The Development of Self-Perception of Creative Abilities

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Questions

- Does self-perception affect creativity?
- Where does self-perception come from?
- Are you a creative person?
- Why do others perceive you as creative?
- Who is your creative role model?
- Is creativity important to the creator or for others?

Research Methods

Surveys were distributed to students on two campuses regarding their beliefs about creativity and their own self-perception on personal creativity. Stephen F. Austin State University (SPASU) students and faculty during the fall 2010 semester were surveyed, along with students and faculty from Lamar University in the summer 2010 session. In total, we surveyed 216 students and faculty. 48 from Lamar University and 168 from SPASU. Though we would have enjoyed conducting more extensive research, our surveys only cover college students at the two universities mentioned. Along with surveys, we also did extensive research regarding creativity throughout the academic community. As seen in “The Development of Self-Perception of Creative Abilities”, we used a multitude of different resources to compare our research.

Findings

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<tr>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>Does field of study require creativity?</th>
<th>Do others perceive you as creative?</th>
<th>Are you satisfied with your creative abilities?</th>
<th>Do you feel comfortable displaying your creative abilities?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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The surveys indicated a very low correlation between “academic success” for which we used the grade point average (GPA) to measure and the students’ perceptions of their creative abilities. In other words, the correlational coefficient was 0.006. Unfortunately, GPA is most likely not the best measure of academic success. Rather the amount of learning and critical thinking accomplished would be a better measure. But GPA is the measurement tool widely used in the academic setting. This data supports our belief that academic success does not determine creativity. Now does creativity determine academic success? It is encouraging to learn that the majority of students do not allow their academic record to dictate their self-perception of creative abilities.

Instead, we had hoped to find a stronger relationship between other’s perceptions of one’s creative abilities and one’s own self-perception. 73% of those surveyed believed others viewed them as creative. 68% of those surveyed believed themselves to be creative. The correlation coefficient between the two was 0.338. This is significantly higher than the correlation between self-perception of creative abilities and academic success. This data confirms our belief that self-perception of creative abilities is strongly related to social interactions. Perhaps this information is indicative of the problem with the system often used to identify gifted/talented students within the school system. Often times, grades are used to help identify these students when once a self-perception of creative abilities may strongly influence how one perceives oneself. And this self-perception is strongly correlated to how others perceive one to be. When an authority figure labels one as “gifted/ talented,” this socialization may play an extremely large role in the development of one’s self-perception. Social interactions seem to play an important role in one’s creative abilities.

How is satisfaction with creative abilities related to the perception of others? There is a 0.336 correlation coefficient between whether others perceive one to be creative and whether one is satisfied with their creative abilities. This implies that extrinsic motivation may play an important role in this development. In order to determine if a majority of those surveyed did not feel comfortable displaying their creative abilities in front of others. This is almost equivalent to the number of those who said others do not perceive them to be creative. Are we doing so poorly at encouraging creativity in children that 25% grow up to be uncomfortable with displaying their creative abilities? We are generally disappointed at the lack of confidence in creative abilities. In fact, only 11% of those surveyed rated their creative abilities as a 3 or 4 (with 3 being not creative and 4 being very creative). An astounding 6% rated their abilities as 4 or less. We were pleased to learn that no one rated themselves below a 3. This indicates that no one surveyed believed themselves to be below average in creative abilities. Perhaps we are not doing so poorly in the school system after all maybe we are teaching students to see the “traditional” way and in the process, are encouraging the development of each student’s creative potential.

Conclusion

Does each individual perceive himself or herself as possessing creative abilities? What does this self-perception of creative abilities develop? This self-perception is dependent upon each individual’s definition of creativity. Research shows no consensus and offers a broad variety of definitions to the controversial word “creativity.” After all, is creativity defined by academic research, social interactions, intelligence, or motivation? In the end, it is our own self-perception that defines, limits, and expands our creative abilities.

When researching creativity, there are a plethora of aspects to consider. Not only does one need to consider the many available definitions, one must also research creative ability and potential. We found that socialization has a great impact on self-perception, which in turn impacts an individual’s creative potential, though these are not the only factors that must be considered.

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