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Creativity assessment: Pitfalls, solutions, and standards

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INTRODUCTION

Creativity Assessment: Pitfalls, Solutions, and Standards

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. . . [P]robably any tests of creativity [will] show considerable error variance due to function fluctuation. Reliabilities of tests of creative abilities and of creative criteria will probably be generally low. There are ways of meeting such difficulties, however. We should not permit them to force us to keep foot outside the domain.

—Guilford, 1950, p. 445

Since the beginning of the systematic study of individual differences in creativity, and particularly since the 1950s, the question of creativity measurement has often been at the forefront of the creativity research agenda. Without proper instruments to measure creativity or adequate standards of assessment, the validity of any creativity study is seriously questioned. Over the last few years, however, evolving research questions and needs, advances in methodology and technology, and efforts to address recurrent measurement issues in our field have led to important developments regarding creativity assessment. That notwithstanding, enduring conceptual and methodological issues and the lack of established assessment standards still challenge the validity of creativity studies, limit meta-analytical work, and make the creativity literature at times elusive to the novice eye.

This special issue (SI) provides a much-needed critical review of current practice in creativity assessment and existing measures, outlining common pitfalls, while suggesting important guidelines and standards for best practice in creativity research and directions for the field. After a general overview of common assessment practice in the field (Snyder, Hammond, Grohman, & Katz-Buonincontro, 2019), several contributions in this SI address challenges and new developments regarding the measurement of divergent thinking (Acar & Runco, 2019; Reiter-Palmon, Forthmann, & Barbot, 2019), consensual assessment technique and subjective ratings (Cseh & Jeffries, 2019; Myszkowski & Storme, 2019; Primi, Silvia, Benedek, & Jauk, 2019), and self-report methodology (Kaufman, 2019). Recent developments and methodological recommendations relevant to creativity assessment on topics including neuroscience of creativity methods (Benedek, Christensen, Fink, & Beaty, 2019), experience sampling (Cotter & Silvia, 2019), developmental methods (Barbot, 2019), self beliefs research

(Karwowski, Han, & Beghetto, 2019), and cross-cultural studies of creativity (Glăveanu, 2019) are also represented. The SI concludes with a general commentary on these contributions, outlining recommendations for best practice in creativity assessment (Barbot, Hass, & Reiter-Palmon, 2019).

Although the field has continually discussed creativity assessment—see, for example, the American Psychological Association Division 10 debate regarding whether the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking are still relevant in the 21st century (see Smith, Smith, & Kaufman, 2011)—a SI in a leading journal in the field of creativity, dedicated to the scrutiny of where we stand on the matter, is long overdue. Thus, it is with great enthusiasm that we bring this effort to fruition.

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