Well-crafted

Elegant

These categories have emerged after 25 years of research into what makes a thing creative. Would you have chosen additional attributes? If so, what are they?

Selecting Qualitative Methods to Measure Creativity

Qualitative data are typically collected by interviewing, watching, analyzing case studies, immersing oneself in a culture, and/or examining archives. In contrast to the research designs of quantitative studies, qualitative studies tend to be more open-ended in terms of what they expect to reveal. Although quantitative studies prove or disprove hypotheses, qualitative studies frequently generate them. Qualitative research requires that an investigator be open to many possibilities, be able to draw conclusions about observations, and be willing to navigate uncertain waters.

Although the qualitative method relies on standardized assessment tools, qualitative methods in creativity research may involve interviewing participants about their creativity, interviewing others about the participant’s creativity, taking field notes about things that affect creativity, and documenting and analyzing a product’s creativity.

Using the Consensual Assessment Technique to Evaluate Creative Products

Although at first glance the CAT may seem to be a quantitative method of creative product assessment because of its various structures and methods, it is not categorized here as either a quantitative or qualitative methodology. The reader interested in using the CAT should refer to Creativity in Context (Amabile, 1996) for specific guidelines. In order for creativity to be assessed by the CAT, the task must have a product or something that can be seen, the task should allow for some flexibility in interpretation, and the task should not be one that depends heavily on specialized skills.

The CAT judges must meet the following criteria: they must be experienced in the domain in question, they must make their assessments independently, and they should also make assessments on dimensions other than creativity, such as technical aspects and aesthetics (to help determine if creativity is related to or independent of those dimensions).

As an example, some categories measured during a fine arts CAT can include creativity, novel use of materials, novel ideas, technical skill, organization, effort, evident planning, and expressiveness.

Final Thoughts

This chapter has introduced readers to the ever-changing field of creativity and creativity research and has discussed how creativity can and does contribute to improved patient outcomes in occupational therapy. Creativity affects every practitioner in his or her personal and professional endeavors, and it changes along with personal maturation and professional experience. Creativity sustains, informs, and entertains. It keeps practitioners engaged in their professional endeavors, surprises them in their personal lives, and sometimes makes them laugh out loud. Studying creativity certainly is worth the effort.

Questions

1. What effect have the various theories of creativity had on occupational therapy?
2. Describe the Four P Model in your own words; apply it to a creative work you have done.