Convergent Thinking Encyclopedia Article

Convergent Thinking

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Convergent Thinking

The ability to narrow the number of possible solutions to a problem by applying logic and knowledge.

The term convergent thinking was coined J. P. Guilford, a psychologist well-known for his research on **creativity.** Guilford posited that a prime component of creativity is **divergent thinking,** the capacity to arrive at unique and original solutions and the tendency to consider problems in terms of multiple solutions rather than just one. Convergent thinking, which narrows all options to one solution, corresponds closely to the types of tasks usually called for in school and on standardized multiple-choice tests. In contrast, creativity tests designed to assess divergent thinking often ask how many different answers or solutions a person can think of to a specific question or problem. Some researchers have claimed that creative achievement actually involves both divergent and convergent thinking—divergent thinking to generate new ideas and convergent thinking to "reality test" them in order to determine if they will work.

For Further Study

Books

Amabile, Teresa M. *Growing Up Creative: Nurturing a Lifetime of Creativity.* New York: Crown Publishers, 1989.

Guilford, J. P. *The Nature of Human Intelligence.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967.