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Introduction to the Special Issue on Chinese and American Creativity: Empirical Studies

In August of 2010, we co-chaired an invited symposium at the American Psychological Association devoted to the creativity of Chinese people and their Western counterparts. The exciting work presented and the lively discussions convinced us to continue our work on this topic and bring together many of the same participants (and some new ones) for two special issues of the *Journal of Creative Behavior*. In the most recent special issue, we featured three papers that presented theoretical perspectives.

In this special issue, we highlight four empirical studies that cover creativity at all stages of life. Wong and Niu (this issue) examine differences in stereotype perception and performance of American and Chinese students on both creative thinking and deductive reasoning. Yi, Hu, Plucker and McWilliams (this issue) study evidence for a possible developmental creativity slump in Chinese children, looking at both how actual creative performance and how children perceived their school climate. Hu, Wu, Jia, Yi, Meyer, and Kaufman (this issue) look at the scientific creativity of schoolchildren after the implementation of a “Learning to Think” intervention. Finally, Zhang and Niu (this issue) study creativity in elderly Chinese people. We conclude with an essay that synthesizes the work of all seven papers across the two special issues (Niu & Kaufman, this issue).

Collectively, the seven papers try to capture the unique features of creativity in the Chinese context, which offers a unique angle to examine the nature of creativity: How should it be defined? What is the developmental trajectory of creativity across the lifespan? How is creativity promoted in schools and the workplace? How do policy, organizational climate, and educational curricula affect creativity? Most important, after a decade-long emphasis on promoting its citizens’ creativity, how has creativity progressed among the Chinese people in comparison with their Western counterparts?

We hope that you will find this special issue equally as thought provoking as its predecessor.

REFERENCES


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