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Are the Openness Personality Trait and a Specific Level of Experience Necessary for Creativity among College Students?

Melanie Essayans, '09
Illinois Wesleyan University

Jean Pretz, Faculty Advisor
Illinois Wesleyan University

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Poster Presentation P14

**ARE THE OPENNESS PERSONALITY TRAIT AND A SPECIFIC LEVEL
OF EXPERIENCE NECESSARY FOR CREATIVITY AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS?**

Melanie Essayans and Jean Pretz*
Psychology Department, Illinois Wesleyan University

While previous research shows a consistently positive relationship between creativity and the Big Five Openness personality variable, researchers have been unable to find this consistency in college student samples. Here, Openness signifies an active imagination and intellectual curiosity with attentiveness to aesthetics and inner emotions, while creativity refers to the creation of an innovative and useful product. In the current study, we examined relationships among creativity, the Openness personality trait, and college class year in order to investigate the differences in college student creativity and Openness. One hundred seventy-two undergraduate students from Illinois Wesleyan University participated in a divergent thinking task and the International Personality Item Pool. While previous research would lead us to expect a steady increase in college student creativity, results confirmed that our student sample deviated from the expected relationships amongst the two variables, in that creativity did not follow any distinguishable pattern in relation to Openness or class year. However, results also suggested that we may need to consider the multi-faceted nature of the Openness personality trait and its affect on our findings. Suggestions for future research include analyzing creativity with respect to each individual facet of Openness, while implications include a better understanding of creative ability and its connection to college students and personality variables.