PALGRAVE HANDBOOKS

THE PALGRAVE HANDBOOK OF CREATIVITY AT WORK

Edited by
Lee Martin and Nick Wilson

The Palgrave Handbook of Creativity at Work

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Editors

The Palgrave Handbook of Creativity at Work

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We dedicate this Handbook to Coral, Flo, Jake, and Rowan, and to everyone, young and old, whose creativity at work *cares for our world, now, or in ways yet to be imagined.*

Editors' Preface

Welcome to *The Palgrave Handbook of Creativity at Work*. Our aim in bringing together this interdisciplinary compilation of forward-looking and critical research-led chapters has been to provide authoritative and up-to-date scholarship and debate concerning *creativity at work*. The volume provides a timely opportunity to re-evaluate our understanding of creativity, work, and the pivotal relationship between them. It is all too easily forgotten that the word "creativity" appeared only in common usage in the early twentieth century, though, of course, there is nothing "modern" about creative activity or ability per se. Though creativity is today most readily associated with artistic, aesthetic, and cultural activity—"work" in the context of the "creative industries" and the wider "creative economy"—its value in society was contingent upon science and technology, which revealed human independence as being *possible*, and the introduction of free-market economics, when constant innovation became inescapably *necessary*. Far from being a new arrival on the scene, the context of "work" has always been a place shaped and sharpened by creativity as well as a site that determines where, when, how, and for whom creativity emerges.

An opening premise for this publication is that creativity is a universal human capacity; we are all creative; furthermore, we are also (more or less) creative at work, regardless of our job title. In keeping with this, the handbook provides 30 chapters that are distinctively broad in their analytical focus. Research interest in *creativity at work* cannot be circumscribed by an interest in the creative labour of the few, for example, the specialist context of creative and cultural production. Nor should our understanding of creativity in a work context be limited to a particular form of problem-solving technique that can be applied instrumentally to meet market-focused objectives. By

emphasizing the opportunity to bring creativity research (in all its diversity) together with focused scholarship on creative labour, creativity in an organizational context, and the commercialization of creativity, the handbook offers a distinctive resource to help us research and practice creativity in new and beneficial ways.

It is one thing to acknowledge creativity as a universal human capacity, but as the history of thought on creativity reminds us, accepting this principle certainly does not mean that all those we study are able to apply their creative potential fully. Researchers have long been guided to consider the contextual barriers to creativity being enacted—in the workplace as elsewhere. A rounded sensitivity to "context" requires careful understanding not only of specific creative capabilities and media (musical, visual, written, etc.) but also of the social, economic, political, technological, and cultural conditions surrounding creative work. This requires taking an open approach to what creative processes might look like and ensuring we widen our search to fully embrace the range of factors involved in creative production. The question of how social values and biases in recognition practices can influence creativity research has constituted a major challenge to knowledge production, and indeed, this had led to research all too often prioritizing recognized creative action over the potential for its realization. To address this gap, creativity theory needs to explore ways to identify (latent) creative work outside of these recognition parameters. Throughout the handbook, we have commissioned chapters that tackle just these issues, helping us to move beyond a reliance on recognized creative workers alone.

Over and above providing an accessible, comprehensive, and authoritative single volume, therefore, this handbook is motivated and framed by the need to ensure that there is consistency between theory and practice. This need is all the more challenging, of course, when we acknowledge the extraordinary range of work, workers, and workplaces across the globe (we have purposefully included contributions from authors from many different international backgrounds in this volume). The lack of theory/practice consistency within creativity research is perhaps no more evident than when it comes to our focus on the "what" of creativity, which is most often cast in terms of novelty and value. Defining "novelty" remains problematic as in some way all things, events, people, and products are novel. Similarly, "value" and "usefulness" are riddled with issues of power and politics, and recognition by appropriate judges can dissolve creativity into the pronouncements of a privileged minority. The chapters in this handbook engage critically with these topics from a wide variety of perspectives, including discussion of professionalization, regulation, gender, power, political economics, education, entrepreneurship,

technology, digitization, space, sustainability, and globalization. In practice, creativity has all too often been reduced to what the prevailing definition of creativity tells us it is in theory—that is, an assessment of value by groups of legitimized people. In addition, much of the understanding developing around the creative process has been based upon laboratory studies of undergraduate students. A key goal for this volume has been to include chapters that encourage critical reflection on these theory-practice links.

The handbook asks many critical questions, including—Why is creativity important at work? What can we learn from creative labour in the context of the creative economy? What do we need creativity for? How might creativity be different from innovation? How should we understand the ethics of creativity at work? We agree with other commentators, particularly those working in the field of education, that it is increasingly important to ask such searching questions of creativity. For example, one of the distinguishing features of the capitalist system is its tendency to give rise to relentless accumulation—of profits, of credit, of waste but also of innovation. With the advent of the fourth industrial revolution, this drive for ever-increasing innovation is at risk of clashing directly with the drive to ensure a more sustainable society. Is it time to question this logic of using our creativity for achieving more, or better? Is it time we got more creative about *creativity at work*?

Commercially motivated interest in creativity has mushroomed, and there is now a global industry dedicated to enhancing, fostering, enabling, and developing creativity in the workplace. But with this increased demand to "get creative" comes renewed responsibility for research to get it right. This is not simply about satisfying the market's insatiable appetite for innovation, nor is it applying a set of tried and tested heuristics that can enable better problem-solving in a business and management context (helpful though these might be); it is also about challenging preconceptions and taking a critical eye to the types of outputs, outcomes, and innovations we want to see for ourselves, our organizations, industries, and communities. This handbook is being published at a time when global sustainability challenges make the need for developing "value positive" creativity within the workplace even greater. Researchers have made significant progress in our understanding of exactly what creativity is, what enables successful creative work, how to develop creative potential, and the organizational and cultural conditions that enable creativity to flourish, and this handbook builds on this wealth of knowledge; however, as editors, our raison d'être has been to answer another even more pressing question: what is the future for creativity research, given contemporary sustainable development challenges? Human creativity has undoubtedly brought progress, but not without cost, especially to the natural environment.

To argue within a new handbook on creativity that research should continue with "more of the same" would, therefore, be problematic, to say the least.

Those researching creativity today, who are also concerned with sustainable economic, social, and environmental development, do so with an understanding that the overwhelming evidence of history suggests the products of human creativity, whilst bringing many benefits, have also (directly and indirectly) given rise to significant challenges to sustainable development. We discover uses for oil and create energy systems that damage the planet, we create antibiotics and face threats from resistant bacteria, we unpick the inner workings of the atom but can now envisage nuclear Armageddon, we organize for economic growth but at the expense of human happiness, freedom, and flourishing. The intended and unintended negative consequences of human creativity are manifold. To now fail to call upon creativity (at the very least) to mitigate the risks associated with the threats from previous creative work, such as those associated with climate change, a loss of biodiversity, and growing inequality, would be a huge mistake for the future of creativity research.

There is then a need to research creativity in ways that enable both the release of more creativity and greater understanding as to how its existing or potential unintended negative consequences can be reduced or prevented. As an example, the United Nations Paris Agreement on climate change contains provisions for, amongst other things, the invention of carbon capture technologies by the middle of the century. The question is, can our current understanding of creativity enable these discoveries to happen without further risk of unintended damage to our ecosystem? It is with just this duty of care for our world in mind that many of the chapters within this handbook have been commissioned.

Creativity research, therefore, needs to understand and explain not only how creativity "works" within contemporary neoliberal economic systems but also what it is able to become, as well as the conditions that could enable a transition towards using our creativity more sustainably. For example, Wilson (2010) identifies that creativity is, by definition, a social process, yet, the predominant legal, cultural, and management frameworks within which creativity is enacted prioritize and reward individual action over and above social or group action. Establishing that creativity is fundamentally a social process points to the importance of social contexts for successful creative production being identified, specified, and explained. We are delighted, therefore, that the chapters comprising this handbook offer up so many examples of just such identification, specification, and explanation. In the process, they contribute to a deeper understanding of what human creativity is and can become.

Accepting the fact that human creativity is a universal capacity, and a potentially unsettling and disruptive one at that, the aim of this handbook is also to challenge us to think critically about how this capacity is developed into an advanced capability (which is where much of the research on creative "genius" has so far resided), especially in the workplace. The handbook provides a welcome space for new directions, regardless of disciplinary, metatheoretical, or ideological starting positions. To understand *creativity at work,* we must understand the physiology, psychology, sociology, economics, politics, philosophy, art, aesthetic, business, and practice(s) of its existence. Creativity, after all, is an emergent human quality that extends across all our scientific, philosophical, and artistic interests. Developing explanations of how to make creative work more sustainable, interrogating the role of context, and understanding how creativity exists outside of its recognition are important issues to tackle as creativity research progresses. Whilst this handbook offers a wide range of contributions to our understanding of creativity, these themes are explored throughout this work.

The handbook is divided into four parts:

Part I: Working with Creativity (introducing key theoretical perspectives)
Part II: Putting Creativity to Work (developing understanding from practice)
Part III: Working in the Creative Economy (exploring tensions and challenges)
Part IV: Making Creativity Work (raising opportunities for the future)

In the opening part "Working with Creativity", contributing authors provide a wide-ranging introduction to the field. The chapters present key theoretical perspectives, explore debates surrounding what creativity *is*, particularly where we are struggling to understand creativity in practice, analyse creative identities, and provide a preliminary contextualization of creativity at work. Part II "Putting Creativity to Work" develops our understanding of creativity at work through consideration of situated practice—across a range of educational, commercial, workplace, and marginal contexts. Attention falls on the organizational nature of creativity and the implications ("good" and "bad") for those involved. The third part "Working in the Creative Economy" takes the disputed context of the "creative economy", where creativity has been synonymized with innovation, as its focus. Chapters explore tensions and challenges influencing the creative labour of everyone—not just those labelled "creative" or working in the cultural and creative industries. The concluding part "Making Creativity Work" is explicitly future focused in order to respond

to the question "creativity for what?" Chapters in this final section include discussion of "value-based innovation", everyday creativity, the role of social media, sustainability, and ethics.

We are very grateful to the internationally recognized scholars, researchers, and practitioners who have contributed to *The Palgrave Handbook of Creativity at Work*. As editors, we have encouraged risk-taking, and it has been wonderful and enlightening to read the many new insights, paradigms, and perspectives they have provided within these pages, which collectively question where we must go next and what still needs to be done. We hope very much that you find this handbook inspiring and insightful, as you develop your own *creativity at work*, wherever that might be, and in whatever form it might take.

Coventry, UK — Lee Martin
London, UK — Nick Wilson
June, 2018

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Part I

Working with Creativity

1

Measuring Creativity at Work

Xavier Caroff, Justine Massu, and Todd Lubart

Creativity can be defined as the ability to produce original ideas or work that fits within a specified context and responds to task constraints (Sternberg & Lubart, 1995). Creative ability is best manifested in unique accomplishments that are recognized as valuable. Creativity is increasingly cited as a twenty-first-century skill that is valued in education and the workplace (Adobe, 2012a, 2012b, 2016). For example, the World Economic Forum placed it in the top characteristics for employability in the coming decade (WEF, 2016), and a survey of 1541 CEOs of major international companies indicated that creativity was the most important ability that a good leader must show in order to address the complexity of the new economic environment (IBM, 2010a, 2012). Since the 1980s, the multivariate approach to creativity has contributed to help conceptualize and measure creativity. In this approach, creativity requires a particular combination of factors within the individual (cognitive, conative, and affective factors), and outside the individual, in the environmental context (see Lubart, 1999).

Specific aspects of cognition (such as mental flexibility), personality (such as risk taking), motivation, and affect (such as emotional idiosyncrasy) combine with physical or social stimulation from the environment and provide the "ingredients" that come into play in the production of creative work. The extent to which the various person-centered and environment-centered

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"ingredients" are qualitatively and quantitatively optimal, given the nature of the problem to be solved, determines the degree to which highly creative productions can be achieved. Of course, it is important to note that these ingredients, or factors, combine in interactive and maybe non-linear ways. Thus, there may be some partial compensation between strong and weak factors but also some multiplicative effects in which the co-presence of two or more factors leads to an extra boost in creative output. In addition, it must not be forgotten that the "ingredients" that favor creative work must be brought into the productive process of thinking. The manner in which these psychological or environmental factors enter the work progress will also determine the effect on the creative work produced.

Therefore, according to the multivariate approach, which is developed in this chapter, creativity depends on cognitive, conative, affective, and environmental factors. Each person has a particular profile on these different factors. This profile may be more relevant to the requirements of a given task or job. In order to conceptualize creativity and measure it, we distinguish (1) creative potential, which is a latent capacity of a person to produce novel, valuable work, from (2) creative accomplishment, which refers to the effective production of work that is appreciated as novel and valuable in a given social context.

Walberg (1988) considers creative potential as part of human capital, at the individual level, but also at the organizational or societal levels. This capital may be put to use if the opportunity exists. An individual, and his/her organization, may be aware of this potential, although this is not always the case. Each person can be described as having a certain level of creative potential in a given domain of work, and more specifically, in a given task. As the specific nature of creativity varies to some extent across domains, it is expected that individuals will have heterogeneous levels of creative potential and creative accomplishment across diverse domains of activity.

In terms of the measurement of creative potential, it is useful to distinguish three main approaches.

1. Assess the resources that form the basis of creative potential

To assess creative potential in a multivariate approach, an individual may be presented with a series of measures designed to assess the ingredients or resources underlying creative work. This assessment situation covers, ideally, cognitive, conative, affective, and environmental factors. The set of assessed resources can be summarized in a person's profile.

2. Assess creative potential manifested in a sample task

Another way to assess creative potential is to have a person complete a sample task, which simulates a real-world situation. In this case, it is typical to compare individuals' performances on the simulated task, as through indices such as the number of ideas generated or judgments of the creative nature of the ideas by appropriate evaluators. In this measurement approach, all the relevant resources can be brought into play during engagement in task completion. Here the simulated task should be as close to the real task as possible. It is also important to assure that individuals engage as fully as possible in the simulated task.

3. Assess creative potential through previous creative achievements

In this line of measurement, which focuses on creative achievement, real-world accomplishments are evaluated for their creativity. This may take the form of self-reported judgments of work, peer judgments, or expert (supervisor or external panel) judgments. Although these measures concern creative achievement, they can also be used as a proxy for future expressions of creative potential. In this view, the person-centered and environment-centered resources that were brought into play in the past have a good chance to be brought again into play in the future. Again, estimates of creative potential based on past achievements depend partly on the similarity of future tasks to past ones.

This presentation of the three main ways to assess creative potential can be extended to measures of innovation. Creativity and innovation are closely related topics, and creativity may be considered as part of innovation (Tang, 2017). To simplify, creativity is often seen as the ability to "get ideas", which is considered as the first part of an innovation cycle (Amabile, 1988; Anderson, Potocnik, & Zhou, 2014; Cropley, 2006). Then these ideas need to be developed and brought to market, which tends to be the focus of work specifically on "innovation". In fact developing ideas and bringing them to fruition itself often involves the generation of new ideas, so the distinction is quite blurred in most cases (Paulus, 2002; Scott & Bruce, 1994). We can note, however, that the three types of assessment of creative potential, mentioned earlier, can be adapted to measure the potential for innovation.

In the next sections of this chapter, we look into contemporary issues concerning each of these measurement topics. First, the measurement of creative potential through assessment of the multivariate resources is described. Second, the peer-assessed evaluation of productions generated though sample

tasks or achievement measures is examined. Third, measures that concern creative achievements within the broader innovation cycle are presented.

Part I: Assessment of Multivariate Resources

Given the importance of creativity for work and organizational psychology, some authors have addressed research questions related to professional selection (e.g., Althuizen, 2012; Hunter, Cushenbery, & Friedrich, 2012; Malakate, Andriopoulos, & Gotsi, 2007) or creative personnel management (e.g., Mumford, 2000). Creativity is becoming a major issue for companies, and it is therefore important to know how to detect the creative potential of people.

There is, however, relatively little research on the selection and recruitment of creative staff. In one study, Scratchley and Hakstian (2001) examined the possibility of detecting the creative potential of managers in a real recruitment situation for Canadian firms. They defined managerial creativity as the ability of a manager to produce new concepts, new ideas, new directions, new procedures, and new methods that will be useful to the company. In order to detect candidates' creative potential, they developed a battery measuring openness (composed of openness to change, risk taking, and tolerance to ambiguity), general intelligence (Wonderlic Personnel Test), and three divergent thinking tasks. This battery was administered to 223 candidates, managers from the public and private sectors. To validate their measures of creative potential, Scratchley and Hakstian (2001) assessed also the candidates' creative performance. To do so, they asked the candidates to name one of their supervisors that would be able to evaluate their work. Then, indicated supervisors had to evaluate the candidate's managerial creativity on three criteria: the ability to have (1) ideas that produce fundamental changes in the organization's activities, (2) ideas that improve products and processes but are only a small lag in relation to existing practices, and (3) general managerial creativity (a composite score). The results show that, for each criterion, openness was the best predictor (correlations vary between 0.20 and 0.43). However, both openness and divergent thinking contributed uniquely to the prediction of creative manager behavior. Intelligence did not show in this study the expected effect on managerial creative performance.

In line with this finding, creative potential for a task is envisioned, according to the multivariate approach as the confluence of several distinct but interrelated resources (Lubart, 1999; Lubart, Mouchiroud, Tordjman, & Zenasni, 2015; Sternberg & Lubart, 1995). A few examples of these resources are described.

Cognitive Resources

First, mental flexibility refers to the capacity to change perspectives, to explore a new direction during problem solving. It is often contrasted with mental rigidity or fixedness. Flexibility allows a person to move from one line of ideas to another and thus explore a topic more widely. Flexibility is related to cognitive mobility, which is by definition one of the keys to adopting new approaches to a problem or task. Second, associative thinking is a fundamental ability to bring together ideas, to make connections (e.g., Mednick, 1962). Being able to find possible associations, in particular ones involving elements that are not commonly connected, is facilitated by a rich knowledge base. In addition, it helps synthesizing disparate elements in new ways. Koestler's "bisociation", Rothenberg's (1979, 2001), Janusian thinking, homospatial thinking, and Sepconic processing (connecting separate elements) are examples of this ability allowing multiple views to be simultaneously considered and then combined to form a new entity.

Conative Resources

Conation refers to personality traits and motivations. One example is risk taking, which is central to creative work because originality involves breaking from habitual ideas (Prabhu, 2011; Sternberg & Lubart, 1995). To engage in creative behavior, one must risk the use of personal resources (time, money, energy) and accept the possibility of social criticism (new ideas are often met with resistance and rejection). A relevant motivation that favors risk taking is sensation seeking. A second example is openness to new experiences. A high level of openness is thought to facilitate the exploration of alternative solutions (e.g., Feist, 1998; McCrae, 1987). Individuals with low openness tend to have more conventional or traditional interests as well as being more dogmatic. Need for novelty is a relevant motivation which supports openness. Those who are easily bored will naturally be prompted to seek new experiences.

Affective Resources

Affective resources refer to emotional states, traits, and competencies. A growing body of research has investigated the impact of affect on creativity. For example, positive mood states have been found to favor divergent thinking. Related to the tendency to be in a particular mood state, which may favor