The Cambridge Handbook of Creativity

The Cambridge Handbook of Creativity is a comprehensive scholarly handbook on creativity from the most respected psychologists, researchers, and educators. This handbook serves as a thorough introduction to the field of creativity and as an invaluable reference and current source of important information. It covers such diverse topics as the brain, education, business, and world cultures. The first section, “Basic Concepts,” is designed to introduce readers to the history of and key concepts in the field of creativity. The next section, “Diverse Perspectives on Creativity,” contains chapters on the many ways to approach creativity. Several of these approaches, such as the functional, evolutionary, and neuroscientific approaches, have been invented or greatly reconceptualized in the last decade. The third section, “Contemporary Debates,” highlights ongoing topics that still inspire discussion. Finally, the editors summarize and discuss important concepts from the book and look at what lies ahead.

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The Cambridge Handbook of Creativity

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We would like to dedicate this book to the memory of Colin Martindale – a brilliant and prescient scholar, supportive mentor, and valued friend.
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Preface

With the world changing more rapidly than ever before, creativity is at a historical premium. As many investors have discovered, yesterday’s investment strategies do not necessarily work anymore. As many politicians and citizens alike have discovered, yesterday’s ideas about ethical behavior and propriety do not necessarily apply today. As many CEOs have discovered, the competition today is quite different from at any time in history. Printed newspapers, for example, have to compete not only with each other, but with their own online versions. We live in a society where those who do not creatively innovate risk failure in any of several domains of life.

Just what is creativity? It can refer to a person, process, place, or product. It can be found in geniuses and in small children. It has been studied by psychologists, educators, neuroscientists, historians, sociologists, economists, engineers, and scholars of all types. Legendary thinkers throughout time, from Aristotle to Einstein, have pondered what it means to be creative. There are still debates, after more than six decades of intensive research, on how to measure, utilize, and improve it.

The first step to understanding creativity is to define it. Most definitions of creative ideas comprise three components (Kaufman & Sternberg, 2007). First, creative ideas must represent something different, new, or innovative. Second, creative ideas are of high quality. Third, creative ideas must also be appropriate to the task at hand or some redefinition of that task. Thus, a creative response is novel, good, and relevant.

It has been more than a decade since Robert J. Sternberg, one of the editors of this volume, edited Cambridge’s last Handbook of Creativity. Since it was published in 1999, there have been more than 10,000 published papers concerning creativity, along with hundreds of books. More than ever, there is a flourishing community of scholars focusing on creativity. The American Psychological Association’s Division 10, the Society for the Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts, now sponsors an official APA journal on this topic (Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts).
Established journals such as the Creativity Research Journal, Journal of Creative Behavior, Empirical Studies of the Arts, and Imagination, Creativity, and Personality continue to publish exciting new papers. New journals have emerged (e.g., Thinking Skills and Creativity, International Journal of Creativity and Problem Solving). Other journals feature work on creativity in different areas, such as gifted education (Rozer Review and Gifted Child Quarterly) and business (Innovation and Creativity Management, Leadership Quarterly). Several major written and edited works by leading scholars have appeared in the last decade. A few examples of such works include Dorfman, Locher, and Martindale (2006); Piirto (2004); Puccio, Murdock, and Mance (2006); Runco (2007), Sawyer (2006), Simonton (2004); and Weisberg (2006). Kaufman (2009) provides a detailed overview of these recent works.

Structure of This Handbook

We have structured The Cambridge Handbook of Creativity into four parts. The first part, which we call “Basic Concepts,” is designed to introduce readers to the history and key concepts in the field of creativity. This section begins with a history of creativity research by Mark A. Runco and Robert S. Alpert. It is followed by a thorough review of major theories of creativity written by Aaron Kozbelt, Ronald A. Beghetto, and Mark A. Runco. Next, Jonathan A. Plucker and Matthew C. Makel review creativity assessment, followed by Seana Moran’s discussion of the role of creativity in today’s society.

The next section is titled “Diverse Perspectives on Creativity.” This section contains chapters on the many ways to approach creativity. Several of these approaches, such as functional, evolutionary, and neuroscientific approaches, have been invented or greatly reconceptualized in the last decade. We begin with Thomas B. Ward and Yuliya Kolomyts describing the cognitive approach to creativity, then shift to Gregory J. Feist’s chapter on the creative personality. Paul J. Locher writes about creativity and aesthetics, and Gerard J. Puccio and John F. Cabra cover organizational approaches. Dean Keith Simonton then discusses major (or “Big C”) creativity, followed by Ruth Richards on everyday (or “little c”) creativity. Neurobiological foundations of creativity are discussed by Allison B. Kaufman, Sergey A. Kornilov, Adam S. Bristol, Mei Tan, and Elena L. Grigorenko, while Sandra W. Russ and Julie A. Fiorelli write about developmental approaches to creativity. Jeffrey K. Smith and Lisa F. Smith discuss educational perspectives on creativity, and Todd Lubart analyzes cross-cultural research and theory. Next, Liane Gabora and Scott Barry Kaufman highlight evolutionary theories of creativity. Finally, David Cropley and Arthur Cropley write about functional creativity.

The third section of the book offers essays that cover “Contemporary Debates” in creativity – ongoing debates that still inspire discussion. John Baer addresses the question of whether creativity is one thing (domain-general) or many things (domain-specific). Beth A. Hennessey analyzes how intrinsic motivation may affect creativity. R. Keith Sawyer discusses the comparatively new area of group (as opposed to individual) creativity. Paul J. Silvia and James C. Kaufman highlight the controversial topic of creativity and mental illness, and Kyung Hee Kim, Bonnie Crawford, and Joyce VanTassel-Baska outline the often-conflicting literature on how creativity relates to intelligence. Mark A. Runco distinguishes between the idea of divergent thinking and creativity, and Ronald A. Beghetto concludes the section with a discussion of creativity in the classroom.

Finally, in the last section, we both summarize and highlight important concepts from the book and look to the future at what lies ahead.

The chapters in this book discuss research and theories from all aspects of creativity. The authors tackle such diverse topics as the brain, education, business, and world cultures. We hope that this handbook not only can serve as an introduction to the study of
creativity but also can represent a launching pad for more debates, discussions, and future research.

References


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Editing this book has been a labor of love, and it has been an honor to work with such a distinguished and noteworthy group of authors. We would like to thank Maria Avitia, Candice Davis, Ryan Holt, Amber Lytle, Tessy Pumacahua, Amanda Roos, Lauren Skidmore, Roberta Sullivan, Oshin Vartanian, Arielle White, and Vanessa Zarate for their assistance in preparing the manuscript; Simina Calin and Jeanie Lee from Cambridge University Press and Phil Laughlin and Eric Schwartz, formerly of Cambridge University Press; and our departments and universities for their support. James would like to thank Allison, Jacob, Mom and Dad, and everyone else in his family for their support and love. Bob would like to thank Karin for her love, support, and patience while he read and edited chapter after chapter after chapter.