

## Creativity

*Creativity: An Introduction* is a systematic and straightforward introduction to the interdisciplinary study of creativity. Each chapter is written by one or more of the world's experts and features the latest research developments, alongside foundational knowledge. Each chapter also includes an introduction, key terms, and critical thought questions to promote active learning. Topics and authors have been selected to represent a comprehensive and balanced overview. Any reader will come away with a deeper understanding of how creativity is studied – and how they can improve their own creativity.

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## An Introduction

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Edited by

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## Preface

The editors of this textbook both teach courses on creativity. There is no lack of potential textbooks for our courses, including books we have written or edited. But both of us have experienced some frustration in trying to find a textbook that fits our courses. Either the books are too long or too short, too low-level or too high-level, or just do not teach the topics we want to teach. And that is why we decided to create this textbook.

This textbook is the second in a series. The first was *Human Intelligence: An Introduction*, also published by Cambridge University Press. The third, still in preparation, will be *Wisdom: An Introduction* and will be published by Cambridge University Press as well.

Diverse people inside and outside academia are increasingly recognizing the importance of creativity. They perhaps have been slow to do so because our educational system is so driven by conventional teaching and standardized tests, neither of which particularly emphasizes creativity. But all the major contemporary engines of economic and social development gain their edge through creativity. At some level, this always has been true. But it is even more compelling in an era when knowledge and innovation leap forward at breathtaking speed.

In art, literature, music, science, and virtually every field of endeavor, the skills that lead to lasting recognition are not exactly those taught in conventional schooling or measured on standardized tests. Perhaps first among all these skills is creativity. The greats in any field – people like Scott Joplin, Charles Darwin, Marie Curie, Albert Einstein, Frida Kahlo, and Maya Angelou – are remembered for their creative contributions, not for their school grades or IQ scores.

For this textbook, we chose authors who we believed combined three characteristics. First, they are experts in their respective fields and thus bring to the task of writing chapters a diversity of perspectives and viewpoints that one would not obtain in a textbook written by just one author. Second, they are individuals in whom we had confidence regarding their ability to write at a level that would be accessible and interesting to students of creativity – both undergraduate and graduate. Third, we chose individuals who we were confident would not use their chapters to grind their own idiosyncratic point of view regarding creativity. All of us scholars in the field have such viewpoints. But a textbook is not a place to argue for just a single viewpoint. The authors have done a commendable job, we believe, of fairly representing the field as it exists today in the second decade of the millennium.

We have chosen topics that we believe represent the most important areas of theory, research, and practice in the field of creativity as it exists today. Because this is a textbook, we have had to limit the number of chapters to one that reasonably could be covered in a one-semester course on creativity. We believe you will find that virtually every important topic in creativity today is represented in our textbook.

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Our textbook is written for both upper-level undergraduate and graduate-level courses on creativity. We, the editors, teach courses on creativity at both levels, and we strove to develop a textbook that could be used at both levels, as well as at schools that have students of different interests, educational experiences, and backgrounds.

Some users might wonder, why an edited textbook? We believe there are several advantages to an edited as opposed to written textbook:

- **Expertise:** The field of creativity has blossomed since the twentieth century and requires far more knowledge and expertise than in the past. We have chosen authors who are specialists in their particular topic within the field of creativity, so we believe we have selected those individuals who are best qualified to tackle each topic.
- **Timeliness:** Having an edited textbook enabled us to finish the textbook somewhat more quickly than would be the case for a single-authored book, so that readers get material that is up to date rather than written some time ago. With single-authored texts, the chapters written early are often out of date by the time the author gets to the later chapters. This is especially important in a rapidly advancing field such as that of creativity.
- **Diversity:** Our authors represent a welcome diversity of national origins, ethnicity, research methods, and points of view, so they are able to provide a variety of perspectives on the field that would not be possible in an authored book.

We believe our textbook is unique. It has, we suggest, the following distinctive features:

- The most distinguished group of authors one can find in the contemporary field of creativity
- The most comprehensive coverage of topics to be found in any textbook
- Absence of a single ideology or strong point of view that might discourage use of the book by those who take a different point of view
- Pedagogical features that are second to none
- Completely up-to-date coverage in a field where some of the other textbooks are becoming out of date

The textbook has a number of pedagogical features that we believe will be useful to students. The pedagogical features for each chapter include:

- a. **Chapter introduction** that highlights the main conceptual issues dealt with in the chapter
- b. **Chapter summary** that summarizes the main points in the chapter
- c. **Bolded key terms** that are defined where they are first used
- d. **Glossary** that separately defines the key terms for easy reference
- e. **Five or more critical/creative thinking questions** for those students who wish to reflect more deeply on the material in the chapter
- f. **My/Our Research Contribution** box that highlights in roughly 250 words what the authors see(s) as the main research contribution to the field presented in the chapter
- g. **Figures and tables** that illustrate the main ideas in the textbook

We hope you find the textbook useful and fun to read. And we hope the book gives you new insights into the nature of human creativity.

We are grateful to our editors at Cambridge University Press, Stephen Acerra and David Repetto, for making the book possible, to Emily Watton for her careful editing of each chapter of the book, and to Trent Hancock for copyediting the final manuscript. Thanks also to Dr. Sareh Karami for her helpful suggestions.

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