

Organizing the Emerging Discipline of Creative Studies: An Executive

Summary of Mallon's 1993 Master's of Project

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Background to the Project

In August of 1990, thirty scholars from around the world who had devoted their careers to creativity research came to Buffalo, New York. The major purpose of this collaboration of scholars, according to Murdock, Isaksen, Vosburg and Lugo (1993), was to begin the process of transforming the study of creativity from a field of study into an emerging discipline.

Mallon's (1993) index work on the proceedings of the 1993 *International Working Creativity Research Conference* can best be understood in light of the general purposes for the conference, as stated by Isaksen, Murdock, Firestien and Treffinger (1993a; 1993b):

- Provide the attending scholars with an opportunity to collaborate around the subjects of the research being produced by other scholars of the study of creativity;
- Provide all those attending the conference with an opportunity to share ideas about the emerging discipline of creativity; and
- Provide the attending scholars with a climate where connections could be made between the theories of creativity that had been developed and the practices of those theories.

The Conference was sponsored by the *Center for Studies in Creativity* at Buffalo State College in Buffalo, New York. Before arriving at the Conference, each of the thirty scholars was asked to write a paper about their research and other theories and practices being produced in the emerging discipline of creative studies. The purpose of these papers was not only for presentation at the conference, but also to publish later as conference proceedings outlining the current research being done in the development of the discipline (Mallon, 1993). The two volumes produced were named *Nurturing and Developing Creativity: The Emergence of a Discipline* and *Understanding and Recognizing Creativity: The emergence of a Discipline*. The following year, in October of 1991, the *International Creativity Research Working Meeting* was held as a follow-up to the 1990 conference. Murdock, Isaksen and Coleman (1993) stated that the purpose of the 1991 conference was to continue to organize the field of creativity so that it could become a respected discipline.

Project Overview

In light of organizing all this material, the purpose of Mallon's (1993) Master's project was "to identify the core constructs in the field of creativity" (p. 4). She defined core constructs as the central ideas or themes that come together to define such a field. The understanding was that if sufficient and articulated constructs could be identified, then the disciplinarity of the domain could be more easily supported (Murdock, Isaksen, Vosburg and Lugo, 1993). The primary road block, according to Mallon, was to find the ideas that all the scholars in the field of creative studies agreed should be considered the major constructs for defining the emerging discipline. After the consensus had been established, those key constructs would become the subject indexes for the two books

that were developed out of the 1990 Conference in Buffalo. The way in which Mallon chose to gather such consensus was through the examination of key texts that had previously been produced in the area of creative studies (1993, p. 4). The main idea for the subject index was not only to organize the current research that had been developed in the field of creative studies, but also to have a well established set of concepts for future research in the discipline of creative studies (Mallon, 1993, p. 5).

If the subject index were to identify the key ideas of the emerging discipline of creative studies, then, according to Phenix (1962), the index had to fulfill three specific requirements:

1. The subject index had to simplify the framework that was being developed for the emerging discipline of creative studies;
2. The subject index had to represent the key correlations between the constructs that were to be used to define the discipline of creative studies; and
3. The subject index had to be well tied to the key concepts in the current field of creative studies as well as allow novelty in the future development and growth of the discipline.

At the completion of Mallon's Master's project, she did sufficiently meet these requirements.

Method

Before the key constructs could be determined, Mallon (1993) had to research and select key texts on creativity to determine what terms were used most often with reference to the study of creativity. Through an intensive analysis of these key terms, she then extracted the constructs that could be used to organize the discipline of creativity.

Specific criteria were developed for the selection process of these key texts. The texts had to:

- focus on the field of creativity;
- be nationally or internationally published;
- be authored by lead scholars in the field of creativity;
- include subject indexes;
- be written as recently as possible; and
- highlight the numerous perspectives in the field of creativity (p. 12).

The eighteen texts that were selected by Mallon (1993) focused on many areas of research in the field of creativity, including education, science, management, and innovation. Table 1 shows the title and author of each of the texts that were used in the search of the core constructs. After the key texts were selected, they were investigated

Table 1

Key Texts Used to Find the Core Constructs

Title	Author
<i>Springs of scientific creativity: Essays on founders of modern science</i>	Aris, R., Davis, H. T. and Stuewer, R. H. (Eds.)
<i>Creative and innovative management: Essays in honor of George Kozmetsky</i>	Charnes, A. and Cooper, W. W. (Eds.)
<i>Technological innovation in the 80's</i>	Coles, J. S. (Ed.)
<i>Computer based innovation resources: A computer based system of citations and annotations of the periodical literature on creativity</i>	Fox, J. M.
<i>Handbook of creativity</i>	Glover, J. A., Ronning, R. R. and Reynolds, C. R. (Eds.)
<i>Innovation: A cross-disciplinary perspective</i>	Gronhaug, K. and Kaufmann, G. (Eds.)

<i>New directions in creative and innovative management: Bridging theory and practice</i>	Ijiri Y. and Kuhn, R. L. (Eds.)
<i>Frontiers of creativity research: Beyond the basics</i>	Isaksen, S. G. (Ed.)
<i>Frontiers in creative and innovative management: Volume 4 of series on econometrics and management sciences</i>	Kuhn, R. L. (Ed.)
<i>Managing innovation: The social dimensions of creativity, invention and technology</i>	Lundstedt, S. B. and Colglazier, Jr., E. W. (Eds.)
<i>Applied imagination</i>	Osborn, A.
<i>Psychoanalysis, creativity, and literature: A French-American inquiry</i>	Roland, A. (Ed.)
<i>Stimulating creativity: Volume 1</i>	Stein, M. I.
<i>Stimulating creativity: Volume 2</i>	Stein, M. I.
<i>The nature of creativity: Contemporary psychological perspectives</i>	Sternberg, R. J. (Ed.)
<i>Widening horizons in creativity: The proceedings of the fifth Utah creativity research conference</i>	Taylor, C. W. (Ed.)
<i>Perspectives in creativity</i>	Taylor, I. A. and Getzels, J. W. (Eds.)
<i>Creativity and liberal learning: Problems and possibilities in American education</i>	Tuerck, D. G. (Ed.)

for the terms used most frequently with reference to the study of creativity. The terms that were identified as appearing the most frequently amongst all the key texts being explored became the constructs for the emerging discipline of creative studies.

According to Mallon (1993), those constructs that were selected truly “withstood the test of time” (p. 13). Mallon (1993) also took specific care to include in her Master’s project the steps that were needed for her to determine those key constructs.

Findings

Mallon noted that the list of the key constructs was very diverse when it was finally organized. The list included names of people that were pivotal to the understanding of creativity, terms that were related to other disciplines of study, such as psychology and education, and words that defined personality characteristics and feelings, such as openness and humor. The fact that these terms not only defined the discipline of creative studies but also related to so many other disciplines of study was a testament to the interdisciplinary impact of the emerging discipline of creativity (1993, p. 16). As previously stated these terms also satisfactorily meet the requirements that Phenix (1962) showed as necessary criteria for an emerging discipline.

References

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