
Preface and acknowledgments

When we accepted Edward Elgar's commission to put together a Handbook of Research on Creativity two years ago, we knew we were taking on a challenge, but it was only when we started work on the Handbook that we began to realize what a huge challenge it was. If a Handbook is 'a book giving information such as facts on a particular subject or instructions for operating a machine' (Oxford Dictionary) then this Handbook will disappoint many. Not only is it not a manual for how to do research on creativity, it is also light on 'facts' about research on creativity. This is because, as is pointed out in the Introduction and in the chapter 'Researching creativity and creativity research', creativity research in the early years of the 21st century is a dynamic field. While an increasing number of researchers are identifying with creativity research as a field of study, many more would gladly distance themselves from such an exercise, preferring to work within established disciplines such as psychology, sociology, history, philosophy, the arts, education and so on. Perhaps it is inevitable that any new area of research will not attract the interest of many scholars in established disciplines, but creativity is a particularly alluring although nebulous concept, a bit like beauty or success, which until recently has made it somewhat unsettling for researchers to spend any serious time on.

The challenge for us, then, was to pull together a volume that is not only informative about the state of the art in creativity research, but is also inclusive about what counts as creativity research. If we had only invited contributors from those who work under the banner 'creativity research', we would have a relatively homogeneous Handbook, with most of the contributors being psychologists or education researchers. We thought that it was important for us not to accept such self-definitions as the only criterion for inclusion in this Handbook. We therefore deliberately reached out to researchers in different disciplines who have something valuable to contribute towards our understanding of creativity, however defined, and however evaluated. The result is a Handbook that has 35 chapters and has involved 46 authors in total, many of whom contributed individual chapters while others furnished chapters written as collaborative ventures, sometimes developed between authors working in different continents or in different parts of a country.

In the end our challenge was made all the more exciting as the scholars whose chapters appear in the Handbook both met and exceeded our expectations. Some authors needed very little editorial direction or advice, expert in the practices of writing for such a volume, while others took on the task of reworking chapters to meet our requests, without flinching in what could seem an arduous process at times. All involved, from professors through to doctoral students, showed nothing other than an ongoing professionalism, generosity and collegiality, and a deep commitment to the advancement of knowledge and our project. As the process for building the Handbook got under way, authors often included in their emails, along with drafts that we anticipated at critical points, thoughtful comments and kind words which made our task all the more

memorable. In the end the Handbook is a collective effort and we are extremely grateful to all the authors for their contributions.

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