

Further thoughts on the 5c framework for exploring the dimensions and complexity of creativity. Adding value through a visual aid

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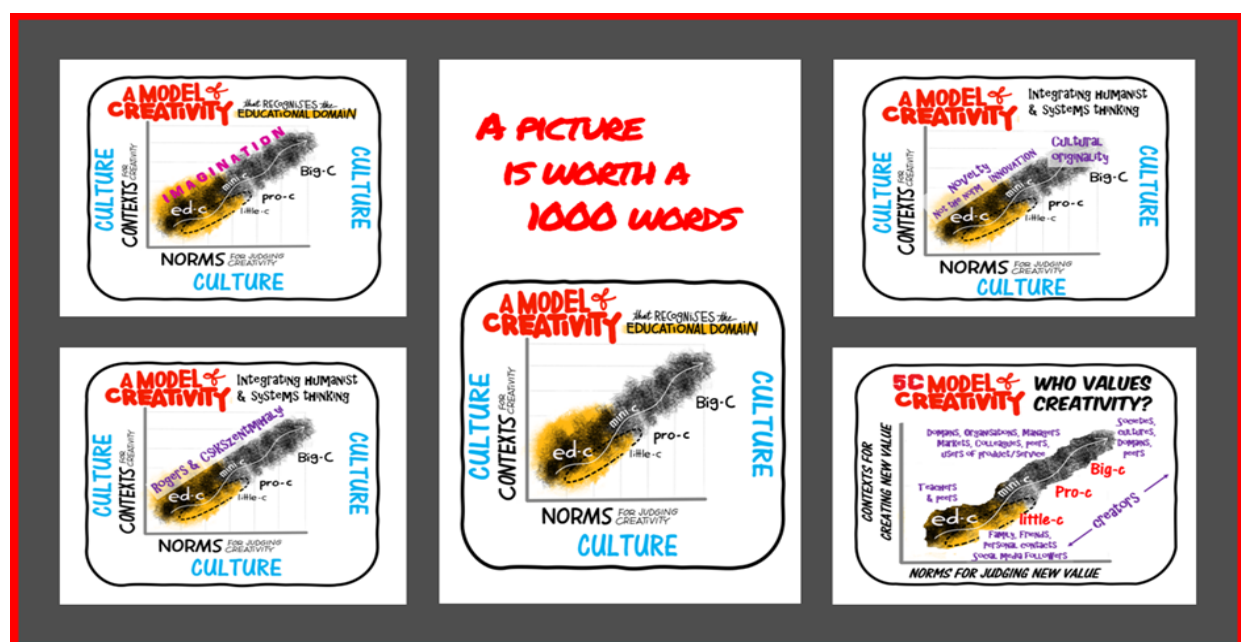
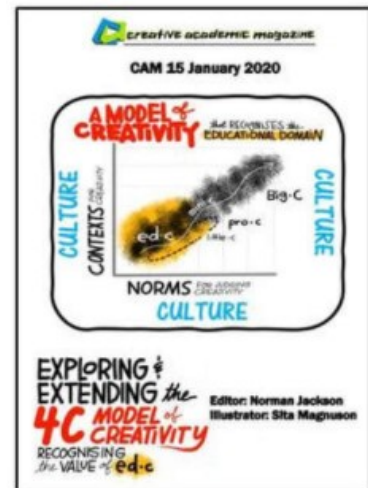
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Introduction

The 4c model of creativity development by James Kaufman and Ron Beghetto¹ provides a useful framework for viewing some of the complexity we associate with creativity. With Carly Lassig I developed a 5c version that argues for an ed-c (educational creativity) domain.

The 5c version was published in Creative Academic Magazine #15 and the visual aid has proved to be a useful tool for exploring and explaining some of the features we associate with creativity. These notes summarise the ways I have used the framework to represent and explain aspects of creativity in discussions in the #creativeHE forum³ during 2020.

They say a picture is worth a thousand words because of its power to convey complex information that is easier and quicker to assimilate and comprehend than by reading the written words. Sometimes there is also a poetry in a picture that connects us emotionally with the subject. I think there is something poetic about the 5c image. Last October while participating in an inquiry into learning ecologies in Harvard University's Learning Innovations Laboratory I met a graphic facilitator called Sita Magnuson. I was impressed with the way she turned my talk into a narrative picture on the wall. I kept in touch and since then she has drawn a number of illustrations for me. I am quite capable of drawing a diagram in word or power point but the hand drawn illustrations she creates are far more engaging and poetic. She kindly produced the centre image in the panel from a sketch I had given her and I was then able to derive a family of conceptual images using a



combination of paint, snipping tool, powerpoint and lunapic software which I have used in my talks, articles and social media posts.

Sources

- 1 Kaufman, J and Behgetto R (2009) Beyond Big and Little: The Four C Model of Creativity Review of General Psychology Vol. 13, No. 1, 1-12 Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/.../228345133_Beyond_Big_and...
- 2 Jackson, N.J. and Lassig, C. (2020) Exploring and Extending the 4C Model of Creativity: Recognising the value of an ed-c contextual domain. Creative Academic Magazine CAM15 <https://www.creativeacademic.uk/magazine.html>
- 3 <https://www.facebook.com/groups/creativeHE>

Imagination

Imagination often gets left out of models of creativity yet it is an important part of the creative process and must pervade all domains of the 5c framework. The idea works well with the concept of 'pragmatic imagination'¹, in which imagination works with perception and reasoning to enable us to think about things and situations from many different perspectives including perspectives that have never existed. It is this productive entanglement of cognitive and psychological processes - perception,

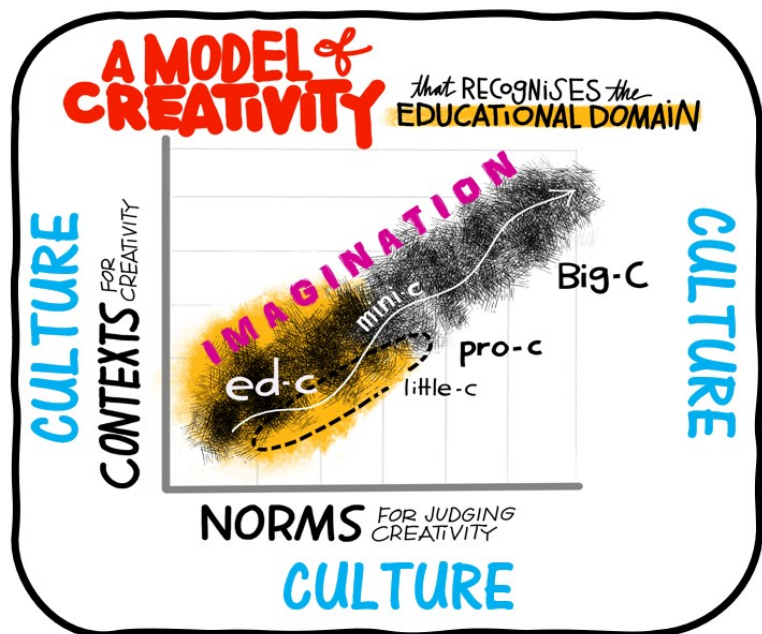
reasoning, imagination, beliefs, values and emotions, that enables us to respond in our unique ways to our unique circumstances through the creation of mental images and models about things that only exist in our thoughts. Such mental imagery enables us to travel backwards and forwards in time to explore possibilities, revisit memories to 'see' what might have happened if situations had been different, and see and feel situations through the eyes of others. We are able to draw on these powerful mental processes to inform any decisions we make about future actions and behaviours.

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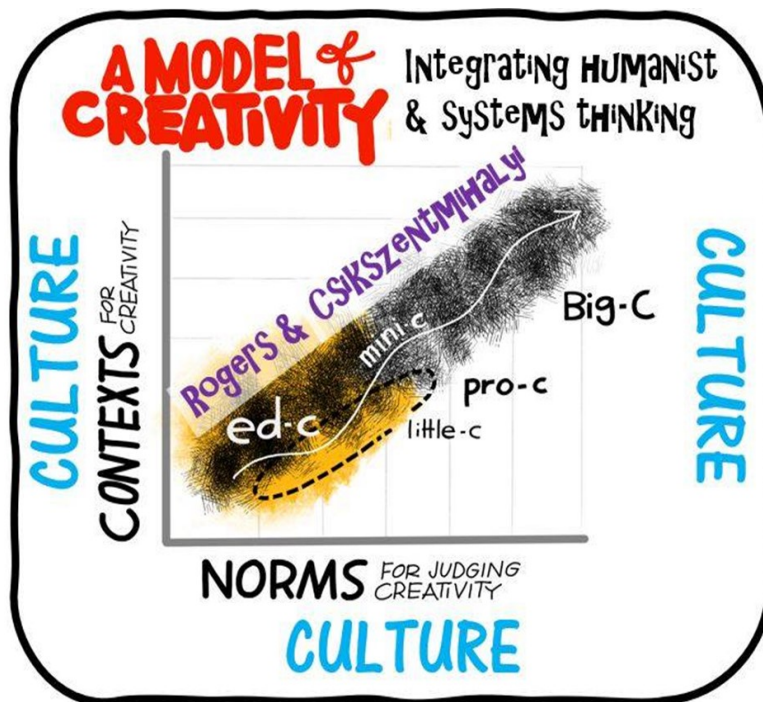
- 1 Pendleton-Jullian A. (2020) Pragmatic Imagination: A New Muscle for the White Water World Lifewide Magazine #23 p15-25 available at: <https://www.lifewideeducation.uk/magazine.html>

CREATIVITY Are we navigating between two different perspectives, philosophies and definitions?

Some of the confusion associated with creativity is resolved if we accept that we are working with two different perspectives on the phenomenon of creativity. These perspectives are captured in the thinking and writings of 1) Carl Rogers who approaches creativity from a humanist, person- and individual- centred



therapeutic perspective and 2) Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi who approaches creativity through the lens of individuals acting in systems and cultures. Kristen Bettencourt (3) neatly captures the philosophies of these thinkers and these notes are taken from her article.



Rogers (1) defines the creative process as “the emergence in action of a novel relational product, growing out of the uniqueness of the individual on the one hand, and the materials, events, people, or circumstances on the other” (1 p. 251). Rogers points out, “the very essence of the creative is its novelty, and hence we have no standard by which to judge it” (1 p.252). Rogers leaves room in the definition of creativity for the creator to define whether the expression is indeed novel, going as far to say that anyone other than the creator cannot be a valid or accurate judge.

This is in contrast to Csikszentmihalyi’s emphasis on the creative expression serving to transform the culture or the domain.

Csikszentmihalyi (2) “creativity does not happen inside people’s heads, but in the interaction between a person’s thoughts and sociocultural context. It is a systemic rather than individual phenomenon” (2 p.23). Csikszentmihalyi tells us “To be human means to be creative,” he defines creativity as “to bring into existence something genuinely new that is valued enough to be added to the culture” (2, p.25), and “any act, idea, or product that changes an existing domain, or that transforms an existing domain into a new one” (2 p.28). The word “creative” is given to expression seen as novel in relation to the surrounding culture, domain, or community, and that is novel enough to create change within that culture, domain, or community.

It seems we have to accept both of these ways of thinking about creativity and work with both constructs when trying to make sense of it. In other words we have to be able to accommodate both Rogerian and Csikszentmihalyian philosophies into our sense making in the manner crudely depicted in the attached figure.

Sources

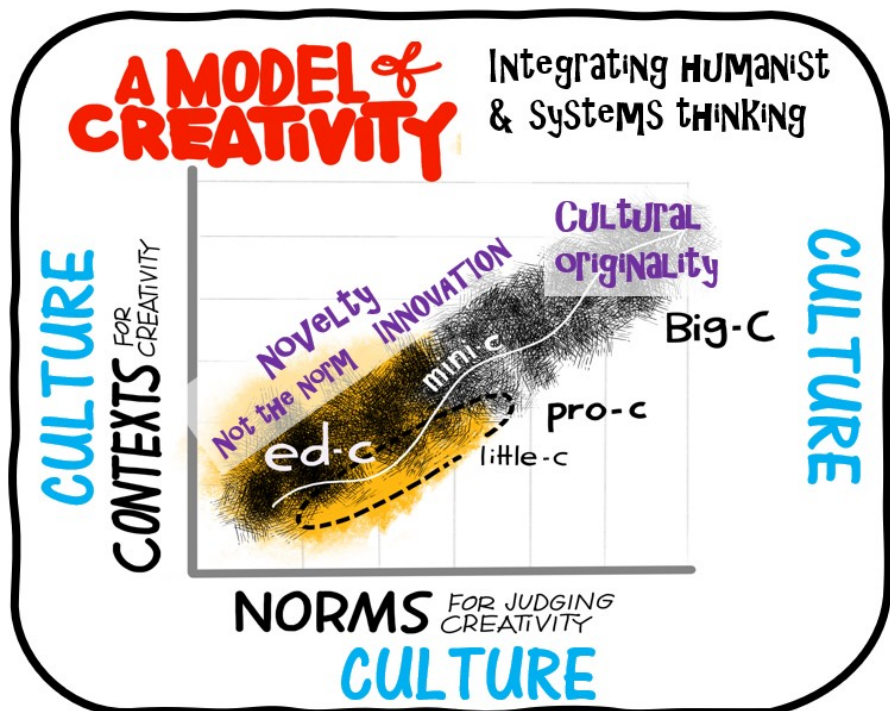
- 1) Rogers, C. (1954). Toward a Theory of Creativity. ETC: A Review of General Semantics, 11, 249-260.
- 2) Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1996). Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention. New York: Harper Collins.
- 3) Bettencourt, K (2014) Rogers and Csikszentmihalyi on Creativity The Person Centered Journal, Vol. 21, No. 1-2, 2014 [https://www.adpca.org/.../Bettencourt,%20Kristen%20\(2014\)%20](https://www.adpca.org/.../Bettencourt,%20Kristen%20(2014)%20)

CREATIVITY: Are we navigating between novelty that is new to individuals and originality that is unique to culture?

One of the challenges of creativity - perhaps the biggest challenge is to comprehend it as a phenomenon that embraces the acts of individuals that have significance and meaning only to them, and the acts of creative giants who quite literally change the way we see and experience the world at a cultural or cross-cultural level.

In my earlier post, using the 5C adaptation (1) of James Kaufman and Ron Beghetto's 4C model of creativity (2) I tried to show schematically how we can embrace the humanistic individualistic view of creativity typified by the thinking of Carl Rogers (3) and the systems cultural way of thinking typified by the thinking of Mihaly Csikszentmihaly (4).

I'd like to take this reasoning a step further in the context of the question I posed at the start about novelty and value. I think we can use the 5C framework to show that at the little-c ed-c part of the continuum we are concerned with novelty and value that are defined and understood by individuals, or individuals and their immediate contacts - like family, teachers and peers. The appropriate concepts of novelty in this context is the quality of being different, new, and unusual it is not the quality of being unique or original. As Carly Lassig (5) discovered in her grounded theory study of the creativity of adolescents, novelty is about behaving, performing and producing outside what is the accepted norm.



As we move along the continuum into the realm of expertise, for example in a work domain, novelty is often seen in the context of product innovation - the production of useful products that are, in some way, different to what existed before. Mostly these are incremental changes to things that already exists but sometimes they are original to a market. But novelty in the domain of expertise is also relevant to the production of new practices, performances, processes - for example bringing about change in an organisation. Again there are going to instances of true originality that are recognised in an organisation, environment or domain. The most creative novel acts (Big-c) result in changes that affect one or more cultural domains and they are widely recognised for their originality.

Using this sort of reasoning I believe, we can make better sense of creativity as a phenomenon by embracing this continuum of possibility. I also believe that novelty (in some form) and new value are part and parcel of the phenomenon of creativity but its presence is the result of individuals and groups of individuals interacting with their environment ie its an interactional and ecological phenomenon so one might argue these are equally important ideas to embrace in any concept of creativity.

Sources

- 1 Jackson, N.J. and Lassig, C. (2020) Exploring and Extending the 4C Model of Creativity: Recognising the value of an ed-c contextual domain. Creative Academic Magazine CAM15 <https://www.creativeacademic.uk/magazine.html>
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- 3) Rogers, C. (1954). Toward a Theory of Creativity. ETC: A Review of General Semantics, 11, 249-260.
- 4) Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1996). Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention. New York: Harper Collins.
- 5) Lassig, C. J. (2012) Perceiving and pursuing novelty : a grounded theory of adolescent creativity. PhD thesis, Queensland University of Technology. Available at: <https://eprints.qut.edu.au/50661/>

Who Values Creativity? Using the 5c framework as a mapping tool

This has been an interesting discussion and the concept of who is the valuer where creativity is concerned, has been the dominant theme. What has emerged is a general agreement that creators themselves are first and foremost their own judges of value and are presumably motivated to engage in creative thinking and practices by the possibility and potential of creating something of value to themselves or others. But we live in a social-cultural economic world and other people have views on whether a practice, performance or product has value and it's their views that count as to whether something has value in a social-cultural or commercial sense. In the latter part of the discussion we saw that value was multidimensional and it is therefore not surprising that we value 'things' differently according to the weight we accord the different dimensions. For me, the really interesting aspect of this is how we learn to value what we value through a lifetime of exposure to the norms of our culture, noting that it is only by pursuing things which lie outside the norms that we can creatively achieve. I find this a fascinating part of the conundrum of creativity and perhaps what we value and our judgement of it in what we do is an part of our unique creativity.

We can use the 5C framework (1) we developed from the 4C framework (2) to map the contexts for creating new value and the location of norms for judging the value of creative achievements. By this I mean a tangible expression or manifestation of someone's creativity (thinking and actions) in the formation of something new (practice, performance or product). To keep it simple the following narrative focuses only on individuals rather than collaborations or group enterprises.

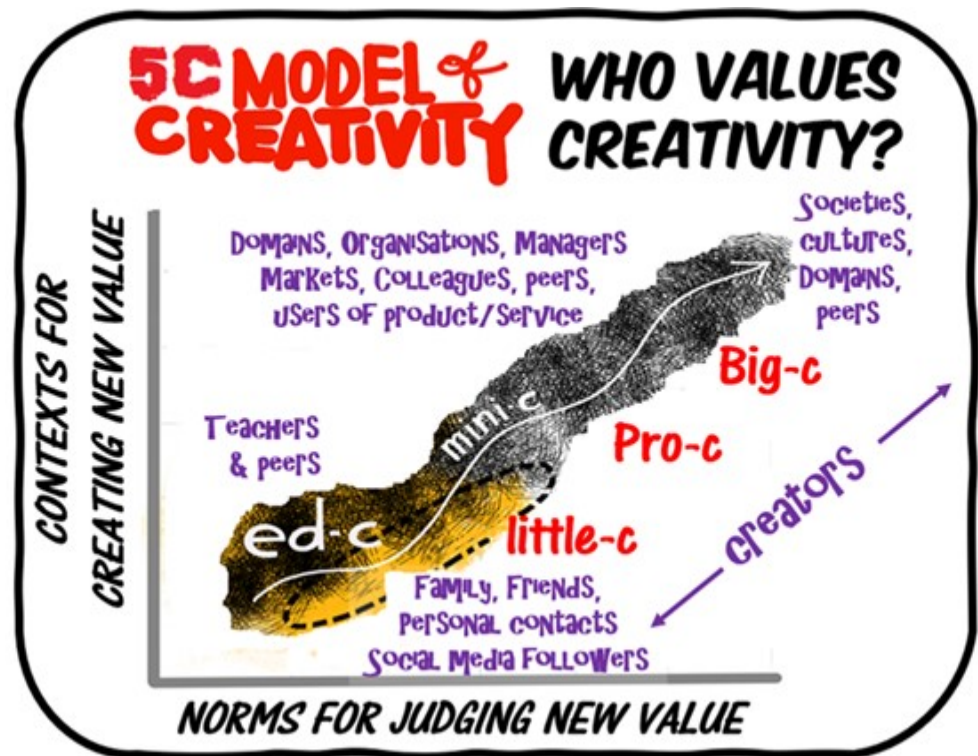
In all domains of the 5C framework creators are engaged in thinking and practices that have the potential to create novelty and new value. As Carl Rogers' humanistic perspective on creativity tells us (3), first and foremost it is the creators themselves who value their creative achievement. Only they can understand why and how the phenomenon emerged in the circumstances of their life and only they can experience the formation of a

creative achievement. The value they ascribe to an achievement might be very different to the value that others ascribe.

In the little-c domain individuals pursue novelty and create new value in the circumstances of their everyday life. Their creative achievements might only be known and valued by themselves or by the people who their achievements directly affect - for example a mum preparing a

novel meal (not the norm) for her family. But such achievements might be broadcast more widely and appreciated by others - people who use Instagram, Twitter or Facebook for example have friends/followers who might be interested in their creative achievement. In such an environment some of these little-c achievements have the potential to 'go viral' to become part of popular culture, even if its only for a short period of time. It can be argued that the advent of social media enables more people to be exposed to individuals' little-c creative achievements, and therefore implicated in their valuation, than at any time in our history.

In the educational domain (ed-c) judgements on the value of an individual's achievement are usually made by a teacher against a set of pre-determined criteria but may also include external examiners if performance is in the context of an examination. As Carly indicates in her post based on her own research (4) - how a learner values their creative achievement may be different to what a teacher values. Teachers have an important role to play in sharing their judgements of value through verbal or written feedback during the production of an achievement - whether a performance or artefact. Much of this feedback is informal and spontaneous as a teacher interacts with her students, but some of the feedback might be more formal and deliberative as a teacher formally evaluates and judges a piece of work and provides written feedback. Chrissi's post on her interactions with her tutor on a creative writing course, show values can be shared, communicated and progressively understood through this interactive relationship. Peers also may be exposed to an individual's achievement and their teacher's comments and they also form opinions on value. In fact, this context for being exposed to the achievements of others is the way in which we come to understand the norms of our environment and it prepares us for learning what this means in the domains in which we will work.



As we move into domains of expertise, more people are involved in decisions as to whether a creative achievement is of value. Every context is different, if we imagine the development of a new innovative product it might include peers in a design team, managers, sales reps, managers of retail outlets and the buyers and users of the product - the customers. In an entrepreneurial environment like a start-up the valuation of a new product or service it might also involve investors. In the commercial world factors other than creativity come into play in the valuation of a novel product. In the academic world where the development of new knowledge and ideas is the product of creative achievement - it is experts in the discipline who act as peer reviewers, journal editors or who sit in the committees of grant awarding bodies who judge value. If we imagine someone in the performing arts field it might include other performers, a performance director and production teams, audiences and professional critics. Of course, amongst this diverse group of actors some voices will be more influential than others in determining value and persuading others with their opinions.

The Big-C level is an extraordinary achievement in any field in which the value of what is created is widely acknowledged. The valuing of such achievements is usually led by experts in the field and promoted through awards, media and education. One of the features of Big-C creative achievements is their enduring character. They are often the foundational building blocks for culture in a domain and so are valued in a historical sense for advancing some aspect of the domain.

Perhaps one of the most interesting perspectives to emerge from the discussion related to where access to new ideas or products are restricted for commercial, political or other reasons, so that value can only be appreciated by those with the power to control the flow of information.

Sources

- 1) Jackson, N.J. and Lassig, C. (2020) Exploring and Extending the 4C Model of Creativity: Recognising the value of an ed-c contextual domain. Creative Academic Magazine CAM15 <https://www.creativeacademic.uk/magazine.html>
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