



Chapter 003, Methods in Creativity Research: Multiple Approaches, Multiple Levels

Michael D. Mumford

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NOTE: This is a single chapter excerpted from the book *Handbook of Organizational Creativity*, made available for individual purchase. Additional chapters, as well as the entire book, may be purchased separately.

This chapter covers the methods employed in studies of creativity and innovation. Creative products represent the production of viable, original solutions to problems that call for, or permit, creativity. When creativity is viewed as a product, albeit an intellectual one, arising in response to certain types of problems, the key methodological concern in studies of creativity becomes apparent. Of these characteristics of creative problems, the concept of ill definition has, perhaps, received the most attention. For ill-defined problems, no one solution will suffice. Rather multiple different, albeit potentially viable, solutions may be generated. In fact, recognition of this point led to the development of divergent thinking tests. Ill-definition, however, is not simply a matter of multiple potential, equally viable, solutions being possible. Ill-defined problems allow the problem to be construed, or understood, in different ways. Thus, an organizational purchase problem may be understood in terms of enhancing financial viability, increasing absorptive capacity, or amortizing risks. These alternative ways of framing, or approaching, the problem allow for the generation of multiple potential responses. Similarly, exactly what constitutes a viable solution may not be apparent.

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