

# Learning and collective creativity:

## Activity-theoretical and sociocultural studies

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Creativity is one of the 'hot topics' in educational research; activity theory and sociocultural/cultural-historical theory some of the 'hot' perspectives. This book is the only book currently available that brings together theories of human activity and studies of human creativity. The book grounds its interest in a variety of settings where people are learning and, specifically, learning to be creative. Creativity is defined, not so much as 'little c' creativity but as an integral aspect of learning that enables and promotes the exercise of learners' agency.

In social sciences the topics of creativity and learning have been widely explored. The relation between collective creativity and learning is however still poorly understood. Creativity has been primarily conceptualized as the quality of an innovative individual or of a novel outcome. In both cases it consists in a mental property, which disregards collective processes of creation, the learning involved in those processes and their foundational role in cultivating creative minds as well as in producing creative outcomes of societal relevance. Activity theory and socio-cultural studies can contribute to a novel conceptualization of creativity and learning in this direction by revitalizing the Vygotskian tradition on art and imagination.

Those who have gone beyond the individualist paradigm of creativity have not focused on the relation between collective creativity and learning. On the other hand predominant lines of research on learning do not include creativity as central elements of their research agenda. Bringing together collective creativity and learning opens up a dialogue between two field of research which have remained separate so far.

The book brings together leading representatives of activity-theoretically and socio-culturally oriented researchers around the world, to discuss creativity as a collective endeavor strongly related to learning to face the societal challenges of our world. As history shows, major accomplishments in arts and technological innovations have primarily served to see the world differently and to identify new learning perspectives for the future which were seldom limited to individual action or isolated activities.

### Section 2: Redefining artistic production and innovation

**6. INTERLINKING INDIVIDUAL AND INSTITUTIONAL AGENCY: DEVELOPING THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND CREATIVE SPACE IN HIGHER MUSIC EDUCATION AND PERFORMANCE**  
Karin Johansson, *Lund University, Sweden*

**7. CREATIVE ENCOUNTER AND THE EXTRAORDINARY ACT OF MEETING OF NEED AND OBJECT**  
Reijo Miettinen, *University of Helsinki, Finland*

**8. CREATIVITY AND INTENTIONALITY: JEAN-PAUL SARTRE AND SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR BECOMING WRITERS**  
Annalisa Sannino, *University of Helsinki, Finland*

**9. SHARED UNDERSTANDINGS AND INNOVATION THROUGH THE CREATIVE METAPHORICAL METHOD OF LEGO SERIOUS PLAY**  
Klaus-Peter Schulz, *Chemnitz University of Technology, Germany*

### Section 3: Collective creativity as means to face societal challenges

**10. RESEARCHING TECHNOLOGIES FOR ENHANCING COLLECTIVE CREATIVITY IN INTERAGENCY WORKING**  
Harry Daniels and Peter Johnson, *University of Bath, UK*

**11. PROFESSIONAL CREATIVITY: TOWARDS A COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY OF TEACHING**  
Viv Ellis, *Brunel University, UK*

**12. COLLECTIVE CONCEPT FORMATION AS CREATION OF NEW WORLDS AT WORK**  
Yrjö Engeström, *University of Helsinki, Finland*

**13. SOCIAL CREATIVITY AND CULTURES OF PARTICIPATION**  
Gerhard Fischer, *University of Colorado, Boulder, USA*

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Annalisa Sannino, *University of Helsinki, Finland* & Viv Ellis, *Brunel University, UK*

### Section 1: Creative collective endeavors as path-breakers of new learning

### **2. RESOURCEFUL LEADERSHIP: COLLECTIVE CREATIVITY IN CHANGING CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

Anne Edwards, *University of Oxford, UK*

### **3. INTERAGENCY, COLLECTIVE CREATIVITY, AND ACADEMIC KNOWLEDGE PRACTICES**

Kai Hakkarainen (with Kaisa Hytönen, Jenna Tuomainen, & Pirita Seitamaa-Hakkarainen), *University of Turku and University of Helsinki, Finland*

### **4. CONCEPT FORMATION IN PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES: FRAGMENTS OF KNOWLEDGE OR COHERENT CONCEPTUAL STRUCTURES**

Sten Ludvigsen, *InterMedia, University of Oslo, Norway*

### **5. FOSTERING THE AGENCY OF CHILDREN: A CHALLENGE TO DIVISION OF LABOR IN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH**

Katsuhiro Yamazumi, *Kansai University, Japan*