From Divergent Thought to Eminence: Integrating Creativity Research

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The study of creativity has come a long way in the last hundred years. Researchers have moved beyond the view held in ancient Greece and the Middle Ages that creativity was divinely inspired to empirically based description of creativity. Research has typically focused on four general categories: creative people, creative products, the creative process, and creative environments. Despite these developments there are still unresolved issues. While some researchers argue that creative products and the people who created them get at the essence of creativity most effectively, others suggest that understanding more common forms of creativity that affect people on a daily basis are more important. How to measure creative potential is also a problem for creativity research. Some argue that it is erroneous to make any suggestion of potential in the absence of a product while others believe understanding potential is an important goal of creativity research.

The current project first describes the main methods used to study creativity. It then outlines problems in creativity research. The concept of attrition, the idea that every project develops to a different level of completion and varies in terms of how broad an audience it reaches and how long it lasts, is introduced as a way to help organize current research and address these problems. A new dynamic system is described to help organize existing and future research. This system allows researchers to describe creative potential in the absence of a product. Empirically based methods to study creative as an interactive process and understand how characteristics interact and affect one another in a dynamic process are also discussed. Finally, strategies to overcome obstacles to more intensive and comprehensive research are provided.