

# Book Review: Educating for Creativity Within Higher Education: Integration of Research into Media Practice

McIntyre, P., J. Fulton, E. Paton, S. Kerrigan and M. Meany (2018), *Educating for Creativity Within Higher Education: Integration of Research into Media Practice*, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan

Creativity has become a central theme in discussions about higher education, employability and the future of work. In *Educating for Creativity within Higher Education*, McIntyre *et al.* (2018) examine how creativity can be built into university teaching, especially in media and creative practice courses. Rather than just talking about creativity as a vague or abstract idea, the authors try to show how research on creativity can be used in every day teaching and curriculum design. This book synthesises research and theories of creativity, examining them through the lenses of teaching and media practises. The authors start by situating creativity within wider changes in society and the economy that are affecting higher education and the creative industries. Shifts driven by digitalisation, globalisation and more unstable job markets have changed what types of careers graduates are going into (McIntyre *et al.*, 2018). Because of this, creativity is not just seen as something artistic, but more like a key skill that helps people deal with complex and uncertain careers. This links with other research that suggests creativity is becoming more important across lots of different sectors (Craft, 2001; Harris, 2016).

One of the main strengths of the book is how it challenges common myths about creativity. Traditionally, creativity has been seen as something linked to individual genius or talent. However, McIntyre *et al.* argue that creativity is shaped by social and cultural contexts rather than solely by the individual (McIntyre *et al.*, 2018). This

reflects a wider shift in how creativity is understood, moving away from individual explanations to more system-based ones.

The book draws a lot on Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's systems model of creativity, which describes creativity as coming from interactions between the individual, the domain (area of knowledge) and the social field that judges or values creative work (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). Using this, the authors argue that creativity should be seen as a process rather than a fixed trait. This idea forms the basis of their main teaching model, called Systems Centred Learning (SCL).

The SCL model tries to combine theory and practice instead of keeping them separate. Students go through cycles of creating work and then reflecting on it. This means they are not only producing creative outputs but also thinking about how and why they created them (McIntyre *et al.*, 2018). The case studies from media production courses at the University of Newcastle help show how this works in real life, although some of the examples felt a bit repetitive at times.

This link between theory and actual teaching practice is probably the most useful part of the book. A lot of writing about creativity in education stays quite abstract, but here the authors give real-world examples of how it can be applied. This makes it easier to understand how creativity research can shape teaching, rather than just being something theoretical.

That said, the focus on media production courses does limit how widely the ideas can be applied. Even though the authors suggest the SCL model could work in other subjects, most of the examples are from creative disciplines. Because of this, people in other fields might find it harder to directly use the model without adapting it quite a bit.

Even with this limitation, the book still adds something important to wider debates about creativity in education. Writers such as Craft (2001) and Harris (2016) have already argued that creativity should be part of all learning, not just arts subjects. McIntyre *et al.* build on this by offering a more structured way of putting this into practice, even if it is not perfect.

Another interesting part of the book is the discussion of creative labour. Work in media and cultural industries is often unstable, with freelance work and short-term contracts being common (Deuze, 2007; Hesmondhalgh, 2007). The authors acknowledge this and suggest that students need more than just technical skills – they also need to understand the systems they will be working in. This part felt particularly relevant, although it could have been explored in more depth to better situate these issues within broader theories of creative labour and strengthen the book’s argument about preparing students for precarious work environments.

For readers of *Reinvention*, the book is especially relevant because of its focus on linking research and practice. Nowadays, undergraduate students are often encouraged to reflect on how theory is translated into real-world practice. The SCL model is a good example of how this might work in teaching, even if it is not universally applicable.

Overall, *Educating for Creativity within Higher Education* gives a thoughtful look at how creativity research can inform teaching. While the book mainly focuses on media practice, it raises bigger questions about how universities should support creative thinking in a fast-changing world. By highlighting the social and systemic nature of creativity, the authors contribute to ongoing discussions about what higher education should be doing, although some parts feel slightly over-explained.

Grace Fisher, University of Warwick

## References

Craft, A. (2001), *Creativity in Education*, London: Continuum

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1997), *Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention*, New York: HarperCollins

Deuze, M. (2007), *Media Work*, Cambridge: Polity Press

Harris, A. (2016), *Creativity and Education*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

Hesmondhalgh, D. (2007), *The Cultural Industries*, London: Sage

McIntyre, P., J. Fulton, E. Paton, S. Kerrigan and M. Meany (2018), *Educating for Creativity Within Higher Education: Integration of Research into Media Practice*, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan

Grace Fisher

University of Warwick

---

To cite this paper please use the following details: McIntyre, (2026), 'Book Review: Educating for Creativity Within Higher Education: Integration of Research into Media Practice', *Reinvention: an International Journal of Undergraduate Research*, Volume 19, Issue 1, <https://reinventionjournal.org/index.php/reinvention/>. Date accessed [insert date]. If you cite this article or use it in any teaching or other related activities, please let us know by emailing us at [Reinventionjournal@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:Reinventionjournal@warwick.ac.uk).

ISSN 1755-7429 © 2026, contact [reinventionjournal@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:reinventionjournal@warwick.ac.uk). Published by the Institute for Advanced Teaching and Learning, University of Warwick. This is an open access article under the CC-BY licence (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)