CREATIVITY IN CONTEXT:

From the Person to the Planet

Teresa Amabile · ESM · Global Creativity and Innovation Indexes

Workshop 2 of 2

WHERE WE LEFT OFF

- High-quality measurement = validity + reliability + cross-cultural equity + feasibility.
- Four quadrants: I · IT · WE · ITS.
- Tools so far: self-beliefs, TTCT, RAT, CAQ, Runco, ESM/EMA, CAT, SOQ.
- Today: how context shapes creativity, and how we measure it at scale.



TODAY

THEORY

Amabile's componential theory and the work environment.

LIVE ESM

Four short pings on ourselves.

INDEXES

GII and GCI, and their limits.

DEBRIEF

What our data shows, and what it can't.

ESM BRIEFING

1. You are both participants and researchers.
2. Four short pings, same questions, about 60 seconds.
3. Anonymous and voluntary. Your code: first two letters of a pet's name + birth month.
4. Notice your experience. Don't try to be creative on purpose.

The room opens each ping for you.



Scan · the room already knows which ping this is

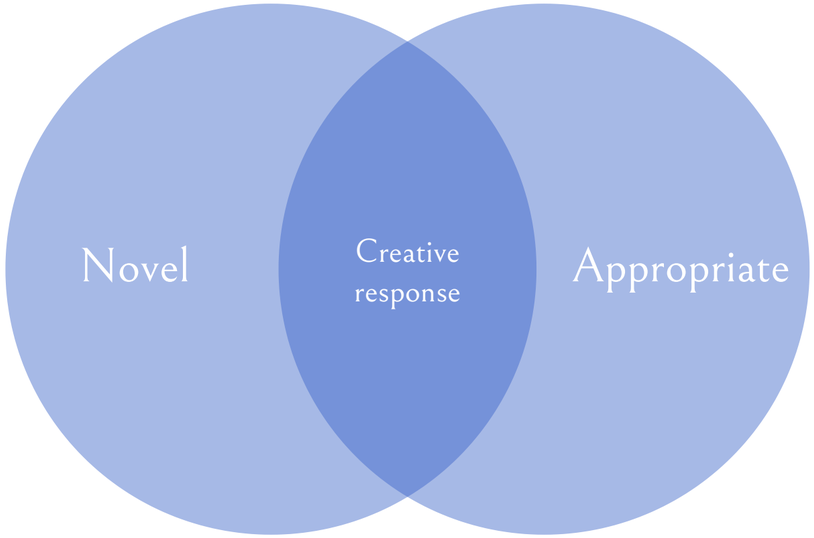
Ping 1

0:05 · 90-second window

AMABILE I

TERESA AMABILE

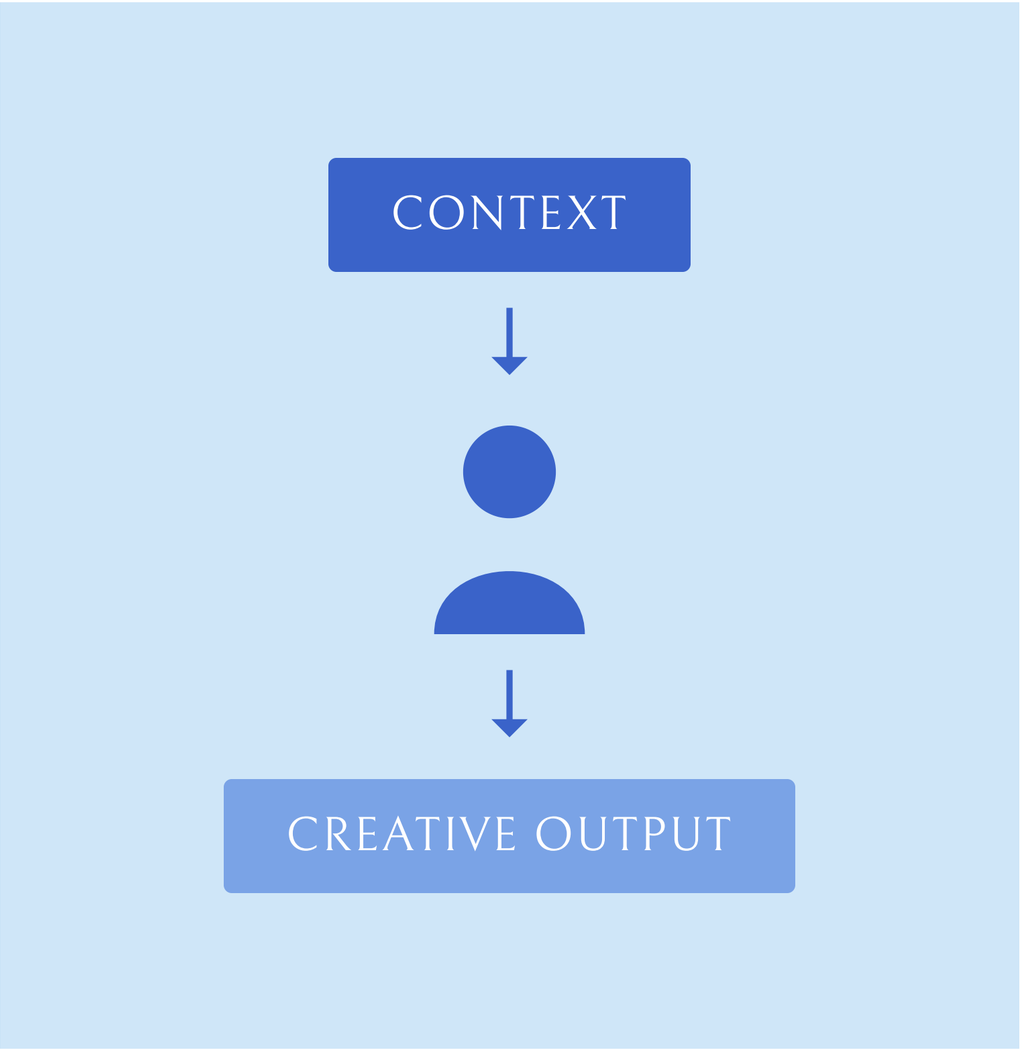
- Social psychologist, Professor Emerita at Harvard Business School.
- Founded the social psychology of creativity (1979 on); created CAT; co-developed KEYS.
- Creative = novel and appropriate to a heuristic task. Creativity is the idea; innovation is its implementation (1988).



THE BIG CLAIM

CONTEXT CAN CHANGE CREATIVITY

- Before Amabile, creativity was treated as a trait or an ability.
- The social environment can raise or lower creativity in the same person.
- Expecting evaluation or reward reduced artistic and writing creativity (1979, 1985).



AMABILE, 1983 · 1996

THE COMPONENTIAL THEORY

Three components inside the person, one outside. Creativity is highest where they overlap.

Domain-relevant skills

Knowledge, technique, talent: the “performance space”. Monday: content validity.

Creativity-relevant processes

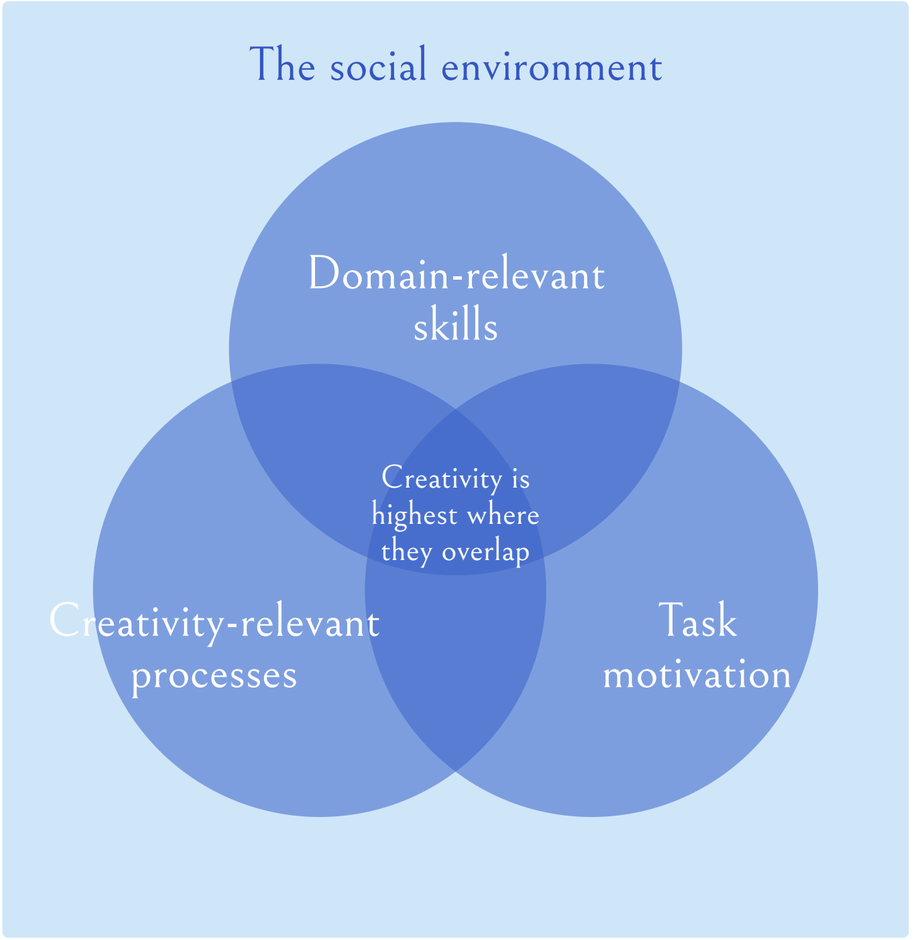
Flexible thinking, tolerance of ambiguity, persistence. Trainable. Monday: TTCT, RAT.

Task motivation

Intrinsic motivation principle. Controlling rewards undermine; enabling ones help (synergy, 1993).

Social environment

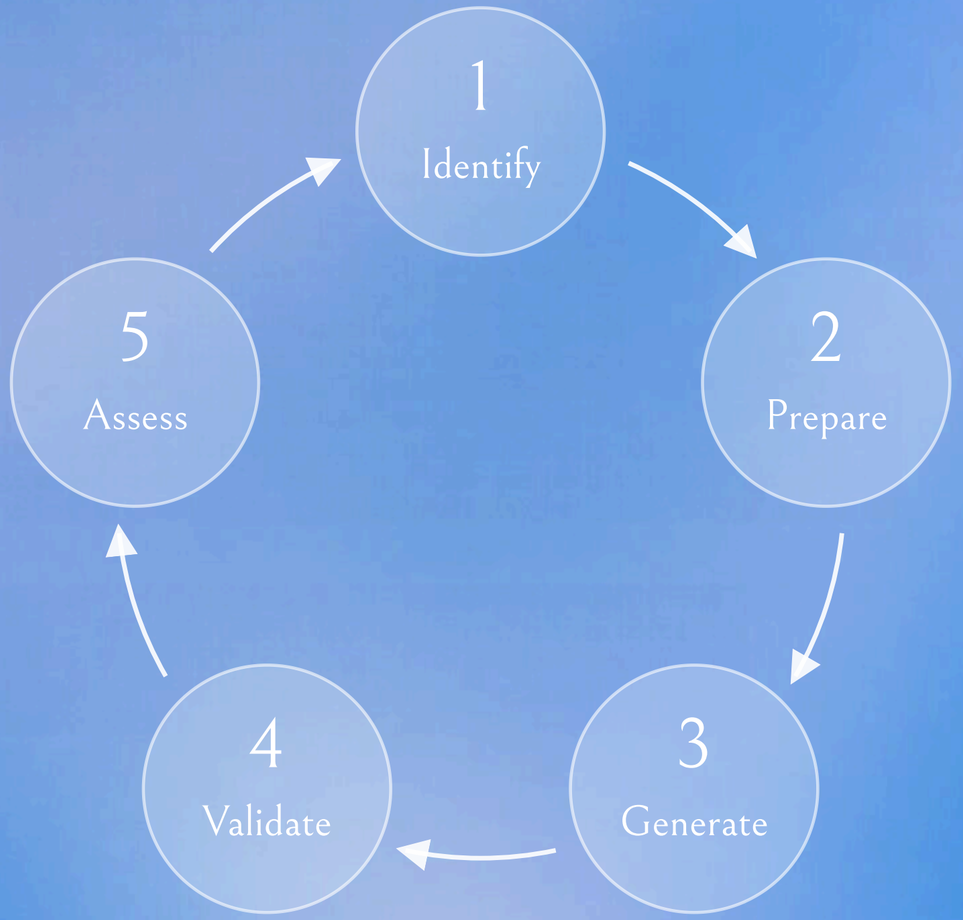
Culture, leaders, peers, resources, time. Acts through motivation. The easiest to change.



THE CREATIVE PROCESS

1. Problem or task identification
2. Preparation
3. Response generation
4. Response validation
5. Outcome assessment: loops back

Amabile & Pratt (2016) make it dynamic: progress and meaning feed motivation. A system, not a trait list.



PREVIEW OF MY POINT OF VIEW

MAPPING TO THE QUADRANTS

Amabile's theory sits across three quadrants. The indexes sit in the fourth.

I

SUBJECTIVE

Task motivation

IT

OBJECTIVE

Skills and processes

WE

INTERSUBJECTIVE

Social environment

ITS

INTEROBJECTIVE

Indexes (later)

ACTIVITY A · 15 MIN · PAIRS

MAP THE COMPONENTS

- Pick a real creative project.
- Fill in the four boxes.
- Which component is weakest? What single change in the environment would help most?
- Share one insight.

SKILLS

What do you know and can do?

PROCESSES

How do you work and think?

MOTIVATION

Why are you doing it?

ENVIRONMENT

Who and what is around it?



Scan · the room already knows which ping this is

Ping 2

0:45 · 90-second window

BREAK

TEN MINUTES

0:55 – 1:05

AMABILE II · MEASURING THE WORK ENVIRONMENT

KEYS

- Amabile et al. (1996): a validated scale of the perceived environment for creativity.
- Six stimulants, two obstacles.
- Compare the SOQ from Monday: Freedom, Trust and Openness, Idea Time.

Stimulants

Organizational encouragement

Supervisory encouragement

Work-group support

Freedom

Sufficient resources

Challenging work

Obstacles

Organizational impediments

Workload pressure

INNER WORK LIFE

PROGRESS AND PRESSURE

THE PROGRESS PRINCIPLE

Diaries of knowledge workers (Amabile & Kramer, 2011): making progress in meaningful work lifted inner work life the most. Good mood one day predicted creative thinking that day and the next (2005). A diary study is close kin to ESM.

UNDER THE GUN

High time-pressure days meant less creative thinking, with a hangover after (2002). People felt more creative under pressure but weren't rated so: I and IT diverge, so measure both.



Scan · the room already knows which ping this is

Ping 3

1:20 · 90-second window

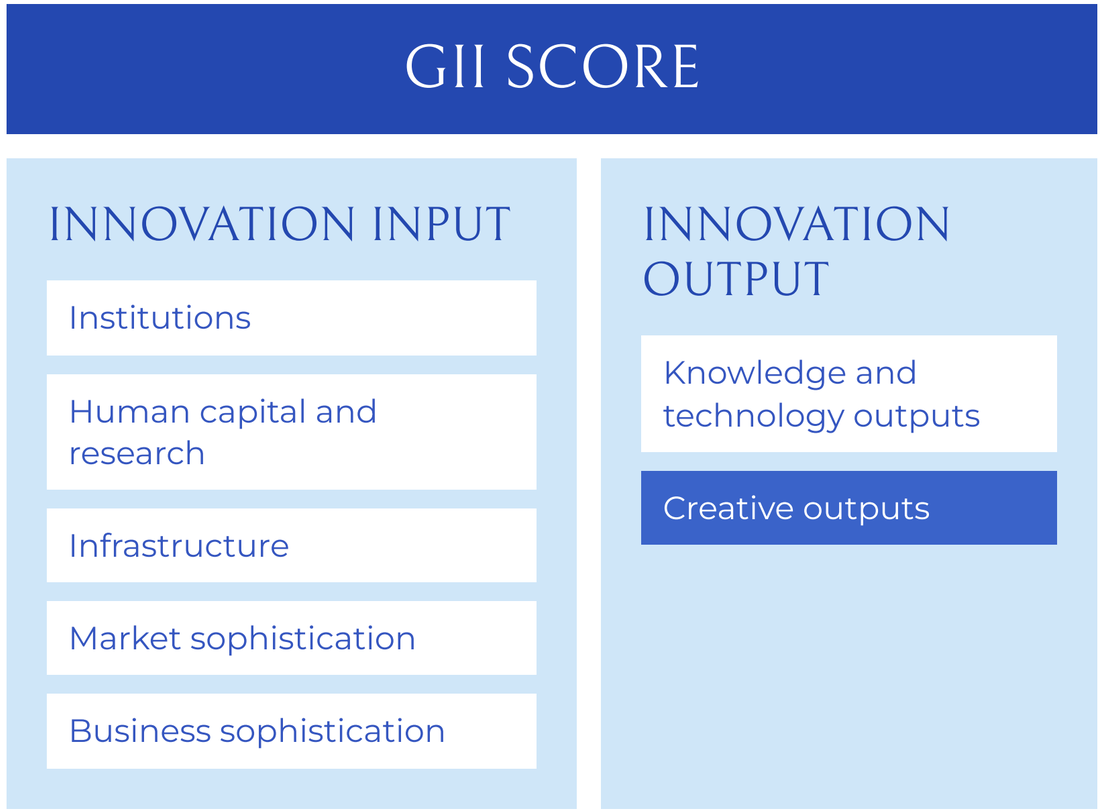
DISCUSSION

1. Where has an environment helped or blocked your creativity?
2. Which KEYS scale would you measure in your own setting?
3. How would you measure it without one person’s mood that day biasing it?

ZOOMING OUT · ITS

GLOBAL INNOVATION INDEX

- If environments shape creativity, can we measure them across countries?
- WIPO, annual. GII 2026: 139 economies, about 80 indicators.
- Score = average of an input and an output sub-index.



GII 2026

HEADLINE RESULTS

- No new economy in the top 15; Europe holds 14 of the top 25.
- UAE enters the top 25 (25th, up from 30th).
- 21 economies innovate above their development level, led by India and Viet Nam.

1	Switzerland 1st for a 16th year in a row
2	Sweden
3	United States
4	Republic of Korea
5	Singapore

FLORIDA, MELLANDER & KING, 2015 · THE “3 TS”

GII VS GLOBAL CREATIVITY INDEX

	GLOBAL INNOVATION INDEX	GLOBAL CREATIVITY INDEX
PURPOSE	Innovation capability and output	Conditions that attract and use creative talent
FOCUS	Institutions, R&D, patents, creative outputs	Technology, Talent, Tolerance
CADENCE	Annual	2015, not updated on a cycle
WEAKNESS	Both national-scale, composite and mostly objective data	

ARE INDEXES VALID MEASURES?

CONSTRUCT

Is a patent count creativity? Does “tolerance” capture inclusion?

ECOLOGICAL

National averages hide cities, clusters, communities.

EQUITY

Formal, IP-protectable creativity counts. Everyday creativity is invisible.

RELIABILITY

Rank changes can be methodology as much as real change.

WEIGHTING

Composites need sensitivity analysis (Nardo et al., 2008).

CREATIVE CLASS

A critique of the thesis: Peck (2005).

10 MIN · GROUPS OF 3–4

SMALL-GROUP TASK

1. Choose one country.
2. Where is it on the GII? What would Amabile say about its environment?
3. What can the index see, and what can it not?
4. Report one blind spot.

What can the index see?
What can it not see?



Scan · the room already knows which ping this is

Ping 4

1:50 · 90-second window

ACTIVITY B

ESM DEBRIEF

Open the live debrief in the ping room.

a) How did mood, energy and creative engagement change across the pings? (line chart)

b) Was engagement higher when challenge and skill were both high (flow)?

c) Was it higher when people felt free to share unusual ideas?

d) Did the activity matter (listening, discussing, making)?

Expect noise: small n, four pings. Compare change within people with differences between them.



Live debrief

WHAT OUR ESM CAN AND CANNOT TELL US

STRENGTHS

In the moment. Less recall bias. Variation within people.

LIMITS

Reactivity. Self-report only. Tiny sample. A classroom isn’t everyday life.

BETTER

Week-long signals in natural settings.

TRIANGULATE

Pair it with CAT-rated products or sensor data.

MY POINT OF VIEW

CREATIVITY IS MEASURED BEST IN LAYERS

Person, situation and society each tell part of the story. Pair an ITS index with WE climate and I experience data.

The quadrants are lenses, not silos.

I

SUBJECTIVE

Self-beliefs

ESM mood and motivation

IT

OBJECTIVE

TTCT, RAT, CAQ

Observed behavior

WE

INTERSUBJECTIVE

CAT, KEYS, SOQ

ITS

INTEROBJECTIVE

GII, GCI

TAKEAWAYS

NEXT STEPS

- Creativity = skills + processes + motivation, in an environment that helps or harms.
- Meaningful progress beats pressure.
- Indexes are maps: ask what they miss.
- 7-day ESM in the ping room (5 pings a day) + 600-word reflection.
- Read: Amabile & Pratt (2016); Hennessey & Amabile (2010).

Questions?

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