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Margaret Botticchio
University of Wollongong

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CREATIVITY UNDER THE GLASS CEILING: A STUDY USING A CONTEXTUAL
THEORY OF CREATIVITY AS A FRAMEWORK

Margaret Botticchio

Dip Ed. (Art), M. Ed.

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of

Doctor of Education

in the Faculty of Education in the University of Wollongong

February 2006

CERTIFICATION

I, Margaret R. Botticchio, declare that this thesis, submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Education, in the Faculty of Education, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

M.R. Botticchio
28 February, 2006

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of a study of creativity under the glass ceiling was to make a contribution to a viable theory of creativity. Six case studies were constructed in which each of six women talked about an individual experience of creative work in a distinct domain. These data were not fully included in the early development of a contextual theory of creativity.

The initial proposal of a contextual theory of creativity was developed by asking questions of visibly creative people. Because women were not found in sufficient numbers at the top of many domains or professions, these important questions were not asked of them. When women's data appeared in the research they were not valued. In this way contextual theory failed to show a complete understanding of creativity phenomena and was not tested on diverse populations.

The six stories came from interviews with women who demonstrated a serious commitment to their work in different domains. The interviews and the analysis were structured on the contextual framework developed by Csikszentmihalyi and Gardner. The cases challenged the contextual view of creativity by using the contextual framework with women and by trying to determine whether the contextual theory could accommodate these and other different experiences of creativity. Analysis of the case studies showed that the women's experience of creativity was captured and explained by the contextual framework. The new dimensions of creativity discovered by this research extend the theory, enabling greater flexibility in further testing on other populations and situations. This study of creativity under the glass ceiling offers support for a social theory of creativity that is inclusive of varied experiences of creative enterprise. The theory, made inclusive by this process, provides a more comprehensive understanding of creative phenomena.

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