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The “Aha!” Moment: Library Support for the Cognitive Process of Creativity

Carla-Mae Crookendale

Virginia Commonwealth University, cmcrookendale@vcu.edu

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The "Aha!" Moment: Library Support for the Cognitive Process of Creativity

Carla-Mae Crookendale, Visual Arts Librarian

The Challenge:

Design and lead a session on creativity for a multi-disciplinary audience as part of *Advance Your Research*, a day of drop-in workshops for graduate students and advanced researchers.

The Solution:

Research on creativity and cognitive psychology suggests that creation is a process that can be managed, and one that is necessary for all disciplines. The session was an introduction that linked this concept to specific resources and services VCU Libraries provides, focusing on those that would be most helpful at each stage in the process. The session was initially done as an in-person presentation, then repeated as a webinar.

The Pitch:

"Your "Aha!" Moment: Learn about library resources that will help you think creatively and convert your research into new ideas."

The Audience:

Students in a range of fields signed up to attend, including Business, Economics, English, Family Medicine, Health, Information Systems, Microbiology, Neuropsychiatry, Operations Research, Preventative Psychiatry, Psychology, and Physical Therapy.

Takeaways:

- A more inclusive definition of creativity.
- An opportunity to promote library resources in a different context.
- Framing the library as partner in the creative process.
- Creativity and innovation are of interest to people in many disciplines.

Feedback:

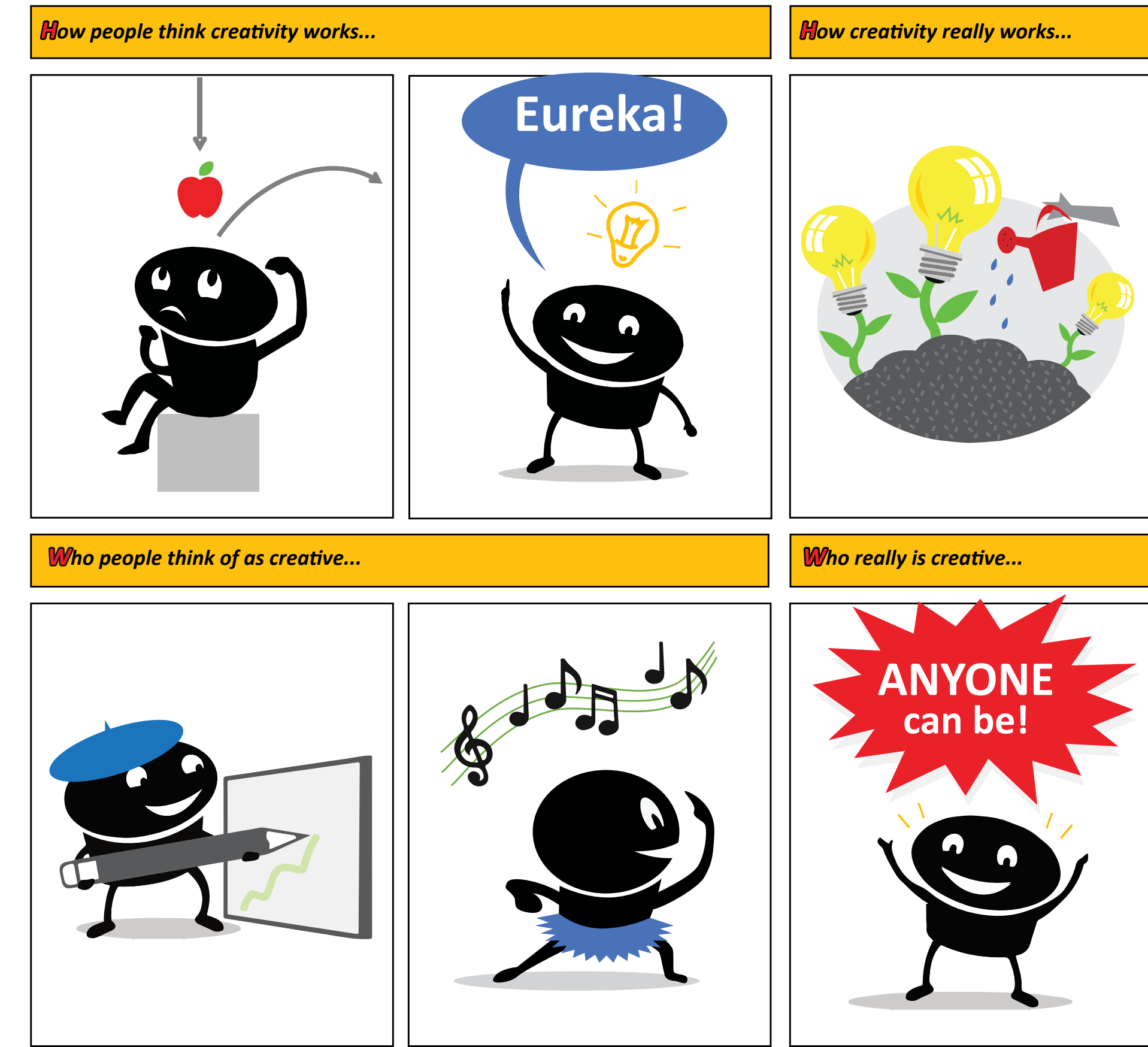
What did you learn today that will help you be creative in the future?

Creativity is a process, not a moment.

Creativity is a process that takes ample time and resources. You can't force it, but you can use what you have (and the resources of the library) to make the process easier.

Being creative does not only consist of artistic abilities. It is a process and can lead to many innovative epiphanies.

I didn't know about all the incredible resources in the library!



Creativity is
"the ability to make new things
or think of new ideas"

Merriam-Webster.com

The Creative Process + VCU Libraries

For details on specific resources, go to <http://guides.library.vcu.edu/creativity>

Preparation:

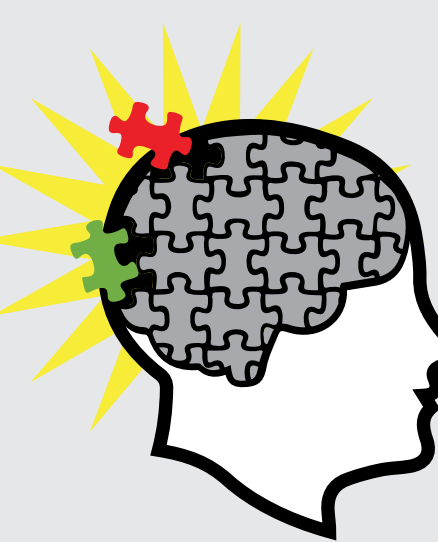
Focused attention, building a knowledge base

- Books on creativity and leveraging the creative process.
- Books, journals, databases and research guides for information gathering.
- Study spaces for collaboration.
- Study spaces to focus.
- Librarians for brainstorming and research assistance.
- Events and programming to learn and be inspired.

Incubation:

Let go and absorb

- Books, movies, music & video games for fun.
- Special Collections: book arts & comics.
- Art Browsery: visually inspiring books.
- Spaces to relax, alone or with friends e.g. coffee shop & media viewing room.



Illumination:

Insight—The "Aha!" Moment

Your brain makes connections after Preparation and Incubation—the library can't help you here!

Verification:

Share ideas and make them real

- Books, journals, databases and research guides for data.
- Media production equipment and software for creation.
- Tutorial training software for developing execution skills e.g. Digital Tutors.
- Spaces for producing and sharing projects.
- Books on pitching ideas and presentation skills.