



HER RESOURCES

A collection of resources designed to provide practical tools for women undergraduate students.

Unleashing Your Creativity

The statement “I’m just not that creative” stems from the common misconception that creativity is innate, either you’re born with it or not and there’s nothing you can do about it. Rather than it being a character trait some have from birth, creativity is a skill you can develop and refine over time. Throughout your life situations where you need to be creative will constantly crop up - whether it’s in the classroom or in the boardroom, creativity is a skill necessary for success. In this issue of Her Resources, you will find a variety of practical tips for honing your creativity skills.

“FOR A LONG TIME, I THOUGHT OF MYSELF AS A NON-CREATIVE PERSON. I THINK IT HAD A LOT TO DO WITH STUDYING MATHEMATICS AND OFTEN HEARING THAT YOU ARE EITHER GOOD IN ANALYTICAL OR CREATIVE THINKING. AFTER STEPPING OUT OF MY COMFORT ZONE AND TAKING SOME THEATER CLASSES, I’VE REALIZED THAT RATHER THAN BEING OPPOSITES, THESE TWO KINDS OF THINKING COMPLEMENT EACH OTHER AND SHOULD BE PRACTICED EQUALLY.”
- MATHEMATICS MAJOR



Tools

1

Practice thinking creatively. Your brain is just like every other muscle in your body, exercise it regularly and it will get stronger. Challenge yourself to create everyday - this can be writing, photography, singing, drawing or any number of mediums that interest you. Practice brainstorming by finding topics you're curious about or issues you're passionate about solving. There are any number of ways you can practice creating, just be sure to let the ideas freely flow and look back on it with a critical eye later.

3

Try slow-motion multitasking. Slow-motion multitasking is a term used to describe working on several long-term projects at the same time, moving from one to the other as the situation demands. It's very different from the way we usually think of multitasking as frantically switching between tasks with the hope that we will be able to do more in less time. Slow-motion multitasking allows you to combine interests and hobbies that might not have an obvious connection. This can in return unlock your creativity by helping you to draw inspiration from multiple sources and applying ideas from one field to new contexts. What's more, working on unrelated projects offers you a solution to simply switch between them in case you get stuck (which also means you avoid procrastination!)

2

Record and organize your ideas. Inspiration can find us anywhere at any time, in the shower, walking the dog, washing the dishes, in the middle of a never-ending meeting - unfortunately, as quickly and unexpectedly as it appears, inspiration finds a way to disappear before you have time to cultivate it. Though it may seem like the antithesis to creativity, structure and organization can be the key to growing your most inspired ideas. Try carrying an idea journal and record every idea that comes to you (no matter how silly you may think it is), then create boxes, physical or otherwise, to organize these ideas. When you have time to think creatively, open one of these "boxes", pull out an idea and see if you can make it grow. You'll never have the opportunity to be creative if you let inspiration pass you by.

4

Do some free Writing. Freewriting is a practice of stream-of-consciousness-style unedited writing that can help your creativity to flow. There are 3 main things to follow when free-writing: Use a prompt, set a timer, and keep your pen moving. Don't be afraid of ideas that do not make sense, of making grammar mistakes, or even sounding incoherent. Even if you feel tempted to do so, do not pause to think or edit. Often, we jump straight to limitations and this stops our ideas from flowing. Free-writing helps you outrun your conscious mind and forces you to work with whatever ideas come to you.

Further Reading

[5 Science-Backed Ways to Boost Your Creativity](#) by Hayden Field

[Better Brainstorming](#) by Hal Gregersen

[Reinvent yourself: Unleash your creativity](#) course on EdX platform

[TED Talk on Slow-motion multitasking](#) by Tim Harford

A note from one of the authors

"Creativity comes in so many shapes and forms that we sometimes fail to recognize when we are in fact being creative. Having a multidisciplinary background, I often apply ideas from one field to another and it took me some time to realize that this too is a sign of creativity. I try to carve out time for creative practice on a weekly basis. I found that it's a good way how to unwind, spend some time with myself, or get together with my friends." - Alexandra Urbanikova