

Brainwriting

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What is Brainwriting?

Similar to Brainstorming---

Objective: Generate many ideas

- Ⓐ Need problem/opportunity statement
- Ⓐ Need facilitator
- Ⓐ Need 4-30 participants
- Ⓐ Need flipcharts/overhead to write ideas
- Ⓐ Run open or structured session
- Ⓐ Wild ideas can lead to sane ideas

Problems w/ Brainstorming

- à Discussion domination
- à Wallflowers
- à Intimidation
- à Volatile issues lead to arguments
- à Only generate one idea at a time

Brainwriting methods:

Ⓐ 6-3-5 Method

à Rounds:

6 per group/3 ideas/5 minutes

Ⓐ Pool Method

à No rounds:

Response sheets in center of table

Ⓐ Idea card (or pin) method

à No rounds:

Ideas are written on cards/post-its and passed to person on right

P email method

à Rounds:

Forms are passed via email

The Rules:

1. **DEFER JUDGMENT**

no bad ideas

2. **QUANTITY**

more is better (don't worry about quality)

3. **FREEWHEEL**

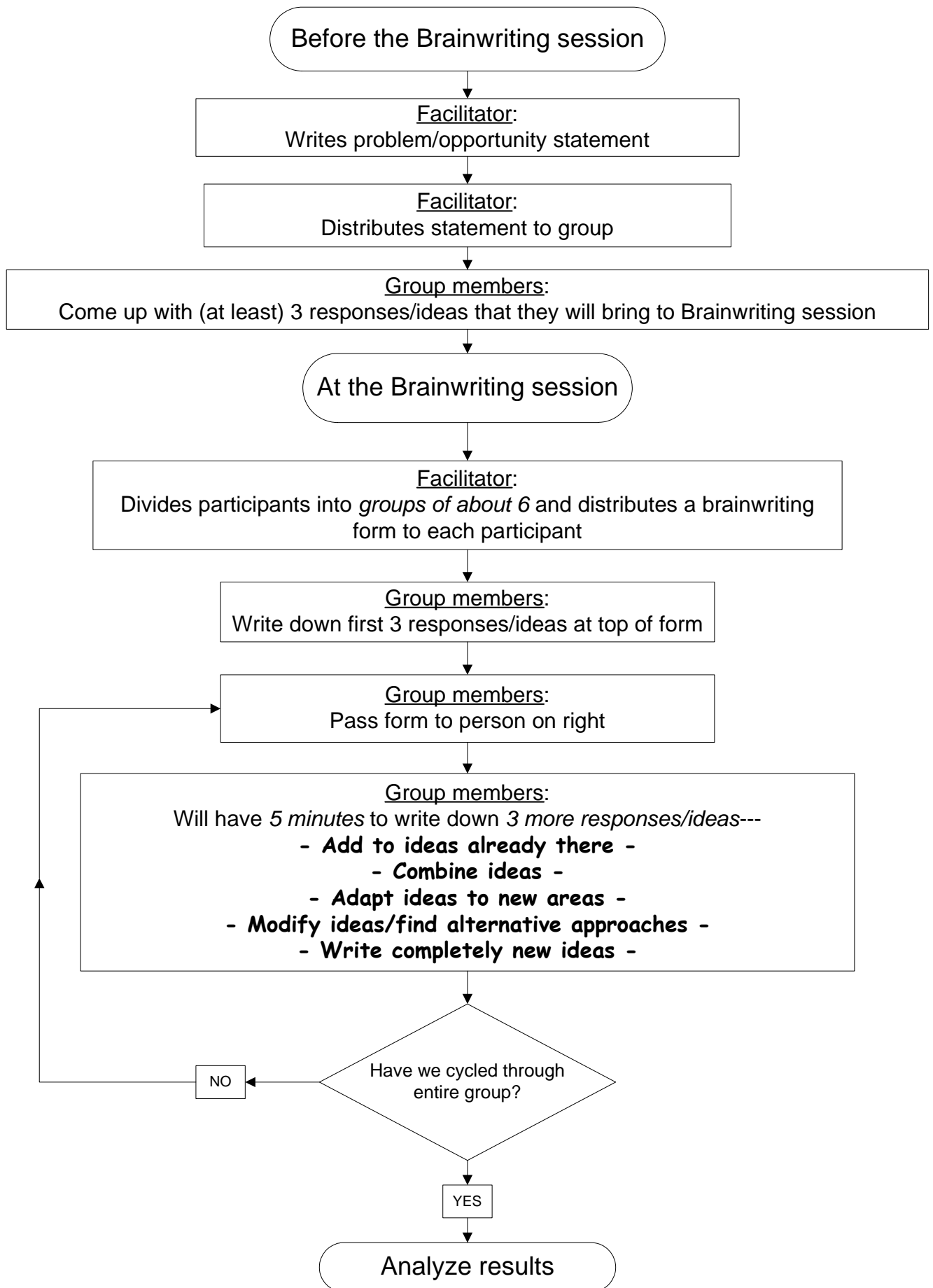
wild ideas are OK

4. **PIGGYBACK IDEAS**

play off ideas of others

5. **WRITE NEATLY & CLEARLY**

ideas fully understood



Analyzing Results:

Analysis involves grouping ideas into common groups

Cluster technique

- P Post all ideas
- P Everyone participates in grouping ideas into common themes or clusters (duplicate a note if necessary)
- P Assign labels to clusters
- P Objective can be to
 - 1) generate ideas or 2) reach consensus

Individual technique

- P Pass sheets around and put stickers on top ideas on each page

Delayed Analysis

- P Allow a little more percolation time before analyzing

Our question:

In November 2002, the Higher Learning Commission (NCA) completed its comprehensive evaluation of UCO. In their exit meeting, the reviewing team was extremely positive about the direction that UCO had set for itself. Moreover, they indicated that UCO was poised to enter into the “next tier” of universities.

What specific goals, directions, activities, and accomplishments will bring UCO into this “next tier” of universities?

Brainwriting

What is “Brainwriting”?

You are probably familiar with the method of Brainstorming to generate a lot of ideas. In a brainstorming session, participants call out ideas to a moderator who lists them on a board. Ideas are not discussed or rejected during this session. The goal is to generate as many ideas as possible and a wild idea can frequently lead others to offer additional new ideas. All the sorting and evaluation is done at the end of the brainstorming session. Brainstorming has a few potential problems: 1) sometimes one or two individuals can dominate a brainstorming session (which inhibits the free flow of ideas that such a session looks for), and 2) younger or more quiet individuals will have less tendency to make suggestions to a group.

Brainwriting is an alternative method to brainstorming that tries to encourage a more uniform participation within a group. Like brainstorming, it is designed to generate lots and lots of ideas in a short amount of time. There are several methods for conducting a brainwriting session:

D 6-3-5 Method

1. 6-3-5 means: 6 in group/3 ideas per round/5 minutes per round.
2. Divide everyone into groups of about 6. Too many in a group is unmanageable, too few restricts the generation of ideas.
3. Each participant starts with a prewritten brainwriting form. The problem to be addressed is written at the top of the form (see example).
4. In the first round, participants have 5 minutes to write 3 ideas in the top boxes (1 per box) of the brainwriting form. Often the problem is known ahead of time and the participants come in with the 3 ideas already developed. If this is the case, this initial time can be shorter.

5. At the end of each round, the form is passed to the person on the right. As each person gets a form from the person on the left, they read all the ideas on the sheet and then add three new ones. The new ideas can be completely new, or can be variations of ideas already on the sheet, or can be additional developments to ideas already on the sheet. Ideas from other participants should foster new ideas. There is no talking or discussion during these rounds.
6. The process is completed when each participant gets his own form back, now filled up with many ideas.
7. The last step is to sort the ideas using a clustering method (described below).

▷ Pool Method

1. Each participant gets a form. Problem is written on form.
2. 5 – 8 in group.
3. Each person writes three ideas at top and puts sheet in center of table.
4. Participants take new sheet out of center pile and add to it.
5. No rounds. Put sheets back and get new sheets at own pace.
6. Process completed at end of pre-determined time (e.g. 30 min).
7. Sort ideas.

▷ Idea Card (Pin Card) Method

1. Each participant gets a stack of index cards or index card-size post-its. Problem is written on visible board.
2. 5 – 8 in group.
3. Each person writes one idea on card and places it on his right side.
4. When participant runs out of ideas, they pick card from pile on left and try to add to it. If they can't, they shift it to the pile on the right and get another card. If they can add to the idea, they write it on a new card, attach the two cards together, and move both cards to the pile on right.
5. Moderator keeps cards circulating.
6. Process completed at end of pre-determined time (e.g. 30 min).

Ⓐ Electronic method

1. Ideas above are adapted by emailing sheets around or posting onto a website.
2. Moderator must somehow make sure that participants keep participating.

Brainwriting Guidelines

DEFER JUDGMENT Ⓐ no bad ideas

QUANTITY Ⓐ more is better

FREEWHEEL Ⓐ wild ideas

PIGGYBACK IDEAS Ⓐ play off ideas of others

WRITE NEATLY & CLEARLY Ⓐ **ideas fully understood**

What you can do:

- Ⓐ Write new ideas
- Ⓐ Combine other ideas
- Ⓐ Adapt ideas to new areas
- Ⓐ Modify ideas into alternative approaches
- Ⓐ Add to ideas

Analysis Methods (this is where the Post-Its are most helpful):

Ⓐ Cluster Technique

1. Immediately after the brainwriting session, all ideas are copied onto Post-Its.
2. Participants, as a group or individually, begin arranging ideas into “clusters.” This is simply a sorting process; there should be no discussion of which ideas are better or worse. Some require absolute silence at this point.
3. The group agrees on (or an individual assigns) a label to put on each cluster.
4. If an idea can fit into two or more clusters, duplicates may be made.

5. Clusters can stand individually if the goal is just to get a bunch of ideas. If some consensus must be reached, discussion can begin about which clusters to merge or eliminate.

6. Consensus discussion tools include:

a. Cause Enumeration Diagram (Fishbone/Ishikawa diagram)

b. Affinity Diagram (group related clusters together; connect with lines)

c. Other prioritization techniques

D Individual Analysis

1. Immediately after the brainwriting session, individuals examine their sheets and identify the top three ideas. They put a "+" sign by each top idea before passing the sheet to the person on their right who repeats the process.

2. This identifies the top choices by the group.

3. Further analysis can be obtained by repeating the process or using consensus discussion tools.

D Delayed Analysis

1. No discussion takes place after the brainwriting session. 24 to 48 hours after the session, the moderator makes copies of sheets available to participants (or has the group make a cluster analysis and makes these results available).

2. Participants review the sheets and make additional comments/additions.

3. The group is called back together for the final analysis using consensus tools.