Fostering Collaborative Creativity

Facilitating brainstorming techniques for effective ideation

COLLABORATING | Co-creation Skills

What you will need:

- 6-60
- Workshop
- 1 hr preparation
- 2 hrs execution
- Flip-overs, markers and sticky notes

Related Tools:

Brainstorming with Eureka

Menu:

I. Overview
II. Learning Activity
III. Assessment
IV. Key Advice

"Give students the tools and techniques to come up with innovative solutions to problems that may not have a straightforward answer. By thinking outside-the-box and exploring different creative techniques, they may discover new and more effective ways to solve complex problems."

—Michèle Gerbrands

Except where otherwise noted, content on the Transition Makers Toolbox is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Icons by The Noun Project.

I. Overview

This tool equips students with the necessary skills to lead co-creation sessions with an emphasis on brainstorming. Brainstorming skills play a vital role in fostering problem-solving, innovation and collaborative decision-making. By mastering these skills, students can foster an inclusive and creative environment, leading to the generation of diverse ideas and breakthrough solutions.

Through a series of interactive activities, role-playing exercises and reflection, this tool aims to empower students to facilitate brainstorming sessions with confidence, encouraging active participation and unlocking the full potential of collective thinking.

Learning outcome:

- The student is able to apply brainstorming techniques to develop and facilitate ideation sessions, characterised by psychological safety

Except where otherwise noted, content on the Transition Makers Toolbox is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Icons by The Noun Project.

II. Learning Activity

Students learn and grow together with their peers as they design, facilitate and moderate ideation sessions.

1. Introducing Brainstorming

10 mins

Begin by explaining the purpose of the activity: to equip students with the skills to facilitate a co-creation session focused on brainstorming techniques.

Emphasise the importance of creating an inclusive and collaborative environment during brainstorming. Encourage students to be open-minded and receptive to diverse ideas.

Have a brief plenary sharing around the question 'What might be effective techniques to facilitate an inclusive and collaborative environment for brainstorming?'

2. Discussing Brainstorming Techniques

10 mins

Present an overview of various brainstorming techniques and rules for brainstorming that can be employed during co-creation sessions. Highlight techniques such as rapid ideation, brainstorming with Eureka cards, and brainwriting.

Discuss with students that the effectiveness of each brainstorming technique depends on the specific context and goals of your co-creation session, the advantages and limitations of each technique and provide examples of when they can be effectively used.

Except where otherwise noted, content on the Transition Makers Toolbox is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Icons by The Noun Project.

3. Interactive Demonstration

20 mins

To help students understand how to facilitate a co-creation session, conduct an interactive demonstration. Divide the students into small groups and assign each group a specific problem or challenge.

Instruct them to brainstorm ideas using one of the techniques discussed in Step 2. Provide clear instructions for facilitating a session.

After the brainstorming session, each group presents their ideas and facilitate a discussion on the effectiveness of the technique they used.

4. Role-playing Exercise

30 mins

Students engage in a role-playing exercise to simulate a real-life co-creation session. Divide the class into groups with at least three students and assign roles: facilitator, observer(s) and participant(s). Make sure that every student practices as a facilitator.

Provide each group with a specific challenge or problem to address. The facilitator guides the participants through a brainstorming session using one of the techniques learned. The observers should pay attention to the facilitator's behaviour, such as encouraging participation, managing time and ensuring everyone's ideas are respected.

Tip: provide criteria for observer-feedback.

5. Reflection and Feedback

1 hr

Consolidate the learning by conducting a reflective session which encourages students to gain valuable insights from different perspectives and further develop their facilitation skills. Foster a constructive and supportive environment by encouraging students to ask questions, seek clarification and provide additional insights. Follow these steps:

Except where otherwise noted, content on the Transition Makers Toolbox is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Icons by The Noun Project.

- Begin by asking the student who played the **facilitator** role to reflect on their experience. Encourage them to share their thoughts on how the session went, highlighting the successes, challenges faced, and lessons learned. Prompt them to consider what they could have done differently or better in facilitating the co-creation session.
- Next, invite the student(s) who served as **observers** to provide their feedback by using observer feedback from Step 4.
- Allow the student(s) who played the role of **participants** to share their thoughts and reflections on the activity. Encourage them to provide feedback from their perspective as participants. Ask them to discuss what they found effective in the facilitator's approach and suggest areas where improvements could be made.

Conclude the reflection session by encouraging students to continue practicing and refining their facilitation skills. Emphasise the importance of ongoing development and learning in becoming effective change makers.

Except where otherwise noted, content on the Transition Makers Toolbox is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Icons by The Noun Project.

III. Assessment

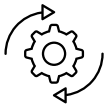
During Step 4 of the learning activity, the assessment focuses on gathering feedback from students who assumed the roles of facilitators and participants. A designated observer will evaluate the facilitators' performance during the brainstorming session, providing constructive feedback that highlights strengths and identifies areas for improvement based on predetermined criteria. Subsequently, the assigned participants will engage in reflection, gaining valuable insights from the students' perspective.

Purpose

Assessment *for* learning (formative assessment) aims to gather evidence and provide feedback on students' learning during the learning process.

Roles

Peer-assessment



Characteristics

Self-regulated learning

Materials

Observer-feedback questions

Except where otherwise noted, content on the Transition Makers Toolbox is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Icons by The Noun Project.

Assessment

Criteria for observer-feedback

By assessing the facilitator's performance based on these criteria, observers can provide specific and constructive feedback to help their peers to improve their facilitation skills in future co-creation sessions.

1. Engagement and Participation
Did the facilitator actively engage all participants and encourage their participation throughout the session? Did they create a safe and inclusive environment that allowed everyone to share their ideas?

2. Clarity and Communication
How effectively did the facilitator communicate the purpose of the session, instructions for the brainstorming technique and any time constraints? Were their instructions clear and easy to understand?

3. Time Management
Did the facilitator manage the time effectively, ensuring that the session progressed smoothly and allowed sufficient time for brainstorming, discussion and presentation of ideas?

4. Active Listening and Empathy
How well did the facilitator demonstrate active listening skills? Were they attentive to participants' ideas, validating and respecting their contributions? Did they show empathy and create a supportive atmosphere?

5. Creativity and Encouragement of Novel Ideas
Did the facilitator foster an environment that encouraged the generation of innovative and unconventional ideas? Did they provide prompts or prompts that inspired participants to think outside the box?

6. Facilitation Style
Did the facilitator demonstrate confidence and competence in their role? How effectively did they manage the flow of the session, transitions between activities and overall facilitation process?

Except where otherwise noted, content on the Transition Makers Toolbox is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Icons by The Noun Project.

IV. Key Advice

Instructions for various brainstorming techniques (Step 2) and **facilitating a brainstorming session** (Step 3) can be downloaded below.

Except where otherwise noted, content on the Transition Makers Toolbox is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Icons by The Noun Project.

Instructions for various brainstorming techniques

Select the brainstorming technique(s) that best suit the objectives and dynamics of your co-creation session. Each technique has its own advantages and limitations, and its effective use depends on the specific context and goals of the session.

1. Rapid Ideation: Generating Ideas with Speed and Openness

Rapid ideation is a brainstorming technique that emphasises generating as many ideas as possible within a specific time frame, without engaging in discussion, critique or detailed elaboration. Follow these instructions:

Set the Stage

Clearly communicate the topic or challenge for brainstorming. Explain that each student will be contributing ideas individually.

Set a Time Constraint

Establish a time limit for the rapid ideation session. Choose a duration that encourages quick thinking and prevents overthinking. For example, you may allocate five minutes for individual idea generation.

Capture Ideas

Instruct each student to write down as many ideas as possible within the given time limit. Encourage them to think freely and expansively without judging or analysing the ideas. Emphasise the importance of speed and capturing every idea that comes to mind. Emphasise that the focus is on quantity rather than quality at this stage.

Group Discussion and Evaluation

Collect all the ideas and share them without judgment. Once all ideas have made their way around the circle, initiate a group discussion. Encourage students to share their thoughts, insights, and evaluations of the ideas. Together, decide which ideas are the most promising and deserve further exploration.

Advantage

Rapid ideation promotes creativity by generating a large number of ideas within a short timeframe, expanding the range of possibilities and encouraging innovative thinking. The time constraint creates a sense of urgency, stimulating creativity and preventing premature judgment. This fosters an open and inclusive environment where students feel encouraged to share their ideas without self-censorship. By separating idea generation from critique, rapid ideation allows ideas to develop and transform over time which promotes a more exploratory mindset.

Except where otherwise noted, content on the Transition Makers Toolbox is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Icons by The Noun Project.

Limitations
Rapid ideation focuses on quantity rather than quality, which means that ideas may not be fully developed or explored during the initial session. Due to the rapid nature of ideation, there may be instances where multiple participants generate similar or overlapping ideas.

Effective Use
Rapid ideation can be effective when generating a broad range of ideas at the start of a co-creation session, allowing for a diverse pool of concepts to work with. It is valuable when time is limited and a quick burst of creativity is needed to explore various possibilities. It can be particularly useful when addressing complex challenges or seeking innovative solutions that require "outside the box" thinking.

2. Brainwriting: Collaborative Idea Generation
In this nonverbal brainstorming technique, students engage in a collaborative idea-generation process by following these steps:

Set the Stage
Clearly communicate the topic or challenge for brainstorming. Explain that each student will be contributing ideas individually and building upon each other's suggestions.

Idea Generation
Allocate around four to six minutes for individual idea generation. Instruct students to write down three ideas related to the brainstorming topic. Encourage them to be creative, think critically and explore innovative solutions.

Idea Exchange
Instruct students to pass their written ideas to the student on their right (or left). Each student reviews the ideas they received and adds bullet points or creative strategies to expand upon them. If students are working remotely, they can use a collaborative online platform or tools to share and build upon ideas.

Iterative Process
Repeat the idea exchange process for a few rounds, allowing ideas to circulate around the group until everyone receives their original sheet of paper. This iterative process ensures that each student has the opportunity to contribute and build upon ideas generated by their peers.

Group Discussion and Evaluation
Once all ideas have made their way around the circle, initiate a group discussion. Encourage students to share their thoughts, insights and evaluations of the

Except where otherwise noted, content on the Transition Makers Toolbox is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Icons by The Noun Project.

ideas. Together, decide which ideas are the most promising and deserve further exploration.

Advantages

Brainwriting allows students to actively participate, express their creativity and benefit from diverse perspectives. It promotes equal engagement, minimises dominant voices and encourages collaboration.

Limitations

Be mindful of time constraints during each stage of the process to ensure efficient idea generation and sharing. Additionally, in remote settings, students should have access to reliable online communication tools and platforms to facilitate idea exchange.

Except where otherwise noted, content on the Transition Makers Toolbox is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Icons by The Noun Project.

Key Advice

Instructions for Facilitating a Brainstorming Session

Define the Objective
Clearly articulate the objective or problem statement the brainstorming session aims to address. Ensure that all participants have a shared understanding of the goal to focus their ideation efforts.

Set the Stage
Create a conducive environment for brainstorming. Choose a comfortable and well-lit space, provide materials such as whiteboards or flip charts, and ensure that participants feel encouraged to express their ideas freely, without judgment.

Explain the Rules
Explain the brainstorming rules by using the tool 'Brainstorming with Eureka'.

Facilitate Idea Generation
Employ the selected brainstorming techniques.

Document Ideas
Record all ideas on a visible medium, such as post-its, a whiteboard or a flip-chart, for everyone to see. Ensure that each idea is captured accurately and legibly. This visual representation helps participants build upon existing ideas and triggers further ideation.

Manage Time
Allocate sufficient time for each stage of the brainstorming session, including idea generation, discussion and reflection. Maintain a balance between allowing ample time for idea exploration and ensuring the session progresses within the allocated timeframe.

Facilitate Closure
Wrap up the brainstorming session by summarising the ideas generated and emphasizing their value. Discuss potential next steps for further development or evaluation of the ideas. Express gratitude for participants' contributions and encourage them to continue exploring new solutions.

Remember, as the facilitator, your role is to create an inclusive and supportive environment, encourage active participation and guide the process to achieve the desired outcomes. Adapt the instructions and techniques based on the specific objectives, participants and context of the brainstorming session.

Except where otherwise noted, content on the Transition Makers Toolbox is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Icons by The Noun Project.