

Additional Information

For more information on building your leadership skills or getting involved in a leadership role on campus, please contact the Dean of Students office. The Student Organization Area can assist in providing additional advisement to the needs of your club/organization. The Student Leadership Institute provides opportunities such as workshops and a University Leadership Conference. Feel free to contact us for any leadership development or support that you may need. We look forward to hearing from you.

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Brainstorming

Dean of Students

What is brainstorming

"Brainstorming" is a way to stimulate creative thinking. Simply stated, it is the free expression ideas on a given subject without the evaluation of the ideas by the group. The more ideas you have to choose from the better your final choice will be!

The idea of "brainstorming" is not new. Alex Osborn popularized it in 1953 upon the publication of his book, Applied Imagination, and through the subsequent work of the Creative Education Foundation. "Brainstorming" has been used successfully by many industrial and research organizations involving business, engineering, scientific, and management problems.

How does it work?

Listed below are the essential elements of a "brainstorming" session:

The group leader writes the problem for which solutions are sought on the conference pad.

The question should be brief, specific, and stimulating.

The reason for the question should be made clear to the group. The group leader should provide all pertinent background information as well as information regarding how the ideas will be used.

The Ground Rules for "brainstorming" should be clearly explained. They are: Every idea is acceptable (even if it sounds silly). The group permits no evaluation of ideas during the "brainstorming." This includes both verbal evaluation and non-verbal expression of approval or disapproval. The quantity of ideas is the main goal – quality ideas will normally follow. This is called "freewheeling." Building on the contributions of others, referred to as "hitchhiking," is encouraged. Some of the best suggestions result from the stimulation provided by the ideas of others. A time limit for the "brainstorming" stage should be set.

The group leader lists each idea on a board or pad as quickly as possible. It is written exactly as given. Hesitation in recording the idea sometimes gives the impression of disapproval. Usually the session begins with an initial spurt of ideas and then

slows down. At this point, a new flow of ideas may be stimulated if the group remains silent for several minutes and thinks about the problem or issue and the ideas previously suggested.

Apply the results

- ◆ If several groups brainstormed the same idea, put the lists on a wall and let everyone read each other's work.
- ◆ Group ideas into related categories for review.
- ◆ Decide which ideas are most promising and which can be eliminated; this can be done by group putting pluses and minuses by items.
- ◆ Rank-order the most promising.
- ◆ Select those with greatest potential and high-ranking priority for either implementation or refinement by committee.
- ◆ Be sure to utilize the ideas generated by developing an action plan.