

Ways to Engage Participants - Creative Thinking & Dialogue

Outcome:

Various idea-generation methods are used to promote creative thinking and facilitate dialogue, including those that encourage a wide range of ideas and those that foster in-depth exploration.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Welcomes everyone's ideas and opinions.

What is it?	Best used when...	Avoid using when...	Leader considerations
Group members participate in an unstructured conversation that invites everyone in the room to contribute ideas/opinions.	The exploration of ideas using a familiar conversational approach is desired.	A decision is needed, and time is limited. A few individuals dominate discussions.	Focus on the discussion. Determine who talks when.

INDIVIDUAL WRITING

allows individuals to organize their thoughts before group discussion

What is it?	Best used when...	Avoid using when...	Leader considerations
Group members organize their thoughts by individually writing for a few minutes before engaging in an Open Discussion, Round the-Table, Brainstorming, or 2*4*8.	Individual reactions and depth are desired. People have strong opinions and quickly switch from asking questions to advocating for their beliefs. There are several introverts/internal processors in group. There are significant power differences between participants. The leader would like to know what	The issue being discussed is clear and has a minimal impact on the group.	Clarify the topic or question. Indicate that the purpose is for members to clarify their thinking. * Let people know how much writing time is allotted. Use post-its for categorizing ideas.

	each group member thinks.		
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ROUND-THE-TABLE

Everyone must contribute an idea or opinion.

What is it?	Best used when...	Avoid using when...	Leader considerations
Group members take turns speaking without interruption.	Identifying thoughts and opinions on a complex topic helps structure the discussion and show a wide range of ideas. It's important to hear from everyone in a group, whether it's a new group, a controversial topic, or to include quieter members. The leader would like to know what each group member thinks.	The issue being discussed is clear and has a minimal impact on the group.	Determine if thoughts should be recorded for each person. Clarify the question to be addressed. Provide the specific amount of time required: 3 sentences, if you like, etc. Select a volunteer to begin and suggest that the group continue in a clockwise direction.

BRAINSTORMING (IDEA LISTING)

Efficiently produces a diverse range of ideas.

What is it?	Best used when...	Avoid using when...	Leader considerations
Group members efficiently generate a range of ideas and stimulate each other's thinking. Mind Map Variation By visually connecting ideas as they emerge, one can create a mind map that displays both ideas and the relationships between them.	The goal is to energize the group and encourage creative thinking. It is desirable to generate a wide variety of ideas.	The issue being discussed is clear and has a minimal impact on the group. A decision must be made within a limited timeframe.	Create ground rules: - All ideas are welcome. - Discussion, analysis, and prioritization will be addressed later. - Ensure that all participants in the conversation allow quieter group members to have a voice.

			Provide clarification on the question and specify the duration of the brainstorming session. Decide how to record the ideas.
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2*4*8 (IDEA GENERATING and CLUSTERING)

Individual ideas are generated quickly, which are then synthesized into themes by small groups.

What is it?	Best used when...	Avoid using when...	Leader considerations
<u>Generate ideas—post-its</u> Each team member should take a few minutes to write down their thoughts individually in response to a question, like "What makes meetings successful?" One idea per post-it. <u>Synthesize/Cluster Ideas</u> 1. Pair up and share your post-its by reading them out loud to each other. Group similar ideas together. 2. Ask pairs to find another pair. One member of the group of four explains the theme of a cluster of post-it notes. The other pair reads aloud any cluster(s) with similar concepts. Group similar ideas together on flip chart	The leader/group is seeking individual reactions and a comprehensive understanding of the themes in real-time. People have strong opinions and quickly switch from asking questions to advocating for their beliefs. Promoting interaction and fostering communication within the group.	The issue being discussed is clear and has a minimal impact on the group. A decision must be made within a limited timeframe.	Provide clarification on the topic or question. All ideas are welcome. Please limit each idea to one post-it. The methods that only generate ideas take less total time. Parallel processing is an effective and transparent method for gathering individual data points and efficiently clustering them into themes.

paper. Keep going until all post-it's read, even if they don't cluster.

Variation: Keep going for another round in groups of eight.

3. Create headings for each cluster on a blank post-it.

Museum Tour

After the clustering is finished, the groups will rotate in a clockwise direction and read the headings/titles of the next group.

Ask the entire group to discuss any similarities they observed, any surprises, or any other observations.