

Brainstorming

What is the purpose of brainstorming?

The purpose of a brainstorming session is to work as a group to define a problem, and find, through a participatory intervention, the best group decision for a plan of action to solve it.

What do you require?

- A problem to solve;
- A group with potential to work as a team. This works with a small groups of five to ten people, all the way up in size to a whole school;
- A board, large sheets of paper, or something that can be seen easily by all, and some large marker pens to write on it; and
- A facilitator. Someone who's task is to draw out the suggestions from the participants, not to impose her or his own opinions, while still using leadership skills to maintain the order and purpose of the session.

The ground rules:

- The facilitator leads each session;
- The facilitator calls for suggestions from the participants;
- No criticism (of anyone's suggestion) by anyone is allowed; and
- All suggestions should be recorded on the board (even the crazy ones).

The procedure:

1

Define the problem:

- Ask for suggestions as to what is the most important;
- Write all the suggestions on the board;
- Group together any problems that are similar or related; then
- Rearrange them and list them in priority (most important ones at the top).

2

Generate the goal:

- Reverse the definition of the problem (it's solution);
- The solution to the problem defined above is the goal;
- Define the goal as the solution to the problem;
- Write the goal on the board; then
- Remind the group that the goal is the one that they selected.

3

Define the objective:

- Explain the difference between a goal and an objective;
- Ask the group to suggest objectives;
- Write all the suggested objectives on the board;
- Group together any objectives that are similar or related;
- Rearrange them and list them in priority;