Brainstorm Bank

LESSON

LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT OUTCOME

In this lesson, participants practice their creative thinking and innovation skills to determine new and extraordinary uses for some of the most boring and ordinary items.

MATERIALS

Random objects (optional), worksheets, writing tools

AGE ADJUSTMENTS

This activity is appropriate for all ages.

Lesson Plan

Introducing the Lesson

- Begin by asking the group a few questions.
  - What is brainstorming?
  - Why do we brainstorm?
- Tell the group that they are going to be able to practice brainstorming but first it is important to establish ground rules around the process. The ground rules will help to make the process fun and safe for everyone!
- You may provide some of your own or ask participants to share ones that are important to them. Examples include:
  - *There are no bad ideas in brainstorming.*
  - *Brainstorming is about quantity, not quality.*
  - *Respect each other's ideas.*
  - *Stay focused.*

How else can we choose objects?

"You may also choose to hand out objects you intentionally chose or have participants write down the first object that comes to their minds for use in the activity instead."

Experiencing the Lesson

- Give participants 30 seconds to find a “common” or “ordinary” object in the room. The item must be small and easy to put away.
- Pass out a worksheet and writing tool to every participant.
- Tell participants that they will have five minutes to write down as many different uses for their item that they can think of. See Resources for an example.
- After five minutes have passed, break participants into groups of four to five participants to share their brainstormed lists.
- After each person has shared their list, the other participants should try to write down two to three more ideas for how the item could be used on their worksheets, and share out loud.
- After everyone has had a chance to share, bring all participants back together to lead a closing discussion.

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Closing the Lesson

- To close the lesson, lead a large group discussion about the process:
  - What was your favorite idea that you came up with or heard from someone else?
  - What was easy or hard about the process of brainstorming?
  - How did it feel to share your ideas with others?
  - What was it like to hear others' ideas and build on them?
  - Why is brainstorming helpful or important?
  - How can you use brainstorming in your own life?

After the Lesson

- Challenge participants to use brainstorming to solve the next problem that they face. What creative ways can they come up with to solve everyday challenges?

Check out the note at the end of the Further Exploration section for an idea to help participants get un-stuck!

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Further Exploration

- Now, give the group a chance to brainstorm together! Break participants into groups of eight to ten and have them form individual lines in front of a whiteboard or poster paper. Remind everyone of the ground rules before you begin.
- Give the first participant in each line a marker. Tell everyone that as a group they are going to try to come up with 100 ideas in five minutes. The person at the front of each line will go up and write down their idea first, then pass the marker to the next person in line. Encourage members to help each other out if someone is stuck!
- Everyone should say their idea out loud and also write it, this will help make sure everyone knows what idea is being written down and also give the group energy!
- Give each group a prompt, they can be different or the same. Examples include:
  - *Birthday party themes*
  - *Places to go on vacation*
  - *Games we can play as a group*
- Start the timer and begin.
- Once the timer is up, have participants read through all of the ideas.
- If groups are getting stuck, provide some extra prompts to help open their minds. For example: *"What would a pirate suggest?" Use a variety of relevant figures appropriate for your group, like Kylie Jenner, Shang-Chi, a pet dog, your best friend, etc.*

Get Creative

- Have participants get into pairs and think about how they could combine their two objects into one. What would it look like? How would it be used? Give participants paper and drawing tools to create a “patent” drawing to show off their new creation.

Online

- To facilitate this lesson online, facilitators and participants will need access to audio through their conference platform (ex: Zoom).
- Participants will also need access to paper and writing and/or drawing supplies.
- Give participants time to stand up, move around, and find an object in their own space to utilize for the brainstorming activity.
- Assign participants to breakout rooms to share their brainstormed lists with each other.
- Bring all participants back to the main session space to lead the large group discussion.

Resources

- Item: Fork
  - To eat
  - To comb your hair
  - For arts and crafts
  - To label plants in a garden
  - As a musical instrument

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Brainstorm!

Worksheet for: Brainstorm Bank

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