



EARTHE

Activity 2

Digital toolkit for innovative curriculum and methodological development

Module – Problem solving

Method - Guided Brainstorming

Class activities

Module 4 – Problem Solving

Class activity 1. - “Brainstorm Carousel”

Related method: Guided Brainstorming

Target group

Age: Adults (20+)

Gender: All genders

Level of studies: Various – from vocational to postgraduate

Status: Employed, unemployed, or in transition

Fewer opportunities: Possible inclusion of participants from disadvantaged backgrounds
Also, activity could be useful for adult educators (coaches, trainers, facilitators) engaged in formal and non-formal adult learning settings. These participants regularly design and deliver training to diverse learner groups, so they could benefit from experiencing creative thinking tools themselves.

Learning outcomes

- **After finalising this activity, participants will be able to:**
- Generate diverse and contextually relevant ideas in a structured group setting.
- Build upon and adapt other participants' contributions.
- Identify and prioritise the most promising ideas for further development.

Duration

45–60 minutes

Materials and resources

Flip charts or large sheets of paper (one per “station”), Markers in multiple colours, Sticky notes (optional), Timer, Spacious classroom or meeting room with room for rotation between stations



Activity description

This dynamic, multi-station brainstorming format encourages participants to build upon one another's ideas in a structured, rotating process. It fosters creativity, collaboration, and divergent thinking, essential for problem-solving in education and training contexts.

Detailed Implementation Steps

Introduction

Welcome participants and introduce the central challenge or problem (e.g., "How can we engage reluctant learners in digital courses?").

Explain the carousel concept: groups rotate through stations, each with a sub-question or aspect of the main problem.

Emphasise brainstorming rules: no judgment, build on others' ideas, quantity over quality at first.

Main activity

Place flip charts around the room. Each chart has a unique sub-question related to the main challenge

Divide participants into small groups (3 to 5 people) and assign them to starting stations.

Groups write as many ideas as possible for their station's question.

After the time limit, groups rotate to the next station, review existing ideas, and add new ones or refine existing suggestions.

Continue rotations until all groups have visited each station.

Return to the original station, review the accumulated ideas, and prepare a short summary for presentation.

Conclusion and reflection

Each group presents their station's key ideas to the whole class.



Facilitate a discussion: Which ideas stand out? How did building on others' input change the quality of ideas?

Link the activity to real-world training contexts: brainstorming to co-create curriculum, design engagement strategies, or solve logistical issues.

Assessment / Evaluation Method

Observation: Monitor participation, idea diversity, and group collaboration.

Group Reflection Questions:

Which idea emerged that you would not have thought of alone?

How did time limits influence your creativity?

How might you adapt this process for your own learners?

Adaptation Tips

For online delivery, use collaborative tools (Padlet, Miro, Google Docs) as “stations” participants visit in breakout rooms.

Adjust the number of stations depending on time available.

For very large groups, run multiple carousels in parallel.

Module 4 – Problem Solving

Class activity 2. - Provocative Prompts

Related method: Guided Brainstorming

Target group

Age: Adults (20+)

Gender: All genders

Level of studies: Various – from vocational to postgraduate

Status: Employed, unemployed, or in transition

Fewer opportunities: Possible inclusion of participants from disadvantaged backgrounds. The activity might be useful also to adult educators (coaches, trainers, facilitators) who often work with learners from diverse cultural and professional backgrounds, and need tools to stimulate creativity in settings where thinking patterns may be entrenched.

Learning outcomes

After finalising this activity, participants will be able to:

- Break away from habitual problem-solving patterns using unconventional prompts.
- Generate novel, “out-of-the-box” solutions.
- Evaluate creative ideas for practicality in a given context.

Duration

40 minutes

Materials and resources

Prepared list of provocative prompts, Whiteboard or flip chart, Markers, Sticky notes, Timer

Activity description



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This activity uses intentionally unusual prompts to spark divergent thinking. By reframing problems through unfamiliar perspectives, participants develop flexibility, originality, and the ability to reimagine challenges — vital skills for educators needing to innovate under constraints.

Detailed Implementation Steps

Introduction

Introduce the problem or challenge to be addressed.

Explain that today's brainstorming will be guided by provocative prompts, which force us to think differently.

Share 3 to 5 example prompts and encourage playful thinking.

Main activity

Divide participants into small groups. Assign each group one provocative prompt, either randomly or by choice.

Groups brainstorm ideas specifically in line with their assigned prompt, writing each idea on sticky notes or directly on the flip chart.

After 10 minutes (approximately), groups swap prompts and build upon the previous group's ideas.

All ideas are gathered in one place (whiteboard or wall) for review.

Conclusion and reflection

Which prompts produced the most unexpected solutions?

Invite participants to select 2 to 3 ideas they believe could work in their professional context.

Connect to real-life and emphasise that creative reframing can be used in staff meetings, curriculum design, or problem-solving workshops.

Assessment / Evaluation Method

Monitor whether groups stay within prompt constraints while still generating ideas.

Self-evaluation questions:

Which prompt felt most uncomfortable, and why?

Which idea surprised you the most?



Could you realistically apply one idea in your current work?

Adaptation Tips

Use culturally relevant prompts to ensure engagement in international groups.

In virtual settings, prompts can be distributed via chat, and brainstorming done on collaborative boards.

For shy participants, start with light, humorous prompts before tackling serious issues.

Module 4 – Problem Solving

Class activity 3. – Silent Brainwriting

Related method: Guided Brainstorming

Target group

Age: Adults (20+)

Gender: All genders

Level of studies: Various – from vocational to postgraduate

Status: Employed, unemployed, or in transition

Fewer opportunities: Possible inclusion of participants from disadvantaged backgrounds. This activity is particularly suitable for groups that include introverted participants, people from cultures where public speaking is less common, or teams where dominant voices often overshadow other.

Learning outcomes

After finalising this activity, participants will be able to:

- Generate multiple independent ideas without influence from group dynamics.
- Build constructively upon others' contributions.
- Combine individual and collective creativity for richer results..

Duration

45 minutes

Materials and resources

Index cards or slips of paper, Pens or pencils, Timer, Flip chart or wall space for displaying ideas.

Activity description



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Silent Brainwriting¹ allows participants to create ideas individually before sharing, ensuring equal participation and a wide diversity of thought. This method avoids “groupthink” and helps surface less obvious but valuable suggestions.

Detailed Implementation Steps

Introduction

Explain that in this activity, there will be no talking during the idea-generation phase.

Emphasise benefits: avoids dominant voices, allows more reflective contributions.

Main activity

Each participant writes down 3 ideas on separate cards.

Cards are passed to the person on the right, who adds one or more ideas to each card.

Continue passing cards until they return to the original owner

Ideas are grouped on a wall or board under thematic categories.

Conclusion and reflection

Review clusters as a group.

Discuss: *Which ideas were most enhanced by others' additions?*

Assessment / Evaluation Method

Check for equal participation and number of ideas generated.

Group discussion prompts:

Did this process make it easier for you to share ideas?

How did seeing others' contributions influence your own thinking?

Which combined idea has the highest potential?

Adaptation Tips

In an online setting, use a shared document where each participant adds to the previous person's ideas.

Can be scaled up for large groups by using multiple tables with separate card sets.

Adjust the number of passes based on group size and time available.

¹ Silent Brainwriting is a creativity and idea-generation technique similar to brainstorming, but instead of speaking out loud, participants write down their ideas silently