

## **PROCESS AND IMPORTANCE OF BRAINSTORMING TO SCHOOL CHILDREN DURING CLASS ACTIVITIES**

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### **Abstract:**

This study aimed at identifying the impact of brainstorming strategy on improving writing skills of high school pupils. Nowadays, most of the school children are facing with difficulties with brainstorming and gathering ideas while writing an essay. The reasons for this issue may be narrow-mind and lack of reading books. Teachers can help people to improve the brainstorming performance.

**Keywords:** Gathering ideas and select them, improvement, writing paragraph, brainstorming, creative thinking.

Brainstorming strategy is one of the most important strategies in provoking creativity and solving problems in the educational, commercial, industrial and political fields. Brainstorming strategy was introduced by Alex Osborn, an American advertisement company manager in 1938 as a result of his inconvenience of traditional business meetings. Brainstorming means the use of brain to the active problem solving and the brainstorming session aims to develop creative solutions to problems [Jarwan, 2005].

On the other hand, creative thinking is known as a compound mental activity aiming to direct a strong desire to look for solutions or reaching original solutions that were not known before [Jarwan, 2008, Hoing, 2001] defined it as the multiple thinking that includes the breaking up of old ideas, making new connections, enlarging the limits of knowledge and the onset of wonderful ideas. With regard to creative problem solving it is based on the cognitive theory that adopts the concept of the cognitive structure. It is the mental process of creating a solution to a problem. It is a special form of problem solving in which the solution is independently created rather than learned with assistance. Creative problem solving always involves creativity [Qattami, 2010].

It can be defined as a frame of styles designed to help and enhance the problem understanding then generating new and different solution and assessing those solutions using the creative skills [Gardner, 1999; Richard, Angle & Ann, 1999].

Due to the importance of both concepts (brainstorming and creative thinking) the current study aims to explore the relationship between them especially in developing creative problem solving skills.



### What is brainstorming?

Brainstorming allows students to think critically about ideas and solutions, form connections, and share ideas with peers. Often, there are no wrong answers when brainstorming; in this way, students are able to freely express their thoughts without fear of failure. Brainstorming activities include listing, free writing, outlining, mapping/webs, and pro-con grids. Methods used for brainstorming and sharing include:

- physical writing/drawing tools like paper, posterboard, or whiteboard
- digital writing/drawing tools like Word, Photoshop, or any ideas-mapping software
- collaborative tools like Google hangouts, Google docs, WebEx

Brainstorming sessions can be run in both online and face-to-face classes, during both synchronous and asynchronous schedules. Synchronous collaboration tools like Google Hangouts or WebEx help facilitate this activity online. Even Twitter, Pinterest, and Facebook can be used to collect brainstorming ideas from the class. Techniques vary but there is a general structure to follow when developing brainstorming sessions. After the problem or issue is presented, students are organized into groups to brainstorm all possible ideas which could solve the problem. Discussion of these ideas takes place after the brainstorming session ends, usually after a defined period of time. Each idea will be discussed and considered, some ideas will be eliminated, and a final list will be ranked for possible use as a solution toward solving the problem.

### Strengths of Brainstorming

- Provides a quick and easy class activity. Brainstorming sessions can be effectively used in the classroom. However, they do require meaningful planning time for ultimate success.
- Contributes to classroom collective power. Brainstorming sessions allow individual students' voices to become one with the group's voice. The final ideas are generally identified through consensus.
- Creates a student-centered activity. Students direct the group in which they generate their own ideas, develop rating criteria, and are responsible for group dynamics.
- Supports learning in a relaxed environment. Students are able to collaborate in a relaxed, informal learning environment.
- Strengthens problem-based learning. Brainstorming is a problem-solving activity where students build on or develop higher order thinking skills.
- Encourages creative thought. Brainstorming encourages students to think creatively (out of the box), encouraging all students to share their ideas, no matter how far "out there" they may seem.

### Challenges of Brainstorming

Keeping the session from being just a chat session. The moderator should direct the session to keep students on task.



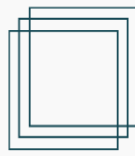
Ensuring students collaborate rather than compete with one another when generating ideas. Walk around the room and listen for inappropriate group behavior. Encouraging students to build on each other's ideas to help them build their critical thinking skills. Getting "buy-in" or acceptance from those who have participated in brainstorming who have never seen their ideas brought forth and acted upon. Work forward from this point with any student who may be in this category and remark on their contribution both to them personally, their group and to the whole class. Getting quiet or independent students to actively participate. Explain that as part of this course all students are expected to bend a little which may have them participating in activities which might make them uncomfortable. Never force someone who is adamant about a particular situation. Instead, coax those who are hesitant at first by creating a trusting and caring classroom environment from the beginning of the semester. This approach can help students be more accepting of change and those who tend to feel uncomfortable working with others. Helping groups to move forward if they are "stuck" and not able to generate ideas. Reconvene the group to review the problem or issue or provide an example of a possible solution. Reaching consensus. Getting students to reach consensus becomes less of a problem if all students are given equal time to provide input, feel comfortable as a valued member of the group and are respected for their points-of-view. Basically, critical thinking is based on three aspects theoretically among which are theories of reasoning, theories of critical discussion, and finally, theories of the cognitive mechanisms and processes operating in belief formation and decision making [Johnson-Laird, 1983; Walton & Krabbe, 1995].

The first one referring to theories of reasoning is relevant to the present study as it refers to activating prior knowledge and information in approaching a situation, updating the models by incorporating new information, and eventually arriving at a deduction through analyzing the possibilities [Johnson-Laird, 1983; Johnson-Laird & Byrne, 1991]. Brainstorming is considered as a tool for prior knowledge activation and an alternative which can lubricate critical thinking formation. We should ensure that students not only internalize the content of the lessons; but also, assess the quality of that internalization through achieving the survival skill of thinking critically to make choices about their personal, social, academic, and occupational lives. Due to the salience of higher-level thinking, meta-cognitive abilities and problem-solving and critical attitudes in L2 education, developing CT in an L2 context should be a priority over L1 context; otherwise "our students may well flounder when they are confronted with necessity of thinking critically, especially in an academic setting" [Davidson, 1998; p.121].

Since the development of higher order thinking skills such as critical thinking which affects reflective and logical reactions and world perception is considered fundamental in higher education [Jarvis,2005], it is evident that teaching this skill would require time, energy and expertise and the extent to which teacher can target teaching critical thinking successfully depends on their grasping its foundations, as well as being able

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to think critically themselves. The latter requirement is assumed to be one of the main barriers in the instruction of critical thinking competencies.

Brainstorming sessions during writing lessons can be useful strategy to encourage genuine collaboration and interaction in the classroom. Putting together a well-stated problem and careful planning strategies can lead to meaningful idea generation and idea building which can be used in solving problems or addressing specific course-related issues.

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