

Brainwriting

Brainwriting is a technique similar Brainstorming and Trigger Sessions where everyone sits at a table together to simultaneously tackle a problem. **The difference is that in Brainwriting each participant thinks and records ideas individually, without any verbal interaction.**

1. The facilitator prepares enough Brainwriting templates for each participant.
2. Participants sit on chairs in a circle, facing inwards (**6 - 8 people in a group**).
3. Participants think of an actual problem/ issue/ question they need answered and write it down on the top of the page.
4. They then hand their template to the participant on their left, to write 1 to 3 suggestions in a response box.
5. Once participants have responded to the question on the template or the time limit is reached (3-5 minutes), they hands it to the person on their left.
6. This next participant reads the question posed and prior suggestions, then may write an entirely new suggestion or they may build on prior suggestions.
7. In this manner, each template is seen and answered by each participant in the circle until it reaches the owner of the problem/ question again.
8. The owner of the problem/ question now can choose from the many suggestions listed and select the best solutions or ideas.
9. A debrief round is possible, in which each participant shares their problem question and the best solutions. This may also be omitted if the ideas need to be processed.

Pros and Cons of this method:

- It is an extremely simple method to use and doesn't require a lot preparation.
- It allows participation from all without inhibition from more vocal participants.
- It is a good method to use when there is conflict between people as it makes one focus on the question rather than the person.
- The quality of answers depends on how well the question is written/formulated.
- Participants still get to cross-pollinate and build on each other's ideas.
- Ideas are recorded the moment you get them: no ideas are lost while you wait for a chance to speak.
- No one gets overshadowed and everybody contributes equally, regardless of personality type or personal agenda.
- Ideas are contributed in private. There's no fear of being openly judged by other participants. The ideas can be kept anonymous and participants have freedom to be truly wild with their ideas.
- Everyone's given a clear task: to fulfill a specific idea quota in a specific time frame. The quota adds an element of healthy pressure that can help unlock your creativity, as it can be seen as a fun challenge.

Etiquette for participants:

- Clear, legible handwriting
- Contribute solutions generously
- Be constructive when providing solutions.
- Build on each other's ideas: **develop and improve without criticism**

Tips:

Larger circles of participants are possible, but that would be exhausting to the participants who would have to read and answer each question from the group.

Sometimes when the owner of a problem receives their paper back, they may need time to process the suggestions given and would be unable to make clear judgment on which solutions fit best. In such cases, a debrief may not be the best thing to do.

Links:

<http://litemind.com/brainwriting/>

<http://www.mycoted.com/Brainwriting>

<http://www.kstoolkit.org/Brain+Writing>

<http://creatingminds.org/tools/brainwriting.htm>