

Debriefing Questions

Questions about the activity:

- How did it work?
- How did the speaker respond when I listened well? When I listened poorly?
- When did I listen poorly? What did I do?
- What happened when you used a reflecting response?
- What approach did you use? How did it work?
- What happened as you and your partner completed this activity?
- What happened as you worked with the group in responding?
- What happened in the negotiation?
- What happened in your group?
- What happened in your role play?
- How did the deadline affect the quality of your work?
- What happened in your team as a result of those deadlines? How did you approach each assignment?
- What information did you consistently want? Why?
- Where did you disagree with the team? Why?
- How easy or hard was it compared to the last exercise? Why?
- What was different between that role play and the last one?
- How would that have been different if you were actually responding to your own manager?

Questions about feelings and reactions:

- How do you feel about that activity?
- Did that role play feel any different when you switched roles?
- How confident are you about the work you did?
- How did you feel about that process?
- How did you feel about the deadlines for your team activity?
- How did you feel when responding to objections?
- How do you feel about the number of options available?
- How do you feel about your potential for success?
- What was your reaction as we negotiated? Did you get more or less comfortable?
- Which questions do you like best? Why?

Questions about learning:

- What did you learn from the feedback from your partner?
- What did you learn?
- What do you still need to learn?
- What insights did you have in that activity?
- Which personal objectives have been addressed?

Questions about application:

- How can understanding this process help you on the job?
- How can you use this on the job?
- How does this relate to a project in your job/area?
- What phrases did you learn that you can use on the job?
- What will you do with this knowledge?
- Which questions will get you the most useful information?
- Which questions would you be uncomfortable asking? Why?
- Why is this important in your job?

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Process Toolkit



Brainstorm

Purpose: To generate ideas and solutions.

- Write down a brief description of the problem/ objective (post it where it can be seen to keep the group focused).
- Gather the participants with as broad a range of experience as possible.
- Select a group facilitator and/ or recorder
- Set a time limit.
- Write down **all** the solutions/ ideas put forth.
- Do NOT evaluate ideas until the session moves to the evaluation phase.
- Do NOT censor any solution, no matter how silly it sounds. The silly ones will often lead to creative ones - the idea is to open up as many possibilities as possible, and break down preconceptions about the limits of the problem.
- The facilitator/ group leader should keep the brainstorming on subject, and should try to steer it towards the development of some practical solutions/ ideas.

Once all the solutions have been written down, evaluate the list to determine the best ideas or the best action to correct the problem. Best solutions/ ideas can be explored either by using further brainstorming or more conventional solutions.

Multi-Voting

Purpose: To gain group consensus when there are a variety of issues and opinions.

- Create a list of issues, ideas, opportunities, problems, etc. This list can be created individually and then as a whole group. Eliminate duplicates and record the list for everyone to see (e.g. whiteboard, blackboard, flip chart, etc.).
- Provide individuals with sticky dots (1 to 5 dots is usual but this will be dependent on the number of items and the need to prioritise).
- Each individual uses their dots to select the items they consider important. All dots can be placed on one item, or spread across a number of items.
- It will now be easy to visually see the priority areas.

Develop action plans with roles and responsibilities around priority items.

<p>RED CARD</p> <p>Discussion Phase I can see a breach of agreed procedures has occurred</p> <p>Decision Phase I do not support this proposal. It does not support the best interests of our school and students at this time.</p>	<p>RED CARD</p> <p>Discussion Phase I can see a breach of agreed procedures has occurred</p> <p>Decision Phase I do not support this proposal. It does not support the best interests of our school and students at this time.</p>
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Jigsaw

Purpose: To promote co-operative learning and enable participants to actively create their own and others' learning.

- Divide the material that needs covering in four segments.
- Put participants into groups of four. These groups will be the 'home groups' of the jigsaw.
- Allocate each person in the home group a different segment or selection of the material to become an 'expert' on.
- Participants leave their home group and sit with a group of participants assigned to the same segment. Participants engage in professional reading, discuss their segment, and decide what and how they should present to their home groups.
- Participants regroup with home groups. Each participant is responsible for teaching their segment/ selection to their home group.

Wandering Flip Charts

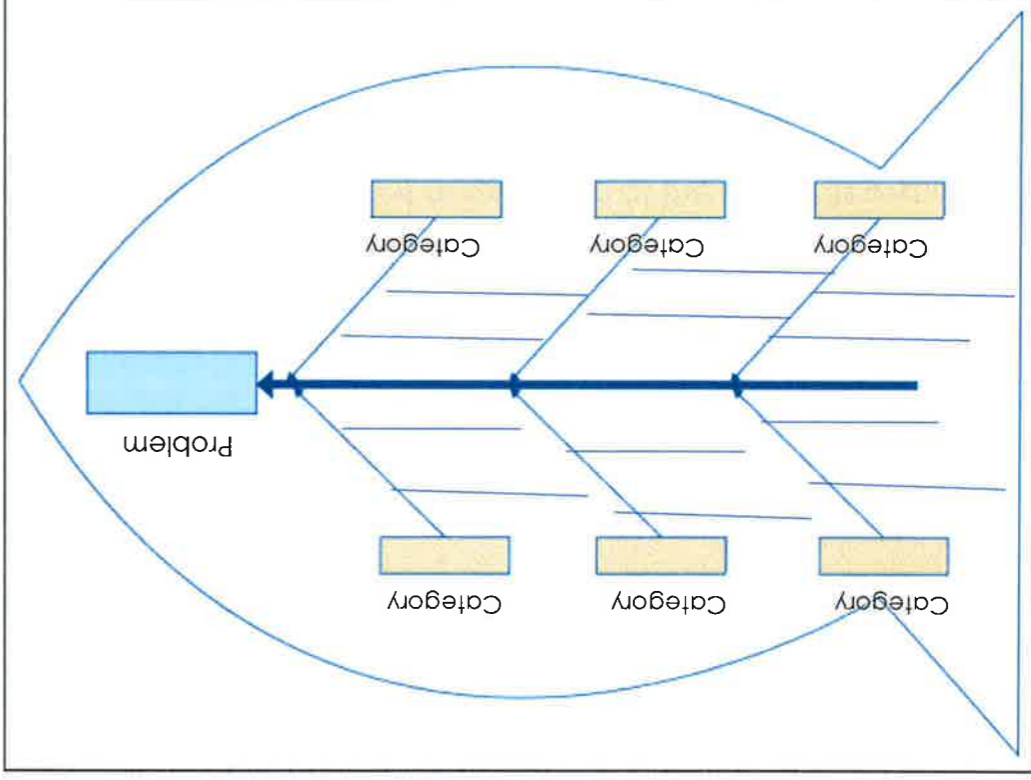
Purpose: To explore others' ideas.

- Set up the room by posting blank sheets of flip chart paper or poster paper in separate stations around the room.
- Clarify the topic(s) to be discussed then divide the topic into segments or sub-topics.
- Post one topic segment or sub-topic at the top of its own flip chart sheet.
- Instruct people to wander the room and gather at a flip chart that features a topic about which they have knowledge. Be clear that there must always be no fewer than three and no more than five people at each flip chart. Once there, the participants discuss the topic and record their collective thoughts or ideas for a specified period, typically in the range of five minutes.
- At the end of five minutes, invite everyone to wander to another flip chart station, read what the first group has written and confer with whomever else wandered there in order to add more comments to the sheet. This process can be repeated until all of the flip chart sheets are filled. It is not necessary that each person visit each station.

Decision Grids/ Fish Bones

Purpose: To understand the underlying causes of problems or issues.

- Develop a statement of the problem. Write it down on the 'fish head'.
- Brainstorm a list of possible causes of the problem. Write each of these down on another sheet of paper.
- Review the list of causes and identify the major categories. Write down the names of the categories on the 'fish bones'.
- Review the causes and list each under the appropriate category. If necessary, revise or expand the list of categories.



<p>GREEN CARD</p> <p>Discussion Phase I would like to be added to the speakers list.</p> <p>Decision Phase I support this proposal. This is the best decision we can arrive at for our school and students at this point in time</p>	<p>GREEN CARD</p> <p>Discussion Phase I would like to be added to the speakers list.</p> <p>Decision Phase I support this proposal. This is the best decision we can arrive at for our school and students at this point in time</p>	<p>GREEN CARD</p> <p>Discussion Phase I would like to be added to the speakers list.</p> <p>Decision Phase I support this proposal. This is the best decision we can arrive at for our school and students at this point in time</p>	<p>GREEN CARD</p> <p>Discussion Phase I would like to be added to the speakers list.</p> <p>Decision Phase I support this proposal. This is the best decision we can arrive at for our school and students at this point in time</p>
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Colored cards

Some consensus decision-making bodies use a system of colored cards to speed up and ease the consensus process. Most often, each member is given a set of three colored cards: red, yellow and green. The cards can be raised during the process to indicate the member's input. Cards can be used during the discussion phase as well as during a call for consensus. The cards have different meanings depending on the phase in which they are used.^{[14][16]} The meaning of the colors are:

- **Red:** During discussion, a red card is used to indicate a point of process or a breach of the agreed upon procedures. Identifying off-topic discussions, speakers going over allowed time limits or other breaks in the process are uses for the red card. During a call for consensus, the red card indicates the member's opposition (usually a "principled objection") to the proposal at hand. When a member, or members, use a red card, it becomes their responsibility to work with the proposing committee to come up with a solution that will work for everyone.
- **Yellow:** In the discussion phase, the yellow card is used to indicate a member's ability to clarify a point being discussed or answer a question being posed. Yellow is used during a call for consensus to register a stand aside to the proposal or to formally state any reservations.
- **Green:** A group member can use a green card during discussion to be added to the speakers list. During a call for consensus, the green card indicates consent.

Some decision-making bodies use a modified version of the colored card system with additional colors, such as orange to indicate a non-blocking reservation stronger than a stand-aside.^[42]

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consensus_decision-making#Colored_cards

Criteria Matrix

Purpose: To evaluate ideas and reach consensus.

- Produce a clear goal statement (e.g. To choose the best computer system for our office operations).
- Brainstorm a list of criteria that a good solution must satisfy (e.g. compatibility, cost, etc.).
- Be clear and concise on the meanings of the criteria, for example:

Definitions of Each Criteria	
Criteria	Definition
A: Compatibility	Runs key office software applications
B: Cost	Total 5-year cost of ownership
C:	
D:	

- Create an L-shaped matrix with the criteria across the top (A-D) and solution options down the side (1-3). Which company's computer system satisfies which requirements?

Options	Criteria			
	A Compatibility	B Cost	C	D
Computer 1 - PC				
Computer 2 - Mac				
Computer 3 - Sony Laptop				

- Assign a weight to each criteria based on importance.

Criteria	*Weight 0-5 (5 being high)
A: Runs key office software application	4
B: Total 5-year cost of ownership	4
C:	
D:	

* Weight is NOT a ranking. Consider each criterion on its own merits.

PROCESS TOOLKIT

Tools for Generating Ideas

- Brainwriting
- History of the Future
- Lotus Blossom

Tools for Exploring Perspectives

- Facilitative Listening
- Wandering Flip Charts
- SWOT Analysis

Tools for Building Consensus

- Decision Grids
- Affinity Diagrams
- Dotmocracy Sheets

Tools for Decision Points

- Gradients of Agreement
- Fist to Five
- Consensus Cards

Debriefing Questions

GRADIENTS OF AGREEMENT

a leadership facilitation tool

A Definition ...

Gradients of Agreement is a tool decide to build group consensus. This is especially important when the item being considered is crucial to the successful completion of the group's ultimate goal. Rarely, in group decision making are there true "yes" and "no" responses. More often than not, there are many "shades" of yes and no. Any variation from true "yes" and "no" responses can sabotage the final project outcome. Gradients of agreement helps to identify those "shaded" area of responses and move the participants to agreement.

Gradients of Agreement

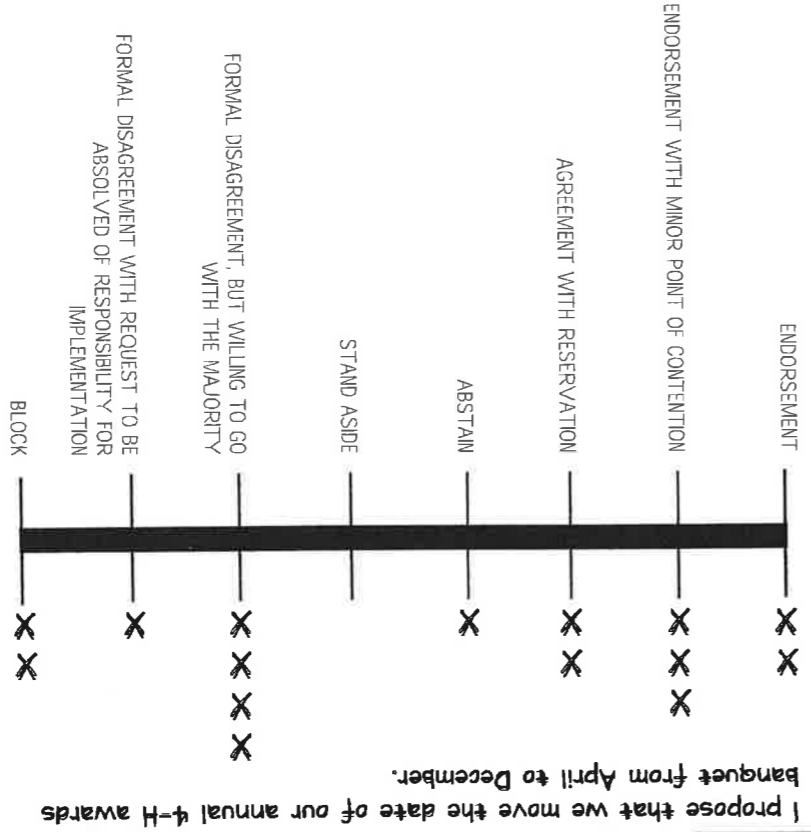
1: Explain to the participants what gradients or levels of agreement mean. Point out the importance of agreeing and how "shades" of yes and no responses can taint the outcome of any decision.

2: Review the levels of agreement:

- (a) **Endorsement:** I like/agree with it.
- (b) **Endorsement with Minor Point of Contention:** For the most part, I like/agree with it.
- (c) **Agreement with Reservation:** It's okay.
- (d) **Abstain:** I have no opinion.
- (e) **Stand Aside:** I don't/won't do this, but I won't hold up the group should they decide to do this.
- (f) **Formal Disagreement, but Willing to Go with Majority:** I want my disagreement formally noted, but I'll support the group's decision.
- (g) **Formal Disagreement with Request to be Absolved of Responsibility for Implementation:** I won't stop the group or any one person, but I don't want to be involved in the implementation.
- (h) **Block:** I veto.

3: Write the proposal/decision/possible solution on a flip chart, chalkboard or white board. Draw the gradient scale underneath. 4: Ask each participant to mark their positions on the scale. 5: For those who disagree or veto, ask how the proposal could be changed to make it agreeable to them. 6: Make the changes and poll the participants again. You may either start with a new scale or change the color of the marker in order to distinguish between the first and second polls. 7: Continue to repeat the process until a consensus is agreed upon.

Looks Like This ...



Write one idea here in large letters:

Do you agree?

Fill your one dot below & sign on the right:

	Strong Agreement		Agreement		Neutral		Disagreement		Strong Disagreement		Confusion
--	------------------	--	-----------	--	---------	--	--------------	--	---------------------	--	-----------

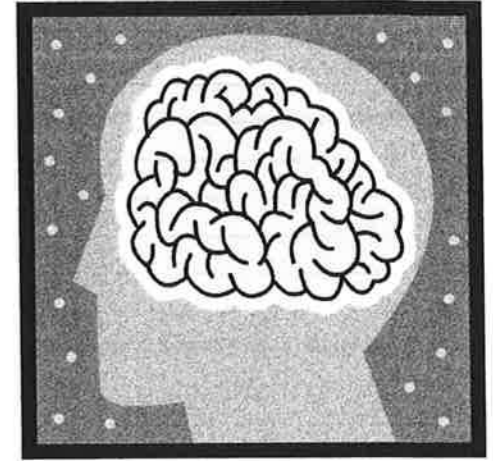
Strengths & Opportunities

Concerns & Weaknesses

Optionally add brief comments:

Facilitator: _____ Place: _____ Organization: _____ Date/time: _____ # _____

BrainwritingPlus: Powerful and Easy!



Brainwriting is one of the simplest idea generation techniques and often creates some breakthrough ideas as people build on the ideas of others. It works best with small groups of 5 – 9 people and the attached worksheets include stimulator words to make it an even more powerful tool. Here are the guidelines:

Reminders:

1. Review issue or purpose for the session.
2. Criteria for success should be developed in advance.
3. Work silently – discussion will follow the ideation time.
4. Be specific – every idea should have a subject and a verb, e.g. Create a weekly newsletter.
5. Don't judge ideas – quantity counts.
6. Build on ideas, reverse them, turn them inside out or upside down.

Generating Ideas:

1. Print out a sheet for each person and distribute them to everyone participating in the session.
2. Each person writes one idea in the three boxes of one line.
3. Once a person has filled in one line of 3 boxes, the sheet is put into the center of the group and a new sheet taken.
4. Each person adds three more ideas to each sheet taken, building on ideas where appropriate or just adding new ideas as they occur.
5. Allow 20-30 minutes or stop once it's obvious that energy is lagging.

Processing Ideas: (If more than 9 people, break into subgroups.)

1. Establish or review criteria for success.
2. Each person takes one sheet and marks with an "X" the ideas that are interesting.
3. Switch sheets and mark interesting ideas. Repeat till everyone has seen 3 sheets.

4. One at a time, have each person read the ideas that have three Xs, then read the ones with 2 Xs, then 1.
5. See if there are any "orphan" ideas that anyone has a lot of passion around that didn't get read.
6. Cut the ideas apart and tape or glue the top ideas onto index cards.
7. Tape them onto easel pages in order of priorities – 3 Xs together on one sheet, 2 Xs on another and so on. Have everyone walk around and re-read the ideas. Begin a discussion about best ideas and how to make them even stronger.

Judging Ideas:

1. Review the criteria again.
2. Use the [Strategy Mapping] process to see how the top ideas place. Or, use the [Quadrant Collaboration] process to create a different quadrant to map the ideas against.
3. Use [Dot Voting with a Difference] to select one or two ideas to develop further.

Worksheets: (choose the one that fits best)

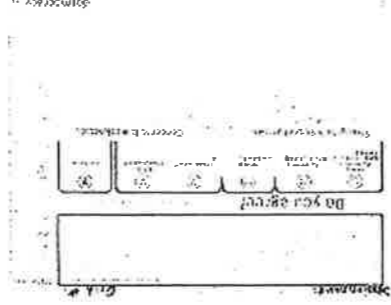
1. Plain Brainwriting Sheet
2. Brainwriting w Random Words
3. Brainwriting w/ SCAMPER Plus

(Click here for to print out instructions and sheets.)

BRAINWRITING SHEET

Directions: Each person takes one sheet and enters 3 ideas – one in each box on a horizontal line. Then, put that sheet in the center of the group, take a new sheet and enter 3 new ideas.

Dotmocracy Sheets



Completed Dotmocracy sheet

Dotmocracy sheets are designed to compliment a consensus decision-making process by providing a simple way to visibly document levels of agreement among participants on a large variety of ideas.^[45] Participants write down ideas on paper forms called *Dotmocracy sheets* and fill in one dot per sheet to record their opinion of each idea on a scale of "strong agreement", "agreement", "neutral", "disagreement", "strong disagreement" or "confusion". Participants sign each sheet they dot and may add brief comments. The result is a graph-like visual representation of the group's collective opinions on each idea.^[47] The *Step-by-Step Process and Rules* defined in the *Dotmocracy Handbook* reinforce consensus decision-making by promoting equal opportunity, open discussion, the drafting of many proposals, the identification of concerns and the encouragement of idea modification.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consensus_decision-making#Dotmocracy_Sheets

Affinity Diagrams

Definition: A group decision-making technique designed to sort a large number of ideas, process variables, concepts, and opinions into naturally related groups. These groups are connected by a simple concept.

Purpose: To sort a list of ideas into groups.

Guidelines:

- ▷ Insure ideas are described with phrases or sentences.
- ▷ Minimize the discussion while sorting -- discuss while developing the header cards.
- ▷ Aim for 5-10 groups.
- ▷ If one group is much larger than others, consider splitting it.

How to Conduct an Affinity Sort:

1. Conduct a brainstorming session on the topic under investigation.
2. Clarify the list of ideas. Record them on small cards or Post-It notes.
3. Randomly lay out cards on a table, flipchart, wall, etc.
4. Without speaking, sort the cards into

"similar" groups based on your gut reaction. If you don't like the placement of a particular card, move it. Continue until consensus is reached.

5. Create header cards consisting of a concise 3-5 word description; the unifying concept for the group. Place header card at top of each group.
6. Discuss the groupings and try to understand how the groups relate to each other.

Tips:

- ▷ Inquire whether ideas are adequately clarified.
 - ▷ Use only 3-5 words in the phrase on the header card to describe the group.
 - ▷ If possible, have groupings reviewed by non-team personnel.
 - ▷ While sorting, physically get up and gather around the area where the cards are placed.
 - ▷ Team members will ultimately reach agreement on placement, if for no other reason than exhaustion.
 - ▷ Sorting should not start until all team members are ready.
 - ▷ If an idea fits in more than one category or group, and consensus about placement cannot be reached, make a second card and place it in both groups.



History of the Future

Purpose

To generate new ideas by imagining an ideal future state in which a goal was achieved even better than was hoped for, using the *Visioning Innovation Style*.

Duration

20 - 30 minutes

Instructions

1. Imagine that it is 3 years in the future... Reflecting back on the goal you were striving for 3 years earlier, you realize that it has been achieved even beyond what you thought was possible, better than you had ideally wished and hoped for.
2. Write a "bullet point" list of what has been achieved, including all of the "ideal wishes" that have come true.
3. Looking back from that future state, tell the story of what it took to get to that ideal.

Facilitator Notes

You can set this exercise up by telling the participants that it is 3 years in the future and they are to write an article for the company's annual report about how a challenge "of 3 years ago" had been successfully met. Or you can say that it is 3 years in the future and a famous business magazine wants to interview them about how a challenge "of 3 years ago" had been successfully met. They are to make an outline of that annual report or business magazine article. If you wish, you can have them write the text in addition to the bullet point list.

Example

"For the last 3 years, sales of our division have grown at a rate of 35% annually, and we have more than doubled in size in that time. Even more astounding, our morale has dramatically improved, due to the breakthrough work of our quality teams. We established a new quality program, educated our employees on breakthrough creativity techniques, and even got our customers involved. We cut product development time by 50%. We received the industry award for most outstanding customer satisfaction."

Our ideal achievements were:

- Establishing a new Quantum Quality program
- Educating all employees in breakthrough creativity techniques
- Getting our customers involved
- Cutting product development time tenfold
- Receiving the industry award for most outstanding customer satisfaction

Lotus Blossom

When to use it

Use it when you want to develop creative ideas.

Use it when you are having problems creating more ideas.

Use it when you are trapped by a single mode of thinking.

Use it to create seeds of ideas that can trigger further good ideas.

How to use it

Describe the problem

Start with a description of the problem you are facing. Write it on a card or Post-it Note and put in in the middle of a large working area. If you are working in a group, this works well with a vertical work area, such as a wall or large pin-board. You can also use the floor or a large table top.

Surround it with ideas

Use other tools for creating ideas to create a set of ideas on how to solve the problem. These should be as different from one another as possible.

Write each idea on a card or Post-it Note of its own and place it around the problem description. Eight ideas fit neatly, as below. You can also do six, in a hexagonal shape.

In placing the ideas around the original problem, you can put them down in a 'knight's pattern'. This helps mix up the ideas and generate more different thinking.

When you are working in a group of people, engage everyone. Perhaps they could create a different idea.

Idea	6	Idea	8
Idea	1	Problem Description	Idea
Idea	4	Idea	7
		Idea	5
		Idea	2

Unfold the lotus blossom

Make a copy of each of the idea cards and place them radially further out from the cluster (the stamen and pistil of the flower) that you created in the previous steps.

Impact/effort grids are easier to use than criteria-based grids because the grid has already been designed and there's no need to create criteria. The major difficulty in using an impact/effort grid lies in clarifying exactly what is meant by the terms "easy to do," "difficult to do," "small improvement" and "big improvement" since everyone will understand these terms differently. Being clear about terminology at the start will avoid much heated debate.

Criteria-Based Grids

Step #1: Ask members to identify the criteria against which potential solutions will be judged. Examples are:

- saves time
- saves money
- reduces stress
- is timely
- is feasible
- is affordable
- supports the strategic plan
- is something we can control
- represents the right sequence
- doesn't disrupt our operation
- will get management support
- satisfies customer needs

Step #2: The relevant criteria are chosen from this list and placed along the top of a grid. The options being considered are placed down the left column. Note that some criteria may be more important than others, and hence given more weight. An example of weighted criteria uses the following scale:

(x 1) = does not meet the criteria

(x 2) = somewhat meets the criteria

(x 3) = good at meeting the criteria

Step #3: The choices are then evaluated as to the extent each meets the criteria. Scores are tallied to identify the best choice.

Decision grid for assessing solutions to the challenge of getting 50 people trained in new software in 14 days.

Criteria	Choices			
	Shut down to give all staff two days' classroom training	Have experts on site for two weeks to give one-to-one support	Have only 10 people off for two days at a time	Totals per Solution
Cost Effective (x 1)	1 2 1 1	2 2 2 1	2 2 3 3	8.25
Meets Customer Needs (x 3)	1 1 1 1	2 3 2 2	2 2 2 2	12.75
Speed (x 1)	3 3 3 3	1 2 1 1	2 2 2 2	14.25
Lack of Disruption (x 1)	1 1 1 1	3 3 3 3	2 2 2 3	

Decision Grids

What is it? A matrix that uses criteria to assess a set of ideas in order to determine which ones are most likely to be effective.

When to use it? When you need to bring more objectivity and thoroughness to the decision-making process.

What's its purpose? To provide a structured decision-making process for dealing with a complex issue involving various elements. Transform a random debate into one in which solutions are judged against an objective set of criteria.

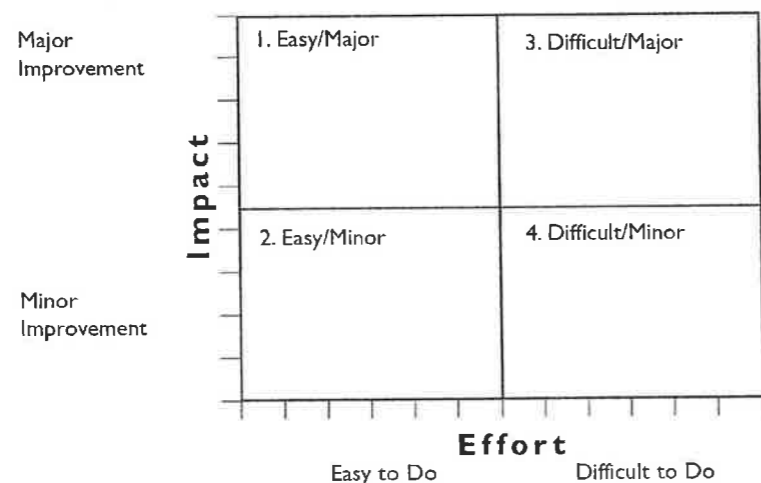
What's the outcome? Clear, sorted ideas emerge from a mass of random inputs. Grids also make the sorting process more systematic. Since everyone gets to cast votes or express opinions, the use of grids is participative and objective.

How to Use Decision Grids

Two types of decision grids are illustrated: *criteria-based* and *impact-effort based*.

Impact/Effort Grids

Step #1: Recreate the chart shown below on a sheet of flip-chart paper.



Step #2: Discuss the various choices, then place each in one of the four boxes:

1. Easy to do and yielding a big improvement
 ☞ for immediate implementation
2. Easy to do but yielding a small improvement
 ☞ for immediate implementation
3. Difficult to do and yielding a big improvement
 ☞ action as major projects
4. Difficult to do and yielding small improvement
 ☞ discarded

Now repeat the previous step of the process, surrounding each of the copied idea cards with secondary ideas, using only the copied idea cards as stimuli. This should result in ideas which are further removed from the original problem.

This can lead to many ideas, as in the diagram below. You do not have to fill in every space - if ideas run out, you can move on. Also, if an idea seems to be leading somewhere, you can repeat the whole process ad infinitum until you get somewhere or nowhere.

When you are working in a group of people, you can rotate them around the lotus. Thus a person puts one secondary idea against a copied idea and then moves on to the next copied idea. This creates a dance around the ideas, moving the thinking on at each step.

Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea
6.6	6.1	6.4	1.6	1.1	1.4	4.6	4.1	4.4
Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea
6.3	6	6.7	1.3	1	1.7	4.3	4	4.7
Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea
6.8	6.5	6.2	1.8	1.5	1.2	4.8	4.5	4.2
Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea
3.6	3.1	3.4	6	1	4	7.6	7.1	7.4
Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea	Prob-	Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea
3.3	3	3.7	3	blem	7	7.3	7	7.7
Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea
3.8	3.5	3.2	8	5	2	7.8	7.5	7.2
Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea
8.6	8.1	8.4	5.6	5.1	5.4	2.6	2.1	2.4
Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea
8.3	8	8.7	5.3	5	5.7	2.3	2	2.7
Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea	Idea
8.8	8.5	8.2	5.8	5.5	5.2	2.8	2.5	2.2

Seek practical answers to the problem

Look around the many ideas you now have and seek to link some of these back to the original problem, using them as stimuli for more practical solutions that may be implemented.

How it works

The Lotus Blossom works to stretch thinking away from the rut that can surround the original problem by using ideas as triggers for further thinking, thus asking you to move further way from the problem than you might otherwise go.

Facilitative Listening

What is it? A technique for getting people to listen to each other and really hear each other's ideas. A way of teaching people effective listening skills.

When to use it? To insure that people really understand each other in situations where there are opposing ideas and people have a history of not hearing each other's views. As a key first step in mediating a conflict.

What does it do? Allows everyone to get a fair hearing and feel understood by the "opposing side". Circumnavigates conflicts by placing people in pairs and limiting their interactions to either presenting views or listening to understand.

What's the outcome? This structured approach to listening insures that people listen to, comprehend and acknowledge the opposing views of others. Since counter-arguments are not allowed, people have an opportunity to hear each other's views. Feeling heard relieves tension and sets a positive tone for tackling issues together.

How to Do Facilitative Listening

Step #1: Announce that you will be asking participants to take part in facilitative listening. Review the following rules:

- One person will be speaking and expressing their thoughts about the subject at hand.
- The second person will be limited in how he or she may respond. It is your job to:
- Stay neutral no matter how you feel about what the other person is saying. Do not express opposing views or argue back.
- Listen actively by maintaining eye contact and using attentive and open body language.
- Ask probing questions after each point made by the other person to get more information.
- Paraphrase what the other person is saying by repeating their main ideas to gain clarity.
- Summarize what the other person has said to insure that his or her ideas have been understood.

Step #2: Clarify the topic to be addressed. Then ask everyone to find a partner. It's important that people select a partner from the "opposing" group. Ask the partner pairs to spread out around the room so that they feel they have some privacy.



S.W.O.T. Analysis

Topic: _____

<p>Strengths</p> <p>.....</p>	<p>Weaknesses</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>Opportunities</p> <p>.....</p>	<p>Threats</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>Action 1 _____</p> <p>Action 2 _____</p>	

SWOT Analysis

This is an extremely useful strategy for examining one's practice or organisation, such as one's club, family, school department, school, P & C or important proposals, decisions or suggestions. There are many applications in curriculum as well. This commonly used method involves categorising both internal and external factors as Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT). Generally, though not exclusively, the strengths and weaknesses are internal factors relating to the organisation itself, while opportunities and threats arise externally. In non-organisational situations such as proposals, the internal-external factors are not always clearly divided.

Process

1. Decide carefully on the topic to be discussed or analysed
2. Create a SWOT template as on the opposite page
3. Write the issue to be discussed next to the heading *Topic*.
4. Complete the operation

Example

If the topic is 'My Classroom Practice':

Strengths would include factors such as your knowledge and enthusiasm level, relationship with your students, ability to motivate and inspire, lesson preparation and many other obvious aspects of your practice. However, one may also include ideas such as the quality of your own friends (could they address your classes occasionally?), jokes, anecdotes, musical ability, your travels, slides, photographs, music collection, sense of humour. How about your comfort level with more recent education theories, learning styles, behaviour management techniques and other issues affecting classrooms today? In short, any resources and capacities which allow you to undertake your professional practice and to fulfil its purpose and needs. You need to be honest in listing those areas where others consider you to be particularly strong.

Weaknesses will require a high level of honesty and self-analysis. I am aware that at certain schools, teachers invite their students to conduct a similar exercise on their teaching practice. Now that is brave behaviour! However, since I also like to keep in mind the saying, "If you always do what you always did, you'll always get what you always got!", especially if things are not going too well, being honest about one's weaknesses is the best place to start any remediation. In addition, one should also look at limitations, barriers and defects in the overall operation which prevent or hinder one from fulfilling one's potential. These may be mentioned in the Threats quadrant since these are external.

Opportunities are normally to be found outside one's immediate operation. If one of the weaknesses is discomfort at addressing larger groups of people, then joining an organisation such as Toastmasters is an opportunity to overcome that weakness. Often the help or solution is to be found within the school or within one's immediate community.

Threats are often more difficult to determine or imagine. Teachers are becoming increasingly aware of the threats of stress, keeping up to date, satisfying paper-work demands and a raft of considerations extraneous to classroom practice. One way of meeting or eliminating some of these threats is to utilise one's strengths, e.g., if you are good at goal setting. Another threat for many teachers and parents is the march of technology and the need to be *au fait* with these developments. One way of meeting these threats is then to avail oneself of workshops offering training in these areas.

Observation

When analysing a situation or proposal (e.g., my classroom practice, the school sports carnival, the effectiveness of our family, the introduction of a Goods and Services Tax, Hitler's decision to invade Russia in 1941, etc) the ensuing open brainstorm usually results in a dog's breakfast of ideas. Consequently, it is difficult to organise the various ideas and therefore almost impossible to arrive at a useful resolution or decision.

Using a SWOT Analysis allows thinkers to view the results of their deliberations in a more ordered and manageable manner (Analysis), decide on a solution or alternative (Synthesis) and if there is more than one possible action, to decide on the best action (Evaluation) and to monitor that action for appropriateness and success (Evaluation). For this reason, I have added *Action 1* and *Action 2* to the template so that one is able to move beyond the Analysis function.

Facilitating With Ease!

Step #3: Determine how much time is appropriate for the particular topic. Set a timer and have the pairs begin their conversations. Maintain time-frames and make sure that people have the chance to play both roles.

Step #4: After the first round, stop the action and ask everyone to find a second partner. Stop after the second round or repeat the process to deepen the dialogue. The facilitative listening pairs can be repeated as often as desirable.

Step #5: If you are working with two individuals, ask each to make a short presentation back to the other person, summarizing his or her new understanding of the situation. Make sure these summaries are acceptable to both parties.

Step #6: If you are working with two groups, allow the groups to caucus separately to combine the information that each person heard into a summary of the views of the "opposing" party. Have each group appoint a spokesperson to make a presentation to the other group, summarizing their understanding of the other party's views. Check the summaries to make sure they're satisfactory.

Wandering Flip Charts

What is it? A safe and participative means of engaging a large number of people in productive conversations about specific issues. A way of gaining a lot of input from a large group in a short time.

When to use it? When you want to explore a wide range of topics with a large number of people and have little time to do it. To energize a group and get everyone into the conversation. When there is a topic that people may not want to talk about in open conversation. When a large open space with useable walls is available and you have a group of at least 20 people.

What does it do? Creates a relatively safe and anonymous setting for conversation. Provides an alternative means of generating group synergy since people get to read and then build on each other's ideas.

What's the outcome? A large number of issues are explored.

Group ideas are developed. Everyone gets to participate and have their ideas added into the mix.

How to Use Wandering Flip Charts

Step #1: Set up the room by posting blank sheets of flip chart paper or poster paper in separate stations around the room.

Step #2: Clarify the topic or series of topics to be discussed. Then divide the topic into segments or sub-topics.

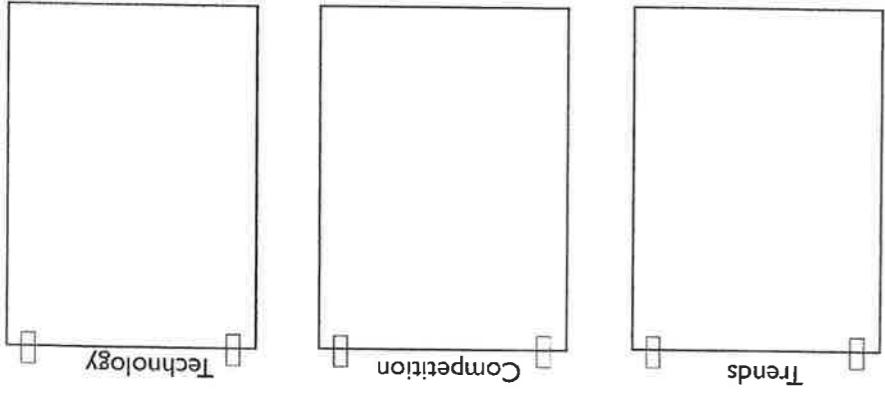
Step #3: Post one topic segment or sub-topic at the top of its own flip chart sheet.

Step #4: Instruct people to wander the room and gather at a flip chart that features a topic about which they have knowledge. Be clear that there must always be no fewer than three and no more than five people at each flip chart. Once there, the participants discuss the topic and record their collective thoughts for a specified period, typically in the range of five minutes.

Step #5: At the end of five minutes invite everyone to wander to another flip chart station, read what the first group has written and confer with whomever else wandered there in order to add more comments to the sheet. This process can be repeated until all of the flip chart sheets are filled. It is not necessary that each person visit each station.

Wandering Flip chart variations and applications:

In planning exercises, the flipchart topics can coincide with various key questions in the planning process, such as: what are the key consumer



trends, what competitive forces do we face, what are our manufacturing strengths, what are our manufacturing weaknesses, what are the next technological innovations we need to prepare to adopt and so forth.

In a problem solving exercise, solve a large number of problems by posting each in a different area and then having participants wander to first analyze each problem. When all of the problems have been analyzed by at least three sets of wandering visitors, have people retrace their steps to read the completed analysis sheets and then begin to brainstorm solutions. After everyone has wandered to at least three stations to add solutions, give everyone a colored marker and invite the participants to tour all of the sheets of brainstormed solutions to check off the three ideas they think should be implemented.

