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Popular Article

Brainstorming – A teaching tool in veterinary education

Ranjani Rajasekaran¹, K. Padmanath², P.N. Richard Jagatheesan³

¹ Assistant Professor, Department of Veterinary Microbiology, Veterinary College and Research Institute, Theni.

² Assistant Professor, Veterinary Clinical Complex, Veterinary College and Research Institute, Theni.

³ Dean, Veterinary College and Research Institute, Theni. Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University.

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What is brainstorming?

Brainstorming is a student-centred cognitive strategy-based teaching methodology, where students in groups of four or five are asked to discuss their ideas and opinions about a specific topic. Brainstorming provides a platform for free thinking without any boundaries, thereby stimulating creative thinking. Brainstorming can be aimed either at discussing ideas about a topic or at arriving at a conclusion or a decision for a problem.

Who coined the term 'brainstorming' and when?

The term brainstorming was introduced by a creative theorist named Alex F. Osborn in the year 1953 through his book *Applied Imagination: Principles and Procedures of Creative Thinking*. Hence, it is important to note that brainstorming has been in practice for more than 70 years now.

When can brainstorming be scheduled in a lecture?

Brainstorming can be scheduled either before the start of the lecture or at the end of the lecture. Brainstorming sessions before the start of the lecture ensures that students get a first-hand knowledge about the next day's lecture in prior. With the knowledge gained, they can discuss their ideas in a group. While scheduling a brainstorming session at the end of the class, a problem-solving discussion can be provided. This

ensures that the knowledge gained during the lecture is understood well by the students, thereby this also serves as an instant assessment for both the teacher and the student.

What are the rules of brainstorming?

There are certain rules to be followed while scheduling a brainstorming session in the class. It includes:

- All ideas should be welcomed gracefully without judgement and criticism.
- Every idea should be given equal importance with scope to build on the given idea.
- Ideas should be focused on the topic under discussion.
- Wild and insane ideas should also be encouraged.
- One idea at a time or one conversation a time.
- Quantity of ideas should be encouraged more than quality.
- Presentation of ideas should be made more fun and visual.

What are the various techniques of brainstorming?

There are various techniques to conduct a brainstorming session. A few techniques include rapid ideation, word-association, round-robin brainstorming, brainwriting, figure storming, mood board and brain netting. Rapid ideation is where the student is asked to write as many ideas as possible about the day's lecture in a given time. Word-association is nothing but a word game where the students are requested to give words that could be related to the lecture. Round-robin brainstorming is asking the students to give one idea at a time until the whole class has given an idea. Brainwriting is jotting down three ideas in a certain time frame and then discussing on those ideas. Figure storming is displaying a picture or a video pertaining to the lecture, after which students are expected to give their ideas. Mood board is similar to figure storming, expect an interesting picture collage of the lecture is made, for students to spell out their ideas. Brain netting is a technique where ideas are fed online where all the students can view each other's ideas.

What tools can be used in brainstorming sessions to make it more fun?

Although there are various brainstorming techniques, effective utilisation of these techniques is required to make learning interesting. This can be fulfilled by physical writing using post-its, charts or papers; digital writing using Microsoft word or PowerPoint; and collaborative writing using online word cloud, Google Doc or sheets.



What are the merits of brainstorming?

- Encourages creativity with freedom to suggest and give ideas.
- Develops thinking capacity.
- Encourages participation in the activity.
- Builds self-confidence and self-expression in students as there are no negative answers in brainstorming sessions.
- The brainstormed words and ideas can be used to explore discipline-based jargons.

What are the limitations of brainstorming?

- Time is limited.
- Introverts and quiet students might not be expressive.
- Extroverts and active students might dominate the group.
- Chances of going off-topic and becoming a chat-session is more.
- Verbal conflict might occur.

How to conduct a brainstorming session?

Topic of the lecture to be brainstormed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Announce the topic of discussion• Display mood boards or videos for discussion
Define the rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All should participate• No criticism of ideas
Define the expected outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ideas in post-its or paper / word cloud / online document / drawings / charts / speak out
Set the time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Place a timer that is viewable for all the students
Evaluate the ideas generated	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Group common and repeated ideas• Remove off-topic ideas
Final discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Give a well-rounded discussion from the responses that have received



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