



Module 2: Brainwriting 6-3-5 Approach To Creative Thinking

BRAINWRITING 6-3-5: Where does it come from?

There are many varieties of Brainwriting. 6-3-5 Brainwriting (or 635 Method, Method 635) is a group structured brainstorming technique aimed at aiding innovation processes by stimulating creativity.

The name Brainwriting 6-3-5 comes from the process of having 6 people write 3 ideas in 5 minutes. The technique was developed by Bernd Rohrbach who originally published it in a German sales magazine, the Absatzwirtschaft, in 1968.

For which purposes it is used?

One of the main advantages of using 6-3-5 brainwriting is that it is a very simple method and therefore is easy and quick to learn. No particular training for the supervisor is required. Brainwriting can be used instead of brainstorming in the following situations (Wilson, 2013):

- When some participants are shy, and you don't want the loud or more powerful ones to intimidate others,
- When you want to give more time for the participants to formulate their thoughts,
- When expressing bold ideas, different from those of the majority or from the leadership of the group, is not well accepted,
- When the issue to be discussed is sensitive, e.g., related to bullying at school,
- When you have limited time - brainwriting allows generating ideas faster than brainstorming,
- When you don't have an experienced moderator - which is essential for good brainstorming but less important in brainwriting,
- When the group is too large for effective brainstorming. Brainwriting can be implemented at a conference of 500 people simply by leaving a large card on each seat, asking a question, and then having each audience member pass a card to someone else, and then repeat three times for a minute of writing.

Brainstorming encourages sharing and exchanging knowledge, so different perspectives can be well exploited. Differently than brainstorming, it assures participation from all members and at the same time avoids issues of domination over introverts that are also likely to feel freer about expressing their own ideas.

All ideas are recorded on the worksheet(s), which means that nobody has to be in charge of taking notes throughout the session; it is possible to keep track of the author of a particular idea. It is a very productive method that allows generating many ideas in a short time.

Brainwriting may not be suitable if the participants find it difficult to express ideas in writing or if more social interaction and/or teambuilding is desired (Wilson, 2013).



BRAINWRITING 6-3-5: Implementation

In a brainwriting session, the moderator asks the participants to write down their ideas about a particular question or problem on sheets of paper in a set period of time (e.g. 5 minutes); then each participant passes their ideas on to someone else, who reads the ideas and adds new ideas.

After the same period of time, the participants are asked to pass their papers to others, and the process repeats. After 10 to 15 minutes, you collect the sheets and post them for immediate discussion.

In Brainwriting 6-3-5 session, each person has a blank 6-3-5 worksheet (below).

Worksheet Template Example

Problem Statement: How to...			
	Idea 1	Idea 2	Idea 3
1			
2			
3			

Tips and tricks

Brainwriting helps students that have less self-confidence to express their ideas in a safer way. If you have technical possibilities, try using a digital tool for the Brainwriting process, e.g., Padlet.

The method may be more difficult to use with students with learning difficulties or lack of cooperation skills. If some children are uncomfortable with this activity, they can be assigned the role of “paper passers”.

For students who are still working on their writing skills, ask questions that can be answered in one word or by drawing a sketch.

Sources:

<https://www.smashingmagazine.com/2013/12/using-brainwriting-for-rapid-idea-generation/>
<https://www.mindtools.com/ak3qj17/brainwriting>