



THE BRAINSTORMING SESSION AS ONE OF THE EFFECTIVE INTERACTIVE METHODS OF TEACHING ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

The article presents the interactive method of brainstorming as one of the excellent teaching strategy to generate ideas on a given topic. It characterizes the stages of the brainstorming session. The article suggests tips for the teachers how to organize the process of brainstorming more affectively. The author's attention is focused on the advantages of this teaching method. It is also mentioned about the theory of Alex Osborn and its steps involved in the creative process of brainstorming.

problem statement. For the successful implementation of educational goals, it is necessary to look for the new means and methods of their realization during the lesson. Using new approaches of conducting a lesson will be one of such means. The methodology of preparing the future teachers should be up to date. It should be based on the usage of the interactive methods. One of such methods of teaching English is brainstorm. Using it during the lesson is one of the most urgent to date. One of its peculiarity is that the brainstorm can be used at different stages and periods of learning. The brainstorm activity helps to avoid a formal approach, for example at the beginning of the lesson or gives the possibility to activate student's attention, or just to check or sum up their knowledge.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Many international and Ukrainian scientists investigate this method. Among them are Hanisha Besant,

John Allman, Oleksandra Glazova, Larysa Shragina, Mark Mereevich.

Purpose of the paper. The first purpose of this work is to show the positive moments of use of brainstorming activities in the class during different parts of the lesson. The second one is to give special pieces of advice which can help teachers in their work.

Discussion of the main material. «Brainstorming is usually called a method of a joint problem solution. This form of communication appeared in the late 30-ies of the XX century. The main purpose of it was to activate creative thinking and to increase the self-confidence and willingness for creative search. Brainstorm can be applied to various activities such as developing a search on the Internet, conflict resolution, writing essays, figuring out problems touching the certain theme, analyzing the learnt material. It is an effective way of creating ideas individually or within a group. These sessions explore and expand a student's ability to think critically and laterally. As students get



actively involved, the sessions aid the process of learning and improve academic performance» [2].

The benefits of brainstorm activity are the following:

- focus students' attention on a particular topic;
- generate ideas;
- teach tolerance for individual differences;
- encourage learners to present and share their ideas and opinions;
- adjust their previous knowledge;
- make students equal;
- eliminate fear of failures;
- based on individuality and creativity;
- students accommodate new information;
- motivate students to express their ideas freely;
- form connections between the topics.

The concept of brainstorming activity was introduced by Alex Osborn in his book *Applied Imagination: Principles and Practices of Creative Thinking* (1953).

«It is easier to tone down a wild idea than to think up a new one». These words belong to Alex Osborn. He was the man, who presented a theory of the steps involved in the creative process, describing it as «a stop-and-go, catch-as-catch-can operation – one which can never be exact enough to rate as scientific» [1, p. 130]. The process, he said, usually includes some or all of these phases:

Orientation: Pointing up the problem.

Preparation: Gathering pertinent data.

Analysis: Breaking down the relevant material.

Hypothesis: Piling up alternatives by way of ideas.

Incubation: Letting up, to invite illumination.

Synthesis: Putting the pieces together.

Verification: Judging the resultant ideas. Alex Osborn established basic rules for brainstorming:

Criticism is ruled out.

«Free-wheeling» is encouraged. The wilder the idea, the better. Quantity is the goal. Combination and improvement are sought.

«In addition to contributing ideas of their own, participants should suggest how ideas of others can be turned into better ideas; or how two or more ideas can be joined into still another idea» The thematic content and form of the brainstorm activity may be various. It depends on purposes of studying. One of the most popular forms of conducting brainstorming is using tables or schemes. For example if we take into consideration the topic «Difficult children», we can ask the students to fill in the following form and then discuss in groups and be ready to present your answers:

The third variant of such kind of activity is used to develop students' critical thinking. The task is to write down the associations to the word «childhood» and be ready to give the examples from the real life. Source: worked out by authors

After the final discussion students have a chance to change their mind. For this the teacher prepare three corners or three boxes, or three colors with words: agree, disagree, not sure.

Brainstorming is conventionally divided into several stages:

- generation of ideas;
- selection of the best idea;
- analysis.

During the first stage of «brainstorming» – the generation of ideas – all participants have the right to make the suggestion for the solution of the task. Criticism of ideas is prohibited. All participants have the right to express their thoughts freely without pressure.

To start with the teacher should set up a comfortable environment for the session: make sure that the room is well-lit, clean and that the teacher has the tools,



resources, and refreshments that he or she needs. When everyone is ready to start, the teacher points out one person to record the ideas that come from the session. In this case the students can use post notes where everyone can see them, such as on sheets of paper or white- boards. In a small or large group select a leader.

In the effectiveness of «brainstorming» a large role is given to the leader (the moral and psycholog- ical atmosphere of the group, the ability to organize the work depends on him, so that no proposal is lost, so that all ideas are discussed, so that the state- ments were not evaluative, but meaningful).

Next step is to present the problem. The problem that you want to solve should be defined clearly. In order to work more effectively the rules also should be mentioned to the participants. The first one is to ensure that only one problem is submitted for consid- eration. The second is participants must be placed in a circle so that they can see each other and be equal. The third rule is the time limit of discussion. It is not more than 30 minutes. (It is proved that a shortage of time generates stress and stimulates brain activity). The fourth rule is letting the leader to have a control. The next one is recording each answer.

The second stage of brainstorming session is the selection of the best ideas. During this stage it is not accepted to emphasize the author of this or that idea. The best ideas appear only with the re- sult of collective creativity.

Once everyone has shared their ideas, start a group discussion to develop other people's ide- as, and use them to create new ideas. Building on others' ideas is one of the most valuable aspects of group brainstorming.

The leader should encourage everyone to con- tribute and to develop ideas, including the quietest people, and discourage anyone from criticizing ideas. The teacher can share ideas if he or she has them.

During the process creativity is welcomed. It is pos- sible to use thought experiments such as provocation or random input to generate some unexpected ideas. The third stage is an analysis of ideas (the partic- ipants are divided into two groups – supporters and opponents – they must analyze all the argu- ments for and against each idea). It is possible to have the third group. Students who are not sure can be placed into it.

Some initial qualities to look for when examin- ing the responses include:

looking for any answers that are repeated or similar;

grouping similar concepts together;

eliminating responses that definitely do not fit. To analyze the ideas the teacher can use several tools. For example: the Six Thinking Hats tech- nique to look at ideas from different perspectives; Multi-Voting can help to choose between options as a team, particularly where the differences be- tween options are quite subjective.

We shouldn't forget about the teacher's role during the brainstorming session. «During group brainstorming sessions, the teacher assumes the role of facilitator and scribe. That is, he or she prompts and probes by asking questions such as «What do you mean?», «Can you give an exam- ple?» or «How are these ideas related?» – record- ing these ideas on the board, an overhead trans- parency, or an electronic display. The outcomes of a brainstorming session can subsequently be used as a resource for further freewriting, listing, or more structured prewriting activities» [5, p. 53].

There are the tips for teachers which help to organize productive brainstorming session:

- set up a comfortable environment for the session;
- participants must be placed in a circle;
- assign a leader (moderate);
- set a time limit;



- choose the person who will write down the ideas;
- ensure that only one problem is submitted for consideration;
- establish a warm, supportive environment;
- emphasize that a quantity rather than the quality of ideas is the goal;
- judgment is forbidden;
- let students generate ideas individually first and then in groups; encourage and provide opportunity for all students to participate;
- stress the importance of listening to expressed ideas;
- recognize and reward innovation;

Conclusions and suggestions. To sum up, we can draw to conclusion that

brainstorming is a great way to allow students to voice their opinions or ideas in a safe environment. This form of interactive activity is perhaps the most interesting, exciting and easy. This kind of work prompts students to show their imagination and creativity, gives them an opportunity to express their thoughts freely. All this stimulates the interest of the participants in brainstorming by the process of cognition, promotes the increase of human activity, the development of its creative potential, promotes the establishment of mutual understanding, high moral culture of communication, because participants were entrusted to manage others and to speak to them publicly.

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