Group Process Techniques

Action Lists
**Goal:** Generate ideas for action
**Process:**
1. Participants keep a list of ideas, and actions that will help them apply the ideas they are discussing.
2. Participants determine a time when they will try each idea.

Brainstorming
**Goal:** Quickly generate many ideas in response to a given question or issue
**Process:** Four methods of brainstorming are described below:

1. **Freewheeling**
   - Group members call out their ideas.
   - A scribe writes down the exact words of each participant.

2. **Carousel**
   - Write a series of questions or topics on the issue on separate sheets of paper.
   - Divide participants into small groups (3–5) and have each group stand in front of a sheet of paper.
   - Each group spends 2–3 minutes generating ideas and recording them on the paper.
   - Each group moves to the next spot where they read the ideas and add additional ones.
   - Continue the cycle until all groups have been in all locations.
   - Participants take a Gallery Walk to read all posted ideas.

3. **One-Two-Six**
   - Individuals write down one idea for action.
   - Participants pair off to share their ideas and agree on one.
   - Participants form groups of six to share their ideas and agree on one.
   - Post the ideas for discussion and next steps.

4. **Slip Method**
   - Divide participants into small groups.
   - Individuals in each group write down their ideas on index cards or Post-it Notes.
   - Each group organizes its ideas into themes and shares them with other groups.

Concept Walk
**Goal:** Preview the materials and book (Participant’s Manual)
**Process:**
- Pose questions about the sections of the book.
- Divide the group in pairs.
- Invite the pairs to skim a section of the book.
- Each pair will briefly describe the contents of a section.
- While the groups describe their sections, the class can read the section being discussed.
- Close the activity by relating the sessions to the course goals.
Fast-Write
Goal: Quickly articulate ideas on a topic
Process:
• Participants listen to a statement, question, or story.
• Participants write without stopping for 2–3 minutes, jotting down whatever comes to mind. Their pens should not leave the page.

Forced-Choice Stickers
Goal: Set priorities and reach agreement on next steps
Process:
• List action steps on a large sheet of paper.
• Distribute a set number of stickers (e.g., round signal dots) to each person.
• Each person must demonstrate his or her priorities by “spending” the stickers, either distributing them across options or weighting them on one or two choices.
• After all group members have distributed their stickers, you will have a visual representation of the group’s priorities.

Gallery Walk
Goal: Generate ideas as an adaptation of the Museum Tour
Process:
• Pose a problem or question to the group as a whole.
• Divide participants into subgroups to explore different perspectives of the problem.
• Members of the subgroups can write, draw, diagram, and so on, their collective response to the problem or question on a large piece of chart paper.
• Post the chart paper on the walls around the room.
• One member of each group stands by the group’s chart to act as an expert while course participants walk around the room, read the charts, and ask questions about the information listed.
• When group members complete their tour, they can take the place of the group members acting as experts to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to see every chart.

Helping Trios
Goal: Offer suggestions in response to a colleague’s questions and dilemmas
Process:
• Person A describes a problem or concern to Persons B and C.
• B and C ask A clarification questions.
• B and C suggest solution strategies to A.
• A asks B and C clarification questions.
• Repeat the process for B and C.

Jigsaw
Goal: Learn content by becoming an expert on a topic, then share that expertise with others
Process:
• Participants begin in home groups. Each member of the home group selects or is
given a different reading assignment.

- The home group splits into expert groups. There is one expert group for each reading. The expert groups read and discuss their particular topic.
- The home groups reconvene, with each member sharing what he or she has learned with other group members.

**K-W-L (Know-Want to Know-Learned)**

**Goal:** Activate prior knowledge and set a purpose for learning

**Process:**

- Divide a piece of chart paper into three columns: K W L
- *Prior* to a learning activity ask the group to share what they already know about the topic and jot ideas down in the "K" column. Don't critique the ideas for accuracy. The group then categorizes the items under the K.
- Next ask the group what they would like to know about the topic and jot their remarks down in the "W" column. The group then categorizes items under the W.
- *After* the learning activity ask the group to reconsider what they have under the K. Did they discover that any of their ideas were inaccurate?
- Ask them to share what they learned and jot it down under the L.
- Compare the K and L columns to see if there are changes in the group’s understanding of the topic.
- Compare the W and L columns. If there are things that the group wanted to learn and didn’t, ask for suggestions on how they might learn those things. You may want to list them under a fourth, H (How), column.

**Museum Tour**

**Goal:** Generate and share ideas

**Process:**

- Pose a problem or question(s) to the group as a whole.
- Subdivide the group into clusters of 4–8 people.
- Give each subgroup several pads of Post-it Notes.
- Allow each individual a few minutes to generate ideas in response to the focus question(s) or problem. Individuals should record each idea on a separate note.
- Ask table members to share their ideas and cluster them into similar categories, posting them on chart paper. They should label each category.
- Direct the groups to rotate clockwise around the tables, viewing each group’s display. Tell them that they will have several minutes at each station and that you’ll signal them when to move to the next station.
- After touring all stations, the groups return to their tables to discuss what they have learned from the other groups.

**Questions With Post-it™ Notes**

**Goal:** Generate and encourage questions from the participants.

**Process:**

- Prior to the beginning of the session, place Post-it Notes on every table and tape a large sheet of chart paper on the wall.
- At the beginning of the session, invite the participants to write any questions they have on the Post-it Notes and place them on the chart paper for the facilitator.
• At the end of the session (or during transition times), the facilitator will answer the questions.
• Questions should be grouped thematically if they seem to cluster. Often isolated questions, when grouped, reveal larger-scale conceptual misunderstandings.

Think-Pair-Share
Goal: Immediately engage participants in a topic
Process:
• Participants spend a few minutes thinking about and jotting down responses to a question or problem.
• Participants form pairs to discuss their responses.
• Each pair summarizes and shares its comments with the entire group or a larger subset.

Three-Step Interview
Goal: Link new information to prior knowledge and experiences
Process:
• Divide participants into groups of four. Ask them to form pairs within their group.
• Each pair has an interviewer and interviewee.
• Person A asks Person B a set of questions.
• Person A takes notes.
• Reverse roles for A and B.
• The group of four rejoins, and the members of each pair share what they have learned from the people they interviewed.

Three-Two-One
Goal: Bring closure to a session or review at the beginning of a new session.
Process:
• Divide the participants into small groups.
• Invite them to share one sheet of paper and write a large 3 near the top, a large 2 in the middle, and a 1 near the bottom of the page.
• Direct the participants to write three good ideas that they learned, two ideas that they can use in their classrooms, and one confusion (an area needing clarification).
• Debrief by having each group share their ideas and respond to the confusion by asking the group for input.

TILT (Things I Learned Today)
Goal: Review what participants learned during a session.
Process:
• Invite the participants to do a Fast-Write, recalling everything they learned during the session.
• After three minutes, ask them to share their writings with the larger group.

These techniques have been reprinted and adapted from three sources: (1) Learning