Study Skills and Test Prep

Lesson Plan | Middle and High School

Lesson Time: 10-20 minutes

Anything Goes Brainstorming

Objectives & Outcomes

Lesson Objectives: Given the broad topic of study skills, students will brainstorm and create a list of strategies to develop and improve their study habits.

Lesson Outcomes: Students will be able to ...

- brainstorm individually and in a group
- analyze a list of strategies for good study skills

Subject Area Connection: Language Arts

Getting Ready

Teacher Preparation: Hang chart papers for brainstorming session around the room.

Materials Required:

- chart paper for each group
- tape or tacks to hang paper
- colored markers
- notebook paper
- pens and pencils
- sticky notes

Key Vocabulary

brainstorming: thinking of many related ideas.

collaboration: working together on a project.

strategy: a plan for getting a desired result.

Background

Brainstorming is a technique for generating a large volume of ideas in a short period of time. It has been used in business and schools for decades. In a brainstorming session, there are a few rules that promote creativity and spontaneity. These are:

- All ideas are accepted
- Build on previous ideas
- Go for a large volume of ideas
- Don't be afraid to put in wild ideas

Brainstorming can be freeform, with people writing ideas all over a paper, or it can be more structured, such as setting categories for ideas. Once a set amount of time has passed, the ideas are collated into a formatted list and reviewed.

Studies have shown that in standing meetings, people are more creative and productive. Therefore, this brainstorming lesson will be conducted standing up. Students will have their papers on the walls of the classroom and will stand in groups as they record their ideas.

Brainstorming can be used for problem solving, for creative ideas, for developing vocabulary, for creating rules and policies, and anything that benefits from a large input of ideas.

"In a brainstorming session, **all ideas are accepted**."

Introduction and Modeling

Draw a picture of a pet on the board and explain to the students that they are going to make some decisions about the pet. Ask them who they think should take care of the pet and what does taking care of the pet involve? How will they take care of its basic needs whether it is healthy or sick?

Explain to students that they have been brainstorming some solutions for the "problem" so they have a plan in place before the pet arrives. Share that brainstorming is a great way to develop a plan for anything, because it allows you to think of new ideas or be inspired by a friend's idea. You might think of something you wouldn't otherwise think of if you hadn't brainstormed the problem. They should keep in mind that it's important to generate as many ideas as possible and not dismiss any of them as silly or unrealistic because you never know what might inspire you.

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Procedure

1. Tell students they will be working on a brainstorming session on how to develop good study skills. Have each group move to one of the pieces of chart paper hanging around the room.

2. Students will be in groups of three or four. Hand out a small stack of sticky notes to each group. One person will write the topic at the top of a piece of chart paper and divide the paper into six sections: who, what, why, when, where, and how. Each person should write ideas about the topic on sticky notes and place them in the appropriate categories.

3. Set a timer for five minutes. Remind students to allow all ideas, no matter how far-fetched they may seem at first. Many unusual ideas lead to other ideas that are more concrete.

4. Students should write their ideas on a sticky note and place it in the relevant category.

5. Monitor the groups, reinforcing the rule that all ideas are allowed, and all group members stay positive.

6. After the timer goes off, students should step back and review their ideas.

7. Students analyze the ideas and create a list of their favorite ones for improving study skills.

8. Students will write two or three paragraphs to a fictional student who needs help with study skills. The letter will give concrete advice on what should be done, based on the ideas generated by the group as well as explaining a brainstorming procedure.

Discussion Questions

- How does brainstorming work?
- Explain why any idea is acceptable in a brainstorming session.
- What are some real world applications for brainstorming?
- How can you individually use brainstorming on a project or assignment you have now?

Evaluation

Read the letters, checking for writing that is clear, coherent, and gives support for the ideas as well as explaining how to brainstorm ideas.

Tips for Tailoring This Lesson

For Higher Grade Levels

- Analyze the ideas and place them in three categories: excellent, useful, and not useful.
- Transfer the ideas to an online document so all group members have a copy.

For Lower Grade Levels

- Instead of sticky notes, have a recorder in the group write all the ideas on the paper.
- Have the students brainstorm without dividing the ideas into categories.

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Alignment to Standards and Frameworks

Common Core State Standards: College & Career Readiness

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Anchor Standards for Writing

CCRA.W.4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening

CCRA.SL.1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCRA.SL.2. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCRA.SL.4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Anchor Standards for Language

CCRA.L.1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

CCRA.L.2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Partnership for 21st Century Framework

Partnership for 21st Century Framework: the framework comprises the skills, knowledge and expertise students should master to succeed in work and life in the 21st century. Partnership for 21st Century Skills www.p21.org

SOCIAL AND CROSS-CULTURAL SKILLS

Interact Effectively with Others

- Know when it is appropriate to listen and when to speak
- Conduct themselves in a respectable, professional manner

Work Effectively in Diverse Teams

- Respond open-mindedly to different ideas and values

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