Brainstorming is designed to help you come up with many ideas and suggestions in a short time. It can be used to generate ideas for projects, help you visualize possible problems, and suggest solutions.

To brainstorm...

Relax
Brainstorming is anything but a rigid and formal exercise. If you are comfortable you will brainstorm much easier, you will generate more creative ideas, and it will be more enjoyable.

Record
Select someone to write down the ideas as they develop (two people if the ideas start pouring in). Try to write on a dry-erase board or flip-chart; something that will display the ideas for everyone to see (“mind-mapping”).

Focus
Select what you want to brainstorm (new projects, problems and solutions, publicity, etc.).

Blurt
Have everyone in the group blurt out as many ideas pertaining to the subject as they can. Don’t discuss the ideas; that will come later. Don’t worry if any of your ideas might be considered silly. Often such suggestions turn out to be extremely useful.

Review
After you have exhausted your great mental reservoir, review your ideas. Throw out the impractical and unworkable ideas and discuss the good ones.

Helpful Hints
Using brainstorming in a group that is unfamiliar with the concept can be difficult. To help break the ice, form a circle and have each person very quickly name something in a category like “the world’s worst food.” This should get people in the mood to brainstorm.

Specify the Brainstorming Rules Before You Begin:
- Evaluation and criticism is forbidden.
- All contributions are to be encouraged. Every idea counts, no matter how silly or impossible it may sound to you.
- Quantity is the goal. Generate as many ideas as possible. Remember – the more ideas generated, the more likely it becomes that you’ll get good ones.
- The combination and improvement of ideas is sought. Combining two or more ideas can generate a better idea.

For more information on organization and personal development skills in the SOAR series, stop by or call UNL Student Involvement, 200 Nebraska Union, 472-2454; or 300 Nebraska East Union, 472-1780. Staff members will be happy to assist you and answer your questions.

Student Involvement
http://involved.unl.edu

Revised 6/2008