

Working with Groups:

Story Boarding

This is sometimes called “snow cards” due to the resulting blizzard of cards/ideas.

This technique originally was developed by the Disney organization as a way to bring together creative people to begin the process of designing a cartoon film. The only tools needed are markers and large sticky notes (4-x 6-inch sheets).

1. Divide the group into smaller groups if it is very large. Hand out several sticky notes to each person and put markers on the table.
2. Ask everyone to silently and independently write all ideas about the topic on their sticky notes. Encourage them to write down thoughts in quick phrases in order to get ideas out quickly. They should write or print large enough to be seen from a distance.
3. At a specified time ask the people to paste their sticky notes on a wall. Sometimes it can be helpful to first have them report in round robin style. Continue the report back until all ideas are shared, and then post the notes on the wall.
4. Categorize the topics under themes or broad headings. Everyone can help with this task. As a facilitator it may be helpful to initially put up sticky notes as titles to help start the organization of ideas. Participants should feel free to get involved and give suggestions. This is like putting together a large puzzle.

5. After most of the ideas are grouped, look for categories that can be merged and renamed. Let people think about these and when they feel it cannot be reduced anymore, review the main categories.

This technique is a simple way to show the diversity of ideas on a topic within the group and how the topics can be organized into more manageable categories for future action or discussion.

Reference: University of Minnesota Facilitation Resources. (2001). Managing group interaction. In partnership with Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs. (4)16.

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