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An effective classroom technique for brainstorming utilizing Play-Doh®

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Abstract

This article suggests an interactive management classroom activity, introducing business students to several issues that are often found in task-oriented business teams when brainstorming. Brainstorming is an essential element in decision-making and often a platform for creativity leading to innovation. In a previous classroom lecture, Osborn's (1957) four rules of brainstorming are introduced. This work also examines topics often found in groups including leadership, social loafing, and cohesiveness. The day of the activity, the groups are assigned, given a task to perform, and one can of Play-Doh® to utilize in task completion. Teams must work together to accomplish all elements of the task given. Observers document the occurrences of brainstorming rule breaking, leadership development, social loafing, and group cohesiveness. Debriefing and evaluation by observers are presented. Students are given the opportunity to evaluate their own brainstorming abilities. Results report that successful groups (groups that can successfully complete the task) are the groups that are able to more closely follow the rules of brainstorming. Observer and individual evaluations also coincide in the successful groups. This article provides an easy activity that can be completed in a seventy-five minute class period. It may also be scaled back for completion in a fifty minute class.

Keywords: brainstorming, group dynamics, leadership, social loafing, creativity, group cohesiveness