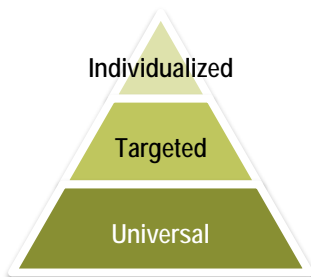


Brainstorming



Brainstorming is a process for generating ideas on a given topic without stopping to evaluate responses as they are recorded. It encourages students to explore their thinking and understanding, and form connections between previous experiences and the current topic. Brainstorming encourages students to improve, combine, and build on ideas.



A teacher's understanding of their students' learning needs helps determine when to provide universal, targeted, or individualized instructional strategies. For some students, universal instructional strategies may be enough to meet their learning needs. For others, more targeted instructional strategies are the starting point for implementing the curriculum. The strategy described is a guideline that teachers can use depending on the learning context.

Why use this strategy in an inclusive learning environment

- Can be used to generate ideas and to record what students know or understand about a topic.
- Encourages students to make connections and acknowledges what they know.
- Can be used prior to studying a new topic or to review content that has been learned.
- Encourages students to take risks in generating and sharing their ideas and opinions.

How this strategy could be used in an inclusive learning environment

1. Introduce the topic and discuss brainstorming guidelines to help students participate. They could include:
 - accepting all contributions, including repetitions;
 - encouraging students to build on each other's ideas;
 - being respectful of everyone's ideas; and
 - modifying or adapting a given idea is welcome.
2. Record the ideas that students generate using key words and phrases, and ensure that responses are visible. Encourage students to think aloud and share as many ideas as they can.
3. Once brainstorming is complete, model how to select the responses that best suit the topic and which ideas to set aside. Initial criteria could include eliminating responses that are repeated and grouping similar concepts together. Agree on the remaining responses as a group.



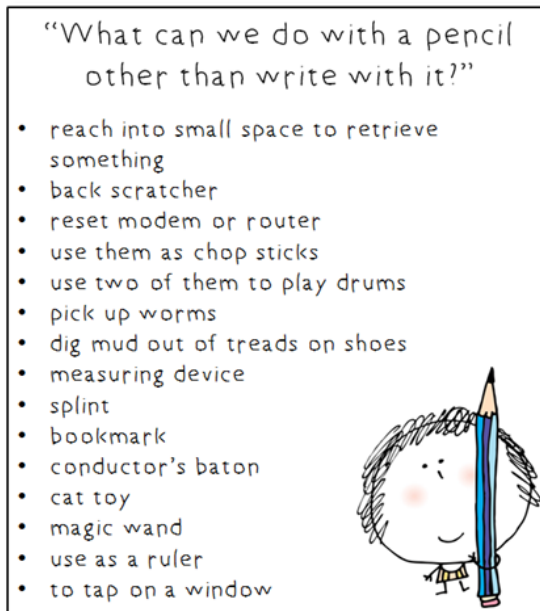
Example

1. This example demonstrates how a story can be used to generate new ideas. Not a Stick by Antoinette Portis is the story of an imaginative pig and a stick.
2. Explain to students that they are going to work together to brainstorm both real and imaginary ideas for using a pencil.

Remind students that all ideas are valuable and that “piggybacking” (adding to, modifying, or adapting a given idea) is welcome.

For example, ask students, “*What can we do with a pencil other than write with it? Let’s brainstorm all the ideas we can in the next few minutes.*”

3. After brainstorming with students, introduce the book, Not a Stick. Read the book with students and have them keep track of how many of their ideas show up in the story.



Tips for individualized supports

- Model the brainstorming process ahead of time to provide additional practice prior to a larger group activity.
- Explore unfamiliar topics with concrete examples in advance to provide sufficient time for students to generate and record ideas.
- Use word prediction software to record ideas individually or in groups and for students to refer to in other activities on the same topic.
- Ensure students have enough time to process the information provided before being asked to respond.
- For English language learners, provide sentence starters to help students scaffold responses during or after the brainstorming activity:
 - *I agree with _____ that _____.*
 - *I realize that _____.*
 - *I would like to add _____.*
 - *I don’t understand what _____ meant.*
 - *Why is _____ different from _____?*

