



Directions: Brainstorming is a way of generating an assortment of ideas without criticism or judgment about the quality of those ideas. The team leader, or another team member, can use this procedure to lead team members to brainstorm answers to questions or responses to issues as needed.

1. Have chart paper and markers available.
2. Write the question or issue the team is addressing at the top of the chart paper.
3. Explain the following guidelines for generating responses to the question or issue:
 - Ideas should be developed as quickly as possible.
 - Everyone on the team should contribute ideas.
 - Unique and off-the-wall ideas are welcome.
 - Do not critique or evaluate ideas during the brainstorming period.
 - No discussion during this time! Just throw out ideas.
4. Begin with the first question or issue the team will address and toss out ideas. List all suggestions on the chart paper. Continue until the supply of ideas seems exhausted.
5. Examine team members' suggestions. Team members may now explain their ideas or ask questions about ideas that others suggested. They should delve more deeply into each other's thinking and consider which ideas are most useful.
6. With a marker, put a check mark by keepers — those suggestions that all team members agree to include as one of the answers for the question or issue.
7. Cross out ideas that team members do not think work well as a response.
8. Reach consensus on remaining suggestions, and decide whether or not to include them with the team's list of agreed-upon responses.
9. Compile a list of all keepers.
10. Continue using this process as needed to generate a list of ideas for each question or issue the team needs to discuss.

Source: Jolly, A. (2008). *Team to teach: A facilitator's guide to professional learning teams*. Oxford, OH: NSDC.

This tool is one of many included in *Team to Teach: A Facilitator's Guide to Professional Learning Teams* (NSDC, 2008). Turn to the book to develop a comprehensive understanding of how to lead a high-functioning professional learning team focused on improving student outcomes. *Team to Teach* is available at www.learningforwardstore.org, item #B394, member price \$40.

