



## Small Group Decision-Making Procedures

Chapter Seven


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## Decision-Making Procedures

Definition

Decision-making procedures describe structured methods of decision making that coordinate group members' communication, keep members focused on the issues at hand, and guide members through the process of problem diagnosis, solution selection, or solution implementation




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## Idea Generation Procedures

### Share Four Common Principles:

- 1 Encourage the generation of many ideas
2. Members are focused on one single activity
3. Members must follow a set of rules or steps in working through the decision-making process
4. Members must commit to using the procedures in a cooperative group climate




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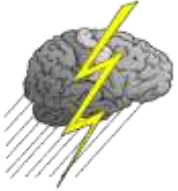
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## Brainstorming



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## Brainstorming

Definition

Brainstorming allows groups to generate more ideas or solutions to problems than individuals might generate working alone

Brainstorming is considered an appropriate decision-making procedure to use for many reasons



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## Brainstorming

Four rules of brainstorming

1. No evaluation should occur during the session
2. Members should generate as many ideas as possible without extended pauses
3. Members should be encouraged to be creatively wild and crazy
4. Piggybacking or hitchhiking on ideas is important



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## Brainstorming



### Three tips make brainstorming more effective

1. One member should be selected to write the ideas on a blackboard (or other surface) so all members can view them
2. All members must understand and agree to follow the four rules
3. Members should refrain from evaluating ideas

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## Nominal Group Technique (NGT)



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## Nominal Group Technique (NGT)



### Definition

Allows members to independently and silently generate ideas, but not as a group

Members then combine ideas and later view the process as one in which they worked as a group

Requires the use of a facilitator

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## Nominal Group Technique (NGT)



### Facilitator

An individual whose task is to ensure that group members follow the decision-making procedure in the time allotted



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## Nominal Group Technique (NGT)



### Four steps of NGT

1. Members silently generate ideas
2. The facilitator records the members' ideas so they are visible to all members and members then present their ideas, one at a time
3. Members clarify ideas to make sure other members understand what the recorded ideas mean
4. Members vote on the best idea

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## Ideawriting



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## Ideawriting



### Definition

A procedure that focuses on a single topic that produces a written product

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## Ideawriting



### Four steps of Ideawriting

1. Members react to stimulus questions by listing three or four ideas and supplying reason(s) why each idea has merit
2. Members select a list other than their own and respond to the list by providing suggestions

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## Ideawriting



### Four steps of Ideawriting

3. Members read other members' comments on their list and respond, in writing, to the solutions, suggestions, and weaknesses provided
4. Members summarize, report, and evaluate their collective ideas and select those ideas they think merit further discussion

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## Six Thinking Hats



### Definition

Designed to simplify thinking by having a group focus solely on one aspect of a decision at a time

Groups wear one of six hats at any given point

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## Six Thinking Hats



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## Six Thinking Hats



### Definition

Designed to simplify thinking by having a group focus solely on one aspect of a decision at a time

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### Six Thinking Hats



1. The white hat is used to approach the decision in a neutral and objective manner by providing facts and figures



2. The red hat is used to approach the decision in an emotional manner by legitimizing members' emotions and feelings about the decision



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### Six Thinking Hats



3. The black hat is used to approach the decision in a cautious manner by centering on the negative aspects (i.e., risks, differences) of the decision



4. The yellow hat is used to approach the decision in an optimistic manner by focusing on the positive aspects of the decision



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### Six Thinking Hats



5. The green hat is used to approach the decision in a creative manner by exploring alternatives of the decision



6. The blue hat approaches the decision in a procedural manner by monitoring the decision-making procedures used by the group



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## Six Thinking Hats



### To use

1. Begin with the blue hat
2. Use at least two hats
3. Spend no more than one minute per member per hat

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## Why Use Decision-Making Procedures?




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## Decision-Making Procedures



### Four advantages of using decision-making procedures

1. The rules a group follows in idea generation create other benefits aside from the narrow focus on the quantity of ideas
2. The procedures aid in the development of group and member creativity

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## Decision-Making Procedures



### Four advantages of using decision-making procedures

3. The procedures increase group efficiency and enhance the quality of the decision
4. Facilitators (or leaders) can conduct sessions with a large number of groups

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## Decision-Making Procedures



### Three disadvantages of using decision-making procedures

1. Researchers have not consistently proven that groups outperform individuals, particularly in brainstorming sessions
2. Some group members' communication and personality traits affect their participation in decision-making procedures

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## Decision-Making Procedures



### Three disadvantages of using decision-making procedures

3. Some group members may feel restrained by their lack of creativity

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## Decision Assessment Procedures



Procedures used after a decision has been made in order to reduce chances of error and post decisional regret

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## Risk Procedure



- Members settle on a preliminary choice, but pause before proceeding to implement the choice to engage in a second-chance meeting (Janis, 1982)
- At second-chance meeting, members generate a list of the major risks of moving forward with the choice.
- Members engage in critical discussion (Black hats) of each risk– What are the chances risk will occur? If it does, how can it be managed?
- Members then choose to implement choice, implement a modified choice, or abandon choice and begin decision processes again.

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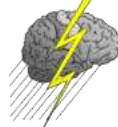
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## A Final Note



Amazingly, most students admit their groups do not use any of these decision-making procedures, with the exception being some form of brainstorming

When working in a group, think about the advantages of using these procedures and do so



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