

How do groups and individuals select and evaluate ideas they generated
in a brainstorming session?

Torsten Reimer, Shuo Yao, & Laura Harger

Abstract

Brainstorming is a popular technique to generate innovative ideas. Only few studies, though, have investigated how groups select ideas. We asked participants subsequently to their brainstorming sessions to select their best ideas either individually or in three-member groups. Interactive groups (a) produced more unique ideas than individuals and nominal groups, (b) but focused more on common ideas when selecting ideas, and (c) evaluated their ideas to be better than individuals. The perceived quality of ideas was unrelated to the quantity of generated ideas. The results question the widespread claim that brainstorming should be done individually rather than in interactive groups.