

Brainstorming and Benchmarking Tips

- Create an environment that encourages everyone to participate.
- Listening to all ideas is crucial – let people finish before offering your idea, and ask for elaboration when necessary.
- Moderate and record the session.
- Record all of the ideas – focus on the idea’s content, not the person who offered it to the discussion.
- The time should be devoted to brainstorming – don’t allow for any external interruptions during the session, but set a time limit.
- Think about what you “need.” Review this topic, and ask “Why”, “How” and “What” questions to generate ideas about it.
- Let one idea lead into other ideas.
- If an idea is repeated, ask the person to modify it so it becomes an entirely new idea.
- What hasn’t been done before? Don’t be afraid to break new ground.
- Nothing is sacred – freely challenge ideas.
- Encourage outrageous ideas, don’t censor them.
- When you think you’ve exhausted the topic, force the group to add a few more ideas. Desperation isn’t always a bad thing.
- Don’t judge or eliminate ideas until the end of the meeting. Don’t even react if possible, as all ideas are valid until this point.
- Use ranking, voting, or elimination to reduce the number of applicable ideas.

Tips from Engaging Learning: Designing eLearning Simulation Games:

- Include all players — programmers/graphic artists.
- Circulate your criteria for a solution.
- Have your team brainstorm on their own.
- Allow time for ideas to incubate.
- Allow several hours for team meeting.
- Review ISD criteria.
- Do warm up or loosen-up (relate to experience, trip, character) activity.
- Get individual contributions - no value judgments.
- Look for connections between ideas.
- Insist on wild ideas.
- Juxtapose random ideas.
- After all ideas presented, move to select key ideas through evaluation process.

Quinn, Clark. 2005. *Engaging learning: designing e-learning simulation games*. San Francisco, CA: Pfeiffer.