# Optimizing Communication Competence in ELF Learners via Brainstorming Methods (A Study at Qassim University)

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## ABSTRACT

The study was conducted with a sample of 18 EFL teachers and 122 students from the Department of English Language and Literature in Arrass. This population was selected to provide insights from both educators' perspectives and learners' experiences, aiming to evaluate the effectiveness of brainstorming techniques in enhancing English proficiency.The main characteristics of modern education are Interaction, communication, and engagement. To facilitate learner-centered education and enhance outcomes, it is believed that an interactive class must incorporate active participation. Brainstorming is a popular participative strategy for decision-making that can be effectively employed in a classroom situation. This study is analytical. Despite utilizing a descriptive research methodology, data from the relevant populations were collected through questionnaires. The findings illustrate that brainstorming is a very successful instructional approach that attracts the attention of both students and teachers. The main objective of the present study was to investigate the learning environment and address the related processes using descriptive research methods. Two questionnaires were specifically designed for students, and the other was made for teachers. Before administering the two tools, an assessment of content validity was conducted. Below is a detailed examination of the two instruments employed in the study and the researcher's observations and expertise. A thorough examination of the student questionnaires, analyzing each item individually. Exhaustive Compilation.

**Keywords:** Brainstorming, communication, competence, innovation, strategy, self-motivation.

## Introduction

Brainstorming is a decision-making technique that may be applied in any situation where participation is expected. It is also utilized in an educational context. The presence of the group, both physically and intellectually, is essential for ensuring the quantity of ideas throughout the brainstorming session. This leads to selecting the most qualified candidate from a group of candidates, and the coordinators effectively carry out this decision. Brainstorming serves to assess the level of understanding the decision-making body has acquired on the problem at hand. At times, individuals make decisions without thoroughly contemplating the matter at hand. Long-term consequences result from such judgments since they can be harmful and ineffective. During the "Brainstorming" process, the group gains insight into each other's authenticity and commitment to the organization they are employed. Due to their combined expertise, numerous members will generate enough solutions, several of which may be somewhat pertinent to the current issue. Still, some may have reservations considering the current situation.

## Literature Review

There is an abundance of studies available that examine learning processes in general. Many scholars place significant emphasis on the participatory technique. Here is a summary of several pertinent studies: Tsui (1996) examined the motivating aspect that drives students to participate in brainstorming sessions. According to Bejarano et al. (1997), establishing communication within small groups is essential for helping students develop effective learning practices. Nevertheless, there has been limited investigation into the effectiveness of learning strategies such as brainstorming in the context of teaching practical skills like writing. According to Richards (1990), brainstorming is an effective technique for promoting student involvement, which is essential for cultivating the cognitive skills required for generating ideas. The study's findings indicated that students who received instruction on the brainstorming technique exhibited greater proficiency in organizing and generating ideas than those in the control group. In his 1994 study, Brown examined the significance of an interactive learning environment and discovered a plethora of captivating data. Rao's (2007) study found that students who received instruction in the brainstorming technique and consistently employed it over a year achieved considerably improved results on their writing projects. Moreover, a survey evaluating attitudes indicated that the students participating in this research project held a positive view of the effectiveness of brainstorming techniques. VanGundy (1981) found that the technique of "brainstorming" has been successfully utilized in the commercial context to promote creativity and innovation. Brainstorming is a commonly used method for teaching writing in language classes. Common warm-up or pre-writing exercises often involve word mapping and free association (Richards, 1990, 112).

### Definition of brainstorming

Brainstorming is the act of combining lateral thinking, which involves thinking creatively and beyond the box, with a flexible and informal approach to problem-solving. Individuals are tasked with identifying notions and ideas that may originally seem insignificant. The objective is to amalgamate certain concepts to generate distinctive and inventive solutions for problems. Even seemingly insignificant thoughts can serve as inspiration for subsequent ones. The objective of brainstorming is to guide folks towards novel viewpoints and away from traditional thought processes. The main feature of brainstorming is that ideas should not be subjected to criticism. Students strive to possess a receptive and unbiased mindset, refusing to accept any preconceived ideas or assumptions about the limits of the problem. Following the brainstorming phase, evaluations and analysis of ideas are examined, although the primary focus should be on generating new ideas at this stage. The brainstorming process facilitates the generation of inventive solutions to difficulties. It motivates students to question existing beliefs and investigate new, uncharted areas of study. Problem-solving has become an essential element of the teaching and learning process. Brainstorming can enhance collaborative problem-solving by infusing it with a sense of creativity and satisfaction while minimizing its formal and impersonal nature. You can utilize it within your classroom to incorporate the diverse perspectives of your students. This enhances the range of subjects covered, especially before the reading, writing, and listening tasks. Brainstorming ideas is an enjoyable activity. Consequently, it establishes stronger relationships between students and teachers as they address disputes in a secure and supportive setting. Although the brainstorming technique was initially intended for group settings, individuals can also effectively employ it to produce ideas.

"Mind mapping is a highly effective way to generate ideas and think creatively about a subject. It provides a visual framework that helps organize thoughts and identify relationships between concepts."

"Brainstorming plays a crucial role in fostering creativity within teams and individuals. It removes constraints on thinking, encouraging innovative solutions to problems that may not be evident through traditional analytical approaches." (Brown, T. 2009. Change by Design: How Design Thinking Creates New Alternatives for Business and Society. Harper Business.)

### Different brainstorming techniques

"Individual brainstorming can be just as effective as group brainstorming, particularly when there is a need for in-depth thinking or when the goal is to explore personal insights before group discussion."
(Michalko, M. 2006. Thinkertoys: A Handbook of Creative-Thinking Techniques. Ten Speed Press.)

When comparing group brainstorming to individual brainstorming, it is shown that individuals who brainstorm alone tend to generate a greater number of ideas, and these ideas are often of higher quality. Other reasons could contribute to this. Students

may not consistently adhere to brainstorming principles precisely in collaborative environments, perhaps leading to undesirable group dynamics. Instead of generating their ideas, students may focus more on the thoughts of others. Occasionally, students experience a lapse in memory regarding their intended message when they are in a state of anticipation to communicate. Individuals may experience obstacles due to their shyness. Some students are most productive while working independently. Engaging in individual brainstorming can enhance enjoyment and reduce stress levels. Due to their freedom from concern over the ideas and thoughts of others, kids can express their creativity more openly. A student may experience a sense of ease and curiosity when delving into an idea during a solitary brainstorming session, even if they consider it to be unworthy and are hesitant to discuss it in a collaborative brainstorming session. Students can voice their thoughts without the need to wait for others to finish speaking. Nevertheless, there are instances when engaging in alone brainstorming yields lower levels of productivity. During a brainstorming session, the collective experiences of the group members enhance the comprehensive development of ideas. This is a potential omission in brainstorming sessions that solely consider the members' individual experiences.

**Group brainstorming can offer numerous advantages:**
"Group brainstorming encourages a range of perspectives, leveraging collective creativity. It allows individuals to build on each other's ideas, often resulting in more innovative                                                solutions."
(Osborn, A. F. 1953.

Brainstorming is a method that harnesses the combined knowledge and creativity of a group to tackle an issue. When a member of the group exhausts their ideas, the ingenuity and expertise of another member can propel the proposal forward. Consequently, engaging in group brainstorming can generate more comprehensive ideas compared to brainstorming individually. Another benefit of group brainstorming is that it fosters a sense of collective involvement toward the final thought. It serves as a reminder of the existence of individuals with innovative concepts. Brainstorming is an effective method to foster cohesion and enhance team dynamics within a group. However, group brainstorming does have numerous drawbacks. It could be perceived as dangerous. At first, unconventional yet impressive ideas may not seem pertinent. Consequently, the educator must exercise caution to avoid stifling these thoughts. Collaboration should not impede creative problem-solving.

**How to Apply Brainstorming**
John R. Hayes (1989) suggests using these strategies outlined in his book "The Complete Problem Solver. "Ensure that the ideation and assessment processes are kept separate. Commence the initial phase of idea generation and, without engaging in critical evaluation, quickly record thoughts as they spontaneously arise. It is crucial to accept and adopt unconventional or extravagant notions and actively work towards enhancing or integrating existing ideas. The challenging aspect of this phase involves subduing your internal evaluator, which may cause you to dismiss an idea that appears
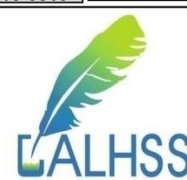
excessively apparent or unproductive. Similarly, as previously mentioned, brainstorming is as effective when done in groups or individually. I believe that teachers should utilize diverse brainstorming techniques to assist students in meeting their individual learning preferences and needs. Furthermore, there is the option to integrate both approaches by allowing students to engage in private brainstorming, followed by a collective brainstorming session where they can share and discuss their ideas. In the subsequent discussion, I will outline the process of conducting a brainstorming session with your group.

Arrange and set up the space for the brainstorming session. Arranging the student workstations near enhances their ability to participate more effectively. During the session, you have the option to record any thoughts that arise or delegate this task to a student, depending on their level of proficiency. It is imperative to document the ideas in a manner that is unambiguous and accessible to all. You can make use of either the whiteboard or computers equipped with data projectors. Group brainstorming might employ a list as a resource for generating fresh ideas when individual contributions become depleted. Once the flood of ideas ceases, it is necessary to initiate the evaluation phase. Now, you assess each recommendation to determine which ones are the most probable solutions to the problem. Clearly articulate the problem you want your student to address. Make sure that the kids comprehend that the objective of the brainstorming session is to produce many ideas. Following the presentation of the problem, allocate sufficient time for the students to contemplate it independently. Promote and foster students' ability to articulate their viewpoints.

Ensure that every child is provided with an equitable opportunity to participate. Motivate all students, even those who are hesitant, to actively participate and share their views. Instruct students on the concept of building upon or generating novel ideas by leveraging existing ones. Inform the class that it is not appropriate at this moment to evaluate or criticize ideas, as this could pose a potential risk, impede the generation of creative solutions, and disrupt the brainstorming process. Members of the group must maintain an open-minded disposition. Demonstrate your excitement by consistently offering positive feedback for every contribution. Allow students unrestricted opportunities to articulate their thoughts and unleash their creativity. Enable individuals to engage in enjoyable activities and freely exchange a multitude of ideas.

### Brainstorming in EFL & ESL classes

Generating ideas in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms Preliminary to reading: Students endeavor to respond to as many of the questions posed by the instructor as possible, to comprehend the content comprehensively. The questions should encompass a diverse range of potential responses. Before engaging in the act of listening. Unchanged from its previous state. Students provide an equal quantity of responses to open-ended inquiries. Before writing, a topic can be thoroughly brainstormed either through an individual or group brainstorming session or a combination of both, to generate a
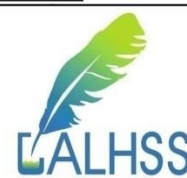
maximum number of ideas. Students utilize their notes to create a structured plan and compose the initial version of their work, which will then undergo revision throughout the class. Students should proactively study grammar instead of relying on the teacher to guide them through each stage for comprehension. Students should consider the functions, applications, and construction techniques of various structures. This exercise would be enjoyable. When studying English as a foreign language (EFL) or English as a second language (ESL), students frequently encounter challenging vocabulary. While it is commendable to teach students how to utilize dictionaries, it would be more advantageous for them to employ brainstorming sessions to comprehend intricate terminology through contextual analysis. Reissue an invitation to students to resubmit their estimates, and be open to accepting all of them, including the most imaginative ones. Subsequently, aided by the teacher, the students endeavor to assess them and choose the most suitable interpretations. Conducting a brainstorming session can be beneficial in resolving problems or developing innovative ideas. The classes aim to evaluate and enhance the student's critical and lateral thinking abilities. The classes foster active participation, which enhances learning and boosts student performance.

**In the classroom, how might teachers facilitate student brainstorming?**
Conducting a brainstorming session might aid in problem-solving or idea generation 2. These seminars evaluate and enhance the students' critical and lateral thinking abilities. The classes foster active participation, which enhances learning and boosts student performance.

**What benefits may brainstorming sessions provide?**
Brainstorming sessions provide several key benefits, including enhanced creativity, improved problem-solving, and increased team collaboration. Research indicates that structured brainstorming encourages diverse idea generation (Paulus & Brown, 2007) and fosters a more inclusive environment for participation (Nijstad et al., 2002). Additionally, group brainstorming has been shown to stimulate cognitive stimulation, leading to higher-quality solutions (Osborn, 1957). By leveraging collective knowledge, organizations can drive innovation and make more informed decisions (Sutton & Hargadon, 1996)."**

During classroom brainstorming sessions, students are prompted to openly express their viewpoints and concepts on many topics. Due to the absence of definitive correct or incorrect responses in the workshops, students are provided with a forum to express their ideas without the apprehension of experiencing failure. Students can establish connections between the content being taught in class and their prior knowledge by utilizing it during the sessions. Furthermore, it cultivates in students a sense of the need for mutual respect by actively engaging in attentive listening and thoughtful consideration of others' perspectives. Implementing specific guidelines can enhance the efficiency of the brainstorming session, despite its first appearance of being unstructured. Expressing one's opinion instead of engaging in a heated debate:

Brainstorming does not involve the concept of a winning or losing team. Every concept and notion is given equitable consideration and significance. The teacher should preside over the meeting to ensure a congenial exchange of ideas and that the students acquire knowledge. Ensure universal participation in the session by all individuals. React is a JavaScript library used for building user interfaces. Deliberately construct the issue that requires careful consideration to ensure the generation of a high quantity of thoughts. Teachers should compile a roster of supplementary inquiries if students deviate from the main topic or if the conversation becomes prolonged. These questions could facilitate the students' cognitive process correctly. Assign the students the task of documenting their ideas in written form to ensure their preservation and avoid redundancy. Establish a certain time limit: Establish a predetermined duration for the chat. The amount of time allocated would depend on the subject matter. After the conclusion of the lesson, a student can consolidate all the subjects that were covered. Facilitator: The teacher should oversee the meeting and handle it without making any subjective decisions or providing commentary on the topics discussed.

## Several guidelines for setting up brainstorming sessions:
The instructor can easily facilitate brainstorming sessions in the classroom by employing the following strategies: Basic conceptualization, Displaying the discussion topic on either the chalkboard or a flip chart, and instruct the students to express their ideas. Once the designated time has passed, students are permitted to engage in a discussion regarding the topics displayed on the board or chart.

- **Brainstorming in groups**

Classes can be classified into distinct categories. Participants can be equipped with identical topic matters, a sheet of paper for documenting their thoughts, and explicit instructions on the duration of the activity. After the allocated time has passed, one student from each group will be chosen to orally express their opinions. Students may be provided with an additional sheet of paper to record any concepts that they find difficult to comprehend. Through this approach, students can create and comprehend each       concept       that       is       introduced       throughout       the       session.


- **Collaborative                        ideation                        in                        pairs**
Using this methodology, the students are grouped into pairs, and each pair engages in discussions and records their opinions.


- **Advantages of Concept Development**
Below are some advantages of brainstorming approaches: Firstly, the target group can produce a greater number of alternative solutions because they possess more precise and comprehensive knowledge. Furthermore, Democracy is the fundamental basis for collective decision-making. Democratic institutions, widely recognized and in line with democratic standards, guarantee fair educational possibilities. Furthermore, employing a brainstorming strategy to make decisions seems more effective due to the active participation of every group member. The advantages of brainstorming show

how important it is. This is held in both general and instructional settings. Nonetheless, brainstorming may be more suitable and useful in educational institutions since it takes a more democratic approach and is focused on human relations, unlike educational administration (Khan, 2004, 2005). Brainstorming is the method of generating ideas in a spontaneous and unstructured manner to explore various aspects of a given topic. These thoughts are not subject to any reorganization or alteration. Consequently, they could serve as the foundation for an additional activity, such as verbal communication or written expression. One way to enhance response speed is to record all the words that spring to mind when someone mentions "healthy eating" on paper and then transfer them onto a board. Utilizing a smart board in the classroom facilitates effortless recording of responses. The teacher can capture the responses using basic recording devices or equivalent equipment. Brainstorming sessions provide students with the opportunity to think more creatively and unconventionally compared to a traditional classroom setting. It enables peer education and enhances students' retention of existing knowledge. It is an enjoyable and captivating method of delivering a subject to the class.

**The classroom, as well as idea generation**
Brainstorming is the process of randomly coming up with ideas related to a topic. There is no rearrangement or revision of these ideas. Subsequently, they could form the basis for an additional task, such as speaking or writing. For example, you can come up with responses more quickly if you write down every word that comes to mind when someone says, "healthy eating," first on paper and then on the board. If the classroom has a smart board, recording responses is simple. The teacher can record the responses even with simple recorders or similar devices. Brainstorming sessions provide students with an opportunity to engage in more unrestricted and creative thinking compared to the conventional and structured atmosphere of a standard classroom. It enables peer education and enhances students' retention of existing knowledge. It is an enjoyable and captivating method of delivering a subject to the class. The task or action being executed. Typically, the subsequent actions are taken: - Foster creative thinking; Guide students during their ideation process; - Organize various class divisions based on specific criteria. Appoint a competent student in each group as the secondary leader, while the teacher takes on the position of primary leader, the number is negative one. The project's first phase entails the allocation and generation of ideas.

The process of brainstorming is divided into multiple stages or steps: Phases: The primary investigation gives rise to further investigations. For example, the next objective or inquiry needs to be further subdivided into smaller components: What impact does mobile technology have on individuals' lives? Subsequently, the problem/question was divided into distinct components: What is the current impact of mobile technology on our lives?
What would be the implications if none of us had a mobile device? What were the negative effects on the mobile industry? What is the level of importance of mobile

devices to you? Students are allowed to create groups, where each group is allocated a distinct section of the question. Students are given a time frame of three to five minutes to independently reflect on the given question. Afterward, the students participate in small group conversations to debate the ideas they developed in step 2. Afterward, each group appoints a recorder or moderator, whose duty is to collect and arrange the ideas and proposals. The reporters subsequently rotate groups and report on the ideas that the initial group came up with. The second group expands upon the notions generated by the prior group or groups, integrating any original ideas of its own. It is crucial that this stage produces favorable outcomes and that no suggestions from the previous group or groups be ignored. This method is iterated until each group has had an opportunity to deliberate and scrutinize every facet of the inquiry. After the group talks, the reporter/moderator shares the subjects that each group has discussed with the full class. Subsequently, the audience is methodically introduced to these concepts.

- **Speaking Tasks and "Brainstorming" Exercises**

Oral tasks and activities focused on the technique of "brainstorming". The emphasis is placed on participation as "brainstorming" is a widely recognized approach for generating ideas.

- **Generation in small groups.**

The goal is to develop a maximum number of ideas within the specified time frame. A multitude of other concepts are consistently generated, and these are not assessed until the last stage. Typically, teachers initiate a speaking exercise on a certain topic by commencing with a "warmup round" to recapitulate prior content and stimulate conversation. While "brainstorming" can be advantageous in all phases of the instructional process, it is particularly effective for speaking and conversation sessions. It is an advantageous exercise to initiate conversation. Certain students exhibit greater academic achievement compared to their peers. To ascertain the reason behind this phenomenon, Rubin (1975) examined the attributes of proficient learners. The section that follows covers four of these features. These factors could elucidate the reasons why brainstorming is a valuable instructional approach. Through the utilization of brainstorming, students can develop the capacity to engage in risk-taking. McCoy (1976) presents a compelling case for the benefits of enhancing problem-solving abilities to alleviate anxiety. During the brainstorming process, there is no definitive solution that is considered correct or incorrect, and professors do not provide any form of negative criticism. Engaging in a basic brainstorming warm-up might enhance students' confidence and ease in generating educated assumptions.

- **Generating Ideas for a Picture or Image**

Website visuals can motivate contemporary target audiences to engage in written or verbal communication. Real-life scenarios can also act as a source of inspiration for generating ideas through brainstorming.

## Interpretation and analysis

What follows is an analysis of the two instruments utilized in the study, together with the researcher's personal experiences and observations. item-by-item analysis of the student questionnaires: A Comprehensive List. The first statement was disputed by thirty respondents (greater than sixty percent). Alright, alright, alright. Of the participants, 27% admitted believed posing queries improves critical thinking. According to 3–36% of respondents, brainstorming techniques can be used successfully. Most of the sample indicated that they would prefer to use these methods more often when learning the English language. Many pupils discovered that this kind of brainstorming engages a lot of students. It takes more time to complete. Six individuals sought the teacher's or leader's assistance with our questions. We obtained advice on how to respond to the problem from the teacher and the students. based on a survey. 80% of students think that participating in brainstorming exercises can make learning enjoyable. Most students (98%) believe that brainstorming sessions improve student learning. In an EFL class, 76% of participants said they would be in favor of Q&A periods following an EFL lecture.

### Analysis of the teacher survey data

Analyzed the data obtained from the teacher survey, analyzing each item individually. Evaluation of the data collected from the survey conducted among teachers. Consider the data collected from the teacher survey, carefully examining each item separately. According to most educators, collaborative brainstorming sessions aid students in preparing their English as a Foreign Language (EFL) project. The teachers verified that the technique of "brainstorming" improves pupils' ability to think creatively and practically about issues. Teachers perceive themselves as facilitators of the learning process, partly because they employ brainstorming approaches. Most educators concur that during a brainstorming session, the teacher ought to contribute to the idea generation process. The process of brainstorming produces collaborative learning benefits. The process relies on learner-centric activity. Studies have shown that children typically prefer and find pleasure in brainstorming sessions. The objective of "brainstorming" is to foster passion among pupils. The teacher should have discernment in choosing the most advantageous option from a range of choices, rather than just offering the answer. Brainstorming is a technique used to generate ideas and make decisions, usually under the guidance of a teacher or leader.

## Conclusion, results, and suggestions

### Results

Research has demonstrated that incorporating brainstorming into language instruction is a simple and efficient pedagogical approach. The research findings validate that it enhances the learning efficiency of our students. Incorporate this enjoyable activity into your class plans, since students find it engaging.

## Outcome

The students enthusiastically engaged in the effective classroom interventions and showed high levels of satisfaction with the brainstorming tools they had acquired. The survey findings are succinctly presented in this document. Brainstorming had a beneficial influence on both the classroom atmosphere and the students' learning behaviors. The study participants actively and enthusiastically participated in the brainstorming sessions. The target audience observed that several students had demonstrated self-motivation. The warm-up exercise brainstorming session helped the students develop confidence in meeting the vocabulary requirement of the speaking task.

## Conclusion

The findings indicated that most of the study participants held favorable opinions regarding the efficacy of brainstorming techniques in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. All the students acknowledged, to some extent, that the strategies had aided them in improving their preparation for their language learning assignments. The teacher-researcher's observations and personal experience substantiate the efficacy of "brainstorming" as an instructional tool. One should remember that brainstorming approaches can be used in various educational contexts.

## Recommendations

Given the limited size of the current study's sample, it is recommended that a more extensive and meticulous case study be undertaken on a broader scale to thoroughly examine the information. Moreover, brainstorming techniques aim to involve all students in generating innovative ideas by using their existing knowledge and information, as the ultimate goal of any instructional approach is to promote learning. In addition, they encourage active learning by facilitating cognitive processes and spontaneous interaction to uncover innovative viewpoints. Teachers can facilitate students' skill development, foster accountability and introspection in their learning, evaluate their current level of knowledge, including its breadth and depth, encourage participation in class debates, help students organize their thoughts, and guide them in reaching a group consensus using brainstorming strategies in the classroom. Finally, the process of learning enables students to cultivate their imagination and creativity, thereby fostering the development of their communication abilities.

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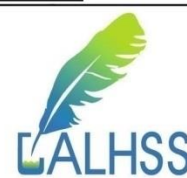
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