**Brainstorming Techniques**

**Brainwriting**

* Everyone writes down three ideas that relate to the topic of the brainstorm in about four to six minutes.
* Everyone passes their ideas to the person on their right (or left, whichever you prefer), who will then build off of the ideas, adding bullet points or other ideas.
* After another few minutes, everyone will pass the piece of paper again until it makes it all the way around the table.
* Once the ideas have made it around the circle, the group discusses them and decides which ideas are best to pursue.

**Mind mapping**

The group starts with one idea and then draws lines connecting sub-ideas to the first one. Mind mapping is a visual way to approach brainstorms and can be helpful for those who think visually. Online tools: <https://zapier.com/blog/best-mind-mapping-software/> and templates: <https://templatelab.com/mind-map/>.

**Rapid ideation**

Everyone writes down as many ideas as possible in a set amount of time before any ideas are discussed, critiqued, or fleshed out. For this brainstorming technique, you will need to set (and stick to) a time constraint, otherwise you’ll risk losing the sense of urgency.

This brainstorming exercise can be helpful to avoid having an idea is shot down before it has time to grow, transform, and develop. By allowing everyone to capture their ideas before the critique begins, rapid ideation avoids the inevitable, premature shooting down of ideas. The time constraint can also prevent people from talking themselves out of an idea before they share it with a group—a common brainstorming mishap.

**Online brainstorming, aka brain netting**

* Put together a running document (Google doc, sharepoint) that allows everyone to write down their ideas whenever inspiration hits.
* Be sure to establish a deadline for this initial step
* After everyone writes down their ideas follow up with a discussion to decide which ideas to pursue.
* You can also keep everyone’s identity anonymous if that helps the team contribute more freely.

**Starbursting**

* Implemented when a group has already selected an idea to elaborate upon and potentially execute.
* Start with an idea or challenge at the center and then create a six-point star around it. Each point represents a question: who, what, when, where, why, and how.
* It focuses on questions rather than answers - starbursting encourages the group to examine an idea from every angle. Presenting an idea in this way frees the person who generated the idea from having to defend it or figure out how to execute it on their own. Instead, the team works on solutions together.