Random Input Creativity Technique

From "Teach your child to think" - Edward de Bono:

The "random-word" method is a powerful lateral-thinking technique that is very easy to use. It is by far the simplest of all creative techniques and is widely used by people who need to create new ideas (for example, for new products).

Chance events allow us to enter the existing patterns of our thinking at a different point. The associations of a word applied to the new out of context situation generates new connections in our mind, often producing an instant Eureka effect, insight or intuition.

It is said that Newton got the idea of gravity when he was hit on the head with an apple while sitting under an apple tree. It is not necessary to sit under trees and wait for an apple to fall - we can get up and shake the tree. We can produce our own chance events.

Random inputs can be words or images. Some techniques for getting random words (and the words should be nouns) are:

- Have a bag full of thousands of words written on small pieces of paper, cardboard, poker chips, etc. Close your eyes, put in your hand and pull out a word.
- Open the dictionary (or newspaper) at a random page and choose a word.
- Use a computer program to give you a random word [or use the ones below]
- Make up your own list of 60 words. Look at your watch and take note of the seconds. Use this number to get the word.

It is important to use the first word you find.

Once you have chosen the word, list its attributions or associations with the word. Then apply each of the items on your list and see how it applies to the problem at hand.

How does it work? Because the brain is a self-organising system, and very good at making connections. Almost any random word will stimulate ideas on the subject. Follow the associations and functions of the stimulus word, as well as using aspects of the word as a metaphor.

You may want to mind-map the random word.

Exercise.

- 1. You are tired of getting unsolicited email and you are searching for a solution. Your random word is **BANANA**.
- 2. You need to tell a story to your children at bedtime. Your random word is **EGG**.

Roger von Oech writes in "A Kick in the Seat of the Pants":

A good way to turn your mental attic of experiences into a treasure room is to use Otrigger conceptsO - words that wll spark a fresh association of ideas in your mind. Like pebbles dropping in a pond, they stimulate other associations, some of which may help you find something new.

He writes in OA Whack on the Side of the HeadO about various cultures having oracles. The ancient Greeks used the ambigious predictions of the Delphic Oracle, the Chinese used the I Ching, the Egyptians consulted the Tarot, the Scandinavian people used Runes and the North American Indians used Medicine Wheels. The purpose of these oracles was not so much to foretell the future but to help the user delve deeper into their own minds.

You can create your own oracle by doing three things:

- 1. Ask a question. This focuses your thinking. Perhaps you should write your question to focus attention.
- 2. Generate a random piece of information. Random selection is important, as the unpredictability of this new input will force you to look at the problem in a new way.
- 3. Interpret the resulting random piece of information as the answer to your question.

The important thing is to have an open, receptive mind.

LET A RANDOM PIECE OF INFORMATION STIMULATE YOUR THINKING!

Here is a method I (Charles Cave) have been developing recently:

I make my own random picture cards by cutting out pictures from the various pieces of advertising material and magazines that appear in my letter box. A card can be picked at random and used as the random word. Choose pictures without text to allow a more right-brain approach. My cards include pictures of felt pens, furniture, kitchen items, art works, people, buildings, scenes and abstract designs. The cards can be shuffled and a card chosen at random.

Random Word List

Print this page, cut out the words, put them in a jar, and use it to draw out random words when you need a stimulus.

Adult
Aeroplane
Air
Aircraft Carrier
Airforce
Airport
Album
Alphabet
Apple
Arm
Army
Baby
Baby
Backpack
Balloon
Banana
Bank
Barbecue
Bathroom
Bathtub
Bed
Bed
Bee

Bible
Bible
Bird
Bomb
Book
Boss
Bottle
Bowl
Вох
Воу
Brain
Bridge
Butterfly
Button
Cappuccino
Car
Car-race
Carpet
Carrot
Cave
Chair
Chess Board
Chief
Child
Chisel
Chocolates

Church
Church
Circle
Circus
Circus
Clock
Clown
Coffee
Coffee-shop
Comet
Compact Disc
Compass
Computer
Crystal
Cup
Cycle
Data Base
Desk
Diamond
Dress
Drill
Drink
Drum
Dung
Ears
Earth

Egg
Electricity
Elephant
Eraser
Explosive
Eyes
Family
Fan
Feather
Festival
Film
Finger
Fire
Floodlight
Flower
Foot
Fork
Freeway
Fruit
Fungus
Game
Garden
Gas
Gate
Gemstone
Girl

Gloves
God
Grapes
Guitar
Hammer
Hat
Hieroglyph
Highway
Horoscope
Horse
Hose
Ice
Ice-cream
Insect
Jet fighter
Junk
Kaleidoscope
Kitchen
Knife
Leather jacket
Leg
Library
Liquid
Magnet
Man
Мар

Mist	
Money \$\$\$\$	
Monster	
Mosquito	
Mouth	
Nail	
Navy	
Necklace	
Needle	
Onion	
PaintBrush	
Pants	
Parachute	
Passport	
Pebble	
Pendulum	
Pepper	
Perfume	
Pillow	
Plane	

Maze

Meat

Meteor

Milk

Microscope

Milkshake

Planet
Pocket
Post-office
Potato
Printer
Prison
Pyramid
Radar
Rainbow
Record
Restaurant
Rifle
Ring
Robot
Rock
Rocket
Roof
Room
Rope
Saddle
Salt
Sandpaper
Sandwich
Satellite
School
Sex

Ship
Shoes
Shop
Shower
Signature
Skeleton
Slave
Snail
Software
Solid
Space Shuttle
Spectrum
Sphere
Spice
Spiral
Spoon
Sports-car
Spot Light
Square
Staircase
Star
Stomach
Sun
Sunglasses
Surveyor
Swimming Pool

Sword
Table
Tapestry
Teeth
Telescope
Television
Tennis racquet
Thermometer
Tiger
Toilet
Tongue
Torch
Torpedo
Train
Treadmill
Triangle
Tunnel
Typewriter
Umbrella
Vacuum
Vampire
Videotape
Vulture
Water
Weapon
Web

Wheelchair		
Window		
Woman		
Worm		
X-ray		

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