

Untethered Thinking

Design Thinking Frameworks for Tech-Free Student Brainstorms

Jen Solomon

A close-up photograph of a hand with a dark sleeve pointing at a whiteboard. The whiteboard is covered with several yellow sticky notes. The notes contain handwritten text, including 'SHOOT OUTS', 'ELIOSE', and 'WEBSTER TUTORIAL & GUYOT'. The text 'What brought you here?' is overlaid in large white font across the center of the image.

What brought you here?

About Me



13 years
in schools



Spouse and
2 kids



Struggled with
AI



A word cloud shaped like a brain, composed of various terms related to creative thinking and problem-solving. The words are arranged in a way that they fit the overall shape of a brain, with the most prominent words being 'THINKING', 'CREATIVE', 'PROBLEM', 'SOLVING', 'PROBLEMS', 'IDEAS', 'GENERATIVE', 'WICKED', 'POSSIBILITIES', 'SOLUTIONS', 'PRODUCT', 'EXPANSIVE', 'PEOPLE', 'METHOD', 'POST', 'IDEATION', 'BRAIN', 'OF', 'DESIGN', 'DIVERGENT', 'RANGE', 'NEW', 'SOLVE', 'GROUP', 'INNOVATION', 'PRODUCT', 'BOX', 'OUT', 'DISRUPTIVE', 'THE', 'RELAXED', 'SPONTANEOUS', 'CREATIVITY', and 'WIDE'. The words are in various colors (orange, green, blue, yellow) and sizes, creating a dynamic and visually engaging composition.

The background of the entire slide is a dense, close-up photograph of numerous colorful plastic balls. The balls are in various colors including orange, yellow, green, blue, pink, and purple. They are arranged in a way that creates a sense of depth and texture, with some balls in sharp focus and others blurred in the background.

Activity 1

Name 6

Viola Spolin - Theater Games for the Classroom

Brainstorming Protocols

- Sticky notes & Sharpies
- 1 idea per sticky (very few words)
- Place sticky notes in center of group
- Defer Judgement
- Quantity over Quality
- Encourage Wild Ideas
- Build on Ideas



“It is easier to
tone down a
wild idea than
to think up a
new one.”

Alex Osborn





How might your school enhance its dining options?

Timed Brainstorm - 10 minutes



My AI Benefits and Concerns



Benefits

Offload tasks
Simple crowdsourcing
Understand my students



Concerns

Over-reliance on cognitive outsourcing
Skill atrophy
Personal litmus test

“Memory is
the residue
of thought,”

Daniel T. Willingham



“If students rely
on AI for their
education,
what skills
would they
even bring to
the workplace?”

James D. Walsh

NEW YORK

Why invest in student brainstorms



Student voice
increases
agency



Develop
creative
confidence



Increase
mattering -
students feel
they have
added meaning
and value

A person is shown in profile, playing a piano. The scene is dimly lit, with a warm, golden light source creating a soft glow on the person's face and the piano keys. The person's hands are positioned on the keyboard, and the piano's lid is open. The background is blurred, showing a lamp and some papers on a desk.

Tom Kelly, Creative Confidence

"Like a muscle, your creative abilities will grow and strengthen with practice"



Activity 2

30 Circles

Tom Kelly, Creative Confidence



How might your school enhance student mattering?

Quantity Brainstorm - 15 stickies



Activity 3

Idea Walk

How did those feel?



Mindmap

1. Start with central problem
2. Branch off
3. Refine ideas
4. Can prescribe quantity of branches or time
5. Draw connections

SCAMPER

1. Substitute
2. Combine
3. Adapt
4. Modify
5. Put to another use
6. Eliminate
7. Reverse

Crazy 8s

1. Paper folded into 8 sections
2. Set 8 minute timer
3. Sketch an idea for 60 seconds in 1 box
4. Continue for all 8 minutes until each box is filled

Questions?