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Speed-Storming Organizational Creativity: Brainstorming + Speed-dating = Speed-Storming

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Everyone likes speed and I am not referring to what you buy on the street. The street stuff can certainly accelerate your mental processes at the expense of your sanity. I am referring to a new psychological technique to speed up the process of generating ideas and identifying potential collaborators to facilitate your creative efforts. A team of interdisciplinary researchers from the University of California, Berkeley, coupled the older popular technique of brainstorming with speed-dating to come up with a new technique of "speed-storming" to foster creative work instead of romantic involvements; however, I am not sure if conjugal pairing might not happen anyway, at least occasionally, as a result of speed-storming. After all, one of its purposes is to facilitate potential collaboration that crosses disciplinary boundaries! If it does, then one reaps extra benefits, provided organizational code of ethics will permit such benefits.

Essentially, speed-storming involves having people work in pairs generating ideas in a round robin fashion for about 3-5 minutes each round. Ideally, the pairs may consist of people from different disciplines or departments. Bringing together people with different specialties helps an

interdisciplinary exchange of ideas that may not be readily possible otherwise. It may also help to identify potential collaborators for a project. The process of finding new ideas is facilitated by different people interacting, albeit briefly, to brainstorm new possibilities on a particular issue. Working in pairs for brief periods of time may help avoid some problems that one finds in group brainstorming such as shyness to speak in groups, social loafing, and some highly vocal people dominating the session.

Speed-storming is no doubt a fascinating new strategy for benefiting from various individuals in a short time period. It can facilitate interdisciplinary contributions to solving problems, provided people with different specialties can communicate with each other. Imagine a United Nations' discussion session among peoples of different nations speaking different languages without an interpreter. The teams' preliminary research suggests that speed-storming accomplishes its two intended purposes: generating new ideas and identifying potential collaborators. However, as it is not clear that speed-dating accomplishes any more than making lightening speed decisions about identifying a potential life-long mate, at least at that moment, so it is with speed-storming-we do not know to what extent the new ideas and fast judgments about potential collaborators have actually worked out in the long run for potentially serious issues in organizations. Can speed-storming help us find quick interdisciplinary creative answers to all types of the world's most pressing problems of poverty and conflicts contextualized in varied cultures and systems of beliefs? For now, it is a promising new technique calling for refinement and more research.

For more information on speed-storming, please see:

Hey, J. G., Joyce, C. K., Jennings, K. E., Kalil, T., & Grossman, J. C. (2009). Putting the discipline in interdisciplinary: Using speedstorming to teach and initiate creative collaboration in nanoscience. *Journal of Nano Education, 1,* 75-85.

Joyce, C. K., Jennings, K. E., Hey, J. G., Grossman, J. C., & Kalil, T. (2010). Getting Down to Business: Using Speedstorming to Initiate Creative Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration. *Creativity and Innovation Management, 19(1),* 57-67. (doi:10.1111/j.1467-8691.2009.00538.x)