


**Innovation
Engagement, &
Collaboration...**

through Silence

#BCNet2017

Think It / Ink It

A hand holding a blue pen, ready to write. The pen has a blue cap and a blue body with some text and a logo. The hand is positioned as if about to write on a piece of paper.

Think about what you already know about brainstorming.

1. Tell me what you know about brainstorming.
2. Tell me the questions you want answered about brainstorming.

Reach **every** learner

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EASY  SY.

D2L
DESIRE2LEARN

Most Brainstorming sessions
start with sincerity



"I just want to get feedback, how is it
going, is there a better way to do this?"

Most Brainstorming sessions assume...

- 'Throwing ideas around' will help generate even greater and more innovative ideas.
- Brainstorming = Innovation

Most Brainstorming sessions assume...



- If you have an idea you'll say it.
- Attendance = Participation

Most Brainstorming sessions assume...



- If you ask people to give their ideas, they will.
- Inviting Responses = Collaboration

Are those assumptions correct?



Some
People
Participate
Actively



Some don't



If that is the
case...

“Any time people come together in a meeting, we’re not necessarily getting the best ideas; we’re just getting the ideas of the best talkers” – Susan Cain



what about Idea Generation?



An Experiment

Learning Outcomes

A close-up photograph of a young girl with fair skin and numerous freckles. She is wearing a bright red knit beanie. Her eyes are light blue and she has a serious, focused expression. The background is slightly out of focus, showing some greenery and a pink patterned fabric.

1. New Pet Peeve
2. Why/How Silence?
3. New Ideas

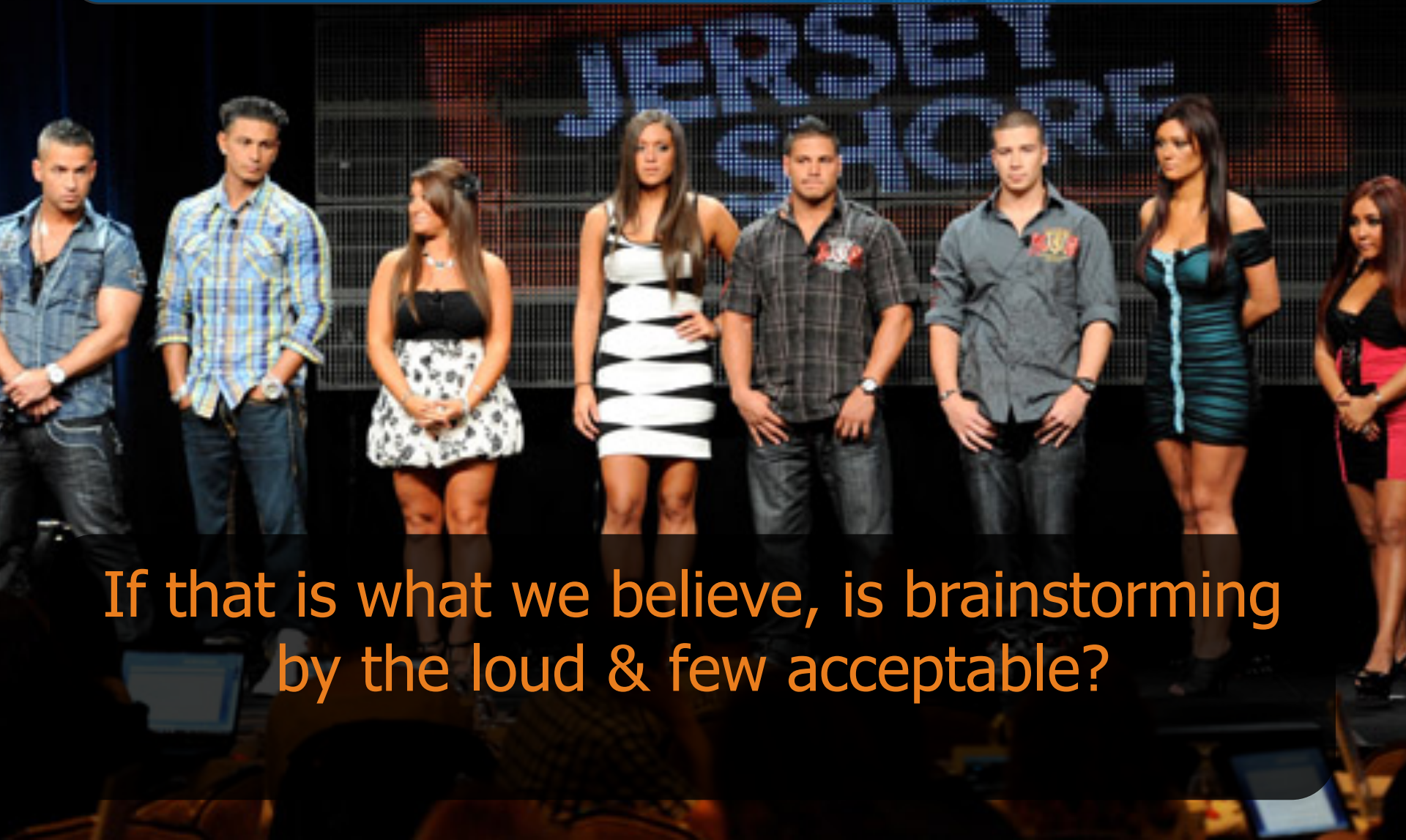
Stepping Back

Why do we
brainstorm?

1. To Innovate
2. To Create
Great Teams



Stepping Back



If that is what we believe, is brainstorming by the loud & few acceptable?

Stepping Back

A photograph of a large elephant with bright pink skin, standing in a savanna-like environment with trees and a dirt path. The elephant is facing right and holding a small bundle of green grass in its trunk. The image is used as a background for the text.

If that is what we believe, is restricting our ideas to pink elephants acceptable?

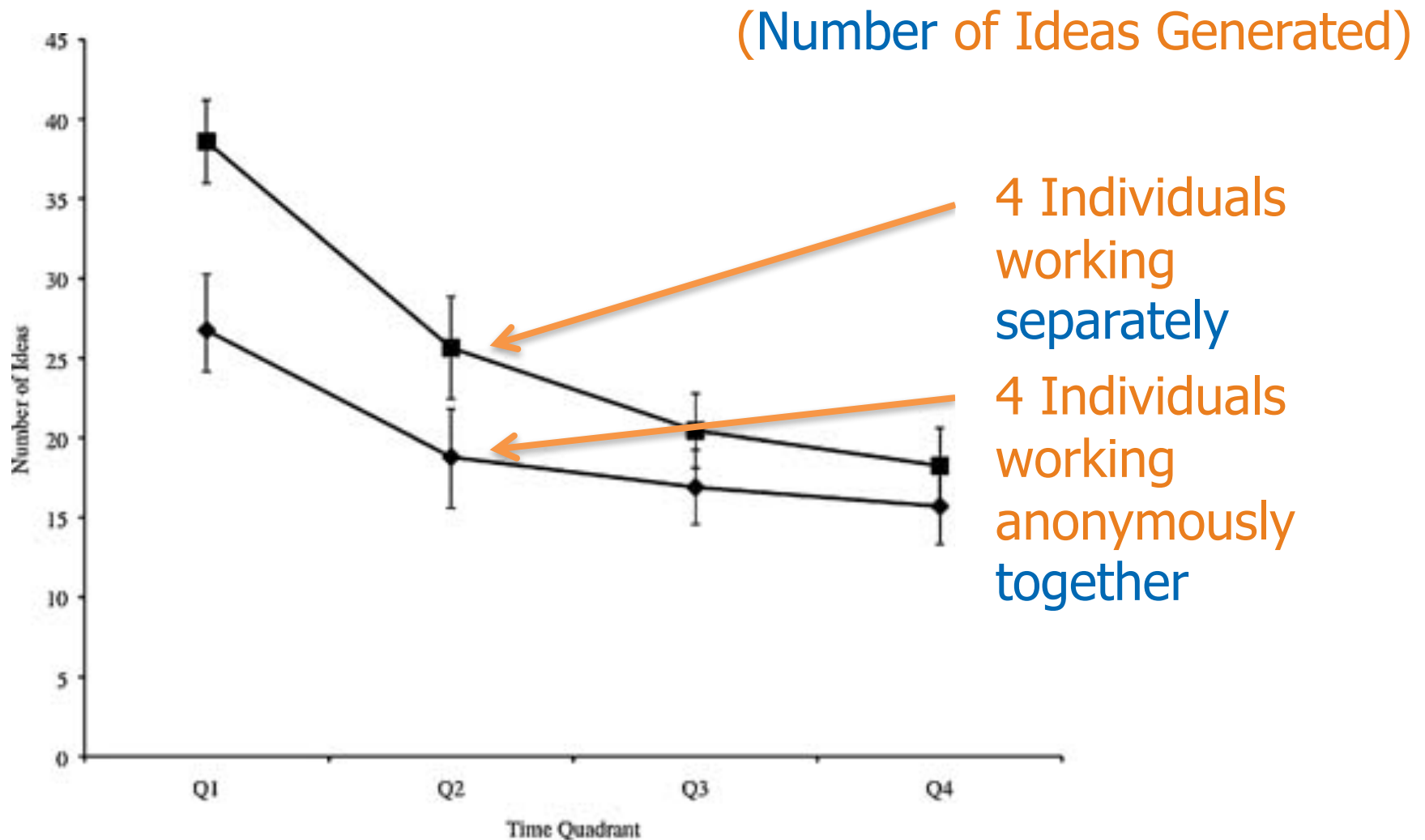
The Science



“Turns out the way your team is brainstorming is probably all wrong!”

- BusinessInsider.com referencing a joint University of Texas and Texas A & M University Study from 2010

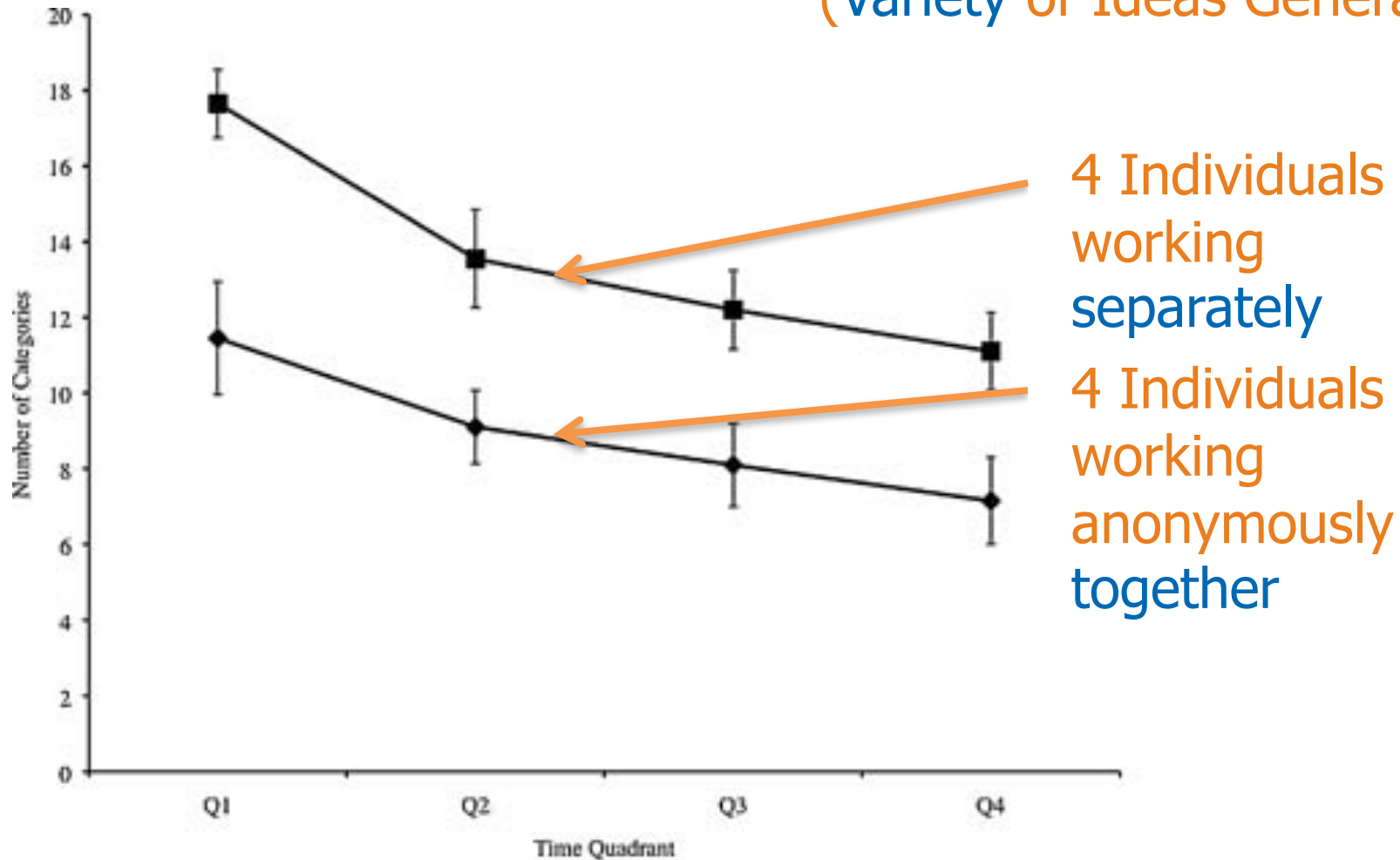
The Science



(from "Collaborative Fixation: Effects on others' ideas on brainstorming")

The Science

(Variety of Ideas Generated)



(from "Collaborative Fixation: Effects on others' ideas on brainstorming")

The Science

“supports the notion that exchanging ideas in a group leads members to become **fixated** on their peers' ideas, thus reducing the number of categories explored.”

(from “Collaborative Fixation: Effects on others' ideas on brainstorming”)

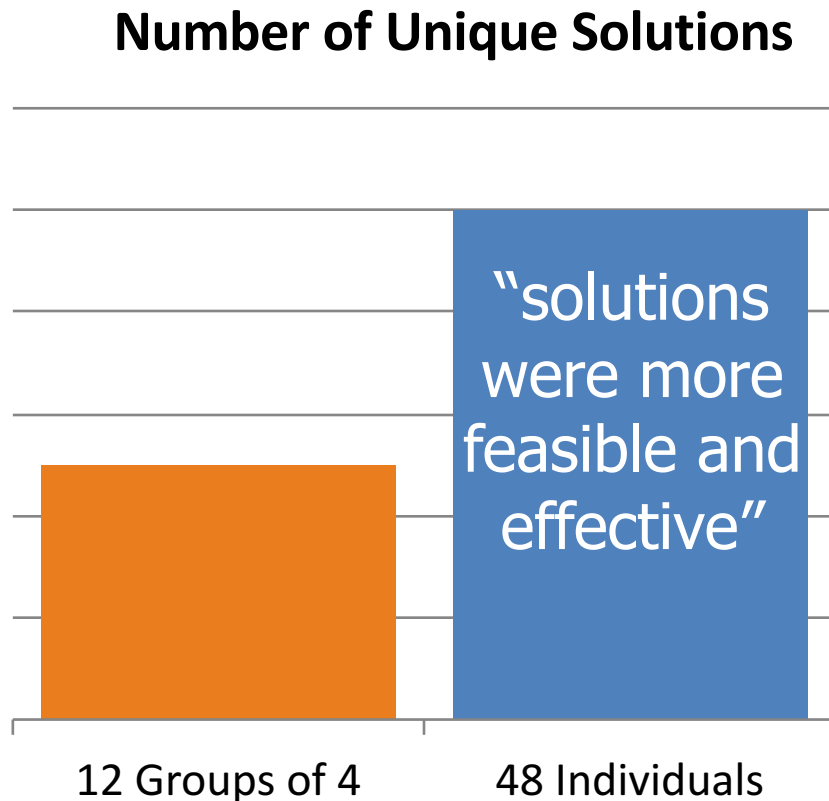
CLASS OF 1958

The Science



Crouse Romancier Uhr Farrar Rosentreter Vimmerstedt Haalck Weetman
Abarr Tagudar Stephens Barres Choong Kurmes Rogers Smith Johnston
Makel Knudtson Yoshimura Benseler Barker Hasso Brown
Lawson Keniston Darling Sonner Dowdle Bell

The Science



“Brainstorming didn’t unleash the potential of the group, but rather made each individual less creative”

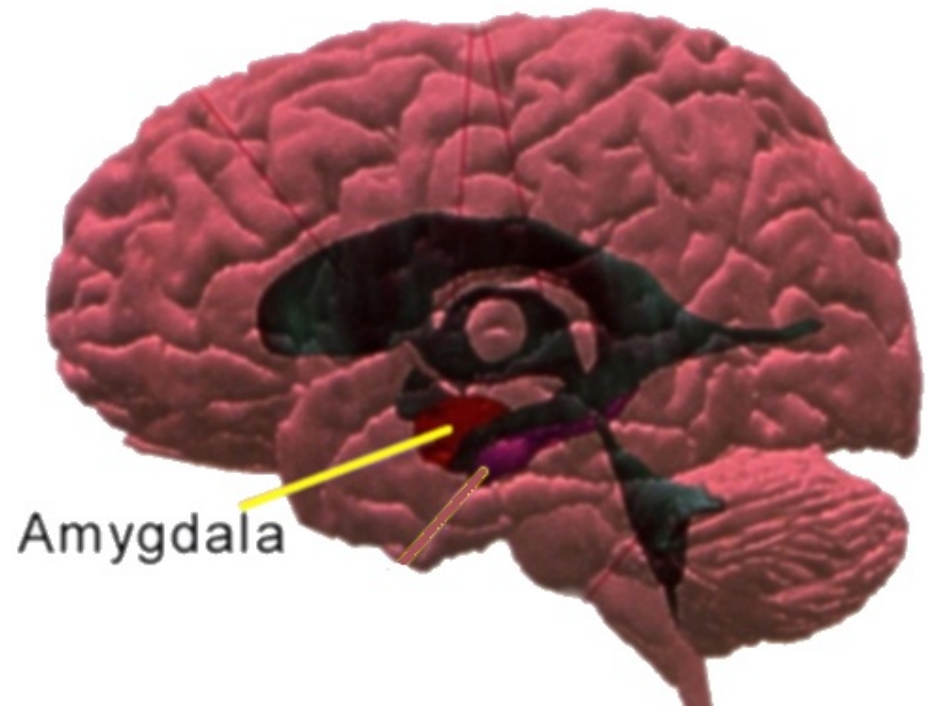
Yale University – Study (1958)

The Science

Why the Fixation?

"The Emory University neuroscientist Gregory Berns found that when we take a stance different from the group's, we activate the amygdala, a small organ in the brain associated with the fear of rejection. Professor Berns calls this 'the pain of independence.'"

- Susan Cain



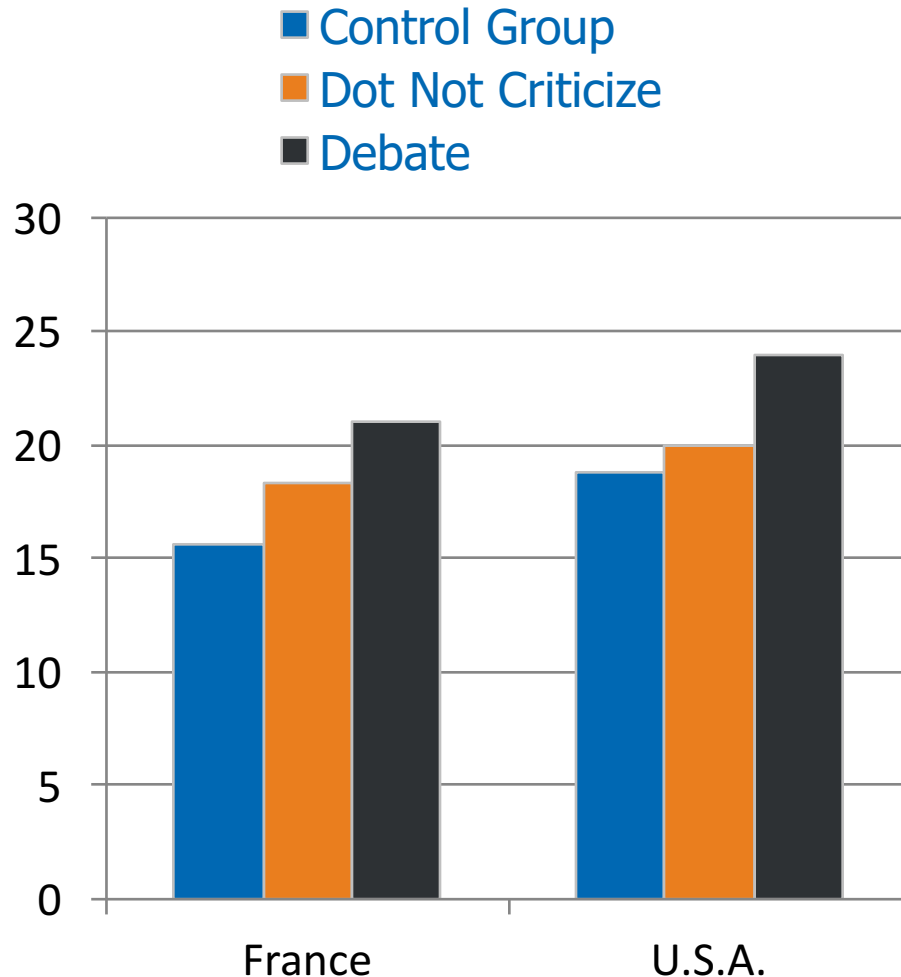
The Science



What about Debate?

(2003 Study at the University of California by professor Charlan Nemeth)

The Science



What about Debate?

- Teams that were instructed to debate the ideas ... “were the most creative – generating nearly twenty percent more ideas”

(2003 Study at the University of California by professor Charlan Nemeth)

The Science

A background image showing two men in dark suits and ties sitting across from each other at a white table. They appear to be in a formal meeting or debate. The man on the left is looking towards the man on the right, and the man on the right is looking back. There are papers and a small green object on the table.

Why is debate useful?

Consider this free association example:

- Say the first thing you think of when I say...

GREEN

- Nearly everyone says...

(2003 Study at the University of California by professor Charlan Nemeth)

The Science

(at least in 1965...)

How do we get past this layer of predictability?

The Science

“being exposed to [alternate views] expands our creative potential.”

“After hearing someone shout out an errant answer, we work to understand it, which causes us to reassess our initial assumptions and try out new perspectives.”

(2003 Study at the University of California by professor Charlan Nemeth)

The Science

“Decades of research have consistently shown that brainstorming groups think of far fewer ideas than the same number of people who work alone and later pool their ideas.”

- Keith Sawyer – psychologist at Washington University about Brainstorming

“This finding mirrors patterns found in previous research (Coskun, Paulus, Brown, & Sherwood, [2000](#)) and suggests that brainstorming sessions might be optimal if a group session follows an individual session.”

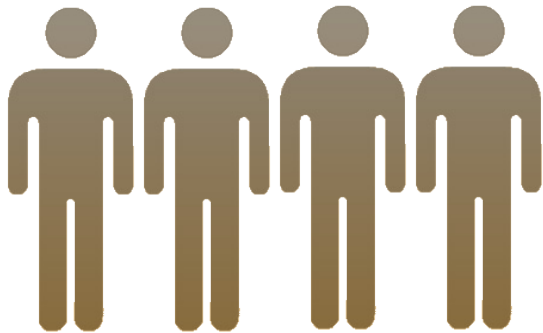
- (from “Collaborative Fixation: Effects on others’ ideas on brainstorming”)

The Science : Summary



Individual > Group for Generating Ideas

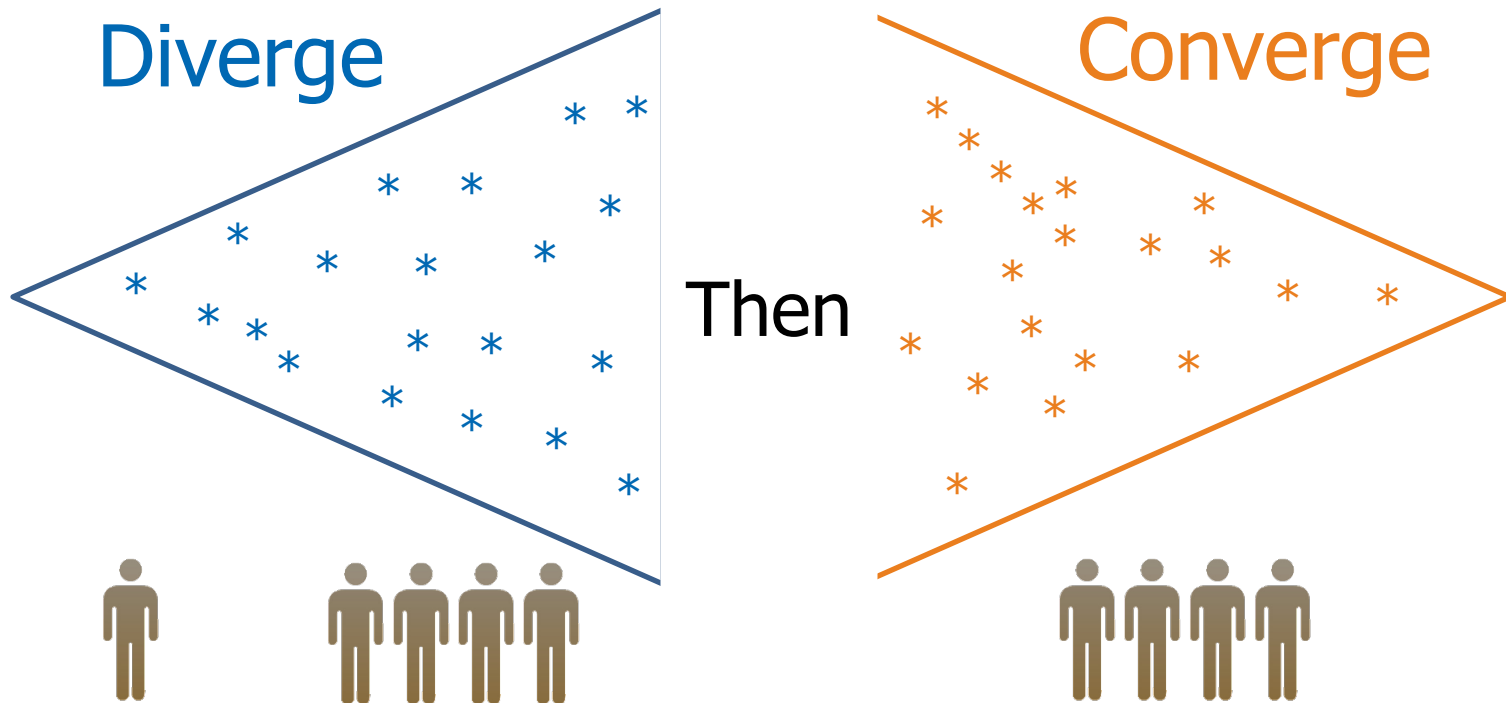
- Ironic Process Theory
- Fixation
- Amygdala
- Group Think



Group > Individual for Processing/Expanding Ideas

- Debate spurs new perspectives
- Activates System 2

The Science : Summary





So?

How then
should we
brainstorm?

1. Think about this presentation.

Think about what you learned about brainstorming.

In **silence**, write down everything you learned about brainstorming (one item per post-it)



So?

How then
should we
brainstorm?

2. Alternate reading your ideas out loud to your group. Place your idea in the middle once you've read it.

During this round, do:

- Ask questions.
- Write new ideas as you think of them.
- Remove Duplicates

Continue until all ideas have been read.

Comparing the Steps to the Science

Steps

1. Prompt (facilitator)
2. Write (silence)
3. Process (out loud)

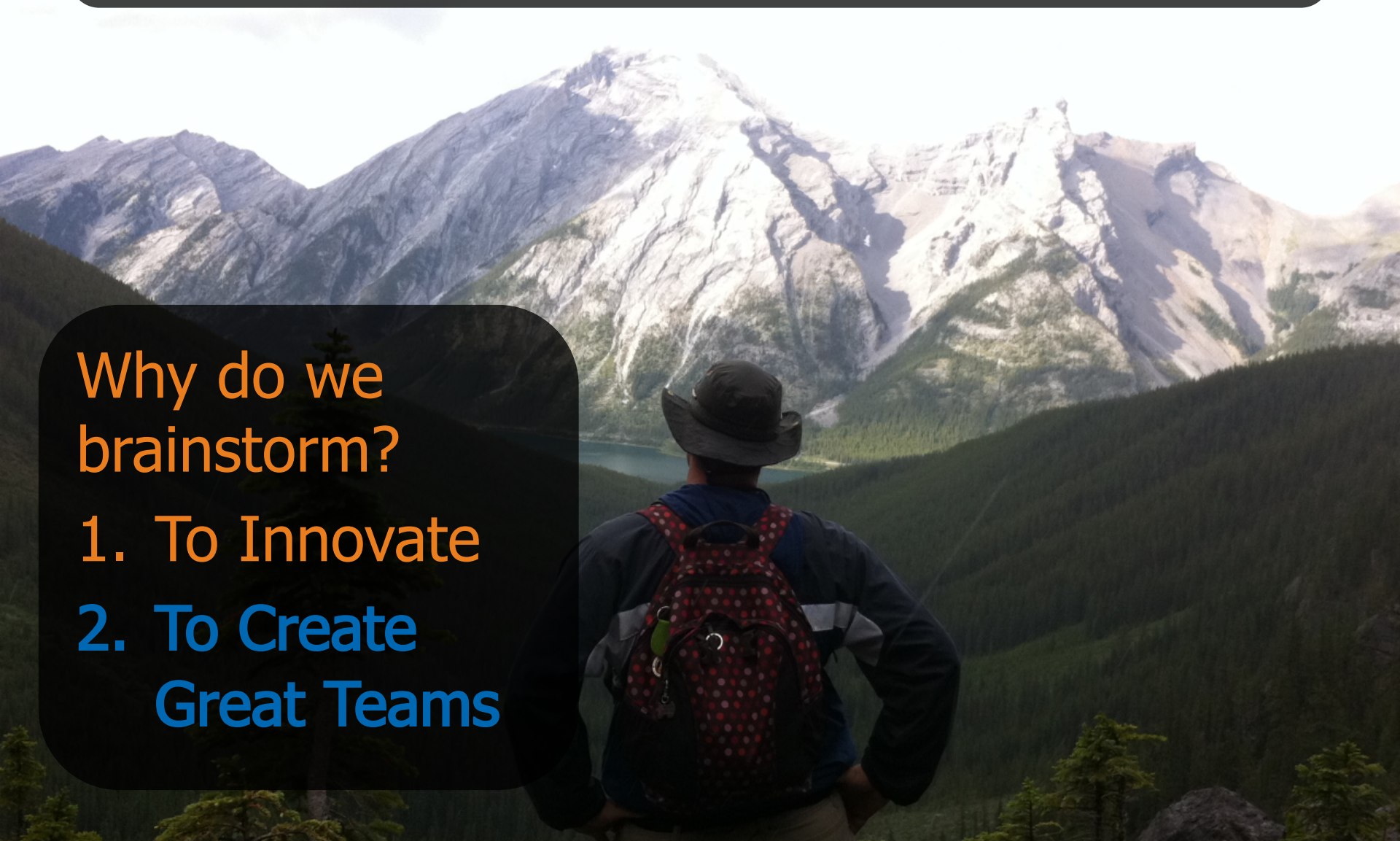
Science

1. Prompt w/o Fixation
2. Generate in silence
3. Process out loud

Stepping Back


Why do we
brainstorm?

1. To Innovate
2. To Create
Great Teams



The Science Just Might Be
Secondary...

Silent Brainstorming Encourages:

A photograph of four people (three men and one woman) standing in front of a glass wall covered in numerous pink sticky notes. They are all looking at the notes, and one man is pointing at a specific note. The scene is set in an office environment with blue cubicle walls.

Giving up power.
Handing out ownership.
Spreading around responsibility.
Creating engagement.
Building better teams.
Building better products.

Reach **every** learner

In Closing

To innovate and build great products, use this simple technique to **reach every participant**:

1. Generate in silence
2. Process out loud

EASY  SY.

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<http://www.slideshare.net/SteveRogalsky/the-silence-of-agile>

Credits

- Collaborative Fixation: Effects on others' ideas on brainstorming
 - <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/acp.1699/full>
 - http://articles.businessinsider.com/2012-01-04/strategy/30587996_1_brainstorming-creative-ideas-fixation
- The liberating role of conflict in group creativity: A study in two countries
 - https://www.ilr.cornell.edu/directory/ja26531/downloads/Liberating_role_of_conflict_in_group_creativity.pdf
- Susan Cain articles:
 - http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/15/opinion/sunday/the-rise-of-the-new-groupthink.html?_r=1&pagewanted=all
 - <http://www.fastcompany.com/1814377/susan-cain-groupthink-brainstorming-quiet-introverts>
 - <http://www.fastcodesign.com/1668930/the-brainstorming-process-is-bs-but-can-we-rework-it>
- JFK Story
 - <http://www.probe.org/site/apps/nlnet/content.aspx?c=fdKEIMNsEoG&b=4282487&ct=5510241>
- Jonah Lehrer article:
 - http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2012/01/30/120130fa_fact_lehrer?currentPage=1
- Books:
 - Collaboration Explained – Jean Tabaka
- Comics:
 - Non Sequitur <http://www.gocomics.com/nonsequitur/2012/10/28>

Silent Examples

- Generic Silent Brainstorming
 - <http://winnipegagilist.blogspot.ca/2012/01/silent-brainstorming.html>
- Silent Brainstorming: A Guide to using Post-its
 - <http://www.slideshare.net/SteveRogalsky/silent-brainstorming-a-guide-to-using-postits>
- Speed Boat
 - <http://innovationgames.com/2010/01/using-speed-boat-for-process-improvement/>
- Sail Boat
 - <http://blog.protegra.com/2015/02/18/empathy-mapping-customer-job-stories-and-business-modeling/>
- Remember the Future
 - <http://innovationgames.com/remember-the-future/>
- Retrospectives
 - <http://winnipegagilist.blogspot.ca/2010/11/agile-retrospectives-rising-patton.html>
- Lean Coffee
 - <http://leancoffee.org/>