

# AND NOT BUT

The And Not But activity helps us to reflect on the simple words we use to communicate, and how these can impact a conversation. "But" is an interesting word in communication. It is a minimizing word that detracts from, and qualifies, the statement before it. By replacing the word "but" with "and," communication can have a more positive and powerful feel. Our choice of words and responses can frame a conversation and help us to communicate more effectively.



10-15 minutes



Minimum of 2



None

Source: Adapted from multiple sources

## DEBRIEF *(following the activity)*

In both planning sessions you were using the word "yes."

- How did it feel when you were planning your trip using "yes, but?" Now, how did it feel when you were planning your trip using "yes, and?"
- Did you feel the flow of the conversation change when you used "and" instead of "but?" If yes, how did it change?
- How can we change our language and framing around issues to communicate more effectively in health care?
- Where can you embed this change in your day-to-day work or activities? What's one thing you could try in the coming week?

By replacing the word "but" with "and," communication can have a more positive and powerful feel. "But" often acts as a minimizing word that detracts from, and qualifies, the statement before it.

## WHAT TO DO



1. In partners, plan a vacation with one partner using only “yes, but” after each statement.
2. One partner will start the conversation with a statement and then the second partner will follow with a statement starting with “yes, but.” For example:
  - Partner 1: We are going on a trip to Hawaii and we are going to go to Maui.
  - Partner 2: Yes, but I can’t go next week as I have a work meeting.
  - Partner 1: That’s okay – we can switch the time.
  - Partner 2: Yes, but I don’t like Hawaii.
3. After a few minutes of planning your trip using “yes, but,” switch and repeat the exercise above using nothing but “yes, and.”
4. One partner will start the conversation with a statement and then the second partner will follow with a statement starting only with “yes, and.” For example:
  - Partner 1: We are going on a trip to Hawaii and we are going to go to Maui.
  - Partner 2: Yes, and we are going to go to the beach every day.
  - Partner 1: Yes, and we are going to go snorkelling.
5. After a few minutes of planning your trip using “yes, and”, debrief on the language used and how it felt using “and” versus “but.”

# BANNED

Sometimes turning your thinking on its head can be the best thing to do when trying to generate new ideas and solutions to old problems. The banned exercise gets you to create future scenarios based on imagining a world in which a product, service or experience no longer exists. It explores how people might adapt in this situation to generate new ideas and creative solutions.



30 minutes



Groups of 6-8 (can have multiple groups)



- Flipchart paper for storyboards
- Markers

*Source: Adapted from Media Lab Amsterdam; IDEO Method Cards*

## **DEBRIEF** *(following the activity)*

- What did it feel like to imagine a world where a product, service or experience no longer existed?
- Were you surprised by the ideas that you were able to generate?
- How could you apply this learning/experience in your work?

## WHAT TO DO



1. Decide on a scenario to investigate. For example, a world in which there is no treatment for pressure ulcers.
2. Determine time and scope for the scenario. For example, we begin when the patient enters the hospital pressure ulcer-free.
3. Identify stakeholders. For example, patients, nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, care aids, physicians, etc.
4. Create a storyboard by drawing your scenario. How would you adapt in your new world in which there were no treatment options for pressure ulcers? For example, you may draw frequent turning of patients or any other wild and creative solutions. Try to generate as many adaptations as possible.
5. Analyze the scenario through discussion. Explore your adaptations and how they might be put into practice.
6. Summarize insights. Discuss your adaptations and people's reactions to them. Are any possible to implement?

# BRAIN WRITING

This activity provides an alternative to traditional brainstorming for generating new ideas. It is a great activity for quiet groups or when you want to avoid "group think" in idea generation. Ideas are generated by asking people to write down their ideas rather than presenting them verbally.



30 minutes



Groups of 4-6 (can have multiple groups)



- Extra-large index cards
- Pens

Source: Adapted from Media Lab Amsterdam

## DEBRIEF *(following the activity)*

- How was this different than traditional brainstorming, or brainstorming on post-it notes?
- What was the hardest part of the activity?
- What was the easiest part of the activity?
- Did seeing others' perspectives change the ideas you generated in subsequent rounds?

## WHAT TO DO



1. Organize attendees into groups.
2. Ask each group to define a problem that it will tackle through "brain writing."
3. Each participant should "write" three solutions in two minutes, recording their ideas on an index card.
4. After two minutes, participants will pass their card to the person to the left.
5. Have the next participant build on the existing ideas by writing their own new ideas underneath the original solutions. Allow three minutes for this part of the exercise.
6. The process should be repeated as many times as there are people around the table, allowing an additional minute each time - so four minutes for the next person, five for the one after that, etc.
7. Once complete, the group should review the ideas that were generated and discuss which ones they could pursue further.

# BUILDING TOGETHER

The Building Together activity encourages teams to work together to design and develop a structure using collaboration and teamwork. The goal is for the team to build the tallest freestanding tower with the limited materials provided. Take risks, be creative, and try new things!



30 minutes



Maximum of 40, plus 1-2 judges



Each team of 4 requires:

- 20 pieces of spaghetti
- 1 large marshmallow
- 1 metre of string
- 1 metre of tape
- 1 small brown paper bag

Source: Unknown

## DEBRIEF *(following the activity)*

This activity encourages critical thinking by asking team members to work together in a short period of time while using limited supplies. Teams must demonstrate quick decision-making, execute a plan, and show resilience in the face of challenges and frustrations. This has a strong parallel to teams in health care who must also work together and show resilience in the face of challenges.

After the winning team is announced, ask participants these questions:

- What was the hardest part of this activity?
- What was the easiest part of this activity?
- What did you learn?
- What would you do differently if you had a chance to rebuild the tower?
- What lessons from this activity can we apply to our work?

## WHAT TO DO



1. In groups of four, each team will be asked to build a structure using basic materials (see resources list).
2. You have 15 minutes to build the tallest freestanding structure with only the materials provided.
3. Once 15 minutes have elapsed, all teams must not touch their structures. The facilitator will measure each tower and record the highest height.
4. The winner of the activity is whichever team has the tallest freestanding structure at the point of final measurement.

# FRESH PERSPECTIVES

The purpose of the Fresh Perspectives is to help you and your team challenge the status quo. It is designed to help investigate the necessity, validity, and uniqueness of the current solution or approach. It is a great technique to use at the idea-generation phase of your project – and can give you the impetus you need to discard your current solutions in favour of ones that challenge the old way of doing things.



30-60 minutes



Groups of 4-8 (can have multiple groups)



- Copies of blank process tables for all participants/groups
- Pens

Source: Adapted from the Innovator's Toolkit

## DEBRIEF *(following the activity)*

- Did this exercise challenge your assumptions?
- Did it assist in generating new ideas and directions?
- How could you apply this tool to your work in health care?

## WHAT TO DO



1. Share a scenario with participants. For example: Create a new method for health care identification.
2. Invite teams to select a focus. This can be an innovation, opportunity, product, service, system, process, or business model. For example: Health care identification that is easy to use, secure, and private.
3. Invite groups to document the current solution's inputs, outputs, customers, suppliers and any other associated processes. For example: Create an ID card that is easy to use but impossible to lose or have stolen.
4. Ask groups to add assumptions that they take for granted about the current solution. These can include factual data, physical characteristics, supporting ideas or philosophies and limitations. List this in the first column (example below).
5. Review all process steps, elements, and assumptions and determine if any can be eliminated. Is it necessary, or can it be eliminated without incurring any negative side effects? Indicate yes or no in the second column.
6. If the step, element or assumption is necessary, what function or feature does it provide? Record this in the third column.
7. Once the elimination and reasons steps are complete, groups should explore alternatives by challenging the uniqueness of the solution. Is it the only way to provide the needed feature/ functionality, or are there alternatives?
8. After the process outlined above is complete, make a list of the alternative ideas that you want to explore further.

Process Step, Element or Assumption	Eliminate	Reason	Alternatives
Care cards are 5.5 x 8.5 cm in size	No	Provincial standard	RFID chip in a key chain
Care cards are blue	Yes		
Cards must be carried on you to receive care	No	Identity verification	Retinal or fingerprint scan

# IDEA JACKPOT

Idea Jackpot immerses you in a creative thinking process. We know that some of the best ideas are the surprising and incongruous ones. For Idea Jackpot to work, you need to come up with as many ideas as you can, as quickly as possible.

This activity combines the user, a location, and a tool to help generate ideas. These elements are made into propositions that may be incredibly insightful.



30-90 minutes



Groups of 3-8 (can have multiple groups)



- 4 pads of differently coloured post-it notes
- Markers or pens

*Source: Adapted from THINK School for Creative Leadership; The Thing from the Future*

## DEBRIEF *(following the activity)*

This is a great method for generating ideas within groups. Here are some questions you can use to debrief with your team:

- How did this process feel for you?
- Was it challenging?
- What made it challenging?
- What was it like to generate ideas with the three different categories?
- Did anyone discover any hidden opportunities?
- Did anyone hit the jackpot with an idea?

## WHAT TO DO



1. Working in groups of 3-8 people, think of an innovation topic for which you want to generate new ideas. For example, how might we make education more exciting for students?
2. Make a list of users, stakeholders, members, and employees who are involved in (or influenced by) your innovation topic, and write each of them on their own blue post-it note. For example: "teachers," "students," "parents," and "universities" would each get their own blue post-it note.
3. Repeat this process, except make a second list of spaces, areas, or rooms all the people from the first list will frequent. Write each of these on their own yellow post-it note. (These spaces, areas, and rooms should relate to the chosen innovation topic.) For example: "classrooms," "the internet," "coffee shops," and "libraries" would each get their own yellow post-it note.
4. Repeat this process once more, this time making a third list of objects, tools, and artifacts the people from the first list will use in relation to the innovation topic chosen. Write each one on its own green post-it note. For example: "chalkboards," "computers," "iPhones," and "USB sticks" would each get their own green post-it note.
5. Randomly select one post-it note from each colour group and build a proposition around the combination of user, space, and object. For example: "students," "coffee shops," and "iPhones."
6. Individually, have each player come up with as many ideas as they can in five minutes. Write each of the solution ideas on its own orange post-it note. Please note that the sky is the limit! Logic and realism are not required for this part of the process.
7. Bring the group back together and share your ideas with the rest of the team.
8. Play a second round, using a new combination of post-it notes.
9. Repeat and play as many rounds as you like.
10. Once the activity is over, have your team vote on the favourite idea generated from the activity. Then refine it further together as a group.

# INTERACTIVE TRIZ

TRIZ is an acronym that stands for a Russian phrase: "Teoriya Resheniya Izbretatelskikh Zadatch." In English, this translates into "Inventive Theory of Problem Solving." The basic idea behind a TRIZ is to put a critical lens on thinking about how to create a system or process that is designed to fail. An Interactive TRIZ is acting out all of the ways a system or process can possibly fail due to individual or team behaviours and communication.



30-45 minutes



Groups of 5-12 (can have multiple groups)



A safe space to act without disrupting others

Source: Adapted from *Liberating Structures*

## DEBRIEF (following the activity)

Debriefing (100% unwanted behaviors):

- Are we actually currently doing any of the unwanted things, even if only in a minor way or a small percentage of the time?
- Is there anything that we never EVER do?
- What actions can we commit to avoiding altogether?
- What can we commit to doing?

Debriefing (100% desired behaviors):

- Are there one or two ideas that emerged from this exercise that we can really focus on as a team?
- What will we do to avoid unwanted behaviour and role model desired actions and behaviours?
- What strategies and support can we use as a team to embed the desired actions in our day-to-day work?

## WHAT TO DO



1. Divide participants into groups.
2. In each group, decide on a topic you would like to act out. Remember that your TRIZ is about how to get *unwanted* results. For example, a TRIZ question could be: How will we ensure a patient and/or their family members feel as unwelcome as possible coming into our unit?
3. Divide your group in two and decide which half will be actors, and which half will be observers.
4. Define which acting role each actor will have (e.g. patient, nurse, doctor, unit clerk, family member, etc.)
5. Before starting, reflect on some actions, behaviours, or traits that will ensure an unwanted result.
6. Act out all of the things each assigned role can do to achieve the unwanted result. Be creative! Be extreme! Make yourself laugh!
7. Debrief as a team (sample questions on back of card). Allow observers to provide feedback and provide an opportunity to suggest things that could ensure even more unwanted results.
8. Switch positions, and allow the observers to now become actors. However, this time the group will ensure 100% of the time that they get the desired result! They will paint a picture of the ideal, reliable, and safe system.
9. Again, debrief as a team (sample questions on back of card). Allow the observers to provide feedback and create the opportunity for them to suggest things, phrases, or behaviours that could ensure desired results are achieved more often.

# KILL THE ELEPHANT

There are many ways in which we interfere with someone's ability to think creatively. Doubt, fear, playing the devil's advocate, or being a "naysayer" can deflate a team's energy during idea brainstorming. The Kill the Elephant exercise is an opportunity to acknowledge all of the "elephants" in a room and bury negative thinking at the inception of a project's ideation process. This is an activity that would be conducted prior to a separate brainstorming session.



15-30 minutes



Groups of 4-8 (can have multiple groups)



- Flipchart paper
- Post-it notes
- Markers/pens
- Tombstone Image
- Dots for dot voting

Source: Adapted from Gamestorming

## DEBRIEF *(following the activity)*

- What were the challenges that prevented teams from pushing ideas forward?
- What would happen if we removed these barriers for teams?
- How could you apply this exercise to work that you do?

## WHAT TO DO



1. Decide on an upcoming project you would like to focus on.
2. Prepare separate flipchart sheets for each of the questions below. Post them around the room prior to starting, along with one image of a tombstone.
3. Before entering any brainstorm, have members answer as many of the following questions as they can about the chosen project. Ask each person to write their answer to each question on individual post-it notes.
  - What do I dislike?
  - What will go wrong?
  - How will this end in disaster?
  - What are my fears?
  - What are my qualms?
  - What are the risks?
  - What are my concerns?
  - What makes me roll my eyes?
  - What am I sick of hearing?
4. Ask participants to post their answers under the appropriate questions around the room.
5. Ask the team to vote on their top three answers for each question by dot voting (provide each participant with three dots to vote)
6. Now, place the top three elephants on the tombstone image. This provides the team with an opportunity to voice unaddressed issues.

# METHOD 101

This is a simple brainstorming method designed to generate a very large number of ideas in a short period of time.



45 minutes



Groups of 5-10 (can have multiple groups)



- Flipchart paper
- Markers/pens

*Source: Adapted from Media Lab Amsterdam*

## **DEBRIEF** *(following the activity)*

- How did it feel to generate so many ideas in such a short span of time?
- Were you more "free" with your ideas because of the time constraint?
- Did you generate any ideas that surprised you?
- How could you employ this technique where you work?

## WHAT TO DO



1. Create groups of 5-10 people.
2. Have the group define a problem/issue the group will brainstorm on.
3. Identify a moderator in each group.
4. Invite the moderator to ask the group to generate 101 ideas in only 30 minutes while the moderator records the ideas on a flipchart.
5. Once the ideas are generated have the group review the results and see what they can act upon.

# MINDSHIFT

Shifting your mindset around unexpected events and suggestions can be powerful. You can see them as obstacles or you can see them as gifts. Seeing them as gifts can augment the opportunity for creativity and innovation.



10 minutes



Minimum of 2



None

Source: Adapted from *Eye Openers*

## **DEBRIEF** *(following the activity)*

Ask participants a series of questions to get them to describe their experience with this activity:

- What was it like to complete this exercise?
- What made it confusing or difficult to do?
- What effect did the unexpected words have on your story?
- What was your initial mindset when the words started coming?
- Did your mindset stay the same or change throughout the activity?
- How does mindset affect your experience in this exercise?
- How does it feel when you think of the new word as a nuisance versus an opportunity?

If you see different ideas as obstacles, they will indeed become obstacles for you and feel like negative elements that you cannot control. Instead, differing ideas – or thought diversity – results in better ideas, better solutions, and increased innovation.

## WHAT TO DO



1. Assign people into pairs.
2. Describe the activity: Person A will tell a story and, after a few sentences, person B will start throwing in random words that A has to immediately incorporate into their story. For example:  
Person A: There once was a dog named Bob who liked to chase balls.  
Person B: Apple.  
Person A: One time, Bob accidentally thought an apple was a ball and then developed a taste for apples.
3. Before starting, demonstrate this process by asking someone to throw random words at you while you tell a story. Try to incorporate the words into the story as you tell it, to show them how the exercise works.
4. Have the pairs work on their stories as outlined above with Person B continuing to throw random words into Person A's story until the exercise is complete.

# POINT OF VIEW MADLIB

Point of View (POV) MadLib is a reframing activity that allows an individual or group to take a wicked problem and translate it into an actionable problem statement. If you haven't heard of them, madlibs are phrase template word games where one player prompts others for a list of words to substitute for blanks in a story. In this case, a madlib format provides a framework to develop the POV by creating a statement that defines three elements: a user, a need, and an insight into that user's POV.



10-15 minutes



Pairs



- Flipchart paper
- Markers/pens

Source: Adapted from Bootcamp Bootleg

## DEBRIEF *(following the activity)*

- What was it like to try to understand another's point of view?
- By defining the user's need and a surprising insight about them, did it help you to better understand and articulate the problem?
- How might you use this activity in your day-to-day work in health care?

## WHAT TO DO



1. Organize people into pairs.
2. Have each pair define a problem/issue for which they will create a madlib. In this case, it needs to be an issue about which the pair has some knowledge. For example, teenage girls require nutritious food to be healthy.
3. Have pairs complete the following madlib: [USER] needs to [USER'S NEED] because [SURPRISING INSIGHT].
4. The [USER] is the user of the solution, the [USER'S NEED] should be a verb and the [SURPRISING INSIGHT] is not simply the reason for the need, but a stepping stone to create a solution. For example, instead of "A teenage girl needs more nutritious food because vitamins are vital to good health" try "A teenage girl with a bleak outlook needs to feel more socially accepted when eating healthy food, because in her neighbourhood social risk is more dangerous than a health risk." Note how the later madlib is an actionable problem statement which gives the people who are developing solutions something to sink their teeth into to start solving the problem.
5. Invite the pairs to try out a number of options to create a madlib for their problem/issue.
6. Once everyone has an actionable problem statement, the statement can be used to start identifying solutions to the challenge.

# POINT OF VIEW WANT AD

Similar to a Point of View (POV) Madlib, a POV Want Ad reframes a design challenge and translates it into an actionable problem statement using a playful format. The POV Want Ad highlights a specific user and embeds the user, his or her need, and any insight about their POV into a want ad format.



10-15 minutes



Groups of 2-6 (can have multiple groups)



- Flipchart paper
- Markers/pens

Source: Adapted from Bootcamp Bootleg

## DEBRIEF *(following the activity)*

- What was it like to try to understand another's point of view?
- By defining the user's need and a surprising insight about them, did it help you to better understand and articulate the problem?
- How might you use a POV Want Ad in your day-to-day work in health care?

## WHAT TO DO



1. Create groups of 2-6 people.
2. Define a design challenge a particular point of view would have.
3. Have the groups write the descriptive characteristics of a user. For example, "a high energy teenager."
4. Follow the description with the word "seeks." For example, "a high energy teenager seeks..."
5. Complete the ad with the insights about the user's point of view. For example, "a high energy teenager seeks awesome social network for managing their type 1 diabetes. Interests should include issues of societal importance (e.g. how much parents suck and why being a vegetarian is a good thing). Willingness to IM constantly during the school year is a MUST."
6. Once groups have an actionable problem statement, the statement can be used to start identifying solutions to the challenge.

# RANDOM IDEA

If you take random ideas that are very different from each other, the line the brain wants to draw between them is often the path you would never take, and is therefore a creative way to generate original ideas.



10 minutes



Groups of 6 (can have multiple groups)



- 8.5 x 11 sheets of paper
- Markers

Source: Adapted from THINK School for Creative Leadership

## DEBRIEF *(following the activity)*

This is a great method for generating ideas within groups, either within or outside of health care. Here are some questions you can use to debrief with your team:

- What was it like to do this?
- How did it feel when your partners encouraged you?
- Were you more creative using this approach?
- Was it challenging to link three random words?
- How could you apply this activity back in your workplace?

## WHAT TO DO



1. Give all participants a marker and an 8.5 x 11 sheet of paper.
2. Ask participants to write down, in big letters, three of their favourite things. Note: these favourite things can be food, activities, countries, co-workers, or something else. For example, a piece of paper might say: dogs, cell phones and cheese. Participants are only allowed one minute.
3. Tell participants to walk around the room with their sheet of paper held out in front of them so others can read what they have written. Allow approximately one minute for this.
4. Tell the group to stop walking and randomly form groups of three.
5. Have participants in each group read the paper of the person on their right and then circle one of the items on their list that they like best. The group will end up with three pieces of paper with one word circled on each piece of paper.
6. Using the words that the participants have circled, generate a new service or idea based on those words. For example, virtual cheese treats for my dog on my cell phone!
7. Now, as the groups are generating new ideas, they will pitch their ideas as cheesy sales people from an infomercial to each other. Note: Have participants talk in short sentences and build on each other's ideas. Encourage them to say "great idea" or "I looove your idea" before adding something new. Participants have three minutes for this part of the exercise.
8. As the facilitator, walk by quiet groups and encourage them to think out loud.
9. Notify participants when they have 30 seconds left.