Creative Problem Solving

# What is CPS?

Separate your divergent and convergent thinking to find innovative solutions to problems.

Divergent Thinking

Generating lots of potential solutions and possibilities, otherwise known as brainstorming.
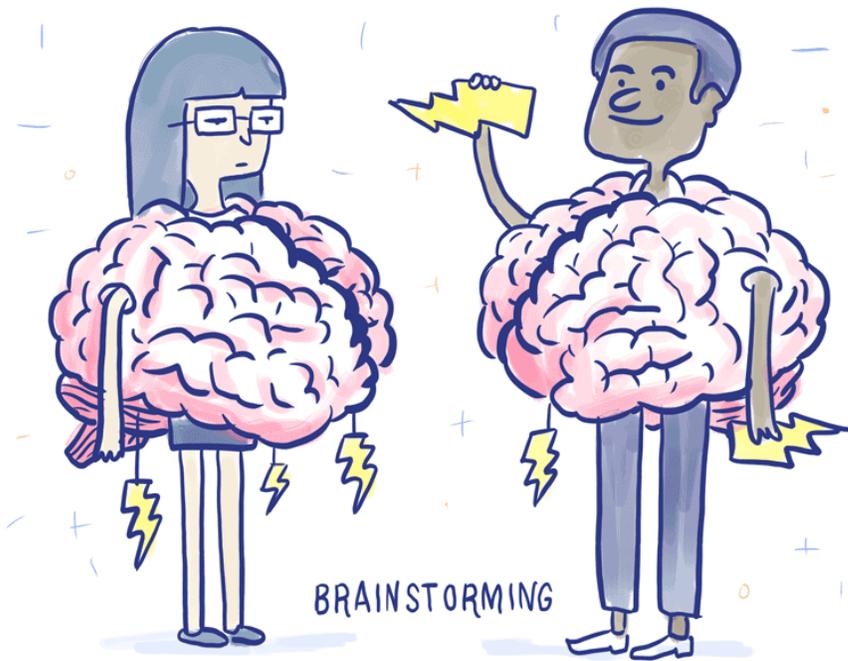
Convergent Thinking

Evaluating options and choosing the most promising one.

Core Principles

Balanced Thinking

Learn how to identify each mode of thinking, and when to practice each one.

Problems as Questions

Rephrase your problem as an open-ended question to make it easier to generate solutions.
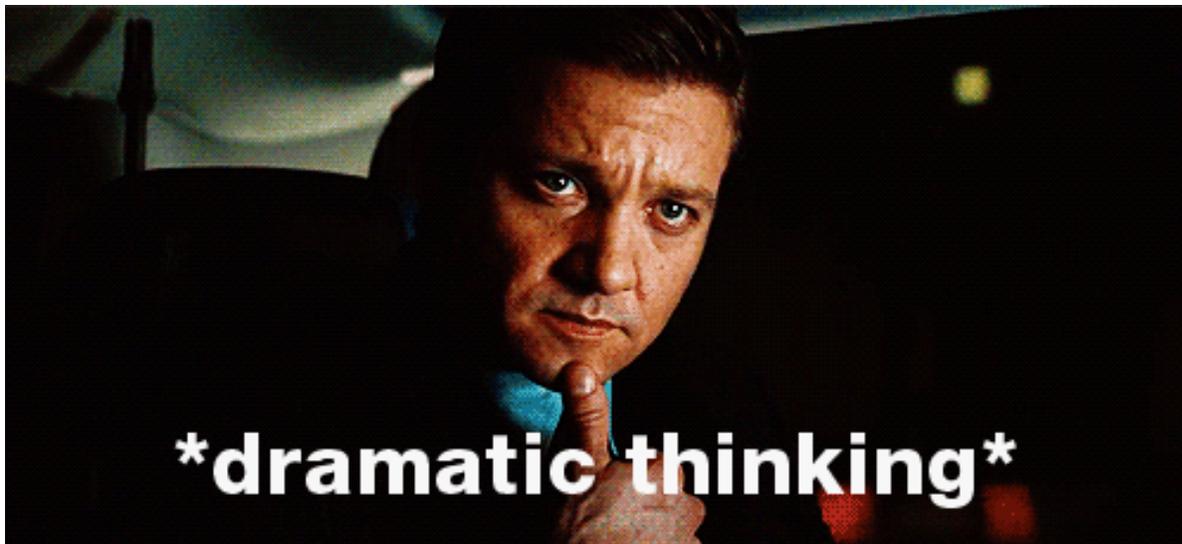
Defer Judgment

Save your judgment of potential solutions for the convergence phase to avoid shutting down idea generation.

Focus on "Yes, and"

Using "and" instead of "but" encourages people to expand their thoughts.

How to use CPS

Step 1: Clarify

- **Identify** your goal or challenge in detail.

- **Collect information** about it.

- **Formulate questions** that can help you generate solutions.

Step 2: Ideate

- Divergence stage of CPS

- Use your questions to generate ideas.

- Brainstorming or mind maps can help generate ideas as well.

Step 3: Develop

- Convergent stage of CPS

- Evaluate the solutions you brainstormed.

- Analyze whether they meet your needs and criteria.

- Consider how you can strengthen them and determine which is the best fit.

Step 4: Implement

- Identify resources and actions you need to implement your solution.

- Determine who is in charge of each resource or action.

- Make sure everyone understands and accepts the plan.

Remember...

This is only one mode of problem solving, and may not be the most appropriate for every situation.

www.mindtools.com

This free, online resource has lots of educational content on different modes of problem solving, and lots more!

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CPS Summary

- Clarify – what is the problem?

- Ideate – what are all the potential solutions?

- Develop – which solution will work the best?

- Implement – create a plan of action.