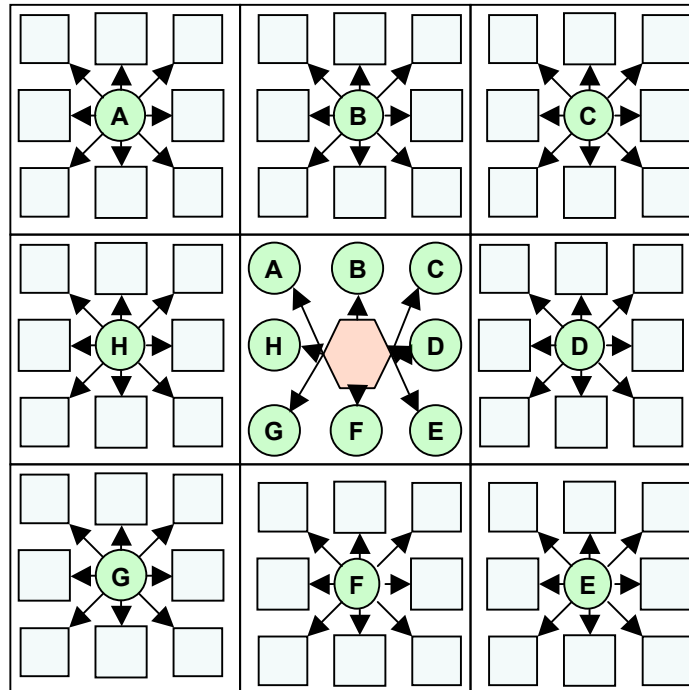


The Lotus Blossom, a brainstorming technique

I have found out that although my senior students' English level is getting better each day, their approach for generating ideas for essays and reports has been lacking. This technique was introduced to me by a friend in college.

The technique starts with a grid of nine squares (see below). The students start with the centre pink hexagon by putting the main theme/idea in it. Then students are encouraged to come up with up to eight sub-points that are related to the main theme and put them in Circles A to H right beside the pink hexagon. Students then transfer the sub-points from Circle A to H to corresponding circles in each grid around the central hub. Next, students come up with supporting ideas or evidence to support each sub-point.



Most of the students, find this technique useful for several reasons:

- It is a new and different brainstorming method from the regular “point form” or “brainstorm clouds”. The sense of novelty is helping them take the first step, trying the technique.
- It appears to make it easier for students to recall which sub-point is linked to which main point since they are all grouped in the central square.
- Students felt that the main points were more appropriate to the central theme than those generated from more traditional brainstorming because they have to select more carefully from the outset since there are only eight squares available for them.

NB A disadvantage is when it is unclear what the key ideas are. However, I have noticed one drawback of this technique is that students felt pressured to fill out all the squares to complete the visual tool. This actually discouraged few students from using this method effectively. Therefore, it is very important for me to carefully explain to them that they do not need to fill all the squares (to ease their pressure).