



Nominal Group Technique for collaborative action

A short introduction
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Nominal Group Technique (NGT)

An efficient and easy method for collaborative work within your team of learners, with a project team, with a community to make sure all voices can be heard.

You can use it for:

- Defining your challenges
- Collaborative goal setting
- Selecting a preferred alternative
- Deciding on actions

The NGT supports collaborative thinking for group members who are less vocal than others or there is a need that all participants actively participate. It can also highlight differences of opinion, that otherwise might be not become apparent.

Source: PAR, Theory and Methods, Chevalier and Buckles, 2020, p 119

What do you need for NGT?

You need a:

- group of people, not too large
- set of post-its or other ways of making notes
- set of writing material
- facilitator / moderator
- work space (room or digital room) with a presentation board

For preparation you need to define the main theme and an agreement on the set time that is allocated for the steps in the process.

Step 1 – Stating the Theme

State the problem, question, or issue that is the subject of the brainstorming and ensure that everyone understands.



Step 2 – noting down and collecting



- Each person silently thinks of ideas that come to mind when considering the problem; writes down as many as possible in a set period of time (5 to 10 minutes).
- Each member states aloud one idea. The facilitator records it on the board.
- No discussion is allowed, not even questions for clarification.
- Continue around the group until all members pass or until an agreed-upon length of time.

PAR, Theory and Methods, Chevalier
and Buckles, 2020, p 119

Steps 3 Discuss and organise

- Discuss each idea in turn.
- Wording may be changed only when the idea's originator agrees.
- Ideas may be stricken from the list only by unanimous agreement or when there are duplicates.
- Discussion may clarify meaning, explain logic or analysis, raise and answer questions, or state agreement or disagreement.
- With the help of the facilitator the group may also combine ideas into categories.

PAR, Theory and Methods, Chevalier
and Buckles, 2020, p 119

Steps 4 Prioritise and conclude

- Prioritise the recorded ideas in relation to the original question using multi-voting or list reduction.
- Typically, the solution with the highest total ranking is selected as the final decision.
- One could also include estimating the amount of work required to implement each solution by assigning it a point value; the higher the point value, the more work involved.
- The facilitator summarises the conclusions for the main common ideas and the next step in the process.

PAR, Theory and Methods,
Chevalier and Buckles, 2020, p 119

NGT recap



- a structured method for group brainstorming encouraging contributions from everyone
- facilitates quick agreement on the relative importance of issues, problems, or solutions.
- Team members begin by writing down their ideas, then selecting which idea they feel is best.
- Everyone presents their favourite idea(s); the suggestions are then discussed and prioritised by the entire group using a point system.
- The ratings of individual group members are combined into the final weighted priorities of the group.

PAR, Theory and Methods,
Chevalier and Buckles, 2020, p
119

References

Chevalier, J. M. & Daniel J. Buckles, 2019. Participatory Action Research. Theory and Methods for Engaged Inquiry, Routledge

Website:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nominal_group_technique

Steps for a student group to explore mapping challenges



1. Invite students to think of an event/situation that illustrated a meaningful challenge they had/have to face and writes this on a card (possible details on the back).
2. Students form groups around similar challenge cards. Those who do not know which group to join, explain what their cards are about, and can be 'adopted' by a group.
3. Each group prepares a skit to represent the key challenge that matters most to them.
4. Listening to the presentation, students note down what they find the most important after all: the one they first thought of or one they heard. After the presentations the facilitator invites all to join the group that addresses the challenge they consider most important.
5. Newly formed groups prepare a pitch on why their challenge should matter greatly to everyone and how they could respond to it.
6. After the presentation the facilitator describes recent findings from a refereed journal on the challenges faced by this type of stakeholders. Asks the group to compare and discuss.
7. All ends with a brief discussion on how the methods of action inquiry differ from the conventional approach and tools they used before.

PAR, Theory and Methods,
Chevalier and Buckles,
2020, p 119