**Discovery Stage Brainstorming Exercise**
**Location: To be determined by the student**
**Duration: 1 hour, to be repeated as necessary**
**Materials: Sticky notes, pens, camera, image editing software**

**Description: An early stage activity that can help identify project ideas, methods, and potential paths for prototyping.**

The goal of this exercise is to provide a structured activity to assist in the early stages of idea development. This is not the only approach a person can take when starting a project, but is one of many possible techniques.

Outline:
- I: Brain Dump (10-15 minutes)
- II: Organize and Identify (20 – 30 minutes)
- III: Document and Annotate (10-15 minutes)

Step I: Brain Dump
Take a stack of sticky notes and a pen. Set the timer. (Give yourself a short but reasonable amount of time to work.) Put everything that comes to mind on a sticky note and place the note in front of you. Don't be stingy with the stickies. Use one note per idea, thought or phrase. DO NOT EDIT your ideas, however, crazy or useless they may seem at this stage. Respect every initial idea that passes through your head. You can selectively choose what to focus on later.

Step II: Organize and Identify
Start to group your sticky notes into categories. Avoid lumping everything together into a uniform square. Physically move the stickies that go together next to each other and pay attention to both how they conceptually and physically relate. Some notes will correspond to project ideas. Others will focus on topics and questions. Still yet, other notes will speak to a particular technology or media form. If you find stickies that have a shared relationship to other notes, place them in between and take note. If you find your stickies lack specificity, then you need to go back to Step I and generate more stickies in greater detail. If you are  having trouble organizing your sticky notes, grab a friend or a fresh set of eyes and have them help you out.

You should start to see patterns between project ideas, methodologies, and technologies or forms. This can serve as the start of initial prototypes you may undertake to learn more about your possible projects, giving further insight as to which project to pursue (if you are deciding between ideas) or next steps if you already have something defined.

Step III: Document and Annotate
Take a photo of what you've done. Multiple photos, if needed. Then annotate your thoughts onto those photos using image software. Save these images as part of your archive.

Repeat Steps 1-3 if necessary.