

International Entrepreneurship Educator's Programme

Entrepreneurial Learning - Pedagogical Note Series

11. Speed-networking

1. What is speed-networking?

It is an informal exercise designed to create interaction between participants, warm them up (as the name implies) and learn about each other. Speed-networking can be used to encourage networking at an event or it can be used in teaching and learning as an ice-breaker. It is most often used during the early stages of a programme to replace the process of participants introducing each other more formally.

2. How is the exercise constructed?

In speed networking, participants are lined up in two lines facing each other, they are invited to spend 30 seconds to 1 minute each to introduce themselves. Usually a whistle or some other loud device is used to indicate that the time is up. When the time is complete one line moves along so that they are facing a new person and the introductions start again. Typically the speed-networking exercise may be conducted for 20-30 minutes. A longer period of time is not recommended as it can be tiring for participants.

The exercise can be constructed to fit any programme or event. For example in student entrepreneurship programmes it can be used to get students to introduce each other before group work or before choosing groups for an experiential exercise (e.g. business planning). The exercise is commonly undertaken under pressure. The exchange of experience allowed between any two participants is deliberately limited to encourage a focused summary of the person introducing themselves.

3. Relevance to Entrepreneurial Learning

The exercise is designed to: facilitate networking and enable people to get a basic knowledge of each other in a short period of time. It is usually a fun exercise so it works well in ice-breaking and it ensures that participants talk to a large number of other people.

4. Outcomes

Participants get to know each other more, they break down barriers and it enables the beginning of trust to emerge between participants. Usually they meet somebody who they may not have met otherwise and sometimes these individuals assist their learning on the programme more as a consequence of social barriers being removed.