International Entrepreneurship Educator's Programme

Entrepreneurial Learning - Pedagogical Note Series

14. Brainstorming Using Post-its

1. **Brainstorming Using Post-its?**
   The basis of brainstorming is generating ideas in a group situation based on the principle of suspending judgment - a principle which can be highly productive in individual effort as well as group effort. The **generation** phase is separate from the **judgment** phase of thinking. Brainstorming has many forms but is usually conducting in groups with specific rules being applied: no-judging ideas; aim for a large quantity of ideas; use piggy-backing of others ideas and freewheeling (be as abstract as possible).

2. **How is the exercise constructed?**
   In the entrepreneurship educators programme a loose form of brainstorming was used using post-it notes. Participants were asked to think about as many 'learning needs' and 'learning offers' as they could and attach these to appropriate NCGE learning outcomes. This was the brainstorming part of the exercise. These ideas were collected into themes by the use of the outcomes framework. In the second stage of the exercise participants were asked to take one learning outcome and sort the ideas into categories. In this stage they were organising the ideas. In the final stage they were asked to link categories together. This stage was a form of conceptualisation – seeing how the different categories link to each other.

3. **Relevance to Entrepreneurial Learning**
   The exercise can be constructed in many brainstorming situations. It is particularly valuable when you want to get thoughts from participants and to organise them in a sophisticated way. In a student situation it could be used to explore attitudes and expectations about entrepreneurship. It can also be used to conduct analysis of business ideas.

4. **Outcomes**
   The main benefit of the approach is for a combined perspective from participants in relation to a particular theme. This holistic view enables participants to be more aware of the wider picture. It is also very effective at demonstrating expectations and views across a group. The categorisation also makes explicit participants frames of reference.