

International Entrepreneurship Educator's Programme

Entrepreneurial Learning - Pedagogical Note Series

18. Use of Empathy in Communication Exercises (with entrepreneurs)

1. What is 'Use of Empathy in Communication Exercises'

The objective is to sensitize participants to the need for different forms of communication with different interest groups and to develop capacity to use this skill. In particular emphasis is placed upon the 'ways of communicating' of entrepreneurs, informally, with the appropriate word count and on a need-to-know and know-how basis.

2. How is the exercise constructed?

This can be approached in a number of ways.

By an exercise in writing for different kinds of audiences. To commence this exercise participants, organised in small groups, can be given a copy of an article from the Times or Guardian and then an article on the same subject from the Sun or the Mirror. They are asked to analyse the differences. They can then be asked to write a short piece reporting an incident or covering an issue of relevance to the group in the language of the Times and then the Sun. The end discussion might focus upon the importance of considering the different 'word counts' and processes of communication for different audiences and discussion of the relevance of this for the participants.

An example focused upon reaching independent business owners might be that of designing a brochure to promote a programme on financial management for small firms. Participants might be asked to speculate on the different needs of different groups of firms at different stages and invited to consider ways of segmentation of the 'market. Particular attention will be paid to the educational/qualification background and the kinds of newspapers they might read. They might then brainstorm on the particular 'needs to know' and 'know how' needs of this group. What problems are they likely to have in the field of financial management and what opportunities for development might they face where financial skills might be needed? What barriers might there be to owners of the 'type' identified have to attending the programme and how does that affect the communication? Bearing the above in mind the brochure will be written and may be appraised by different groups.

Another example is organising and selling a briefing workshop to local entrepreneurs for the above programme in particular covering forms of verbal and written communication relating to processes of; attracting entrepreneurs to the workshop; creating the right environment for communication when they arrive; forms and content of presentations/discussions designed to excite and create interest. Methods of 'sealing the deal'.

3. Relevance to Entrepreneurial Learning

The focus is upon the art of communication and engagement with different audiences a key component in the process of creating affectivity and conativity in entrepreneurial learning processes.

4. Outcomes

An enhanced capacity to build relationships, promotional and learning with different groups of participants. An associated ability to communicate on a Know-How and Need-to-Know basis with small firms.