

## International Entrepreneurship Educator's Programme

### Entrepreneurial Learning - Pedagogical Note Series

#### 21. Use of Frames of Reference for Intuitive Decision making

##### 1. What is 'Use of frames of reference for Intuitive Decision Making'

A frame of reference in the context of entrepreneurial learning is a mind map used for exploration of a particular phenomenon. In the context of entrepreneurial learning such maps are the product of experience enabling the entrepreneur to make rapid, seemingly intuitive, judgments.

##### 2. How is the exercise constructed?

The exercise is dependent upon the construction of a frame of reference by participants through which a particular event might be analysed and decisions made. Such a frame may be constructed by a process of brainstorming facilitated by the educator without any prior knowledge input – to test how participants see things and to encourage them to combine existing knowledge. Alternatively, following a knowledge input for example on assessing customer potential, participants are asked to construct a frame for analysis.

Examples;

##### 1. Creating a frame for assessing a business proposition.

Participants are asked – without any input – 'If I (the facilitator) came to you for advice about starting a business, what kinds of questions would you ask me?'

*Participants can be divided into groups for this exercise.*

*After 20 minutes the various views are fed back and the facilitator groups and creates out of the replies the, now familiar frame of reference of:*

*IDEA*

*ABILITY*

*RESOURCE*

*MOTIVATION*

*ADMINISTRATION*

*PLAN*

*Within this frame the various feedback is accumulated so that the headings in the frame are filled out. The frame can then be reinforced in use by application to the participants if they are a start up group, applied to a case or used as a basis for interviewing a simulated or real start up.*

##### 2. Creating a frame for business analysis on the basis of knowledge input

Participants are asked to imagine that they are going to visit small/medium sized firm for half a day. They are asked the question:

What would you look for during the visit in order to determine whether the firm had a strong strategic orientation?

The question is asked in the knowledge that the participants have earlier undertaken a programme focused upon Strategy,

*Participants can be divided into groups for his question or the issue can be openly brainstormed in class.*

*As in he above example the answers can be collated into a frame – or the participants can be asked to suggest a frame within which they might logically place observations. The end result might be a frame as below.*

*VISION AND DEGREE SHARED*

*PLANNED CAPACITY  
TO IMPLEMENT VISION*

*STRENGTH OF ENVIRONMENTAL  
SCANNING*

*ABILITY TO SEE BUSINESS  
THROUGH STAKEHOLDER  
EYES*

*CAPACITY TO BRING FORWARD  
THE FUTURE ON A 'WHAT IF'  
BASIS*

*CUSTOMER FOCUS*

*COMPETITOR KNOWLEDGE*

*DEPTH OF KNOWLEDGE  
OF OWN BUSINESS*

The purpose of such an exercise is to strengthen capacity to quickly apply knowledge. It can often be the case that students have accumulated knowledge but not in a form that lends itself to prompt application,

**3. Relevance to Entrepreneurial Learning**

The focus is upon stimulating capacity for intuitive decision making and the capacity to accumulate and internalise knowledge in a way hat can be transferred into long term memory.

**4. Outcomes**

Participants will have enhanced capacity to organise knowledge in a manner that enables it to be applied to different contexts. They will have built confidence in their capacity in this respect. They will also have greater respect for experiential knowledge.