

International Entrepreneurship Educator's Programme

Entrepreneurial Learning - Pedagogical Note Series

43. Use of Polls

1. What is the 'Use of polls'?

A poll is a means of engaging the audience in an issue which is being discussed/presented. It is particularly useful when there are large numbers of participants. It can be used in a number of ways:

- to obtain a view of how much the audience already knows about an issue
- to learn what the audience already thinks about an issue
- to identify the needs of the audience relating to personal or organisational development

2. How is the exercise constructed?

This is usually by a simple questionnaire which can be quickly and easily answered – usually of a simple scoring nature (agree or disagree or via a Likert scale). It can be delivered in class or circulated beforehand and the results collated to provide a basis for framing discussion. If the technology is available it can be used as an interactive device to get audience/class participation by the pressing of a button.

An example, used on the programme, is to question participants as to how they see progress in entrepreneurship education in key areas in their institutions. The results form a basis for discussion as what needs to be done, which are the major areas for action and what actions can be taken.

A poll can also be used as a means of focusing a particular session on needs as identified by the audience. For example an audience of entrepreneurs can be polled prior to or during a programme about key problems or opportunities facing them. It can also be used as a straw poll feedback evaluation – what do you think?

3. Relevance to Entrepreneurial Learning

The poll provokes engagement of the participants/audience, It is a vehicle for developing creative problem solving based upon what the participants' think. It is also a vehicle for stimulating peer learning as it becomes evident to the individual whether or not they are mainstream on an issue and therefore will provoke thinking and interaction. It also gives ownership of the learning agenda to the participants and demonstrates that the session is relevant to the needs/views of the group

4. Outcomes

There is a stimulus to action resulting from peer pressure. There is also a stimulus to learning from the others in the group who may have a more advanced or different perspective on an issue.