



**EARTHE**

## **Activity 2**

# **Digital toolkit for innovative curriculum and methodological development**

**Module – Problem solving**

**Method - Guided Brainstorming**

**Case study**

## Module 4 – Problem Solving

# Case study - Facilitating Adult Learning through Guided Brainstorming: A Practical Example

### ***Related Method - Guided Brainstorming***

#### ***Context and Background***

Organisation Type: Adult education centre, i.e. non-formal learning institution.

Target Group: Adult learners, including professionals seeking skill development, unemployed individuals, and lifelong learners.

The case study at hand involves a series of workshops aimed at enhancing problem-solving and creative thinking skills among participants.

#### ***Problem / Challenge Presented***

Participants often struggle to come up with creative solutions to real-world problems due to:

- a) Limited exposure to different perspectives.
- b) Fear of being judged, which limits people from expressing their ideas.
- c) Struggling to organise thoughts in a coherent way.

The aforementioned limitations hinder the development of soft skills essential in both personal and professional contexts.

#### ***Actions Taken / Method Applied***

Guided Brainstorming was a method implemented as a structured approach to address these challenges, and it was done in the following manner:

- a) Facilitators defined clear objectives and provided context for the brainstorming session.
- b) Participants were invited to share ideas openly, without immediate judgment, creating a space for free-flowing discussion.
- c) Facilitators helped the group sort and prioritise ideas to identify solutions that could be acted upon.
- d) Participants developed concrete steps for implementing the most promising ideas.



This method was adapted from general brainstorming techniques, as detailed in resources like the National Highway Institute's guide on brainstorming.

## ***Outcomes and Results***

The application of Guided Brainstorming led to the following outcomes:

- a) Participants improved their ability to create innovative solutions.
- b) Active participation was noted, with learners contributing with more ideas and feedback.
- c) Learners showed better capacity to analyse and address complex issues.

These outcomes are consistent with findings from the National Institute for STEM Education, which highlights the effectiveness of brainstorming in fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

## ***Lessons Learned***

*The guided brainstorming process highlighted the following important points:*

- 1) Clear guidance ensures productive sessions and prevents idea stagnation.
- 2) When people feel free from judgment, they share their ideas more openly and honestly.
- 3) Bringing together participants from diverse backgrounds fosters more innovative solutions.

## ***Key Success Factors***

*The key success factors when it comes to the application of the method of guided brainstorming are as follows:*

- 1) Experienced facilitators, skilled in guiding discussions and managing group dynamics.
- 2) Clear objectives and well-defined goals for each session to maintain focus.
- 3) Inclusive environment which encourages all participants to contribute equally.
- 4) Turning ideas into practice to highlight the value of involvement.

## ***Challenges Encountered and How They Were Addressed***

During the implementation of the guided brainstorming method, initial hesitancy was observed, which was gradually overcome by setting ground rules that emphasised respect and a non-judgmental approach.



Similarly, the team faced an overload of ideas, which was addressed by categorising and prioritising them to concentrate on the most practical solutions.

Adult learners are by nature a diverse group with diverse learning styles. This challenge was addressed by incorporating various activities to engage different types of learners.

### ***Applicability / Recommendations for Educators***

Educators can apply the Guided Brainstorming method by:

- a) Setting clear objectives, i.e. by defining the purpose and expected outcomes of each session.
- b) Creating a Safe Space, and encourage open communication by fostering an inclusive environment.
- c) Guiding the brainstorming process to maintain focus and productivity.
- d) Implementing valuable ideas and provide feedback to participants.

These strategies are supported by research on case-based and problem-based learning, which emphasises the importance of structured, real-world problem-solving in adult education.