

Integrated Action Project (IAP) Formal Continuous Assessment

Project Idea Generation and Screening

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Today facing challenges and competition involves continuous innovation. It became an integrated part of organizational and business activities. Technology has a potential to empower the both interrelated steps of the innovation dynamics.

Young people, who are the fundamental asset of our economies and societies across the world, face real and increasing difficulties in finding a decent job with each day.

Three additional merging factors are worsening the youth employment crisis even further, causing challenges while transiting to decent jobs, namely (i) unemployment among university graduates of tertiary education in general are rising (ii) numbers of discouraged youth, in other words, young people, who are neither in education nor in employment or training (NEETs) are increasing, and (iii) potential NEET group students, especially in the 1st year, who, apart from reduced study fees, require extra motivation and moral support from educators.

An idea generation technique is a creative process of coming up with solutions and ideas. It also involves developing these ideas and communicating them.

In real life practice, problem solvers are good at generating and implementing ideas. Furthermore, all the truthfully successful people started with the generation of innovative or creative ideas. In fact, entrepreneurship is being able to create and run a business. In today's business world, idea generation is one of the main factors that lead to its success. The idea thought of here should be able to solve a problem.

In addition to being unique, a good idea should also be easy to execute. For example, let's suppose you feel a lot of government employees have a problem with report and business writing skills. In this case, your idea could be setting up a business writing skills center located in proximity to the government facilities.

1.1 Idea Generation in Product Development

Idea generation is the first step for any product development. This requires you to look for feasible product options that can be executed. It is a very important step for organizations to solve their problems.

It requires you to conduct a SWOT analysis by scanning the micro and macro environments and to do a feasibility study that includes a market research. You should aim to come up with an idea that is unique from your competitors and can be used profitably.

As well as being a master of your own internal (strengths and weaknesses) factors, generating an idea that is unique from your competitors and can be used profitably, requires that you understand and be well vested with the Political, Economic, Social/Culture, Technology, Ecology, and Legal (PESTEL) factors trends within the market environment you intend to implement such an idea. Understanding the PESTEL factors trends will always help you to identify, analyse and pursue right opportunities while avoiding threats.

2.0 IDEA GENERATION PROCESS

The process may be different for different organizations and different people. But there are three main steps in the process. It starts with the identification of the question or the problem we need to solve.

After which we need to come up with ideas and probable solutions. Finally, in the third stage, we select the most suitable idea and execute it. For example, let's suppose you are opening up a restaurant.

So firstly, you need to identify what question you need to answer. Let's assume you want to decide upon a name for the restaurant. Now you will use different techniques (brainstorming, mind mapping, etc.) to come up with ideas for names.

In the last step, you will choose the most appropriate name from the different names you came up with within the second step.

For example, self-sanitizing door handles can be innovative product idea that would be differentiated from competitors. It is unique and would be in high demand because of the current shift towards a healthy lifestyle.

3.0 IDEA GENERATION TECHNIQUES

3.1 Mind Mapping

A mind map can be described as a central idea which branches out into different themes or new ideas which then branch out further exponentially.

The process of mind mapping can utilize the full range of cortical skills including generating words, drawing inspiration from images, analyzing or connecting numbers as well as applying logic in both analytical and mental ways therefore giving us the freedom to explore a wide variety of ideas through a single medium.

How to mind map

It is a technique of presenting information. Here we show the links between the different elements or the pieces of information. The links or connection is usually shown with the help of lines and arrows. It's a visual way of presenting the information.

The process of mind mapping involves only a few tools and can be done both digitally and manually. However, I recommend that you try this technique by hand initially to avoid the potential learning curve of a digital experience.

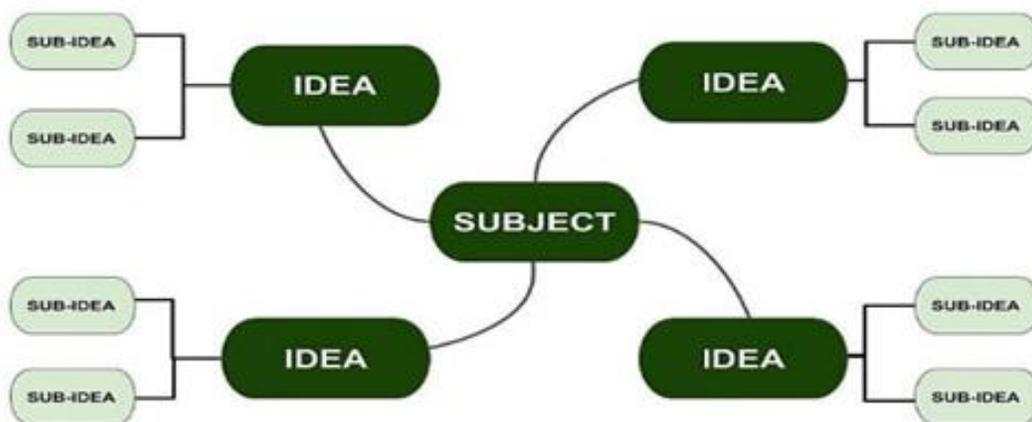
- 1) **Begin in the middle of a blank page** writing a single word or drawing a simple image of the central idea from which you wish to start.
- 2) **Begin branching out** from the central idea by developing related subtopics around it. Connect these subtopics using curved lines. Allow yourself to explore all the ideas which come to you.
- 3) **Repeat this process** for the subtopics by generating additional images, words and numbers which you associate with them.
- 4) **Keep going.** The real value in this process comes from exploring and developing upon your subtopics and associations. You may be surprised at where this process can lead you!

Mind mapping can be used whenever there is a need for brainstorming, analysis or strategic overview. By utilizing this process, you can take a few steps back from your initial assumptions and explore other areas of potential opportunity.

For example, let's suppose you want a name for your new IT application. You will start by writing the main topic in the center of a paper, which here is the name for your new application.

From the center point, you will have arrows pointing out. These arrows will point to the main things to be kept in mind while thinking of a name like guidelines, visualization, productivity, etc.

Now from every key aspect, there will be more arrows pointing out. These arrows will describe the key aspect in detail. Like 'guidelines' will talk about the name being able to express what the application does, following the naming scheme, etc.



PRACTICAL TASK ONE (1)

Based on your field of study and the **outcomes of the qualification Units you are registered for at NIT**, each group member must use the mind mapping technique to generate one best innovative project idea. During the process of using the mind mapping technique to generate a project idea, the group must refrain from discussing, complimenting, or criticizing ideas as they are presented. Consider every idea to be a good one. The quantity of ideas is what matters; evaluation of the ideas and their relative merit comes later. Each group member must present the generated idea to the Group Supervisor for further guidance and decision to involve other members into discussions of various generated ideas from all the members.

3.2 Reverse Thinking

As is very clear from the name itself this technique asks us to think oppositely. Instead of working on the problem in front of us, we work on the exact opposite of it.

For example, let us assume you want to know 'how to increase your followers on social media platforms. According to this technique, you will instead think of 'how will I not increase my followers on social media platform'.

To this question, you will get answers like, by not posting regularly, or posting low-quality content, etc. Now you just have to reverse your answers.

So, to increase followers on a social media platform you should post high-quality content regularly. This idea generation technique works on the concept that it's easier to come up with negative suggestions.

PRACTICAL TASK TWO (2)

Based on the best chosen ideas generated in task one, each group member must use reserve thinking to test the criticality of the idea.

Once all the members has utilized reverse thinking to critic the idea, each member shall present his/her findings to the group. Guided by the Supervisor, the group should decide on the best ideas to qualify to take to the next step of the process.

3.3 Brainstorming

This technique is quantitative meaning that you come up with a large number of ideas. Here a group comes up with a different probable solution to the problem.

For example, if you along with some of your colleagues are trying to come up with a tagline for your product. And each one of you gives your ideas, then that is called brainstorming.

3.3.1 Steps in Brainstorming

Brainstorming is an idea-generation tool designed to produce a large number of ideas through the interaction of a group of people.

- 1) The session leader should clearly state the purpose of the brainstorming session.
- 2) Participants call out one idea at a time, either going around the round in turn, which structures participation from everyone, or at random, which may favor greater creativity. Another option is to begin the brainstorming session by going in turn and after a few rounds open it up to all to call out ideas as they occur.
- 3) Refrain from discussing, complimenting, or criticizing ideas as they are presented. Consider every idea to be a good one. The quantity of ideas is what matters; evaluation of the ideas and their relative merit comes later. This tool is designed to get as many ideas generated in a short period of time as possible. Discussing ideas may lead to premature judgment and slow down the process.
- 4) Record all ideas on a flipchart, or on self-adhesive notes, so that all group members can see them.
- 5) Build on and expand the ideas of other group members. Encourage creative thinking.
- 6) When generating ideas in turn, let participants pass if an idea does not come to mind quickly.
- 7) Keep going when the ideas slowdown in order to create as long a list as possible and reach for less obvious ideas.
- 8) After all ideas are listed, clarify each one and eliminate exact duplicates.
- 9) Resist the temptation to “lump” or group ideas. Combining similar ideas can come later.

PRACTICAL TASK THREE (3)

Based on your field of study and the **outcomes of the qualification Units you are registered for at NIT**, each group must use Brainstorming rules and steps to generate NEW (not those generated under task 1) project ideas.