
UNIT 4 TRAINING SKILLS

Structure

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Qualities of a Good Trainer
- 4.3 Communication and Interpersonal Skills
- 4.4 Promoting Self Learning
- 4.5 Promoting Group Formation
- 4.6 Coping with Changes in the Learners and Training Situations
- 4.7 Coping with Resistance and Conflict
- 4.8 Administrative Tasks of the Trainer
- 4.9 Managing the Training Programme
- 4.10 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.11 Glossary
- 4.12 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

4.1 INTRODUCTION

A good trainer needs to possess several important skills. You will learn more about these skills and characteristics of good trainers as you study this Unit. Broadly speaking, trainers need to know the subject matter, the methods by which this subject matter can be communicated, how to communicate well with the trainees in a way which they will enjoy and also benefit from achieving the objectives of training. As you can guess, being a good trainer is not easy. Bringing about change in women's attitudes and life skills is, however, your crucial mission. So, give of your best. Your effort will make a great difference to the lives of many women.

Objectives

After studying this Unit, you should be able to:

- describe the qualities of a good trainer;
- discuss the nature, role and importance of the communication process and interpersonal skills in conducting training programmes;
- list ways to promote self learning;
- describe the steps in formation of self help groups;
- discuss ways of promoting self help group formation; and
- describe ways of coping with changes in learners training situation and resistance/conflict.

4.2 QUALITIES OF A GOOD TRAINER

In order to be a good trainer, you need to have the following qualities:

- Basic knowledge of the subject;
- Good communication skills/ Ability to communicate;
- Patience;
- Relaxed behaviour;
- Good observation;
- Helpfulness;
- Good grooming;
- Democratic style;
- Honesty and sincerity; and
- Ability to organize and facilitate

Basic Knowledge of the Subject

The training process involves enabling trainees to acquire new knowledge and skills. Trainees expect these from the trainer. Hence, nothing can replace the basic knowledge of the subject. You may have excellent facility of language or may be very well conversant with all the training skills and the methods of conducting a training programme, but if you do not have the basic knowledge of a subject, you will fail in all your endeavours. You have to give the correct knowledge to your learners.

Example 1

A trainer would keep her text book open in her drawer of the table and read from the book while teaching the trainees. She would secretly refer to the text book. Every now and then she would make mistakes while writing on the black board because her knowledge of the subject matter was very weak and understanding of the subject was also low. She was neither able to answer questions from trainees nor able to help them in problem solving. The trainees had to go and report to the organization supervisor and this trainer had to leave the organization.

Example 2

A trainer invited for training was excellent with her knowledge of the subject matter, had all the concepts on her finger tips, explained very well and expected excellent work from the trainees. In a matter of days, this trainer earned the respect of all the 30 trainees and the supervisor and also the rest of the community. The trainees also did well in interacting with the community women after the training was over.

Good Communication Skills/Ability to Communicate

You have the knowledge, yes, but how are you going to pass it on to the learners? Just having the knowledge is not enough; you need to be a good

communicator, and pass the message across in a simple and interesting way, using simple rather than complex language. Your terminology should be understood by the target group and you should be able to come down to the level of the learners. Also, you should motivate your learners by positive reinforcement and make them feel adequate and competent.

Patience

Trainees may ask you a question while you are teaching, but you want to proceed with your instructions. You do not want to be interrupted while teaching and are impatient to complete your work. This attitude will not help the learners; you have to clarify their doubts, make them understand the previous step/point before you proceed to the next one. You may have to repeat a step/point twice, thrice or four times and make your trainees feel comfortable. Hence, have patience and do not mind if your instructions are interrupted or trainees seem to take a long time to understand.

Relaxed Behaviour

Being very serious while teaching also makes the learners wary of the trainer. They feel unsure and uncomfortable. *Do relax, smile often* and continue teaching. If you are relaxed and open to questioning and discussion, learners will also be more relaxed. They will be able to ask questions and clarify their doubts leading to better learning and understanding.

Example 3

A trainer was always very tense and never smiled while teaching, with the result that the trainees also were always tense, serious and never asked questions. They were scared of the trainer.

The counselling session with the trainer revealed that she was anxious to do well but did not spend enough time in preparing the subject matter.

She was guided by her supervisor to learn her content well, make teaching aids, use them appropriately while teaching in the class. Acting upon the suggestions, the trainer gained confidence, her confidence led to her expression softening and she starting smiling often during the training sessions.

The learners observing that the trainer was at ease, questioned her and clarified their doubts. There was continuous interaction between learners and the trainer. The trainer got encouraging comments from her supervisor; learners enjoyed and clarified their doubts; the trainer was satisfied since the learners were actively participating and paying attention.

Good Observation

Besides being relaxed yourself, a trainer of trainers needs to be observant and vigilant. While addressing the learners you need to glance around the group, observe every learner and see what is happening among the learners. From their expressions you can gauge whether learners are following you or not. Also you should be *alert* to the needs of the group. If the trainees need a different approach or strategy, provide it. They may be bored or tired or uncomfortable. You may, therefore, stop or provide change of activity to make them comfortable.

Helpfulness

Do be *helpful* and reach out to your learners very amicably. Help them solve their problems and resolve any arguments which may arise, peacefully. Learners will pick up the values which you portray.

Good Grooming

Talking about setting good examples, you should always be *well groomed* and simply but neatly dressed. Clean habits are other necessities for a trainer, i.e., have clean nails, properly combed tied hair and appropriate light make up. Also carry yourself well showing poise and confidence.

Democratic Style

Democratic style of training means you must allow freedom to your trainees. Allow the learners to talk, ask questions, give their view points and discuss issues. They should be even encouraged to show dissent in relation to the point of view expressed by others in the group if they feel strongly about it. This may bring a fresh perspective or innovative way of doing things.

Honesty and Sincerity

Be honest with your trainees. Nobody is perfect or knows everything. So own up if you are not sure about some concept and there is no harm in talking to the learners that you will check/consult a book and then let them know or clarify their doubts. But do not leave it that. Consult a book or expert and explain or present the fact at the next opportunity. This shows your sincerity along with honesty.

Ability to Organize and Facilitate

Lastly, you have to be a good organizer i.e. you have to show that you can plan the programme well, execute it and then evaluate it too. During the programme there may be situations when you have to change your strategy and choose out of many options available. At such moments you will have to weigh the pros and cons of all the options and select and follow the best option. In other words, i.e. you will have to be a good *decision maker too* so that your plan gets successfully executed.

4.3 COMMUNICATION AND INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Communication has a very important role in promoting effective training. Interpersonal skills are also of great importance in becoming a good trainer.

Importance of Communication

Communication represents one of the fundamental aspects of all human interaction. In a training programme, the most effective communication possible has to be in operation. If it is not, the trainers and learners would be unable to communicate with each other and the learning will be reduced considerably.

What is Communication?

Communication is not simply talking. It is an act of influencing and inducing

others to interpret an idea in the manner intended by the speaker or writer. The word ‘communication’ is derived from the latin word ‘communis’ which means ‘common’. This stands for sharing of ideas. Common communication of ideas establishes a common ground for understanding. The three fundamental elements of the communication process are: the speaker, the message and the receiver. In Aristotle’s model depicted in Figure 4.1, communication is seen as a simple, structured process in which a communicator (sender) transmits a thought, idea or feeling (message) to another person (receiver).



Figure 4.1: A Simple Model of Communication

Communication is the act of making oneself understood or the interchange of information, ideas, views and opinions between people. In order to be an effective communicator, you must understand the basic framework of the communication process. The cycle of communication is explained in the following Figure 4.2.

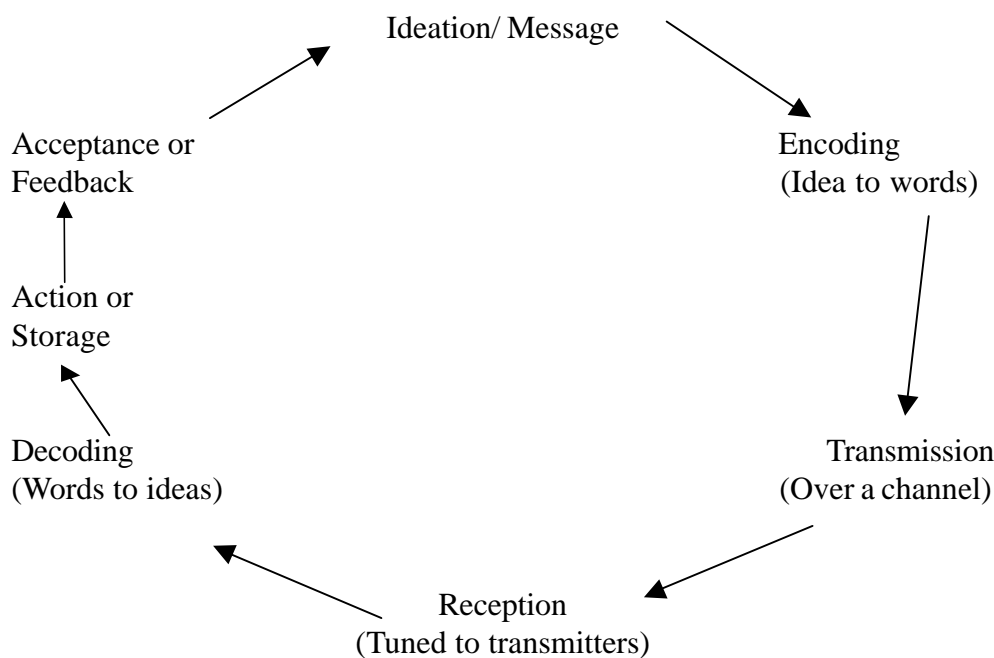


Figure 4.2: Cycle of Communication

This cycle is particularly applicable to oral communication. Simply speaking, an individual or a group of individuals (called the communicator) has an idea, message or understanding that needs to be transmitted to another individual or group (called the receiver). In order to transmit the idea, the communicator translates the idea into a language known to both the parties (called encoding) and sends the message by verbal, non-verbal or written means (called the channel or medium). The message is received through the senses of the receiver and translated (decoded) into a message received. The receiver accepts the message, acknowledges the verbal or non-verbal feedback. Verbal feedback is the written or spoken response. Non-verbal feedback is body movements like facial expression, nodding of head or actions. The communication process is successful only when the sender and the receiver understand the message to the same degree. Feedback permits clarification and repetition until the message is fully

understood. Whenever interaction takes place, the communication network should facilitate proper transmission of information and this aptly applies to the training situation.

Objectives of Good Communication in Training

Communication in training is a process of sharing information and creating relationships to facilitate achieving training goals and objectives. You have read about the need and functions of training in Units 1 and 2 and recall that the most important role of the trainer is to facilitate learning. In some ways, it is an exploration of the participant's willingness to learn and apply what they have learnt. More specifically, the objectives of good communication in training would be to:

- make participants understand clearly the objectives;
- create and maintain an atmosphere of cooperation and interpersonal relationships;
- increase efficiency and understanding and
- motivate participants for willing participation.

Effective communication alone can help us in realizing these objectives.

Communication Skills

The four basic communication skills are:

- Listening
- Speaking
- Reading and
- Writing

The growth of the language has always followed the sequence of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Effective communication is regarded as the responsibility of the trainer and for this she/he needs to speak and listen effectively.

Ten Commandments of Good Communication

1. Clarify ideas before communicating. Analyzing the message systematically would facilitate its clear reception.
2. Examine the true purposes of communication: Identifying objectives clearly helps in proper designing of the communication process.
3. Take the entire environment - physical and human into consideration. Physical setting, social climate and past communication practices should be examined in adapting the message to the environment.
4. Beware of the overtones as well as the basic content of the message: Voice, tone, facial expression, choice of language etc. all influence the listener's reaction to the communication.
5. Convey useful information: People remember things that are beneficial to them. Keep the listener's interest in mind.

6. Support words with deeds: Saying one thing and doing another undermines communication.
7. Communicate with the future as well as the present in mind: Keep long-term goals in mind.
8. Follow up communication: Obtain feedback and take appropriate action.
9. Be a good listener: Relating to a listener’s needs is important for effective communication.
10. When valuable, obtain advice from others in planning: Consultation with others helps to provide insight and support.

Developing the Art of Speaking

When you speak, you communicate through the words you speak, and your body language i.e. how you look when you talk and the gestures you make. Research has shown that the impact of communication carries firstly from the body; secondly the voice quality and lastly the actual words we speak. If there is any inconsistency between these, then body language and tone of voice would have more credibility.

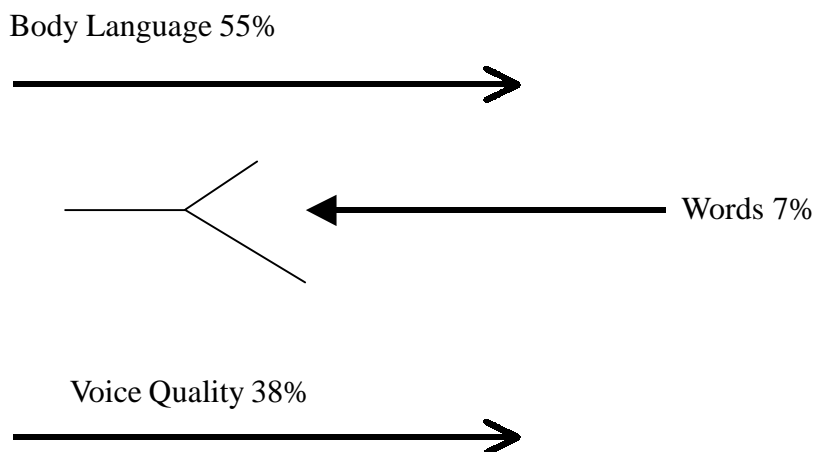


Figure 4.3: Impact of Communication

Effective trainers apply this knowledge to send positive signals through the body language, words and voice quality to full advantage.

Non-Verbal Communication

Non-verbal communication is made up of a number of signals using both body and voice. Some of these signals we display without realizing that we are doing so or the effect they will have on other people, for example frowning, lifting of eyebrows, shrugging of shoulders etc. These non-verbal signals convey many different messages about our emotional state and our attitudes. It is important to understand that it is rare for a single non-verbal behaviour to be significant in isolation from other non-verbal behaviours. Usually we judge non-verbal behaviour as a whole.

Body Language

Body language is 55% of our communication. Some of the important body signals are:

- Clothes and appearance (shabby, smart, eccentric);
- Head and body movements (nods, angles of the body);
- Facial expression (frowns, smiles);
- Direction of gaze (stares, day dreaming);
- Feet and leg movements;
- Bodily contact (shaking hands, patting);
- Proximity and positioning in relation to other people (towering, standing back); and
- Energy level.

Your appearance is a method of communication. The first impression the learner has of you is the way you look. Dressing appropriately for the target group is essential. If you want people to feel at ease, look relaxed, prepared, open and friendly, use your body, gestures, facial expressions consciously to get positive outcomes. For example, you can move towards someone to get their attention. Use your hand to stop someone who is monopolizing a discussion or make eye contact with learners to encourage participation. Such conscious use of body language, however, must be done with sensitivity, integrity and in the interest of the learners.

Remember some gestures mean different things in different cultures. Stay alert that your body language does not give offence or cause confusion. You can control your body movements by getting honest feedback about your conscious and unconscious body language from someone you trust.

Tone of the Voice

A person's voice accounts for 38% of communication and provides a rich variety of information. When you speak, people make inferences about your mood, state of health, social standing, etc. In training, your voice can add interest and energy, secure attention, make learners alert or put them to sleep.

Try listening to yourself on a tape. It would be surprising. Practice different speeds, volumes, modulation, etc. Try saying a sentence in different ways for example "*I didn't know she took your books*". You would be surprised to notice that although the words remain the same, the meaning is changed each time you put emphasis on a different word in the sentence. Also note your facial expressions and gestures which change every time.

You can train your voice by making a careful analysis of what makes professional speakers on television, radio, etc., so interesting to listen to. The pace, volume, intensity and attitude appear to be the important aspects.

Verbal Communication- The Words

The words that you use to communicate too are important. You should use a language which is well understood by the learners. Some of the important ways by which you can make your words effective are:

- Use simple language, words or phrases. Eliminate all unnecessary words. Keep your sentences short. Long sentences make learning a memory exercise.

- Avoid unnecessary jargon. Explain carefully such related terms whenever you decide to use them.
- Provide information in small steps.
- Use multi-sensory speech which gets reflected in pictures, sounds or feelings. Ensure that your learners can see what you mean, hear you loudly and clearly and get a hold of your meaning.
- Have pauses. Silence in between provides time to learners to reflect on what is being said.
- Organize your thoughts clearly.
- Avoid interruptions.
- Speak clearly and audibly. Do not speak too fast or too slow.
- Do not speak while moving away from a person. Do not assume others understand automatically. Check for understanding.

Effective Listening

Effective listening is important to communicate effectively. It is important for you as a trainer to be sensitive to a learner's responses and listen actively. Such listening is essential for effective interaction in a training programme. In fact, it is often what is not said – the pause and silent consent in a conversation — which makes for effective communication.

Remember hearing is not listening. It is an overall label for the complex psychological and neurological factors involved in the understanding and retention of verbal materials presented in spoken form. Active listening involves listening to every aspect of conversation:

- Words;
- Linkages;
- Expressions;
- Tone; and
- Body language

As the trainer you then respond to these aspects of conversation to show that:

- You are listening;
- You are interested;
- You understand or want to understand what is being said.

Listening enables you to distinguish between fact and fancy and develops the ability to evaluate and judge statements objectively.

The helpful responses we make in active listening to someone may be:

- Expressions that you are encouraging not threatening. Don't listen to, refute or in other words disagree with the speaker. Let your listening be sympathetic, alert, active and understanding.

- Gestures like nods, smiles, shrugs;
- Body postures that are relaxed;
- Establishing eye contact without staring;
- Asking appropriate questions to clarify meanings;
- Summarize – rephrasing speaker’s arguments in your words;
- Stay objective; and
- Expressions/noises like “yes”, “I see”, “mmm”.

These helpful listening behaviours are conducive to effective listening. There are some bad practices and behaviour which act as barriers to effective listening.

Disinterest can be expressed by:

- Premature arguments and verbal responses such as ‘so what?’
- Non-verbal responses such as frowns, shuffling papers, tapping hands and feet, looking around, fidgeting, doodling, daydreaming etc.
- Postures such as slouching, getting up and walking around.

Impatience can be expressed by:

- Verbal responses such as ‘oh well’, ‘yes’, ‘but’
- Non-verbal responses such as looking at your watch repeatedly
- Postures such as hovering, pacing up and down.

Remember, active listening is important both for the trainer and the learner. It is a skill which can be improved by proper training and guidance.

Check Yourself

An honest response to these six key questions will go a long way to determine the effectiveness of your communication.

For Communicator (Sender)

For Receivers

What do I intend to say?

What does she expect to hear?

What will I actually say?

What will she actually hear?

What will be the emotional impact of what I say?

How will she feel about what she hears?

Interpersonal Skills

Communicating effectively demands skills in inter-personal relationships. When interacting with others, you are able to influence others by your personal charisma or your leadership qualities. You may be persuasive and motivate or resolve people’s differences. People who have good inter-personal relationships are good communicators. Self - awareness and deep concern for others are important to relate effectively with others. Trust, confidence and listening sensitivity play an important role in interpersonal aspects of communication. The three important qualities that foster improved communication are: genuineness, understanding and acceptance and empathy. Let us learn more about these qualities.

- Genuineness is being honest and open about one’s feelings, needs and ideas. A genuine person is aware about his own emotions and shares her/his thoughts and feelings with others.
- Understanding means accepting, respecting and supporting another person in a non- patronizing way. For this the essential ingredients are an attitude of neutrality towards the other person, belief that each person is unique and has her own capabilities and indicating that you care about the other person.
- Empathy is the ability to really see and hear another person and understand her from her perspective. This involves recognizing emotions in others and understanding them as they are.

Genuineness, understanding, acceptance and empathy are important attitudes that improve relationships with people. You may have mastered the necessary communication skills and techniques but if you lack these attitudes your relationships may not flourish and you may not achieve your set goals. In a way, they become the necessary condition for optimal communication.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

1) What is communication?

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2) What is the importance of communication in training?

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3) Name the important communication skills.

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4) Name the important elements of speaking.

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5) Suggest some ways you can make your verbal communication effective.

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6) List helpful listening behaviour.

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7) Name important qualities which improve interpersonal relationships and communication.

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Activity: Listen to any communication (a lecture, a talk or a dialogue – in person, on TV or radio) and identify the efforts that have been made to (or not made to) make it effective/ ineffective.

4.4 PROMOTING SELF LEARNING

The tremendous growth in knowledge (doubling in less than 20 years) and the rapid advances in information and communication technologies as well as human resource initiatives imply that an individual has to devote a growing proportion of his or her time to learning. A time has come when organizing training programmes to impart knowledge will not be cost effective. Instead, each person will have to acquire internal mental strengths and resources and draw on these to learn meaningfully for her/him. Increasing participant’s autonomy and making them responsible for their own learning during the training programme is crucial to further this process.

4.5 PROMOTING GROUP FORMATION

Individuals seldom work in isolation from each other. The working in groups and the influence each individual exerts over other members is an essential feature of human behaviour. A group may be defined as an aggregate of a small number of people in reciprocal communication and interaction around some common interest.

Groups become a source of mutual understanding and are important for performance of certain tasks which need the combined efforts of a number of individuals working together. The variety of experience and expertise among members of the group provides a synergetic effect which can be applied to solve complex problems.

One type of small group is called Self-help group. Such a group is mostly an informal group whose members have a common perception of need and impulse towards collective action. The common feelings, interests and attitudes are the important base for affinity among people which brings them together. There are various ways in which these groups can be used e.g., for discussion, activities or information processing. Such self-help groups provide momentum to initiate desired changes in the community. Based on local conditions and requirements, these self-help groups evolve their own methods of working. You will learn more about groups in Block 2.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

1) Why is self learning important?

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2) What is a Self Help Group?

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3) What is the purpose of Self Help Groups?

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4) What is the role of a group in making communication effective?

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4.6 COPING WITH CHANGES IN THE LEARNERS AND TRAINING SITUATIONS

You may be thoroughly familiar with the subject matter, have necessary training skills and have designed a programme with utmost care. Yet it is quite possible that you are not able to implement the programme in a planned manner. The training situation may change because the participants' expectations and responses are different from what you visualized. What works well with one group may not work at all with another. You may feel convinced that it works but the problem may be that a particular group may not share this conviction. Learners differ in interests, methods of work, speed of learning and how they interpret a trainer's behaviour. In order to meet the widely varying and changing needs of learners, you need to demonstrate flexible behaviour in an immediate situation that makes up a session and all through the programme as a whole.

How would you as a trainer handle such situations? The response to a large extent depends on a trainer's particular focus, or on a particular subject, or on covering an assigned task; or on the learners as a group and its development; or on relationships with the learners. A trainer who views learners' response as a challenge to her authority would deal differently with a situation as compared to a trainer who views such responses as arising naturally in the learner's endeavour of learning. A sample situation follows:

Time is running out and the trainer has another two or three major points to make but participants are busy following an earlier thought. The discussion is lively. It is drawing in some who have not spoken earlier and now speak haltingly and rather slowly and not very directly to the point perhaps. What does the trainer do? Does she close the discussion, hopefully with some grace or let the participants continue? Or does she try to refocus the group on the main training objectives? To do the last, she could, for instance, state the choices now open for the little time remaining. It is a spot judgement and even with the best intentions may come out wrong. What is certain is the very manner in which the trainer proceeds, in whatever direction reflects her feelings and speaks of her as a person. In a similar situation, one trainer may reassert herself quite roughly, as if the discussion had really been a distraction and now become a nuisance; another holds herself back from intervening for fear of group displeasure; while a third reminds them of the task, acknowledges that continuing their discussion may be the most useful for the time remaining and suggest a particular time (e.g. during the break) when rounding off might get done.

You would experience innumerable situations like this and face dilemmas.

What should a trainer do under the circumstances? Some guidelines for coping with such changes in the learners and training situation are:

- Bring conflicting expectations into the open and make common plans.
- Offer participants alternative suggestions to choose from instead of just one.
- Work in small groups to handle individual variations in learning.
- Deal with specific individual needs outside the session.
- State and restate the orientation and objectives of the programme.
- Encourage clarification of doubts about participants' behaviour.

Trainers need to be flexible. One of the many challenges of training is that no two sessions should be exactly the same. The underlying basis always remains the objective and key programme points. What can differ are the methods, exercises and style of delivery — to meet the learner's needs. Acting quickly and spontaneously when the occasion demands, with the focus on learners and their learning is the benchmark of an effective trainer. Such trainers suit specific behaviours to situational needs. For instance, when a new approach or practice is begun and learners are quite confused by it, they give a clear, systematic explanation of the task and its sequence, components, etc., and postpone attention to the difficulties later. At times, when you find learners frustrated, blocked or not progressing, flow can be facilitated by using devices such as exercises, acting out, games and other structured experiences for physical and non-verbal expression. Effective trainers focus attention on the several aspects of the situation that seem best for maximizing learning in the group in the desired direction. Such contextual appropriateness requires adaptability. The trainers need to choose appropriate concepts and skills to suit the fluid situations in the session as well as the differing needs of individual learners. Enthusiasm, empathy and sensitiveness are the important attributes which enable a trainer to perform this role effectively. Such trainers are effective and respond to real life situations in an appropriate manner.

4.7 COPING WITH RESISTANCE AND CONFLICT

Even when you plan and design your training programme, you will experience problem participants or witness problematic interactions as you proceed in your training. Some of the common problems in training groups are:

- an individual resisting the process of the group;
- the participants using one or another method of avoiding the issue;
- some members control the group by means of specific behaviours like cynicism, hostility, etc.;
- pairs or cliques are formed that impede the progress of the group;
- some learners withdraw from interaction;
- individuals or groups rationalize non-participation of quiet members, etc.

These individual behaviours and group processes point towards disruptive individuals, conflict and resistance, which block the flow of the training programme and hamper achievement of training goals. Some of the reasons for such problems and possible ways to prevent and tackle such behaviours are discussed in the following sub-sections.

4.7.1 Tackling an Individual's Disruptive Behaviour

When individual behaviour is disruptive to the other members of the training group, it can be a source of great annoyance. Initially it would be wiser to ignore such individual behaviours. It is possible that the learner is testing the trainer's response and if the behaviour is not reinforced by the attention called to it, it may be abandoned. However, if the behaviour continues, you must deal with it first at the individual level and then at the group level. Let the individual hear the effects of her behaviour on the other group members from the members themselves.

When you find that some learners are trying to dominate, block or monopolize the participants, remind them of the norm of giving everyone a chance to speak. When some learners voice another's point of view, tell them to own it or to speak about their own views. Check the accuracy of their statements by asking others. If someone speaks too much, ask them to express the idea/thought in one sentence. Encourage those who don't volunteer and appreciate the ones who don't value themselves.

The hostile learners who decide to play 'dumb' instead should be challenged to make up an answer or choice and their effort can be reinforced. Try to model the behaviour and demonstrate how to deal with difficult members. If some learners argue or question, avoid getting into an argument or a lengthy debate on the issue. Respect the learner's point of view and refer the problem back to the group for them to deal with it. If some learners decide to change issues of discussion, seek the consensus of the group to do so. Try to change the focus from a person's motivation to the effect of behaviour on the group. Always separate behaviour from the person. Remember, it is said that there are no problem participants, just inflexible trainers.

4.7.2 Conflict in Training

Whenever individuals with varying needs, values, and personalities come together within a training situation, conflict is inevitable. Differences and conflicts that arise from them can be viewed as a problem or as a source of creativity. The conflict, in fact, may even be desirable for promoting change and growth. Depending on the trainer's response to conflict, the outcome may help or stifle group and individual growth.

Conflict can be defined as an emotional or physical struggle arising when two or more persons compete for the same resources, activities or goals but when only one can achieve them at the expense of the other. The interpersonal conflict usually arises between individuals and in groups and is seen as behaviour which is intended to obstruct the achievement of goals. In conflict, the learner is drawn or forced into a confrontation. The situation may arise spontaneously with no ground rules and little knowledge of how far the situation could escalate. Some of the important recognized sources of conflict are presented here.

Differences in perception

We all see things in different ways. We all have our own unique experience, picture or image of the real world around us. Differences in perception result in different people attaching different meanings to the same stimulus. As perceptions become a person's reality, differences in value judgements arise and these are a potential major source of conflict.

Role Conflict

A role is the expected pattern of behaviour. Problems of role incompatibility and ambiguity arise from inadequate or inappropriate role definition and can be a significant source of conflict. The learners are then left in a situation where they claim they do not know what to do.

Group factors

Some individuals try to dominate the group. Ambiguity and uncertainty of group norms and inefficiency to master the cooperative group skills are a potential source of conflict.

Individual factors

Individual's attitudes, personality characteristics, particular personal needs, illness or stress may also lead to conflict.

Environment

Changes in the external environment and changing social values can cause major conflicts.

Managing Conflict

In general, conflicts tend to be associated with negative features and situations which give rise to inefficiency, ineffectiveness or dysfunctional consequences. Properly managed conflicts can have potentially positive outcomes. It can be an energizing and vitalizing force. Conflicts can be used to bring incremental improvements in learning. Some of the positive outcomes of conflict include:

- generation of better ideas;
- motivation to search for new approaches;
- solving of problems surfaced;
- clarification of learner's view;
- stimulation of interest and creativity; and
- a chance for individuals to test their capacity.

Managing conflicts requires judging the degree of confrontation through feedback, evidence and feelings of the participants. Judging the level of confrontation is like finding out the difficulty of jumping across a gap — it must not be so small that it is unnoticeable nor so large that one fails. As a trainer, you need to decide how to cope with differences and conflicts – by ignoring them, debating, arguing, fighting, compromising and so on. You should not always be in a hurry to provide support at any evidence of tension.

Remember, people need some tension to change and grow, and they need to learn how to cope with it. If the tension becomes counterproductive, that is the time to step in. Occasionally, however, it may be better temporarily to avoid conflict by providing other sources of learning that may ultimately help to resolve the differences, e.g., by splitting the group into compatible sub-groups. Ensure development of feedback skills before coping with the total group conflict.

Some of the preventive steps to avoid conflicts would be:

Clarification of training goals and objectives: Clarification and continual refinement of goals and objectives, role definitions and expected behaviours helps to avoid misunderstandings and conflicts. Focussing attention on training goals that are shared by the participants may help to defuse hostility and lead to more cooperative behaviour.

Development of interpersonal skills: This may help to encourage a better understanding of one's own behaviour, the other person's point of view. Effective communication may encourage people to work through conflict situations in a constructive manner.

Promotion of group activities: Careful selection of group leaders, paying attention to composition of groups and factors which affect group cohesiveness may reduce dysfunctional conflicts.

However, whenever you perceive a major conflict, the best approach is problem solving. The strategy includes the following steps:

- Conduct a problem analysis to determine the basic issues;
- State the problem as a goal or as an obstacle;
- Identify the steps to attain the goal;
- Depersonalize the problem; and
- Separate the process of defining the problem from the search for solutions and from the evaluation of alternatives.

Your role as a trainer in this situation is to act as a mediator whose function is to encourage communication for helping to restore harmonious working relationships.

4.7.3 Resistance in Training

All training has the aim of promoting positive change. Despite the potential positive outcomes, change is often resisted, both at the individual and at the group level. Resistance to change which is probably due to the thought of the implications of the change appears to be a common phenomenon. People are generally wary of change. Among many, there is an uneasy mood, a suspicion that change is out of control. Resistance to change can take many forms and it is often difficult to pin point the exact reason for the resistance. The important task of the trainer is to help participants deal constructively with their resistance.

Some of the common reasons for resistance and the ways of dealing with them are suggested in the following discussion.

- Resistance may be caused by the fact that the training was forced on the participants rather than their volunteering for it. Acknowledge this feeling

at the start of the programme. You can simply say that such feelings are understandable and then challenge them to make the most out of the situation and learn whatever they can for their own benefit. It might work.

- Individual’s fear of exposing oneself – having others learn about them may often be the cause of resistance. If you witness too much pressure, instead of focusing attention on reluctant group members (and embarrassing them further), shift the focus. It might be helpful to discuss with the participants ‘what are the best and the worst things that could happen in this training programme’. Depending on their response, decide the nature and extent of your training programme.
- Using a methodology that participants do not see the value of, may also cause resistance. Seek feedback by asking: ‘How is it going?’ ‘Are the objectives being met?’ This would help you to negotiate or alter your methodology. You should be willing to drop the method if it is not working.
- Overcontrol may also contribute to resistance. Reduced freedom of action is likely to prove inconvenient for many participants. Remember your role is to help participants learn ‘how to do things for themselves’, not to direct or do it for them.

Training is a mutual effort. The participants’ willingness and the perceived value of training are of utmost importance. Habit, security of the past and fear of the unknown may be the unexpressed cause of the resistance. There is a wish to retain old and comfortable ways. Proposed changes to the established and accustomed ways of the past may confront participants and cause anxiety or fear. Reassure participants and involve them in the process of change. Co-establishing the goals and roadmaps would ensure their commitment to change and its implementation.

An important task for the trainers is to create an environment of trust and shared commitment and involve participants in decisions and actions which affect them. It is conducive to establish a climate of safety, openness, risk-taking, experimentation, choice and support from the very beginning. If the group is cold, warm up activities can help. Energizer activities and things to increase active participation may be required for sleepy groups. If the group members seem hostile or put off by the subject, establish the importance of the task. If the group tries to escape the tasks set out (given to fun and games), remind them of the objectives. More importantly, model the positive norms that you want to establish.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

1) Which characteristics of a trainer would enable a trainer to cope with changes in the learner and training situation?

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2) Suggest some ways to cope with changes in the learner and training situation.

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3) How would you handle learners who tend to dominate in your training?

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4) What are the important sources of conflict?

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5) Name the strategy to solve a perceived conflict.

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6) Why do learners generally resist in training programmes?

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4.8 ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS OF THE TRAINER

As a trainer, you would have to handle several administrative and managerial tasks in addition to your role in the training process itself. Some of these tasks include:

- Arranging for funding for running the training programme;
- Arranging for the venue, the needs/ refreshments;
- Looking after children/ husbands/ other family members who may be accompanying the women trainees;
- Arranging for preparation and distribution of learning materials;
- Informing invited resource persons and training team members about timing of sessions, checking with them about their requirements and transport arrangements;
- Arranging for accommodation, training room arrangements, services for first aid, audio-visual equipments; and
- Writing reports and conducting follow up to support the learners in whatever way necessary when they return to their work or their homes.

You will learn about this in detail in Unit 18, Block 4 of this course.

4.9 MANAGING THE TRAINING PROGRAMME

You know that management involves planning, organizing, implementing or controlling and evaluation of any strategy. If you were to apply this knowledge to managing of the training process what would it be?

In this part of the Unit, let us understand what our responsibilities are as a trainer. In Units 2 and 3 you have learnt all about the training process and the training situation. Details of how training is designed will be discussed in Block 4. Once you have designed a training programme, let's see how you proceed.

4.9.1 Management of Training Sessions

Do you remember various tasks in the training session?

Managing the training process involves tasks such as the following:

- Choosing appropriate method;
- Briefing the group about the task at hand;
- Dividing a group into small groups;
- Maintaining control/ discipline;
- Monitoring the discussion by keeping the group on the right track;
- Debriefing-recapitulating;
- Summarizing; and
- Suggesting/ providing inputs.

You, as a trainer, have to reach out to the trainees or learners and ensure that you are passing on the knowledge to the learners effectively. How you do it has to be done by the use of an appropriate method and by proceeding in the right sequence.

4.9.2 Planning the Administrative Details

The major planning has already been done for the training programme’s training content. Now one must make a last minute check to ensure/determine if any last minute arrangement/improvisation is required – like tables, chairs, equipments, and educational materials. You may have to make some final adjustments to meet the special requirements of the particular participant group. Otherwise you may have to manage with a poor room layout or ill ventilated or lighted room, the teaching aids may not work during the session.

In order to be sure that you have everything at hand and easily available to you, make a check list of the things you have to do or the materials that you will require for the lecture/demonstration session.

An example of a check list is given here.

Check List

1.	The Room	Lighting Ventilation
2.	Layout	Number of seats set Space for you and trainees Type of tables and chairs Arrangement of seats (Circular, U-shaped, parallel etc.)
3.	Materials	Felt pens Transparencies Hand outs Name cards or plates Boards Pencils/ Pens
4.	Projection Equipments	Check its functioning Placement Extra table
5.	Easels	Chalk board Easel pads Chalk markers Pointer Charts, maps, exhibits etc.
6.	Miscellaneous	Time schedule for breaks Transport Menu etc.

Planning Daily Schedules

- As a trainer, you have to plan and organize the pace or timing of the programme.
- Think of the content that needs to be covered in one day and accordingly allot time.
- You may have to adopt a faster pace or do team exercises with a particular group.
- You must arrive at each break at the precise time and not spill over to the next session. To do this put into your notes the time (in pencil) when you plan to arrive at a particular subject or sub-step of your presentation. When you have the whole day scheduled in your notes, you will be able to reschedule the later sessions if the earlier one's run longer or shorter than planned.

4.9.3 Organizing the Training Programme

The exciting challenge for you as a trainer at the beginning of each training programme is to communicate ideas and information in such a way as to create full understanding and enthusiastic acceptance by the trainees. You have everything well planned and ready for the training programme by now but often you may have to improvise, change strategies from time to time and depart from the basic design.

Let us see the points you must consider to effectively play the vital role of communicator as a trainer of trainees.

- i) Know the objectives and subject matter regarding your training programme.
- ii) Know your participants well.
- iii) Get the trainees motivated and keep them motivated throughout your training programme.
- iv) Ensure that the trainees understand the subject matter.
- v) Make sure that the participants are retaining what you are teaching them.
- vi) Get feedback from the audience.
- vii) Check and ensure that the trainees will apply their knowledge gained in other situations.

Now let us discuss each of these.

- 1) *Know Your Subject:* Knowing your subject will give you a great deal of confidence. This will also help you answer any question the group of trainees asks you. Also you will be able to think up the right questions to lead the group discussion. This will also promote your credibility with the group of trainees.
- 2) *Know Your Participants/ trainees:* a) You should talk to the trainees at their level i.e. your talk should not go over their heads with the result they are not able to understand the ideas or information you are giving them. But if you talk 'down' to them, they will lose interest in your training programme.

- 3) *Motivate Your Learners/trainees:* Gain the favourable attention of your group and keep them positively motivated through out the programme. If they do not listen with interest, they will not understand and not be able to apply appropriately when they are supposed to be learning. Try to get them to pay attention to what you are saying.
- 4) *Capture their Interest:* The interest of the participants can be promoted by getting them involved personally. You can divide the group into teams and give them something interesting to talk with each other (e.g. playing ice-breaking games).
- 5) *Be an interesting person yourself:* In order to hold the interest of the trainees in your training programme, be an interesting person yourself by:
 - a) Smiling often – Be relaxed and friendly. Be open and out-going. This will encourage the group to respond in the same way. Treat each trainee as a friend, join in the fun but at the same time be sincerely interested in the participants and in the training programme.
 - b) Use humour often – Just smiling is not enough. A ready wit and light humour *now* and *then* make the training programme a pleasant experience and also provide some mental relaxation. But do not do it too often as sometimes jokes can be offensive to people. Avoid ethnic, racial and sexist jokes. When in doubt, don't tell the joke or the story.

Plan your jokes and stories in advance and key them right into your notes. Use the reactions of different groups to your jokes as a key to their use in future.

- c) Be Enthusiastic – You must remain keenly alive and enthusiastic about the programme you are conducting. If you act bored about it, others will definitely lose interest.

Here are some helpful hints.

- Do keep a lively eye-contact with individual trainees.
 - Stand and address your trainees and do not sit and slouch.
 - Do move around.
 - Positively reinforce trainees to make useful contributions.
 - Modulate your voice i.e. consciously vary the tone and loudness of your voice.
 - Do not slouch when you walk.
- d) Keep a Good Pace – The pace should not leave behind the slow learners or bore the fast learners. A good strategy for you would be to give fast learners opportunities to show off and lead the slow learners. And if necessary, give the slower ones some after-hours coaching.

To keep the right pace, you have to be alert to the feedback from the trainees. Be very alert and observant and react promptly to the feedback from the group.

- A puzzled look is a clue to repeat, restore or probe.
 - Frowns and head shakings – mean disagreement – get it out in the open before the whole group and sort it out.
- e) Give Recognition – to individual trainees who have earned it. If you give positive reinforcement to a trainee, it is really appreciated and it invokes a positive emotional response. But specify precisely why the recognition is being given and do not make general statements like “Good Work” etc.
 - f) Elicit rather than Tell – Ask questions and get information from your trainees. This will keep up the interest and motivational level of your trainees.
 - g) Using Simple Language /Words – Avoid high flying and difficult words in your vocabulary while training others.
 - h) Communicate ideas one at a time – Throw out one idea at a time and not too much information in too short a space of time and proceed only after the information has been assimilated by the trainees. You can use the technique of questioning.
 - i) Use Visuals to explain concepts which are not possible to explain verbally. But use the visual correctly.

Tips on how to use visuals

- Let the visual speak for itself. Elaborate on it but do not read it word for word. Encourage trainees to read from it.
- Talk to the audience and not to the screen, maintain eye contact with the trainees.
- Keep screen in view of everyone. Don't let your own body, an easel flip chart etc. get in the line of visibility of learners.

4.9.4 Controlling

Your plan will be useful only to the extent you keep checking your progress against it. Having planned the time to be devoted to each training session, you have to control the pace of the seminar/session and have to ensure that the discussion is relevant and useful. You have to control the trainees unobtrusively and with a reasonable degree of flexibility.

- 1) **Time Control:** Points to be kept in mind are
 - Keep constantly aware of the actual time as compared to the plan.
 - Avoid using a wrist watch to check time. You can keep a watch with a face or numbers large enough to be read several paces away on your table and casually refer to it without anyone noticing it.

In case you are running short of time for a particular session and you had not preplanned any strategy then you have to quickly decide on a strategy out of various options available to you and improvise immediately.

Options available to you may be –

- Team exercises can be shortened e.g. instead of asking all questions to all teams, give two questions to each team and allow fewer trainees to come to a consensus about the two questions given to them.
- You could speed up your presentation of less important topics by referring participants to appropriate sections of the workbook if it is available and quickly summarizing them.

If you are running ahead of time/schedule, you as a trainer are much better off than if you are running behind.

Strategies to be used to use time at hand

You can introduce optional work exercises or group discussions ahead of those planned for such an eventuality. Address some provocative questions in general with some group discussion and keep it going till the scheduled time slot is over.

Finally, some points to be kept in mind regarding controlling your training session are:

- 1) Start the programme on time as well as end on time. You can start a session with a funny story or anecdote. First session you can start with an ice-breaking game so that the trainees get to know each other or at least introductions can be given. You can point out to the trainees (without making a threat or being offensive) that starting late means finishing late because there is a lot of material to be covered. A subtle tactic is to “synchronize” watches at the start of each day. Also don’t say “please be back in 15 minutes”. Say “please come back by 1.15 p.m.”

2) Subject Matter Control

The next aspect we will consider is subject matter control. Although as a trainer you would and should encourage full and free participation in group discussion but you do have to keep the session going/ moving.

A group discussion that continues too long annoys or bores some participants and weakens your leadership role.

Strategies

- In case you see that all trainees are showing keen interest and the discussion is relevant, let it continue. Sooner or later you as an experienced trainer will pick up some non-verbal clues that interest is decreasing/waning or you will get repetitive responses.
- At times continuation of the discussion or questioning is maintained by a highly motivated individual.
- At such times you have to step in and maybe use a humorous one-liner or can also call a break (if it is time for that) to terminate the discussion.

Controlling the subject matter also means making sure all the valid points are made and appropriate questions asked by you as a trainer to effectively cover all points.

3) Behaviour Control

While you are conducting the training course, problems of individual behaviour will come up once in a while. Problems that you may face include a trainee who is always out to get a laugh from the group- the joker. Then there is the wall flower— who does not participate. A silent sphinx can also create problems – the unchanging facial expression can be interpreted as hostility or detachment or stupidity. Sometimes you may also face active hostility.

The dozers and day dreamers you should rouse by asking a direct question. Direct questions will also help the shy members to get involved.

In order for you to be an excellent trainer, you have to keep the trainees under control but do allow every opportunity for participation.

4) Organizing the Participants

Divide the groups into sub-groups or teams and allot projects or sub-themes on which they can work. You may also allot seats to the sub-groups so that they sit in groups and not waste time when they have to work in groups. Sub-grouping of trainees is very helpful in a training programme, hence plan it before hand and execute it when the programme begins.

- Within the group choose a group leader with the participation of the group when possible. You should change the group leader from session to session from within the group. The group leaders can exercise control within the sub-groups and help you in maintaining discipline.
- Be alert to the needs of the weak teams and help or guide them whenever they need it.

5) Monitoring and Evaluation

It is a very important aspect of the training programme. You should explain to the participants about what you are doing and why before you start monitoring or evaluating. For courses that last more than one day, you could divide the whole group into small groups and meet at the end of each day to discuss the day's activities and report back to the facilitators. This way you can assess the level of learning and keep the course pitched at the right level. This allows participants some control over the process.

A training programme does not end till the whole proceedings have been evaluated. Do not rely only on the evaluations written up by the participants at the completion of the programme which are appropriately referred to as “Smile Sheets”.

Participant Evaluations – This generally takes place right after the sessions in the training room itself. The trainees are asked to fill out a form to give their opinions on the quality of the presentation and subject matter.

This kind of evaluation can be helpful to the trainer in improving future programmes. Sometimes the comments of participants can result in redesigning of the programme.

How to do it?

i) *Develop a Standard Form*

A sample form with five point (scoring options) scale is suggested. A successful

training programme should get about 80% of the responses in categories 4 and 5 e.g. satisfied, very satisfied; adequate but not complete, complete coverage. You can design many such statements or categories on a 5 point scale ranging from lowest score to highest score.

ii) *Get Immediate Evaluation*

Ensure that you get the evaluation forms filled out before the participants leave the seminar room so that you get 100% response.

iii) *Encourage Signed Forms*

Preferably try to get participants to sign the forms in order to help you review the evaluations. You might expect a less favourable evaluation from a participant who was probably forced to attend your training programme.

iv) *Use Evaluations with Care*

Participant evaluations are very valuable, but after all, you are the professional in the training business. Your professional judgement should have the greatest weight.

Supposing you were getting good ratings for your training programme/strategies and suddenly with one group the ratings drop- what will you do? Yes, make some modifications and changes, keep a more sensitive eye on timings and observe the change in ratings – they should go up again.

6) Some Suggestions for Improving your Training

Before your session

- Prepare a schedule ahead of time and distribute it to the trainees before the session.
- Arrive well ahead of time and arrange the room for learning.
- Individually greet learners as they arrive.

During your session

- Use ice breakers if it is the first session.
- Try and be honest with the trainees.
- Stay on schedule.
- Call learners by name.
- Provide appropriate handouts and / or note taking techniques.
- Share the 'air time' with the learners – allow opportunity for questions and answers from learners.
- Try to summarize your ideas at periodic intervals – don't wait until the end to summarize.
- Schedule breaks for the learners.
- Ask open-ended questions.
- Start and finish on time.

At the end of your session

- Be available for questions
- Listen to the learners' reactions

A week or two after the session is finished:

- Respond to questions in a timely manner.
- Begin to plan the changes you will make if you offer the session again.

Ice-Breaking Games

1) *Who makes the shortest and who makes the longest?*

Divide the participants into groups so that each group has an equal number of participants. Now ask them to make the longest queue.

In the discussion after this the trainer asks the winning group as well as the other groups the reason for the results. Winning group would have responses like - "We identified and utilized resources (like dupatta, saree, dhoti etc.) that we had in the group." The discussion can be then related by you to the work situation where the importance of identifying and utilizing existing local resources, planning etc. can be explained.

Use this strategy to analyze the method you are using. Check its strengths i.e. the positives about it, its weaknesses i.e. the drawbacks which probably you can modify to improve it and see if opportunities could have been given to improve participation. Also list the threats and make sure you do not get affected by the threats, instead find solutions to get rid of them.

4.10 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit you have learnt about the:

- qualities of a good trainer;
- importance of communication, role of communication in training, communication and interpersonal skills;
- importance of self learning;
- need for promoting self help groups formation and stages in the development of a group;
- ways to cope with changes in the learner and training situation; and
- ways to cope with conflict and resistance in training.

4.11 GLOSSARY

Debriefing	: Collection of responses of learners to training in an organized way by trainers for declaring publicly.
Structured experience	: A learning experience which has been organized by the trainer to meet specified

learning objectives. Such experiences are based on experience of others not the learners themselves.

Simulation : A learning experience where the learner is placed in a situation similar to real life conditions and expected to make choices / take a role and act as if she were in that situation.

4.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

- 1) Communication is the structured process in which a communicator transmits a thought, idea or feeling to another person or is the act of influencing and inducing another person to interpret an idea in the manner intended by the speaker or writer.
- 2) Communication in training helps the learners to clearly understand the objectives, increase efficiency and understanding, maintain an atmosphere of cooperation and motivate participants or it helps to achieve training goals and objectives.
- 3) The four important communication skills are listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- 4) The important elements of speaking are:
 - The words spoken.
 - The way they are spoken.
 - The body language.
- 5) The ways to improve verbal communication are:
 - Use of simple language.
 - Keeping length of sentences short.
 - Avoiding jargon.
 - Speaking clearly and audibly.
 - Using multi sensory approach etc.
- 6) The helpful listening behaviours include:
 - Gestures like nods, smiles.
 - Sympathetic listening.
 - Asking questions.
 - Establishing eye contact etc.
- 7) Genuineness, understanding, acceptance and empathy are important attitudes to improve interpersonal relations

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

- 1) Growth in knowledge, growth in information technology and unpredictable future are important reasons to promote self learners.
- 2) Self help groups can be used to promote learning and effect changes. They exert powerful influence on growth of individuals and shape their behaviours.
- 3) Self help groups are mostly informal groups whose members have a common perception of need and impulse towards collective action.
- 4) Forming, storming, norming, performing, adjourning.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

- 1) Flexibility, adaptability, enthusiasm, empathy and sensitiveness are important attributes which would enable a trainer to cope with changes in the training.
- 2) Some ways to cope with changes in the learners are: making common plans, working in small groups, focusing objectives, encouraging clarification of doubts, dealing with individual needs etc.
- 3) Remind them of the norm of giving everyone a chance to speak. Ask them to express ideas concisely and own their point of view.
- 4) Differences in perception, role conflict, ambiguity and uncertainty of group norms, changing social values and particular personal characteristics and attitudes are some of the potential causes of conflict.
- 5) Problem Solving
- 6) Unwillingness to attend training, fear of exposing oneself, use of unfavourable methodology, over control and fear of the unknown are some of the important causes for resistance.