
UNIT 17 CONDUCTING TRAINING PROGRAMMES

Structure

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17.1 INTRODUCTION

Conducting training programmes is a very crucial area in which any trainer must develop expertise. The way in which a training programme is conducted has a lot of bearing on the extent to which it is able to meet its objectives and how much it benefits the members of the group. The role of the trainer is very significant in this regard.

Training can be of many types and conducted with different objectives. Sometimes, trainers try to force the trainees to learn. They may use coercive methods for training. Once the trainer has finished the session, the learning may or may not have taken place. It may not necessarily bring about change in the learners. In participatory training, however, the trainer plays the role of a facilitator so that learning brings some permanent change in the learners. We shall discuss participatory training and how to conduct participatory training.

Objectives

After studying this Unit, you should be able to:

- describe the role of a trainer as a facilitator in conducting participatory training;
- enumerate the styles of facilitation ;

- describe the skills of a facilitator; and
- discuss the tasks of the trainer in conducting structured experiences.

17.2 ROLE OF THE TRAINER AS A FACILITATOR

We cannot assume that if the training sessions are going on as per schedule, learning is taking place in the desired direction. The process has to be facilitated. Thus, when conducting a training programme, your role is that of a facilitator. You have to assist the learning process. In the case of women learners, there are some particular aspects that you, as a facilitator, would need to keep in mind (e.g. helping them gain confidence and overcoming their inhibition). You would appreciate this aspect more as you read on. First, let us understand what is facilitation.

17.2.1 What is Facilitation?

Facilitation is a conscious process of assisting learners to successfully achieve the task. For example, suppose the task of the group consisting of women, is to analyze the problems they face. Generally this is a topic very close to their heart. There are chances that the group may, instead of discussing various problems, get stuck with the very first problem that was taken up. The group may get divided in favour of and against some point. In such a situation, time for discussion may soon be over and no useful reflection may take place. One would need to intervene in a friendly but firm manner and ensure that the task is completed. How can we do that?

There are a number of ways of doing it. In order to facilitate this, it is important to understand *what is it that needs to be facilitated*. So let's look at this aspect first. We need to facilitate:

- *Effective performance of the task and maintenance functions:* By and large, a group does need to be assisted in working collectively towards successfully accomplishing the set-out task. All members need to cooperate for the continuation of the learning process.

In the case of the above example, facilitating would involve making the group members aware that they are not allowing the learning to take place by sticking to one point only, and helping them progress further.

- *Processes like participation, communication, conflict resolution, decision making, problem solving and leadership:* Whenever you give some task to the learner group, the above mentioned processes to a greater or lesser extent, will take place in the group. What we can do is to guide the course of these processes towards successful completion of the task. For instance, when the group members meet for the first time, some members may predominate the discussion while others may be quiet and indecisive about whether or not to speak. In such a situation, we can facilitate participation by encouraging or coaxing members to speak, and ensuring the participation of all the members in the problem solving and decision making process. Also we may help them to resolve or avert conflicts and help in polishing their communication skills.

- *Effective resolution of issues like inclusion, influence, intimacy and performance:* As group members interact and work collectively, group dynamics is likely to occur in the natural course of events. We need to ensure that group dynamics such as inclusion, influence, intimacy and performance are channelized positively, and not allowed to hinder the accomplishment of the task.
- *Smooth transition of group learning from one stage to another :* Members of a group do not automatically and immediately form a rapport and smoothly proceed to accomplish the group task. Many stages are usually involved. You would need to help the group members proceed from one stage to another, so that they open up and frankly discuss, and the task is performed. In the example cited above, it would involve the group members unhesitatingly discussing the problems that women face.
- *Accomplishment of the task:* This is the culmination of all the above processes. In the case of the above example, it would mean that the members are able to understand, critically discuss and analyze women's problems.

Now let us examine these aspects:

- a) How to facilitate
 - b) Being aware of your personality as a facilitator/trainer
 - c) Knowing how to facilitate
- a) **How to Facilitate**

Before we can effectively facilitate, we need to have clarity with regard to some basics.

We need to:

- understand what is happening in the group;
- be aware of our own personality as a facilitator/ trainer;
- know how to facilitate;
- take up these points individually; and
- understand what is happening in the group.

Remember, whatever the background of the learners, some dynamics do take place in each learner group. We must understand these dynamics. For example, one member may be trying to impress the group members by going on about the work which she has done. She is not only talking about what is irrelevant, but is also not allowing other members to express their views in the context of the group task.

Groups of learners vary in terms of the nature of their tasks, their composition and in the problems that come up. How you facilitate would depend upon your understanding of the situation. The process of understanding what is happening in the group may be called diagnosis. It is an essential skill to develop. You can proceed further to remove the problem only after you have diagnosed what it is that is going wrong. Diagnosis includes understanding the causes, after looking for clues within the group, for example communication patterns. Clues can also be found outside the group, for example in the past relationship between members.

Let us look at a couple of examples to understand this aspect better.

Problem 1: Everyone does not participate or show interest, and a few remain silent.

Possible Causes:

- The goal or task is not relevant for everyone.
- Some members are insecure.
- Some members are dominating on the basis of caste, class, education or sex.

Problem 2: Members of the group stick to their conflicting points of view, slowing down or preventing progress or decision-making.

Possible causes:

- Existence of differing value systems which are more important than the group task at hand.
- Existence of differences/ conflicts between the individuals that were probably there even before the group was formed.

The list of possible causes of each of the problems is mentioned earlier. This is by no means complete, and has been provided to provoke further thought. Do ponder over what else could result in these problems, and write the same in the space provided below:

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b) Being aware of your personality as a facilitator/ trainer

Before we come to the training situation to carry out facilitation, we must look into our own personality, try to objectively assess how we come across. Attempting to be bossy will influence our success in building a partner relationship with the learner group which is so essential in participatory training. Thus, we'll need to tone down that attitude.

In the case of women (and men for that matter), their own personality does influence how they behave and react, and this is true even when they are acting as trainers/ facilitators. In order to be effective facilitators, we need to be aware of our strengths and weaknesses in order to optimally handle the dynamic learning situation and do our best to achieve the set objectives.

c) Knowing how to facilitate

We, as trainers, must know how to behave in a particular learning situation, in order to promote learning. Depending on what we diagnose as the factor(s) preventing the group from progressing further, we may bring the group back to the task by intervening through any of the simple means of facilitation, which include:

- encouraging the learners;
- bringing the conversation to the point;
- mediating and peace keeping in case it is needed;
- maintaining order (not police order of course);
- helping the group to accomplish the task; and
- politely requesting the learners to be part of the larger group.

But then, in some cases, these simple means of facilitating alone are not enough. We have to look deeper and understand clearly the unconscious processes and the levels of awareness among the members of the group. For example, it may happen that two members, with their continued confrontation, are disrupting the proceedings and despite your requesting them repeatedly, are not ready to compromise and are not allowing the group task to be accomplished. As you just studied, this can happen because of many reasons. Depending upon your grasp of the situation, you may choose to adopt a particular style of facilitation.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

1) What is facilitation in the context of a training situation?

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2) As facilitators, why do we need to understand what is happening in the group?

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Now let us try to understand the various styles of facilitation.

17.2.2 Styles of Facilitation

Style of facilitation, mode of facilitation means the way you intervene when learning is not taking place in the desired direction. Remember, as a trainer and facilitator, you need to adopt the style of facilitation depending upon your diagnosis i.e. your understanding of the situation, the objective of the change (action/awareness) and the focus of the change (group/ individual).

In the context of participatory training, you will find that there are changes that take place in the individuals in a group and the changes that the group goes through as a whole. Further, changes essentially can occur at two levels — at the awareness level (among individuals of the group or the group as a whole) or at the action level (among individuals of the group or the group as a whole). We will now go on to discuss styles of facilitation in the context of the underlying change processes.

Let us begin by glancing at the summary picture:

- Action by an individual (in a group) –Interactive Style
- Action by a group as a whole– Inclusive Style
- Awareness of a group as a whole –Interpretative Style
- Awareness of an individual (in a group) –Intrusive Style

Individual	Groups	
Action →	Interactive Style	Inclusive Style ← Action
Awareness →	Intrusive Style	Interpretative Style ← Awareness

Figure 17.1: Foci of Intervention and the Corresponding Styles of Facilitation

Interactive Style

If your diagnosis indicates that the problem is at the individual level, your facilitation would obviously be individual -centred. The interactive mode of facilitation focuses on the actions of the learner i.e. the behaviour of the learner. Remember, it is basically educative, and change in the behaviour of the individual is sought to be brought by providing support and encouragement.

For example, suppose that one woman is not taking part in any group learning. You find that she understands but hesitates to share because of her low self concept. Incidentally, this is a very common problem that is experienced, particularly in the case of women learners (in all likelihood due to the subjugated role that women generally occupy in our society). In this case, you may coax her to speak in small groups. Once she expresses herself in small groups, she is likely to develop more confidence. Once the progress starts, it builds momentum, and you will find that with encouragement, her participation has increased.

What did you observe in the above example? The facilitator’s intervention focused on behavioural change in an individual member. In this mode, you as a facilitator would encourage the members to experiment with new behaviours by creating favourable conditions such as openness, support, confrontation, restatement, suggestion and request. When doing so, you have primarily played the role of a helper. You have directed interactions among members, supported expression of feelings and facilitated openness in the group.

Remember, in such a situation you have to keep aside your own needs and feelings and play the helper’s role. You would need to empathize with the individual’s feelings and thoughts. Essentially you act as a mirror, which reflects the ‘actual’ feelings of the person, helping to clarify what is happening within her. This intervention demands a great deal of maturity on your part and is

very effective in a group where there are norms of acceptance of each other, trust and support for each other. Then there is a 'policing' or disciplining role which you will play and will address itself to issues which are process related. Examples of this are encouraging members to listen to each other, seek clarification from each other, and focus discussion on the issue; inviting participation from silent/ quiet members etc.

Inclusive style

You, as a trainer, may find that some problems have cropped up in the group, and the focus has to change in action or behaviour of the group. In such a case, you as the facilitator would need to deliberately include yourself as a member of the group and provide model behaviour that the group could adopt. This is the inclusive style of facilitation. You need to be careful that you should not consciously include your own feelings. When you are facilitating and adopting this style, remember that you are doing it as an ordinary person with your own values, feelings, needs, opinions and also weaknesses. This openness will help you to establish the necessary rapport, i.e. gain the members' acceptance and succeed in your task of facilitation.

Changes can occur in a group through new actions adopted by the group as a whole — the inclusive style of a group as a whole. You have to demonstrate the desired behaviour by setting yourself as an example. You will do this by considering yourself as a member of the group. You will provide a role model as an ideal group member through your responses and behaviour. This mode is possible when you are accepted by the group as a fully functional member of the large group of learners. It means that in the training sessions you express your opinions, biases, feelings — use of 'self as it is'. This helps the other group members also to open up naturally in the training situation.

An episode to illustrate the inclusive style

In a training programme, after a simulation on team building, intense discussion and analysis was going on between the members of the large group. This simulation brought to the surface the kinds of feelings that members of two settlements X and Y in the same village had:

A group member from Settlement X (Let us name her Sita for better understanding): "The members of Settlement Y came to talk to us. In the beginning, because we were absorbed in ourselves, we did not pay much attention to them. Then we wondered why they had come? What interest do they have in us? They belong to another settlement. We do not have any work in common."

Another group member from Settlement X (Let us name her Mohini for better understanding):

"Yes, how could we trust these other members? We did not know them. We did not have any contact with them."

Facilitator: "What do you mean you had no faith in them and didn't (angry) know them? Don't tell me that you live in the same village and have nothing to do with each other. Even if they belong to a different settlement, I am not ready to accept it. You mean to say that it actually happens in the village! That is one thing that you do not get along well with each other, but certainly every one knows who belongs to the village!"

Sita and Mohini withdrew into stunned silence following the outburst of the facilitator, who also acted as a learner in this exercise.

Then another member of the group said:

“I think the point being raised is not that people don’t know each other, but since they are working or living life around their settlement only, they do not have rapport with each other.”

The group realized the issue at hand. Sita too looked at what she had said and proceeded to examine the implications of such relationships. In this facilitation mode, the facilitator becomes a fully-functioning participant in the group, expressing feelings, prejudices, biases, needs, interests, etc. The humanistic side of the facilitator is expressed in the interest of the group. It also provides for other members of the group to do the facilitation. Thus the facilitator and group members become models for each other too.

However, this style of facilitation can temporarily block some learners, who have not yet established equal and comfortable relationships with you as the facilitator and still relate to you with a position of authority. The risk taken in the above situation was that the task of the group could have got affected or an individual alienated. Essentially, the inclusive mode of facilitation rests on the premise of mutual learning between the trainers and learners.

Interpretative Style

As a facilitator you may feel that as a group the level of awareness is not as much as you expected. In that case you could play the role of an outsider. Analyze the problem objectively and then present your findings absolutely impersonally to the entire group. This style is known as the interpretative style of facilitation.

This mode of facilitation has been very effectively and exclusively used for group facilitation. It consists of intervention made by you as a facilitator at the group level. It may be in the form of some factual information provided. For instance, when the group is discussing a situation or a case-study, you may feel that the group members are not aware of, say, the legal rights of the women involved in the situation. In that case, you may choose to provide that information. However, basically, this style assumes that changes in the group will occur when members of a group are aware of what is happening to the group as a whole. What you have to do as a facilitator is to comment about the group level phenomenon, and reflect on the group processes with analytical objectivity. Remember not to make any references to any individual in the group. The group members are urged to explore, recognize and accept ‘what is happening within the group as a whole, and feel challenged to do something about it.’ Remember, it is possible that some members are already aware of what is happening. In that case, the facilitator validates their understanding.

Do keep in mind that in this mode of facilitation, you as a facilitator are not to pass any judgment on the members of the group. You do not criticize the group. Also, you need not intend to manipulate the group. You would simply be bringing the issues to the group members’ notice, and you would be doing it in a manner that the group can learn from it.

For example, read the following two responses of a facilitator for further understanding the style.

Response A-Facilitator: “Members A, B, C in the group are engaging in dysfunctional and disruptive behaviour.”

Response B-Facilitator: “The tasks of the group are not getting accomplished. It seems that some members do not wish to take responsibility for their learning unless forced by the authority.”

In this framework, Response A would not be considered an interpretative style of facilitation. It is accusing some members in the group. Such a response would anger the members and thus alienate them.

Response B is a statement about what is happening within the group, and provides space for the members to become aware of their behaviour and the impact of the same on the group, and this aspect could be picked up for discussion subsequently.

The interpretative style is very effective for dealing with issues of group dynamics and gender issues and can be effectively used in the early stages of group development to strengthen the group building processes. The group level focus does not, however, recognize or deal with individuals and individual differences in the group. Members tend to experience a sense of anonymity in the process. Since the facilitation style is merely interpretative, you as a facilitator do not make an attempt for experimentation with new behaviour by the members. This style does not leave the group members feeling threatened. However, some members may feel irritated because they were so engrossed in the process. Some feel agitated because what was not visible is becoming visible. Others feel relieved, since the tension in the air is released finally. Did you notice that in this style of facilitation you did not play a supportive role for initiating any action or validating any action either? However, to ensure that paralysis in group action does not occur, other styles of facilitation would have to be used to address individual issues as well.

Intrusive Style

As a facilitator, you would adopt this style if you have diagnosed the problem to be with the individual, and the focus of the change is at the level of awareness. You have to be sure that the individual is interested in learning about oneself; that she wants to be aware of her true self. You would present the facts you have observed, and what they could possibly indicate about the particular individual. Remember that you have deliberately done it, so there should not be any hesitation about it. You have done this absolutely impersonally. This kind of facilitation is known as the intrusive style of facilitation.

The intrusive mode essentially believes in raising the awareness of an individual in a group as a basis for change. This style is characterized by the intentional intrusion of the facilitator into the life span of the learner to bring to her awareness the subconscious elements within her.

Adults often need to unlearn, in order to learn something new. This ‘unlearning’ can be a very painful and difficult experience. Some adults may not be aware of the blocks that exist within them, which do not allow them to look at a phenomenon happening within them, critically. It is thus your responsibility

as a facilitator to bring to the attention of the participant what is happening within her at a given moment of time in group interaction.

Thus, by this intervention, you are articulating what the participant is feeling or thinking, and is not able to say or express.

An episode to illustrate the intrusive style

In a group task, a member Rani was finding it difficult to agree with other members on what should be done in the context of the task given. A lot of anger, irritation and frustration had set in. Finally you, as a facilitator, intervened.

Rani to all the group members: "Some people have decided not to agree"

Facilitator to Rani "Are you upset?"

Rani: "I am angry with the whole process."

Facilitator: "Would you like to say why you are angry?"

Rani: "Some people just don't listen to the right way of doing things! Why can't they do what I am telling them to?"

Facilitator: "Don't you think you are trying to dominate the group? While what you are suggesting makes sense, others are also making valid points."

Rani: "I am confused. Let me see if the ideas can be combined."

Facilitator: "Are you still angry?"

Rani: "I am not angry with anyone now. I am sitting far away from the group. Let me sit close to the group."

A little while later, Rani says to the group: "Let's move ahead."

Intrusive intervention thus brings a 'revelation' to the individual. In this style, the reflection by the learners sometimes continues to take place even after the facilitation is over. Remember, the intrusive style can be irritating and painful to the learner at times.

Several questions must have arisen in your mind.

- Won't the learner feel alienated?
- Won't the group develop negative feelings about the learner?
- Won't she feel humiliated by the facilitator?
- Doesn't this style of facilitation give you, as the facilitator, an opportunity to give vent to your negative feelings for a particular individual under the disguise of facilitation?

All these questions are very pertinent. But, always remember that the degree of intrusion will depend upon the situation, the learner and the issue. It may be gentle and light at times, very strong and powerful at other times. The most important thing that you must keep in mind is that it must be used for learning, and not for settling scores with the learner. If your intention is clear to the learner, the intervention becomes meaningful. Therefore, if you are using this

style of facilitation you must build up sufficient rapport with the learners, and norms of trust, openness and mutual learning must be established between you and the learners. It is also important for you to see that there must be some amount of group cohesion, sensitivity to deal with individuals and support for each other for learning, among the learners. Your intention is not to control an individual and make decisions for her; rather you pose a challenge to the learner to enable her to decide for herself. Of course you have taken a risk. The learner may feel snubbed and may not participate in further discussion, which you will have to then correct. Or it may happen that one learner may move ahead, but for others learning may be blocked. Therefore, you have to be sensitive and aware of each learner's personality in the group. Through this process there are chances of intruding into the learner's life space, and bringing about a lasting change. That is an achievement as facilitator.

Using the Facilitations Styles

You, as the facilitator, would need to remember that the facilitation style depends upon focus of change. However, by now you are probably wondering how to diagnose the problems of the group, or of individual members in it. How to know about whether it is at awareness level or behaviour level? All this comes from experience, and the more you practice as a trainer, the better you are likely to be at diagnosing and facilitating, especially with respect to interpretative and inclusive styles of facilitation.

Do keep in mind that the facilitator must avoid taking an authoritarian or moral stand during facilitation. This might effectively curb any further participation by the group members. Also remember that not every sentence that a facilitator says makes it facilitation. This distinction is very crucial. Stating a position as a member of the group is quite different from facilitating a position in the group. What should the facilitator do and why? Can different facilitation styles be combined?

Let us look at this last aspect through an example.

An episode to illustrate use of multiple facilitation styles

A group of women working in a governmental health programme were getting restless towards the end of the session on the second day of a six-day training programme. They were getting bored, wanted to leave early, were beginning to be unattentive, distracted etc.

Member 1: (to Trainer): "Madam, why don't you let us off early today?"

Member 2: "Yes, Madam. It would be good. As it is we are getting bored and all are not paying attention (looks around the room)."

Facilitator (Intervention A): "Wouldn't you like to carry on with what was planned for the day?"

Member 2: "No, Madam."

Facilitator: "Are you speaking for yourself or the group?"

Member 2: "Of course, for the group as a whole. Are we not all feeling the same? I am a member of the group (looks around)."

Member 3: “May be we can cover up some of today’s agenda today and the rest tomorrow (Tentatively).”

The Trainer ran her eyes around the room, and sensed that not all want to leave early. She had two choices before her:

Option 1: The group is feeling bored: why should I waste my time — let us call it a day and talk about their boredom the next day.

Option 2: This group of women is used to switching off their minds from all learning context by continued disinterest? Would it not be detrimental for group and individual learning? Are they really interested in their learning as a group and achieving their objectives? Or are they just whiling away the time since they have to complete this training and get a mere certificate for the same?

Facilitator (Intervention B): “On the one hand, the group members have expressed their commitment to pursue certain learning objectives. On the other, they do not want to commit themselves to the process of learning.”

Facilitator (Intervention C): “I do not want to keep the group here, despite this opportunity to examine closely this feeling of restlessness and boredom. I feel very strongly that I am looking at the symptom of finding a short cut solution. I need to look at the root-cause of this problem. I am feeling frustrated that there is so little commitment to one’s own learning and to each other’s learning. I am not sure whether we will be able to work as a group at all. Do we all not have a shared responsibility for learning?”

The group became serious following this. A challenge, a question had been thrown upto them and it moved them to a higher level of analysis of the issue, and its implications for group and individual behaviour.

In this episode, Intervention A was an interactive style of facilitation.

Intervention B was an interpretative style of facilitation.

Intervention C was an inclusive style of facilitation.

The above episode vividly describes the use of multiple facilitation styles one after the other, at both the individual level and the group level. Facilitation styles do not always exist in a pure form. They are complementary to each other and may need to be used in a row if the process is stuck and needs to move ahead, and some members also need to be pushed to examine certain critical issues.

If there is a team of facilitators, each can complement the other by using a different style. Normally, as facilitators, we tend to prefer certain styles exclusively and feel comfortable using the same, time and again. But that alone should not determine what intervention to use. We must develop an ability to use all the styles, if we are to be true to the process, and use the style most appropriate for the situation.

<p>Check Your Progress Exercise 2</p> <p>1) Fill in the blanks with the following words: Intrusive, Inclusive, Interpretative, Interactive</p>

- i) Suppose your diagnosis of the problem is that it is at the individual level and the focus of change is on action or behaviour. Your style of facilitation in this situation will be
- ii) Suppose your diagnosis of the problem is that it is at the group level and the focus of change is on action or behaviour .Your style of facilitation in this situation will be
- iii) Suppose your diagnosis of the problem is that it is at the individual level and the focus of change is on the level of awareness. Your style of facilitation in this situation will be
- iv) Suppose your diagnosis of the problem is that it is at the group level and the focus of change is on the level of awareness. Your style of facilitation in this situation will be

2) At the end of a seven-day training of trainers programme, a needs analysis for the next phase of training was being done. The trainer asked all participants to express what they wanted to learn.

Participant 1:“I would like to further understand about the group.”

Participant 2:“I would like to focus upon women’s learning and working in a heterogenous team.”

Participant 3:“I support that. It is an important issue. We should explore gender issues in depth.”

Participant 1:“Why do we always have to create this distinction between men and women? They all learn similarly. Also this new category, ‘gender issues’ -I don’t think we should unnecessarily go so much into it; it is like hair splitting. We talked about it during this training and we don’t need to waste more time.”

P2 +P3: (Almost simultaneously) “We don’t agree with you.”

Participant 2:“Whenever we talk of gender issues, we find this typical reaction. In our context of work, we must understand it and be sensitive to it. You also work in a community and you too must be aware of women’s learning processes.”

Participant 3:“We must not get stuck on the word gender. We must not see it only as a women’s issue, but one that all need to know about.”

Participant 1:“I work with women colleagues. They have never found any problems with my approach and understanding. I am quite sensitive to this process.”

Facilitator (Intervention A): “It seems to me that the group is already struggling with the issue of gender and there are male-female dynamics going on right here.”

Intervention B to P 1: “We have to look at these issues. Perhaps you are seeing the issue only on the basis of the words that are being used here. You have to examine your attitude too; it seems patronizing. You may need to examine your relationship with female colleagues *more* analytically and find out if you are maintaining the status quo or are responding with typical patriarchal forms of relationships.”

Now fill in the following blanks

In the above episode:

- i) Intervention A is an example of the.....style of facilitation.
- ii) It is followed by the..... mode of facilitation (Intervention B).

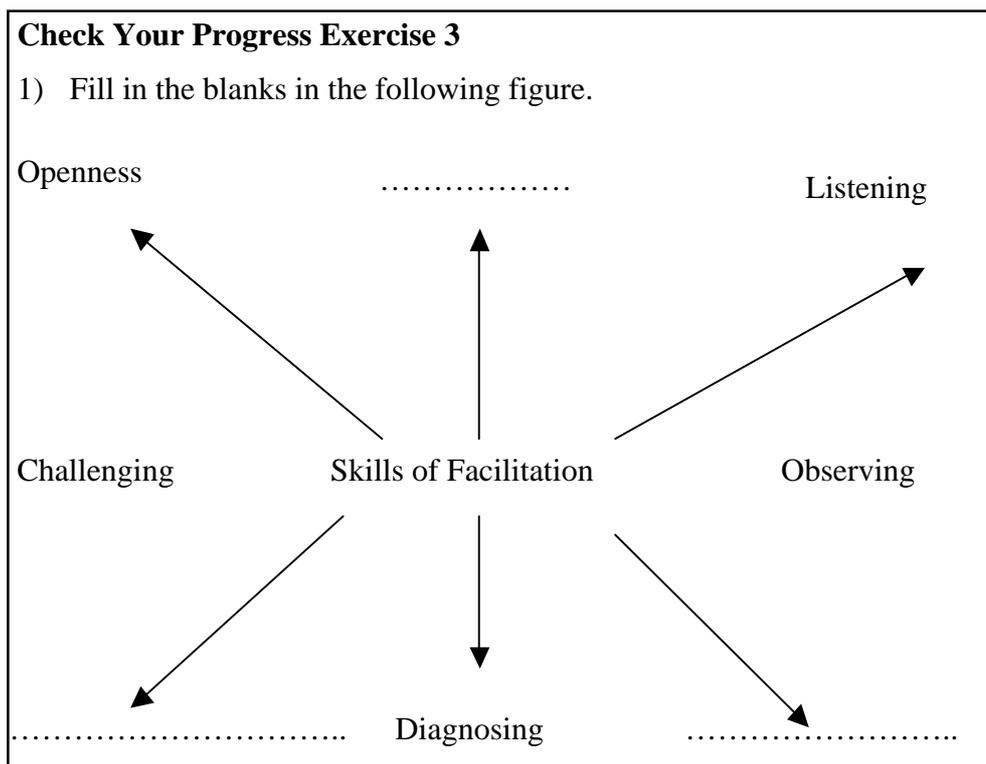
17.2.3 Skills of Facilitation

As you have just read, being able to successfully facilitate, including whenever needed, switching over from one style to another depending upon the situation, needs lots of practice. However, if you can sharpen some skills you will be able to do so. Given below is a list of skills that are normally considered necessary for effective facilitation. Make a conscious effort toward developing these. This will help you to be a good facilitator and thus, an effective trainer. You must develop skills of:

- *Listening:* You should listen carefully. Listen carefully to the verbal communication. Whenever you are listening, pick up both positive and negative aspects of situations. It will help you in diagnosing problems, difficulties and tensions, and thus, in facilitating the training process.
- *Observing:* Keep your eyes open to what is happening around you. Understand the non-verbal communication. Always remember that you are observing objectively in order to monitor the group's work.
- *Empathizing:* You must develop your skills to pick up implicit messages and you must try to put yourself in the learners' shoes whenever you are viewing a problem. Try to empathize with their feelings, ideas and values.
- *Diagnosing:* You must develop your diagnosing skills. That means you should be able to define the actual problem from diverse inputs you may be getting from the group about the problem. Based on your analysis, you should be able to select practical alternatives and intervene. When doing so, you should keep in mind that your actions are constantly being watched by the learners.
- *Supporting/encouraging:* Develop your ability to provide verbal and non-verbal messages of encouragement, appreciation, affirmation and caring. Try to assist learners in a joint search for solutions.
- *Challenging:* Pose challenging questions to the learners for defining or analysis of problems. Sometimes to probe further, you have to challenge them. Challenge their values, their norms. It is not easy. In this process you might have to say something to the learners which might hurt them. Develop your will to be able to say 'no' to learners. You might have to confront or disagree, or even stop a process. Do not hesitate to do so, but be polite and firm. Remember never to be rude to the learners. This hampers the learning process.
- *Openness:* Be open to the learners. Your ability to receive feedback and on it will definitely help you to be a good facilitator. You should be ready to examine your attitudes, values and ideas and change them, if necessary. You should be able to invite dialogues with learners.

- *Modelling*: What modeling means here is not to be a model of any advertisement. Rather, it means that you should be able to respond spontaneously without being idealistic. Never present yourself as an expert. In participatory training, all of us learn from each other .

In spite of your best efforts in trying to make the group harmonious and homogenous; you will always find some learners trying to dominate others. As a facilitator, you should make a conscious effort to use skills we have mentioned earlier and try to bring the learners onto the same platform or level of understanding.



17.3 TASKS OF THE TRAINER IN CONDUCTING STRUCTURED EXPERIENCES

You have already studied the planning of structured experiences in Unit 16. You are aware that when conducting participatory training sessions, groups are used as a vehicle of learning. In order to bring about a change in awareness of the learners, different methodologies are used like role play, case study, small group discussion, simulation, games and exercises.

However, these methods do not bring about any change in the learners unless the experiences which are generated by these methods are linked with, and the learning applied to, day-to-day life. *Thus, to make the training effective, the experiences during training sessions are structured in such a manner that learning takes place.* You, as a trainer, should be able to understand how structured experiences are actually a part of experiential learning. This is perhaps becoming a little difficult to understand. So before we talk more about structured experiences, let us first talk about what is experiential learning.

17.3.1 Structured Experiences as Part of Experiential Learning Cycle

You have seen that participatory training draws largely from the tenets of adult learning, which hold that adults learn fast from and through experiences. These experiences are usually their own — from the past and present. Sometimes they learn from the experiences of others also. These experiences—whether one’s own or those of others – are the fundamental source of learning for adults. However, remember that not all experiences lead to learning. For example, if an adult feels some emotions or some vague impression of an experience, it may not lead to learning. Learning takes place when the individual reflects upon the experience, analyzes it, understands the dynamics, gains insights, derives applicability of that particular experience and accordingly brings about change in behaviour.

You feel that most of the time, all through our lives, we go through these steps instinctively, rapidly, unknowingly or quickly. For example, when a person draws water from the well s/he has seen others doing it. May be they use a pulley to pull the bucket with a rope. The person does the same. What s/he has done? S/he has used the experience of others, reflected upon it, accepted it and brought change in the behaviour .

Let us take this example again. But suppose the person first tries to draw water from the well without using the pulley. S/he finds that as the bucket comes closer and closer, it becomes harder and harder to pull the bucket. This is his or her own experience. S/he relooks upon and analyzes the situation. This may or may not bring some desired change in the behaviour. Suppose the second time s/he tries with the pulley, and then, reflects upon both the experiences. This may bring some desired change in the behaviour , as the person realizes that it is more convenient to draw water using the pulley. You have seen from both these examples that deep reflection is an important and crucial step. You will also agree that this is not always done consciously. The systematic examination of what is behind the experience and what is behind the reaction are also necessary steps. These, if put together, form a cycle as shown in Figure 17.2 as the experiential learning cycle. This cycle is deliberately used to equip learners, particularly adult learners with the strength to confront experiences and derive conscious learning from them.

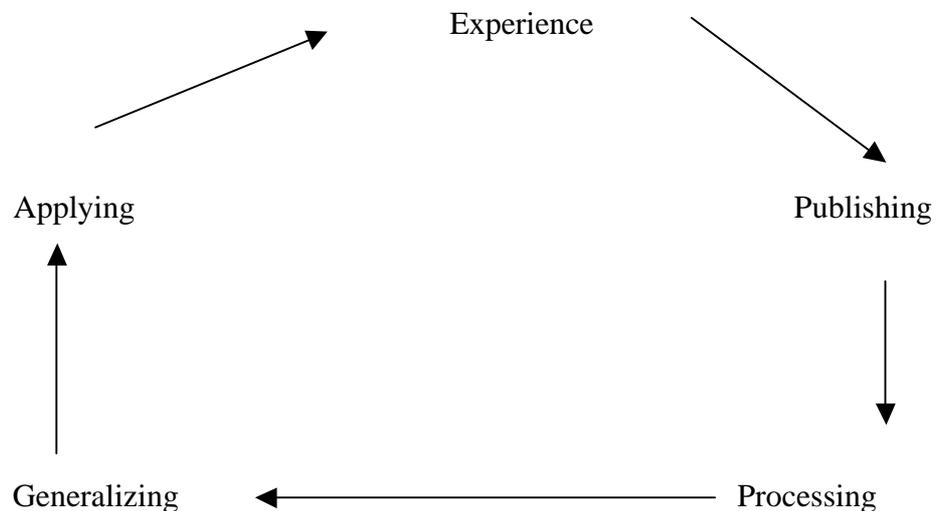


Figure 17.2: The Experiential Learning Cycle

Let us take an example to understand each step of the experiential learning cycle. Suppose you want to make the learners understand how the decisions are being taken in the group and how the group members relate to a particular decision that has been taken by the group.

You have divided the learners into small groups, with four to five members in each group. You have given the same exercise to each group to discuss and finally take a decision. The group members will discuss among themselves and take some decision. You will observe different kinds of decision making processes taking place in the groups. This is called *Experiencing*.

Now you make these small groups share their decision with the large group. It may happen that they have written down their decision on a piece of paper and read it out in front of the large group. It may also happen that you write it down for them on the black board or on a flip chart. The sharing of decisions made, information or experience is called *Publishing*. 'Publish' does not mean that the experience you have had or others have had should be published in book form. What it means is that the learners share the reactions and observations with each other. At times, it happens that a few learners may not feel like sharing their reactions and observations with others. In that case, you as a trainer may not use the experience of those learners for learning. For those learners, you would be skipping this phase. However, learning may take place by gaining from the other's experience. If the situation demands, you may not disclose the identity. For instance, the members may write down their experiences or observations, without writing their names. You may then collect all the papers, mix them up, and then read out each one for discussion.

After sharing the reactions and observations, you as a facilitator and the learners reflect upon the implications. You may also like to discuss the pattern of occurrences and the dynamics. You may share with them anything significant that you observed during the experiencing phase of the cycle. Most probably the learners were not aware as to what processes were taking place when they were discussing. This helps in developing a better understanding of the situation. Remember, here you are analyzing the whole process. This part of the cycle is known as *Processing*.

Once the reflection is over, you come to generalizing that is, the group practically understands what has actually happened, and then generalizes it and takes decisions.

Based on the data which has been generated and processed in the group discussion, various ways of taking decisions can be derived. To provide a clearer understanding, you as a trainer should add on to what has already been experienced by the learners. Their experiences should be considered by you as the base on which further inputs are added by you for facilitating learning. Perceiving common threads in the experiences of individual members falls in the domain of *Generalizing*.

Now it is upto the learners who will decide how to use this new learning. As a trainer, you may assist individual learners in undertaking and deriving specific applications of the learning in their day-to-day life. If, in the above example, inputs were given on decision making, you may help the learners understand which decision making process makes the group take responsibility towards the decision. This is called *Applying*.

We are sure by now you have understood why this is called the experiential learning cycle. It is based on the learners' experience, which has been structured for a particular learning in that it is considered appropriate for inclusion in a particular training session designed to meet particular learning objectives. Figure 17.3 clarifies how the learner's own and others' experiences could be utilized for structured experiences and the experiential learning cycle.

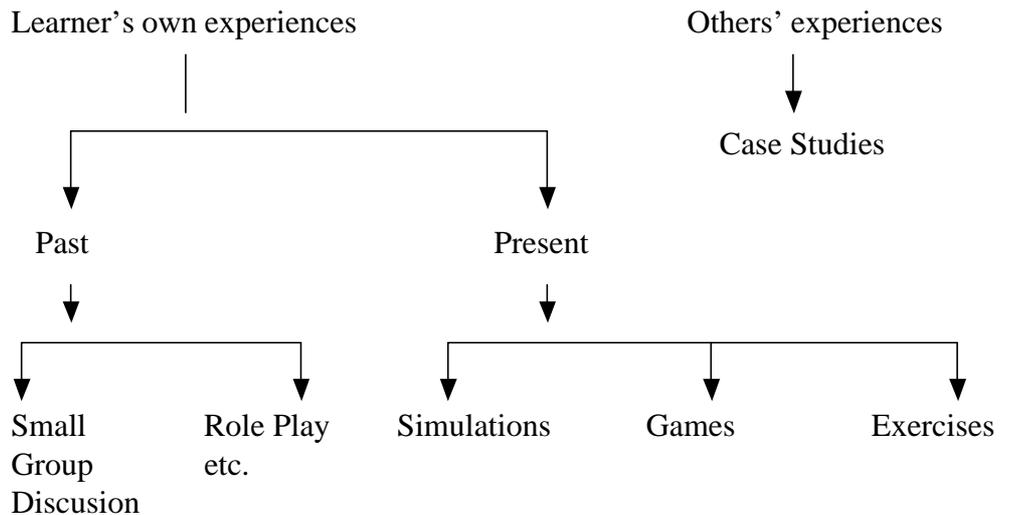


Figure 17.3: Use of Structured Experiences

When conducting a training programme, you would need to provide the learners with the requisite structured experiences, and guide them through the experiential learning cycle. Women learners are known to learn very effectively through this approach. Let us now look at some specific roles, responsibilities and tasks that you as a facilitator have to perform when you are conducting a session.

17.3.2 Choosing Appropriate Methods

When you feel or know that the learners have adequate experiences within themselves on the particular subject, and will not hesitate to share their experiences, you may use group discussion. For example, with women from a community who face a drinking water crisis, you can use their knowledge of the situation and their perspective of how to solve this problem. But if you feel that either the group members do not have adequate experience or that they may not be willing to share those experiences, then in that case you should use experiences of others, like case studies. Let us taken an example. Suppose, with some village women, you want to discuss problems faced by women in starting their own economic activity .You may find that not all women have tried this and that they do not have sufficient knowledge and idea about it. You may bring to the session a woman who would speak out clearly her own story about starting her own economic activity and subsequently not being able to continue because of various reasons. Have you used a live case study? This is very effective when you are training illiterate village women. If you feel that some experiences or feelings that need to be generated are inherent in a complex social situation, than a simulation could be used. For example, for a group of village women who are not ready to speak out about the injustices being done to them by landlords, a simulation will be an appropriate method. On the other hand, if the experiences or feelings that need to be generated are simple, you may use a game. For example, you may want to show how

communication gets distorted by playing the whispering game. That is, let learners sit in a semi-circle. Give a simple message to the first learner of the semi-circle. Let the first one whisper to the second one, who is sitting adjacent to her, the message. In this way, let the message be whispered in the ear of the last learner of the semi-circle. Finally you ask her to speak out the message clearly and loudly. You will find that the message has been distorted in this process of communication. Thus, the methods chosen depend on the issues that have to be taken up.

17.3.3 Preparation

Once you have chosen the appropriate training method to communicate the content, you have to do some preparation and get the materials which are needed for the particular method, ready to use. Suppose it is an illiterate group of learners, and you have decided to use pictures. Now, when you are selecting the pictures you need to be careful, in that the learners should be able to relate themselves easily with the pictures. Mostly, what happens is that you may have some readymade pictures available with you, and to save time and resources, you may plan to use them. It will definitely have less impact. For instance, if in a training programme, the group comprising illiterate rural women of Haryana is shown some pictures of women of South Africa or women from Bengal where the dress styles are different, the correlation may not be so easy and quick. At the same time, drawing pictures for each training programme may not be feasible. One often has to make a compromise. Further, when drawing pictures or getting them made, we need to remember that they are not to be used to show the artistic ability, but to send some messages. We can draw simple pictures which send the same messages. You need to consider the resources available before taking a decision.

Similarly, when you have chosen role play as the training method, you have to identify the theme or the story for the script. In the case of a case study, it might mean identifying an appropriate case and getting copies made.

Check Your Progress Exercise 4

- 1) What are normally the five steps in the experiential learning cycle?
 - i)
 - ii)
 - iii)
 - iv)
 - v)
- 2) Give one example each of a structured experience based on the :
 - i) learners' own experience

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ii) other's experience
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17.3.4 Briefing about the Task

Clearly state the task to the group members. If it is a group of illiterate learners, make them repeat what has been stated about the task. With a literate group you may write down the task on the black board or a chart or transparency clearly (it depends upon the teaching aid you are using during the training programme). The idea is that you have to make the group clearly understand what they have to share, notice, discuss and deliberate, and analyze. For example, if a decision-making exercise is being conducted, clearly specify that they have to take the decision regarding the specified task. The time limit is clearly specified. The time permitted depends upon the exercise. For example, for a decision-making exercise, half an hour is enough to come to a decision for a group. Necessary procedures of recording and reporting should be made clear, and remember, it should be the same for all the groups. For example, you have to clearly mention that each small group has to present the decision it has taken, and that the presentation can be oral or written, depending upon the level of learners.

17.3.5 Dividing into Groups

It may be necessary to divide the large group into smaller groups for more effective sharing and analysis. Depending upon the number of learners and the task, you have to decide the size and number of groups. There are various methods of dividing the large group into smaller groups. Suppose you have decided that a large group should be divided into four smaller groups. You may ask the learners to start counting from one side. So, starting from one end, the first learner would say 'one', the second learner sitting next should call out 'two', the third learner should say 'three' and the fourth one sitting count 'one' again, and so it goes on till the last learner has called a number.

Now if the large group can be divided by four then you will have an equal number of members in each group, but in case it is not divisible by four, you will have groups where the number may be one more than four . Practically one member extra in a group does not matter .

Sometimes you may want to divide members into groups by name, keeping in mind the level of learners and the grasping power of the learners. This can be done only when you have a fairly good idea about the learners, by the third or fourth day of the programme. It is always better to use the count game and form groups during the first and second days of the programme.

Another way is that you may ask the group members themselves to form groups as they desire. You, as a facilitator, have the responsibility to see that groups

are formed. This method may be tried out once or twice in the training sessions, but frequent use of this method of group formation causes different kinds of group dynamics and hinders the learning process.

17.3.6 Maintaining Control

Though this might sound authoritarian, the facilitator needs to maintain some degree of control over processes like simulations, role plays and games, in order to see that effective learning takes place.

17.3.7 Monitoring the Discussion

While small groups are engaged in discussion, you should keep a constant watch over them for such mundane matters like whether order is maintained and for more important things like whether the task is clear and whether the discussions are on track or not. In case you feel that the progress of group discussion is not on track, you may intervene — depending on the style of intervention you feel will be suitable. At the same time, remember that you should not intervene unless you feel that the group has not understood the task or there are obstacles created by some members.

17.3.8 Debriefing

Debriefing is the process of getting out from the groups or individuals the sum and substance of what they discussed or felt. (Details are included in the box at the end of this section).

17.3.9 Consolidating/Summarizing

The various reports and debriefs should be summarized before the group and various patterns and trends drawn out to put the information into an intelligible framework, that is, a framework which is understood clearly. Most of the time you have to contribute something from your own experiences. This will automatically happen as you conduct more and more training programmes. Your practical training experience will increasingly help you in consolidating the debriefing information to render it close to real life or real life situations. For example, in the training of women panches (women leaders elected from a village) the session on conflict resolution, after the debriefing, should be related to their day-to-day life, and finally more inputs from your side on conflict resolution, should be concluded. The debriefs, along with your inputs, lead to consolidation.

17.3.10 Providing Inputs

Your inputs should be built on what the learners have shared and published.

Participatory training does not expect the trainer to be an expert or specialist in the subject matter. However, it is also not mandatory that you as a trainer have to summarize on the basis of inputs you received from the learners themselves. As a trainer, it is your duty to provide the necessary information which the learners might not be knowing or be aware of.

Box 17.1: Debriefing and Consolidation

An experiential learning situation must necessarily be followed by debriefing and consolidation.

If the learners have gone through a moderate to intense emotional experience, it is necessary to allow them some time to get out of that emotional framework otherwise they can get too involved and carried away.

Debriefing consists of getting from the learners or learner groups their feelings, emotions, experiences and whatever else you might feel is necessary to allow them space and opportunity to relate the training experience to themselves, their group, their field situation.

The debriefed information should be noted down publicly. That is, it should be published. Do you remember that we had talked about publishing in the experiential learning cycle? You may ask questions such as:

What did you see? How did you feel? What did you say during discussions?

Such questions help in bringing out the participants' perceptions and experiences. The information gathered may be noted down on a board or chart paper. You, as a facilitator, should help the participants put the debriefed information into a real life context, so that they can relate to it in a broader framework. To provoke analysis of the information presented, enabling the derivation of broad principles, you could ask questions such as:

Why did you feel the way you did? Why did you say what you did during the discussions? These questions enable participants to analyze the reasons and causes behind their behaviour, perceptions and experiences.

Do such situations occur in real life? When? Has it happened to you?

Questions like these try to situate the experience in reality and try to draw parallels with life.

Why do you think this happens ?

This is an attempt to analyze and draw principles and conclusions which form the core of the new learning. It may be necessary at this point to provide additional information. Without suggesting manipulation, the objective of the trainer is to put the debriefed information into the conceptual framework, after analysis and additional information. When doing so, it is essential that the information be situated in real life or related to real life.

What is a conceptual framework?

The conceptual framework is the broad theoretical framework that the trainer follows when choosing the content area. The conceptual framework relates to the learning objectives and the content area. It forms the basis for the debriefing and the analysis. For example, suppose the participants of a training programme are illiterate elected women panches of five *panchayats*. The objective of the training programme is to make the participants understand the importance of empowered groups. One of the content areas may focus on strengthening the group. For this, you may take sessions on participation, communication, decision-making, conflict resolution, problem

solving and leadership in the group context. But all these should be tied together in the conceptual framework of group processes. This will enable the women panches to understand that to strengthen the groups, they need to take care of all these processes within the groups.

Source: Adapted from A Manual for Participation Training Methodology in Development, PRIA, New Delhi, 1995

Check Your Progress Exercise 5

1) What is debriefing?

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2) What is the importance of consolidating?

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17.4 LET US SUM UP

When conducting a training programme, your role is that of a facilitator. As a facilitator, you must ensure that learning takes place in the desired direction. In the case of women learners, there are some particular aspects that you, as a facilitator, would need to keep in mind, for example, helping them develop their confidence and overcome their inhibitions. If you see that learning is not taking place as you thought it should, you need to facilitate the process by switching over to different modes of facilitation. As a facilitator you must develop your listening, observing, empathizing, diagnosing, supporting, encouraging, challenging and modelling skills for conducting training programmes with women's groups. Openness is an important skill that you must develop as a facilitator. You as a facilitator must conduct structured experiences during the training programme. Women learn effectively through this process. You have to choose the appropriate methods and prepare for the session. The task has to be briefed clearly to the members before dividing them into groups. When the group is performing the task, you have to ensure that it completes the task. After the task is performed, debriefing is done. It is followed by consolidating and providing additional inputs for learning.

17.5 GLOSSARY

Authoritarian : Like a dictator ordering people gives them no freedom

Curb	: Stop or prevent
Homogenous	: In the case of a group, when members belong to the same socio-economic background, the group is called homogenous
Pertinent	: Relevant

17.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

- 1) Facilitation is a conscious process by which the trainer assists learners to successfully complete the task.
- 2) In order to be able to identify problems (and their possible causes) impeding group functioning, so that one could attempt to remove them and help the group in progressing further towards successful completion of the set task.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

- 1)
 - i) Interactive
 - ii) Inclusive
 - iii) Intrusive
 - iv) Interpretative
- 2)
 - i) Inclusive
 - ii) Intrusive

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

- 1)
 - i) Empathising
 - ii) Supporting/Encouraging
 - iii) Modelling

Check Your Progress Exercise 4

- 1)
 - i) Experiencing
 - ii) Publishing
 - iii) Processing
 - iv) Generalizing
 - v) Applying
- 2)
 - i) Any one of the following: small group discussion, role play simulations, games, exercises.
 - ii) Case Studies

Check Your Progress Exercise 5

- 1) Debriefing consists of getting from the learners or learners groups their feelings, emotions, experiences and whatever else you might feel is necessary to enable the training experience to be analyzed while also giving the trainees the opportunity to get out of the emotional framework created and not get carried away.
- 2) Debriefs along with trainers' inputs lead to consolidation. This helps to render it close to real life or real life situations. Consolidating creates a framework for better understanding based on various patterns and trends.