
UNIT 2 APPROACHES AND STRATEGIES OF TRAINING

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2.1 INTRODUCTION

Dear Learner,

In the previous unit we discussed that competent human resources at various levels are one of the important requirements of development and competencies of development professionals and other stakeholders involved in development can be improved through well organized training programmes. So effective training of the development functionaries helps in implementation of development programmes successfully.

Training requires various approaches and strategies and effectiveness of any training programme depends on its approaches and strategies. As the training varies from organisation to organisation and even within the organisation from one category of employee to the other, therefore, there is a need for adopting appropriate training strategies for the effective implementation of training programme. Also, before discussing the approaches and strategies of training, it is essential to know various dilemmas associated with training. This unit deals with the training dilemma, approaches, and strategies.

After studying this unit, you will be able to

- explain the training dilemma
- describe the approaches and techniques of training
- describe the various strategies of training and related issues.

2.2 THE TRAINING DILEMMA

It is understood that whatever be the emphasis of training programme, every training programme may be confronted with certain dilemma. Some of these dilemmas are as follows

- i) Theory versus Practice: It is a fact that training in social sciences will differ from training in natural sciences, and the theory and practical components to be covered in both these categories of training programmes will differ from one another. Therefore, theory and practice combination in all training programmes has to be judiciously balanced. For the accomplishment of training objectives, maintaining a balance between theory and practice is very essential. Too much theory will make the training programme monotonous and similarly too much practical will not be helpful for theoretical and conceptual clarity acquisition among trainees.
- ii) Trainee versus Task: Another dilemma is whether to put focus on the trainee, or, on the task that he or she has to perform during training. As Chowdhary says, "When there are several compulsions and pragmatic considerations, there is a tendency to highlight the task components in the training programme schedule". This dichotomy between trainee and task will determine the approaches and strategies, and accordingly training has to follow during the training programme.
- iii) Structured versus Unstructured: The third dilemma is whether the training programme will be a structured or unstructured one. If it is structured, then the timing, budget, and curriculum are strictly accommodated. The sequencing and systematic coherence enable the training organizers to achieve training goal within the allotted time. In comparison to these, the unstructured programme is more accommodative and allows greater freedom to both the trainees as well as training. However, the demerit of the unstructured programme is that it may lead to inconsequential achievable. Therefore sometimes the training organisers are caught in dilemma as to which is better. The contextualisation is very important here (Please refer Unit 1 of this Block for more details on structured / unstructured training).
- iv) Generic and Specific: Sometimes the training organizer gets struck of with generic and specificity of the training. The specific programme may not be handled by all types of training institutions or training organizations.

Example : The generic programme like training technology may be handled by any training organisations. However, the specific training programme on various sectors such as health, education, urban development, rural development etc can not be handled by all types of training organisations.

Activity 1

Visit a nearby training institution and discuss with the faculty about training dilemma being confronted by them. Compare their views with those given in the above section and identify the common features.

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2.3 APPROACHES TO TRAINING

Training organizations follow various approaches depending on the factors like needs identified, trainees' background, subject matter to be covered etc. These are discussed below for your understanding.

- i) **Informative approach:** This approach provides information to the trainees on various subjects. For example, development professionals working in health sector need information about the performance and functioning of various health programmes. The trainees might not have current information about specific aspects such as infant mortality, maternal mortality, death rates etc. This information has to be procured from various sources, such as Health Information Bureaus or the Census of India and provided to trainees. Various teaching methods, such as conventional black board or power point presentations can be used. The trainer can also use other interesting and innovative methods of imparting information through various teaching aids.
- ii) **Participatory approach:** In the participatory approach, the trainees act as facilitators and, instead of following a one-sided lecturing approach, they involve trainees in the process of teaching and learning. In this process, the trainer also learns from the trainees and teaching and learning becomes a two-way process. The participatory approach empowers the trainees and the trainer, equally. The participatory approach is considered as a democratic way of training and followed by most of the development organizations involved in the training at the grassroots.
- iii) **Experimental approach:** The experimental approach emphasises situations in which the trainees will eventually operate. In this approach, both the trainers as well as the trainees jointly formulate the objectives and methodologies of training programme. Here, the trainers primarily serve as facilitators, catalysts, or resource persons. This method applies more effectively to those who have some field experiences.
- iv) **Performance based approach:** In the performance based approach, the goal of the training programme is measured by the attainment of a given level of proficiency. The performance based training approach is developed by Elan in 1971. It is mostly task or skill centred, and can be applied to non-formal education and extension education.

Activity 2

Visit a nearby training institute or development department and discuss about various training approaches being followed by them. Compare them with those given in the above section and write your observations.

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Till now you have read about the basic training dilemmas and training approaches in the above sections. Now answer the following questions in Check Your Progress-1.

Check Your Progress-1

Note: a) Write your answer in about 50 words.

b) Check your answer with possible answers given at the end of the unit

1) Name the important training dilemmas

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2) Write the relevance of participatory training approach.

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2.4 TRAINING STRATEGIES

Broadly, there are six training strategies.

- 3) The academic strategy
- 4) The laboratory strategy
- 5) The activity strategy
- 6) The action strategy
- 7) The personal development strategy
- 8) The organizational development strategy

Let us discuss them briefly for your comprehension.

2.4.1 The Academic Strategy

The academic orientation strategy gives pride of place to transmitting content and increasing conceptual understanding. Its characteristic methods are lectures, seminars, and individual reading and preparation. The goals are incorporated first in a syllabus, which will be covered, and assessed through examinations which will test the students' recall of the content and ability to apply them under simulated conditions.

This type of orientation makes two assumptions.

- 1) First, content and understanding can be passed on effectively by those who know viz., Faculty, Researchers to those who are unaware.
- 2) Second, participants are capable of translating abstract generalizations into improvements in their performance in concrete situations.

Universities need not be concerned about the second assumption. But the academic orientation is not confined to academic institutions. It is commonly used in many training activities, that is, where specific improvements are expected to take place on the job and in the organization. Many aspects of teachers training, for instance, offer examples of academic training for action goals. In fact, it would not be an exaggeration to say that the academic strategy tends to be generally preferred in the training world. Programme directors have to be argued out of it. It comes naturally, apparently, and is used until something else takes its place.

The attractions of academic strategy approach include:

- The special status accorded to the educated person, irrespective of accomplishment
- The neatness and orderliness of the syllabus; and,
- More basically, to the assured control that such orientation gives to the trainer.

2.4.2 The Laboratory Strategy

The laboratory orientation strategy has enjoyed prominence and respect for centuries in a variety of disciplines, since it provides an opportunity to gain insights and skills from direct experience and manipulation of a limited number of elements under controlled conditions. It is real to that limited extent, and thus, can also provide sufficient distance from real life to permit both freedom to experiment and safety to learn from the consequences of trial. It is through laboratory training that the student of medicine discovers the wonders of human anatomy, such as when a bacteriologist develops first-hand familiarity with pathogens, or, when a budding physicist discovers subtle applications of the law of gravity.

The concept of the laboratory has found wider use in recent years, for example in language laboratories. Here, we are particularly interested in training laboratories for personal and organizational development. The laboratory strategy can be used for improving skills of social interaction that are essential for development professionals, managers, supervisors, trainers, community workers, and a host of others who need to influence the quality of human interaction and human relationships in the work environment. For this purpose, laboratory orientation gives weight to considerations of process, not content: how things are done or not done, rather than what is accomplished. This orientation is used to experience, and then to understand through this experience, how different people think, act, and react; how leadership and other roles are performed in a group; how people become involved in a task or reject involvement. The training laboratory is, therefore, concerned with human relations and organizational behaviour.

Two assumptions underlie the laboratory orientation.

- 1) The first is that it is useful and possible to help people examine their inner reality, their psychological reality, in order to better understand the sources of their behaviour and that of others and to become aware that these are important factors in actual performance on the job.
- 2) The second assumption is that people are able to transfer laboratory experience and learning to actual life situations, including other learning and work situations.

2.4.3 The Activity Strategy

The activity orientation strategy emphasizes the practice of a particular skill. Its primary objective is to improve individual performance on a specific job. The most elementary version of this orientation is to 'try, try and try again,' until the participant can do the job. Skilled practitioners, particularly if they possess the inclinations and skills of a trainer, can greatly help this unstructured process along.

Examples: Apprenticeship, understudy, and internship under international aid schemes.

The advantage of leaving the learning process unaided and unsystematic is the opportunity for exploration that it affords participants, whereby they can 'get the feel of the job', given sufficient time. Since this orientation puts training 'on the job', it avoids the problems of transfer from training back to the job. Finally, it makes lighter demands on the work organization than other orientations.

Two assumptions underlie the activity orientation.

- 1) The first is that the skill required by the organization is within the ability of the participants to do the particular job, and at the same time to pick up the manner in which the surrounding organization operates. A variant on the first assumption is that participants can conceptualize their activities for themselves sufficiently to deal with any additional needs on the job.
- 2) The second assumption is that production and training can be combined rather simply.

These are assumptions that may have been generally useful some time ago. Now they are useful for fewer and fewer jobs. Job requirements are, in fact, changing so rapidly and to such an extent that limited job training necessitates repeated retraining. The activity orientation leaves to chance questions of individual motivation and of collaboration between two or more people. The assumption that production and training can be readily combined is also no longer useful. Production goals tend to crowd out training goals, so that often this orientation ends in all work and no training. On jobs that require very little skill this may not matter. But the number of such unskilled jobs declines sharply as an economy develops. Finally, the activity orientation puts participants in danger of learning outdated or faulty methods of work. In the rapidly increasing number of jobs for which speed, precision, and adaptability are required, the activity orientation is de facto of little value and may be detrimental.

The limitations of the activity orientation have been belaboured because it is quite common. Many of the numerous production-cum-training centres in India, for instance, actually institutionalize its confusion. Though apparently logical,

the combination of production and training in practice is so difficult as to border on the impossible. When a centre concentrates on production, as many do to satisfy their evaluators' itch for concreteness, training becomes very costly. Often, it is also ineffective because skilled workers, instead of being allowed to instruct and supervise, are put on direct production to augment the monthly production record. At the same time, a centre's training function allows organizers to avoid responsibility for inefficiencies in production or other aspects of management.

Institutions that include field placements in their training programme often encounter a variant of the activity orientation and its limitations. Training placement often yields nothing beyond sheet activity. The participants are kept busy with a motley assortment of tasks that permanent staff members assign. Or, they are ignored, hopefully to 'make their own way'. Neither method constitutes training.

Updated versions of the activity orientation avoid some of these pitfalls, but never all. As used by an increasing number of systematic training programs, in trade schools for instance, it is based on rigorous detailed analyses of a particular skill. The skill is practiced in parts, often with the use of simple aids. When participants have gained specific standards of accuracy and speed in the parts, they practice the parts together and attain accuracy and speed in the operation as a whole. In this method, training time is greatly curtailed and wastes, for example of spoiled materials, reduced. However, a 'feel for the job' is not acquired even by this procedure, nor is a capacity for further learning, should conditions change. These must come on the job, over time, or they will not come at all.

2.4.4 The Action Strategy

The action orientation strategy is akin to the activity orientation. It does for the organization as a whole a group, city, or other social system - what the activity strategy does for individuals. The training component of work camps and many other community action programs is based on this orientation. Its emphasis on action rests on the same assumptions and runs the same dangers for an organization that the activity orientation does for individuals. Its focus, too, is on process, not content. Its emphasis on the practical can become so strong that the training purpose gets lost. In the absence of renewal through training, action soon fails, in terms of quality. It becomes discontinuous, and in many cases, ceases. If action is called for above all or else, as in disaster relief or in digging a common village well, these limitations need not concern us here. But if an action program is chosen as a training orientation, then action by itself is not enough. It ensures neither sound practice nor the understanding or working procedures required for further development.

The massive Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee programme for rural community development has been beset with dilemmas that can be traced to an increasing reliance on an action orientation. With heavy pressure for concrete results, in terms of seed distributed, wells dug, roads and schools constructed, and the like, the program became all action by officials; in this shift, the underlying purpose of stimulating participation, initiative, and collaboration by villagers is not adequate. Thus, the officials are caught in a vicious circle where secondary goals have been met only at the cost of primary ones.

2.4.5 The Personal Development Strategy

The personal development orientation strategy completes the range of orientations that aim to train an individual. This orientation gives weight to both job requirements and the processes by which these requirements are met. It consists basically of providing participants with alternating opportunities. During part of the programme participants work on tasks and problems similar to those faced on the job. In between they analyze and explain the factors underlying the experiences they have undergone, and the points of view with which they approached them. This orientation does not lead merely to improvements limited to a specific job or situation, but to a widening and deepening of the participants' competence in understanding and dealing with many situations. What to think is considered less important than how to think. Action and discussion methods of training are characteristic of these orientations which are field training, simulation methods, and the discussion of incidents and cases.

The personal development orientation rests on two sets of assumptions.

- 1) One set states that participants are already sufficiently familiar with work situations to deal with any new job content or other details expected to be required. They will be able and eager to secure for themselves any additional knowledge that they feel they need. They are also already adept at analyzing their experiences and generalizing from them for the future. This assumption suggests that the personal development strategy is most appropriate for training professional personnel, and that it will become widely appropriate for India also, as education spreads and improves and as more and more jobs call for the kind of self awareness that this orientation fosters.
- 2) The second set of assumptions is common to all individual orientations. It states that individuals will have the support of their organizations in putting their training to use. To leave the organizational factor to chance, leads to many heartaches and much waste. This happens when competent, well trained individuals cannot use their training because their organizations will not give them sufficient elbowroom to change their behaviour. Sometimes, individuals may be able to create a little elbowroom and thus, do their jobs more effectively and with greater satisfaction than before. But, the effect is limited to their immediate surroundings. They are tolerated, no more. The wider organization remains unaffected and, should they quit the organization, their innovations fade away.

2.4.6 The Organizational Development Strategy

The organization development orientation strategy goes beyond the personal development orientation in just one respect: organizational change is its explicit, central focus and a change in individuals through training is just one means for organizational change. This orientation requires the closest collaboration between the training institution and the work organization. The institution plays a consulting role prior to executing the core parts of the required training and again after returned of participants to their jobs.

To begin with, this orientation addresses the question: what does the organization need to learn to achieve a particular change? It next assesses the training needs in detail and relates them to other requirements of change. The organization, then, uses training to ensure that competency that the change can be effected. This orientation directly guides the selection of individuals for training and for

jobs upon their return. Beyond accomplishing an immediate, discrete change, it has the more general and lasting aim of developing the organization's own training function. Basically, this is not a matter of setting up or not setting up a training department. Rather, it is a matter of fostering an attitude and allocating resources so that staff is trained further through the organization's normal operations. The aim is to achieve, in the organization, a pervasive sense of continuous development and a heightened receptivity and readiness for change.

The first of two assumptions underlying the organization development orientation is analogous to, the first underlying the personal development orientation, namely, attention to organizational needs and to the processes by which they can be met will induce participants to acquire any additional knowledge needed and to enhance their ability to conceptualize developments for the future. The second assumption also covers parallel ground, but in reverse. The personal development orientation assumes that organizational change will follow individual learning. This is not necessarily so. The organization development orientation assumes that the individual will change as the organization changes and change, too, in line with organizational requirements.

The organizational development orientation can incorporate two provisions to minimize discrepancies between individual and organizational interests.

- 1) One is prior involvement of individuals in organizational changes that will affect them and to give them opportunities to contribute toward shaping these changes.
- 2) The second is to openly acknowledge that such discrepancies may occur and may lead to some shifting of staff within the organization, and, if all else fails, to some loss of staff.

A training system oriented to organizational development must clarify these issues and insist that the organization resolve them before it embarks upon a training program. To the many rapidly expanding organizations in a developing country such as India, the training system can point out that they are in a favourable position for providing trained staff with opportunities to change to jobs elsewhere in the organization that promise continued personal satisfaction.

The use of an organizational development orientation is so new that a series of six examples in ascending order of complexity may help you visualize it. The common simple mathematical extrapolations of staff needs at various levels to cope with new or expanding activities are only the bare beginnings of this kind of orientation.

- i) Selecting participants in pairs or threes who work side by side or in functional interrelationship in an organization is a simple attempt at an organizational development strategy. The Small Industry Extension Training (SIET) Institute, Hyderabad, has tried to do this in its regular three month industrial management and area development courses. It is a rough-and-ready rule, because two or three trained people from any level in the organization may not, in fact, be the minimum concentration required. When the basic idea is not understood by the organization, the two or three candidates they nominate for training may not in fact work sufficiently closely together to provide the necessary support on the job.
- ii) SIET Institute used this type of orientation on a large scale when it recruited sixty potential entrepreneurs from one small town for a succession of four

10 day courses in entrepreneurial motivation. The majority of these participants formed themselves into an entrepreneur's association which showed tangible results within three years, in terms of industrial units started and new investments.

- iii) To stimulate industrial development in a district, a largely rural area with a population of 1.5 million, the Institute decided to concentrate training in two or three district towns and offer them a sequence of training events and services. In the first stage, it strove to create a broad base of interest. It proceeded by placing in local factories, for in-plant fieldwork, groups of participants in one of SIET Institute's regular courses. The faculties supervising the fieldwork were simultaneously able to organize and run weekend courses for sixty or so local entrepreneurs and managers. The second stage consisted of short entrepreneurial motivation courses, again, for sixty or so local people, organized locally. Of these sixty people some promising participants were selected for stage three, a succession of regular management training courses at SIET Institute.
- iv) In its three-tier management programs, the India Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIMA), has attempted to take into account the hierarchical relationships in organizations and the support of changes needed from the chief executive downward. Each program has three stages, and participating organizations have to be represented in all three. The first (six weeks) is for one or two members of middle management; the second (one week) is for a member of senior management; the last (three days) is for the top executive. The stages overlap. The idea is that each participant will be more effective after training by having the support of at least two others at different levels of the organization.
- v) A more intensive three tier program is run by the South India Textile Research Association (SITRA) for individual textile mills. Primarily for supervisory training, the program includes training also for two higher levels (managers and managing agents) and the level immediately below (Jobbers). Short special courses and other in-service activities are also arranged for clerical and administrative staff. Training at each level is largely based on feedback about existing practices and suggestions for the next lower level in the organization. Each unit program is limited to twenty participants and lasts four weeks, excluding follow-up services. The Ahmedabad Textile Industry's Research Association (ATIRA) has another unit program. Financed by four mills and lasting several years, the program aims at training all line supervisors in these mills and ensuring adequate organizational support for them. The program has grown out of collaborative action-research projects designed to elicit training and job requirements.
- vi) The Institute of Rural Health and Family Planning (IRHFP) at Gandhigram in southern India bases its training on service activities started at least one year in advance of any new training program. These activities, concentrated in six community development blocks, are designed to involve the people themselves in planning and implementing health programs in their communities. Health leaders, elected by the people, form a village health committee that gradually takes responsibility for more and more health activities. The Institute's service staffs perform as staff members of the

official government health centres at the block level. The Primary Health Centre working staffs participates in the program and evaluates its effectiveness.

In time, official health workers from other areas and other states have come for training in the methods of work developed. Opportunities for developing similar skills are provided through field assignments in the operating blocks. A trainer is assigned as liaison with the staff in each block and assumes responsibility for field activities for the participants.

Each of these examples of an organizational development orientation to training embodies the attempt to take care of the needs that actually arise in carrying out specific changes. This is achieved through planning in advance and flexibility in operation, and is painstaking, hard work. It delays the start of training and demands expensive staff time, not just once, but continuously. Onward work is necessary to keep abreast of developments and to pare to the minimum the numbers of participants and time requirements of training. But, as in construction, so in training, this type of investment pays. It is wise to build extra strength into a program initially, then pare down, rather than skimp at the outset. Once the program is under way, tighter specifications can greatly reduce the cost of mobilizing, advancing, and sustaining an organization in development.

High cost is not likely to be the main obstacle to the wider application of the organization-development orientation to training. Properly carried out, it is cheaper in terms of results than the present costs of haphazard training for which organizations find money. Two difficulties figure more prominently than costs. One that confronts all careful planning is the reluctance of many executives to commit themselves and their organizations to a definite course of action over a lengthy period. Uncertainties seem to loom too large, and estimates are not worth the paper on which they are written. Much of this hesitation cannot be logically justified. Vagueness clouds the fringes, not the massive core of calculations. Perhaps a more serious difficulty underlies this hesitation, namely, the threat that careful planning and action may unveil the loopholes guarded by senior executives. As a result of detailed studies of operations and requirements, strategic factors of resources become more widely known and discussed. Exclusive guardianship of information has often been an important tool for senior executives in sustaining their power or a company its competitive position.

The selection of an appropriate orientation depends on a number of factors. One is the training goals. Once the organization has clarified its training goals, quite possibly through consultation with a training system, it can settle on the orientation which promises best to gain them. For example, the goal of developing individuals with sufficient skills to be able to perform more effectively on their jobs cannot be accomplished by an academic orientation to training. For that goal an activity or personal development orientation is more appropriate. The activity orientation is appropriate when the job calls for limited skill and is not likely to change much in the near future. The personal development orientation is more appropriate if the job is complex and changing. When the main emphasis is on changes in the total organization, it is necessary to use the organizational development orientation.

Activity 3

Visit a nearby development department or organization which follows activity orientation strategy and discuss how they are imparting a particular skill through apprenticeship or internship. Write your observations.

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In this section you read about different training strategies to impart effective training programmes. Now, answer the questions in Check Your Progress 2.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: a) Write your answer in about 50 words.

b) Check your answer with possible answers given at the end of the unit

1) Name different training strategies

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2) What are the two basic assumptions about the activity orientation strategy?

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2.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we discussed about the approaches and strategies of training. Before initiating discussion on approaches and strategies, training dilemmas have been narrated. Then main approaches to training such as informative, participatory approach, experimental approach and performance based approach have been discussed. As far as strategies are concerned, the unit deals in detail, the various strategies such as academic strategy, laboratory strategy, activity strategy, action strategy, personal development strategy and organisational development strategy.

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2.7 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWER

Check Your Progress-1

- 1) Some important training dilemmas are theory versus practice, trainee versus task, structured versus unstructured, generic and specific.

- 2) The participatory approach is the most effective training approach to achieve the objectives of any training programme. In this method, trainees are actively involved in the process of teaching and learning. The trainers also learn from the trainees and the teaching-learning becomes a two-way process. The participatory approach empowers equally, the trainees and the trainer. The participatory method is considered a democratic way of training, where both the trainers as well as the trainees gain from the training.

Check Your Progress-2

- 1) The six strategies are: 1) the academic strategy; 2) the laboratory strategy; 3) the activity strategy, 4) The action - problem strategy, 5) The personal development strategy, and 6) The organizational development strategy.
- 2) The activity orientation strategy emphasizes practice of a particular skill and its primary objective is to improve individual performance on a specific job. There are two basic assumptions underlying the activity strategy. The first concerns the skill required by the organization, the ability to do the particular job, and to pick up the manner in which the surrounding organization operates. The second assumption is that production and training can be combined rather than working in isolation.

