UNIT 2 METHODOLOGIES FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Structure

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Self development is closely linked with an organisation's preparations to achieve its goals and its ability to respond to the changing situations. The success of a good staff development programme would depend on the choice of training methods to impart it. Usually organisations leave the choice of selecting training methods to a trainer or to a small team of trainers. What do we do in such situations? Generally, we opt for a method or a few methods which have been used earlier and proved to be effective. But the methods we would have found useful and effective in one context may not be so in another, simply because the trainee-clientele differs, among other things.

In theory, you can use any training method you choose to teach anybody anything. In practice, however, there are a whole range of criteria which should be applied to training methods before you can be sure of the right one. Selection of methods essentially depends upon factors such as cost involved, the nature of the content/subject matter, the learning styles of your trainees and the objectives of your institution/organisation. (Institution also contributes to the selection of method to a certain extent). We look at some of the training methods most regularly used, see what is involved in each, and identify the areas and situations where each is most likely to succeed.

Training, particularly the choice of training methods, is linked to our perception of 'change' and so we need to begin our discussion with a few reflections of the dynamics of change.

2.1 OBJECTIVES

In this unit, we have discussed the need for selecting the right training methods for the right purposes/situations. After going through this unit, you should be able to:

- explain how one should go about selecting right training methods to suit a particular context;
- explain the process of arriving at the correct decision concerning training methods; and
- criticise and evaluate the methods discussed in the context of your organisation/institution.

2.2 DYNAMICS OF CHANGE AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Change is inevitable in an organisation and change is a process. As such, it is always occurring in any institution either for maintaining the system's stability, or transforming it to move in new directions. Though both functions are needed, problems occur when people and organisations are either too stable or want to change too rapidly. For example, if organisations become too rigid and do not plan for change in relation to new markets and personnel, they soon begin to lose their efficiency.

The change process would show that there are certain assumptions on which staff development programmes are based. These assumptions have certain valid implications for the institutional arrangements for training. The assumption that change is a necessary process would imply that the goal of training is to influence the directions and rate of change. For example, if the old fashioned print-based correspondence courses and the institutions offering them have to adapt to the multimedia technology based open distance learning, then the aim of the training programme should be to remould the thinking of the policy makers, planners and the staff to recognise the need for it and persuade them to make such arrangements within the organisation as to implement the changes. When problems arise – and they are bound to arise – the training programmes intended to solve them should recognise the multiple causes behind them. In this case, the implications are to admit everyone's limitations, including those of the trainers and aim at a training which would encourage collaborative efforts and development of skills necessary to implement the new ideas. Some changes may result in paradoxical situations and the trainers should be frank enough to admit the consequences.

Change does occur or is brought in at two levels: within the existing structures (called first-order changes) and by changing the structures themselves (called second-other changes). An example of the first kind is to allow more autonomy to the existing departments of distance education and an example of the second kind is to set up new structures such as open universities within the system of distance education in a country. Depending on the kind of change intended, the goals, strategies and methods of staff development will vary.

When change is thought of as a process, it becomes apparent that problems within the system have multiple causes which mutually influence each other. Trainers may need to convince clients that seemingly opposite qualities are, in realty, compatible and integratable. Therefore, people and organisations do not have to choose between competition and cooperation, aggressiveness and passivity, anger and love, thinking and feeling. Rather, competency calls for an ability to use multiple characteristics depending on the situation and the people involved.

The point is that trainers need to assess which order of change is needed and wanted by a group, decide whether training can accomplish that change, and/or determine whether first-and second-order changes can be compatible. This will help decide on the choice of methods.

Finally, we should not be tempted to conclude that the first-order change is ineffective and the second-order change is always preferable-it is not consistently true. A series of first-order change often lead to second-order change, at which point new norms are incorporated into personal and professional relationships. The sequence of change is often necessary. Second-order change usually alters the power structures in relationship and institutions and, therefore, employees often resist, if proposed too soon.

There also are identifiable phases of change, recognition of which can help trainers diagnose problems and design their training programmes. The phases *are unfreezing, changing, and refreezing.*

Unfreezing connotes a readiness for change, for new information and skills. It necessitates the presence of some level of uncertainty, dissatisfaction, or aspiration which must be combined with a level of trust so that the fear produced by uncertainty opens rather than closes people to experimentation and new information. Unfreezing is the first essential phase in the overall change process. It requires moderate uncertainty and maximum trust to fulfil the requirements for productive change and effective systems.

The second phase of the change process is labeled **"changing"**, which is the actual assimilation of new information and the learning of new skills. At this point, we would like to suggest two general concepts for trainers to remember when planning for a change.

- *It is preferable that trainees attribute their learning to themselves, not to the trainer or the instructional activities.*
- *The probability of long-term changes is higher, if trainees understand the paradoxical process of change mentioned earlier and understand why people alter their attributes and behaviours.*

The third and final phase is **'refreezing',** i.e., the stabilizing of changes that may have occurred. Just as supporting and restraining forces are important to consider during training, they are just as important in the refreezing or reintegration phase. People return to back-home environments that contain forces (not present in the training context) which will affect the stability of change. Methods to help trainees re-enter their home environments involve

- Dealing with trainees' anticipated problems at the end of the training session.

- Helping them plan for building the mechanisms or channels through which their goals can be reached, such as support groups or institutional channels.
- Planning ways that trainees can publicly commit themselves to their goals.

The way in which change is conceived and planned for affects the substantive outcomes of training programmes and it is against this context that we should see the importance of choice of training methods. At this point, you may think of the situation in your own institution/system and try to relate the ideas discussed here to the kind of institutional changes you are thinking about.

2.3 FACTORS AFFECTING TRAINING METHODS

When we select a training method, we need to ask questions about that method. We need to know whether it is right for us – in our situation. Further, using training methods effectively requires a sound foundation of *learning principles and a learning model.* We shall first review the learning cycle by presenting a theoretical model that will help you appreciate the stages trainees go through and our role during each stage.

When we design a training programme, it is important to make our decision on which methods to use. And, this decision emanates from our understanding of how people learn. Learning cycle includes three stages:

- learning activity
- participants' (i.e., learners') response
- application

Let us discuss each of these stages here.

Initially, we involve trainees in some activity that we have selected from the many learning methods and experiences available. This activity might be relatively passive, such as reading or observing a demonstration, or very active such as solving a case or participating in a role play exercise. The purpose of learning activity may be to encourage **inductive learning** through reading or **deductive learning** through experience. In either case, the learning activity provides the basis for understanding a concept or performing a task or both.

Once this is over, we need to know the response of the trainees about the learning activity. This is a crucial part of the learning cycle because it encourages them.

i) *to identify the impact of what they have been exposed to,*

ii) *to analyse both feelings and information,*

iii) *to continue their focus on the experience or learning.*

Having done this, the trainees move to the stage of **application.** At this stage, they can begin to make generalisations, draw conclusions and transfer them to their everyday life. Learning now moves form the **abstract to the concrete.** At this point, a review of information, concepts and theory is appropriate because it serves to augment whatever else has been learned earlier. We can present the learning cycle diagrammatically as follows:

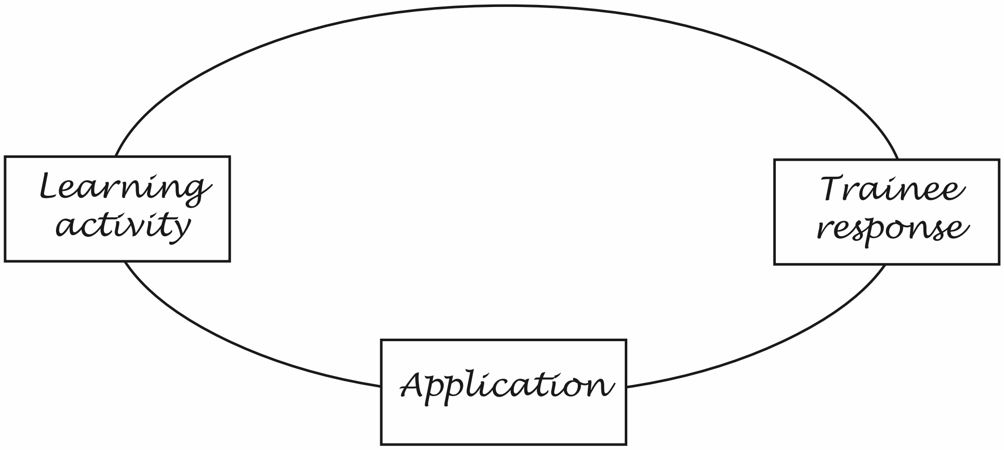

Fig. 2.1: Learning cycle

As trainers we should also know adult learning principles (andragogy) for better performance in a training context. What usually happens, perhaps inadvertently, in a training context is that we apply the principles of child learning (pedagogy) which perhaps we are familiar with. Often this backfires – the training imparted becomes ineffective and at times is resented. As the scope of this unit does not include a detailed discussion on the adult learning theories, we have presented here the salient features of adult learning (as contrasted to child-learning) in Table 2.1. This should suffice as far as our present purpose is concerned.

Table 2.1: Differences between Child-and Adult-Learning

Child	Adults
Relies on others to decide what is important to be learned.	Decide for themselves what is important to be learned.
Accepts the information being presented at face value.	Need to validate the information based on their beliefs and experiences
Expects that what they are learning will be useful in their future.	Expect that what they are learning will be useful for immediate purposes.
Has little prior experience to fall back on and so is less-biased.	Have much past experience to draw upon and so many have strong biases.
Has limited knowledge structure to be used as knowledge-resources.	Have significant ability to serve as a knowledgeable resource for facilitation and group members,
May have less active participation in the learning process.	Are mostly problem/issue-centred. May participate actively. Are mostly content-centered.
Learns (usually) in a teacher dominated environment.	Function best in a collaborative Environment.
Has no responsibility in planning (It is the teacher's responsibility	Share in planning.

Table 2.1 should give us an idea about the importance of deciding on appropriate methods for imparting training. Further, within this general framework of the principals of adult learning, we should also be able to identify the learning styles of individuals.

It is possible that you arrive at the perfect decision concerning your trainees and the content-areas (to be imparted) and yet you may be in a tricky situation. Your institution may not be inclined to resource the methods you have chosen. This common predicament – you have conceived an ideal solution, but you cannot deliver it – can be overcome/avoided if we adopt a methodical approach. Let us ask ourselves the following questions to shape our strategy:

- *What training skills and experience can we call on?* : In practical terms, we need to think at the very early stage of planning, the person who would deliver the training programme. (Some would object to this 'who' question because it is legitimately felt that it has the potential to switch the focus away form the trainee to the provider. It becomes all too easy to ask 'what we can give' and only 'what trainees need'. This being a valid claim we should be cautious and avoid falling into that trap. But the question 'who' in the present context remains valid. For example, we cannot entrust the task of simulation or role playing to a person who is not familiar with these methods).

- *How quickly/easily can we develop new resources? :* When we analyse a training context, we discover that the trainees are not happy with the programme. However, the training as scheduled will occur but it might not be as effective as possible. This situation – where we cannot cover what we have committed to – is a serious gap in our training. When we face 'gaps'/'limitations', we as trainers react differently, according to temperament, of course, but also according to the situation. For some of us, it is easy to develop the skills of the people. For others, the solution is, in the short term, to restrict the output of the training function in the light of available skills, but to press for a development budget at the earliest opportunity.

- *What should be the location? :* Suppose that you are working with an organisation which is spread across the country. The administration/ management can be complicated: the sheer amount of information concerning who is doing what, when and with whom can be overwhelming. In such situations, we need to ask a few fundamental questions:

  i) when the focus of the training is same, should identical training programmes be run on different sites?

  ii) is the training unit, if any, better split into autonomous units, relating to one policy-making nerve-centre?

  iii) is each site to become a 'centre of excellence' for one specific subject area?

The answers to these questions will influence our choice of training methods. For example, when we conduct identical training programmes on two or more sites, we must find a method which guarantees a high level of uniformity or consistency of message. When we choose centres of excellence, the one-to-one skills of subject experts may come to the fore. And, where training departments have a degree of autonomy, you, as a training coordinator may find yourself called upon to compare and contrast different methods and make recommendation.

Besides identifying all these training resources, we should also keep in mind the issue of time. Some methods, for example, take longer to implement than others. One can organise a *lecture* at fairly short notice, but we cannot commission a *video recording* and expect to see it on the screen the next day.

Perhaps the latter is a good method for 'reflectivity' but it takes time. Having touched upon the change-dynamics and training resources, now we need to talk about the expectations of an organisation/institution. Experience shows that there are two situations in which an organisation/institution influences our choice of training method:

- *preference*
- *specific objectives/certain methods and evaluation.*

What does 'preference' here mean?

There are many reasons why certain training styles develop and hold sway in an organisation for years. One, a very common one at that, is when senior colleagues recall their own training. Some may think, for example, 'chalk and talk' method is good enough because it has suited them. Obtaining a flipchart and pens is a major concession wrung from these people — so you must realize that flying in the face of intractable opposition is not always the best way. Instead, we recommended that you:

- Build up a reputation as a thoughtful, successful trainer before you attack any really ingrained myths and prejudices
- Persist in seeking the benefits of any new approaches, which means explaining; describing; getting trainees to give feedback and providing reliable evaluation data.

How do 'objectives' and 'specific evaluation' influence the choice of methods?

Your organisation will have established its own objectives. These will allow you to plan a logical learning sequence, starting with basic concepts and anticipate the types of learning necessary. You will have to make sure, in appropriate tests and assessment techniques that your organisation requires. The logical sequence of objectives provides an equally logical sequence and content, methods and assessment.

You can proceed further, after working out the exercise given below:

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Space is given below for your answer.

ii) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

List the training resources we have just been talking about.

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2.4 SOME TRAINING METHODS

The foremost criterion for deciding on a methodology for a training programme is to see how suitable it is for achieving the learning objectives of the programme (which are based on trainee needs). Here a choice must be made among several equally appropriate methods, after having considered, several factors: specificity of objectives; trainer experience; trainee experience; trainers' prior contacts; trainees' prior contacts; trainee homogeneity/heterogeneity, budget and time. Let us discuss some of the training methods here:

2.4.1 Presentation

In any training context, presentation is very important. Many training programmes fail in spite of rich information-inputs, mainly because of the way the inputs are presented. Whether the duration of our presentation is five or fifty minutes long, we need to prepare and present it properly. The crucial six steps that need to be paid attention to in the preparation for a presentation are

i) **Determining objectives for presentation:** Our answer to the following questions should help us determine our objectives for the presentation:

   - Who suggested that the presentation should be done-you/your superior/top management?
   - When and where will it happen?
   - Is your presentation a part of a larger design? If yes, what precedes or follows yours?
   - How much do you know about the topic?
   - Should the presentation be technical, theoretical or practical?
   - Why are you making this presentation?

ii) **Analysing the audience-profile:** This second step requires us to analyse the audience for whom the presentation is intended so that we can gear it to suit them. In order to analyse the clientele, we are to look into these questions:

   - How much do they already know about the topic?
   - What is their attitude towards the topic – hostile/approving?
   - Are they attending this presentation voluntarily or is it mandatory?
   - How open-minded are they–eager/neutral/resistant?
   - What presentation techniques might attract their attention?
   - What presentation techniques might get negative reactions from them?

iii) **Preparing a preliminary outline or plan:** Once we are clear about our audience, we need to prepare an outline of the presentation—obviously, basing it on everything we know so far about the participants. One can start with identifying topic sentences/main ideas and put them down one by one. We shall then arrange them in an order that suits the clientele. Topic sentences will provide clues for developing presentation-outlines.

iv) **Selecting/preparing visual aids:** For each of the main ideas identified, we may think of providing some visual aids. This would help present the matter more clearly. Depending on the resources both in terms of cost and expertise we can opt for one or a combination of a few of the following aids: videos/films/flip charts/ transparencies/handouts.

v) **Finalising the presentation outline with details:** Once the above steps have been considered, we are now ready for finalising the draft presentation. In finalising it, we should first make sure that our points are in a logical order. We should further identify places where we would like to present the visual aids. It is always a good idea to break the lengthy presentations into meaningful and manageable chunks for easy consumption. For this purpose, we can even indicate in the outline when we may be pausing for answering questions, etc. Spaced and controlled pauses facilitate interaction – individual and group.

This is not all. We should also plan well to introduce the presentation. You may consider the following choices:

- Direct statement of what will be presented and why it is important to your audience.
- Indirect opening using something that is of vital interest to your audience and would lead into your topic.
- Vivid example or comparison that leads into your topic.
- A useful quotation that relates to your topic.
- Important statistics.
- A story that illustrates the message in your presentation.

vi) **Practising:** It will be a rewardin experience if we can have a practice session. Supposing it is not available because of various reasons, we can practice standing before a mirror. Sometimes, it is also possible to find a willing colleague/partner who cares to sit through when you practise and give you feedback.

Finally, we should also plan in advance as to how we will summarise and close the presentation. It is important to restate the main ideas and end with a positive, direct appeal for action or vividly review the purpose of our presentation. Sometimes a final example, a question or a story works well.

2.4.2 Problem Analysis/Solving

The primary skills employed in problem analysis are using a sequenced problem-solving process and using creative thinking to generate ideas. Problem solving can include several steps:

- Identifying the basic goal(s) of the organisation.
- Identifying which forces in the situation obstruct and which aid in achieving that goal.
- Disentangling interrelated difficulties into distinct issues to be addressed.
- Identifying who is involved and what their points of view and vested interests are.
- Distinguishing what information is factual and what is being inferred by participants.
- Determining short-and long-range goals for relieving the problem situation.
- Determining a chronological sequence regarding what goals need to be pursued first and which can be postponed.
- Identifying alternative strategies for achieving the goals.

- Identifying criteria for selecting from among the alternative strategies. Projecting the possible consequences of employing each strategy.
- Developing an action plan that details what strategies will be used, who will do what, when, where, how, and so on.

The creative thinking process encourages trainees to expand the limits of approaches available to them beyond those immediately evident, to include new possibilities that they might not have used or thought of before. This process also can include several steps:

- Thinking very positively about the ideal outcomes they would like to achieve.
- Generating possible solutions without applying immediate criticism as to their viability.
- Building upon ideas thrown out by colleagues, combining worthwhile elements of ideas given, using conceptual breakthroughs in others' thinking to stimulate fresh approaches in their minds.
- Comparing the situation they are in to those in other contexts that are analogous to it.
- Continuing to generate unusual, far-fetched ideas even after an obviously useful one has been proposed, that is, to cutting off the listing of possibilities prematurely, while still operating within the scope of old ways of thinking.

Enhancing the use of skills like these can add depth and variety to trainees' ability to analyse effectively whatever problems they face.

What are problem analysis training methods?

The primary mode of developing ability in problem analysis is the case study, or variants of this form. This method teaches through concrete examples. It provides trainees with a stimulus that takes into account the ambiguous, multifaceted, complex nature of many management situations. They must respond to the case in a way that requires the skills of problem analysis, so they experience how to address in an effective way to any problem that might arise for them.

Every case study describes a situation containing a problem that cannot be solved in only one simple, obvious way. The problem is of a kind that could arise in many work settings. Hence, in considering how to respond to it, trainees gain insights into that kind of problem and into the process of problem solving in general.

What assignments make studies useful?

For trainees to gain the ability to use the skills of problem analysis, they must be asked to work on the cases presented to them in ways they would not ordinarily use – ways that direct them towards a deeper, more analytic examination of the case situation. There are several alternative methods by which learners can be asked to work this way with a case.

The first is most common. The trainees read the case, meet in small groups, and are asked to come up with answers to a few basic questions within a set time limit. To answer the questions, they must apply problem – analysis or creative-thinking skills to the case situation.

A second alternative is used in the **"syndicate"** approach to training. Trainees are presented with "briefs" describing in detail a specific case of a general area of the training-content. These are reviewed in groups of about 10 members each (a "syndicate"). Each breaks down the problem into specific assignments which are allotted to individuals or to small teams of syndicate members. They do their individual task and then prepare reports for the syndicate. Their findings are incorporated in a written report which is presented to a plenary session, where it is again discussed, together with reports from other syndicate groups.

Another, much more elaborate, variant on the case study is the action project. From the foregoing details, we can see that learning from cases can manifest in several ways:

i) written or oral reports to specific problem analysis questions.

ii) reports given to larger training groups.

iii) letters or a report to the sponsoring organisation itself.

iv) actually taking part in diagnosing, planning, and carrying out solutions to the problem posed by a host organisation.

Problem analysis, using primarily one of the many forms of case analysis described here will develop in trainees the ability to move from a narrow specialised perspective on work processes to one that encompasses many viewpoints and a long-range outlook.

2.4.3 Simulation

A simulation is a practice situation set up in a training programme which duplicates as closely as possible selected components of real-life work settings (and their inter-relationships) so that the trainees can experience making and carrying out choices involving those components. Simulations are called "games" and "structured exercises" in some contexts. They differ much from case-study work in that the situation is a fictious one, although analogous to actual work-contexts, and the trainees become actively involved in performing work functions during the process. They differ form role playing (which we will discuss the later)in that simulations usually *exaggerate reality, run for a much longer period of time, involve more complex interactions among people and yield learning outcomes that are less under the control of the trainer and based more upon trainees' own individual choices and inferences.*

Although research on simulation is scattered and skimpy, virtually all investigations, no matter what the simulation studied, agree that they are enjoyable, motivating, and involving. Thus, they provide a welcome break from more passive training methods and often are inserted for just this purpose, especially in lengthy sessions.

People who associate learning only with formal classroom activities see simulations as a frivolous waste of time and do not take them seriously. This tendency must be countered by stressing why a simulation is being used at the time it is being introduced to the training group and by debriefing the simulation in such a way that trainees understand how it relates to their lives. Although they are time-consuming as compared to other training methods, simulations can also compress a wide variety of work experiences, especially for positions which involve many responsibilities and many options, into a relatively short period of time compared to that needed for on-the-job training.

Furthermore, when the simulation ends, the participants can look back at what they did and evaluate their actions in the light of a variety of criteria.

A simulation can focus participants' attention on specifically selected dimensions of a work role, thus eliminating the distractions that arise in more comprehensive training methods or in real-life settings. Further, it can be used to expand participants' perspectives beyond the limited range of their previous positions or their own narrow, vested interests. Learning new options can evoke anxiety among trainees, but simulations provide an opportunity to sample new roles in a playful, relatively risk-free environment.

Simulations can sensitize participants to inner feelings and values in themselves and others of which they might otherwise remain ignorant.

How is a simulation created?

Packaged simulations may not be appropriate for many training solutions. Their cost, their length, their content, and so on, may render them unusable. If trainees still wish to include a simulated experience, they may have to create it themselves. This process often requires more effort than is called for in preparing most other training materials, but its rewards can make that extra time quite worthwhile.

The first step involves identifying the instructional objectives for the simulation. The next step is developing a scenario for the same. This includes a description of the work situation the players will be in, the roles they will play, and the pattern of interaction among them. The next stage is to develop the way the game will be played, the rules the players must follow and an accounting system for the game (which would include procedures for decision making by people in the key roles, methods of providing feedback on the quality of their decisions and ways for displaying the results of the scores based on the decisions made).

The final step in the process of creating a simulation is giving it a trail-run to determine its effectiveness and to make final modifications.

The overall approach described here for creating a simulation may yield very different specific game plans depending on the training situation in which the simulation is to be used. Creating one's own material provides maximum assurance that the exercise in that case will fit appropriately the time, people, and purpose for which it is intended.

Training programmes that provide stimulating, practical lectures and simulations enlarge the participants' repertoire of options, that is, what they are able to employ in dealing with situations they encounter back at workplace. They are more ready, therefore, to act in ways that are appropriate to the conditions or contingencies that exist. They are more informed, skillful and flexible than they had been before the training.

2.4.4 Role Playing

Role playing serves primarily as an *opportunity to rehearse or practice the kind of interaction that is likely to arise in the near future.* Thus, it usually is *briefer, simpler, and more realistic than a simulation.* Trainers also use it to achieve more concrete objectives, and they can plan, interrupt, or repeat a role play to steer it in the desired direction.

Role playing is often used to follow up a didactic message or a group discussion at the point where there must be a progression from *knowing to doing or from thinking and talking* about a process to using it. An enactment of a scene that could arise in a workplace, it can fill several functions. If some trainees are to watch others role-play, it can offer a model of exemplary behaviour to imitate, demonstrate errors to avoid, a reveal complications in a situation that the observer had not considered. If all the trainees participate in role playing simultaneously, it can offer them practice in using a method that is new to them, a chance to get feedback on how well they themselves handle a particular situation and an experience, the dynamics of which can then be analysed and discussed to develop deeper understanding and better skills.

There are several formats which fit under the general rubric of role playing. Each is somewhat more appropriate than the others for achieving specific kinds of learning objectives. We will consider the various types and relate each to the purpose for which it is best suited.

Role-playing sessions may be either structured or spontaneous. A structured session is planned in advance; the characters' roles may be written out and it usually is included to provide a demonstration or practice of a general procedure to be taught.

A spontaneous session includes elements proposed by the training participants themselves.

Role playing in a small group involves everyone simultaneously in the activity, allows for exploration of participants' social interest and provides the privacy needed for discussing issues in vulnerable areas. Since the trainer is not at hand, these sessions can perpetuate undesired methods or be dominated by one member of the group, hence, it is important to use them only after groundwork has been laid thoroughly – by covering recommended techniques, by providing explicit instructions about what the group members should do and possibly by appointing, an observer for each group, who regulates the process.

Finally, in some role playing cases, all information about the situation and the people involved is open and available to everyone; in other situations some data are covert, available only on the role description given to each of the players. Open enactments are useful for practising techniques to be used in a risk-free setting. Covert situations often are more — we often have to deal with people whose motives or goals are not immediately apparent. (This is often called a 'hidden agenda'). They force attention away from themselves and onto the other persons. What actually is on the players' minds emerges during the interaction. Role players enter covert situations feeling more wary, wanting to avoid misinterpreting the roles players and/or looking foolish. Hence, to minimize inhibition, the covert approach also should await the development of mutual respect among the trainees.

How is role-playing led?

Role playing requires that trainees try out a way of interaction which they have not used before. At the same time, they are doing something that seems closely related to acting or performing. Both factors are likely to produce some self-consciousness, awkwardness and even rejection of the activity itself. Role playing, therefore, must be introduced carefully. Enthusiasm of trainers who like and value role playing also is contagious and usually facilitates the use of the technique.

Its values as a training technique, as well as its specific purpose at the point it is being used, should be clearly explained. The players' anxiety can be relieved by stressing that it is not a performance, that learning can be drawn from errors as well as accuracy in following the recommended procedures and that attention should be focused on what they themselves are saying or feeling, not only how they look to others. The trainers also might demonstrate how to begin and carry out a scene. Participation of the trainer, if possible, proves to be a great help.

There should be a clear bridge between the role playing and what has occurred before the training and/or in the participants' work lives. In other words, they should see it as an extension of their prior learning (for example, a preceding lecture or case study) and as related to other real everyday needs. The latter connection is stronger, if they themselves propose the problem or the situation to be role played. These ideas can be gathered by surveying the group before the training begins for suggestions about situations they want to learn, how to handle them better, or by giving them a checklist of sample situations from which to choose at the session itself.

The next step is forming the group that is to do the role playing. Usually, this involves two parties: one person playing himself/herself and another playing the customer, subordinate, job applicant, or whomever the trainee must deal with. Often, a third person participates as an observer (or, if it is a public role play, all the members observe). It is best for people not to enact scenes with people they work with. Experimentation with new behaviours is best done with strangers. To mix a large group, the trainer should first calculate *what is one-third of the group's total number, then count people off in seating order form one to the one-third total,* starting over after that *until everyone has a number but only three people have the same number* and finally assign scattered *spots in the room for the three people with each number to rendezvous and carry out their role play.* If the group does not divide evenly into the desired group size, the odd person or two can be asked to volunteer to act as observers of the whole process and to comment, at the end of the session on differences noted among the groups as he/she wandered about the room. Random numbering is another way to select the groups.

How can structured role plays be created?

A role play can be prepared prior to a training session when you know what situations the trainees will be facing, when you know the problems you want them to overcome, and/or when you know the behaviours you want them to perform. The first step in doing so is to identify the typical or critical incidents they must be prepared to handle.

How can videotaping enhance role playing?

Role playing provides a chance to carry out an advocated or customary behaviour and to learn immediately and frankly how others react to it. With videotapes they can also see and hear for themselves what they come across. This opportunity is especially appropriate for those who fill a typically public role, whose outward appearance and demeanor are essential to their effectiveness.

2.4.5 Brainstorming

It is a group exercise in which everyone contributes facilitating a pool of ideas. Basically, it encourages lateral thinking because brainstorming does not lay any restriction on the nature/kind of ideas. The basic tenet of brainstorming is to go for **quantity:** generate as many ideas as possible without making any value judgements on them. This process does not allow any scope for reviewing or commenting.

Running a brainstorming session should entail:

- defining a problem or an issue as a simple question or statement,
- giving participants a couple of minutes to note down their private thoughts first,
- going to each person in turn, asking for one word or a short phrase; transcribing their exact words on a flipchart without comment,
- making it clear that anyone who cannot think of something is entitled to simply say 'pass' : minds quickly go blank if someone else has just made the point one wanted to make,
- keeping the process going until several people say 'pass' and then taking any remaining ideas from anyone.

If you need to have a follow-up activity, you may consider using a flipchart in some way so as to categorize ideas and/or prioritise points. One should be very careful in conducting a brainstorming session because it has advantages and disadvantages as well. The advantage of brainstorming is that it requires a high level of involvement from all trainees and provides an opportunity to 'speak one's mind' in a friendly environment. Further the activity gets everyone thinking about the whole subject and quickly. We can list the following as the disadvantages of the activity:

- drifting of the point and developing wrong points,
- uncritical processes, that may allow inappropriate ideas to get through,
- evading nuances and finer, more subtle points,
- loud and anarchic situations.

However, with proper supervision brainstorming can be made very fruitful and an active exercise which can motivate the trainees to participate, and provide new points and ideas about the issues being discussed.

2.4.6 Case Study

A case study is a story which documents a situation or event involving characters. It may be either a case illustration or a case problem. The former describes decisions made in a given situation. In this case, the trainees' task could be to constructively criticize the decisions or identify faults or mistakes. The latter poses the problem facing the characters. We may ask the trainees to analyse data, make their own decisions and come out with their defence. It should be clear that there need not be only one 'right' answer.

Obviously, we have not discussed all the methods of training. Our intention ways to give you some idea about the design of your training programme and touch upon a few training methods which may be more effective in many contexts than, for example, lecturing. However, we have also dealt with lecturing under the caption 'presentation' in order to highlight the point that even lecturing can be made effective, if it is planned and executed properly. In other words, *no single method is better than the other – each one is as useful as the other, provided the method suits the context and clientele.*

2.5 SELECTING APPROPRIATE METHODS

Despite what we have been discussing so far, it is still possible that we find ourselves in a dilemma. The indicators may not give us a clear signal one way or another. And the more methods/techniques we examine, the more likely it is that we are going to come across a certain proportion which could be delivered through one of the several training methods. How should we gear ourselves to a situation of this kind? How can we make sure that one method will be effective in the given context?

Whether the signals from our basic indicators focus on one method or more than one, eventually we are going to have a choice. Let us think about the choice. What are the best consequences, if it goes right?

We can, to a certain extent, envisage that the consequences of success will include

- meeting/exceeding the trainees' expectations
- developing individual careers
- empowering and motivating individuals to learn
- meeting individuals' goals
- improving the performance of the institution as a whole
- identifying plaudits (as revealed by the trainees)
- increasing the degree of confidence in the training function
- feeling of job security (by the trainees)
- making the institution/organisation to allocate more resources for subsequent training programmes.

Before you proceed further, work out the exercise given here.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Space is given below for your answer.

ii) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

What would be the worst consequences of the choice if it goes wrong? What might be the implications?

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....

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....

Development testing is the answer for our predicament of selecting the most appropriate method. This can be cost-effective, efficient, quick and can provide us with reliable information on which to base our final selection. The test must be planned and implemented as a project, because there is a sequence of actions to be gone through if we are to be sure that the developmental test itself is a success. A systematic and methodical approach entails the following:

Fixing time scales: If you are in a situation where you have to conduct a training programme in a week's time, and yet you are not sure which method(s) you are going to use, you are asking for trouble. (This situation is not uncommon!) If this is so, either you have mismanaged the selection process, or your organization does not have a clue about the purpose of training. (If the latter is the case, we need to educate the organisation about the nature of the training job and purpose of training). We have to ensure that there is sufficient time to developmentally test the methods we have tentatively selected to implement the training programme. Planning, therefore, is of paramount importance. Developmental testing should not be taken as an unwanted extra.

Choosing samples: We need samples of the methods or materials we want to test, the trainee-population and if possible, where applicable, the training team. Obviously, our samples should be representative because what we are attempting in sampling is to gain information about a small part of something which will enable us to build up a picture of the whole.

Carrying out the test: To ensure the cooperation of the sample population, we need to clearly tell them that we are engaged in a developmental test – if they don't know it already. The circumstances of the developmental test should mirror the real-life circumstances as nearly as possible. By way of trainee-feedback we can easily assess whether the method(s) could be improved and how; was/were too easy/hard/just right/relevant/appropriate and why?

Collecting the results: Once we complete the sample of the training, we should gather the feedback the trainees and trainers have been providing during the test. This will give us valuable information about the possible effectiveness of the method(s) used. This stage is crucial because this should guide us in selecting appropriate/relevant/method(s) for the future.

(In any case, evaluation of training is an on-going process and so it is likely that you will be constantly evaluating your training programmes. We shall discuss, at some length, about this area in section 2.6 of this unit).

Besides what we have discussed, **checklists** are a useful way of ensuring that all the necessary arrangements have been made prior to the start of training. Consider the following:

- Is the training room of sufficient size? Do you require additional rooms for group activities?
- What layout do you want, i.e., seating arrangement? Usually, we have U-shaped arrangement for training programmes. It allows the whole group to interact with one another and with the trainer.
- What training equipment will be needed during the training programme?
- Do you require an overhead projector (OHP)/audio/video equipment, etc.?
- Do you need a video camera (say, a camcorder) for purposes of 'reflective' activities? (see unit 2, block 2)
- Is there any need for special equipment (e.g. computer terminal and screen)?
- Have the participants been provided with stationery?

- Do you require name tags for delegates/participants?
- Does your training context require library books, etc., for purposes of reference?
- Have you made arrangements for keeping the training room clean with sufficient lighting, ventilation and temperature?
- Has the arrangement for refreshment been made during the training? (It is always good to find out individual preferences. Some may like to have tea, some, coffee and so on. There may be some who would prefer to have black tea/coffee with an extra spoon of sugar/without sugar.
- Have you decided what is to be provided for lunch? (Personal preferences come to figure here as well.)
- Have you ensured that the training room will be available to you? (It is possible that sometimes, some other meetings may have been planned in the very same room.)
- Are the toilets nearby?
- Have you talked to the security personnel – in case of security problems, say, fire, for example?
- Have the delegates/participants been sent programme-schedules, information brochures, theme papers, and details about the venue for the training programme (if the delegates/participants are form outside)?
- Have you thought of any social activities during/at the end of the training programme?
- Have you arranged for uninterrupted power supply?
- Have you identified attendants to assist you during the training?

One can add other items on to the list. For example, one can mention about the audio system (microphones), acoustics of the room, etc. What we have presented here are some of the arrangements/precautionary measures we should take before we actually start a training programme.

The following are some basic do's and don'ts for training sessions:

i) Do ensure that the trainees are made to feel at ease – the sooner you do this the better. (One can think of various 'icebreakers' here – though we have't discussed them in our units).

ii) Don't forget to advise the trainees/delegates of the administrative and facility arrangements, if the training is conducted in a place which is unfamiliar to them.

iii) Do make sure that you hold delegates' attention and are aware of those who have "switched off" (one should be very careful to communicate with the latter – in a subtle and sophisticated manner).

iv) Don't rush through presentations; take your time and consciously pause to allow the trainees to ask questions, allow time for them to reflect on the 'experience'.

v) Do check trainees' understanding of the information conveyed throughout.

vi) Don't allow interruptions to the training sessions from outside (as far as possible!)

vii) Do speak clearly and with clarity.

viii) Do use training equipment as an aid and not as a crutch.

ix) Do ensure that the trainees know what they should do as an immediate follow up to the training activity. (For example, preparing an action plan to implement what they have learned from the programme in the workplace.

x) Don't expect the action plan of the trainees to be long. It is better to get one thing implemented successfully rather than try to do too much at one go.

xi) Do ensure that the trainees leave enthusiastic and motivated.

xii) Don't fail to follow up and evaluate at a later date to see how much of the training has been transferred into the workplace.

2.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have talked about the relationship between training and the dynamics of change in an institution, the design of training programmes with particular reference to the selection of training methods and the evaluation of training. We have argued that no single method can be seen better or more effective than the other. The implication is that the efficacy of the methods primarily depends on the context in which we use them and the clientele for whom the training is intended. What proves to be an effective method in one situation need not necessarily be so in another context. Further we have said that this unit deals with only a few methods/ technologies which we feel are mostly underused (in relative terms) – the common and oft-repeated method being lecture-cum-discussion. In essence, we have said that selection of an appropriate and relevant method of training is of great significance to achieve the training-goals.

2.7 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

The training resources we have talked about are:

i) the expertise available (ii) the budget allocation iii) training location and (iv) the time factor

Check Your Progress 2

The consequences of failure would be exactly the opposite of those we have listed under 'success'. The implications in either case are that the stakes are high. There are a lot of people involved and they depend on our choice of methods and so it had better be right. We should make every possible effort to make sure it is right before we start.