
UNIT 11 LEARNING ENVIRONMENT OF PARTICIPATORY TRAINING

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11.0 INTRODUCTION

This Unit is about the phase of training when actual learning takes place during the training programme. Learning environment consists of a team of multidisciplinary participants. They bring with them different perspectives on their roles in the task of working with adults in different communities. Section 11.2 will familiarise you with the concepts and issues of group process in participatory training. Different forms of participation are highlighted in Section 11.3 describes. Section 11.4 discusses the role of leadership during the training period. You will learn about conflict resolution in the section 11.5 and about unconscious processes of groups in Section 11.6. In Section 11.7 we will explain the process of debriefing and consolidation.

11.1 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to:

- Understand the nature of ways in which learner groups perform;

- Discuss the nature of participation of adult learners;
- Critically examine the issue of leadership in the course of actual training;
- Analyse the concerns in conflict resolution; and
- Discuss group processes and deal with the processes of debriefing and consolidation.

11.2 LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

We need to know the ways in which groups perform while learning, and also the processes that facilitate participatory group learning.

11.2.1 Small Group Facilitation

One of the key components of participatory method is the emphasis on multi disciplinary teams of learners. By working as a group the team members can approach situations from different perspectives, carefully monitor each others' work and carry several tasks simultaneously. The trainer needs to know the ways in which groups perform.

When several people come to work together, they are not necessarily a productive team. Before people in the group function well together, they must pass through several stages.

Initially people come together, sometimes as strangers and as colleagues, to create a new group for some stated purpose. In this forming stage they are still a collection of people, each with their own agenda and expertise and with little shared experience. As they become familiar with one another they enter a stage of brainstorming, where personal values and principles are challenged, roles and responsibilities are taken, and group objectives of working together becomes more defined. As the individuals begin to understand their roles in relation to others, they establish a shared vision, develop a clear identity and group specific norms of behaviour. This is the stage of norm-building. As the norms have been established the group becomes ready to focus on output, they enter the stage of performing. It is in this stage that they begin to act as a team, willing to take significant risks and try out new ideas on their own.

Participatory training makes it imperative that learners work as part of a group. A small group is able to share experiences, provide feedback, pool ideas, and generate insights and analysis. It is basic to experiential learning. Learners may also plan collectively for change action. In a group, both content related and process related behaviour occurs. The content aspect relates to what group does. It includes key objectives, the learning agenda and the topics of learning. It is concerned with how the group achieves its objectives, how it moves through its agenda and how it communicates its content.

Insights into group processes are important in order to facilitate critical learning. In sub-section 11.2.2 you will learn about the group processes. Continuous monitoring of the processes helps the trainer to revise the pace of training, select methods, and many a time also logistics as well as physical setting.

11.2.2 Group Processes

Communication is an integral part of group processes. Similarly active participation is also a key element of group processes. Since participation is the essence of participatory training, you will learn about it in detail in Section 11.3. Here we will talk about the direction, mode and reception of communication.

Communication: Communication within a group deals with the spoken, unspoken, verbal, non-verbal explicit and implied messages that are conveyed, exchanged relating to information, ideas, values and feelings. To understand the various exchanges while they occur one has to consider various aspects of communication such as direction, mode and reception.

- a) **The direction of the communication:** It includes the following.
- i) **One-way and two-way communication:** One-way communication relates to a situation where one person conveys the message and the other passively receives it. Two-way communication implies a situation where not only do the two parties talk to each other but that they are listening to each other as well. It helps in clarification of doubts, confusions and misconceptions. Both parties understand each other well and give feedback to each other.
 - ii) **Communication networks:** By observing who talks to whom, one can understand the communication networks and the existing hierarchies between the group members. If we plot our observations, we may see the following patterns.

In the first two patterns communication is directed only at some specific group members, for example, towards a single authority. Communication flows through all possible channels in every direction in the third pattern. It is interesting to note that groups exhibiting any of these communication patterns differ situationally from each other in terms of efficiency of task performance, time taken for work and satisfaction of members with their roles in the group.

Communication can also take place horizontally. Those in inferior positions tend to talk up to the other person, demonstrating humility or submission. Those who assume a superior position tend to do the opposite. In a position of relative equality, as between good friends, communication can occur horizontally.

- b) **The mode of communication:** We are used to equating communication with conversation or through exchange of words. A great deal of what we express and understand does not get expressed through words. We also communicate non-verbally through gestures, expressions, changes in voice. In fact we communicate very little through words. Non-verbal expressions form a greater part of our communication. While non-verbal signals are translated unconsciously, we can make our communication effective by becoming aware of the non-verbal communication process; becoming conscious of the signals we are transmitting and ensure that our non-verbal expressions match our verbal pronouncements.

Communication in the non-verbal mode

- Using our bodies - through gestures, posture, facial expressions, eye movements.
- Using our voice - laugh, yawn, scream, whisper.
- Using our skin - touch, pat, push.
- Using distance - sitting close, standing very far, sitting on a higher seat, standing behind a table.
- Using clothes, hairstyles, perfumes, jewelleryes, accessories to make certain statements about ourselves.
- Using silence - convey a range of emotions as disapproval, shock, hurt, joy, togetherness.

Source: PRIA. 1998. *A Manual for Participatory Training Methodology in Development*, p.23. New Delhi: PRIA.

- c) **Reception of Communication:** Besides putting across our own ideas and points of view, it is also important to listen carefully to others. When people are talking to each other, it does not mean that they are also listening to each other. Listening is based on hearing and understanding what others say to us. It is only possible only when we pay attention to what is being said. There are certain guidelines for effective listening.

Guidelines for effective listening

- Concentrate on hearing-we think four times faster than the other person can speak, so our thoughts tend to stray.
- Listen with an open mind
- Pay attention and understand what is being said-listen beyond the words, understand the feelings, emotions, what is being implied. Be alert to non-verbal messages.
- Do not predict what the speaker is trying to say-do not jump to conclusions.
- Do not pretend to have understood when you have not. Clarify your doubts, and request the speaker to re-explain.
- Do not become defensive and do not argue or interrupt.
- To ensure that we are listening attentively we should from time to time restate, repeat and summarise what we think is being said.

It is helpful to understand barriers to effective communication at both personal and situational levels. There are barriers to effective communication.

Barriers to effective communication:

At the personal level

- Our values, opinions, prejudices and attitudes
- The tendency to speak or react before thinking

- Stereotyping people-making quick generalizations
- Use of words and phrases with personalised meanings
- Lack of trust

At the situational level

- Physical well being and mood of the individual
- Differences in the backgrounds and context of the learners
- Differences in the language spoken

Source: PRIA. 2002. *Participatory Training. A Book of Readings*. New Delhi. PRIA.

As a participant observer in a communication process you can do the following for analysis and promoting effective learning.

Select a 30 minute period of communication and note down answers as per the checklist given below and then analyze the direction and mode of communication in this example.

Checklist for observing communication

- Who talks? For how long? How often?
- Who talks to whom? To the group as a whole or to some people in the group?
- Who talks after whom? Is it encouraging or challenging?
- Who interrupts whom? Are some people interrupted all the time?
- Do the members listen to each other?
- What non-verbal messages are being conveyed?

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Space given below the question is for writing your answer.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit under "Answers to Check Your Progress".

1) i) What are the guidelines you should keep in mind for your effective listening?

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ii) What will be the focus of your observation and listening if you want to analyse the direction and mode of communication in group processes?

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11.3 PARTICIPATION

Participation is a fundamental process within a group. If members do not participate, the group ceases to exist. Mere physical presence and being vocal does not mean that participation has taken place. Levels and degrees of participation vary. Some members participate actively. They are talkative, demanding and volatile. Some, on the contrary, are withdrawn, quiet and passive but they listen very carefully. There are different factors that affect members' participation.

- Factors, which affect members' participation**
- The content and task of the group - is it interesting, important and relevant?
 - The physical atmosphere - is it physically, socially and psychologically comfortable?
 - The psychological atmosphere - is it accepting or non-threatening?
 - The level of interaction and discussion - is adequate information provided for everyone to understand? Is it at the level everyone understands?
 - Familiarities between group members - do members know each other from before?

Source: PRIA. 2002. *Participatory Training. A Book of Readings*. New Delhi: PRIA.

It is important to identify and tackle indifferent and uninvolved members who are there in a group but actually not there. They can potentially damage the group.

If you want to analyse participation of each member of the group in a session, you can do the following.

In order to observe nature of participation, select a particular session of group interaction among participants of an adult learning group at your adult learning centre and write down the answers as per the checklist given below and then analyse the quality of participation of each member of the group.

Checklist for observing participation

- How much talking is done by the leader? How much is done by others?
- To whom are questions usually addressed - the group as a whole or to particular members?
- Do members appear interested, bored, and self-conscious?
- Is formation of pairs and sub groupings taking place? Are they discussing issues other than those addressing the group task?
- Are quiet members encouraged to speak? If yes, who has encouraged them?

You can make out the nature of participation if group members participate democratically in decision-making processes of the group.

11.3.1 Decision-making

Decision-making within a group takes place in one or more of the following ways.

The plop: A decision is suggested by one individual, to which there is no response and the decision is adopted. ‘Plopping’ usually occurs in a new group, when a number of members have equal status, or when one member is overly aggressive

Self-authorised: The individual who assumes authority makes a decision. The others find it easier/ convenient to accept the decision than to reject it. The essential difference between this and the ‘plop’ is that the ‘plop’ is not tendered with authority but gets adopted by default, whereas in this case the decision is tendered with the assumption that it will be adopted.

Pairing: Two individuals joining forces make a decision. One floats the idea, other seconds it and the decision is made on behalf of the group.

Minority group: The clique makes the decision and the rest accept it.

Vote: The decision depends upon the number of people adhering to it. Vote may be taken by a show of hands or even by ballot.

Consensus: This is essentially a minimum consent by all. It is important to differentiate between a true and a false consensus. True consensus occurs when everyone has contributed to the discussion, all angles have been considered and everyone is in full agreement. This type of consensus, though desirable is not always possible. What can be aimed at is that everyone feels they have had the opportunity to put forth their views and influence the decision, it was a good and open discussion, and they are prepared to act on the decision taken.

Field Illustration of Decision-making

In development training for village water and sanitation committee members (fifteen in numbers) of Ramgarh village of Uttar Pradesh, the group was given a task of making a village sanitation plan. It was observed that the village Pradhan, representing the strong Rajput section of the village, took all the key decisions in the plan. Six more men of the Rajput community supported him in his decision. The suggestions of the five women in the committee were not given much significance. Nor were the dalit men given much of a role in the decision-making. Dissatisfaction and discomfort in the group were clearly evident.

Source: PRIA. 2002. *Participatory Training. A Book of Readings*. New Delhi: PRIA.

Hints for observing decision-making process

Select a session that you have in your adult learning centre. Observe the decision making as per the check list given below and analyse the nature of participation in the session. Write down the results of your analysis on a separate sheet of paper.

Check list for observing decision-making process

- Does anyone make contributions, which do not receive any kind of response or recognition? What effect does this have on the member?
- Does anyone make a decision and carry it out without checking with other group members? For example, she/he decides on the topic to be discussed and immediately begins to talk about it. What *effect* does this have on other group's members?
- Who supports other member's suggestions or decisions? Does this support result in the two members deciding the topic or activity for the group? How does this affect other group members?
- Is there any evidence of a majority pushing a decision through over other member's objections? Do they call for a vote?
- Is there any attempt to get all members to participate in a decision? What effect does this seem to have on the group?
- Is the decision made by consensus? Are differences fully explored? Is there unanimity or full agreement?

11.3.2 Problem-Solving

Most groups find themselves unable to solve a problem because they address it at a superficial level. After that they find themselves blocked because they cannot figure out why the problem occurred and how they can tackle it. For effective problemsolving they may pursue the following procedure.

Clearly define the problem: Collect additional information, from elsewhere if necessary, and analyse it to understand the problem further.

Look for solutions and the normal sequence of events. Sometimes it pays to deliberately think of 'wild ideas; which are apparently not relevant. The objective should be to generate as many ideas and suggestions as possible.

Choose the appropriate alternative. This will involve resolving some conflict. Collaborative and consensus based resolution is preferable rather than forcing a choice. Considerable discussion is needed to evaluate the various alternative solutions on the basis of constraints and available resources.

Implementing the solution through a plan, and evaluating how the problem is solved.

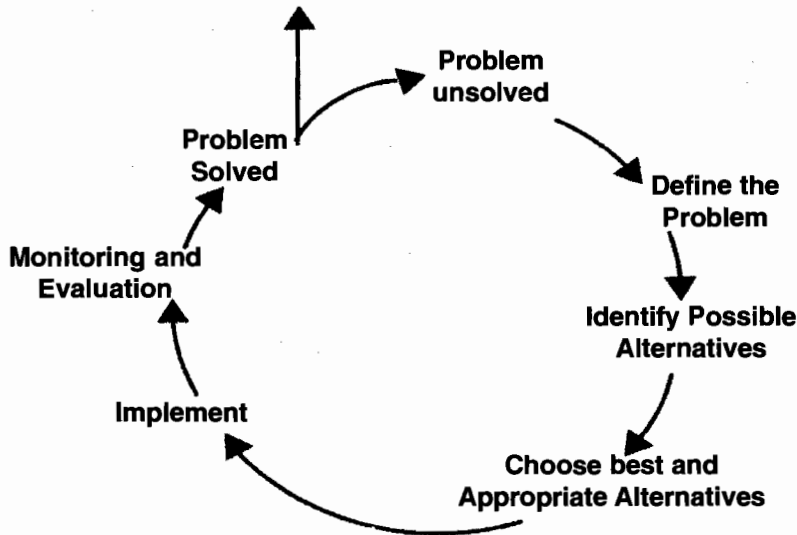


Figure 11.1: Steps in problem solving

Source: PRIA. 2002. *Participatory Training. A Book of Readings*. New Delhi: PRIA.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Space given below the question is for writing your answer.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit under “Answers to Check Your Progress”.

2) i) What are the factors that affect participation of members in a group decision-making process?

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ii) What are the different ways in which decision-making is done in a group?

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iii) What steps would you follow in solving a problem?

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11.4 LEADERSHIP

Leadership involves focussing the efforts of the people towards a common goal and to enable them to work together as one. In general, one individual is designated as the leader. This individual may be chosen from within or appointed from outside. In a small group, the leadership function (unlike the leader) is not static, but is performed by different members at different times. Thus one member may provide leadership with respect to achieving the goal while a different individual may be providing leadership in maintaining the group as a group. These roles can also switch and change. It is interesting to note how leadership is assumed, challenged, and changed in the course of a small group's life.

11.4.1 Leadership Styles

Leadership styles may be classified on the basis of the behaviour of the leader:

- **The Autocratic Leader:** who imposes his own will with very little concern for the members' needs, opinions and preferences. Such a leader has great concern for accomplishing the task but little or no concern for the members.
- **The Laissez-faire Leader:** who has little or no concern for the task at hand, but is concerned about the people, letting them act according to their own wishes.
- **The Democratic Leader:** who is concerned equally with the task and the people. In the ultimate democratic tradition, the leadership function is shared between members of the group.

11.4.2 Factors Affecting Leadership Behaviour

The same individual in different circumstances and/or with different groups may behave differently. In order to understand this we can consider the following factors affecting leadership behaviour.

- **Within the leader:** Is the leader convinced about sharing authority? Does she/he have confidence and trust in the rest of the group - a sense of security? What is her/his value system?
- **Within the group:** Are members willing to take responsibility? Are they mature and interested? How cohesive is the group? Can they act together? What is the degree and level of involvement? Is there a sense of autonomy or of dependence?

- **Within the situation:** Is there a time constraint? Is there a crisis? What is the nature of the problem the group is working on? What is the intrinsic nature of the organisation within which the group exists? What is the overall environment?

11.4.3 Role of the Leader

The leader must assume greater responsibility to be open, equal, accountable, humble, sensitive and committed. She/he must enable the group to identify and analyse issues of vital concern to the group, and as the group grows, share his/her leadership with other members.

- Raise the members' awareness and motivation
- Increase the readiness of members to accept responsibility
- Develop group work and group morale
- Convince the group that they can affect change
- Further individual members' needs for growth and development.

Field Illustration and Observing Leadership process

In a training workshop of trainers for Anganwadi women workers from ten Anganwadi centres from four districts of Himachal Pradesh, the facilitator observed that from the group of ten women workers, two women wielded high influence on the group, at different points of a group exercise. One took lead in initiating the task, ensuring that the group completes the task on hand, with less focus on the member's participation. The other worker's focus was on ensuring that each member got a chance to contribute to the group discussion and also complete the task. The task-oriented woman was knowledgeable about the task and did most of the talking, getting attention of most members of the group. The people oriented woman however spoke relatively less. There was no apparent conflict between the two women, reflecting an effective instance of shared leadership. The facilitator did not make any external intervention, as she observed the effective functioning of the group due to the perceived leadership of the two women.

Source: PRIA. 2002. *Participatory Training. A Book of Readings.* New Delhi: PRIA.

Hints for observing the pattern of leadership

Select a session that you have in your adult learning centre. Observe the pattern of leadership among the participants as per the check list given below:

- Which members are highly influential? That is, when they talk, do the others listen?
- Which members do not wield much influence?
- Do you see any rivalry in the group? Is there a struggle for leadership?
- Who are the members trying to assume leadership? Do they rely on coercion, expertise, formal authority, and personal qualities?
- How is the designated leader behaving? Is the style autocratic, democratic or laissez-faire?
- How are people reacting to the leadership?

11.5 CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Conflict is inevitable in the life of a group. When members with different experiences, attitudes and expectations come together in a group, differences are bound to arise. These differences are sometimes suppressed and not openly discussed. On occasion, the emotions behind the differences in the two parties make the expression of conflict quite intense and visible. The important thing to remember is that conflicts exist in all small groups.

The differences arising out of information, facts and knowledge are easy to resolve. Confusions about roles, co-ordination and responsibilities can also be sorted out in the group. The most difficult conflicts to resolve (they perhaps never get resolved) are those arising out-of differences in values. The most important thing that can be done in these situations is to understand the real causes for differences.

Why is conflict resolution seen as a process? Because conflicts do not go away, each conflict resolution also feeds into the next conflict in a group. It is, therefore, useful to see conflicts as a series of differences in a group, each with some link to the next. How the group deals with conflicts affects the manner of its functioning. There are different ways in which conflicts in a group can be possibly dealt with or resolved.

Ways to deal with conflicts in a group:

Avoiding: Withdraw from conflict situation, leave it to chance.

Smoothing: Cover up the differences and claim that things are fine.

Bargaining: Negotiate to arrive at a compromise, bargain for gains by both parties.

Forcing: Push a party to accept the decision made by some leader.

Problem Solving: Confront the differences and resolve them on a collaborative basis.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Space given below the question is for writing your answer.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit under "Answers to Check Your Progress".

3) i) How would you classify leadership styles?

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ii) What are the ways in which you can deal with conflicts in a group situation?

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11.6 THE UNCONSCIOUS PROCESSES OF GROUPS

The various processes mentioned do not provide information about how or why things happen the way they do. In order to understand this, one needs to consider some unconscious processes that occur within groups, or emotional undercurrents, that produce interfering or destructive behaviours.

Response to authority - From the moment we enter a group, we unconsciously try to relate to the authority figure in the group. Depending upon our individual experiences and reactions to authority in the past, the first response is either one of dependency, or of counter dependency.

- **Dependency** - Members look up to the authority to tell them what to do. They are lost without the authority figure and seek security from it.
- **Counter-dependency** - Members resent authority, their behaviour reflects hostility towards authority.

Emerging from these stages, what has to be achieved is a state of interdependence where members can relate with each other reciprocally.

Fight, flight and pairing - Working cohesively in a group is not a natural function. The unconscious response to being in a group is to fight, to flee, or to pair up. Various behaviours within the group provide clues to these unconscious processes:

- **Fight** - Disagreeing, asserting dominance, attacking whatever is believed to be responsible for stress, trying to get one's own way.
- **Flight** - staying out of discussion, daydreaming, changing the topic of discussion, making irrelevant remarks, and cracking jokes continuously.
- **Pairing** - forming dyads, triads or subgroups that are not task oriented, in which members protect and support one another.

In order to function cohesively and work towards the goal these unconscious processes must be resolved. They have to be recognised, not ignored or denied. Once these processes are identified, the group needs to work with them so that emotional energies are channelled towards the group's effort.

11.6.1 Role of Group Members

A variety of behaviours are seen in-group-members.

Task role behaviour: Some group members many tend to be 'all business', they try to set task objectives, they process information necessary for the task and they push for completion of the group assignment. Behaviour of this type is often referred to as task-oriented role behaviour.

- *Initiator:* S/he takes the lead in making suggestions about new goals and procedures of operation. S/he defines the constraints of the problem and is instrumental in seeing that the group makes progress in accomplishing its task.
- *Information processor:* This individual seeks and gives information and checks the accuracy of the information available. S/he seeks the opinions and values of group members so that they may be incorporated into the task processes.
- *Summarizer:* S/he helps the group in its task by processing information into more compact forms. This may be done by restating and summarizing the group's information into forms, which may be more meaningful to the group. S/he helps by clarifying and elaborating on the thoughts of the groups. S/he helps to orient the group with respect to its goals.
- *Evaluator:* S/he subjects the output of the group to tests such as practicality, logic and morality. S/he tests to ensure that the output meets the objectives and purpose of the group.

Maintenance role behaviour: Some behaviour is directed towards maintaining group harmony and cohesiveness; encouragement is given, communications are fostered and conflicts are mediated. This is referred to as maintenance role behaviour. This behaviour maintains the vitality and functioning of the group, whereas task-orientation behaviour is focused on the solution of the problem or achievement of the task established for the group.

- *Encourager:* S/he acts to elicit the contributions of others by agreeing with others and accepting their ideas. S/he tries to promote group involvement through praise of their work and acceptance of others' ideas.
- *Harmoniser:* S/he leads in the efforts to reconcile differences of opinion and to settle conflicts. S/he acts to relieve tensions when conflict arises.
- *Compromiser:* When involved in a conflict s/he often offers compromises by yielding on her/his position in order to maintain group harmony.
- *Gatekeeper-expediter:* S/he acts to facilitate communication. Her/His behaviour is designed to elicit or deny participation to members. S/he helps to reduce tension and conflict by directing communication into safe channels.

Individual behaviour: Individual behaviour is not oriented toward any group function but is directed toward the resolution of a person's own needs. This is

different from the other behaviours discussed above, in that it is not relevant to the functioning of the group, while the others are relevant. Gross differences between individuals in a group or individuals not identifying with the task can often lead to a pattern of individual behaviour which is detrimental to group work. The differences could be on the basis of temperament, attributes, values, background and so on and the behaviour exhibited includes:

- *The aggressor* - deflates the status of others and expresses disapproval, attacks the group;
- *The blocker* - tends to be negativistic and stubbornly resistant;
- *Recognition seeker* - calls attention to him/herself, through boasting, acting in unusual ways;
- *The dominator* - tries to assert authority and superiority by manipulating the group members;
- *Help seeker* - attempts to gather sympathy from other group members;
- *Self confessor* - uses the group opportunity to express personal, non-group oriented feelings and ideas;
- *Playboy* - displays lack of involvement in the group processes by being cynical, nonchalant; and
- *Self-interest pleader* - speaks for grassroots, “marginalised” to cover his/her own prejudices in the stereotypes which best fits his/her present needs.

11.6.2 Facilitation of a Group

A group cannot function effectively on its own initiative, it needs to be facilitated. Facilitation can be described as a conscious process of assisting a group to successfully achieve its task while functioning as a group. Facilitation can be performed by members themselves, or with the help of an outsider. In order to facilitate, it is important to understand fully the areas that need to be facilitated.

Facilitation may be required for:

- Effective performance of the task and maintenance functions;
- Processes like participation, communication, decision making and leadership;
- Effective resolution of issues like inclusion, influence and intimacy, smooth transition of the group from one stage to another; and
- Accomplishment of the task.

To facilitate effectively the facilitator needs to:

- Understand what is happening within the group; and
- Be aware of his/her personality and how s/he comes across, and, the know-how to facilitate.

Diagnosing a Group: The process of finding out what is going on in a group may be called diagnosing. It is an essential skill of a facilitator. S/he can help solve the problem only if s/he is able to diagnose what it is that is going wrong. Diagnosis involves understanding the causes, including influential factors, that may exist outside the group (e. g. history of past relationship between members).

Examples of problems and their causes

Problem: Everyone does not participate or show an interest, few remain silent.

Possible causes may be:

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

Problem: Subgroups occur within the group and they get involved in their own conflicts.

Possible causes: Existence of different value systems that become more important than the task of the group. Existence of differences/ conflicts between individuals that existed prior to the formation of the group.

An Appropriate Intervention: Having diagnosed the possible causes of the problem, the facilitator needs to decide upon how s/he will help the group go forward. This conscious act is called facilitating. Simple methods of facilitating include:

- Encouraging;
- Bringing the conversation to the point;
- Mediating and peacekeeping;
- Maintaining order; and
- Requesting.

But then in some cases, these alone are not enough. It is then that the facilitator needs to look deeper and understand clearly the unconscious processes and the levels of awareness within the members of the group, and of the group as a whole. Depending upon the facilitator's grasp of the situation, different styles of facilitation can be used.

Some Essential Skills of Facilitator

In order to facilitate the learning process the facilitator needs some basic skills:

Listening: the ability to listen carefully and creatively; picking out positive aspects and problems, difficulties and tensions.

Observation: the ability to see what is happening; to understand nonverbal clues, to monitor the group's work objectively.

Sensitivity/empathy: the ability to pick up implicit messages; to see problems through the eyes of the members; to understand their feelings, ideas and values, to focus on structures and roles rather than personalities or competence.

Diagnosing: the ability to define the problem, to synthesize diverse data and form a working hypothesis to choose intervention and action.

Supporting/encouraging: the ability to provide verbal and non-verbal indicators of encouragement, affirmation, appreciation and caring - to assist in a joint search for solutions.

Challenging: the ability to confront, to disagree, and stop a process without being rude.

Openness: the ability to invite dialogue, to receive feedback, and to be prepared to examine one's own attitudes values and ideas and to change if necessary.

Modelling: the ability to include oneself as a model in the group, responding spontaneously, without being idealistic, or posing as an expert.

Source: PRIA. 2002. *Participatory Training. A Book of Readings*. New Delhi: PRIA.

11.7 DEBRIEFING AND CONSOLIDATION

Debriefing and consolidation following an experiential learning situation are very necessary. 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.

The trainer follows a broad theoretical framework related to the learning objectives and the content area. It forms the basis for debriefing and analysis. The objective is to put the debriefed information into this theoretical framework after analysis and additional information. It is essential that it be situated in/related to real life.

- Debriefing consists of eliciting from the learner or learner-group their feelings, emotions, experiences and whatever else the trainer might feel is necessary.
- The debriefed information must be noted down publicly (published).
- The trainer must provoke analysis on the information presented, enabling the derivation of broad principles (processing).
- The debriefed information needs to be put into a real life context, so that people can relate to it in a broader framework (generalising).
- Wherever necessary the trainer must provide additional information for the learners to arrive at the broad principles (generalising).
- The debriefed information needs to be put into a real life context, so that people can relate to it in a broader framework (application).

As a trainer it is important to note that one must complete the debriefing cycle in all the structured experience methods. An outline of steps involved in debriefing is provided.

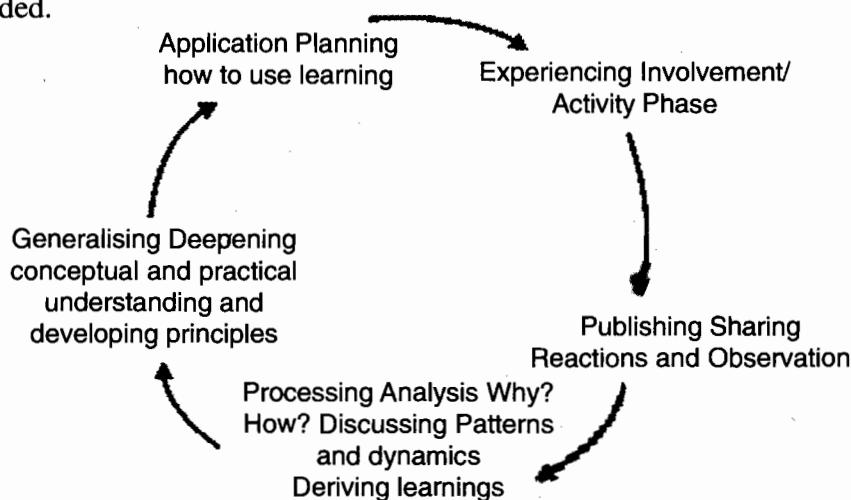


Figure 11.2: Steps in debriefing

Hints for carrying out a debriefing exercise

Select any last session of the workshop in your adult learning centre and as per the following scheme of questioning, carry out a debriefing exercise

A Scheme for questioning

- What did you see? How did you feel? What did you say during discussions?
- These questions help in bringing out the participants' perceptions and experiences. The information gathered is noted down on the black board or on chart paper.
- Why did you feel the way you did? What did you say? What did you do 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 relate the experience to reality and try to draw parallels with real life.
- Why do you think this happens?
- This is an attempt to analyze and derive principles and conclusions, which form the core of the new learning. It may be necessary at this point to provide additional information.

Source: PRIA. 2002. *Participatory Training. A Book of Readings*. New Delhi: PRIA.

11.7.1 Important Considerations While Conducting Training

Even where a high quality design has been prepared, all physical arrangements have been made, learning materials readied, the real challenge in promoting learning comes during the training itself. In conducting training expertise in the subject-matter is important. It is very necessary to make sure that the trainers along with all the resource persons deal with the subject matter well. This is, of course, conventional wisdom too. In most conventional training programmes, the trainers are experts in the given subject and bring a depth of knowledge to the learners. But beyond the expertise in the subject matter, there are several other significant considerations while conducting training within the framework of participatory training methodology.

Conducive learning environment: The first consideration relates to creating a conducive learning environment. Participants often come to a training programme with fears, doubts, expectations and confusion. Some are informed about the purpose and programme of the training, and some are not, some have been forcibly sent, some have come because they thought that the programme would be useful to them. As a result, the first task in a training programme is to prepare participants to become learners.

Energy level of participants: Participants should be excited about learning. They need to be encouraged to become active learners. Energy levels may be stimulated through a variety of interventions, change of pace and methods, through some energizers (like songs, physical exercises, etc.).

Psychological comfort and safety: Another important aspect of the learning environment is a sense of psychological comfort and safety. Adults learn when they find that they have a reasonably comfortable learning environment. This is particularly relevant when the new information and learning challenges one's deep seated attitude, emotions and values; a change of behaviour, skills, and readjustment may be required.

Psychological safety can be significantly enhanced by promoting mutual co-operation and trust within the group, by building a level of rapport and confidence between learners and trainers and by ensuring risk taking by participants where mistakes may be committed in the process of learning (without fear of penalty).

Building self-esteem: Learning is influenced by a variety of emotions. It can be fun, pleasurable, exciting; it can be painful, or create fear and doubts. The self-esteem of learners has a tremendous impact on how they learn. When learners have low self-esteem, they do not feel confident about their ability to learn and to speak out. A learning environment can contribute to the enhancement of their self-esteem, in ways that they can pursue learning.

Homogenous and heterogeneous groups: There is no learning group where all the individual learners are alike. In fact even where strict criteria and screening procedures have been used for selection of learners for the training programme, individuals differ in their style of learning, pace of learning, their self-esteem, etc. This heterogeneity can both be a constraint as well as a resource within the learning group. It is important to recognize and understand this heterogeneity in order to facilitate individual or group learning.

11.7.2 Trainer's Role and Behaviour

In participatory training methodology, a distinction has been made between a facilitator and a subject matter expert. A subject matter expert is the trainer who provides knowledge, concepts and builds skills on the subject matter at hand. The role of the facilitator of the learning process is very different. This role needs special preparation and is a major challenge in participatory training. Interventions aimed at strengthening the learning environment, monitoring the learning process, adapting the pace and depth of coverage, etc. all require skilful facilitation. Therefore, one of the first challenges of conducting a successful training program is preparation of the trainers to be facilitators.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Space given below the question is for writing your answer.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit under "Answers to Check Your Progress".

4) i) Write in brief about variety of behaviours seen in groups.

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ii) What are the essential skills that a facilitator in a group is required to possess?

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iii) In addition to the trainer's role, behaviour and the expertise in the subject matter, what are the other significant considerations that determine the framework of participatory training methodology?

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11.8 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have described the learning environment of participatory training. Learning environment has a team of multidisciplinary participants. They bring with them different perspectives on their roles in the task of working with adults in different communities. We learnt about the nature of participation in participatory training. We discussed the role of leadership during the training period. We learnt about conflict resolution and group processes. Finally we learnt about the process of debriefing and consolidation.

11.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1) i) Following are the guidelines I would keep in mind for my effective listening in a group process.

- Concentrate on hearing - we think four times faster than the other person can speak, so our thoughts tend to stray.
- Listen with an open mind.
- Pay attention and understand what is being said - listen beyond the words, understand the feelings, emotions, what is being implied. Be alert to non-verbal messages.

- Do not predict what the speaker is trying to say - do not jump to conclusions.
 - Do not pretend to have understood when you have not. Clarify your doubts, and request the speaker to re-explain.
 - Do not become defensive and do not argue or interrupt.
 - To ensure that we are listening attentively we should from time to time restate, repeat and summarise what we think is being said.
- ii) If I have to analyse the direction and mode of communication in a group process, I need to pay attention to different people and the processes involved in the group. Basically the focus of my listening and observation will be on the following, as they would help me to analyse the direction and mode of communication in a group.
- Who talks? For how long? How often?
 - Who talks to whom - To the group as a whole or to some people in the group?
 - Who talks after whom? Is it encouraging or challenging?
 - Who interrupts whom? Are some people interrupted all the time?
 - Do the members listen to each other?
 - What non-verbal messages are being conveyed?
- 2) i) There are various factors that affect participation of members in a group decision-making process. The important of these factors are:
- The content and task of the group - is it interesting, important and relevant?
 - The physical atmosphere - is it physically, socially and psychologically comfortable?
 - The psychological atmosphere - is it accepting or non-threatening?
 - The level of interaction and discussion - is adequate information provided for everyone to understand? Is it at the level everyone understands?
 - Familiarities between group members - do members know each other from before?
- ii) In a group decision-making is done in different ways. In majority of the situations decision-making in a group happens in one or more of the ways given below:
- The plop:** A decision is suggested by one individual, to which there is no response and the decision is adopted. 'Plopping' usually occurs in a new groups, when a number of members have equal status, or when one member is overly aggressive.
- Self-authorized:** The individual who assumes authority makes a decision. The others find it easier/ convenient to accept the decision than to reject it. The essential difference between this and the 'plop' is that the 'plop' is not tendered with authority but gets adopted by default, whereas in this case the decision is tendered with the assumption that it will be adopted.
- Pairing:** Two individuals joining forces make a decision. One floats the idea, other seconds it and the decision is made on behalf of the group.

Minority group: The clique makes the decision and the rest accept it.

Consensus: This is essentially a **minimum** consent by all. It is important to differentiate between a true and a false consensus. True consensus occurs when everyone has contributed to the discussion, all angles have been considered and everyone is in full agreement. This type of consensus, though desirable is not always possible. What can be aimed at is that everyone feels they have had the opportunity to put forth their views and influence the decision, it was a good and open discussion, and they are prepared to act on the decision taken.

Vote: The decision depends upon the number of people adhering to it. Vote may be taken by a show of hand or even by ballot. This is followed when other ways fail in decision making.

iii) Problem-solving is a vague process. One needs to follow definite steps to solve a problem. I will follow the following broad steps in solving a problem:

Firstly, I will clearly define the problem.

Secondly, I will look for different solutions that may have any relevance to the problem.

Thirdly, I will evaluate the various alternative solutions on the basis of constraints and available resources and choose the most appropriate one from the available alternatives.

Finally, I will implement the solution through a plan, and evaluate it to assess how best the problem is solved by it.

3) i) Leadership styles may be classified on the basis of the behaviour of the leader:

The Autocratic Leader: who imposes his own will with very little concern for the members' needs opinions and preferences. Such a leader has great concern for **accomplishing** the task but little or no concern for the members.

The Laissez-faire Leader: who has little or no concern for the task at hand, but is concerned about the people, letting them act according to their own wishes.

The Democratic Leader: who is concerned equally with the task and the people. In the ultimate democratic tradition, the leadership function is shared between members of the group.

ii) I will follow one or more of the following ways to deal with conflicts in a group:

Avoiding: Withdraw from conflict situation, leave it to chance.

Smoothing: Cover up the differences and claim that things are fine.

Bargaining: Negotiate to arrive at a compromise, bargain for gains by both parties.

Forcing: Push a party to accept the decision made by some leader.

Problem Solving: Confront the differences and resolve them on a collaborative basis.

- 4) i) The variety of behaviours that can be seen in groups can be summed up as follows:
- a) **Task role behaviour:** Behaviour of this type is often referred to as task-oriented role behaviour which may be performed as *initiator, information processor, summarizer, and evaluator*.
 - b) **Maintenance role behaviour:** This behaviour is directed towards maintaining group harmony and cohesiveness in which encouragement is given, communications are fostered and conflicts are mediated. This behaviour is performed as *encourager, harmoniser, compromiser, gatekeeper-expediter*.
 - c) **Individual behaviour:** This behaviour is not oriented toward any group function and the behaviour exhibited includes the forms like *the aggressor, the blocker, recognition seeker, the dominator, help seeker, self confessor, playboy, self-interest pleader*
- ii) To facilitate the learning process the facilitator needs some basic skills which include *listening, observation, sensitivity/empathy, diagnosing, supporting or encouraging, challenging, openness and modelling*.
- iii) In addition to the trainer's role, behaviour and the expertise in the subject matter, the other significant considerations that determine the framework of participatory training methodology are: *conducive learning environment, energy level of participants, psychological comfort and safety, building self-esteem, and homogenous and heterogeneous groups*.

11.10 REFERENCES

- PRIA. 1998. *A Manual for Participatory Training Methodology in Development*. New Delhi: PRIA. P.23.
- PRIA. 2002. *Participatory Training. A Book of Readings*. New Delhi: PRIA.