

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT OF PARTICIPATORY TRAINING

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Structure

- 11.1 Introduction
- 11.2 Learning Environment
 - 11.2.1 Small Group Facilitation
 - 11.2.2 Group Processes
- 11.3 Participation
 - 11.3.1 Decision-making
 - 11.3.2 Problem-solving
- 11.4 Leadership
 - 11.4.1 Leadership Styles
 - 11.4.2 Factors Affecting Leadership Behavior
 - 11.4.3 Role of the Leader
- 11.5 Conflict Resolution
- 11.6 The Unconscious Processes of Groups
 - 11.6.1 Role of Group Members
 - 11.6.2 Facilitating a Group
- 11.7 Debriefing and Consolidation
 - 11.7.1 Important Considerations while Conducting Training
 - 11.7.2 Trainer's Role and Behavior
- 11.8 Conclusion
- 11.9 Apply What You Have Learnt

Learning Objectives

It is expected that after reading Unit 11, you will be able to

- ❖ Understand the nature of the 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
- ❖ Analyze the concerns in conflict resolution
- ❖ Discuss group processes and deal with processes of debriefing and consolidation.

11.1 Introduction

Unit 11 is about the phase of training when actual learning takes place during the training program. Learning

environment has teams of multi disciplinary participants. They bring with them different perspectives on their

roles in the tasks of working with adults in different communities. Section 11.3 is about the key factor of nature of participation of those taking part in participatory training. Section 11.4 discusses the role of leadership during the training period. You will learn about conflict resolution in Section 11.5 and about group processes in Section 11.6.

Finally Unit 11 provides the important inputs of debriefing and consolidation of what has been done during the training.

Hope that the contents of Unit 11 will help you discover the ways of conducting efficiently the adult learning programs at your adult learning setup.

11.2 Learning Environment

All adult learning setups endeavor to create such learning environments as provide free and fair scope of participation in learning processes. We will discuss the key issues involved in making the learning environment participant friendly and something to enjoy and benefit from. In sub-section 11.2.1 we will discuss the nature of small group facilitation and in sub-section 11.2.2 we will talk about group processes.

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 a 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 initial stage of group formation

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 brain-storming, where personal values and principles are challenged, roles and responsibilities are taken, and group objectives of working together become 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 behavior. This is the stage of norms-building. As the norms establish the group becomes ready to focus on output, they enter the stage of performing. It is in this stage the group members begin to act as a team, willing to take significant risks and try out new ideas on their own.

Participatory training makes imperative that learners work as part of a group. A small group is able to share experiences, provide feedback, pool ideas, generate insights and analysis. It is basic to experiential learning. Learners may also plan collectively for action to bring about change in their existing conditions. In group both content related and process related behaviour occur. The content aspect relates to what group does. It includes key objectives, the learning agenda and the topics of learning. The

process aspect is related to how the group is functioning. 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 is 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 the methods and many a times 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 actually 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

(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 communication networks one can understand 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 according to situations 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 the 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 occur expressed through words. We also communicate non-verbally through gestures, expressions, changes in voice.

In fact we communicate very less 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 (see Box 11.1).

Box 11.1 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 statement about ourselves.
- ❖ Using silence- convey a range of emotions as disapproval, shock, hurt, joy, togetherness(Source: PRIA. 1998: 23)

c) Reception of Communication

Besides putting across our own ideas and points of view, it is also important to listen carefully to others and thus receive their communication. When people are talking to each other 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 possible only when we pay attention to what is being said. For guidelines for effective listening see Box 11.2.

Box 11.2 Guidelines for Effective Listening

- ❖ Concentrate on hearing-we think 4 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 summarize what we think is being said.

It is helpful to understand barriers to effective communication at both

personal and situational levels. For this please see Box 11.3.

Box 11.3 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 generalizing·
- ❖ 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) is the publication 2002 or 2005 because in other place the same is shown as 2005, please clarify

Activity 11.1

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?

After discussing communication aspect, let us now focus on the element of

participation as an important aspect of group processes.

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. See Box 11.4 for the factors that affect members' participation.

Box 11.4: Factors that 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 is provided for everyone to understand? Is it at the level everyone understands?
- ❖ Familiarities between group members- do members know each other previously?(Source: PRIA 2002)

It is important to identify and tackle indifferent and uninvolved members who are there in a group but actually

are not interested in the activities of the group.¹ They can potentially damage the group.

Activity 11.2

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

Checklist for observing participation

- ❖ How much talking is done by the leader or leaders? How much is done by other participants?
- ❖ To whom are questions usually addressed? Are the questions addresses to the group as a whole or to particular members?
- ❖ Do members appear interested or bored or self-conscious and therefore keeping aloof?
- ❖ Is formation of pairs and sub groupings taking place? Are the participants 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 the decision is adopted. 'Plopping' usually occurs in new groups, when some

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.

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.

Consensus: This is essentially a kind of 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 decision, it was a good and open discussion, they are prepared to act on the decision taken.

Activity 11.3

Select a session that you have with the adult learning group at your setup and first observe the decision-making process as per the checklist given below and then analyze the participatory nature of participation in the session. Write down the results of your analysis on a separate sheet of paper.

Checklist 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?

For a case-study of decision-making during the course of training, see Box 11.5 and

you will find that you can easily identify the role of facilitator in that situation.

Box 11.5 Field Illustration of Decision-making

In development training for village water and sanitation committee members (fifteen in number) 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 role in the decision-making. Dissatisfaction and discomfort in the group were clearly evident.

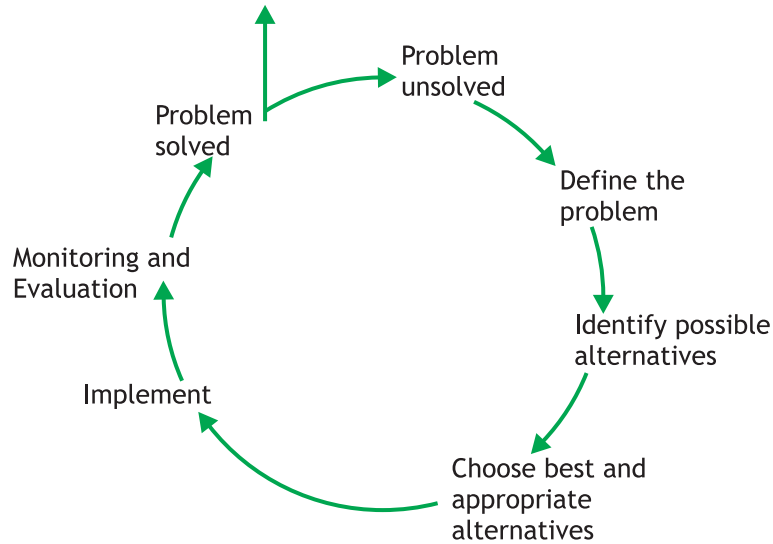


Figure 11.1 Implementing the Solution

Let us now discuss the situation when a group needs to solve a problem and observe how problem-solving takes place as a group-process.

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 an effective problem solving they may pursue the following procedure.

Clearly define the problem: Collect additional information, from elsewhere if necessary, and analyze 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 (see Figure 11.1). You will find more workable if you implement the solution on the basis of a plan and then evaluate the solution.

11.4 Leadership

Leadership involves focusing 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 behavior of the leader.

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

The Laissez-faire Leader: This kind of leader 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: This type of has equal concern with the task and the people. In the ultimate democratic tradition, all members of the group share function of the leadership.

11.4.2 Factors Affecting Leadership Behavior

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

behavior.

- ❖ **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 organization within which the group exists? What is 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 analyze issues of vital concern to the group, and as 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

Activity 11.4

Select a session of a workshop at your adult learning setup and observe the pattern of leadership among the participants on the basis of the checklist given below and making use of the example given in Box 11.6.

Checklist for Observing Leadership Process

- ❖ Which members are highly influential? That is, when they talk, do other 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?

Box 11.6 Field Illustration

In a training 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 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.

Let us now discuss in Section 11.5 the important issue of conflict resolution during the training of adult educators

working with adult members of a society.

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 occasions, 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 (see Box 11.7 for possible ways of dealing with conflicts in a group).

Box 11.7 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.

So far we have discussed group processes which are apparent for everybody to see and understand without much problem.

But there are also unconscious processes of groups. Let us look at them too.

11.6 The Unconscious Processes of Groups

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

i) Response to authority: From the moment we enter a group unconsciously, we 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 behavior

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.

ii) 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 and 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 the group needs to resolve these unconscious processes. They have to be recognized, not ignored or denied. Once these processes are identified, the group needs to work with them so that emotional energies are channeled towards the group's effort.

11.6.1 Role of Group Members

As outlined below a variety of behaviors are seen in-groups.

- i) **Task role behavior:** 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. Behavior of this type is often referred to as task-oriented role behavior.
- ❖ **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 on 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 complex 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.
- ii) **Maintenance role behavior:** Some behavior 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 behavior. This behavior maintains the vitality and functioning of the group, whereas task-orientation behavior 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.
 - ❖ **Harmonizer-** 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 behavior is designed to elicit or deny participation to members. S/he helps to reduce tension and conflict

by directing communication into safe channels.

iii) Individual behavior: Individual behavior that is not oriented toward any group function but rather is directed toward the resolution of a person's own needs. This is different from the others 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 behavior which is detrimental to group work. The differences could be on the basis of temperament, attributes, values, background and so on and the behavior 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, "marginalized" to cover his/her own prejudices in the stereotypes which best fits his/her present needs.

11.6.2 Facilitating 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.

i) Facilitation maybe required for the following purposes.

- ❖ The effective performance of task and maintenance functions
- ❖ The processes like participation, communication, decision making and leadership
- ❖ The effective resolution of issues like inclusion, influence and intimacy, the smooth transition of the group from one stage to another
- ❖ The accomplishment of the task

ii) To facilitate effectively the facilitator needs to

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

a) 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 given in Box 11.8 illustrate the point.

Box 11.8 Some Examples of Problems and their Causes

Problem 1- Everyone does not participate or show an interest, few remain silent.

Possible causes

- ❖ 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 2- Subgroups occur within the group and they get involved in their own conflicts.

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

B) An Appropriate Intervention

Having diagnosed the possible causes of the problem, the facilitator need to decide upon how s/he will help the group go forward. This conscious a it called facilitating. Simple methods of facilitating include the following action.

- ❖ Encouraging
- ❖ Bringing the conversation to the point
- ❖ Mediating and peacekeeping

- ❖ Maintaining order

- ❖ 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 (see Box 11.9).

Box 11.9 Some of the 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.

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

With the above details of learning during the actual training, we come to Section 11.7 of Unit 11. This section will discuss

the issues of debriefing and consolidation.

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 a 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 (generalizing).
- ❖ Wherever necessary the trainer must provide additional information for the learners to arrive at the broad principles (generalizing).
- ❖ The debriefed information needs to be put into a real life context, so that people can relate to it in a broader framework (application).

Activity 11.5

Select the last session of a workshop at your adult learning center and as per the following scheme for 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 bring out the participants perceptions and experiences. The information gathered is noted down on a board or 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 behavior, 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.

As a trainer it is important to note that one must complete the debriefing cycle in all the structured experience methods.

See an outline of steps involved in debriefing in Figure 11.2.

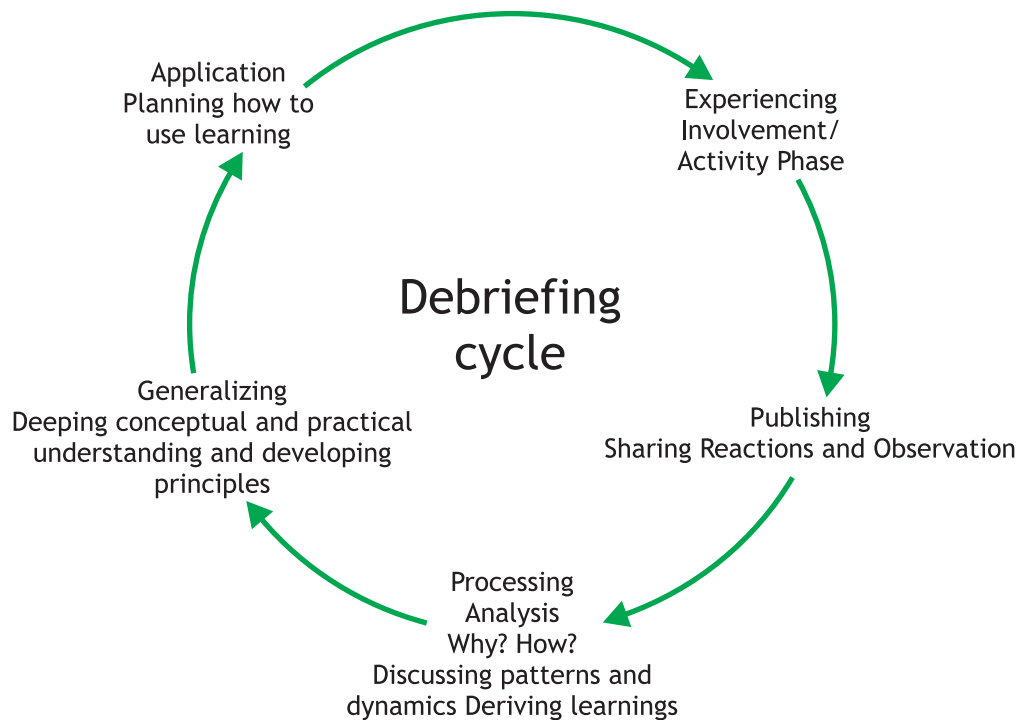


Figure 11.2 Debriefing Cycle

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 programs, the trainers are experts in the given subject and bring a depth of knowledge to the learners. Beyond the expertise in the subject matter, there are several other significant considerations while conducting training within the framework of participatory training methodology. Read below about some of these considerations.

i) 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.

ii) 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.).

iii) 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).

iv) 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.

v) 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 Behavior

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 requires skilful facilitation. Therefore, one of the first challenges of conducting a successful training program is preparation of the trainers to be facilitators.

11.8 Conclusion

In this unit we have described the learning environment of training that is participatory in spirit and practice and discussed the concepts and issues of group process in training. We learnt about the life cycles of groups. We illustrated the small group processes. We

also examined the role of group members, key elements in-group facilitation, and the process of debriefing and consolidation. Lastly we highlighted some important issues that we need to take into consideration while conducting any training. ‘

11.9 Apply What You Have Learnt

Reflect on what you have so far read and analyze your own experiences as an adult educator. Do your experiences corroborate what you have read? If yes, in what ways? If they do not, write down in 200 words in what ways your experiences do not corroborate with what you have read. Share your experiences

with fellow learners.

Secondly, suppose that as an adult educator, you need to organize a participatory training programme. Write a note on the important considerations you would keep in mind while organizing such a program.

