

# The Influence of Transformation in Effective Training: Perspectives from Trainers in the Field

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# Presentation

- Background
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# Background

- Purpose:

Understand how work and life experiences contribute to the perceptions of effective training from professional trainers

- Research Questions:

- How do trainers learn to become trainers?
- How do trainers perceive effective training?

# Theoretical Framework

- Constructivist Theory of Learning (Taylor, 2002)
  - How learners make meaning through prior experiences
  - How facilitators help adults learn through activities & curriculums
  - How learners' perspective & experiences are critical to learning and participating
- Transformative Learning Theory (Mezirow, 1981)
  - Operates on importance of an individual's past experiences on path to a new transformative perspective of themselves
  - Provides basis for creating learning environment and facilitation of training sessions

# Method

- Sample:
  - 25 years of experience-automotive industry (Dylan)
    - Became a trainer after an apprenticeship
  - 3 years of experience-international finance India (Ursa)
    - Was promoted to trainer after excelling in insurance department
  - 20 years of experience-sales communication (Sharon)
    - Became a trainer after restructuring a department
- Data Collection:
  - One-on-One interviews about effective training & training experience
- Data Analysis:
  - Lens of transformative learning to understand how trainers' experiences inform who they are as a trainer

# Presentation of Findings

1. Experienced transformative learning process to become trainers
  - Self-examination and critical reflection
  - Building competence and self-confidence in new roles
  - Planning for & acquiring knowledge & skills for new course of action
  - Assessing feedback
2. Transformative assessment & determinant of training effectiveness

# Findings

- Self Examination & Critical Reflection
  - *Prior work experiences led to reflections on future career as a trainer*
    - “I couldn’t see myself working for someone the rest of my life” (Dylan)
    - “ Trainees’ voices were not always heard or valued...I stood in the gap between the two” (Ursa)
    - “I was going to be a trainer and work with management [to change the system]” (Sharon)

# Findings

- Building Competence & Self-Confidence
  - Competence & confidence built on path to trainer
    - Dylan gained confidence from solving problems unsupervised.
    - Ursa became an advocate for employee voice after listening to trainees share personal stories about management's demands.
    - Sharon took leadership over a mismanaged business which gave her confidence to start her own business.



# Findings

- Planning for & Acquiring Knowledge & Skills for New Course of Action
  - Acquired skills led to beliefs of effective training practices
    - Hands-on
      - “Not everything can be taught via lecture, practical experience provides knowledge on how to solve a problem” (Dylan)
      - “It’s telling them why and letting them see it in actions & getting them to do it” (Sharon)
    - Exploratory
      - “People need the opportunity to explore to learn” (Dylan)
      - Learning through trial and error
    - Experimental
      - “How to utilize improv in work and life and how what you say and do affects others...engaging others” (Sharon)
      - Incorporation of improvisation as experimental form of training

# Findings

- Assessing Feedback
  - Value of feedback as part of learning process for them
  - “Participants received individual feedback and were required to teach” (Ursa)
  - Feedback from trainees as indication of trainer effectiveness (Sharon)

# Findings

- Transformative Learning Assessment & Determination of Training Effectiveness
  - Judged effectiveness of training based on trainees engagement in critical reflection and change
    - Goal to provide guidance to prepare trainees to be more productive and self-sufficient (Dylan)
    - Witness them applying training content to daily tasks (Ursa)
    - “Help them to think of themselves differently” (Sharon)

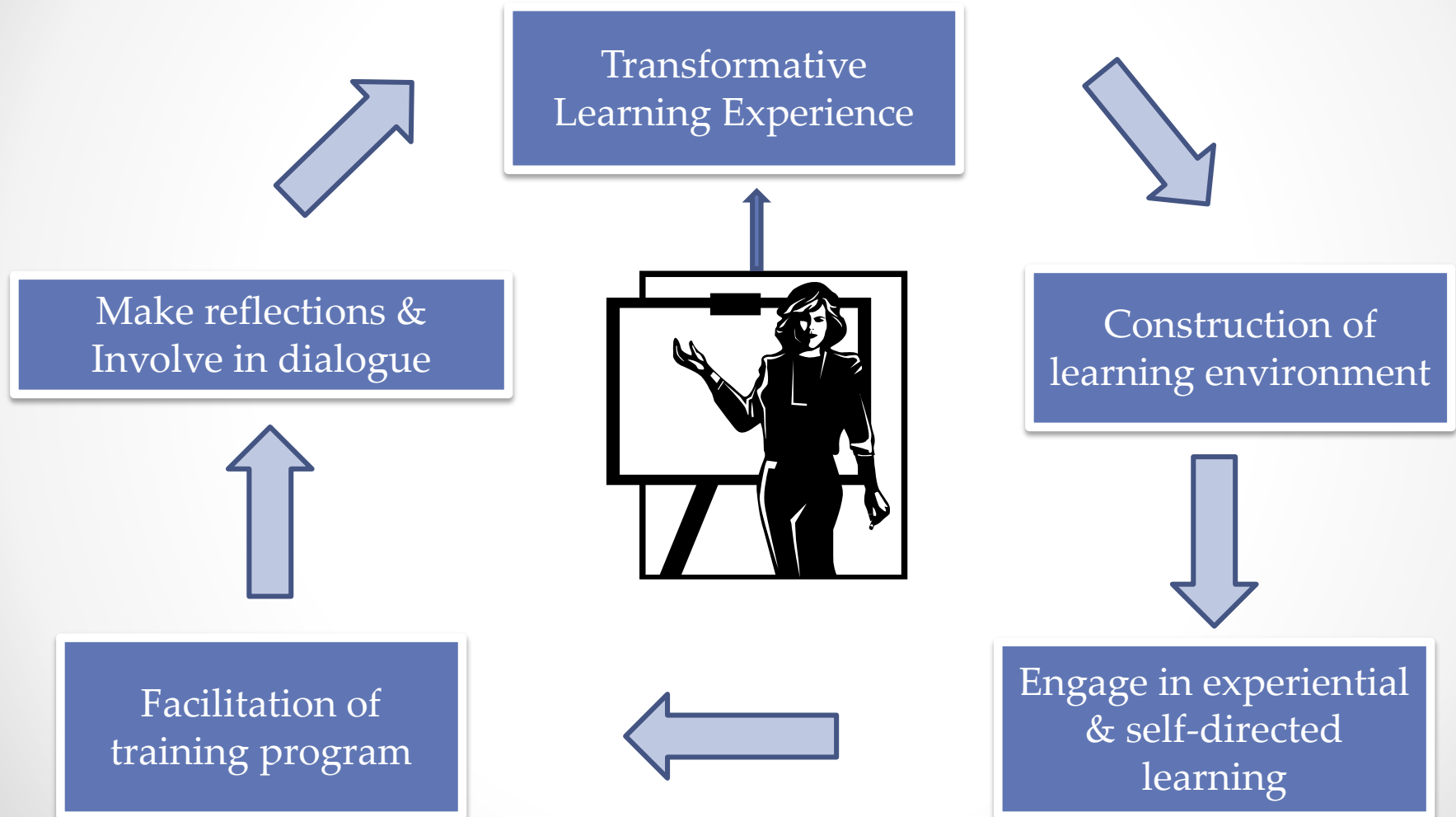
# Discussion

**Effective trainers' "job is not to train but to educate-to expose participants to new ways of thinking, feeling, and acting and allow them to integrate these ways into their being"**

**(Silberman, 2006)**

- Effective trainers draw upon their experiences as learners
- Trainers' style of training was a direct reflection of their personal transformative training experience.
- All agreed that an effective trainer must:
  - Set the tone, have necessary skills, and personality to facilitate discussion
  - Be the agent of change
  - Have ability to be engaging, understanding, and flexible
  - Relate training to trainees' experiences to help them understand how its relevance will improve their current state
- The trainers transformative learning experience plays a role in what it means to be an effective trainer and their definition of effective training.

# Cycle of Effective Training



# Conclusion

## Theory vs Practice

“The practice of adult learning has been carried out without much reference to what is known about how adults learn. This position in fact characterizes much of adult learning, since only a small percentage of teachers, administrators, program developers, and others have had any formal training in adult education. From this position, those working with adult learners rely on common sense and trial-and-error learning, a less formal but certainly no less valuable source of guidance for practice”

Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner (2007)