

Understanding Learner's Frames (Mental Models)

What are 'frames'?

1. Frames are mental models or a 'frame' of reference that lead to the actions a person takes in a given situation.
2. Frames are defined by the learner's previous knowledge and experiences. This prior knowledge and experience explain why learners respond in the manner they do.

Why are frames important to understand?

1. Obtaining an understanding of the learner's frames allows the instructor/facilitator to stimulate discussion and move the learner towards creating new frames.
2. How a person 'sees' a situation leads them to create an internal picture of what is happening and what their next action must be.

Instructor/Facilitator's Responsibility

1. Through curiosity and inquiry, the facilitator can elicit what the learner's mental models are and how they affected the decisions/actions the learner took.
2. Understanding a learner's frames allows the instructor/facilitator to provide meaningful feedback (using good judgment) to help the learner identify their frames and develop new ones so they will 'see' the situation differently and their actions will be different the next time a similar situation occurs.
3. As an instructor/facilitator, you must also understand your own frames about the learners and the situation. Identifying your own frames can help move from a blaming ("Why did you do what you did?") to a more open and curious approach ("I'm curious what you were seeing as this happened?"). The goal is to elicit what frames guided the learner's actions.
4. Create a safe place for learners to experience the simulation and debrief to identify their own frames that may have or may not have helped them to provide quality patient care.

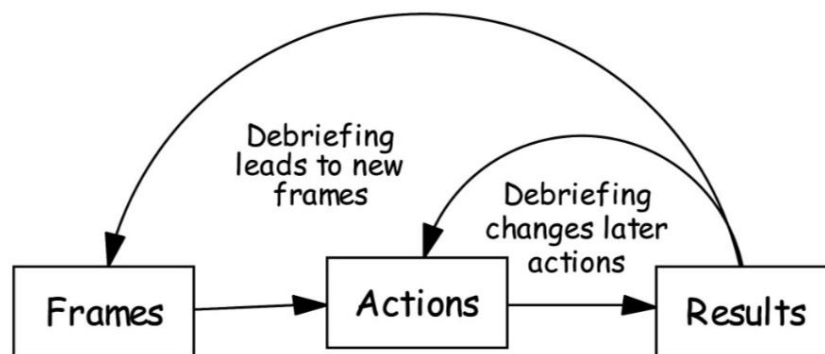


FIGURE 1. Frames are invisible, but inferable; they are in the mind of trainees and of instructors. Actions (including speech) are observable. Most results (e.g., vital signs, order/chaos) are also observable.

(Rudolph, Simon, Dufresne & Raemer, 2006. p. 50)

Reference

- Rudolph, J., Simon, R., Dufresne, R., & Raemer, D. (2006). There's no such thing as "nonjudgmental" debriefing: a theory and method for debriefing with good judgement. *Simulation in Healthcare*, 1(1), 49-55. Available [here](#).