Diagnosing Training Needs

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Section A

What Information Is Needed?
**Diagnostic Questions**

What tasks do the workers have to do (job description)?

Have their tasks changed recently?

Are the workers actually practicing their assigned tasks?

What do the workers already know about their tasks?
More Questions

What skills do they already possess?

Where do the workers need extra help and input to perform their tasks?

What tasks are workers unable to perform because they do not know what to do or do not have the necessary skills?

What are the workers’ attitudes toward their assigned tasks?

Continued
More Questions

What is the ideal (standard) way that workers’ tasks should be performed?

What do clients expect from the workers; are they able to perform to clients’ expectations?

Answers to these questions form a baseline from which the outcome of training can be evaluated.
Understanding Tasks

Think about the work that will actually be done by the trainees when they return to work after training.

Improve the list by reviewing existing curricula, job descriptions, and technical literature.

Discuss their tasks with potential trainees.

Continued
Understanding Tasks

Improve the list by comparing it with what the community needs and the local culture

Seek community input on these needs and on their views of health worker performance

Improve the list by observing what health workers actually are doing on the job and by talking with them about their work
Prepare Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS)

Prepare ORS solution

Assess presence of signs of dehydration

Ask mother/care-giver about the child’s condition

Nigeria Salt Sugar Solution Formula

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 60-ml of water (measured in beer bottle or two soft drink bottles)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 3-ml level teaspoon of salt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 3-ml level teaspoons of sugar</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Continued
Prepare Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS)

- Determine extent of dehydration
- Develop appropriate treatment plan
- Treat patient according to plan
- Refer cases of severe dehydration to hospital

Continued
Prepare Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS)

Treat or refer for other problems,

Record data of patient in register

Compile data on monthly basis; submit report
Analyzing Tasks as a Basis of Training

Examine the task carefully in the context in which it is expected to be performed

Sub-divide the task into various components: sub-tasks, competencies, or steps

Decide what skills are needed to perform each task and step

Decide what knowledge and attitudes are needed to carry out each task and step
Task Analysis #9: Record Patient Data in Register

Context
- During provision of diarrhea management services

Components
- Writing on forms and in register vital information on patient and response
Task Analysis #9: Record Patient Data in Register

Skills
- *Writing, spelling, calculation …*

Knowledge
- *Specific information required on forms*

Attitudes
- *Appreciate importance of data recording*
A Reminder: Trainee Involvement

Task analysis should not be an external or detached exercise
The training committee can discuss

- *The tasks involved in their work*
- *And those areas needing updating*

Trainee discussion groups can highlight concerns
Section B

Documents and Interviews
## Information Needs: Who and How

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOW</th>
<th>Trainees</th>
<th>Managers, the Agency</th>
<th>Clients, Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Documents</strong></td>
<td>Reports</td>
<td>Job description, minutes, etc.</td>
<td>Newspapers, committees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work performance</td>
<td>Facility assessment</td>
<td>Mapping, health behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Questionnaires, pretests, FGDs</td>
<td>In-depth interviews</td>
<td>Survey, FGDs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Observation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interview</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- **HOW** refers to methods used for collecting information.
- **Trainees** includes reports, work performance, questionnaires, pretests, and FGDs.
- **Managers, the Agency** includes job description, facilities, assessment, and in-depth interviews.
- **Clients, Community** includes newspapers, committees, mapping, health behavior, survey, and FGDs.
Examples of Documents

Job descriptions and performance standards

Progress reports: monthly, quarterly, annual

Minutes of staff meetings

Professional literature

Organizational policies

Files and records on events
  - Complaints, grievances, accidents
  - Absenteeism, sickness, turnover
How do people view job descriptions?

- A limitation to my freedom
- A source of argument with my supervisors
- A guide to how I fit into the organization
- A useful structure so I know what to do, where and when

Thus, a job description can be an asset or a liability depending on how it is used by management.
What Are Job Descriptions?

An attempt to define clearly and without ambiguity the **duties** and **responsibilities** of each job

A word picture of the:

- **Duties**
- **Responsibilities and**
- **Organizational relationships**
- **That constitute a given position in the organization**

Continued
What Are Job Descriptions?

An outline of continuing work *assignments* and *scope* of responsibility that are sufficiently different to warrant *unique* job title.

An up-to-date explanation of *current* work requirements

Detailed information on special *knowledge* and *resources* needed to perform the work
Diagnosing Training Needs Based on Job Description

Have duties and responsibilities changed?

Is the employee performing duties and responsibilities as well as before?

Have new organizational structures and relationships been introduced?
Has professional practice changed such that job descriptions are no longer current?

Are new knowledge, resources, and skills needed to perform the job?
What do plans and reports contain?

- Activities? outcomes? goals?

What targets have been met, or not?

What activities worked, and which were less successful?
Reviewing Plans and Reports

Do reports over time indicate trends in successes, problems, results?

What training needs can be discerned?

Photo by John Oribhaboise
Minutes of Meetings

Are staff meetings actually held? (Who attends?)

Are meetings used for problem identification and solving?

Are meetings used for continuing education?

Are issues identified during meetings that require more formal IST sessions?

- Technical/service issues
- Policy/procedures issues
- Human relations/communication issues
Updates practices and new approaches that health workers require to be effective

**Article**

**Antimalarial intermittent treatment during pregnancy: how do we ensure coverage and compliance in Africa?** by P. Magnussen, Danish Bilharziasis Laboratory, Copenhagen, Denmark

Malaria and anaemia in pregnancy are major public health problems and potentially preventable causes of maternal and perinatal morbidity and mortality (McGregor, 1984; Brabin, 1991; Shulman et al., 1996). Protecting pregnant women from malaria infection is therefore a major public health priority in endemic countries. Different strategies using either chemoprophylaxis or intermittent preventive treatment (IPT) during pregnancy have been recommended by WHO. Several randomized controlled studies and meta-analyses of a number of randomized placebo controlled trials conclude that prevention has a beneficial effect on maternal anaemia, placental malaria and low birth weight babies, especially among primigravidae (Shulman et al., 1999; Gülmezoglu & Garner 1997; Steketee et al., 1996).
Changes in Policy: E.g., Malaria Case Management

Resistance developing for chloroquine

SP is second line—but resistance is developing
Drug policies change

Prepackaged drugs help reduce resistance

But health workers need to learn how to use new, third generation drugs
Records of events like accidents, absences, and complaints tells us directly and indirectly something about workers’ performance.

Frequent absences may reflect:
- Stress related to inability to perform tasks
- Boredom with tasks assigned

Accidents may indicate skill levels in handling equipment.
Feedback from Stakeholders

Feedback = interviews

Stakeholders in the training process are many
- Workers/potential trainees
- Supervisors and managers
- Clients/community members
- Professional bodies/associations

Stakeholders can not only provide information about training needs but should also be involved in collecting and analyzing that information.
Interviews in Context

Documents report past actions or planned intentions of an organization or individual.

Observations show the behavior of the employee and the environment in which she works.

Interviews obtain the direct input of the employee and other stakeholders.

- For example, their knowledge, attitudes, opinions, values, perceptions.
Interviewing May Include

In-depth, open-ended interviews with employees, employers, and clients

Questionnaire: structured format to obtain opinions of employees

Tests: specific questions on job knowledge and skills

Continued
Interviewing May Include

Focus group discussions among employees and clients

Group problem analysis: specific discussions among employees around a work site issue that needs to be addressed
Other Ways to Get Input

Suggestion boxes

Brainstorming during staff meetings

Informal conversations during breaks, lunch, water cooler

Role play of challenging situations

Photo by John Oribhoboise
Focus groups provide an opportunity for feedback on health worker

- **Performance**
- **Attitudes**
- **Timeliness**
- **Communication of information**

*Photo by John Oribhaboise*
Section C

Observation of Performance
Observation

The best way to judge trainee skills and relationships is to observe them on the job.

This can be done in a **formal**, structured way:
- *For example, through the use of checklists*

Or, observation can be **informal**:
- *Integrated into normal supervision*
How employees perform tasks (using a checklist to compare with standard)

The flow of service

The interaction between employees and clients

Availability of supplies, equipment, etc., that are needed for employees to perform required tasks
CDC, under a USAID project called African Child Survival Initiative, developed continuing education units (CEUs) in many State Ministries of Health in Nigeria.
CEUs were responsible for training local government health staff in basic child survival programming skills

- Immunization
- Oral rehydration
- Maintaining good records
Although training modules on these topics were available from WHO, UNICEF and the Federal Ministry of Health.

The CEUs were encouraged first to find out what was happening on the ground before inviting participants for training.

Photo by Kabiru Salami

Continued
Using the checklist, CEU staff observed

- **Staff at work**
- **Availability of clinics supplies and materials**
- **Flow of patients among other factors**

They also interviewed clients to determine what they had gained from their clinic visits

A sample of the items from the checklist are found in the course notes
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Observations of Sick Children Management)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the health worker determine the child’s ...</td>
<td>age?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>weight?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>temperature (using thermometer)?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>temperature (by touching skin)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>respiratory rate?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the child have an immunization card?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the health worker ...</td>
<td>Check the child’s immunization status?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Refer the child if immunization needed?</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Observers and the Observed

Observations may have limitations

The person being observed may not behave “normally”

The observer must establish trust and blend into the background
Clearly more than one diagnostic method should be used to determine training needs and understand the solutions required.

**Example: polio eradication efforts**

- *Records show that an increasing number of children were receiving immunizations during state-wide campaigns but*
- *Reports from federal sentinel surveillance sites identify new cases of wild polio virus*
Nigeria: Distribution of Wild poliovirus by type Jan July, 2002

Legend
- Wild Poliovirus type 1 (75)
- Wild Poliovirus type 3 (7)

Source: WHO
Reports show numbers of children vaccinated during house-to-house exercises approaching targets

But projected census data from the state indicate that these targets may be only 80% of the likely population of children

A newspaper article during the last campaign has a letter complaining about government efforts to “sterilize our children” with vaccines
Village Where Wild Virus Found

High coverage reported

Discussions were held with elders

Fear was expressed about sterilization

Note was made of male vaccinators, while women hid in houses with children

One elder showed discarded vials of vaccine in the bush outside the village
Informal interviews were held with health workers where they said:

- **Political pressure to report good numbers at any cost is strong**
- **Village beliefs and customs are an impediment to child health**
- **There is no reason to question accuracy of target goals (numbers of eligible children)**
Finally, trainers followed some vaccinators into the field during the next campaign.

When they approached a village, some people ran and hid in their huts.

The vaccinators ordered the locally selected “guides” around like servants.

No visits were made to the house of the chief.
Implications for Training

Need for human relations and cultural respect

Skills in estimating village populations or conducting a local census

Communication skills to better explain vaccines to community members

Information on sentinel surveillance process and implications of wild virus