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Task analysis

The basis for development of training in management of tuberculosis

World Health Organization

This document has been prepared in conjunction with the WHO training courses titled *Management of tuberculosis: training for health facility staff* (WHO/CDS/TB/2003.314) and *Management of tuberculosis: training for district TB coordinators* (WHO/HTM/TB/2005.347).

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Task analysis: the basis for development of training in management of tuberculosis

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INTRODUCTION

Training courses are often developed with a general purpose in mind, but without careful consideration of the jobs to which learners are expected to apply their training. For example, someone may develop a general course about laboratory procedures without considering specifically:

- For whom is the course intended? Is it for current laboratory supervisors or technicians? Or for staff newly hired to do a certain task? What is their background and previous training?
- What tasks will these individuals be expected to do on the job?
- What skills and knowledge are required to do those tasks? Which skills and knowledge are already known, and which need to be taught?
- What is the real work setting like? What are conditions like on the job?

Questions like these must be answered **before** developing a training course; otherwise, the course materials may contain much irrelevant content. It is possible that the course will be entirely irrelevant, perhaps containing interesting information, but not teaching the essential skills that learners need in their actual jobs. Even if the training course is conducted many times, job performance is not likely to improve.

Effective and useful training is **performance based;** in other words:

- It is based on analysis of the tasks performed in a particular job.
- It uses methods that actively involve the participant (to increase learning and the likelihood of transfer to the work setting).
- It enables the trainer (or facilitator) to assess whether the participant is learning and to give individual help as needed.

The introductory section of this document describes a 10-step process for developing performance-based training courses. This process was used by the Stop TB Department of the World Health Organization (WHO) to develop the following training courses:

Management of tuberculosis: training for health facility staff (WHO/CDS/TB/2003.314)
Management of tuberculosis: training for district TB coordinators (WHO/HTM/TB/2005.347)

A large part of the development process is devoted to analysis of the tasks involved in a specific job, for example, the tasks of health workers responsible for detecting and treating patients who have tuberculosis (TB). This document provides the complete lists of the tasks that served as the basis for the development of the above courses. In addition to the task lists, this document provides lists of the skills and knowledge needed to perform the tasks.

The task lists and the skills/knowledge lists are valuable as examples of the extent and depth of analysis required to develop performance-based training for any purpose. These lists could be especially useful to individuals responsible for:

- developing, adapting, or reviewing training materials intended for similar target populations with similar jobs, or
- identifying staffing needs, developing job descriptions, and hiring staff to perform tasks related to management of TB.

The task lists and the skills/knowledge lists do not themselves constitute training and do not provide all of the details necessary to do a task. For more details about a task, consult the training courses listed above.

1. The 10-step process for developing training courses

The process for developing performance-based training includes the following 10 steps. The first four steps constitute the **task analysis** that is necessary to design and develop relevant, useful training materials. Steps 5–10 constitute the design and development process.

Task analysis

1. Define the **target population** for training.
2. List the **tasks** to be performed by the target population on the job.
3. List the **skills and knowledge needed to do the tasks.**
4. Select the **skills and knowledge to be taught.** (These make up the "training objectives.")

Design and development

5. Organize the selected skills and knowledge into **suitable teaching units** (modules) and develop the **training design** (including brief outlines of module content and planned training methods).
6. Draft **expanded outlines** of modules, including instructional objectives, main body of text, and descriptions of training methods, examples and exercises.
7. Experts provide **realistic examples and information for use in exercises.**
8. Draft the complete **modules, facilitator guidelines, and course director guidelines**.
9. **Field-test** the training materials.
10. **Revise and finalize** training materials based on the field test.

1.1 Defining the target population

The target population is the group of learners for whom the training is intended. It is critical to define this group in order to design the training appropriately. For example, training for clinicians would be very different from training for new community health workers, even though they may do some of the same tasks. To define the target population, ask questions such as:

- What are the job titles of the intended participants in the training?

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