CORE TRAINING SERIES

Training of QA Trainers

Reference Manual

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PREFACE

BACKGROUND

Major efforts are being made throughout the world to increase access to, and improve the quality of, health care services. Quality assurance (QA) methods are being used by clinicians and health care managers to design services, define and communicate standards, monitor the quality of service delivery and identify and solve problems in clinical, managerial, and administrative practice.

Successful QA implementation requires that all health workers, staff and managers, acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities to support QA efforts. Training is an important part of that process. Most countries quickly recognize that providing ongoing QA training that will reach large numbers of people is impractical when using trainers from outside the country. As a result, they target a small number of people who already understand QA to become QA Trainers.

Quality Assurance Trainers deliver practical, performance-based training rather than traditional academically-based instruction. They focus on imparting knowledge and skills which are required by health workers to actually **do** QA.

Quality Assurance Project staff from the Center for Human Services and trainers from JHPIEGO have worked together to create a **competency-based** approach to QA training that focuses on **learning by doing**. The objective is to equip health workers with the knowledge and skills needed to implement QA in their own workplace. This reference manual provides the knowledge needed by QA Trainers to conduct competency-based QA training.

USING THIS MANUAL

In order to improve the quality of QA training as well as to objectively evaluate participant performance, there is a need to standardize the way training is conducted. This manual emphasizes use of **participatory** training techniques based on the principles of adult learning. Because most of the information is transmitted through interactive, "hands-on" learning activities, participants are actively involved in the learning process. Each chapter in this manual describes an area of participatory training for which the QA trainer is responsible.

Chapter 1 identifies the **learning principles** used throughout the manual. It also describes a coaching style of training, which, when combined with other interactive training techniques, is a highly effective way to help participants master complex skills.

Establishing a **positive training climate** (**Chapter 2**) before, during and after the course is critical to the success of training. An essential part of this process is understanding how people learn.

Appropriate audiovisual aids are critical to effective training. **Chapter 3** presents guidelines for using audiovisual materials effectively

Interactive training techniques (**Chapter 4**) enhance learning, whether an illustrated lecture or a small group method such as case study or role plays is used. The trainer who uses effective presentation skills to maintain participant interest with an exciting, dynamic delivery, using a variety of instructional methods, is more likely to be successful in helping participants learn new information.

To measure progress in learning and to evaluate performance (**Chapter 5**), QA trainers use **competency-based knowledge and skill assessments**. Knowledge questionnaires are used to measure progress in learning new information. Job aids help participants acquire new skills (**skill acquisition**) and measure progressive learning in small steps as they gain confidence (**skill competency**). Competency-based checklists assist the trainer and participants in evaluating each participant's performance.

Teams are the work unit in QA implementation. Therefore, **working in teams during training (Chapter 6)**, is a realistic way to learn about and practice QA skills. Quality Assurance trainers who effectively support team building can enhance participants' achievement of training objectives.

Guidelines for how to conduct a QA training course (Chapter 7), describe how to improve the quality of QA training, and what the clinical trainer needs to know in order to organize and conduct a clinical course successfully. Documentation of course activities and results completes the process of conducting QA training.

ONE

AN APPROACH TO QUALITY ASSURANCE TRAINING

INTRODUCTION

The training approach described in this chapter is guided by principles of adult learning. These principles are based on the assumption that people participate in training courses because they:

- Are **interested** in the topic

- Wish to **improve** their knowledge or skills, and thus their job performance

- Desire to be **actively involved** in course activities

WHAT I HEAR, I FORGET;

WHAT I SEE, I REMEMBER;

WHAT I DO, I UNDERSTAND.

Confucius

To be effective, trainers must use appropriate training strategies. The participatory training techniques emphasized in this manual are best reflected in this ancient Chinese proverb.

Chapter Objective

After completing this chapter, the participant will be able to describe a mastery learning approach that is based on adult learning principles and features competency-based training.

Enabling Objectives

To attain the chapter objective, the participant will:

- Identify the goal of training

- Describe the mastery learning approach to training

- Describe the key features of competency-based training

- Identify the responsibilities of trainers and participants

- Identify the criteria for selecting and training QA Project trainers

GOAL OF TRAINING

The **goal of training** in quality assurance (QA) is to assist health professionals in learning to adopt QA techniques which lead to improved work performance, and ultimately, improved services to clients. Training deals primarily with obtaining the knowledge and skills needed to carry out a specific task or activity, such as working in teams, problem solving, developing an action plan for QA work, or interpreting data displays. Training presumes an immediate application of the information or skills being learned.

Education, in contrast, is defined most often in terms of future goals. For example, an individual attends a school or university in order to prepare for a future role as a nurse or doctor. Education provides a broad array of knowledge (and skills) needed to perform that role, from which the student can later select what is needed, according to a given situation.

No matter how effective training is in conveying information or influencing attitudes, if participants are unable to satisfactorily perform the activity assigned to them, the training will have failed. Therefore, trainers must focus their energies on transferring skills as well as on modeling the appropriate attitudes and providing the essential facts required by participants to perform their jobs.

> Effective training stresses application of knowledge in the performance of skills.

MASTERY LEARNING

The mastery learning approach to training assumes that all participants can master (learn) the required knowledge or skills, provided there is sufficient time and appropriate training methods are used. The goal of mastery learning is that 100 percent of those being trained will "master" the knowledge and skills on which the training is based. While some participants are able to acquire new knowledge or a new skill immediately, others may require additional time or alternative learning methods before they are able to demonstrate mastery. Not only do people vary in their abilities to absorb new material, but individuals learn best in different ways—through written, spoken or visual means. Effective learning strategies, such as mastery learning, take these differences into account and use a variety of teaching and training methods.

The mastery approach also enables the participant to have a self-directed learning experience. This is achieved by having the trainer serve as a facilitator and by changing the concept of testing and how test results are used. In courses that use

traditional testing methods, the trainer administers pre- and post-tests to document an increase in the participants' knowledge, often without regard to how this change impacts on job performance.

The philosophy underlying the mastery learning approach, however, is one of a continual assessment of participant learning. With this approach, it is essential that the trainer regularly inform participants of their progress in learning new information and skills and **not** allow this to remain the trainer's secret.

With the mastery learning approach, a pre-course knowledge assessment (e.g., pre-course questionnaire) is used to determine what the participants, individually and as a group, know about the course content. This allows the trainer to identify topics that may need additional emphasis or, in many cases, those that require less classroom time during the course. Providing the results of the pre-course assessment to participants enables them to focus on their individual learning needs. A second knowledge assessment, the midcourse questionnaire, may be used to assess the participants' progress in learning new information. Again, results of this assessment are reviewed with participants.

With the mastery learning approach, assessment is:

- **Competency-based**, which means assessment is keyed to the course objectives and emphasizes acquiring the essential knowledge and skills needed to perform a task, not simply acquiring new knowledge.

- **Dynamic**, because it enables trainers to provide participants with continual feedback on how successful they are in meeting the course objectives. When appropriate, trainers will adapt the course to meet participants' needs. (Trainers using pre- and post-tests often do **not** review the correct answers with the participants. As a consequence, participants may leave the course not knowing important information.)

- **Less stressful**, because from the beginning participants, both individually and as a group, know what they are expected to learn, know where to find the information and have ample opportunity for discussion with the trainer.

KEY FEATURES

Effective training is designed and conducted according to adult learning principles—learning is participatory, relevant and practical—and:

- Uses **behavior modeling**
- Is **competency-based**

These features are described briefly in this section.

Adult Learning Principles

The training techniques and approaches discussed throughout this manual are based on the following eight principles:

- Learning is most productive when the participant is **ready to learn**. Although motivation is internal, it is up to the trainer to create a climate that will nurture motivation in participants.

- Learning is more effective when it **builds** on what the participant already knows or has experienced.

- Learning is more effective when participants are **aware** of what they need to learn.

- Learning is made easier by using a **variety** of training methods and techniques.

- Opportunities for **practicing** skills initially in controlled or simulated situations (e.g., through role play or use of case studies) are essential for **skill acquisition** and for development of **skill competency**.

- **Repetition** is necessary to become competent or proficient in a skill.

- The more **realistic** the learning situation, the more effective the learning.

- To be effective, **feedback** should be **immediate**, **positive** and **nonjudgmental**.

Behavior Modeling

Social learning theory states that when conditions are ideal, a person learns most rapidly and effectively from watching someone perform (model) a skill or activity. For modeling to be successful, the trainer must first clearly demonstrate the skill or activity so that the participants have a clear picture of the performance expected of them.

Behavior modeling, or observational learning, takes place in three stages (**Figure 1-1**). In the first stage, skill acquisition, the participant sees others perform a task and acquires a mental picture of the required steps. Once the mental image is

acquired, the participant attempts to perform the task, usually with supervision. Next, the participant practices until competency is achieved and s/he feels confident performing the task. The final stage, skill proficiency, occurs only with repeated practice over time.

Skill Acquisition	Knows the steps and their sequence (if necessary) to perform the required skill or activity but **needs assistance**
Skill Competency	Knows the steps and their sequence (if necessary) and **can perform** the required skill or activity
Skill Proficiency	Knows the steps and their sequence (if necessary) and **efficiently performs** the required skill or activity

Figure 1-1. Levels of Performance

Competency-Based Training

Competency-based training (CBT) is distinctly different from traditional educational processes. Competency-based training is learning by doing. It focuses on the specific knowledge and skills needed to carry out a procedure or activity. How the participant performs (i.e., a combination of knowledge and most importantly, skills) is emphasized rather than just what information the participant has acquired. Moreover, CBT requires that the trainer facilitate and guide or encourage learning rather than serve in the more traditional role of the instructor or lecturer. Competency in the new skill or activity is assessed objectively by evaluating overall performance. Finally, CBT has a sound scientific basis. As shown in **Table 1-1**, the ability to recall essential information is vastly increased when one learns the material through participatory methods as compared to more passive methods such as just listening to a lecture or obtaining new information through reading.

Table 1-1. Learning Recall Related to Type of Presentation

TYPE OF PRESENTATION	ABILITY TO RECALL	
	After 3 Hours	After 3 Days
Verbal (one-way) lecture	25%	10–20%
Written (reading)	72%	10%
Visual and verbal (illustrated lecture)	80%	65%
Participatory (role plays, case studies, practice)	90%	70%

Adapted from: Dale 1969.

To successfully accomplish CBT, the task or activity to be taught first must be broken down into its essential steps. Each step is then analyzed to determine the most efficient and safe way to perform and learn it. This process is called standardization. Once an activity, such as construction and use of a process flowchart, has been standardized, competency-based skill development and assessment instruments can be designed to make learning the necessary steps or tasks easier and evaluation of the participant's performance more objective (see **Chapter 5)**.

An essential component of CBT is **coaching**, which uses positive feedback, active listening, questioning and problem-solving skills to ensure a positive learning climate. Unfortunately, the teaching model with which most health professionals are familiar is the classroom instructor lecturing to a group of students who anxiously take notes so that they can pass a written examination. This approach to teaching, used by a skilled trainer, can be effective in providing basic knowledge. It is, however, a very poor way of imparting skills (such as constructing a bar chart), strengthening problem-solving skills or changing attitudes (such as learning to value client input).

What is needed is an approach to training that is different from classroom teaching. Coaching has been used successfully for technical training by industry for many years. In QA work, the word "coaching" describes the relationship between a team and its facilitator or advisor, as well as the relationship between a participant and a trainer. The same skills of positive feedback, active listening, questioning and problem solving are used to help a team progress through its work. To use coaching, the trainer first should explain the new task or activity, and demonstrate it using examples. Once the steps of the task have been demonstrated and discussed, the trainer/coach observes and interacts with the team (or participant) to guide practice,

monitor progress, and help overcome problems.

The coaching process ensures that the team (or participant) receives feedback regarding performance:

- Before practice—as a preview of the goals and objectives of the session, the steps that will be emphasized during the session, feedback on previous performance of the same tasks or an explanation of what is to be done

- During practice—as ongoing observation while the task is being performed

- After practice—as feedback on strengths and areas needing improvement

A QA coach often will do "just-in-time" training. This is training which is done spontaneously, in response to specific needs of a team as members progress through their work. For example, if a problem-solving team has never used affinity analysis, a coach will assume the role of trainer and teach them about affinity techniques just at the time when those techniques are needed. The same processes of previewing the task, guiding practice, and giving immediate feedback, should be used during just-in-time training.

When **competency-based training** is integrated with **adult learning principles** and is based on **behavior modeling**, the result is a powerful and extremely effective method for providing training. A QA trainer in a classroom setting, and a QA coach helping a team, can each use a coaching style of training to enhance training effectiveness.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TRAINER AND COURSE PARTICIPANTS

In CBT, the responsibility for meeting learning objectives is shared by the trainer and each participant. The trainer's goal is to help each participant attain full competence in a task or activity, not just to earn a high grade on a test of knowledge. If a participant does not reach full competence, the trainer should not attribute failure simply to the participant's lack of ability but should look for ways to improve training methods or provide additional practice for the participant.

The role of the trainer is to facilitate learning. The trainer guides participants toward the discovery of new knowledge and the acquisition of new or improved skills. The trainer also seeks to influence participant attitudes by serving as a role model. For example, the trainer always should demonstrate the skill completely and accurately—poor performance is never acceptable.

Participants are actively involved in the learning process, and are encouraged to contribute what they know about the topic being discussed. The knowledge participants bring to the training situation is considered as essential to the total training process as is the knowledge of the trainers. The success of this approach is based on the willingness of participants to take an active part in the training and to share their experiences and knowledge with other group members.

SELECTING AND TRAINING QA TRAINERS

> The key to successful training is transference: assisting professionals who are experts in their field in learning how to transfer their knowledge and skills to others.

In the highly specialized fields of health and industry, organizations are finding that it is better to select outstanding technical (content) experts and teach them training skills, rather than to use training professionals who are not proficient in the technical skills being taught. This is also the case in QA training. In fact, QA virtually never uses professional trainers who lack QA skills, but rather takes people with excellent QA skills and teaches them how to train others.

Perhaps the most crucial decision in designing a training course is the selection of the trainer(s). It often has been assumed that anyone with strong academic credentials and good skills could be a trainer, but experience in many parts of the world has shown that performing and teaching skills are two very different things.

Until recently, trainers had few ways to learn training skills. To some it came "naturally," but usually only after many years of trial and error. A fortunate few had the opportunity of being taught by good trainers whose style they could copy. For most, however, little training in these skills was available.
In selecting potential QA trainers, the following criteria should be considered:

- **Demonstrated proficiency**. The trainer candidate must have experience using the QA skills to be taught. Most QA trainers have first been QA coaches and have worked with teams in problem solving or standards setting.

- **Interest in training**. A person who is genuinely interested in training will be more likely to take the time necessary to learn and practice training skills.

- **Humility**. A good trainer acknowledges mistakes and

does not try to prove that participants will never attain her/his skill level.

Process for Becoming a QA Trainer

To develop sustainable, institutionalized QA training, the QA Project recommends two levels of trainers as described in **Figure 1-2**.

The first level describes a trainer who is able to take standard training materials and conduct QA training using effective presentation skills with a variety of methods (e.g., classroom presentations, small group work, exercises, case studies).

The second level describes a trainer who adds the ability to implement the entire training process, including assessment, task analysis, design, development, delivery and evaluation of training. This person would develop original training and train first level trainers. Often, there will be only one or two trainers at this level who are leaders in a national QA activity. The QA Project hesitates to use titles such as advanced, master, or senior trainer because each country has its own definitions for trainer development and QA trainers should be described by titles commonly accepted for other trainers. This series of steps is common in developing QA trainers.

As shown in **Figure 1-2**, QA trainers will have completed training in problem solving, basic QA skills, or working in teams and will have worked in teams doing these things. If candidates are already QA coaches, they will have demonstrated effective just-in-time training techniques, verbal and non-verbal communication skills, and presentation skills.

A Level 1 QA trainer candidate will attend a Training of Trainers course, during which s/he will learn about adult learning styles, training delivery, organizing training events, evaluating learner performance and complex presentation techniques such as leading exercises or case studies. If not already qualified as coaches, candidates also need to concentrate on effective communication and presentation skills. During the Training of Trainers course, candidates will practice their skills by presenting short classroom-style training on QA topics.

Following the classroom portion of Training of Trainers, each Level 1 trainer candidate will co-train one or more QA courses with a more experienced trainer in a regularly scheduled QA course. Ideally, co-training should be done with the trainer who taught the Training of Trainers course. When the candidate meets the performance criteria as listed in **Figure 1-2**, s/he may

train independently. This completes development as a Level 1 QA trainer.

Eventually, a country will want to stop reliance on outside experts for QA training and will want to develop second level trainers, people who can design and develop QA training courses and materials. Often the QA Project's counterpart in a country will be the initial Level 2 QA trainer. This person will learn about instructional design and training of trainers through one-on-one work with the QA Project staff, meeting the performance criteria described in **Figure 1-2** for Level 2 QA trainers.

When the time comes to create more Level 2 QA trainers, a country may choose to hold a course to develop these trainers, or use outside sources for training. The training should include instructional design and training of trainers techniques. Topics would include:

- Methods to determine that training is an appropriate intervention for a given performance problem

- Needs assessment and task analysis

- Training design and development

- Evaluation of effectiveness of training

- Methods of developing trainers

Level 2 trainer candidates will practice these skills in a classroom setting and then work with a more experienced trainer to develop, adapt, deliver and evaluate a course. After meeting performance criteria described in **Figure 1-2**, this trainer may work independently to create new QA training or train QA trainers.

Occasionally, QA providers will gain appropriate training of trainers and instructional design experience through other means, such as clinical trainer development. Regardless of the source of training, a QA trainer must be evaluated by an experienced QA trainer and meet performance criteria as listed in **Figure 1-2**.

LEVEL	PREREQUISITE	TRAINING CONTENT	OTHER VALIDATION	EXIT SKILLS (AFTER VALIDATION)
PARTICIPANT	Nomination by supervisor	Any QA classes, start with QA Awareness or Customer Service	None	Described by each course
QA TRAINER LEVEL 1	Completion of QA Awareness, Basic Skills, Team Building, at minimum	**Platform skills** - public speaking, use of training aids, leading exercises; **Adult learning theory and training process** - minimal overview with emphasis on using objectives to evaluate learners' achievement; **QA skills** reviewed through micro-teaching which also tests ability to conduct training in ways appealing to adult learners and to evaluate learners	Co-train with senior trainer	Exhibits accurate knowledge of QA courses to be taught and teaches core courses; exhibits excellent platform skills with use of adult learning techniques; evaluates learners' achievement of objectives and adapts content based on pre-course questionnaire results
QA TRAINER LEVEL 2	Meets exit skills of Level 1 QA Trainer; has taught most of the QA core courses; is available to train and evaluate trainers and to teach QA and TOT courses	**Trainer skills** reviewed **Adult learning theory and training process** - with detail of each step, emphasis on conducting needs assessment, writing/revising performance based learning objectives with selection/design of training exercises to meet objectives; developing exercises, developing original training content, methods to evaluate trainers; **QA Skills** - refresh any needed; micro-teach TOT skills	Works with QA Project or national training manager to develop courses, conducts Training of Trainers	Follows training process to conduct training needs assessment, revises/adapts objectives and training materials, creates original training content, including all materials and evaluations; teaches all QA content, platform skills and adult learning theory needed for trainer courses

Figure 1-2. Trainer Development Process

SUMMARY

Quality assurance training assists health care providers to learn ways to assess and improve the quality of their service delivery. When mastery learning that is based on adult learning principles and behavior modeling is integrated with competency-based training, the result is a powerful and extremely effective method for providing training.

The responsibility for achieving the learning objectives is shared by the trainer and each participant. If a participant does not meet the course objectives, the trainer should not simply attribute failure to the participant's lack of ability, but should look for additional ways to assist the participant and to improve training methods.

Finally, not every person who understands QA concepts can become a QA trainer. Therefore, the criteria for selecting potential candidates should include a sincere interest in training, in addition to proficiency in QA skills.

TWO

CREATING A POSITIVE TRAINING CLIMATE

INTRODUCTION

The following case studies illustrate the importance of good planning, communication and establishment of a good learning environment—from the participant's and trainer's points of view.

CASE STUDIES

Training from a participant's viewpoint:

You have been informed by your supervisor that you have been selected to participate in a 2-week course in QA Coaching. You were advised of this a week before the course was to start and were told that you had been nominated for participation by someone in authority at the Ministry of Health. You are unsure whether the fact that your name was selected is a positive or negative reflection on your work. Does it mean that you may be in line for a promotion, or does someone think that you haven't been doing a good job and need to be reassigned? No information is provided about the training other than the dates, location and starting time.

The first session is about to begin and you are a little nervous about what to expect. You find a place to sit towards the back of the classroom and then glance around the room. You know only one of the other 10 participants. Five minutes after the session is scheduled to start, the trainer comes hurrying through the door with a stack of papers. Turning to the first person in sight, he says, "Please pass these out!" The trainer then begins the first session on "Review of QA Concepts." You exchange glances with the other participants and wonder whether they, like you, are hoping that the end of the course comes soon.

Training from a trainer's viewpoint:

You have been informed that you are to conduct a 2-week QA Coaching course. You are given the, participant materials, outline and schedule. You pack up all of your course materials and travel to the training site. Upon arrival you find:

- *Some people who are there have never heard about QA*

- *The training room is too small and there is poor ventilation*

- *There is no writing board or overhead projector*

- *The room contains chairs lined up in rows*

- *You planned for 15 participants—30 show up*

Have either of these situations ever happened to you? How would you feel if they did? Would this situation affect your attitude toward the trainer or the course? Unfortunately, from either the participant's or the trainer's point of view, the training is off to a poor start. Given the circumstances, the trainer will have a difficult time creating an appropriate and positive climate for learning.

A positive training climate is one which:

- Acknowledges how people learn

- Encourages and is conducive to learning

- Creates an atmosphere of safety in which participants can ask questions

- Gives responsibility for accomplishing the course objectives to everyone participating, not just the trainer

Chapter Objective

After completing this chapter, the participant will be able to create a positive training climate.

Enabling Objectives

To attain the chapter objective, the participant will:

- Consider how people learn

- Plan for a positive training climate **before** the training course

- Establish and maintain a positive training climate **during** the course

- Continue a positive training climate **after** the course

HOW PEOPLE LEARN

Establishing a positive training climate hinges on understanding how adults learn. The dynamics of the training process depend on the trainer clearly understanding the participants' expectations and needs, and the participants understanding why they are there. Adults who attend courses to acquire new knowledge and skills:

- Require training to be **relevant**

- Are highly **motivated** if they see the training as relevant

- Need **participation** and **active involvement** in the training process

- Desire a **variety** of learning experiences

- Desire **positive feedback**

- Have **personal concerns** and need an atmosphere of safety

- Need to be recognized as **individuals** with unique backgrounds, experiences and learning needs

- Must maintain their **self-esteem**

- Have **high expectations** for themselves and their trainer

- Have **personal needs** that must be taken into consideration

These ten characteristics are described in more detail below.

Relevance

The trainer should design learning experiences that **relate directly to the participants job responsibilities**. For example, supervisors will need to know how QA should become a part of supervision, while clinicians will need to know how they can participate in assessing the quality of their care. The objectives of the course should be stated clearly and linked to job performance at the beginning of the training. Time should be taken to explain how each learning experience relates to the successful accomplishment of the course objectives.

Motivation

People bring **high levels of motivation and interest** to QA training. Clinicians generally want to improve services to their clients, and supervisors want to help clinicians meet service delivery challenges. Motivation can be increased and channeled by the trainer who provides clear training goals and objectives. To make best use of a high level of participant interest, it is important to explore ways to incorporate the needs of each participant into the training sessions. This means that the clinical trainer needs to know quite a bit about the participants, either from background information or by allowing participants to talk about their experience and learning needs early in the course.

Involvement

Few individuals prefer just to sit back and listen. The effective trainer will design learning experiences that **actively involve the participants in the training process**. Examples of how the trainer may involve participants include:

- Allowing them to provide input regarding schedules, activities and other events

- Questioning and feedback

- Brainstorming and discussions

- Hands-on work

- Group and individual projects

- Classroom activities

Variety

Participants attending training **desire variety**. The trainer should use a variety of training methods including:

- Audiovisual aids

  - writing boards

  - flipcharts

  - overhead transparencies

  - slides

  - videotapes

- Illustrated lectures

- Demonstrations

- Brainstorming

- Small group activities

- Group discussions

- Role plays and case studies

- Guest speakers

Positive Feedback

Participants need to know **how they are doing**, particularly in light of the objectives and expectations of the training course. Is their progress in learning QA skills meeting the trainer's expectations? Is their level of performance meeting the standards established for the task? **Positive feedback provides this information**.

Learning experiences should be designed to move from the known to the unknown, or from simple activities to complex ones. This progression provides positive experiences and feedback for the participant. To maintain positive feedback, the trainer can:

- Give verbal praise either in front of other participants or individually

- Use positive responses during questioning:

  - "That's correct!"

  - "Good answer!"

  - "That was an excellent response!"

- Recognize appropriate skills while coaching during team work:

  - "Very good work! Ilka's Pareto diagram is clear and correct."

  - "Team 5 has done a very good job of developing a client questionnaire. You could all use it as an example."

- Let the participants know how they are progressing toward achieving course objectives

Being Treated as an Individual

People prefer to be **treated as individuals**, each of whom has a unique background, experience and learning need(s). Past experiences are good foundations upon which to base new learning.

> Each person is the best judge of what ideas and skills are relevant to her or his particular situation.

To ensure that each participant feels like an individual, the trainer should:

- Use participant names as often as possible

- Involve all participants as often as possible

- Treat participants with respect

- Allow participants to share information with others during classroom instruction and while working with facility-based teams

Self-Esteem

Participants need to **maintain high self-esteem** to deal with the demands of a training course. Respect on the part of the trainer, which includes avoiding negative feedback, is essential to maintaining participant self-esteem and confidence while learning.

Health professionals attending a course:

- Require training which adds to rather than subtracts from their sense of competence and self-esteem

- Need to have their own career accomplishments recognized

High Expectations

People attending training courses tend to set **high expectations both for the trainers and for themselves**. Getting to know their trainer(s) is a real and important need. Trainers should be prepared to talk modestly, and within limits, about themselves, their abilities and their backgrounds.

Personal Needs

All participants have **personal needs** during training. Taking timely breaks and providing the best possible ventilation, proper lighting and an environment as free from distraction as possible are among the ways of reducing tension and contributing to a positive training atmosphere.

PLANNING FOR A POSITIVE TRAINING CLIMATE BEFORE THE COURSE

A positive training environment does not come about by accident, but through **careful planning**. This planning takes thought, time, preparation and often some study on the part of the trainer. In most cases, course design will be the responsibility of an advanced trainer while **conducting** the course will be the role of the trainer. Course design requires special knowledge and experience in order to write primary and enabling objectives and select appropriate training methods and materials. These topics are beyond the scope of this manual.

During the planning phase of the course, the trainer should:

- Obtain basic **information about the participants**

- Review the existing **course materials** (e.g., reference manual, course handbook and training aids)

- Organize the **physical resources** of the training site

- Anticipate the **needs of the participants**

- **Prepare her/himself** for the course

Although no one can anticipate everything that will happen during a training course, the objective is to minimize the unexpected and then deal with any unplanned events as gracefully as possible.

Information About Participants

It is important for the trainer to know basic information about participants such as:

- **How many** participants will be attending the course?

  For the trainer to plan for seating arrangements, course materials, clinical activities, etc., it is critical to know how many will be attending the course. Some training methods such as case studies work best with small groups, while other methods, including illustrated lectures, are better suited to larger groups.

- **Why** are the participants enrolled in the course?

  Sometimes this can be found out in advance, although often one has to ask participants on the first day of training. Knowing why they are attending and how they feel about coming to the course is important for the trainer.

- What is the **experience and educational background** of the participants?

  The trainer should attempt to gather as much information about participants as possible prior to training. An effective way to do this is to meet the participants **before** the course begins and talk with them about their background and expectations. When this is not possible, the trainer should do this during the first day of the course.

- What types of **QA activities** will the participants perform in their daily work after training?

  Knowing the exact nature of the work that participants must perform after training is critical for the trainer. It is important to use appropriate, job-specific examples throughout the course so that participants can draw connections between what is being taught and what they will need to do. This is an excellent way to reinforce the importance of what is being learned.

Course Materials

In rare cases, the trainer may be responsible for selecting the training methods and activities to be used in the course. In most cases however, trainers are given a training package consisting of a reference manual, course schedule and outline, audiovisual aids and competency-based knowledge and skill assessment instruments.

In other instances, the trainer may be asked to participate in a course that has been planned and developed by an organization or agency (e.g., Ministry of Health) or a medical or nursing

school. In either case, the trainer should not have any responsibility for **developing** the course, although there may be situations when s/he may have to **adapt** the course to the local setting. The task then is to make the best use of available course materials. In addition, any supplemental or new materials needed to customize or localize the course must be developed in advance of the training.

Even if most of the training activities and methods (e.g., case studies, group discussion, brainstorming, use of assessment instruments) are specified in a training package, considerable thought and planning are needed to determine the **timing**, **sequence** and **progression** from one activity to another.

Physical Resources

The trainer must consider the **physical resources** at the training site. Such facilities planning is vital. There are, of course, times when training courses will be scheduled in remote places which cannot be visited beforehand. In such cases, it is important to consult with someone who knows the facility well in order not to leave things to chance. Regardless of the course location, the trainer must be innovative and flexible in dealing with the unexpected events that invariably occur during a course.

The first aspect of facilities planning deals with the physical resources of the training site:

- Is the size of the space appropriate for the size of the participant group? Is there a need for smaller "breakout" rooms for participants? Is proper furniture available such as tables, chairs and desks?

- Is the room properly heated/cooled and ventilated?

- Is there a writing board with chalk or marking pens?

- Is the lighting adequate? Can the room be darkened in order to show audiovisuals and still permit participants to take notes or follow along in their training materials?

- Is there proper audiovisual and demonstration equipment? Is it in working order, with spare parts, such as bulbs and electrical extension cords, readily available?

The **physical arrangement of the furniture and participants** within the room will affect the interaction and communication that occurs during the course. Plan the physical arrangement of the room to accommodate the selected training strategies. For example, most QA training is done in teams. Placing teams around a table helps participants to talk and work with each other without disrupting other teams. A large group discussion,

however, will require participants to be able to see and talk easily with the entire group. The most common arrangements for classroom tables and chairs are:

- **U-shaped**. This arrangement allows the trainer to move about the room and maintain eye contact. It works well with audiovisuals such as projectors, videotapes or flipcharts.

- **Rectangular or circular**. This arrangement is excellent when training uses primarily group discussion and brainstorming; it is not well-suited to using audiovisuals.

- **Small group arrangement**. Several groups of tables and chairs arranged in separate workstations provides space for small groups to work together.

Participant Needs

Planning to meet the **needs of participants** is essential. Some of the questions that must be addressed include:

- Are there physical barriers?

- Will participants be able to see the audiovisuals? Is the projection screen well placed? Is the video monitor big enough?

- Will there be adequate electrical power throughout the course? What will happen if the power fails?

- What plans need to be made for meals? Will refreshments such as tea, coffee, soft drinks or water be provided during breaks?

- Does the facility or trainer have a policy regarding smoking or consuming alcoholic beverages?

- Are there toilet facilities and are they adequately maintained?

- Are telephones accessible and working? Can emergency messages be taken?

- What arrangements have been made for emergencies, such as accidents or sudden illnesses?

Self-Preparation

A variety of activities is important to the trainer's **self-preparation**. Before the course, the trainer should:

- Update her/his knowledge about the course topics (e.g., quality design, conflict management, force field analysis)

- Assure that her/his training skills are up to standard (e.g., using a case study, conducting exercises and role plays)

- Revise training aids such as overhead transparencies to be sure they are up-to-date

- Prepare and personalize a set of trainer's notes

    Colored pens or markers can be used to:

    - Highlight key points

    - Add key questions

    - Insert reminders to conduct the activities presented in the course outline (case studies, role plays, discussions, demonstrations, problem-solving activities, etc.)

Trainer's notes, such as key content points or questions for the participants, can be outlined on the writing board, flipcharts or in transparencies. Notes and reminders also can be written directly on the reference manual pages.

Each of the activities needed for planning a positive training environment is covered in more detail in subsequent chapters.

One final element is the trainer's **mental** preparation. It is natural for the trainer to be somewhat anxious before beginning a course. Setting unrealistic expectations (e.g., expecting to begin a course free from anxiety and with total self-confidence) increases a trainer's sense of strain. A better strategy is to anticipate and accept a certain amount of anxiety, reflect on successful past experiences, focus on the careful planning that has been completed and then launch into the training process. In addition, the trainer who recognizes these feelings of initial anxiety often makes a better connection with participants who may be feeling the same or a higher level of concern.

ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING A POSITIVE TRAINING CLIMATE DURING THE COURSE

Good planning helps to assure a positive training climate before training begins. Establishing and maintaining a positive training climate during training depends on how the trainer delivers information because the **trainer sets the tone** for the course. In any course, **how** something is said may be just as important as **what** is said. To help create and maintain an atmosphere that is conducive to learning, use an introductory course overview, warm-up activities, effective verbal and nonverbal communication, and humor, as well as informal activities outside the course.

Overview

An introductory course overview may be used to:

- Allow participants to become acquainted with each other

- Review course goals and participant learning objectives

- Describe activities that will occur during the course

- Review participant expectations for the course

- Set ground rules for in-class behaviors

- Examine the course schedule and course materials

- Indicate the location of telephones and other services

- Answer any questions participants might have

Warm-up Activities

These activities encourage participant involvement and interaction and can help to diminish any personal concerns the participants may have. They can be used at the beginning of the course and periodically throughout training, for instance, at the start of each day. **Trainers should participate in these activities**. Examples of warm-up activities include:

- On the first day of training it is important that participants get to know each other. Even when they already know each other, the trainer needs to become acquainted with participants. Instead of the usual "tell us your name" option, divide the group into pairs. Give participants a few minutes to interview each other. Each participant is then given a minute to introduce her/his partner by name and to share at least two unique characteristics about her/him.

- Divide the group into pairs and ask participants to tell each other their favorite food or to name the animal they feel best describes them and why. This information is shared with the group when participants

introduce their partners.

- Give participants slips of paper and ask them to write down at least three things they would like to learn during that day's activities. Ask them to attach their slips to a poster board or piece of flipchart paper which is posted in the classroom. The trainer can then review these expectations with the group and tell them which topics will and will not be covered. This activity also can help the trainer focus the course on individual or group learning needs and interests.

- Participants and the trainer form a circle. Using a soft ball, toss the ball around the circle. Participants state their names as they catch the ball. After a few minutes, when catching the ball, they call out the name of the person who tossed the ball to them.

   This activity also can be used throughout the course by substituting a quick information exchange for people's names. For example, the trainer may ask "What are some inputs related to immunization activities?" The ball is tossed around the circle and participants call out a different input as they catch the ball.

- Participants write down three questions and find someone in the room they know as little about as possible. Each asks the other her/his questions. The participants then introduce their partners by sharing both the questions and the answers.

- Prepare a name tag for each participant. Place the tags in a box and have each participant draw a name tag. Participants locate the person whose name tag they drew and introduce themselves. (This is especially useful for larger groups—20 or more.)

Verbal Communication

Verbal communication refers to how something is said. In order to capture and maintain participants' interest, trainers should:

- Vary the **pitch, tone and volume of their voice** to emphasize important points. Avoid monotone speech which will cause boredom no matter how important the content.

- Begin each session and each topic with a **strong introduction** to capture interest and draw attention to important points.

- **Communicate on a personal level** with each of the participants by using their names; however, be sensitive to cultural norms. In some settings using first names may make the participants more comfortable; in other settings, use of first names may be inappropriate.

- Try to **incorporate participants' ideas and examples** into the training. Remembering a participant's comments, either from a previous session or from outside the training environment, will encourage participant interest and further participation.

- **Avoid repeating words or phrases** such as "Do you know what I mean?" "...you know?" and "Do you understand?" These can be extremely annoying after a short time.

- **Vary the pace and delivery.** Make important points slowly and cover less important material more quickly. Use terms that are familiar or easily understood by the participants.

- Try to make **logical and smooth transitions** between topics. Where possible, link topics so that the concluding review or summary of one presentation introduces the next topic. Internal summarization such as this is very helpful when introducing QA tools or materials which are sequenced, such as steps in problem solving. In any case, clearly state the beginning of a new topic and use audiovisual aids (chalk or writing board, flipchart, projection screen) to show it. **Abrupt transitions between topics can cause confusion**.

- Take the time to **give clear directions for all classroom and clinical activities** so that participants will not be confused and lose interest. Participants should not have to wonder what will come next, what they are supposed to do or how activities will be conducted.

Nonverbal Communication

Nonverbal communication is as important as verbal communication. Such things as **dress**, **eye contact**, **body language and movement about the room** can have a significant impact on establishing and maintaining a positive

training climate. To use nonverbal communication effectively:

- Remember the **importance of a first impression**. How you greet participants and the initial "message" you convey can set the tone of the course.

- Use **eye contact** to "read" faces. This is an excellent technique for establishing rapport, detecting understanding or confusion and getting feedback.

- Use **positive facial expressions** to aid in the process of communication.

- **Walk about the room** as you make your points. A skilled trainer coordinates movements and gestures with instructional delivery. Be energetic!

- **Walk towards participants as they respond** to questions or make comments. A slow nodding of the head while maintaining eye contact demonstrates interest and encourages active participant involvement.

- **Avoid distracting gestures or body language**, such as fidgeting, excessive pacing, jingling keys or coins in pockets, or playing with chalk, pointers or marking pens.

- **Limit the use of desks, lecterns or podiums** that establish an artificial barrier between the trainer and participants.

- **Display enthusiasm** about the topic and its importance. Energy and excitement are contagious and directly affect the enthusiasm of participants.

Use of Humor

Humor fosters a team environment while enhancing and maintaining a positive training climate. At no time should humor be offensive nor should humor be used or tolerated as a means of attack. The best humor in training situations is gentle and directed towards producing an atmosphere of relaxation. Examples of appropriate humor include:

- Cartoons and transparencies related to the topic

- Topic-related puns and stories

- Cartoons integrated into training handouts

Informal Learning Activities

Activities outside class and conversations during meals and refreshment breaks can be a means of informal learning for both the trainer and the participant as well as a means of creating a relaxed atmosphere. The trainer must remember, however, to maintain professional standards and respect the confidentiality of such informal conversations. Gossip about participants and other trainers is rarely, if ever, helpful. Participants may attempt to gain the favor of trainers by being critical of their peers. It is important to defend the dignity of the training course and the participants by not being drawn into such interactions.

Commitments made by a trainer during informal activities are as valid as those made in the classroom. S/he should follow through on promises made to participants, whether it is for photocopying a topic-related article, arranging an introduction to a colleague or bringing up a participant's point for discussion in the next training session.

Incorporating participants' ideas discussed during informal conversations is a way for the trainer to show that s/he values their contributions. Ask participants to help you remember: "Please remind me to use your experience with gathering patient satisfaction information in tomorrow's discussion."

CONTINUING THE POSITIVE TRAINING CLIMATE AFTER THE COURSE

Some situations, especially coaching and problem solving courses, allow for **providing follow-up after training**. If so, giving assistance in the workplace can be very valuable and should be discussed before the training course ends. In these instances, there is the possibility for continuing the positive training climate established during training. Another possibility which may be considered is an advanced course (i.e., a more formal follow-up to the course being completed). Trainers should be careful not to be carried away in the enthusiasm which often accompanies the completion of a course and promise more than they have the power to deliver. On the other hand, it may be helpful to hear the participants' desires for further training and to carry these requests to the appropriate decision-making person or organization. (For more on help and follow-up after the course, see **Chapter 5**.)

SUMMARY

Effective training depends on **establishing a positive training climate**. The QA trainer carries the central responsibility for creating and maintaining such a climate.

Creating a **positive training climate before the training**

course includes understanding the participants and their social and cultural backgrounds, reviewing existing course materials, considering the needs of the participants, organizing and using the physical facilities to maximum benefit and self-preparation.

Establishing and maintaining a **positive training climate during the course** is influenced by the delivery style of the trainer, including verbal and nonverbal communication and the use of humor. Throughout the course particular emphasis should be placed on working effectively with each participant and maintaining an atmosphere of respect for all participants.

Finally, planning to continue the **positive training climate after the course** is important for the successful transfer of the training to the workplace. Arrangements **must** be made for practical training for new coaches, and problem solving teams should be given the opportunity to apply learning with the assistance of a coach.