

Teaching Materials and Services

Health teaching made easier: How to create a manual. *Contact*

The October 1988 issue of *Contact* No. 105 contains a very useful and extensive item on 'Health teaching made easier: How to create a manual' by Birgitta Rubenson, RN, MPH. Suggestions are given on how simple learning materials can be produced by teachers and health care supervisors to help health workers. The ideas, directions and examples given can also be easily adapted for use when producing other kinds of learning materials. Some points from the main headings are:

Objective of the manual. The questions: 'Who are the readers going to be? What is the message of the manual?' are asked. Health workers should be able to identify with the content in the manual. The better defined the group of readers are, the more useful the manual will be. In a good manual the health worker can recognize him or herself and the working situation.

Structure and style. Here guidelines for writing simply are given, for example, use simple, short common words, explain technical words. The language has to be simple, so that the health worker can understand and learn. The manual should be written for the reader to understand and learn, not for the writer to show his knowledge of profession and language.

Illustrations. Several examples of illustrations are displayed and the author states that: 'Illustrations can make explanations clearer and more easily understood, but they can also cause confusion. It is important to use clear, simple illustrations in the right way. They serve to: make the text more inviting to read; highlight important issues; explain difficult concepts; and increase understanding.'

Layout. Layout is the way you arrange the text and illustrations on the pages of the manual. You need to decide on: the size of the pages; the margins; the type of headings and sub-headings; and the type of letters.

Conclusion. We have given you some help on how to prepare simple learning materials for students and staff. There is a great need for these materials using local languages and customs. If you have some information to share, we encourage you to try and then let us know how you get on. In case of great need, CMC has a small fund to support printing of locally produced materials. If you have questions or concerns in relation to preparing materials you are invited to write to *Contact*. This issue also gives details of other publications which could prove useful:

Helping Health Workers Learn, by David Werner and Bill Bower, 1982, 632 pages. This book, by the authors of the village health care handbook, 'Where There Is No Doctor', is a collection of methods, aids and 'triggers to the imagination'. It is based on 16 years of experience with a villager-run health programme in the mountains of western Mexico. Written in clear, basic English with hundreds of drawings and photographs to emphasize the key points, its focus is educational rather than medical.

The book is aimed at instructors and health workers who identify with the working people and who feel that their first responsibility is to the poor. This community-based approach tries to help people analyse and improve their situation. For more information write to: *The Hesperian Foundation, PO Box 1692, Palo Alto, CA, 94302 USA.*

Teaching Health-care Workers, A Practical Guide, by Fred Abbatt and Rosemary McMahon. MacMillan, 1985, 249 pages. This book is very useful for teachers who train health care workers, especially in developing countries. Specific guidance is given on decisions about what students should learn, how to teach, and planning training programmes. *For more information write to: TALC, Box 49, St Albans, Herts, AL1 4AX, UK.*

Teaching for Better Learning—a guide for teachers of primary health care staff, by F R Abbatt, funded by the Government of the United Kingdom Overseas Development Administration, 1980, 137 pages. What should your students learn? How can you help your students learn? How do you know whether your students have learnt? How do you prepare teaching materials? These are essential questions to ask before starting to teach others. And this book answers these questions with the help of many other experienced people. *For more information write to: TALC at the above address.*

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