

The Power of Cross-Training

Maximizing Lessons Learned from Past Outbreaks to Develop a Sustainable
Laboratory Cross-Training Program

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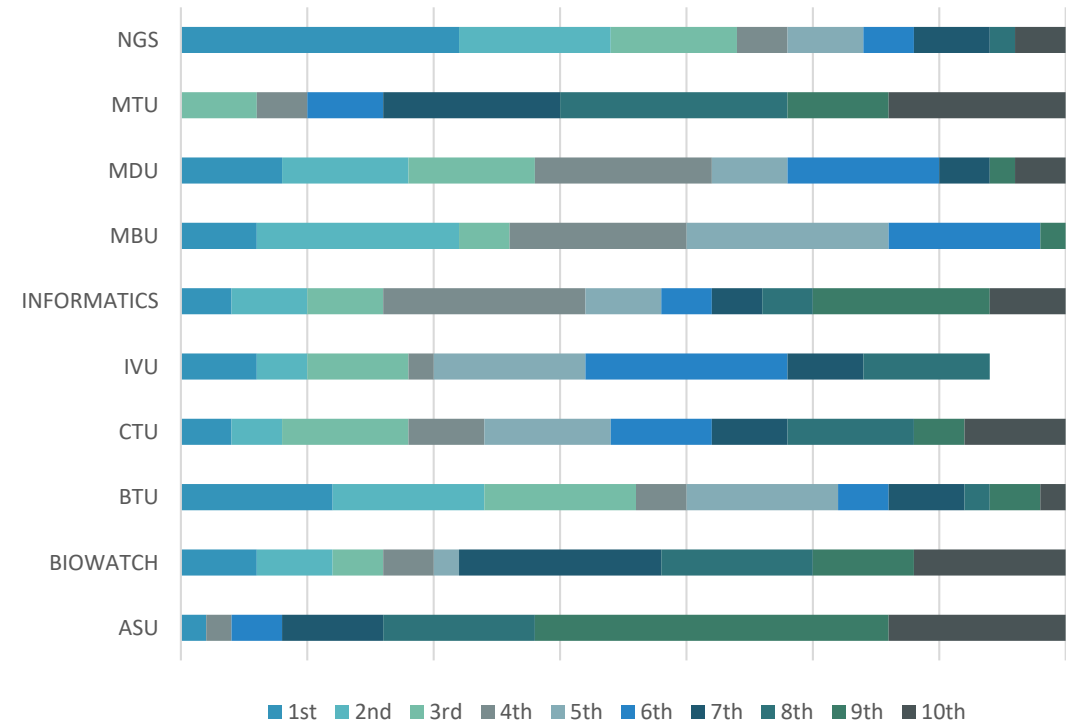


- B.S. in Clinical Laboratory Science, Howard University
- PMP Candidate (Anticipated April 2024)
- MBA (Anticipated December 2024)
- 12 Years of lab experience
 - Private Internal Medicine Practice, Generalist (2013 – 2015)
 - Children’s National Hospital System, Pediatric Transfusion Medicine (2015 – 2019)
 - D.C. Public Health Lab (2020 – Present)
 - Medical Technologist (March 2020 – Present)
 - Interim Laboratory and Epidemiology Coordinator (October 2020 – October 2021)
 - Supervisory Medical Technologist, Mobile Testing Unit (December 2020 – February 2022)
 - Cross training Coordinator (January 2023 – Present)

What is cross training?

- THE ANSWER!
- A powerful training plan lab managers can use to build a reserve of staff to prepare for future challenges, resolve current challenges, and optimize overall lab preparedness
- The foundation for an agile and future-ready workforce
- An opportunity for career development and job enhancement
- A cohesive approach to address lab needs as well as staff wants AND needs

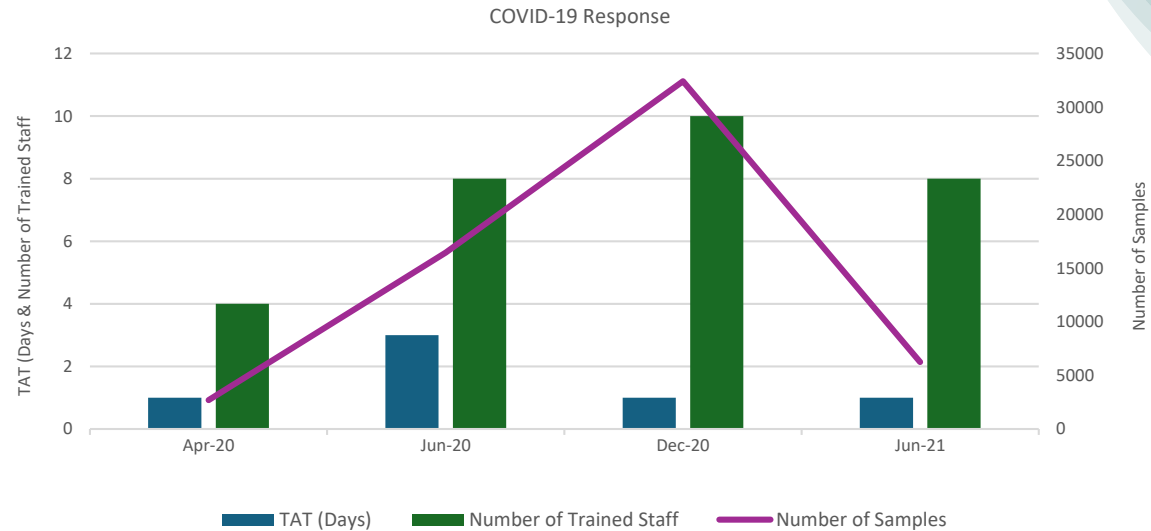
Staff Cross Training Preferences



COVID-19 Response

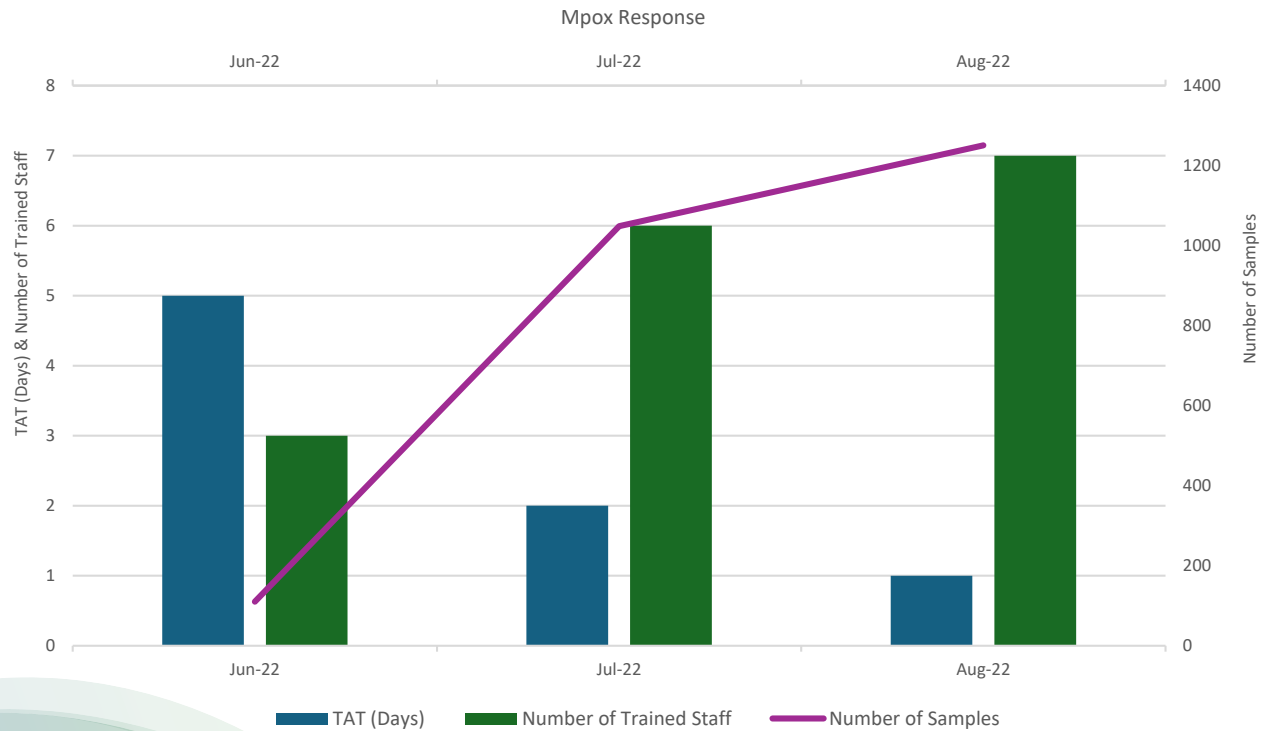
Retrospective Analysis

- Surge led to increased sample volume, subsequently increasing TAT
- Trainers were required to train AND test almost simultaneously



- Training efforts increased the number of trained staff across multiple units to widen staff availability
 - Lacked a concentrated focus on pain points
 - Didn't efficiently address overload and exhaustion
 - Didn't improve TAT on a consistent basis

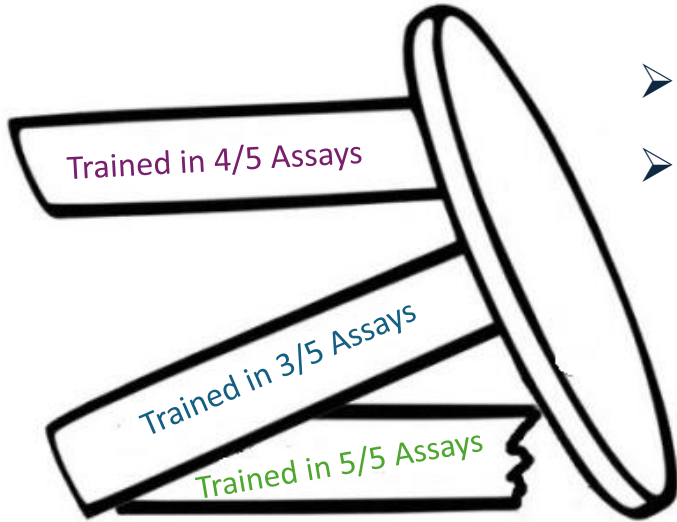
2022 Mpox Response



Retrospective Analysis

- Doubled the number of trained staff in less than 1 month
 - Pulled staff with complementary skills
 - Significantly improved trainer availability
- Decreased TAT despite the increasing sample volume
- Improved operational efficiency
- Implemented a rotating, sustainable schedule

Benefits of Cross Training



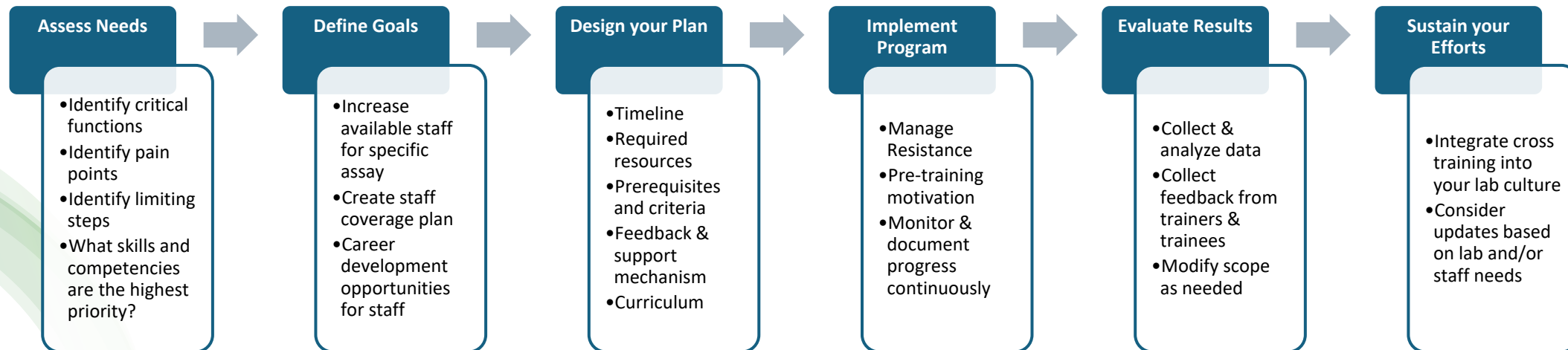
- Allows for readily available support for critical functions
- Increases schedule flexibility
 - Prevents overload/Exhaustion
 - Decreases the need for overtime
 - Allows for a PTO-friendly schedule
- Resolves common operational interruptions and delays
- Increases workforce sustainability
- Promotes knowledge Transfer
- Significantly reduces the occurrence of assay bottlenecks

| Preanalytical | Analytical | Post-analytical |
|---------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Accessioning | Batching | Sample Storage |
| Aliquoting | QC Monitoring | QC Charting |
| Inventory | Reagent Preparation | Documentation |
| | Testing | |

Implementing a Cross-Training Program

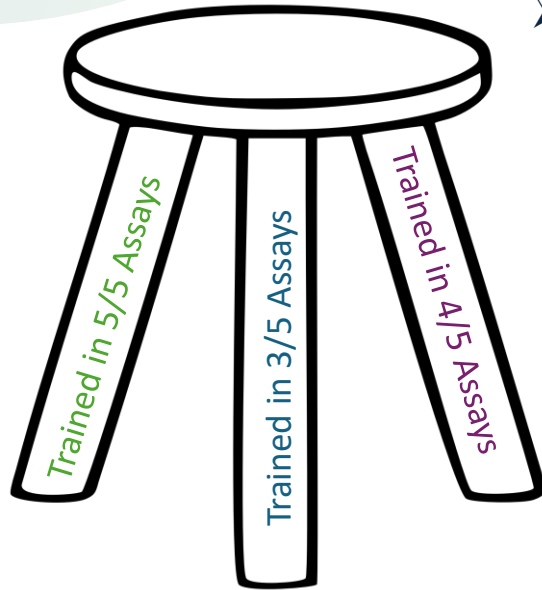
6-Step process based on the following core questions:

- What are the needs for your lab? For each department?
- What needs to be prioritized?
- What do staff need for skills enhancement and/or career development?
- How can you implement a cross-training program without interfering with daily operations?
- How can you overcome staff resistance and encourage collaboration?



Needs Assessment

- Identify overall need first
- Identify areas of the lab that would benefit from cross-training
- By unit, assess the following:



- Workflow
 - Limiting steps
 - Testing Bottlenecks
 - Current solutions to undesirable outcomes
- Staff Availability
 - Coverage for planned/unplanned leave
 - Coverage during cross training (trainers & trainees)

- Categorize tasks as critical, routine, or specialized functions
- Identify areas of concern
- What are your unit supervisors/managers' concerns?

Defining your goals

- Based on your needs assessment
- SMART goals!
 - Specific (Unit specific, project-specific, assay-specific)
 - Measurable
 - Achievable
 - Relevant
 - Time-based
- Are these goals addressing the identified needs?
 - Are these goals obtainable without interrupting current operations?
 - Will there be additional strain placed on operations or staff in order to meet these goals?
 - Are these sustainable goals?

Designing your plan

➤ Achievable Timeline

- Does your cross-training schedule align with the current operational schedule?
- Is the allotted timeframe appropriate for each training module?

➤ Required Resources

- Training Staff
- Staff coverage for trainers' and trainees' units
- Training materials & supplies
- Quality Assurance

➤ Prerequisites and Criteria

- Trainee experience and skills
- Trainer experience and ability to train

➤ Feedback and support mechanism

- How are you collecting and assessing feedback?

1. Which days of the week work best with your unit schedule for your staff to be pulled (for approximately 3 hours each day) for BT training? *

Please indicate ALL available options

- Monday
- Tuesday
- Wednesday
- Thursday
- Friday

2. For each of your selected days in Question 1, please indicate the available time frame for that day. *

For example:

Monday: 10AM - 1PM or 2PM - 5PM
Tuesday: 1PM - 4PM
Friday: 9AM - 3PM

Enter your answer

3. Which days of the week do NOT work with your unit schedule for your staff to be pulled for BT training? *

- Monday
- Tuesday
- Wednesday
- Thursday
- Friday

4. Please share any additional comments/concerns/suggestions regarding BT training/scheduling here *

Enter your answer

+ Add new

Implementing Your Program

➤ Manage Resistance

- Staff buy-in is critical!!!
- Allow unit managers and trainers to participate in the planning process
- Actively solicit feedback and monitor progress

➤ Prepare your trainers

- Explain the process from start to finish
- Clarify what their role and required tasks will be (Documentation, scheduling conflicts, communication, etc.)
- Address ALL concerns **before** implementation.

- Pre-training motivation

- Use this time to build anticipation

➤ Monitor progress and document continuously

- Utilize Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)
- Maintain training checklists regularly & have a clearly defined tracking system in place
- Logbook or register

Creating a Schedule

- Keep it consistent.
- Collaborate with unit supervisors and managers to identify optimal training windows
- Establish an efficient mode of schedule dissemination
 - Easy to follow
 - Aligns with agreed upon timeframes
 - Easily managed

➤ Keep. It. Consistent.

Mon
29

BTU Training- Environmental Specimen Processing Review Session
DFS-Conference Room-4008
Williams, Channyn (DFS)

BTU Training- Specimen Processing Observation
BSL-3
Williams, Channyn (DFS)

Today < > January 28 – February 3, 2024

| Sun 28 | Mon 29 | Tue 30 | Wed 31 | Thu 1 | Fri 2 |
|-----------|---|-----------|---|----------|--|
| | | | | | Update/Finalize Training & Comp Docs (Add Tech. Supervisor to signatures) |
| 7 AM | | | | | |
| 8 AM | | | | | |
| 9 AM | BTU Training- Environmental Specimen Processing Review Session DFS-Conference Room-4008 Williams, Channyn (DFS) | | | | |
| 10 AM | | | | | |
| 11 AM | BTU Training- Specimen Processing Observation BSL-3 Williams, Channyn (DFS) | | BT Training: Hands-On Environmental Specimen Processing BSL-3 Williams, Channyn (DFS) | | BT Training: Environmental Specimen Processing + EZ-1 Extraction BSL-3 Williams, Channyn (DFS) |
| 12 PM | | | | | |
| 1 PM | | | | | |
| 2 PM | | | | | |

Evaluating your results

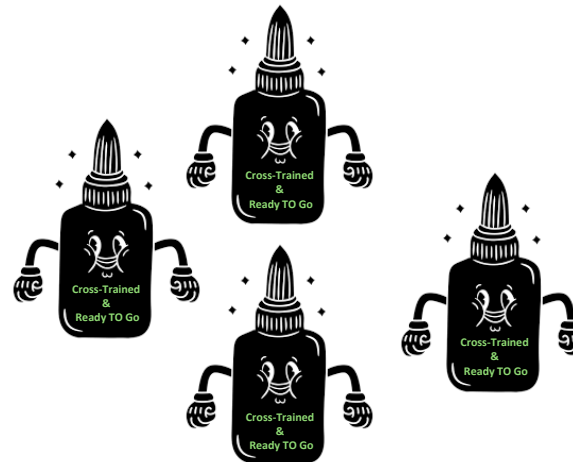
- Continuous evaluations are critical
 - Short weekly huddle/Teams meeting
- Collect and analyze data
 - Compare projected vs. actual training numbers
 - Training & competency document completion
- Are cross-training goals meeting the projected deadlines?
 - If not, what corrective actions are being implemented? Are they effective?
- Collect feedback
 - Assess participant satisfaction
 - Did trainers feel adequately prepared and supported?
 - Did trainees feel confident in their abilities to perform newly acquired skills?
 - Are unit managers/supervisors satisfied with the implemented training schedule?
 - Were concerns resolved?

Sustaining your efforts

- Integrate cross-training into everyday operations
 - Allows for continuous improvement
 - Creates opportunities for progressive enhancement of skills
- Highlight success
 - Number of times the need for staff coverage was met vs. pre-cross-training coverage
- Reward staff for their efforts
- Consistency



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