CONTENTS

10.1 What do we Mean by ‘Knowledge’? 121
10.2 The Importance of Knowledge 122
10.3 The Functions of a Teacher in Helping Students Acquire Knowledge 123
10.4 Selecting Relevant and Necessary Knowledge 123
10.5 Establishing Sources of Information 126
10.6 Helping Students to Learn the Knowledge 128
10.7 Presenting Information Effectively 128
10.8 Helping Students to Remember Facts 132
10.9 Helping Students to Refer to Information Sources 133
10.10 Assessing Knowledge 134
10.11 Oral Examinations 135
10.12 Written Examinations 136
10.13 Open Book Examinations 140
10
Teaching and Assessing Knowledge

10.1 WHAT DO WE MEAN BY ‘KNOWLEDGE’?

In this book, we use the word ‘knowledge’ to mean the facts, and the understanding of these facts, which will help the Primary Health Care (PHC) worker to give good health care to the community.

The range of knowledge which is relevant to health care is very wide—much wider than was thought even a few years ago. At one time the whole emphasis of health care was on treating the individual patient who was ill. This patient was thought of as a biological and chemical machine. So health workers were taught in great detail about the biology and chemistry of individual people (i.e. Anatomy, Physiology and Biochemistry). Since that time much more has been understood about the psychological and social causes of disease, so medicine is now much more concerned with the ‘Whole Patient’. Also the policy of PHC has meant that educating patients, preventing disease and working with communities has become more important.

Because of these changes, the knowledge which is important to health workers has expanded to include knowledge about:

- communities and the way they work;
- psychology and methods of communication with individuals and groups;
- management and planning of health services;
- disease transmission and its control;
- providing suitable food and water.

This change in our understanding of health care does not mean that Anatomy and Physiology are of no value. But it does mean that these subjects are not the only foundation on which health care training should be built. It also means that learning large amounts of very detailed information on Anatomy and Physiology can be rather a waste of time.

Changing Facts

There are many ‘facts’ which are not really facts at all. They are just the present day opinion, or the best information we have so far. For example, the ways in which various diseases are treated change as new information becomes available.

Because facts change, teachers should make a special effort to continue their own education so that they are as well informed as possible. They should also emphasise to their students that ‘facts’ can change and that the students should continue learning throughout their career.