Fourth Annual

2001

National Human Services Training Evaluation Symposium

May 23–25, 2001

Faculty Club
University of California, Berkeley

Co-sponsored by
the California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC),
the California Department of Social Services,
the National Staff Development and Training Association
of the American Public Human Services Association,
and the American Humane Association

Proceedings
of the
Fourth Annual
National Human Services
Training Evaluation Symposium

The material in this volume is based on presentations and discussions at the Fourth Annual National Human Services Training Evaluation Symposium, held May 23–25, 2001, at the University of California, Berkeley

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

Many people and organizations contributed to make this year's National Human Services Training Evaluation Symposium a success. CalSWEC is especially grateful to the co-sponsors of the event: the California Department of Social Services, the National Staff Development and Training Association of the American Public Human Services Association, and the American Humane Association.

The evaluation symposium would not have been possible without the outstanding work and advice of the Steering committee. This year's members included Jane Berdie, Marsha Carlson, Sherrill Clark, Dale Curry, Barrett Johnson, Naomi Lynch, Chris Mathias, Andrew Peterson, and David Wegenast. CalSWEC staff who were also indispensable to the planning and implementation of the symposium included Marsha Carlson, Kathryn Kietzman, and Terry Jackson. Karen Ringuette and Kathryn Kietzman provided great assistance with the editing of the proceedings.

Finally, CalSWEC wishes to thank all the participants in this year's symposium. All the contributions of the presenters, facilitators, and attendees make the symposium a unique forum to move the field of training evaluation forward.

Introduction

The proceedings published in this volume are the result of presentations and discussions at the Fourth Annual National Human Services Training Evaluation Symposium held May 23–25, 2001, at the University of California, Berkeley.

The symposium, held during the past four years at the Faculty Club on campus, is co-sponsored by the California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC), the California Department of Social Services, the National Staff Development and Training Association of the American Public Human Services Association, and the American Humane Association. It offers a unique environment for training evaluators from around the country to present and discuss emerging issues in the field of training evaluation.

This year's symposium program reflected three major challenges that currently face training evaluators: (1) how to measure outcomes, (2) how to evaluate large training projects, and (3) how to integrate transfer of learning methods into training.

Dave Wegenast discussed a fifth level of outcome measurement—Return on Investment—in his keynote address. John Poertner also addressed outcomes with a discussion of evidence-based practice and the importance of integrating research into practice. Freda Bernotavicz presented on underlying competencies that underpin good outcomes and how the state of Maine reorganized the child welfare hiring process to consider these underlying competencies. Jean Ross and Sarah Cearley focused their presentation on the logic model, a framework for designing and implementing human services evaluation that focuses on outcomes. Many of the presentations noted that the process of evaluation is important in achieving outcomes.

In the area of evaluating large training projects, Margaret Rainforth reported on the Standardized Core Curriculum Project in California, a collaborative effort to provide evaluated core training for new child welfare workers. Andy Peterson discussed item analysis as a method to improve the validity of a knowledge assessment tool used in a training program for new child welfare workers in New Jersey. Jane Berdie, Cindy Parry, and Robin

Leake presented on the American Humane Association's comprehensive evaluation of Pennsylvania's child welfare system, covering both the methods of qualitative data evaluation and the importance of ongoing buy-in by the key stakeholders in the system. Anita Barbee's presentation focused on implementing and evaluating a large leadership training program in Kentucky within a very short time frame.

Finally, several of the presentations focused on new training delivery methods that integrate the transfer of learning with the evaluation process. Marcia Sanderson and Joan Richardson presented on Participant Action Plans, which were used to evaluate a statewide training effort in Advanced Risk Assessment in Texas. Dave Wegenast demonstrated the use of Blackboard.com™ to deliver Web-based training with an integrated evaluation. Irene Becker also demonstrated the Public Child Welfare Training Academy's distance learning modules that were developed as part of the Standardized Core Curriculum Project in California.

About the Proceedings

This year, CalSWEC organized the symposium proceedings more formally to more completely represent the presentation material. Rather than reproduce the discussions and presentations verbatim, presenters submitted papers related to their presentation at the symposium. The discussion that took place after the presentations is summarized after each of these papers. Readers should note that the papers generally correspond to the presentations, but there are some differences.

Additional summaries are included for the Affinity Action Groups, which were topical discussions held during lunch. Finally, feedback that participants provided on the symposium itself is summarized at the end of the volume.

Measuring Return on Investment (ROI)

David P. Wegenast, *D.S.W.*

Abstract

Return on Investment is a Level Five training evaluation model that compares costs to benefits and expresses the return as a percent. It is a useful model to communicate the benefits of training to program stakeholders. This paper calculates the return on investment of the 2001 National Human Services Training Evaluation Symposium held at the University of California, Berkeley in May.

Introduction

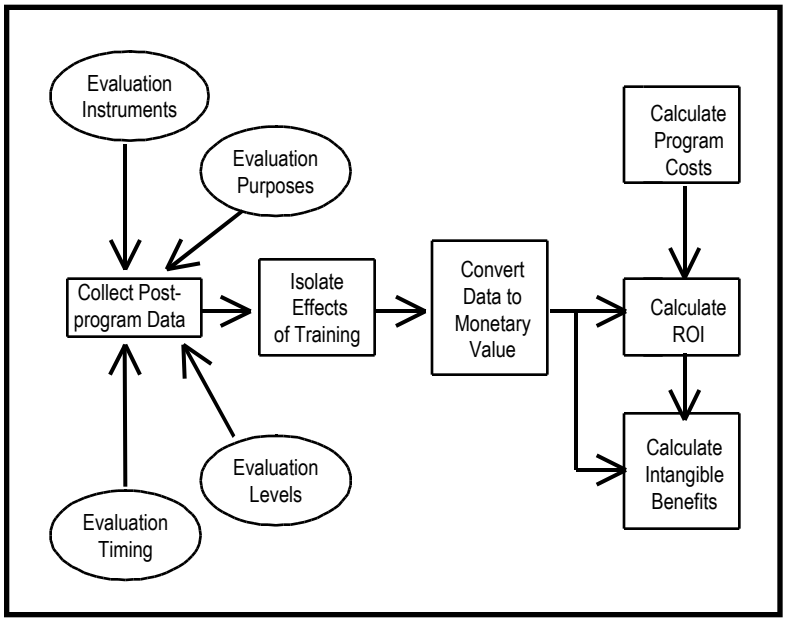
Outcomes of training evaluation can be measured at four levels: reaction and planned action; learning of knowledge and skill; application or changes in behavior of on-the-job application of the learning; and results, outcomes, or program impact. These are now commonly referred to as Levels One, Two, Three, and Four. (Kirkpatrick, 1994).

Return on Investment Model

A fifth level, Return on Investment (ROI), adds a cost-benefit comparison to this training evaluation model. (Phillips, 1991). ROI responds to quantitative quality management and continuous improvement measurement. This measurement model compares the monetary benefits of the program with the program costs. It is

usually presented as a percent or benefit and cost ratio. Figure 1 presents the process of calculating return on investment.

Figure 1. Return on Investment Model



Calculating Return on Investment

ROI is expressed in two ways: a benefit/cost ratio of total benefits divided by program costs, or as a percentage of total benefits minus program costs divided by program costs multiplied by one hundred. These formulas are represented in Figure 2.

This paper uses the 2001 National Training Evaluation Symposium, sponsored by the California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC) at the University of California, Berkeley, as a case example to demonstrate the process of calculating Return on Investment. Trend line analysis is presented as a means for communicating ROI graphically to training stakeholders.

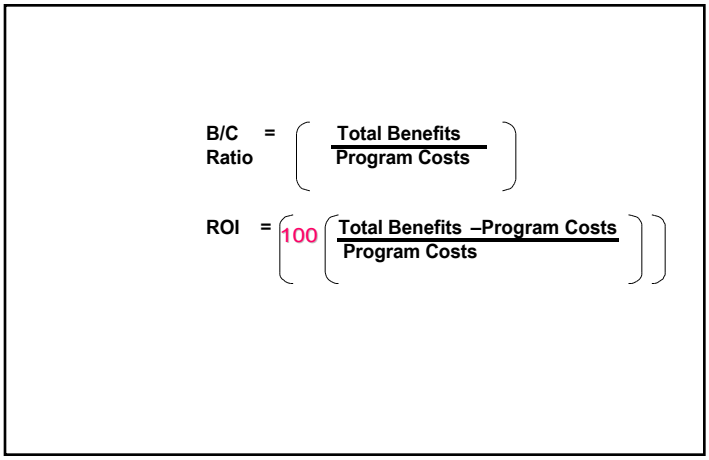
The symposium consists of fifty training evaluation specialists from social service programs and their university training partners. The two and a half day, twenty-hour, or 1,000-hour training program consists of presentations by leading human service training evaluators. This event has been held in May at the Faculty Club on the UC Berkeley campus for the past four years.

The objectives of the symposium are threefold:

1. Increase awareness of evaluation of human services training programs;
2. Increase the number and type of evaluation studies conducted by participants; and
3. Produce scholarly studies and articles.

Return on investment requires the collection of data to assess the impact of training at all four of Kirkpatrick's levels. An objective process is then used to assign a monetary value to the Level Four data. This requires placing a value on each component of data connected with the program. Some techniques to convert data to monetary value have been identified by the American Society for Training and Development (*ASTD Info Line,* Issue 9805). They include: (1) conversion of output data to profit contribution, program impact, or cost savings; (2) calculation of the cost of quality, and converting quality improvements to cost savings; (3) using participants' wages and benefits as the value for time in programs where employee time is saved; (4) using historical costs; (5) using internal and external experts to estimate a value for an improvement; (6) asking participants to estimate the value of the data; and (7) using industry standards.

Figure 2. Calculating Return on Investment



Data Collection and Analysis

Converting data to monetary value is very important in the ROI model. The process is challenging but can be accomplished.

Training managers can use the cost centers they use when budgeting and estimating the costs of developing, delivering, and evaluating training or program improvement activities. The data collection methods proposed in this case study are identified in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Data Collection

Level	Description	Example
1	Customer Satisfaction	
2	Awareness or Knowledge	Rating Scale, Pre/Post
3	Application	Reaction Follow-up
4	Results	# of evaluations and type by participant
5	ROI	

Total Benefits

Figure 4 presents the total benefits of the symposium. A corporate standard for registration for a comparable symposium was used to calculate the cost of registration for fifty participants at $3,000 per person for a total of $150,000. This cost represents a benefit to participants in that they did not have to pay a registration fee for this event. The value of increasing training evaluations by participants is based on an estimate of what it would take in additional funding for each participant to significantly increase the number and type of evaluations or $100,000 times fifty for a benefit of $5,000,000.

The value of publishing a training evaluation study is estimated at $50,000 per fifty participants, or $2,500,000. Thus, the total benefits in this case study are $7,650,000. Participant salaries for 2.5 days ($307,000) could be added to the total benefits since all

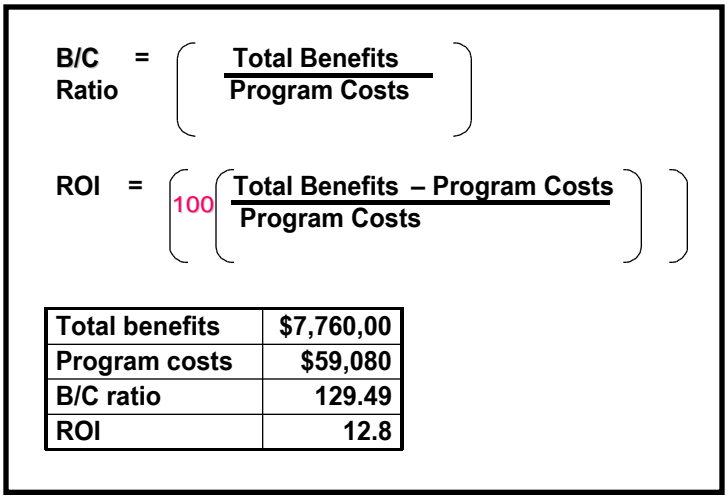
participants contribute to the program in some way. Program costs for the symposium include staff support of $9,080 (two staff @ $40,000 @ 10%, plus six program committee members contributing six hours @ $30 per hour). The cost of participant lodging, food, equipment, printing, and mailing is $50,000. Total costs then are $59,080.

Figure 4. Total Benefits

Calculating Return on Investment

Utilizing this data, the Return on Investment of the National Training Evaluation Symposium at UC Berkeley is 12.8%, or a Benefit/Cost ratio of 129.49. This calculation is presented in Figure 5. Following the 2001 symposium, participant self-reporting estimated the ROI between 30 and 40 percent.

Figure 5. Calculating Return on Investment (ROI)



Total benefits	$7,760,00
Program costs	$59,080
B/C ratio	129.49
ROI	12.8

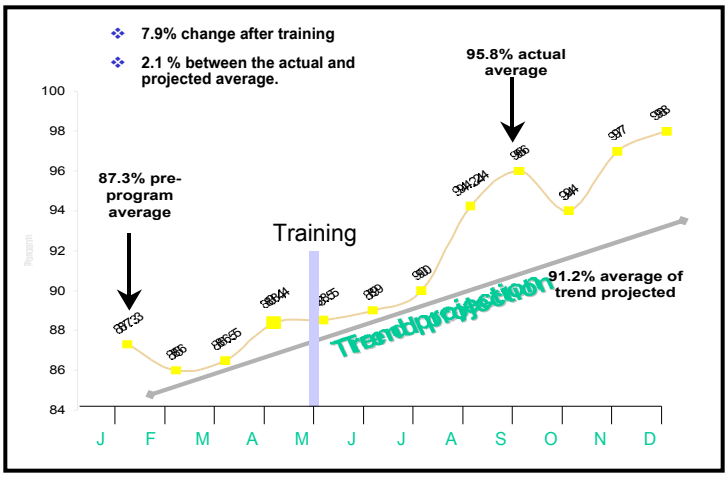
Journey CD-ROM Trend-line Analysis

Return on investment can be graphically displayed utilizing a trend line analysis. A trend line analysis illustrates the value of specific output variables if training had not occurred and compares a projection to actual data after training to represent an estimate of the impact of training.

The hypothetical case example below describes the impact of training on new employees as measured by the satisfaction of customers, supervisors, co-workers, and self. In this example, data would be collected monthly on the outcome variable—new worker satisfaction. This variable is represented on the vertical axis of Figure 6. The vertical line occurring in the month of May represents training or use of a six-hour self-instructional, interactive, computer-based training program, *Journey: Discovering Social Services*, distributed on CD-ROM.

Prior to training there was an 87.3% pre-training satisfaction trend. After training the actual average increased to 95.8%. The trend line of new worker satisfaction is projected to continue to climb as workers gain familiarity and comfort with their new job. The projected trend over time is 92.2 %. There is a 7.9% change after training and a 2.1 % difference between the actual and projected average in this case example. An ROI can now be calculated to represent the value of this effect.

Figure 6. Journey CD-ROM Trend Line Analysis



A benefit of ROI is the ability to measure the value of training and its impact on program results in dollars and cents. ROI and trend line analysis are useful management tools for determining the value of investments in staff training and performance support.

David P. Wegenast is Professor of Social Work at Buffalo State College, New York.

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Hiring Child Welfare Caseworkers: Using a Competency-Based Approach*

Freda Bernotavicz, *M.S.,* and Amy Locke Wischmann, *M.A.*

Abstract

This paper describes the development and implementation of a competency-based hiring and selection system for child welfare caseworkers in the state of Maine. The design of the process was a collaborative effort among the state Bureau of Human Resources, the Department of Human Services, and the authors who were on the staff of the university-based Child Welfare Training Institute. The selection process utilizes data from a research-based competency model and includes multiple assessments. Two rounds of internal validity studies were conducted to assess the reliability of the approach. Results demonstrated a high level of inter-rate reliability.

In Maine, as in most states, the merit system established to ensure a fair hiring and selection process is cumbersome and inefficient. The challenges presented by this process are exacerbated in positions such as the child welfare caseworker where turnover is extremely high (Balfour & Neff, 1993).

The problems that Maine child welfare supervisors experience with the traditional process are summarized in Table 1, *below.* A list of eligible candidates for employment, or register, was open continually. Candidates for child welfare caseworker positions

* This article was published in *Public Personnel Management* (Spring 2000), the journal of the International Personnel Management Association.

applied at any time; their application was scored using a Training and Experience (T&E) rating; and they were then placed on the register. As vacancies occurred in the regions, the hiring supervisor requested the top six names on the register. Only after all six had been interviewed could additional names be requested. If all six were rejected, they still remained in their position at the top of the register on the basis of their T&E score. When a new vacancy occurred, they were re-interviewed due to the existing certification rules. As a result, positions remained open for several months, creating higher caseloads for other caseworkers and exacerbating the burnout/turnover spiral.

The lack of standardized hiring practices across the state created the need to conduct interviews whenever a specific vacancy occurred. Without clear criteria of what they were looking for in the selection interview, supervisors subjected candidates to protracted interviews, only to reject them as not acceptable. Without statewide agreement on screening criteria, the same applicants were interviewed in several different regions. And without valid criteria for rejection, the register was filled with "deadwood"—candidates who had been interviewed several times and rejected.

Frustration with the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of the system was widespread when in spring 1995, the Maine State Bureau of Human Resources informed the Department of Human Services (DHS) of its willingness to try a new approach. The redesign process became a collaborative effort. Child welfare supervisors and managers acted as subject matter experts in the design of a job-related process that would meet the needs of their peers. The Maine State Bureau of Human Resources staff provided expertise on state merit system requirements and University of Southern Maine staff provided expertise on competency-based assessment approaches.

Proposed Process

The new system would be very different, as shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1
Comparison of the Old and Proposed Hiring and Selection Process

Current Hiring Process	Proposed Hiring Process
No pre-screening beyond T&E rating	Pool of pre-screened candidates
Multiple interviews of same candidates by individual supervisors	One-time pre-screening by panels of trained interviewers
Deadwood on register	Regular cleaning out of register
Lack of valid screening criteria	Valid screening criteria
No statewide standards	Standardized, statewide process
Lengthy time to fill vacancies	Shorter time to fill vacancies
Time-consuming process	More efficient process

The register would be opened only twice a year—once in the spring and again in the fall. Applications would still be scored using the T&E rating. A list of the top-ranked candidates would be provided to each region. The number of names on that list would be based upon the regional manager's projections of the number of vacancies that would occur over the following six months. These candidates would then be pre-screened by panels of three supervisors. This pre-screening would represent an additional level of scoring, which would allow the candidates to be placed in rank order on a hiring list for that region. As a specific vacancy opened up, the hiring supervisor could choose to either select the top candidate from the hiring list or re-interview the top three

candidates. Any candidates remaining on the list at the end of the six-month period could choose to remain or remove their names from that list. Once a year, all the names would be removed from the register.

With this redesign of the administration of the hiring process, the Maine State Bureau of Human Resources recommended designing a screening process that would be standardized statewide. It was at this point that the authors became involved and advocated the design of a process that would be both research-based and meet the needs of busy practitioners. The following principles informed the design: it must be based on job analysis; it must focus on specific competencies; it must use multiple, job-related assessments; it must have a variety of questions; and it must be standardized. Each of these principles is described below.

Job Analysis

As Campion notes (Campion, Palmer & Campion, 1997), job analysis is a basic requirement for developing valid selection procedures according to both professional (Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, 1987) and legal (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 1978) testing guidelines. Job analysis, by definition, enhances the job-relatedness of the screening process, thus making it more credible to supervisors who are familiar with the requirements of the position.

Focus on Specific Competencies

However, job analysis provides necessary but insufficient information in deciding whether an applicant is best qualified for the job in question. Competency-based recruiting systems stress the need to identify competencies that are most likely to predict long-term success on the job and that are difficult to develop through either training or experience. As in Spencer's vivid description, "you can teach a turkey to climb a tree, but it's easier to hire a squirrel" (Spenser & Spenser, 1993). Berman and Motowidlo (1992) further argue that selection criteria should embrace a domain of organizational behavior broader than just task activities. They should also include contextual activities—such pro-social organizational behavior as putting in extra effort on the

job, persistence, cooperating with others, following organizational rules and procedures, and supporting organizational objectives.

In addition, studies of child welfare caseworkers have identified a relationship between personal characteristics and turnover. The characteristics that correlate with caseworker retention are: self-efficacy motivation (energy and persistence in overcoming obstacles to accomplish goals); personal responsiveness to the needs of clients (doing for others); and goodness of fit (personal job competence) (Ellett, Ellett, Kelley & Noble, 1996; Ryecraft, 1994).

Multiple, Job-Related Assessments

The limitations of the traditional interview in predicting job performance have been well documented. The validity of the interview is improved by adding structure (from .29 for unstructured to .62 for structured interviews) (McDaniel, Whetzel, Schmidt & Maurer, 1994; Wiesner & Cronshaw, 1988). But even a well-designed structured interview is limited in terms of the opportunities to observe competencies, such as written communication, time management, and organizational skills. The validity of the screening process is increased when a range of job-related assessments are included (Guion, 1998; Hunter & Hunter, 1984; Thorton, 1992).

Variety of Questions

Different types of questions are used in screening interviews: situational ("what would you do if"); behavioral ("what did you do when"); background ("what experience have you had similar to this job"); opinions (including self-perceptions of strengths, weaknesses); and job knowledge. Based on an extensive review of the literature, Campion et al. (1997) conclude that situational and past behavior questions are equally valid. While questioning the vagueness of opinion questions, they recommend that a range of questions be used in a structured interview format.

Standardization

The importance of standardization is supported by both psychological testing principles and EEO requirements (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 1978; Society for

Industrial and Organizational Psychology, 1987). Standardization includes the following components: asking the same questions in the same order of all candidates; using the same interviewers; providing the same opportunities to each candidate (including controlling the length of the interview); and limiting prompting, follow-up questions, and elaboration on answers.

The Research Base

Fortunately, the groundwork for developing a competency-based screening process of child welfare caseworkers already existed in the form of a caseworker competency model (Bernotavicz, 1994a). The holistic competency model was based on a three-pronged approach: Functional Job Analysis (Fine, 1989) identified the functional or task-related knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs); Behavioral Event Interviews (Spenser & Spenser, 1993) revealed the characteristics of outstanding performers; and an Organizational Assessment (including the examination of policy and procedures manuals and a survey of the organizational culture and climate) identified context knowledge and skills.

This model, which included thirty-four competencies, was refined over a period of two years with the participation of groups of subject matter experts (SMEs) and was used in the design of the curriculum for a twenty-day competency-based pre-service program (Bernotavicz, 1994b). In December 1994, in anticipation of possible use of the model for hiring and selection purposes, a survey was sent to all caseworkers and supervisors asking them to rate the competencies according to three factors:

1. Competencies necessary upon entry to the job;
2. Competencies that should be emphasized in pre-service training; and
3. Competencies that should be addressed in the in-service training program.

The Collaborative Design Process

In March 1995, the Maine State Bureau of Human Resources met with a group of DHS casework supervisors and the authors to discuss a revised hiring process. Representatives of the state's five geographical regions and the three separate program

areas (child protective services, foster care, and adoption) were present. Although the supervisors were initially skeptical of the possibility of a standardized statewide approach, they were also sufficiently frustrated with the current system to be willing to try something new.

At that meeting, the authors stressed the importance of clarity about the criteria used in the screening process and suggested using brainstorming to identify the competencies that the supervisors thought were required upon entry into the position. Following the discussion, the results of the survey described above were distributed to the group, and a very high level of agreement was found to exist between the two sets of data. The child welfare caseworker competency model (Bernotavicz, 1994a) was then employed as the basis for refinement of the criteria as well as selection of the behavioral indicators that could be observed during the interview process.

Recognizing that screening becomes more accurate and manageable when raters can focus on fewer competencies (Mitrani, Dalziel, & Fitt, 1992), the group selected nine competencies from the thirty-four in the child welfare caseworker competency model: Interpersonal Skills, Self-Awareness/Self-Confidence, Analytic Thinking, Flexibility, Observational Skills, Job Commitment/Child Welfare Values, Communication Skills, Results Orientation, and Child Welfare Technical Knowledge. The three components of the Selection Index and competencies addressed are shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2
Caseworker Screening Index

Competencies to Be Rated	Standard Interview	Fact-Finding Interview	Written Exercises
Interpersonal Skills: how candidate relates to interview team; expression of ideas and feelings; acknowledgement of others' feelings; evidence of respect and empathy for others.	√	√	–
Self-Awareness/Confidence: reference to own strengths, limitations, personal style, familial background; decisive in ambiguous or chaotic situations; maintains composure under stress.	√	√	–
Analytic Thinking: information-gathering skills; use of range of sources; hypothesis formation; conceptual frameworks; looking beyond superficial explanations.	√	√	√
Flexibility: ability to adapt styles and shift gears; evidence of coping skills; openness to new information.	√	√	–
Observational Skills: ability to observe and identify key elements; recognition of inconsistencies; factual descriptions; accurate observations.	–	√	√
Job Commitment/Child Welfare Values: enthusiasm, genuine interest in job; firm values/beliefs about protecting children; sense of responsibility; self-motivation; perseverance; positive attitude.	√	–	√

Competencies to Be Rated	Standard Interview	Fact-Finding Interview	Written Exercises
Communication Skills: open, clear communication; attentive listening; clarity of written summary and recommendations.	√	√	√
Results Orientation: ability to assess/reprioritize; use of time management tools; persistence; thoroughness; completion of task on time.	-	√	√
Technical Skill/Knowledge: evidence of knowledge and/or experience in child welfare.	√	√	√

The first component in the selection index to be designed was a structured interview. All supervisors were polled and asked to submit the interview questions that they currently used and to identify those that they thought most useful. A subcommittee met to draft the interview questions, which the larger group then fine-tuned. Three types of questions were designed:

1. **Opinions:** These questions relate to the candidates' views of children and families, as well as their self-awareness and values.
2. **Situational:** Based on the premise that the best predictor of future performance is past behavior, these questions ask candidates to describe experiences in the past similar to critical job incidents.
3. **Scenarios:** The purpose of these questions is to elicit evidence of the candidates' analytical ability, their thinking process, and their judgment.

To increase face validity and encourage acceptance of the new process, every effort was made to incorporate questions currently used by supervisors into the interview. Once the structured interview had been designed, the group moved on to design other selection tools to round out the selection index. Since investigative skills and the ability to make sound judgments and to synthesize

information are critical components of a child welfare caseworker's job, the group agreed upon the need for job sample tests to screen for these competencies. A fact-finding interview and a written exercise were designed based on a case study of a fictional family. Pilot tests of the fact-finding and written exercise were conducted on two volunteers with no job experience in child welfare and then appropriate revisions made.

The Screening Process

Review of Case Materials

When the candidate arrives for the interview, he or she is taken to a quiet room where instructions about the process are. The candidate is given a folder with the incomplete case study materials and allotted thirty minutes to read the information and prepare for the fact-finding interview.

Focused Interview

This second phase consists of a forty-five-minute interview conducted by a panel of three casework supervisors who ask thirteen standardized questions in turn.

Fact-Finding Interview

The candidate is then directed by a member of the panel to ask questions pertaining to the case material that the candidate read earlier. Here the focus shifts from the candidate's ability to respond to questions to the ability to ask questions, probe for information, shift gears, and identify key facts. Fifteen minutes is allotted for the fact-finding interview during which one member of the panel serves as the resource person and has available in a folder additional information on the case. The other panel members observe the candidate's performance and screen for competencies, including the number of key facts the candidate elicits.

Written Exercise

The candidate returns to the quiet room to produce a case analysis that includes a summary of the facts in the case, problem statement, conclusions, and recommendations. At the end of thirty

minutes, the applicant's written responses are collected and returned to the members of the interview panel for rating.

Rating of Competencies

Panel members are instructed to rate the candidate on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being high. The structured interview is weighted by a factor of two because it provides the most amount of contact with the candidate. The scores for each of the components are added to produce a composite score. The three members of the interview panel combine their composite scores and take the average to reach one final score for each candidate. Discussion of different ratings provides the opportunity to clarify what was observed and the evidence used. This score is used to rank order the applicants and determine who will be invited back for a second interview from which the final decision to hire is made.

Training the Interview Panels

By April 1995, a final screening process and rating instrument were ready to be implemented. Thirty supervisors who would serve on the interview panels attended a one-day training. Like the design, the training was a collaborative effort, with units presented by the Maine State Bureau of Human Resources and university staff, as well as supervisors who had served on the committee. Topics included: the development of the selection index, a review of the tools (i.e., interview questions, case study information, resource person material, etc.), common interview errors, using the competencies and behavioral indicators for screening, the rating form, a video presentation of a sample structured interview and a fact-finding interview, review of sample written summaries, developing a summary rating, and logistical arrangements for conducting interviews. The training covered both the theoretical context for the development of the selection index, as well as opportunities for the participants to experience hands-on use of the tools.

Reliability and Internal Validity Studies

The new hiring and selection process was implemented statewide in May 1995. A research study of the process was conducted to

determine the internal validity of the model. The highest possible score that a candidate could achieve through the rating process is 140*;* the lowest possible score required for a candidate to be considered for a position is 84. The cut-off score was determined by averaging the score that a candidate would receive if he or she were to be given the average score (3) in every single category.

DHS Regions I, III, IV, and V conducted interviews with a total of 87 candidates. Region II did not participate in the interviews due to their decision to accept rating sheets from other regions for candidates who applied for positions there. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed that there was no significant difference in the average scores between regions.

Nine candidates interviewed in more than one region; some interviewed in all four. Only one of the nine candidates who participated in multiple interviews raised his or her score high enough to make it over the cut-off point. Four of the nine candidates did raise their scores slightly, but the remaining five actually lost ground during subsequent interviews. This demonstrates that candidates who are exposed to the screening process on more than one occasion did not appear to benefit.

For each of the four regions, inter-rater reliability was examined by correlating each rater's total score for each candidate with every other rater's score. The correlations between raters range from .550 to .970, with a majority over .7. These scores, with correlations becoming significant at p=.001, indicate very high levels of agreement between raters for overall candidate scores. In other words, members of interview teams were in accordance in terms of how the applicant was performing on the selection index, and used the rating sheets consistently to record that level of performance.

In addition to inter-rater reliability on candidate's overall scores, this issue was also examined by specific competency. While each region showed fairly high overall inter-rater agreement, two competency areas correlated consistently low: Results Orientation and Job Commitment/Child Welfare Values.

To get feedback on supervisors' reaction to the new approach, interviews were conducted on the telephone or in person with a stratified random sample of eleven supervisors (50% of the interviewers). Comments were generally positive about the

structure and format of the screening process. Though initially uncomfortable with the use of the five-point Likert scale, the supervisors reported reaching consensus regarding ratings through a discussion process.

In September 1995, the Caseworker Screening Committee met once again to discuss the findings of the data analysis and to fine-tune the selection instruments before beginning another round of training. For example, the wording on some of the structured interview questions was altered to make the questions clearer, and additional behavioral anchors for the situational questions were generated. In October, another training session was held for the interview teams to review the changes and train new members.

A second quantitative analysis of the rating sheets was conducted upon completion of this round of interviews. Once again, there was no significant difference, as determined by analysis of variance (ANOVA), in candidates' average scores between the five DHS regions. Of the three candidates who interviewed in two regions, only one raised the score in the second interview. For this candidate, the most notable performance increase was in the Fact-Finding interview. This finding provided support for the argument that candidates' scores be accepted between regions, thereby increasing the efficiency of the process by eliminating the need for multiple interviews of the same individual.

In the second round of analysis, inter-rater reliability was once again examined and was compared with the data from the first set of interviews. Correlations between raters ranged from .637 to 972 in round two, with a preponderance of values above .7. This indicates a very high level of agreement between raters for overall scores.

The overall trend of the data in the second round demonstrated a slightly higher correlation between raters in all competency areas, perhaps providing evidence that practice with rating competencies improves the reliability of the process. There were no correlations below .6 in round two.

In preparing for round three of interviews in spring 1996, the authors anticipated that supervisors would request major changes. However, this did not occur, so the materials appear to be meeting the need for an efficient and effective screening process.

Summary

The redesign of the screening process was a collaborative effort. The Bureau of Human Resources and the University of Southern Maine joined forces with the end users in the Department of Human Services to tackle a major source of frustration. A pre-screened pool of candidates is available when a vacancy occurs; the new process has reduced the time to fill vacancies. Further, the time spent by supervisors on screening has been reduced. Other benefits have also occurred. Using competencies in the screening process provides the opportunity for supervisors to communicate about good practice and to hone their own observational and analytical skills. The level of trust and coordination statewide has improved as supervisors recognize that the rating of candidates in the various geographical regions is consistent. Further, through training of interviewers and standardization of the process, the vulnerability to discriminatory behavior has been reduced.

When this study was conducted, both authors were on the staff of the Maine Child Welfare Training Institute. The Institute is a collaborative program of the Edmund S. Muskie School of Public Service at the University of Southern Maine and the Maine Department of Human Services, One Post Office Square, P.O. Box 15010, Portland, ME 04112.

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Discussion: "Assessing Underlying Competencies"

Thursday, May 24, 2001, 9:15 a.m.
Freda Bernotavicz*, M.S., Presenter*
Sherrill Clark, *Ph.D.,* and Jane Berdie, *M.S.W., Facilitators*

Topics of Discussion

I. A Conceptual Framework for Evaluation: Advancing Conceptualization of Competencies

The group discussion focused on a need to further advance conceptualization of competencies and the importance of having a conceptual framework for evaluation. The main points discussed were:

- **The notion of teaching not only skills but values**. The question raised was whether people can be *taught* these underlying competencies; i.e., can people *learn* emotional intelligence and how can that be evaluated?
- **The importance of simplifying notions of competency and getting at underlying competencies**. By reducing the numbers of competencies and focusing on fewer competencies, it may be possible to achieve more effective measurement.
- **The notion of *group* emotional intelligence.** Even when *individuals* are emotionally intelligent, outcomes may be poor because of *group dysfunction*.
- **The capacity for self-reflection and the ability to learn through experience.** This is perhaps one of the most important competencies that a child welfare worker can possess. The best way to determine the presence of this competency may be through the behavior event interview. It is important to move trainers toward recognition of the importance of self-reflection and meta-cognition.

II. The Hiring Process: Use of Differential Performance Indicators/Measures

The discussion turned to ***the use of the hiring process in identifying the competencies of prospective applicants***. The points of discussion included:

- **Considering the efficiency of the interview process**. Too much time may be spent reconstructing the applicants job history rather than getting to the core of information needed.
- **The value of quality feedback**. Do the applicants get any feedback and, if hired, is there any follow-up with feedback or training on the job?
- **The use of self-assessment tools**. Other measures include the use of supervisor-trainee competency-based feedback.
- **The potential for differentiating between specific strengths of applicants.** Is there a way to identify which applicant is better suited for adoption work vs. emergency response work, etc.?

III. Training: Assessment Tools and Training Designs

The discussion moved again to ***the question of whether workers can be trained to learn meta-cognitive competencies.*** Some major points included:

- **The need for further development of assessment tools** for meta-cognitive ability. Consideration of the ways in which the development of meta-cognitive ability may be facilitated.
- **Other ways to assess competencies**. The use of other methods—in addition to interviews—may offer more reliability, validity and predictive validity. Reliability and content validity, but not predictive validity, was demonstrated in this study.
- **The differentiation of performance indicators.** Consider which competencies can be improved/enhanced by training and which are fairly intractable.
- **Looking at competency-based training designs**. Identify those who are in MSW programs, those who do well in training, those who are retained in the field and those who are not. What is the best way to determine the most important qualities/competencies?

- **The use of tools** for not only MSW students, but also for BSW students.
- **Looking at whether those who have these competencies do better in training**. This is very measurable.

IV. Organizational and Environmental Context

The realities of the job market and ***environmental and organizational context*** were discussed. Topics included:

- **The issue of supply and demand.** Often there is no opportunity to select candidates. Supervisors and managers are frequently filling empty slots where there are not enough candidates for the job.
- **Balancing the process**. It is important to maximize buy-in from the workplace and from the supervisors. Both are essential to the success of the study.
- **Organizational competencies**: Identify and consider the core competencies valued by the organization.
- **Identifying the desired outcomes**. There is a potential constellation of outcomes. Some examples include job retention and job satisfaction.
- **The organization's impact on competency**. Although those with competencies may be recruited, the organizational context can alter this. What responsibility does the organization have to continue on-the-job training to foster and develop workers?
- **The assessment and definition of competencies at other organizational levels,** i.e., supervisors, managers, etc.

V. Identified Issues/Questions for Further Study

- The importance of having **a conceptual framework for evaluation**.
- To determine **whether people can *learn* emotional intelligence** and how that can be evaluated.
- To move trainers toward **recognition of the importance of self-reflection and meta-cognition.**
- **To incorporate quality feedback into the hiring process.** After hiring, follow up with on-going feedback and training on the job.

- To identify and define **the responsibility the organization has to develop its workers.**
- **The need for further development of assessment tools**.
- **The use of multiple methods to assess competencies**.
- **The need to develop more competency-based training designs**.
- **The importance of identifying desired outcomes**.
- **To assess and define competencies at all organizational levels**, i.e., managerial, supervisorial. etc.

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Knowledge Test Construction and Validation: Evaluation of New Jersey's Interdisciplinary Training for Public Agency Caseworkers to Improve Child Welfare Services

N. Andrew Peterson, *Ph.D.,* and Theresa C. Fox, *B.A.*

Abstract

This paper describes evaluation of New Jersey's Interdisciplinary Training Program for Public Agency Caseworkers to Improve Child Welfare Services, a program developed by New Jersey's Division of Youth and Family Services. Highlighted is the use of item analysis to examine and improve the validity of assessment items developed to evaluate knowledge outcomes. Analysis of proximal outcomes suggests large, positive effects of training on caseworkers' knowledge of substance abuse, mental health, and domestic violence. In addition, improvement in caseworkers' knowledge was related to improved substance abuse substantiation rates. Findings support the efficacy of the training program and suggest ways evaluation strategies may be used to build capacity of child welfare agencies.

Introduction

Training of caseworkers is an important strategy of public child welfare agencies to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of children (Ondersma, Simpson, Brestan, & Ward, 2000). Development and evaluation of child welfare training programs build the capacity of public child welfare agencies to develop and maintain sound practice (Jones & Okamura, 2000), as well as introduce and maintain changes brought about by new legislation

and complex client situations (Katz, 1999). As noted by Zippay (1995), empowerment has been defined as a process of helping a group, institution, or community attain political clout or relevant legal authority. Development and evaluation of training activities, therefore, could be considered empowerment strategies in child welfare practice to the extent they assist agencies in enhancing the aptitude of caseworkers to more effectively manage demands and resources.

The Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) of 1997 (Public Law 105-89) was designed to prevent children in foster care from being returned to unsafe homes and to find safe homes for children who are not able to return to their families. The fulfillment of ASFA's goals of safety, permanency, and well-being of children in child welfare settings is substantially determined by caseworkers' knowledge of the laws and regulations that govern their practice, as well as their abilities to assess clients accurately, define clear and realistic goals, and provide individualized interventions for the well-being of children and families.

Caseworkers' knowledge of issues concerning substance abuse, domestic violence, and mental illness are particularly important to meeting ASFA goals (Drake, 1995; Wells, Fluke, & Brown, 1995; Zuravin, Orme, & Hegar, 1995; Wolock & Magura, 1996), as are caseworkers' rates of unsubstantiated reports (Wolock, Sherman, Feldman, & Metzger, 2001), which can place a strain on the resources of child welfare agencies (Besharov, 1998, 1990; Hutchinson, 1993). Improving caseworker knowledge of these issues is important to developing child welfare practice (Mackesy-Amiti, Fendrcih, Libby, Goldenberg, & Grossman, 1996; Mills, Friend, Conroy, Fleck-Henderson, Krug, Magen, Thomas, & Trudeau, 2000).

This study presents results from an evaluation of New Jersey's Interdisciplinary Training Program for Public Agency Caseworkers to Improve Child Welfare Services. Developed by New Jersey's Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS), the program was designed to provide unique, competency-based training to enhance and strengthen the capacity of child welfare caseworkers to respond to complex family problems by improving their knowledge of issues surrounding substance abuse, mental illness, and domestic violence. The evaluation was intended to assist DYFS in building its capacity to deliver high-quality training to caseworkers, as well as ensure the integrity of the training by

gauging its success in achieving desired outcomes. Objectives of this article include the following, to: (1) describe how item analysis was utilized to assess and improve the validity of knowledge assessment items developed to evaluate knowledge outcomes; (2) describe training effects on caseworkers' knowledge of substance abuse, mental health, and domestic violence; and (3) determine whether improvement in caseworkers' knowledge was related to improved substance abuse substantiation rates.

Method

Participants

Data were collected from 182 new DYFS caseworkers who participated in the training. As shown in Table 1, caseworkers from eight cohorts were included. No demographic data were provided.

Measures and Procedures

Knowledge Assessment. Knowledge assessment data were gathered by trainers using an instrument they constructed in collaboration with DYFS staff. Twenty-eight items were included in the knowledge assessment for Cohort 1. Fifteen items (54%) measured knowledge of substance abuse issues, seven items (25%) measured knowledge of domestic violence issues, and six items (21%) measured knowledge of mental illness issues. Based on results of the item analysis for Cohort 1, the knowledge assessment was revised. Twenty-five items were included in the knowledge assessment for Cohort 2. Twelve items (48%) measured knowledge of substance abuse issues, seven items (28%) measured knowledge of domestic violence issues, and six items (24%) measured knowledge of mental illness issues. After further refinement of the knowledge assessment based on results of the item analysis for Cohort 2, the knowledge assessment for Cohorts 3–8 consisted of 30 items. Ten items (33%) measured knowledge of each specified training area.

Substance Abuse Substantiation Rates. Archival data were collected from DYFS files to assess substance abuse substantiation rates before and after completion of the training program. The substance abuse substantiation rate was operationalized as the proportion of caseworker referrals confirmed as substance abuse cases by subsequent counselors' assessment. Trained data collectors entered fields from specific hardcopy forms into an

electronic database. Each file included a referral form, a diagnostic impressions form, and a termination sheet. The referral form contained information concerning the date referrals were made, the name and District Office of the referring caseworker, the reason for referrals, suspected substances abused, and information regarding the priority of the case. Information concerning diagnosis and recommendations for further treatment was recorded from the diagnostic impressions form. Substance abuse counselors completed this form after clients had finished screening procedures. Termination dates and reasons for case closures were copied from the termination sheet. A total of 1,419 client cases were recorded. The referral dates span the period from 1/03/95 to 9/10/00, with 50% of the cases occurring after 11/23/98.

Results and Discussion

Item Analysis

Item analysis was used to examine the psychometric properties of the knowledge instrument. Item analysis is a set of procedures generally used to increase the reliability and validity of a knowledge test by separately evaluating each item to determine whether it discriminates in the same way the overall test is intended to discriminate (Crone & Folk, 1989; D'Agostino & Cureton, 1975; Green, Isaac, & Michael, 1989; Rudner, Getson, & Knight, 1980; Simmons, 1988). For instance, if the procedure shows that individuals in the upper half of the test score distribution tend to answer a particular item correct and individuals in the lower half of the distribution tend to answer incorrectly, then the item is judged to have favorable discriminating power and contributes to the overall reliability and validity of the test. Three specific analyses were performed, including difficulty analysis, discrimination analysis, and distractor analysis.

First, difficulty analysis was used to measure the difficulty of items for participants and included calculating a difficulty index for each item. The difficulty index represents the percentage of all participants that answered the item correctly; thus, lower percentages reflect higher item difficulty. Second, discrimination analysis was conducted to measure whether items discriminated between individuals who performed well on the test and those who did not. Discrimination analysis included computing a point-biserial correlation coefficient between an item response (correct vs. incorrect) and the total knowledge score. Third, distractor

analysis was performed using chi-square. Pretest scores were dichotomized at the median to categorize high and low scorers. This variable was then compared against participant responses to each item. This analysis was used to determine if any distractors (i.e., item answers designed to be plausible but incorrect) were attracting more individuals than intended (i.e., such as attracting high numbers of high-scoring as well as low-scoring participants) or failing to attract any respondents. Distracting more individuals than intended, which reflects a poor performing distractor, may be the result of the distractor actually being keyable (i.e., correct), and in need of being reworded to be plausible but incorrect. Items judged as performing well, and therefore that could be included in future examinations, met the following criteria: (1) moderate in difficulty (i.e., difficulty index of .20 to .80); (2) point-biserial >.20; and, (3) included plausible and attractive distractors.

Appendix A provides a summary of the item analysis, which includes each item's difficulty index, point-biserial correlation coefficient, distractor analysis, and overall performance rating. Items were judged based on the following: (1) performed well—met all three criteria; (2) performed moderately—met two of the three criteria; and, (3) performed poorly—met zero or one criterion. In Cohort 1, five items (17.9%) were judged as having performed well, in that they were moderate in difficulty, distinguished reasonably well between high and low scorers, and possessed distractors that were attractive and plausible. Six items (21.4%) were judged as having performed moderately, while seventeen items (60.7%) were judged as having performed poorly. In Cohort 2, five items (20%) were judged as having performed well, six items (24%) were judged as having performed moderately, and fourteen items (56%) were judged as having performed poorly.

Appendix B shows a comparison of item performance for Cohorts 1 and 2. Six of the items that were changed from Cohort 1 to Cohort 2 showed an improvement in performance while five showed a decrease. Of the six showing an improvement, four items were changed slightly from Cohort 1 to Cohort 2, (i.e., distractors were either added, changed, or dropped) while two items were changed drastically, (i.e., the format of the question was changed, although the item tested the same topic). Analysis of items for each content area showed that items designed to test knowledge of mental illness issues had the highest performance

with five of six (83.3%) performing well or moderately well in both studies. Thirty-three percent of items that addressed knowledge of substance abuse issues performed well or moderately well in both studies (five of fifteen in Cohort 1 and four of twelve in Cohort 2). Fourteen percent of items that tested knowledge of domestic violence performed well or moderately well in Cohort 1 (one of seven), and 28.6% of the items performed well or moderately well (two of seven) in Cohort 2. Eleven items performed well or moderately well in both studies.

Figures 1 and 2 show results of a comparison of pretest and posttest knowledge assessment scores using all items (including those that performed poorly) and the eleven high-performing items (termed "selected items" in Figures 1 & 2). Importantly, these data show that the magnitude of participants' improvement almost doubled using only the high-performing items as compared to using all items. This finding demonstrates the importance of item performance in evaluating knowledge outcomes.

Proximal Outcomes: Knowledge Gains and Improved Substantiation Rates

As stated previously, further refinement of the knowledge assessment based on item analyses for Cohorts 1 and 2 yielded a revised knowledge assessment, consisting of thirty items, which was administered to Cohorts 3–8 before and after participation in the training. Ten items measured knowledge of each specified training area. Shown in Table 2 are mean pretest and the posttest scores. The substantive importance of this difference was measured in terms of the effect size, represented in the following formula (Cohen's d'):

$$ES = \frac{\mu_2 - \mu_1}{\sigma_{pooled}}$$

Whereas μ_2 is the mean of the percent correct posttest score, μ_1 is the mean of the percent correct pretest score, and σ is the pooled standard deviation of the percent correct scores. According to Cohen (1988), effects of .2σ are considered small, effects of around .5σ are considered medium, and effects of .8σ or more are considered large. As can be seen in Table 2, effects sizes for the eight cohorts are large (i.e., greater than .8σ). They range from 1.0 to 1.9, with a mean of 1.4. Based on these data, it can be concluded that the training had a large, positive effect on the participants'

knowledge of substance abuse, domestic violence, and mental illness.

As stated previously, archival data were collected to examine caseworkers' substance abuse substantiation rates before and after completion of the training. Additionally, these data were linked with caseworkers' knowledge assessment data to determine whether improvement in caseworkers' knowledge was related to improvements in substance abuse substantiation rates. Knowledge assessment data could be linked to substance abuse substantiation rate data for only fifteen caseworkers. Pre-post training change scores were then computed for substance abuse substantiation rate and knowledge assessment (proportion of items answered correctly). As shown in Figure 3, pre-post training substantiation rate and knowledge assessment change scores were significantly correlated, $r=.56$, $p<.05$, indicating that caseworkers with greater knowledge gains tended to have more improvement in substance abuse substantiation rates.

Taken together, these data support the efficacy of New Jersey's Interdisciplinary Training Program for Public Agency Caseworkers to Improve Child Welfare Services. Findings show the training to be an effective ally of DYFS as it strives to meet ASFA's goals of safety, permanency, and well-being of children in child welfare settings. As demonstrated in this study, the sensitivity and difficulty level of knowledge assessments play a crucial role in the degree to which an evaluation may be biased. Ceiling effect, a potential threat to validity, occurs when many of the program participants have high scores close to or at the maximum score possible due to inability of the instrument to validly differentiate among the participants on the construct of interest. As demonstrated in this study, ceiling effect may lead to serious bias in estimating program effects. Item analysis may be used to review and refine instruments, more accurately assess program impacts, and suggest additional training needs. Utilizing these strategies, evaluators may play important, empowering roles in building the capacity of child welfare agencies to deliver high-quality training to caseworkers.

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Table 1
Study Participants

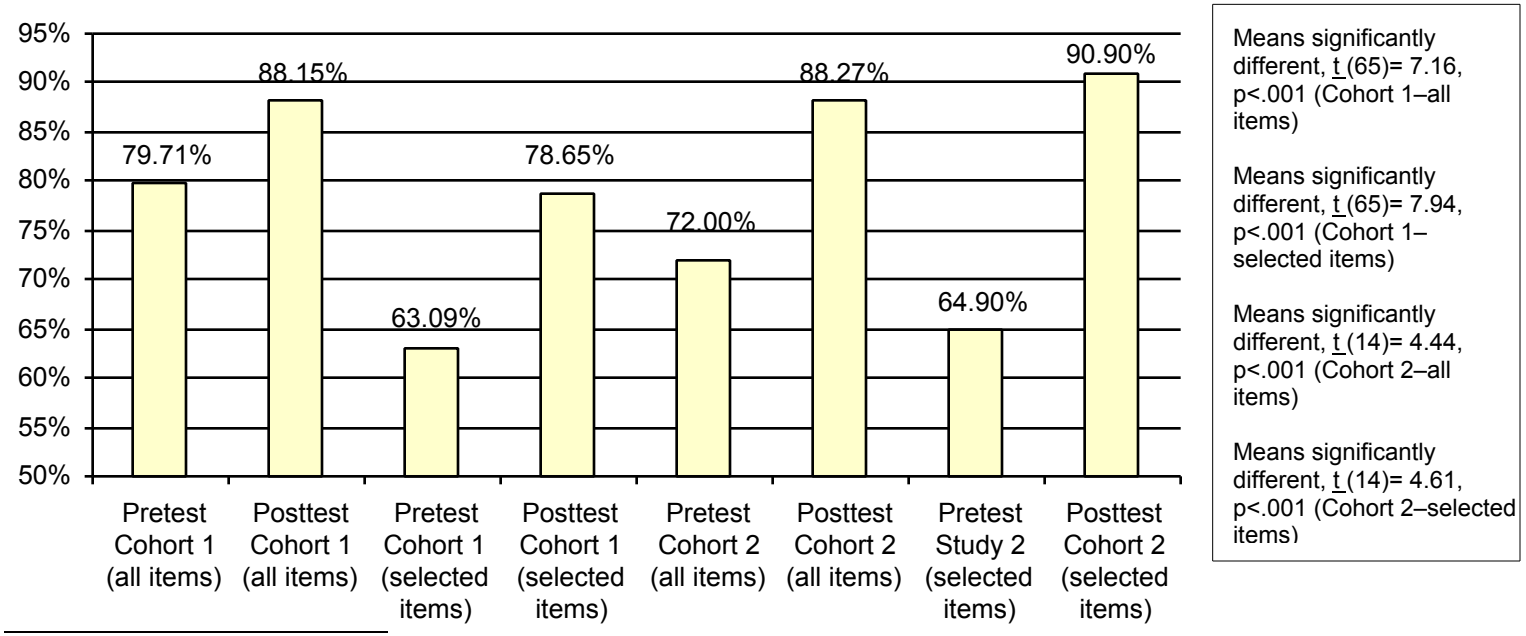
Cohort	n	Pretest Dates	Posttest Dates
1	66	Nov. 15, 1998–Mar. 4, 1999	Nov. 23, 1999–Mar. 9, 1999
2	15	Aug. 4, 1999	Sept. 8–13, 1999
3	26	April 10–14, 2000	April 28, 2000
4	15	June 9, 2000	June 20, 2000
5	16	July 14, 2000	July 21, 2000
6	20	Aug. 14, 2000	Aug. 18, 2000
7	12	Sept. 14, 2000	Sept. 22, 2000
8	12	Oct. 16, 2000	Oct. 20, 2000

Table 2
Means, Standard Deviations, and Effect Sizes for Cohorts[1]

Cohort	Report Date	Mean Pretest Percent Correct Scores	Mean Posttest Percent Correct Scores	Mean Difference	Pooled Standard Deviation	Effect Size
1	September 1999	63.09	78.65	15.6	8.0	1.9
2	November 1999	64.9	90.9	26.0	24.8	1.1
3	May 2000	55.6	74.6	19.0	14.6	1.3
4	July 2000	58.3	73.3	15.0	14.7	1.0
5	August 2000	63.8	85.8	22.0	16.3	1.4
6	September 2000	56.4	91.9	35.5	20.3	1.8
7	October 2000	65.8	88.3	22.5	18.4	1.2
8	November 2000	66.7	96.6	29.9	18.4	1.6

[1] Note: Only high-performing items were used in this analysis.

Figure 1
Comparison of Mean Percent Items Correct for Pretest and Posttest Knowledge Assessments using All and Selected Items[2]



[2] Note: "all items" included items that performed poorly, while "selected items" included only high-performing items.

Figure 2
Comparison of Mean Differences in Percent Items Correct for Pretest and Posttest Knowledge Assessments Using All and Selected Items

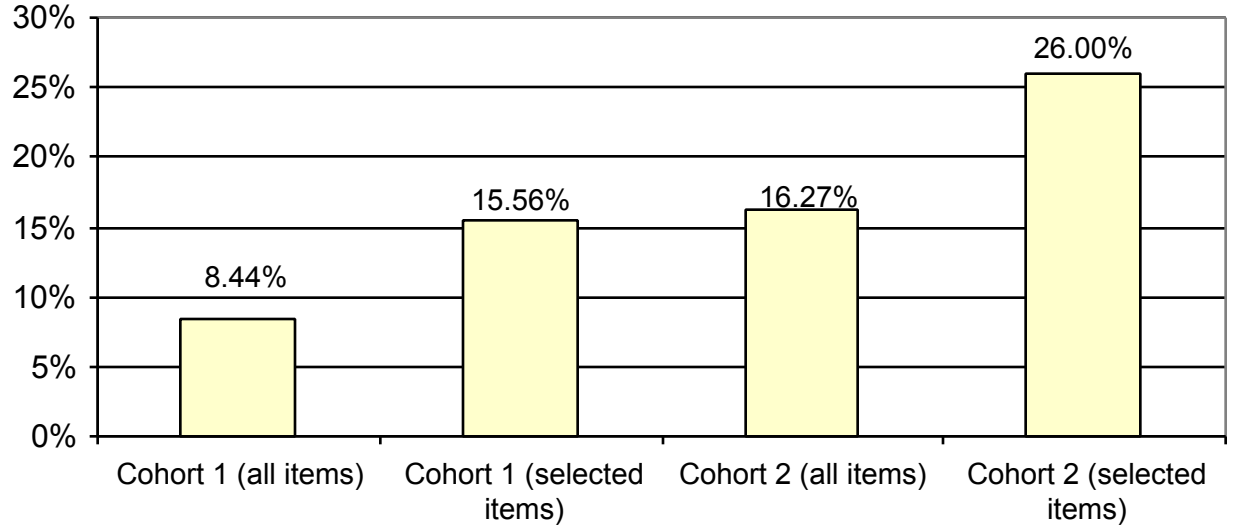
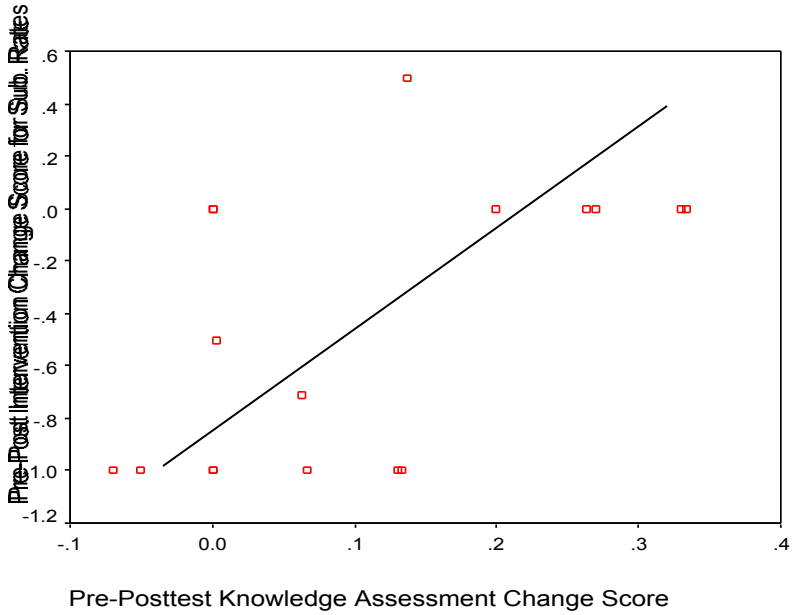


Figure 3
Scatterplot of Pre-Posttest Knowledge Assessment Change Score and Pre-Post Intervention Change Score for Substance Abuse Substantiation Rates



r=.56, p<.05

Appendix A
Item Analysis Summary: Difficulty Index, Point-Biserial Correlation Coefficient, Distractor Analysis, and Overall Performance of Revised Knowledge Assessment Items

	Item	Difficulty Index	Point-Biserial Coefficient	Distractor Analysis X^2 Value	Overall Performance
1.	Addiction is defined as:	.33	.49*	2.41	Performed well
2.	Most dangerous time for female victim of domestic violence is:	.80	.09	2.85	Performed poorly
3.	Behaviors indicative of substance abuse problem are:	.67	.08	0.00	Performed poorly
4.	Not a characteristic of schizophrenia:	.47	.18	2.30	Performed poorly
5.	Not common defenses used by substance abusers:	.13	.47*	5.63	Performed poorly
6.	Cycle of violence ends when:	.60	.07	.19	Performed poorly

	Item	Difficulty Index	Point-Biserial Coefficient	Distractor Analysis X^2 Value	Overall Performance
7.	Which statement is incorrect:	.67	.65**	6.25*	Performed well
8.	A person with a history of sexual/physical abuse is not likely to develop a serious mental illness as a result, but such an individual may experience symptoms of:	.60	.44	6.67	Performed moderately
9.	Violence in the seriously mentally ill is most often rooted in:	.60	.29	2.96	Performed moderately
10.	The DSM-IV defines Substance Abuse in two categories:	.93	.22	1.61	Performed poorly

	Item	Difficulty Index	Point-Biserial Coefficient	Distractor Analysis X^2 Value	Overall Performance
11.	Tolerance in the field of substance abuse is defined as:	.67	.19	3.47	Performed poorly
12.	Behavioral definition of domestic violence:	.93	.22	1.61	Performed poorly
13.	Which of the following may be used to gain power and control over a partner:	.80	.72**	5.63*	Performed well
14.	Parent/Caregiver substance abuse poses a risk to children:	.93	.50*	1.61	Performed poorly
15.	Parents/Caregivers who abuse substances often:	1.00	(a)	(a)	Performed poorly
16.	If an individual is prescribed lithium s/he has most likely been diagnosed with	.67	.65**	6.25	Performed moderately

	Item	Difficulty Index	Point-Biserial Coefficient	Distractor Analysis X^2 Value	Overall Performance
17.	Which of the following best describes a connection between mental illness and parenting:	.73	.69**	8.18*	Performed well
18.	Which of the following represents a significant finding of the disease of alcoholism and drug abuse:	.93	.22	1.61	Performed poorly
19.	Cycle of violence can refer to the cycle between violent episodes and to:	.80	.63**	5.63*	Performed well
20.	Common adaptive strategies used by children exposed to domestic violence:	.93	.43	1.61	Performed poorly

	Item	Difficulty Index	Point-Biserial Coefficient	Distractor Analysis X^2 Value	Overall Performance
21.	When the victim of domestic violence leaves the batterer, safety issues can continue for:	.93	.22	1.61	Performed poorly
22.	Which of the following best describes the NJ law that determines when an individual may be involuntarily taken to a screening center:	.67	.72**	5.56	Performed moderately
23.	Female clients under the influence of alcohol/drugs are at risk of becoming victims of assault because:	.93	.50*	1.61	Performed poorly

	Item	Difficulty Index	Point-Biserial Coefficient	Distractor Analysis X^2 Value	Overall Performance
24.	Which of the following are physical/behavioral indicators of prenatal substance abuse:	.60	.40	4.35	Performed moderately
25.	Which of the following questions is included as part of the substance abuse screening tool that is known as CAGE:	.67	.42	4.17	Performed moderately

** $p \leq .01$.

* $p \leq .05$.

a Cannot be computed because at least one of the variables is constant.

Appendix B
Comparison of Item Performance in Cohort 1 and Cohort 2

	Item	Amount of Change to Item	Performance Test 1	Performance Test 2	Topic Area Tested
1.	Addiction is defined as:	Changed Slightly	Performed Well	Performed Well	Sub. Abuse
2.	Most dangerous time for female victim of domestic violence is: [b]	Changed Slightly	Performed Moderately	Performed Poorly	Dom. Violence
3.	Behaviors indicative of substance abuse problem are:	Changed Slightly	Performed Poorly	Performed Poorly	Sub. Abuse
4.	Not a characteristic of schizophrenia: [b]	Changed Slightly	Performed Moderately	Performed Poorly	Mental Illness
5.	Not common defenses used by substance abusers: [b]	Changed Slightly	Performed Well	Performed Poorly	Sub. Abuse

	Item	Amount of Change to Item	Performance Test 1	Performance Test 2	Topic Area Tested
6.	Cycle of violence ends when:	No Change	Performed Poorly	Performed Poorly	Dom. Violence
7.	Which statement is incorrect: [a]	Changed Slightly	Performed Poorly	Performed Well	Sub. Abuse
8.	A person with a history of sexual/physical abuse is not likely to develop a serious mental illness as a result, but such an individual may experience symptoms of:	Changed Slightly	Performed Moderately	Performed Moderately	Mental Illness
9.	Violence in the seriously mentally ill is most often rooted in:	No Change	Performed Moderately	Performed Moderately	Mental Illness

	Item	Amount of Change to Item	Performance Test 1	Performance Test 2	Topic Area Tested
10.	The DSM-IV defines Substance Abuse in two categories: [b]	Changed Slightly	Performed Moderately	Performed Poorly	Sub. Abuse
11.	Tolerance in the field of substance abuse is defined as: [b]	Changed Slightly	Performed Well	Performed Poorly	Sub. Abuse
12.	Behavioral definition of domestic violence:	Changed Slightly	Performed Poorly	Performed Poorly	Dom. Violence
13.	Which of the following may be used to gain power and control over a partner: [a]	Changed Slightly	Performed Poorly	Performed Well	Dom. Violence
14.	Parent/Caregiver substance abuse poses a risk to children:	Changed Slightly	Performed Poorly	Performed Poorly	Sub. Abuse

	Item	Amount of Change to Item	Performance Test 1	Performance Test 2	Topic Area Tested
15.	Parents/Caregivers who abuse substances often:	Changed Slightly	Performed Poorly	Performed Poorly	Sub. Abuse
16.	If an individual is prescribed lithium s/he has most likely been diagnosed with	No Change	Performed Well	Performed Moderately	Mental Illness
17.	Which of the following best describes a connection between mental illness and parenting: [a]	Changed Drastically	Performed Poorly	Performed Well	Mental Illness
18.	Which of the following represents a significant finding of the disease of alcoholism and drug abuse:	Changed Drastically	Performed Poorly	Performed Poorly	Sub. Abuse

	Item	Amount of Change to Item	Performance Test 1	Performance Test 2	Topic Area Tested
19.	Cycle of violence can refer to the cycle between violent episodes and to: [a]	Changed Slightly	Performed Poorly	Performed Well	Dom. Violence
20.	Common adaptive strategies used by children exposed to domestic violence:	Changed Slightly	Performed Poorly	Performed Poorly	Dom. Violence
21.	When the victim of domestic violence leaves the batterer, safety issues can continue for:	No Change	Performed Poorly	Performed poorly	Dom. Violence

	Item	Amount of Change to Item	Performance Test 1	Performance Test 2	Topic Area Tested
22.	Which of the following best describes the NJ law that determines when an individual may be involuntarily taken to a screening center:	Changed Drastically	Performed Moderately	Performed Moderately	Mental Illness
23.	Female clients under the influence of alcohol/drugs are at risk of becoming victims of assault because:	Changed Slightly	Performed Poorly	Performed Poorly	Sub. Abuse
24.	Which of the following are physical/behavioral indicators of prenatal substance abuse: [a]	Changed Slightly	Performed Poorly	Performed Moderately	Sub. Abuse

	Item	Amount of Change to Item	Performance Test 1	Performance Test 2	Topic Area Tested
25.	Which of the following questions is included as part of the substance abuse screening tool that is known as CAGE: [a]	Changed Drastically	Performed Poorly	Performed Moderately	Sub. Abuse

a Items showing an improvement in performance from Cohort 1 to Cohort 2
b Items showing a decrease in performance from Cohort 1 to Cohort 2

Standardized Core Curriculum Development and Evaluation in California

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Abstract

The Standardized Core Curriculum Project (SCCP) is the result of a multi-year, statewide collaborative effort aimed at providing each new child welfare worker in California with a comprehensive, competency-based training before he or she assumes an independent caseload. After legislation initiated the project in 1998, the California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC) utilized a collaborative model to assemble the curriculum and pilot a delivery model in early 2001. An integrated evaluation plan measured satisfaction and application of knowledge to practice. Focus groups also gleaned qualitative information on curriculum delivery, curriculum content, and application to the workplace. A unique set of transfer of learning tools applied the curriculum to on-the-job training and integrated the supervisor into the training process.

Preliminary analysis of the pilot evaluation has yielded valuable information about curriculum delivery and application of the curriculum to the workplace. In addition, the curriculum development process fostered statewide collaboration and clarified the critical issues that must be addressed when attempting to

[1] CalSWEC wishes to acknowledge the work of the Standardized Core Work Group (SCWG) and the Standardized Core Evaluation Subcommittee in completing this project. Members included Betsy Gross, Ray Liles, Latifu Minirah, Margaret Rainforth, Martha Roditti, and Meera Srinivasan. Elsa Ten Broeck and Frankie Freitas also provided valuable consultation to the SCWG.

implement a large standardized curriculum in a state-supervised, county-administered child welfare system.

The Standardized Core Curriculum Project in California

The Context: California's Child Welfare Training System
California's state-supervised, county-administered child welfare system presents unique challenges and opportunities for development and delivery of core curriculum for new child welfare workers. The magnitude and diversity of California's child welfare system complicates the normal challenges inherent in developing a standardized curriculum. According to the 2000 census, California has over 33.8 million people and over 10.5 million children. California's fifty-eight counties range in population and sensibility from Los Angeles's densely populated urban sprawl to Alpine's small mountain towns. Educating and training the child welfare workforce in such a diverse environment requires collaboration between the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), state and private universities and schools of social work, and county administrators. The Standardized Core Curriculum Project (SCCP) is embedded in, and builds upon, this collaboration.

The CalSWEC Title IV-E Program
Such collaboration has a history in California, most notably with the inception and continuing operations of the California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC). CalSWEC was formed in 1990 at the University of California, Berkeley School of Social Welfare as a collaboration among California's accredited schools of social work, the CDSS, and the fifty-eight counties. Its mission is "to assure effective, culturally competent service delivery and leadership to alleviate negative human conditions, such as racism and poverty, for the people of California" (CalSWEC Web site, http://calswec.berkeley.edu) CalSWEC provides financial assistance (using university and federal funds through Title IV-E of the Social Security Act) to full- and part-time students pursuing an MSW degree in one of California's accredited MSW programs. A comprehensive set of competencies form the basis of a specialized IV-E child welfare curriculum, which students complete during their MSW coursework and field placements. Students receiving the IV-E stipend also complete at least one of

their field placements in a public child welfare setting. The students then are required to complete two years of service in a public child welfare setting, at full salary, after they receive their degree.

The IV-E competencies were developed by a coalition of practitioners, administrators, researchers, and instructors in 1991, were revised in 1996, and are currently under a second revision. The competencies were used in the development of the Standardized Core Curriculum, providing a link between the university-based master's-level education and the academy-based training for newly hired workers.

Newly hired workers who completed the IV-E curriculum are generally believed to require less training than those who have not completed the curriculum. It is unclear, however, whether this is, in fact, the case. It is also unclear which content areas newly hired workers with different levels of training and experience require. As outlined below, one goal of the Standardized Core Curriculum evaluation was to determine with more certainty what areas of training were required for newly hired child welfare workers with different levels of education, training and experience.

The Regional Training Academies

The CalSWEC model was also used to develop a training system for newly hired child welfare workers. For this type of training, five regional training academies were developed. These academies are university/county partnerships, which are charged with meeting the training needs of all counties in their region. CalSWEC provides coordination for the academies, and until fiscal year 2001 oversaw three of the five academies' budgets. Four of the five training academies are funded through Title IV-E training funds, leveraged with matching funds from the CDSS and from the universities where their operations are located. The Inter-University Consortium in Los Angeles also utilizes federal IV-E funds but contracts directly with the County of Los Angeles. Figure 1 shows the counties served by each academy, with their corresponding university affiliations.

Figure 1. California's Regional Training Academies

The Bay Area Academy
Service Area: 12 counties in the San Francisco Bay Area—Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Monterey, Napa, San Benito, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Solano, and Sonoma.
Principal University Partner: San Francisco State University
Total Population of the Region: 7.49 million*

The Central California Child Welfare Training Academy
Service Area: 11 counties in the Central Valley Area—Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Stanislaus, Tulare, and Ventura.
Principal University Partner: California State University, Fresno
Total Population of the Region: 4.14 million*

The Public Child Welfare Training Academy—Southern Region
Service Area: 5 counties in Southern California—Imperial, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego.
Principal University Partners: San Diego State University; California State University, San Bernardino
Total Population of the Region: 9.06 million*

The Northern California Children & Family Services Training Academy
Service Area: 29 counties in the Northern Region—Alpine, Amador, Butte, Calaveras, Colusa, Del Norte, El Dorado, Glenn, Humboldt, Inyo, Lake, Lassen, Mendocino, Modoc, Mono, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Sutter, Tehama, Trinity, Tuolumne, Yolo, and Yuba.
Principal University Partner: The Center for Human Services Training and Development, at UC Davis Extension.
Total Population of the Region: 3.66 million*

Figure 1. *(Cont'd)* **California's Regional Training Academies**

The Inter-University Consortium
Service Area: Los Angeles County.
Principal University Partners: UCLA; the University of Southern California; California State University, Long Beach; and California State University, Los Angeles.
Total Population of the Region: 9.52 million*

*Source: 2000 U.S. Census.

The Move Toward Standardization

Developing and delivering training for child welfare workers regionally allows for each academy to tailor curricula to meet its particular counties' needs. This variation in content and training delivery presents a challenge, however, for evaluation of training. Without a standardized training regimen statewide, it is difficult to determine, for example, whether workers in different regions are getting equivalent training. As the federal government moves toward an outcomes-based evaluation for child welfare systems, it becomes even more important to easily elucidate who has been trained, on what topics, and whether the training has been effective.

The lack of standardized training also has considerable liability implications, in that new employees with minimal social work education and training may be empowered to make decisions about removal and placement of children. Although most counties provide training prior to assigning cases to new employees, this is not always the case. With no mandate for standardized training, all training is more likely to be perceived as a luxury rather than as a necessity, particularly under budget constraints.

The current statewide workforce shortage exacerbates these problems, by creating pressure on counties to fill positions quickly and to recruit workers who do not have degrees in social work or related fields. California regulations stipulate that "At least 50% of the professional staff providing emergency response services, and at least 50% of the professional staff providing family maintenance services, shall possess a master's degree in Social Work, or its equivalent in Education and/or experience as certified by the State

Personnel Board or a county civil service board." The remaining 50% of emergency response and family maintenance staff are to possess a BSW or its equivalent, as defined above. All child welfare supervisors are to possess an MSW or equivalent. (CDSS Division 31 Regulations handbook, section 31-070.11.) Counties are unable to locate sufficient numbers of such qualified candidates, however, and apply for and receive waivers for this requirement. This means that some large counties with ample resources are able to hire new workers with MSW or MSW-equivalent degrees, including those that completed the IV-E curriculum. Smaller counties with fewer resources have increasingly resorted to hiring new workers with less education or less relevant education (i.e., BSWs, BA/BSs, or AAs).

Legislation

Partly in response to these issues, the SCCP began in 1998, with the passage of Assembly Bill 2779, sponsored by California Assemblymember Dion Aroner. AB 2779 appropriated funds to "support efforts to develop a standardized training curriculum for child welfare workers." Child welfare workers would complete the training prior to their assumption of an independent caseload. The legislation mandated CDSS to contract for services with an entity to work in "close collaboration" with various stakeholders in the child welfare system. Specifically named stakeholders included the County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA), CalSWEC, the five regional training academies, and representatives of child welfare social services workers. AB 2779 further stated that the "curriculum effort shall build upon work currently done and efforts currently under way within the California Social Work Education Center and the regional training academies." (California Assembly Bill 2779, section 52, 1998.) CalSWEC received the contract to coordinate the project beginning in 1998.

The SCCP's origins in legislation had a great impact on the course of the project. While the legislation clearly moved the project forward and provided funds to do so, it also placed some limitations on the progress of the project. Of particular note was the absence of any language in the legislation about implementing the standardized curriculum once it was developed.

The Curriculum Development Process

General Development Process Principles

Several general principles emerged as the SCCP moved forward from the legislation to the design of the Standardized Core Curriculum (SCC). These principles guided the project, and will be expanded upon below:

- The SCC would be a **collaborative** effort;
- The SCC would be a **competency-based curriculum** with measurable learning objectives;
- The SCC would reflect **adult learning styles** and have options for distance learning; and
- The SCC would integrate **transfer of learning** into the delivery of the training.

Collaboration: The Standardized Core Curriculum Advisory Committee

The legislative mandate for collaboration greatly influenced the curriculum design process. In order to assure input and buy-in from all of the named (and other important unnamed) stakeholders in AB 2779, CalSWEC convened the Standardized Core Advisory Committee (SCAC) in August 1999. The SCAC consists of representatives from CDSS, CalSWEC, CWDA, the Regional Training Academies, county child welfare training management, child welfare supervisory and line staff, child welfare consumers, foster parents, and labor unions. Other relevant stakeholders and professionals also participated in the SCAC, such as substance abuse training experts and representatives from the Judicial Council of California.

The diverse membership of the SCAC allowed the group to set the tone of the project from the beginning, and the four principles above were established through discussions at the SCAC. The collaborative nature of the group also helped to address "territory" or "turf" issues early on in the process, increasing buy-in by the key stakeholders. Subcommittees were established to specifically address curriculum content, transfer of learning, distance learning, and evaluation, with each subcommittee led by a regional training academy.

Competency-Based Curriculum

As noted above, CalSWEC established competencies for the Title IV-E Program in 1991, using a similar collaborative process with a diverse group of stakeholders. (Clark and Dickinson, 1998). These competencies have been used at universities and training academies throughout the state as they developed their core curricula. This wide use made the synthesis of existing core curricula easier.

The Advisory Committee and the Curriculum Outline

Using the existing CalSWEC competencies as a foundation, the SCAC incorporated existing curriculum content areas at the regional training academies into a comprehensive outline. This outline included eight large content domains, with smaller content areas within each domain. Five domains roughly corresponded to the categories of the CalSWEC IV-E competencies. Three additional domains were identified as "thematic content areas," to be integrated throughout all sections of the curriculum. The SCAC then developed broad learning objectives for each content area. Figure 2 shows the eight domains and twenty-three content areas.

Figure 2. SCC Domains and Content Areas

Primary Child Welfare Skills

This domain includes training related to the practice of child welfare with the child welfare population as it is organized within the State of California.

Content Areas:

- Fundamental Practice Issues in Public Child Welfare (includes Confidentiality and Social Work Ethics and Values);
- Identifying Issues in Child Maltreatment;
- Risk and Safety Assessments;
- Family Needs Assessment;
- Case Planning and Case Management;
- The Issues of Placement in Child Welfare;
- Working Effectively with Caregivers;
- Mandates Regarding Placement.

Figure 2. *(Cont'd)* **SCC Domains and Content Areas**

Social Work Skills
This domain encompasses the training of essential social work skills.

Content Areas:
- Child Welfare Practice in a Multi-Cultural Environment;
- Conducting Interviews;
- Crisis Intervention;
- Working Effectively with Families.

Human Behavior
This domain includes training concerning child, adolescent, and adult human development; human sexuality; and mental health issues.

Content Areas:
- Human Development and the Effects of Child Maltreatment;
- Intrafamilial Sexual Abuse;
- Domestic Violence;
- Substance Abuse;
- Mental Health and Mental Illness.

Work Place Management
This domain contains job behavior and community collaboration.

Content Areas:
- Time Management;
- Stress Management;
- Worker Safety;
- Interdisciplinary Practice.

Legal Processes
This domain contains training related to juvenile court processes.

Content Areas:
- Documentation and Writing Skills for Legal Reports;
- Court Procedures.

Figure 2. *(Cont'd)* **SCC Domains and Content Areas**

Cultural Competence
This thematic domain focuses on identifying and addressing cultural differences and their impact on child welfare practice. This domain also has a one-day training as part of the curriculum.

Content Areas:
- Child Welfare Practice in a Multi-Cultural Environment.

Interdisciplinary Practice
This thematic domain addresses working effectively with community members, agencies, and other professionals.

Social Work Values and Ethics
This thematic domain covers NASW Ethics and Values and their application to child welfare practice. This content was also addressed more specifically in the content area *Fundamental Practice Issues in Public Child Welfare.*

Synthesis of the Curriculum Content
Once the SCAC had broadly defined the curriculum content with the outline, the role of the SCAC changed. While called an advisory committee, the SCAC had actively worked on the curriculum outline, rather than simply advising CalSWEC. Meetings were held monthly from August 1999 to September 2000. As the SCAC grappled with converting the outline into a usable curriculum that could be piloted throughout the state, however, more intensive work was required. This work also required a smaller team than the approximately fifty-member SCAC. Again, a collaborative model was used to develop the curriculum for the pilot. Four of the five regional training academies devoted staff to a new, more intensive group—the Standardized Core Curriculum Work Group (SCWG). The SCAC then assumed a more advisory role, meeting quarterly.

The SCWG's focus was to "flesh out" the curriculum outline developed by the SCAC, synthesizing the curriculum from the regional training academies and developing measurable learning objectives for each content area. At the initial meetings in

November 2000, the group established a standardized format for the curriculum, using the Core Curriculum of the Central California Child Welfare Training Academy as a model. The group also established a subcommittee, the Standardized Core Evaluation Sub-Committee (SCES), to design the evaluation and formulate the necessary evaluation instruments.

For several reasons, the synthesis process presented more difficulty than initially anticipated. First, there was (and remains) little agreement as to the meaning of the term "standardized curriculum." While the SCAC had discussed this issue, the SCWG confronted it much more concretely. This lack of agreement manifested itself in widely differing views as to how "scripted" a standardized curriculum should be. In any large curriculum project with an integrated evaluation component, the pressure to make each training similar in format tempts one to provide a "script" for each trainer to follow, with similar activities and discussions. Scripted curricula maximize the possibility of generating valid, reliable evaluation data, because they minimize differences in training styles.

Using a scripted curriculum has drawbacks in terms of flexibility, however. In a diverse environment, different trainers have different ideas for effective curriculum delivery, and different audiences may react very differently to particular exercises or discussions. The SCCP demanded a highly flexible curriculum that also had measurable objectives. For this reason, a non-scripted curriculum was developed, with recommended guidelines for trainers and standardized objectives. Content was defined in the curriculum as it related to the learning objectives, and trainers were required to teach to this content. The method of delivery of the material, however, could vary according to individual trainer style and the make-up of the group of trainees.

Participants' Guides and Trainers' Guides

Each content area of the curriculum therefore has two separate guides, one for the participants and one for the trainer. Both the *Participants' Guide* and the *Trainers' Guide* contain the learning objectives. The *Participants' Guide* also contains the CalSWEC competencies and defines the content needed to cover the learning objectives. Trainees keep the *Participants' Guide* as a reference manual during and after the training. Trainers receive both the *Participants' Guide* and the *Trainers' Guide*, which advises

trainers about how to approach the material and sets priorities for them when time is limited. A summary of all of the curriculum components, including the transfer of learning tools, is included in Appendix A.

Learning Objectives

McCowan and Wegenast (1998) define instructional objectives as a combination of three specific behaviors trainees must demonstrate to show they have mastered a particular competency:

- **Knowledge—**Specific information that is perceived or learned;
- **Skills—**Proficiency or dexterity requiring the use of hands or body;
- **Values—**A state of mind or feeling.

The SCWG used this model for developing objectives for the different content areas of the curriculum. Work group members who synthesized the curriculum reviewed the learning objectives to determine that they were: (a) reflective of knowledge, skill, or value; (b) actually covered in the curriculum content; and (c) measurable. Each content area of the curriculum also had to have one learning objective related to cultural competence, to reflect the importance of this thematic content area.

Adult Learning Styles

A relatively large body of literature has discussed and categorized preferred learning styles for adults. Approaches to adult learning have included categorizing learning styles by sensory domain (i.e., some people learn visually, others learn kinetically, etc.) and categorizing learning styles by the method with which people integrate information (i.e., some people think globally, some think compartmentally, etc.).

Kasworm and Marienau (1997) identified five key principles to adult-oriented learning:

- Adults learn from multiple sources;
- Adult learning engages the whole person;
- Adult learning is facilitated by self-direction that is encouraged with feedback;
- Adults learn best when the information is in the context of experience; and
- Adults learn from their experiences. (p. 7)

These principles were considered in the development of the core curriculum and in the delivery of the curriculum. Because different trainers would be training in different regions, they would likely have different strengths and use different training techniques. In addition to defining the content areas, the SCAC established guidelines for the standardized curriculum that would make it reflective of adult learning styles and flexible in its delivery. Three issues were identified as guidelines for curriculum development:

- The recognition of various adult leaning styles and their respective impact on the structure of training curricula;
- The specification of training technologies that will enhance the possibility that counties with their respective differences in resources will find this curriculum useful, and
- The incorporation of different approaches to delivering this training curriculum.

Using these guidelines, the SCWG incorporated into the *Trainers' Guide* suggestions for adult learning techniques. CalSWEC also began development of the *Trainer Activity Book*, a tool to assist trainers in developing dynamic, multi-modal presentations in their content area. Unfortunately, the *Trainer Activity Book* was incomplete prior to the pilots, due to time constraints. CalSWEC and the training academies therefore offered trainers assistance in developing their presentations as necessary.

Distance Learning Modules

Given the increasing focus on distance learning of all types, the SCCP sought to develop areas of content that could be delivered outside of the classroom. The Public Child Welfare Training Academy—Southern Region (PCWTA) initiated the distance-learning portion of the core curriculum and assisted in the field-testing of two courses as part of the pilot in the northern region. PCWTA developed Web-based courses for two content areas: *Fundamental Practice Issues in Public Child Welfare* and *Court Procedures.* PCWTA chose to use Blackboard.com™ as a platform for the distance learning courses. *(See Bookhagen, A., in this volume.)* The courses are "asynchronous," meaning that participants may work on them at their own pace, provided that they finish them by the specified end date. Students are required to participate in "discussion boards," which allow all participants to view comments by other participants and instructors. Students also

maintain e-mail contact with the instructors. In the SCC pilot, these instructors were located hundreds of miles away, in southern California. Blackboard.com™ also allows instructors to track student participation, and information on the satisfaction level with the distance learning format is collected as part of the courses.

Transfer of Learning

Mindful of the importance of the transfer of learning to the workplace, and of the need to reinforce the transfer of knowledge both during and after training, the SCCP developed a unique set of transfer of learning tools. These tools are designed to facilitate the transfer of learning from the classroom (or from the computer, in the case of distance learning) to the workplace. This emphasis on transfer of learning acknowledges that classroom training alone—even classroom training by a dynamic presenter with a multi-modal format—does not necessarily apply learning directly and effectively to the workplace.

Background on Transfer of Learning

Curry et al. (1994) refer to the transfer of adult learning as "the application of learning, knowledge, skills, and attitudes acquired in a training setting to the practice setting," and point out that "social work training frequently fails to enhance job performance because it is not viewed as a collaborative process involving factors that affect the social worker before, during, and after training." (p. 8.) The CalSWEC IV-E curriculum applies these principles to an academic setting for MSW students, in that classroom content is tied to field practice in a public child welfare agency. However, training of newly hired public child welfare workers in California has not historically emphasized the field application of what was learned in the classroom. Although a great deal of effort has gone into creating training programs for classroom learning, the development of tools to assist workers once they leave training has been confined to a few recent county and academy programs.

This emphasis on the transfer of learning has important implications not only for the relevance of training to practice, but for retention of workers in social welfare agencies. Research on transfer of learning within the education field has emphasized this connection to retention. A study by Recruiting New Teachers, Inc. (RNT), a national nonprofit educational research organization based in Belmont, Massachusetts, found that teachers who get

extra support early in their careers are far more likely to stay in the profession (Recruiting New Teachers, Inc., 2000). The study also found that when mentors (or in this case, supervisors) are prepared and motivated, they provide crucial guidance about practice and system issues. RNT cited California's Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program (BTSA) as a model for mentorship and retention. BTSA uses a variety of methods to transfer knowledge and skills to new teachers, including support by a mentor, clinical supervision (including reflection and portfolio work), and ongoing formative assessments of teaching practice. The BTSA program increased new teachers' confidence and satisfaction, and improved teaching practices and retention rates. (p. 33)

Dickinson and Perry (1998) found similar results for child welfare workers in CalSWEC's study on burnout and retention. They found that child welfare workers' perceptions of professional support from their supervisors significantly contributed to whether they remain on the job.

Emphasis on the Supervisor-Worker Relationship

Given the importance of mentoring and supervision, the transfer of learning efforts in the SCCP focused on the supervisor-worker relationship, rather than on the trainer-worker relationship. With leadership from Bay Area Academy, the SCAC identified three tools designed to focus on this relationship in the training. The SCWG subsequently developed the tools, which are summarized in Figure 3, below.

**Figure 3. Standardized Core Curriculum—
Transfer of Learning Tools**

The Participant's *Visa*
The *Visa* contains assignments for the participants to complete (with guidance from the supervisor) during the on-the-job training that is embedded in classroom core training. It is intended to be a living document that will be used by trainers, supervisors, and participants to track progress on the job.

The *Supervisor's Cookbook*
The *Cookbook* contains the exercises from the *Visa*, plus supporting content materials for the supervisor to help them reinforce participants' learning on an ongoing basis. It is intended for use both during and after the training. The *Cookbook* could also be used as a resource guide for supervisors to assist others in their unit.

The Supervisors' Retreat
Prior to the first day of training for new workers, all supervisors attend the Supervisors' Retreat, a one-day training that:
- Emphasizes the importance transfer of learning;
- Stresses the role of the supervisor in the learning process and in the retention of staff;
- Provides an overview of the curriculum content covered in the classroom, and the schedule of core training classes;
- Orients the supervisors to the *Visa* and the *Cookbook*, and instructs them in the use of these tools.

Implications for the Hiring Process
Including the supervisor in the training process significantly affected the county hiring process. In county and academy-based core programs prior to the SCCP, new workers either attended core training prior to their eventual assignment, or attended core training after they had been assigned for a period of time and had assumed an independent caseload. With the new focus on the supervisor-worker relationship for the transfer of learning, however, neither of these options was available. Workers must be assigned to their units, but not yet have caseloads. This change has significant impacts on the hiring process for counties, and

implementation of such a plan would likely require greater intra-agency coordination of the hiring process.

The Evaluation Plan

Development of the Evaluation Model

As noted above, a standing subcommittee of the SCAC developed the broad parameters of the integrated evaluation of the SCC. Designing an evaluation for the pilots, however, required a smaller, more focused group. CalSWEC therefore convened the Standardized Core Evaluation Subcommittee (SCES) on a monthly to bimonthly basis beginning in November 2000. This group was charged with constructing a comprehensive evaluation of the standardized core, including determining the specific research questions and designing tools to measure them in the pilots.

Contributing members of the SCEC were selected for this collaborative effort from participating training academies and CalSWEC. The group was comprised of social welfare researchers and training and curriculum specialists, as well as experienced child welfare workers. SCES members concurrently participated in the SCWG to give input on the curriculum development, as well as keep abreast of its progress.

Research Questions

The SCES devised five research questions:

1. Do participants in the SCC indicate greater satisfaction with course content, course trainer, and job relevancy than participants in regular core trainings (i.e., trainings currently provided by regional training academies and counties across the state)?
2. Does the SCC provide a greater difference in knowledge, skills, and attitudes of participants relative to regular core trainings, or relative to those who begin child welfare work without any training?
3. After working three to six months, post-training, in the child welfare field, does the SCC make a greater difference in the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of participants relative to regular core trainings, or relative to those who begin working without any training?

4. Do the training needs differ by education levels for participants with less than BA, BA/BS, BSW, MA/MS, MSW, or IV-E MSW?
5. For trainees with diverse education levels (i.e., less than BA, BA/BS, BSW, MA/MS, MSW, or IV-E MSW), what differing content area needs do they report?

Methods

The evaluation utilizes a quasi-experimental evaluation design. A series of tools developed specifically for the SCCP were administered to participants throughout the pilot trainings. The participants in the pilot trainings constitute Experimental Group I. The same tools will be administered to Experimental Group II, comprised of workers in a separate, regular core training sponsored by an academy or county. Finally, the tools will be administered to a control group, consisting of newly hired child welfare workers who have not yet begun any core training. Figure 4 presents the three groups graphically.

Figure 4

FIGURE 4.A: Evaluation Design

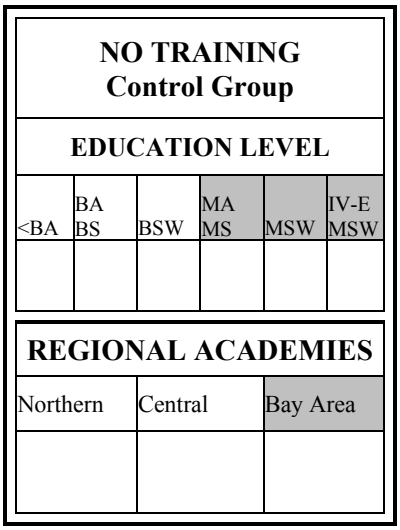

FIGURE 4.B: Evaluation Design

STANDARDIZED CORE Experimental Group I					
EDUCATION LEVEL					
<BA	BA BS	BSW	MA MS	MSW	IV-E MSW

REGIONAL ACADEMIES		
Northern	Central	Bay Area

FIGURE 4.C: Evaluation Design

REGULAR CORE Experimental Group I I					
EDUCATION LEVEL					
<BA	BA BS	BSW	MA MS	MSW	IV-E MSW

REGIONAL ACADEMIES		
Northern	Central	Bay Area

The evaluation tools measure basic constructs using qualitative as well as quantitative data. These constructs, or areas of measurement, are listed in Figure 5, with the corresponding tools used to measure them.

Figure 5. Research Constructs of the SCC Evaluation, with Corresponding Evaluation Tools

Participants' Demographics
Evaluation Tool: Demographic Survey

Participants' Satisfaction with Curriculum Content and Delivery
Evaluation Tool: Satisfaction Scales

Participants' Application of Knowledge Acquired During the Training
Evaluation Tool: Content Questionnaires (closed-ended questions)

Participants' Perception of Knowledge Application to the Workplace
Evaluation Tools: Content Questionnaires (open-ended questions), Closing Focus Group, Follow-Up Interview

Supervisors' and Trainers' Perception of Participants' Utilization of Curriculum Content
Evaluation Tools: Wrap-Up Focus Group

Evaluation Tools

Demographic Survey

In order to track the relationships among background, education, and experience, participants fill out a *Demographic Survey* and assign to themselves an identification code number that they use throughout the evaluation. Data are collected on:

- Level of formal education;
- Previous child welfare training;
- Previous child welfare work experience;
- Age;
- Race/ethnicity; and
- Disability status.

Opening Focus Groups

Each participant brings his or her own perspective and level of curiosity into the training situation, and these factors can heavily influence the participant's ability to learn. The SCES therefore

chose to use *Opening Focus Groups* prior to the beginning of each of the pilots in order to gather information that would not only inform the overall evaluation about possible intervening variables, but also to provide continuous feedback for future evaluations. Opening Focus Group questions centered on what the participants felt they needed to learn in order to complete their job duties competently. Specific topic areas included:

- Participants' expectations regarding what kinds of situations and issues they would be facing during a career as a child welfare worker;
- Participants' motivations for entering the field of child welfare;
- Participants' level of motivation for taking the training;
- Participants' perception of supervisory and managerial support for the training; and
- Participants' experience and background related to child welfare and human services.

Facets of one's workplace culture often relate to an individual's ability to apply knowledge to the job. The evaluation explored this linkage in the closing and wrap-up focus groups *(see below)*.

Satisfaction Scales

Since a limited amount of genuine learning can occur when a participant is restless, frustrated by the content, or bored by a trainer, participants filled out a standardized satisfaction scale at the completion of each content area. The SCES decided to modify Bay Area Academy's satisfaction scale for use in the pilots.

The resulting *Satisfaction Scale* is a twenty-five-item, five-point Likert scale divided into three main sections. The participants rate their satisfaction with (1) the clarity and content of the course objectives; (2) the relevancy of the training to their job; and (3) the trainer and delivery of the materials. Additional items solicited overall ratings of each of the above areas as well as the facilities, with space for elaboration on those questions that are rated low on the Likert scale.

Content Questionnaires

One of the primary objectives of the SCC evaluation is to measure whether trainees apply curriculum material to real-life

situations—in effect, to measure skills gained from the training. To meet this goal, *Content Questionnaires* were designed to address the learning objectives for each subject matter. Since the entire list of learning objectives for the SCC is quite vast, a purposive sample of learning objectives was selected.

While established methods exist to measure skill acquisition, such as observation in the field or in an experimental setting, these are often very time-consuming and costly. The Content Questionnaires, designed to approximate skill acquisition at much less cost, measure the application of knowledge acquired in the training to a child welfare case vignette. For the pilots, the SCES administered the questionnaires at the beginning of each week, starting in Week 2. They covered the content areas of the previous week, after the participant had completed the training and attended one day of on-the-job training intended to reinforce the material. In the first revision of the evaluation, Content Questionnaires will be developed for each content area of the curriculum, rather than for each week. This way, the curriculum can be delivered in a longer or shorter format, and the order of the topic areas can be adjusted to suit a particular county's or academy's needs.

The questionnaires provide vignettes taken from real child welfare cases, with all identifying information removed. With each scenario, participants are presented with various true-to-life dilemmas of child welfare practice and are given five possible means for handling the described dilemmas. The choices offer several marginally adequate means of responding to the situation, at least one grossly inadequate means of handling the situation, and one alternative providing the "best practice" means of responding to the situation. The "best practice" choice is taken directly from the curriculum. Participants are expected to think through the subtle differences among the responses, and choose the "best practice" response.

At the end of each Content Questionnaire, participants answer one open-ended, qualitative question. This question was the same for all the content areas—participants were requested to list three or four key things they had learned (from the most recent training module) that they thought would be vital to their work.

Closing Focus Groups

On the last day of the training the SCES conducted a *Closing Focus Group*, wherein participants give feedback about the

training as a whole. Information is gathered regarding the training, the curriculum, participants' experiences of on-the-job training using the *Visa,* and whether the training met participants' educational expectations.

This information is helpful for identifying problems in the curriculum and the training. It also provides context for the data collected by the other, more quantitative instruments. In short, the Closing Focus Groups serve as signposts in the evaluation; they offer qualitative information, including participant self-assessments, expectations, and child welfare concerns that were stimulated by the training.

Wrap-Up Focus Groups

After the training is complete, trainers, supervisors, and county and academy personnel participate in a *Wrap-Up Focus Group*. During this discussion, everyone shares his or her experiences and provides constructive feedback about the SCC. This information provides further context for the effectiveness of the training and the *Visa* assignments.

Follow-up Interviews

To further determine whether participants think the SCC prepares workers to more effectively do their jobs, CalSWEC will conduct *Follow-Up Interviews* of participants between three to six months after the training. Through these interviews trainees will again be asked to conduct self-assessments and to reveal whether or not the training met the expressed learning objectives. If not, they are asked to describe what was missing. They are also asked to provide specific suggestions that would improve the training for the next generation of trainees, and provide information on what factors kept them from applying the knowledge and skills they acquired in the training.

Coupled with the Closing Focus Groups and the Wrap-Up Focus Groups, the Follow-Up Interviews also provide valuable information on intervening variables that were not known to the participants prior to the training. These include factors such as workplace culture and organizational climate. Glisson and Hemmelgarn (1998) found that organizational climate within the child welfare agency was the primary predictor of positive service outcomes, and was a significant predictor of service quality. Ellett and Millar (2001) found that several factors of professional

organizational culture were related to child welfare employees' intent to remain employed with the child welfare agency. While comprehensive core training may provide workers with a base of knowledge and skills to succeed, the organizational culture may mitigate or enhance this success. By including questions related to organizational culture in the Closing Focus Groups, Wrap-Up Focus Groups, and Follow-Up Interviews, the SCC evaluation will shed some light on this relationship.

The Field Study and Pilots

At the writing of this paper, CalSWEC has completed the first wave of pilot trainings of the SCC. During April 2001, the first SCC training began in Fresno County, conducted by CalSWEC and the Central California Child Welfare Training Academy. The SCWG decided to designate this first training as a "field test" rather than as a pilot, since the curriculum was not yet completed and the evaluation tools had not been used before. Field-testing the curriculum delivery and the evaluation tools proved very beneficial—the SCES quickly discovered that the content questionnaires were far too long to be completed adequately as planned prior to the field test.

Applying what was learned via the field test, CalSWEC completed the remaining two pilot trainings during June and July of 2001. The first of these took place in Redding and was co-sponsored by the Northern California Child Welfare Training Academy. This pilot included new workers from multiple counties across rural northern California. As noted above, many smaller counties have great difficulty filling positions with master's level candidates. This was evident in the sample from this region *(see below)*. This group was somewhat smaller than the other two groups, due to the logistical problems of assembling a group from a large, sparsely populated area for an extended training. Costs per trainee were also significantly higher, since many participants lived so far from the training site that they required lodging between consecutive days of training. Because of these logistical challenges, the northern region was particularly interested in distance learning and chose to field test the two distance learning modules designed by the PCWTA in southern California.

The second pilot took place in Alameda County, a comparatively urban environment in the San Francisco Bay Area.

This pilot was co-sponsored by the Bay Area Academy, and participants generally were more experienced and had more formal education.

Both pilots were conducted using the six-week delivery model. Participants attended classroom training three to four days a week (three on the weeks they used the distance learning format) and one day on the job.

Sample for the Pilots

The target population for the SCC is newly hired child welfare social workers. In order to understand the usefulness of a *statewide* standardized core training, the field test/pilot sample consisted of three groups of child welfare workers who will work with differing populations once they are on the job. The demographics of these groups are outlined below. The cumulative sample includes fourteen men and thirty-nine women (three participants did not indicate a gender), with a median age of 32.

Group I, from the Fresno County field test, consisted of eighteen participants. Of these, none had an MSW or equivalent master's degree, sixteen had completed a BA or BS, and two had completed a BSW. The group was racially/ethnically mixed, with ten participants identifying themselves as white, five as Black/African American, and three as Hispanic/Latino. These new workers will work with a combination of agricultural families, largely African American, Hispanic, and White.

Group II, from the northern pilot, consisted of twelve participants. Again, none had attained an MSW or equivalent degree. Three had attained a BSW, five had attained a BA or BS, and four indicated that they had completed "some college." This group was also more homogenous racially and ethnically; eight participants identified as White, and one identified as Hispanic/Latino. Three participants did not list a race or ethnicity. This group of new workers will work primarily with rural populations that are primarily white, with some Native American, Hispanic/Latino, and African American families.

Group III, from the Alameda County pilot, consisted of twenty-six participants, all with a master's degree of some kind. Of these, nine had completed their MSW with the specialized CalSWEC IV-E curriculum, eight had completed an MSW without the IV-E curriculum, and nine had completed an MS or MA. Ten participants identified themselves as African American, two as

Asian American, and nine as White. Alameda County's population is ethnically mixed, with a large African American population served by the child welfare agency.

Preliminary Findings

As of this report, the field test and pilots have been completed, but data is still being compiled from Experimental Group II and the Control Group. A great deal of qualitative information has been collected both during the curriculum development phase of the project and during the focus groups for the pilot. CalSWEC is currently sorting and analyzing all of the data, and the findings are very preliminary. They are outlined below as they pertain to the delivery model, the curriculum content and development, the distance learning tools, and the evaluation logistics/development.

Delivery Model

Under pressure to fill positions, child welfare agencies are likely to choose shorter training. The SCWG developed a six-week and a nine-week version of the curriculum. The six-week version covered all of the material in twenty-four classroom days, with one day each week of on-the-job training (OJT). The nine-week version included two days weekly of OJT, and allowed for the worker to assume responsibility for two cases part way through the training. Each county chose the shorter version, expressing concern with pressure to complete the training in a timely manner.

Lengthy core training needs to integrate a variety of modalities (i.e., OJT, classroom, distance learning) in order to sustain interest. The response to delivering the training up-front was mixed. While many workers and trainers reported that the material was too exhaustive to be completed straight through, few saw an alternative given the pressures to fill positions quickly. Since the project dictated that participants complete the core training prior to assuming an independent caseload, creative approaches to training must be explored in the transfer of learning. Such approaches are likely to eliminate classroom time, and increase OJT time.

Integrating a mentorship program into the core curriculum shows promise as a tool to increase transfer of learning while decreasing classroom time. Under this model, new workers complete some coursework in the classroom, but follow up on this coursework with an on-site mentor who accompanies them in the

field as needed to model and reinforce best practices. The mentor also works closely with the supervisor to focus on what the particular trainee needs to improve his or her practice. The mentor uses the SCC content, learning objectives, and competencies, and the SCC evaluation tools are administered. This allows for simultaneously standardized and personalized training. The Central California Child Welfare Training Academy has begun to implement a mentorship model, using academy employees as mentors working in the county. This model shows potential for buy-in by the counties, as it does not require them to fund more positions.

Curriculum Development

Lack of an implementation plan can foster superficial buy-in. As noted above, the legislation that initiated the SCCP called for the development of a standardized curriculum. The legislation made no mention of the much more expensive task of implementing such a curriculum. This helped the relevant stakeholders to work together in the short run, because stakes were lower than if an implementation plan was looming. As the project moved forward, however, it became clear that while many of the relevant stakeholders believed *in principle* in a standardized statewide core curriculum, this was quite different than pushing for implementation of the curriculum. Implementation would require changing the training that each academy and county had invested in for a number of years.

Pilots of the curriculum can move the project toward implementation. CalSWEC narrowed the focus of the SCC from implementation of the entire curriculum to implementation of the pilots in order to move the project forward. In order to run pilots, after all, one must have a curriculum to implement. This moved the project from an outline of content to be covered to a set of curriculum tools with an integrated evaluation plan.

Curriculum synthesis is a lengthy and difficult process. The collaboration mandated by the legislation assured that curriculum was included from most of the regional training academies. Synthesizing existing curriculum, however, proved more difficult than anticipated, because a great deal of editing was required to make the different curricula similar in style. Some curricula included detailed text and comprehensive references, while other curricula used a broader outline format. A different member of the

SCWG synthesized each separate module, and this also decreased standardization. This meant a great deal of work for the SCWG and CalSWEC staff, editing and re-editing the curriculum once it was synthesized.

Transfer of Learning

Supervisors need support and accountability in order to provide the transfer of learning. While supervisors involved in the pilot appeared to appreciate the extra information on the training delivered to their new hires, they expressed frustration at not having the time or support to use the *Cookbook* to assist their trainees to complete the *Visa* exercises. Without a strong mandate to use the transfer of learning tools, the supervisors were unlikely to use them.

Increased OJT is needed in order to utilize the transfer of learning tools effectively. The supervisors who participated in the Wrap-Up Focus Groups all reported that the *Visa* and *Cookbook* were well-designed tools—they just did not have enough time with their trainees to use them effectively.

Distance Learning

Web-based distance learning requires logistical support in order to get students started. The field test of the distance learning modules demonstrated that once students were able to access the courses easily, they responded well to this modality of learning.

Web-based distance-learning models require significant up-front development time. Web-based distance learning has a definite advantage in presenting content to participants from a wide geographical area, and potential to reach greater numbers of participants than traditional classroom training models. Development of these courses, however, often involves a significant investment in time and resources. The trainers who developed the distance learning modules for the SCCP reported that it took many more hours of work than they anticipated, partly because they had not before developed such an extensive on-line course.

Web-based distance learning does not necessarily take the place of classroom time. The SCCP initially hoped to replace some classroom time with distance learning modules, thus shortening the time a participant would need for training. It soon

became apparent, however, that this did not necessarily account for building skills on the job. While distance learning was effective in disbursing knowledge to participants, participants still needed to transfer the learning to the workplace and improve their skills. Other models, such as skill-based classroom learning, or on-the-job mentorship, can be used to apply the knowledge learned through distance learning courses.

Evaluation

Collaborative curriculum development affects post-pilot evaluation. CalSWEC's collaborative model of curriculum development produced unexpected effects in the evaluation plan. Since regional training academy and county training staff were part of the development of the synthesized curriculum, they also used the new material to improve their own curricula. Lessons learned by CalSWEC from the pilots were also learned by the academies and the counties, who then integrated them into their core training. Unfortunately for the evaluation, this means that experimental Group II will not receive typical core training, but core training that was influenced and improved by participation in the SCCP. The process of developing the curriculum influenced the outcomes. In fact, the more effective the SCCP was in moving training efforts forward, the less likely it was that the data from experimental Group II would show this.

Holding focus groups at the beginning of the training can affect the culture of the training group. Beginning the training with a focus group provided unexpected benefits and liabilities for the training, depending on the group of trainees. In the Fresno field study and the northern region pilot, the focus groups appeared to enhance the evaluation, by establishing the SCC training in an experimental context for the participants. Since the focus groups encouraged self-examination and self-disclosure as part of the evaluation process, the evaluation itself seemed more personalized. The participants responded with a genuine effort to provide meaningful feedback throughout the evaluation process.

In the Bay Area pilot, however, the focus groups appeared to negatively affect the culture of the training group. Participants in this pilot also saw themselves in an evaluative role. They used this role differently, however, harshly criticizing the individual trainers for particular content areas. This appeared to have a negative affect on the atmosphere of the training room. It is unclear whether this

dynamic was particular to this training group, or a result of other intervening factors. The consensus of the Wrap-Up Focus Group, however, was that the focus group held at the beginning of the training contributed to some of the problems in the training group.

Field test evaluation tools prior to using them in pilots. As noted above, the Fresno field test made clear that the content questionnaires were simply too lengthy to be used effectively in the pilots. They were then pared down to cover a purposive sample of the learning objectives, rather than all of them. This made the evaluation during the pilots less cumbersome.

Allow enough time and resources to prepare and revise the evaluation tools. The "pilot phase" of the SCCP lasted only eight months. During this time, activities included: forming and convening the SCWG and SCES; gathering and synthesizing the curriculum; developing a delivery model; developing an evaluation plan and tools to measure the learning objectives; identifying trainers who could deliver the curriculum; and arranging for and delivering the field test and pilots. Since the evaluation tools could not be developed without the learning objectives, even less time was available to modify and hone them. This meant that a comprehensive item analysis *(See Peterson, A., in this volume)* was not possible. In hindsight, a full-time evaluator would have greatly benefited the project. In the next phase of the SCCP, CalSWEC will conduct an item analysis and revise the evaluation for use in the implementation of the SCC.

Next Steps

After completing the pilots, the SCCP will move further toward implementation. Over the next year, activities will include:

- Revising select content areas to further standardize the format and integrate the latest research;
- Exploring and piloting alternative delivery methods, which include some combination of distance learning, classroom training, and on-the-job-mentorship;
- Analyzing and revising the evaluation plan and evaluation tools so that they can be used effectively in the implementation of the SCC; and
- Continuing to work with relevant stakeholders to move the project further toward implementation.

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Appendix A

Standardized Core Curriculum Project Summary of Curriculum Components

Participants' Guide

This set of documents fleshes out the content of the Standardized Core Curriculum outline, and contains a synthesis of the existing core trainings from California's Northern, Central, and Southern Academies. Additional material not included in these academy core trainings was also gleaned from CalSWEC curricula and other sources.

- The material in the *Participants' Guide* is intended to be fairly exhaustive, and more material is included than can be covered in the training. This allows trainers flexibility in their approach to the material, while setting clear, measurable objectives that are necessary for evaluation.
- Each section of the *Participants' Guide* has a set of specific, measurable learning objectives in the areas of knowledge, skills, and values/attitudes.
- Both trainers and participants receive a copy of the *Participants' Guide*. Trainers use it to develop their training, assuring that it covers the proper material. Participants use it both as a reference point during the training, and as an ongoing post-training resource guide.

Participants' *Visa*

The *Visa* contains assignments for the participant to complete (with guidance from the supervisor) during the on-the-job training that is embedded in the six weeks of classroom core training. It is intended to be a living document that will be used by trainers, supervisors and participants to track progress on the job.

Trainers' Guide

The *Trainers' Guide* is a condensed version of the *Participants' Guide* that outlines the minimum information that is to be covered for each content area. The trainers use the outlines to assure that they cover all areas of the larger content outline. Trainers will use the *Participants' Guide* as a resource for the content outlined in the *Trainers' Guide*.

Trainer Activity Book

This trainer resource is a collection of interactive exercises and training materials that can be used during the training, sorted by type and content area. These will be gathered from experienced trainers throughout the state. With the *Participants' Guide, Trainers' Guide*, and *Trainer Activity Book*, trainers should be able to formulate interactive trainings that cover all the material and that reflect regional differences.

Supervisor's Cookbook

The *Supervisor's Cookbook* will provide exercises and supporting content materials for the supervisor to help them to reinforce participants' learning on an ongoing basis. It is intended for use both during and after the training. The *Cookbook* could also be used as a resource guide for supervisors to assist others in their unit.

Linking Child Welfare Training and Child Outcomes*

John Poertner, *D.S.W.*

Abstract

Since the 1980s, child welfare has increasingly been held accountable for services and interventions provided to children and families. It has focused on defining and measuring outcomes, while forgetting best practice concerns. The evidence-based practice movement calls attention to this essential aspect of accountability. Child welfare training has the potential to play a significant role in providing workers the skills and knowledge they need to balance outcome accountability with best practices. However, as this paper describes, to accomplish this goal, training needs to be designed in ways that support child outcomes, the use of best practices, and use of this knowledge in our complex child welfare organizations.

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Introduction

Since the early to mid-1980s the field of child welfare has increasingly been held accountable for services and interventions provided to children and families. Weary of relying on faith in well-intentioned but often unavailing programs, society began asking social workers to prove their work is worth supporting (Magura and Moses, 1986). During the 1990s a consensus developed on outcomes for child welfare intervention. The Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) of 1997 (Public Law 105-89) codified into law requirements for the federal government to develop national indicators for child welfare services. The law states:

> "The Secretary, in consultation with Governors, State legislatures, State and local public officials responsible for administering child welfare programs, and child welfare advocates, shall – (1) develop a set of outcome measures (including length of stay in foster care, number of foster care placements, and number of adoptions) that can be used to assess the performance of States in operating child protection and child welfare programs pursuant parts B and E to ensure the safety of children…. (Public Law 105-89, Sec. 479A Annual Report, 42 USC 679b.)"

The Department of Health and Human Services established that the national goals for children in the child welfare system are safety, permanency, and well-being. Federal and state laws emphasize child safety and permanency, and these two outcomes are often used in global evaluation of agency or system performance (Courtney, 2000).

Although concerns for accountability are at the center of the outcomes movement, the emphasis on defining and measuring outcomes has drawn attention away from practice. State and federal legislation attempting to improve the child welfare system are focusing on outcomes (Poertner, McDonald, Murray, 2000). Those concerned with the escalating costs of public child welfare are turning to outcome monitoring and performance standards as potential fiscal control mechanisms. Focusing on numbers and quotas for system maintenance draws attention away from the

practice that produces the outcome. For example, if a state meets the adoption requirements for a given year, it receives fiscal rewards. The quality of the relationships and commitments built through the adoption process are not assessed.

In the twenty-first century, a move in the field of child welfare toward utilizing "best evidence" is seen as a way to assure both best practice and positive outcomes for children and families. There is little consistency thus far in defining best practice, but there is relative consensus in its underlying principles. Macdonald (1998) explains the principle of evidence-based practice (EBP) by stating that "when we intervene in the lives of others we should do so on the basis of the best evidence available regarding the likely consequences of that intervention." As social workers strive to meet the outcome goals required by the public, they must also strive to provide effective practice interventions to children and families.

One challenge posed by the evidence-based practice movement is assuring that those who intervene know the current state of the knowledge in a field. How does a child welfare worker faced with a caseload that includes a substance abusing mother, a victim of domestic violence, an emotionally disturbed child, and a developmentally disabled child keep up to date on best practices? Child welfare training is one obvious answer. Yet our limited knowledge of the transfer of the effects of training makes this a substantial challenge. This paper is a review of evidence-based practice, what we know about the transfer of knowledge from the training event to the job, and the challenges that these movements present for child welfare training.

Defining Evidence-Based Practice

Interest in providing effective interventions and services to children and families is essential to evidence-based practice and ethical social work practice. Sackett et al. (1997) defines evidence-based practice as the conscientious, explicit, and judicious use of current best evidence in making decisions about individuals. Defined by worker behaviors, EBP requires (1) an individualized assessment; (2) a search for the best available external evidence related to the client's concerns and an estimate of the extent to which this applies to a particular client; and (3) a consideration of the values and expectations of clients.

An individualized assessment requires that the worker engage with the client to determine what specific issues are causing difficulties in family functioning. The worker and the client collectively determine the stressors and work to define a treatment path. Critical to this stage is an understanding on the part of the worker that an underlying condition/risk factor present within one family system may act out differently than the same factor in another family system. For example, two families may have the presenting problem of mental illness. However, the effect of the mentally ill family member on the family system impacts each system and member within the system differently. Differences, such as severity of the illness, who is diagnosed with the illness (i.e., parent or child), and which areas of functioning (i.e., school, work, home) are compromised, impact the clinical service pathway selected by the worker and family.

Proponents of evidence-based practice advocate a rethinking of the relationship between practice, professional judgement, and research findings. They suggest that the practitioner should not rely only on preferred theories, individual professional experience, or instinct, but also on objective evidence found in the best research studies to date. MacDonald (1998) explains that evidence-based practice relies on available randomized controlled trials and systematic reviews or meta-analysis as a basis for discussing choices with the client. These types of studies are the best evidence for practice. However, lacking this type of evidence, secondary data analysis, qualitative studies, subjectivity, understanding processes, or practice wisdom all play an important role.

Client involvement in making decisions regarding services they will receive and programs in which they will participate is a key element of evidence-based practice (Gambrill, 1999). Social workers need to seek out practice-related research findings regarding important practice decisions and share the results of their search with clients. A social worker should make sure that the intervention, service, or theory directing his or her work with a client is grounded in updated knowledge about what has been proven to be the most effective for the specific client situation. The social worker works with the client to assure that she or he understands the benefits and deficits of the proposed interventions and the extent to which the research applies to his or her individual situation. The client needs to understand that what is presented as best practice is more likely to be effective than other interventions,

but is not guaranteed to work, especially since it depends on individual factors that may not have been controlled for in the research trials. The client's input is essential to insure the best use of current evidence because it will help the social worker and the client to combine research results and individual factors to reach an intervention that is more likely to be successful.

The Nature of Evidence

According to Gambrill (1999, 2001), social work has been and continues to be an authority-based rather than an evidence-based profession. Social workers tend to have strong biases that the interventions they use with families are effective whether or not there is evidence to support their claim. The belief that doing something is automatically better than doing nothing is rampant, yet not necessarily true. Most research that tests the effectiveness of social work interventions does not use a methodology that can establish cause and effect. As a result, practitioners are able to find evidence (no matter how weak) that their programs and interventions are helping families. The current research base is not challenging professional social workers to confront the potential lack of effectiveness in services that are daily provided to uninformed clients.

In social work, there is a range of evidence available to practitioners regarding theories, programs and interventions. The most powerful tools for evaluating effectiveness are meta-analysis and systematic reviews. Systematic reviews are the synthesis of research studies in which the researchers outline their methodology and sources of biases. Meta-analyses use statistical analysis to determine the effectiveness of an intervention used in multiple randomized trials. Randomized controlled trials are the only way that researchers can control for the factors, known and unknown, that may account for the outcome of an intervention.

Unfortunately, there are a limited number of randomized controlled trials in the social work literature. However, there are important opportunities to conduct this type of research. For example, section 1130 of the Social Security Act, as amended by Public Law 105-89, allows for Child Welfare Demonstration Projects and waives certain requirements of titles IV-B and IV-E for these projects (DHHS, 2001). These Demonstration Projects provide an opportunity for child welfare to greatly increase the number of randomized controlled trials in the knowledge base.

Preference is given to approving projects that include an evaluation based on randomized controlled trials. These waivers provide an opportunity to develop creative approaches to dismantling the many barriers that exist between children waiting in foster care and permanency. They also help to define best practices by enhancing the number and quality of randomized controlled trials and the scope of knowledge about the effectiveness of interventions.

In the absence of meta-analyses and randomized controlled trials, social workers need to know what evidence is available to them and the strengths and limitations of the methodologies that are employed. Studies using secondary data-analysis and sophisticated statistical analyses are not as powerful for providing evidence on effectiveness, but these methodologies answer important questions that may not be testable by randomized controlled trials. Also, qualitative studies provide a wealth of information concerning the clients' perspective. These are critical to understanding clients' thoughts, emotions, and experiences with their situations as well as planned interventions.

Making Research Available to Caseworkers

Given the multi-faceted situations facing social workers, it is difficult to imagine how anyone can keep up with best evidence that includes many different fields from substance abuse to mental illness to domestic violence. Practitioners find it nearly impossible to even begin to keep up with new developments in the research literature. The proliferation of scholarly journals to disseminate research findings exacerbates the problem; there are now even more places that the practitioner must look in order to find the best available evidence.

In addition, as Stephen Webb (2001) observes, when workers are provided with evidence, it is unlikely that they will use it in the way that the proponents of EBP claim or hope. He suggests that research is needed into the very idea that alerting social workers to evidence and systematic reviews of research findings will actually cause them to do things differently. This challenge is consistent with research that has shown that available knowledge is underused (Gambrill, 1999). This certainly suggests a role for training. Training has the potential to be a major vehicle for assuring that child welfare workers have the latest knowledge about interventions so that their use will lead to child safety, permanency, and well-being.

Training as a Vehicle for Supporting Evidence-Based Practice

Training plays an important role in the United States child welfare system. Title IV-E spending on training in public child welfare was $188 million for fiscal year 2000 (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1998). With states required to match a minimum of 25% in order to access Title IV-E funds, the total amount spent for child welfare training during FY 2000 is at least $250 million. This does not include the expenditures of private agencies or staff who pay their own way to continuing education workshops or advanced degrees.

Public child welfare agencies rely heavily upon training for a variety of purposes, including preparing employees to provide children safe and permanent homes. Training also serves as a primary vehicle for introducing changes brought about by new legislation and increasingly complex client situations. Training is also a means for agencies to hold employees accountable for practices within acceptable bounds. Certainly training has a large role in promoting child outcomes through evidence-based practice.

Despite the fact that training is a major tool in an effort to develop and maintain sound practice, there is surprisingly little research on how training affects practice. Most training evaluations involve counting the number of people who attended and reporting on the amount of money spent (Seipel 1986). It is also typical for training evaluation to focus on participant opinions of the training and the methods used. To know if training is worth the investment of time and money evaluations need to focus on the transfer of knowledge and skills to the job. There is a body of literature on the transfer of training. This literature suggests that the transfer of knowledge and skills from the training event to the job is a complex phenomenon that includes individual attributes, instructional design, and the organizational environment (Wehrmann, Shin, & Poertner, 2000).

Individual Attributes

Individual attributes that influence the transfer of training include the trainee's expectations of the training event, involvement in decisions to participate in training, feelings of self-efficacy, and

locus of control (Noe, 1986; Tziner et al., 1991). Each attribute is described below.

Expectancy. Expectancy refers to the level of knowledge trainees have about the training event and what it is intended to accomplish. The more trainees know about their future training sessions, such as learning goals, expected outcomes, and methods of training, the more likely that transfer of training will occur (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Clark, Dobbins, & Ladd, 1993; Noe, 1986; Noe & Schmitt, 1986).

Decision Involvement. Decision involvement refers to the extent to which trainees are involved both in choosing training and providing input into training content (Clark et al., 1993; Guthrie & Schwoerer, 1994). Mandatory training, identified as an inhibitor to decision involvement, may affect motivation through increased resistance and contribute to a hostile or non-supportive work climate (Guthrie & Schwoerer, 1994; Pecora, Dodson, Teather, & Whittaker, 1983; Wright & Fraser, 1988). Voluntary participation in training has been found to result in stronger beliefs in training significance and higher satisfaction with training outcomes.

Self-Efficacy. Self-efficacy is the belief in one's ability to successfully perform a given task (Bandura, 1986). It has been identified by many as a catalyst to behavior change and maintenance (Karl, O'Leary-Kelly, & Martocchio, 1993; Latham, 1988; Noe, 1986; Tannenbaum & Yukl, 1992). Individuals who possess high levels of self-efficacy will put forth substantial effort to master new behavioral demands and work toward higher performance levels (Noe, 1986). Morin (1999) found that measures of self-efficacy were higher for individuals who engaged in mental practice activities following participation in a formal training program.

Locus of Control. Locus of control is a person's perception of the control he or she has over events. Individuals are assumed to fit in one of two categories, internal or external (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Noe, 1986). Individuals who are characterized as being "internals" feel in control of their environment and able to influence it. In contrast, individuals characterized as "externals" perceive that they lack control over their environments, and may feel victimized by environmental effects (Noe, 1986; Tziner et al., 1991). The implications of locus of control theory for transfer of training is that those categorized as internals will exert more effort in training by gathering relevant information. Internals may more

actively seek ways to fulfill expectancies, such as promotion and recognition (Noe, 1986). Externals may not be as likely to believe that mastering the training content is within their control (Noe, 1986; Baldwin & Ford, 1988).

Instructional Design

Instructional design is another factor that is said to contribute to training transfer. An effective training curriculum is reported to include clear objectives, relevancy to the work context, and presentation of the content in a variety of ways. Training should use trainers who are skilled, possess credibility from the trainee's point of view, and provide performance feedback (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Curry, Caplan, & Knuppel, 1994; Doucek & Austin, 1986; Ford, Quinones, Sego, & Sorra, 1992; Hagen, 1990; Noe, 1986; Pecora, 1989; Rooney, 1988; Seipel, 1986; Tziner et al., 1991; Vinokur-Kaplan, 1987).

Tannenbaum & Yukl (1992) suggests that it is important for training courses to support and mirror the mission and goals of the organization in order to establish congruence between the work environment and the training material. Tziner et al. (1991) suggest that the level of training transfer may be improved by teaching underlying principles and incorporating elements such as over-learning, stimuli which mirror the work environment, and goal setting. Performance feedback may also increase self-efficacy and influence transfer of training (Clark et al., 1993).

Clark (1991) asserts that trainer credibility involves a combination of trustworthiness and expertise as perceived by the trainee. Processes that involve interaction with participants, goal setting, role-playing, behavior modeling, and performance feedback are also important (Baldwin & Ford, 1988, Tannenbaum & Yukl, 1992). Together these processes may increase the chances of training transfer (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Curry et al., 1994; Guthrie & Schwoerer, 1994).

Organizational Environment

Organizational environment influences are both actual and perceived (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Noe, 1986; Tziner et al., 1991). Even before training is presented, if the trainee does not perceive the work environment as being supportive, the transfer of learning is apt to be negatively affected (Noe, 1986; Tziner et al., 1991; Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Clark et al., 1993). Facets of the work

environment that may influence both the actual and perceived work climate include the level and type of support from peers and supervisors, the opportunity to use skills, time to use the skills, and the role of the supervisor before and after the training (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Ford et al., 1992).

Supervisory Support. Several researchers suggest that the supervisor may be the most important factor in the transfer of training process (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Bowne, 1999; Gregoire, 1994; Kozlowski & Doherty, 1989; Olivero, Bane, & Kopelman 1997; Tannenbaum & Yukl, 1992). Factors found to inhibit transfer of training included supervisors who were not prepared to listen to new ideas and allow experimentation, an overload of work, unplanned work, and difficulty in convincing older staff to make changes. Bowne (1999) found that supervisor interventions intended to increase the trainees' understanding of how training was linked to corporate goals and to help them focus on specific post-training behaviors increased the impact of training. Olivero et al. (1997) examined the effects of coaching of employees (including goal setting, collaborative problem solving, practice, feedback, and evaluation) following a training program and found that it increased productivity.

Supervisors' attitudes toward training may strongly affect the value that the employee places on training (Curry et al., 1994). Staff who perceive their supervisor as apathetic toward training are unlikely to see the relevance of the training (Garavaglia, 1993). Employees whose supervisors were not supportive or had a negative attitude toward training have also been found to have difficulty maintaining skills learned in training (Garavaglia, 1993). This suggests that the supervisory role most likely to support transfer of training is one that involves developing a supportive, rewards-based environment that includes performance feedback, mentoring, modeling, and positive attitudes toward training (Curry et al., 1994; Erera & Lazar, 1993; Ford et al., 1992; Noe, 1986; Seipel, 1986; Tziner et al., 1991; Tannenbaum & Yukl, 1992; Vinokur-Kaplan, 1987; Wright & Fraser, 1988).

Peer Support. The social climate of the work environment defined as the level of support that trainees receive from peers as well as supervisors is a major factor affecting training transfer (Guthrie & Schwoerer, 1994; Kozlowski & Doherty, 1989; McDonald, 1991; Tannenbaum & Yukl, 1992; Tziner et al., 1991). Trainees are more likely to transfer what they have learned in

training if they feel that peers will be supportive and patient with their efforts to transfer newly learned skills (Tziner et al., 1991). The use of "buddy systems" in which peers are paired and instructed to provide feedback and reinforcement to each other has been useful in enhancing the transfer of training (Tannenbaum & Yukl, 1992).

Opportunity to Use Skills. A trainee's opportunity to perform trained tasks on the job has a major impact on transfer of training and perceptions of training effectiveness (Ford et al. 1992). Factors hypothesized to be key influences on creating opportunities to perform include organizational structure, work context, and individual characteristics, such as ability and self-efficacy. A supervisor's perceptions of a staff member's capability, skills, and likability are also related to having greater opportunity for being assigned more complex and differential tasks that enhance the likelihood of transfer (Ford et al. 1992). Supervisors are in the best position to provide opportunities for practice and performance by planning practice activities and assigning new tasks that involve the training content (Garavaglia, 1993). Bennet, Lehman, & Forst (1999) found that employees who participated in a formal training event and then felt impeded from applying what they had learned in training reported lower levels of transfer than employees who perceived a more supportive organizational transfer climate. Gregoire (1994) reported that workers identified the most common obstacles to implementing application of training plans as being the daily rigors of child welfare practice, refusal by supervisor to endorse proposed practice changes, limited resources, the need to provide assistance to co-workers, and backlog of paper work.

A child welfare training evaluation was conducted to evaluate the transfer of knowledge and skills to the job and examine the influence of these various factors in the transfer process (Wehrmann, Shin, Poertner, 2000). This evaluation asked training participants to judge the degree to which they learned the target skills at the end of the training event. Six months later, they were asked to rate the degree to which they were using the skills they learned. Both surveys also asked participants to respond to items that attempted to measure the dimensions of training transfer that were identified in the literature.

The variables that explained trainees' use of trained knowledge and skills were the opportunity to perform new tasks on the job, the support of peers upon returning to the job, and familiarity with

the content. The relationship between familiarity with the content and the dependent variable was negative. Those participants who reported that they were most familiar with the content reported learning and using the least knowledge. This supported focus group findings following the pilot testing of the curriculum where many workers reported that they already knew the material presented in the training. This is not surprising since an outside contractor designed this training and all workers were required to participate.

This is just one evaluation of a particular training in one organizational context. There are many limitations to the research and application of the transfer of training knowledge. However, it does provide useful insights into how factors outside of the training event influence training participants' perceptions of what they learned and are able to apply. Clearly there are substantial challenges to using training to assure that workers have the knowledge they need to produce positive outcomes for children.

Discussion/Conclusion

Changing practice behavior is difficult because it challenges a lifetime of education, practice, and experience. It also challenges whole sets of beliefs and values. Therefore, child welfare workers are likely to be more sensitive to a training model that integrates their resistance and their fears. These strategies, embedded in an organizational culture that values the use of best evidence, may enhance the use of EBP.

Webb (2001) suggests that EBP may end up undermining the profession by letting our "performance culture" (p. 59) take over social work as it may already have taken over health care in managed health care systems. He worries that there may no longer be room for caring and therapeutic relationships. Webb states that "increasingly the phrase 'using research evidence' to facilitate practice is being dropped and replaced by the more monolithic assertion that practice should be 'grounded in' evidence or show a 'commitment to' evidence-based practice" (p. 59). Balancing the need to produce outcomes with the use of evidence-based practices within the context of a helping relationship is a major challenge. Acknowledging this difficulty within the training event and asking child welfare workers to develop strategies in the workplace to

transfer best practices to their work with clients is an important aspect of training.

The negative relationship between participants' report of obtaining the learning outcomes and their familiarity with the content that was found in the Wehrnamm et al. (2000) study has important implications. This is known as decision involvement in the literature. One method for addressing both trainee decision involvement and the work-related relevance of the training is through self-assessment of training needs (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Curry et al., 1994; Ford & Noe, 1987; Guthrie & Schwoerer, 1994). Ideally supervisors and workers would engage in a guided skill assessment process on a periodic basis. From this assessment both parties could develop a plan for skill development that would identify training that both believe to be beneficial. An employee self-assessment completed prior to training would also allow employees the opportunity to determine their own training needs and promote a sense of investment in the training process (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Ford & Noe, 1987; Pecora, 1989). Given the emphasis on child outcomes and the use of evidence-based practice, this assessment might begin with special types of clients and client problems that are particularly challenging for the worker. For example, a worker may have greater difficulty achieving good permanency outcomes for children who are placed due to substance abuse problems. This outcome and barrier could then be the basis for a worker's individual learning plan.

The Wehrmann et al. study also found that the opportunity to perform new leaning after completion of training and peer support for applying new learning were important factors explaining training transfer. Higher levels of opportunity to perform and support from peers were associated with greater learning and application of new skills. The two elements of opportunity to perform are supervisors providing workers with (1) tasks that allow the use of new skills and (2) the time to practice and implement these skills. Elements of peer support include being able to talk with colleagues about the training experience and the support of peers in attempting to use new skills.

The supervisor is key to structuring opportunities to practice new skills, as well as creating a work climate that promotes peer support for applying new learning. One strategy for doing this is for the supervisor to confer with caseworkers about how to integrate what they have learned in training with their current cases

and job responsibilities. They can also establish expectations for their team to try new learning and support each other in these attempts. This implies that supervisors either need to be knowledgeable about best practices themselves or be open to learning the latest knowledge in the field from workers returning from training. This may also present a substantial challenge for training designed to provide workers with the latest evidence-based practice knowledge and skills.

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Discussion: "Models for Evaluating Core Curriculum"

Thursday, May 24, 2001, 10:45 a.m.
N. Andrew Peterson, *Ph.D.,* Margaret Rainforth, *Ph.D.,* and John Poertner, *D.S.W., Presenters*
Dale Curry, *Ph.D., Facilitator*

N. Andrew Peterson: ***New Jersey Division of Youth and Family Services Competency-Based Interdisciplinary Training for Public Agency Workers and Supervisors***

The discussion centered on ***the question of how well a test measures what it is supposed to measure***. Points of discussion included:

- **Concerns about the *quality* of data**. How *well* the test measures what it is *supposed* to measure is critical to assessing the effectiveness of training. Archival analysis of the scores from this study indicated that subjects had *less* knowledge *after* they received substance abuse training.
- The question of **whether it is possible to link improvements in knowledge to improvements in practice**.
- **Two issues of concern in constructing knowledge tests:** ceiling effects and quality of the distractors. Consider strategies for improving distractors and increasing the reliability of tests.

Also discussed was ***the methodology of the study*** *as related to:*

- ***The sample***. The number of participants was 182 across all cohorts.
- ***The use of measurement***. The test changed with each cohort and some cohorts had as few as fifteen participants. The test evolved as the curriculum evolved. The researcher looked at substantiated substance abuse, pre and post. He then calculated the difference between the pre- and post-test knowledge assessment scores and correlated them.

After computing a change score, he also computed a change score of the post test percentage of cases substantiated.

- ***An empirical approach*.** The researcher used items that performed well and discarded those that did not.

Margaret Rainforth: ***California's Standardized Core Curriculum for Child Welfare Workers***

The discussion centered on ***identifying appropriate and effective levels of training***. Some of the main points included:

- **Identifying factors that are critical in determining equivalency in training**.
- **Consideration of differential training levels based on educational background**. The question raised was whether, based on prior education, everyone should be expected to participate in the same training.
- **The most effective training formats.** Compare the effectiveness of having all training "up-front" vs. mixed with on-the-job training days.
- **The effective use of collaboration**. Look at getting supervisors more involved in developing the curriculum, assessment tools, activities book, etc.
- **Learning the policies and procedures of the organization.** Training received in field academies is very specific to the job. Although MSW students have more general education in graduate school, they still need to learn organizational policies and procedures. In Texas, it was decided that the processes are different enough that students must get both types of training.
- **The use of an abbreviated version of pre-service training curriculum for Title IV-E scholars.** North Carolina has created a special abbreviated curriculum that addresses the gaps between these two processes. Gaps exist between state-identified competencies and those existing in the MSW curriculum up until the point

Also discussed was the ***evaluation methodology***.

- The format of the evaluation is mostly multiple choice and the items are scored. Some questions are open-ended; some are "true-false."
- Concern was expressed about the lack of parallel time frames between experimental and control groups.

John Poertner: ***Organizational Factors that Affect Transfer of Learning***

The discussion focused on concerns about ***the lack of information on evidence-based practice in child welfare***. Some points addressed were:

- **The lack of controlled studies in the arena of training evaluation**. Although the technologies are available and federal support for studies is available through IV-E waivers, there is a paucity of controlled studies being conducted.
- **The nature of evidence**. Controlled studies aren't the only way to measure but in the absence of controlled studies; what can be used?
- **The need to determine what constitutes an "error" in child welfare**. How do we determine the best choices for placement when this notion of "error" has yet to be defined?
- **The need to challenge federal outcome indicators**.
- **Concerns about performance contracts.** Whereas under-performance may be equated with lack of safety for kids, over-performance may equal the same safety issues. Concern about the use of the medical model; sounds too much like the managed care model.
- **Finding the "optimal" system as determined by re-abuse rates.** What's the "optimal" re-abuse rate given a particular reunification rate? These are really difficult questions and there is a need for more information about the relationship between these factors.

Identified Issues/Questions for Further Study

- **"Reality" factors** that impact evaluation**.**
- **Identifying effective methods** to get attention and participation of staff who are so busy.
- **Designing evaluations** that are valid and thorough but don't take too much time.
- **Methodological issues.** Addressing concerns about gathering valid case record data.
- **Evaluating behavioral change**.
- **Critical factors in determining equivalency of training**.
- **Assessing effectiveness of federal outcome indicators.**

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A Comprehensive Evaluation of a Statewide Child Welfare Training System

Robin Leake, *Ph.D.,* Jane Berdie, *M.S.W.,* Cindy Parry, *Ph.D.,* and Kathy Jones Kelley, *M.S.*

Abstract

The American Humane Association conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the Pennsylvania statewide child welfare training program. This evaluation included analysis of training and resource allocation for training projects, processes for ensuring quality curricula and trainers, the transfer of learning to the job, and the structure and operations of the training program. Focus groups and interviews were conducted with stakeholders involved at every level of the training program. Surveys were mailed to supervisors, trainers, and caseworkers, and curricula, budget, and planning materials were reviewed. Both qualitative and quantitative analyses were used to analyze the data. How the results were disseminated to stakeholders and the implications of the findings are discussed.

The State Agency's Reasons and Goals for the Evaluation

The Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare (DPW) requested that the American Humane Association (AHA) conduct a comprehensive evaluation of their statewide Child Welfare Competency-Based Training and Certification Program (CBT). This program operates out of state-run Shippensburg University and is supported through state and federal IV-E funds.

The state identified two primary goals of the evaluation: (1) to evaluate the extent to which all the functions of a comprehensive child welfare training program were operating in a quality manner under the current Pennsylvania system and (2) to suggest enhanced or alternative methods by which these functions could be conducted.

In designing the evaluation, AHA sought to address the full spectrum of training-related functions needed in a comprehensive statewide training system. These functions were identified and grouped into six domains: (1) the evaluation of training, (2) the planning processes for determining resource allocation for new and continuing training projects, (3) the processes for ensuring quality curricula, (4) the processes for insuring quality trainers, (5) the transfer of learning to the job, and (6) the structure and operations of the training program. The AHA evaluation focused on these six areas in terms of how they are being carried out, both separately and integratively, in Pennsylvania. Thus, the approach was to identify the training-related functions and then evaluate how these functions are being implemented.

The Collaborative Process for Defining the Scope and Approach

A key component of this evaluation was the collaborative development of a "blueprint" that clearly outlined the scope of the evaluation, as well as guiding principles for good evaluation agreed to by the evaluators and the client. The AHA project team, through ongoing discussions with the director of the Central Management Organization (CMO) of the training organization and the state agency's project administrator (also a DPW, Office of Children and Youth Division regional director), developed a list of areas of focus for the evaluation and a detailed draft workplan. Feedback was obtained from numerous stakeholders from both the county and the state levels, and their recommendations were reflected in the final workplan. The process for finalizing scope and design took several months of discussion, drafting, and revision. Each iteration helped key stakeholders and evaluators more clearly operationalize the goals into a viable workplan. The collaborative process also helped to define perspectives that were

translated into project parameters. These included the following:

- **Breadth of evaluation**: Through discussion many ideas were expressed about the focus of the evaluation. These eventually helped to focus the scope and design into six broad domains.
- **Guiding principles:** Discussion about values and goals helped to clarify which principles of good practice were relevant in relation to administering a large training program.
- **Methods:** The discussion of breadth and the desire to obtain input of a broad spectrum of stakeholders helped define methods.
- **Confidentiality:** Concerns about impact of certain subjective data led to the development of confidentiality and other privacy protections in the methods of data collection, analysis, and reporting.
- **Continued Collaboration:** Discussion about the potential utilization of findings made it clear that a large number of stakeholders buying into the process was critical. Thus, the design of the system for report, feedback, and dissemination included several drafts and revisions to incorporate suggestions and clarifications as well as many dissemination meetings with various stakeholders.

Methodology

This section describes the scope and design of the evaluation, sample selection (including key informants and other respondents), development of the data collection instrumentation, and methods used for both qualitative and quantitative data analysis. It also describes key features of project implementation, including the composition of the review team, the role of training program staff, and planning for communication to stakeholders regarding the evaluation's purpose, activities, and findings.

Evaluation Scope and Design

The scope of the evaluation was defined broadly in order to address the goals. Thus, in designing the evaluation, AHA sought to address the full spectrum of training-related functions needed in a comprehensive statewide training system. These functions were identified and grouped into six domains: (1) the evaluation of training, (2) the planning processes for determining resource

allocation for new and continuing training projects, (3) the processes for ensuring quality curricula, (4) the processes for insuring quality trainers, (5) the transfer of learning to the job, and (6) the structure and operations of the training program. The evaluation was designed to focus on these six areas in terms of how they were being carried out, both separately and integratively, in Pennsylvania. Thus, the approach was to identify the training-related functions and then evaluate how these functions are being implemented.

The outlines for each domain included a series of specific issues, objectives, questions, and methods of data collection. The organization of the domains in the workplan was used to guide the development of the data collection instruments, including the individual questionnaires, focus group questionnaires, surveys, and the review process for written documents.

Another key feature of the evaluation design was the use of multiple methods and sources of information during data collection. The design of the evaluation used a mix of data gathering methods that included record review, database evaluability review, interviews with key informants (e.g., state administrators, county administrators, Regional Training Center (RTC) directors, the training program director, and the database manager, etc.), focus groups with various stakeholders (e.g., trainers, curriculum developers, training program staff), and surveys of caseworkers and supervisors. This allowed the team to get input from a broad range of participants as well as in-depth information on key topics.

Evaluation Implementation

Development of the Data Collection Instruments

Evaluation instruments were constructed from a master grid and tailored to the intended stakeholder group and method. A series of questions defining the scope of the evaluation were developed from the workplan "blueprint" and entered into a master grid according to evaluation domain and specific issue or question (e.g., "evaluation of training effectiveness" and "what participant or course evaluations are currently in place"). This grid served as the basis for constructing each set of interview, focus group, or survey questions, and record review guides. Question topics were reviewed for relevance for each type of stakeholder and tailored to ask for the information from that group's perspective and

experience with the training program. For example, county administrators were asked fewer, less detailed questions from the domain on curriculum development than were curriculum writers from the CMO. Each customized item was keyed back to the generic question it corresponded to on the master grid to more easily enable comparisons during the qualitative data analysis phase.

Methods and Procedures for Data Collection

Interviews

The workplan was used to identify interviewees, as well as sites and dates for interviews. The CMO contacted all interviewees to invite them to participate and set up an interview schedule. All interviewees were mailed invitation letters, maps and directions, and a copy of the interview questions prior to their scheduled interview. AHA conducted thirty-seven interviews with various groups of stakeholders involved in the training program, including DPW staff; CMO staff; Shippensburg University faculty, staff, and administrators; trainers; quality assurance committee (QUAC) members, task force members, central steering committee (CSC) members, county administrators, supervisors, and caseworkers. All the interview protocols reflected issues identified in the workplan's six domains.

Focus Groups

In addition, twelve focus groups were conducted with the following stakeholders (with the location of each): county administrators in Harrisburg; Diversity Task Force members in Harrisburg; QUAC members in Harrisburg and Mars; trainers in Pittsburgh; training liaisons in Harrisburg and Scranton; supervisors in Harrisburg and Mars, and caseworkers in Harrisburg and Scranton. The CMO identified potential participants for each focus group, who were then recruited by telephone. Confirmed participants were mailed letters of invitation, maps with the time and location of the focus group, and a copy of the interview questions. Focus group size ranged from three to fifteen participants.

Mail Surveys

Surveys were mailed to all the supervisors and trainers and to a randomized sample of caseworkers across Pennsylvania in order to

elicit input from stakeholders in every region of the state. The surveys allowed many more people to provide feedback on the training program than were included in the interviews and focus groups, thus enabling AHA to better understand the needs and concerns of people from across Pennsylvania. The mail surveys were based on instruments developed by the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program and adapted to reflect issues associated with the Pennsylvania training program. The survey is a self-report instrument designed to measure the respondents' perceptions of various aspects of the training program, including CORE training, quality of curriculum, availability of training, delivery of training, ability of training to meet their needs and those of their staff, job satisfaction, and overall strengths and challenges of the program. Demographic information, such as age, years of child welfare experience, gender, ethnic background, education, agency size, county, and region, was also collected.

Document Reviews

An integral part of this evaluation involved conducting an extensive review of documents and materials pertaining to the training program, including materials from other programs and states that were relevant to this investigation. Specific training curricula from Pennsylvania and resource materials were reviewed, including:

- CORE 106 Risk Assessment curricula;
- CORE 104 Separation and Placement in Child Protective Services curricula;
- Interagency agreement between DPW and Shippensberg University for 1999 and 2000;
- Budget request package for 99/00 and 00/01;
- Proposed training plans for 99-00, 00-01, 01-02, and 02-03;
- PA Practice Standards for Child Welfare;
- CMO organizational chart and job descriptions;
- Individual Training Needs Assessment (ITNA) form;
- Site Monitoring Reports;
- Results-based Management—Executive Summary;
- Legislative Performance Audit;
- The Pennsylvania Child Welfare CBT and Certification Program;
- STARS Internet User Manual;
- PACWIS training manual;

- Philadelphia FACTS system manuals; and
- Ohio RTC Standards.

Role of the Training Program Staff

Collaboration on logistical issues with the training program staff was an important part of the successful implementation of the project. The director of the training program was instrumental in helping to identify key informants for interviews and the groups of stakeholders that needed to be included in the project's data gathering phases. She and her staff also handled the logistics of setting up focus groups and interviews so that the evaluator's time on site was used to maximum efficiency.

Communication with Stakeholders

Communication with stakeholders was given careful consideration. Several methods were used to ensure that the intent and activities of the evaluation were communicated to all involved. These included a "kick-off meeting," with representation from all key stakeholder groups (including top state administrators) to outline the purposes and process of the evaluation, and provision of introductory letters and copies of the interview or focus group questions to participants in advance. Participants were also assured that their responses would be kept confidential and only summary data would be included in the report. In addition, a series of stakeholder meetings were planned and conducted to provide opportunities for discussion of the evaluation findings.

Composition of the Evaluation Team

In keeping with the broad scope of this evaluation, the evaluation team provided a broad range of complementary expertise and experience. Team members brought extensive familiarity with curriculum design and delivery, evaluation design and methods, testing and database issues, and various structures and financing options for training programs. It was particularly helpful that one team member was familiar with a similar structure involving RTCs in another state.

Process for Analysis of Data and Report Writing

Interview and Focus Group Data

Interview and focus group data was analyzed using QSR Nud*ist NVivo® software for qualitative research. This software, although billed as being effective for organizing and managing complex data, proved to be difficult to use. All data was organized, or "coded," according to item position within the domains identified in the workplan, then analyzed by modeling, which identified the connections between concepts. However, the program had many "bugs" that hindered the process and involved many additional hours of work. Problems included both the inability to save work and print out visual coding. The benefit of the software was its ability to import word processing documents from Microsoft Word, so that all the interviews and focus group information could be entered into a word processor once and then brought over to the NVivo® program. Pieces of the document could then be coded and organized in a number of ways, depending on the information being sought by the user. Because we were only interested in categorizing the data by item position within the domain, we did not take full advantage of this feature. Thus, the time it took to learn the program, negotiate the bugs within the software, import documents, and code the data was probably equivalent to, if not greater than, the time it would have taken to perform the same tasks manually, using only the cut-and-paste features of a standard word processor. The lesson learned is that evaluators need to consider a variety of factors, including the quality of the software available and the intended uses for data, when considering how best to analyze qualitative data.

Once the data from every focus group and interview was coded by item position within the domain, it was printed out and placed in a large three-ring binder notebook. Each evaluation team member received a binder with a complete set of all of the data organized by domain question. For example, if item 2a in domain three was "How do supervisors promote transfer of learning in your agency?" then under that item heading in the notebook, every response to that question, including the respondent, the interviewer, and the date and location of the interview, was listed.

Survey data was entered into Microsoft Access Database and then analyzed using SPSS statistical software. Descriptive analyses

were conducted and the results were provided to the project team members. Finally, for the record review, AHA developed questionnaires from the workplan to guide the reading and analysis of records. Documents were divided among the project team members, who read and summarized the documents. For more standardized and expedient analyses, document summaries and survey data were included in the notebooks provided for the team members.

Integrative Analyses

All the data, including the notebooks, quantitative reports, and record reviews, were integrated for a comprehensive analysis by the evaluation team. The four team members held a two-day "retreat" to synthesize all the data after first privately reviewing it. During this meeting, the group held in-depth discussions, analyzing the data and interpreting the results to arrive at a consensus. At the end of the retreat, each member was given a writing assignment based on domain area. Individual section drafts were reviewed and edited by the other members of the project team, then consolidated into a working document and edited by the project director. This first draft was intended to be a "talking document," whereby stakeholders at all levels of the training program could review the report and provide feedback. We received feedback from several key stakeholders at the DPW and the training program, and revisions were made to the draft.

Dissemination and Utilization of Findings

The training program initiated many dissemination meetings with various stakeholders. AHA participated in some of these; at others, the findings were presented by the training program and DPW. In some areas, the findings and recommendations identified in the report were already being considered and responses were in the planning stage. A summary of utilization is as follows:

1. The training program reviewed each issue and made decisions about implementation. For those recommendations where the decision was to further explore or implement, work groups began activities. Thus, work groups are in place for redesign of curricula to include more skills orientation, for evaluation of training, and for enhancing the capacity of trainers in skills-focused training.

Processes to insure more timely input by various constituents to processes such as curriculum development have been developed.
2. The governance structure of the training program (involving DPW and the counties) has reorganized and developed alternative and additional mechanisms to address key issues.
3. DPW has made changes in the contractual arrangements for management of the training program.

Issues, Challenges, and Outcomes

There were many challenges associated with conducting a statewide evaluation of this scale, as well as lessons to be learned for evaluators embarking on similar endeavors. One of the evaluation's strengths was that it incorporated the views of stakeholders at every level who had very strong and diverse views about the training program and were invested in the outcome of the study. This presented a major challenge for the outside investigators to maintain both internal and external objectivity while working in a politically charged climate. Convincing stakeholders of the inherent neutrality of the investigators and the confidentiality of their responses was crucial in eliciting honest feedback and accurate data.

Another strength of the evaluation was that a variety of methodologies was used to get an accurate assessment of a complex system. Several of these methods relied on qualitative data, which is by nature very subjective. Analyzing this data while maintaining objectivity and scientific integrity presented a challenge to investigators. In order to meet this challenge, AHA employed a system of "checks and balances" to eliminate as much subjective interpretation of the data as possible. Qualitative software was used to organize the data and illuminate themes and commonalities, and project team members analyzed all of the data independently.

Outcomes for the success of this evaluation were identified at the beginning of the project. These included dissemination of the results of the report to key stakeholders and the use of the findings to promote changes in the Pennsylvania Competency-Based Training Program. Through cooperative efforts among the training

program, department staff, and the evaluators, these goals were met.

Robin Leake is Research Associate and Jane Berdie is Director of Education and Training with Children's Services at the American Humane Association in Englewood, Colorado. Cindy Parry is an independent consultant in Training and Program Evaluation also associated with Children's Services at the American Humane Association. Kathy Jones Kelley is Program Director of the Pennsylvania Competency-Based Training Program.

Discussion: "A Comprehensive Evaluation of a Statewide Child Welfare System"

Thursday, May 24, 2001, 1:30 p.m.
Jane Berdie, *M.S.W.,* Cindy Parry, *Ph.D.,* and Robin Leake, *Ph.D., Presenters*
Naomi Lynch, *Facilitator*

Topics of Discussion

I. Merging Political Concerns with Best Practices

The group discussed ***the impact of political interests on the evaluation process and outcomes***. The main points of discussion included:

- **The inherently political nature of action-based research**. Participant or empowerment evaluation is a very effective way to get people invested in the process while simultaneously making the process more cohesive.
- **The impact and importance of *who initiates* the evaluation process.** The state initiated this evaluation; part of the state's motivation was to improve training, part was in response to criticism about how the program was functioning. Consider the impact of a state request for evaluation vs. a program evaluator initiated request.
- **The importance of stakeholder "buy-in."** It is useful to show stakeholders what the potential benefits may be.
- **The value of establishing partnerships and developing a broader sense of ownership**. It is important to involve the county and the president of the county's director association in the evaluation process.
- **The common experience of conflict between different government factions**, i.e., tensions between the state and county.
- **Different political realities that influence the evaluation process**. There may be a pronounced difference between the experience of evaluation in the field and the experience

of evaluation that involves central administration, i.e., counties. Some other issues that frequently emerge include: competing interests, problems getting commitment of folks to spend time on planning, big drop off rate, lack of participation in process that is subsequently followed by dissatisfaction or skepticism regarding results or methods used, etc.

- **The importance of identifying those with political clout.** They may enable the process of evaluation.
- **The value of building relationships and trust.** The existence of such may be just as important as the weight of political clout in certain situations.
- **The consideration of informal sources of power**. In addition, it is also important to identify organizational power and clout.
- **Ways to handle sensitive, politically charged information**. It is possible to separate unexpected and sensitive information from published reports/studies when it is extraneous to the evaluation being performed. This information may be very useful to the organization and can be disseminated in private, individual consultations with relevant departments' administrators.

II. The Impact of the Evaluator–Evaluatee Relationship

The group discussed ***the impact the evaluator–evaluatee relationship has on the process.*** Some of the issues included:

- **Identifying problems** with antagonism, rejection, negativity, lack of trust, lack of response, indifference, and even sabotage.
- **Addressing the challenges** of the evaluator-evaluatee relationship by offering feedback and sharing results with participants. Oregon, for example, shared the results of a five-year evaluation project with its participants.
- **Understanding that trust is critical to the authenticity of the process** and knowing there is a clear correlation between trust and authenticity.
- **Importance of developing a diverse team** and the value of bringing different kinds of expertise to the table.

- **The value of having an outside evaluator**. Participants may feel more reassured regarding the confidentiality of their answers.
- **The role the evaluator plays in disseminating and/or implementing** recommendations. This may depend on whether the evaluator is invited or is expected to participate in this part of the process.

III. Conducting Good Evaluation Research

The group discussed some of ***the challenges and issues around conducting good evaluation research.*** The topics included:

- **The challenge, or question, of maintaining objectivity** (neutrality) while conducting research.
- Suggested **methods for maximizing neutrality** in research, including the use of:
  - Several multiple realities of observations;
  - Two people to interpret results of focus group;
  - Triangulation;
  - Multiple coders; and
  - Member checking.
- **The impact of underinvolvement or overinvolvement**. Either can be problematic to the process of conducting good research; it's important to strike a balance.
- **Differences in evaluation** when the training *program* is the focus of study rather than the specific training itself.
- **Methods:** One ten-minute survey was distributed to a variety of populations.

IV. Identified Issues / Questions for Further Study

- **Strategic planning needed** to move on to the next level of evaluation. Specific next steps need to be identified.
- Proposal to **offer practice forums** where workers can share the ways they have dealt with issues.

Jane Berdie is Director of Education and Training and Robin Leake is Research Associate, both with Children's Services at the American Humane Association in Englewood, Colorado.

Cindy Parry is an independent consultant in Training and Program Evaluation most recently associated with Children's Services at the American Humane Association.

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Advanced Risk Assessment Training: Does It Make A Difference?

Susan Ayers-Lopez, *M.Ed.,* Marcia Sanderson, *L.M.S.W.–A.C.P.,* and Joan Richardson, *L.M.S.W.*

Abstract

Using the Participant Action Plan Approach, 173 child protective services workers and supervisors from the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services evaluated the workplace effectiveness of a training class in risk assessment. *Advanced Risk Asse*ssment, offered by the Protective Services Training Institute in 2000, is designed to increase trainee effectiveness in assessing the risk of future abuse and neglect to children in all stages of agency service. During the workshop, trainees developed a plan of one to three actions that they would try after returning to the workplace. After two months, trainees completed a written survey to assess whether they were able to try their action items and the degree of success they experienced with items tried. Additional information was gleaned for items not tried, including reasons why and whether the trainees believed they would try them in the future. Survey results indicate that the training does make a difference in the workplace. Respondents were able to implement 445 (90%) of their planned action items. When asked to assess degree of success, 91% of those responding agreed [58%] or strongly agreed [33%] that they were successful when they tried their action items.

Introduction

This paper presents the final results of an evaluation from sixteen offerings of the Protective Services Training Institute (PSTI) workshop *Advanced Risk Assessment* offered to Child Protective Services of the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (PRS). The Institute is a collaborative effort of the PRS divisions of Child Protective Services (CPS), Adult Protective Services (APS), Child Care Licensing (CCL), and four of the graduate schools of social work in Texas. The curriculum for this workshop was developed by Joan Richardson, Training Director for the Institute.

The method described in this paper used to evaluate the outcomes for training participants is called the *Participant Action Plan Approach* (PAPA)[1] developed by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management. PAPA has been designed to assess changes in job behavior which are the results of the training.

Overview of the Training

The topic of risk assessment was chosen because it corresponded to PRS professional developmental goals related to the agency's desire to improve staff's ability to assess risk. This and every Institute workshop is organized around a training goal and specific learning objectives, with examples drawn from PRS caseloads.

The goal of the *Advanced Risk Assessment* training is to enhance the ability of CPS Specialists, throughout all stages of service to families, to determine the risk of future abuse and neglect to children. Training objectives include the following:

- **Identify factors in seven key categories that predict risk of abuse and neglect.**
  Using two different case examples, participants practice identifying risk indicators within each of the seven key categories that predict risk. This demonstrates how the

1 United States Office of Personnel Management. (1980). *Assessing changes in job behavior due to training: A guide to the participant actin plan approach.* (Stock No. 006-000--1130-6). Washington, D. C. U.S. Government Printing Office.

Texas risk assessment tool effectively guides the worker's analysis in determining risk.

- **Analyze the common errors of reasoning in child protective work, and develop a personal action plan for overcoming these errors.**
  Based on research findings, workers learn five common errors in judgment that are found in professional CPS work. Participants develop a personal plan to avoid these errors in their own work.
- **Demonstrate/recognize active listening skills used for gathering critical information.**
  Workers practice using six active listening skills as a strategy to gain information of depth. The focus is on expanding their repertoire so they can do more interviewing and less interrogating.
- **Using a case scenario, identify less actionable variables and create interview questions for gathering more concrete information. Less actionable statements are transformed into more actionable ones.**
  Using a case scenario, workers learn to identify the less tangible indicators of risk that are usually related to family dynamics and relationships. They create questions that clarify and specify the risk factors. Also, workers learn how to more powerfully articulate and justify their case assessments when writing court reports.
- **Develop an effective safety plan for a given case scenario.**
  Participants practice writing safety plans regarding four different problems. They are coached on creating specific, meaningful, and supportive plans that insure safety for children.

Overview of PAPA

The process of encouraging change in behavior by having individuals commit themselves to action has been used in social work since the beginning of the profession. More recently, action planning and contracting have been built into training programs to promote the transfer of what was learned in training to the job. In the training context, it is felt that transfer of learning is more likely to occur when the participants commit themselves to a written plan

of action. Essentially, the participants contract with themselves for specific changes in job behavior they intend to try after returning to the work setting.

In addition to the value of PAPA for evaluation purposes, the approach has considerable potential for increasing the transfer of what is learned in training to what is applied on the job. PAPA encourages individuals to become active in the learning process by deciding what to apply from the training and establishing a "self-change" agenda. As part of the process, participants make a commitment to job behavior changes and are more likely to try those changes knowing that follow-up to the training will occur after they return to their jobs.

Data Gathering and Data Analysis Procedures

Data Gathering

In-Course Activities. The PAPA was developed to go beyond the motivational aspects of action planning and to incorporate the process in evaluating training effectiveness. At the beginning of the training session and throughout the day, the trainers drew participants' attention to an "Action Ideas" page and encouraged them to have this page handy during the training to list specific ideas or strategies that they wanted to keep in mind. At the end of the training, the participants were given a carbonized Action Plan and were asked to briefly state goals they planned to implement as a result of training. They were also asked to share their goals with another person and then consider if they wanted to modify their Action Plans. It was then explained that the Institute would like to follow up with participants to determine if they thought the training program was useful once they got back to their work settings.

Mailed Survey Procedures. The PAPA surveys were mailed two months after the training to the participants who turned in an Action Plan. Included in the mail-out was a letter explaining the purpose of the follow-up and a copy of the participant's Action Plan. If surveys were not returned within three weeks, a reminder letter with a second copy of the survey and Action Plan was mailed.

Comparison of Data Gathering by Interview or Survey. During fiscal year 1994 the Institute conducted dual procedures to gather PAPA data in order to test the relative advantages of each type of data-gathering technique. Interviews, previously used exclusively, had resulted in valuable information but were very costly. Of the 304 participants who had filled out Action Plans at the training, eighty were randomly selected to be interviewed by telephone. The remainder of the sample, 224, received a mailed survey similar to the one used in this report. A review of the survey data indicated that participants reported information very similar to that recorded from the interviews. The quality of the responses, as well as the content and amount of detail given, was judged to be comparable overall. The findings of this review lent confidence to the use of mailed surveys, which were chosen for future use.

Data Analysis

The surveys were analyzed for six kinds of information: (1) behavior changes that were attributed to specific training goals, (2) degree of success in implementing the new behaviors, (3) reasons participants were unable to try new behaviors, (4) whether behaviors not tried would be tried in the future, (5) other behaviors being tried back on the job that could be attributed to the training, and (6) retrospective comments on the training itself.

A content analysis identifying trends and patterns was performed to look at the data across all the sampled participants. For the purpose of this evaluation, the relationship of the data to the training topics was analyzed.

PAPA Analysis Results

PAPA surveys were mailed to 313 participants and returned by 173 of them. Response rates, which have been averaged across the sixteen offerings, ranged from 31% to 70%, with an average of 55%.

Table 1
Response Rates by Individual Workshops

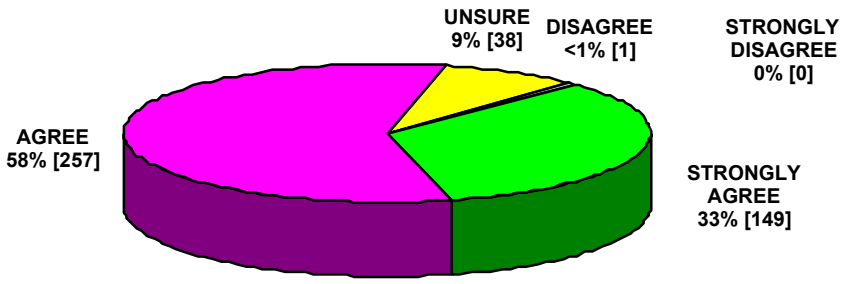
Workshop Number	Date Given	Number of Surveys Mailed	Mailing Date	Final Return Rates	%
1	1-20-00	17	3-23-00	11	65%
2	1-21-00	22	4-12-00	14	64%
3	1-27-00	13	3-23-00	4	31%
4	2-4-00	15	4-3-00	9	60%
5	2-10-00	8	4-13-00	5	63%
6	2-11-00	20	4-13-00	14	70%
7	3-10-00	25	5-12-00	11	44%
8	4-19-00	27	6-19-00	19	70%
9	6-22-00	27	8-25-00	12	44%
10	7-12-00	15	9-18-00	10	67%
11	7-14-00	10	9-18-00	6	60%
12	7-20-00	33	9-18-00	20	61%
13	8-8-00	12	10-9-00	7	58%
14 & 15	8-10-00	47	10-12-00	23	49%
16	8-25-00	22	10-25-00	8	36%
Total		**313**		**173**	**55%**

Success of Implementing Action Items

Overall, respondents who participated in the PSTI *Advanced Risk Assessment* workshops described above responded positively when asked if they were able to follow up on their action items after the workshop, as shown below. Respondents were able to implement 445 (90%) of their planned action items.

A total of 91% of those responding agreed [58%] or strongly agreed [33%] that they were successful in following up on their action items after a workshop. Less than 1% disagreed and no one strongly disagreed that they were successful. The chart below shows the number and percentage distribution of participant ratings on their success in following up on their action items after a workshop.

Figure 1. Participant Ratings on Success



Content Analysis by Training Objective

A content analysis *(Appendix A)* was conducted to see which training objectives were tried most often back on the job and which were most successful when implemented. Eleven of the 445 action items tried had to be dropped from this one analysis due to a lack of data. Of the 434 action items that could be coded into training objectives, the majority [67%] were training objectives related to (1) overcoming common reasoning errors [44%] or (2) using active listening skills [23%]. As mentioned, the overall rate of being able to follow up was 90%, with a range of 88% to 96% across training objectives. No significant findings related to differences between training objectives were noted other than the frequency with which action items were chosen from one category or another. *(Please see Table 2 on the following page for a complete chart of these results.)*

Table 2
PARTICIPANTS' ABILITY TO FOLLOW-UP ON ACTION ITEMS2 AND RATINGS OF SUCCESS BY TRAINING OBJECTIVE

		ABLE TO FOLLOW-UP		PARTICIPANT RATINGS OF SUCCESS ON ACTION ITEMS				
NUMBER OF ACTION ITEMS PLANNED BY TRAINING OBJECTIVE	**PERCENT OF PLANNED ACTION ITEMS BY TRAINING OBJECTIVE**	**YES**	**NO**	**STRONGLY AGREE**	**AGREE**	**UNSURE**	**DISAGREE**	**STRONGLY DISAGREE**
Knowing Seven Categories that Predict Risk of Abuse/Neglect [N=57]	**12%**	52 (91%)	5 (9%)	13 (25%)	33 (63%)	5 (10%)	1 (2%)	0
Overcoming Common Reasoning Errors in CPS [N=214]	**45%**	189 (88%)	25 (12%)	64 (34%)	112 (59%)	13 (7%)	0	0

[2] 11 responses were dropped from this content analysis due to lack of data.

		ABLE TO FOLLOW-UP		PARTICIPANT RATINGS OF SUCCESS ON ACTION ITEMS				
Using Active Listening Skills to get Critical Information [N=105]	**22%**	100 (95%)	5 (5%)	38 (38%)	55 (55%)	7 (7%)	0	0
Creating Interview Questions to Gather Actionable Information [N=59]	**12%**	52 (88%)	7 (12%)	14 (27%)	31 (60%)	7 (13%)	0	0
Developing Effective Safety Plans [N=24]	**5%**	23 (96%)	1 (4%)	5 (22%)	16 (70%)	2 (9%)	0	0
Improved Work Habits when Assessing Risk [N=19]	**4%**	18 (95%)	1 (5%)	8 (44%)	8 (44%)	1 (6%)	1 (6%)	0
TOTAL [N = 478]	**100%**	434	44	142	255	35	2	0

Reasons for Not Being Able to Try Action Items

For this training, 44 action items (10%) were not followed up on. When participants were unable to implement their planned action items, they were asked to describe the reasons behind the non-implementation. Their responses were grouped into seven categories: (1) lack of time, (2) agency/job related problems, (3) skill-related problems, (4) training-related problems, (5) no opportunity, (6) self-related problems, and (7) staff/client problems, as well as other problems. With the exception of "lack of time," descriptions of each category and examples of specific problems are provided below:

Agency/job-related problems describe issues intrinsic to the nature of CPS or CPS work, such as the high-speed pace, personnel policies which make it difficult to obtain guidance or feedback, organizational changes within and between units which take much of the participant's time, and lack of agency support when dealing with difficult problems.

Skill-related problems are issues that concern the difficult nature of the skill itself.

Training-related problems describe situations where the difficulty in implementing the idea back on the job was directly related to an aspect of the training, i.e., there was too much material to absorb during one training session.

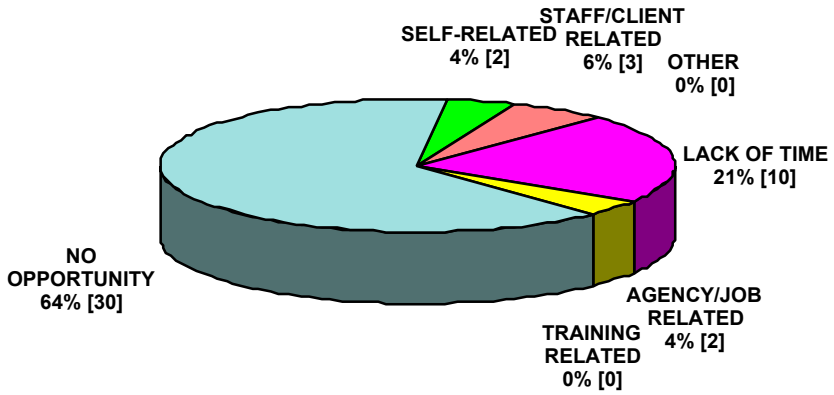
No opportunity describes situations where the participants have not needed to use the skill or knowledge acquired at the training. For example, participants may learn how to prepare court testimony but have not been required to testify since the training.

Self-related problems describe a variety of issues that participants identified as being intrinsic to their own behavior and attitudes. These have been described in the following ways: remembering to use the new skill; feeling that it is hard to change one's own behavior, habits, or values; needing more patience; keeping self motivated to change; being consistent; overcoming one's own fears and anxieties; avoidance of difficult situations; needing practice in an area that is not one's natural strength; and maintaining new behaviors under stress.

Staff/client problems include difficulties in supervising staff, working with peers, and also working with difficult or uncooperative clients.

The following chart shows the number and percentage of responses for each of the reasons participants were not able to

follow up on forty-seven of their action items after the workshop. The majority [85%] of the reasons were attributed to either no opportunity [64%] or lack of time [21%.] No one attributed a lack of skill or the quality of the training provided to not being able to try their action items.



Planned Behaviors

Planned behaviors include all action items that participants had not been able to implement but still planned to try. Of the 10% of the action items that had not been tried at the time of the survey, participants reported that they still planned to follow up on 92% of them sometime in the future.

Additional Comments by Participants

In addition to the action items, participants were asked several additional questions. These, along with the responses, are listed in the following sections. While not included in the original action items, many fall under the original learning objectives.

(1) Is there anything else you are doing differently on your job since attending training that you think is due, directly or indirectly, to your being in the training? An abbreviated summary is given below, organized by the categories of additional behaviors listed by respondents.

***Listening Skills*:** 10 responses

***Questioning Skills*:** 10 responses

Assessing Risk: 19 responses

Seeing the "Big Picture": 13 responses
***Work Habits*:** 29 responses

(2) Do you have any other comments or suggestions regarding the training?

Only comments listed by more than one person are listed.

Liked

- Training was excellent/good/helpful/informative: 19
- Training was fun/enjoyable: 7
- Trainers were effective: 3

Suggestions for Improvement

- Extend training to include actual cases, and make it more experiential: 3

Discussion

The PAPA has been useful in two major areas: reinforcing the transfer of learning for participants and providing information to Institute and agency staff about the learning process itself. In particular, PSTI has been able to use the PAPA in:

- Through the use of the Action Plan, helping trainees to focus on the behavior changes that are associated with the training.
- Giving immediate feedback to the trainers as to whether or not the participants are "getting it."
- Providing additional qualitative data from participants regarding what they are learning to augment the reaction evaluations.
- Directing curriculum writers toward changes that might be necessary in the training if participants do not seem to be focusing on the key points.
- Reinforcing training through the development of the Action Plan and the receipt of the survey two months later.
- Understanding the secondary learning or subsequent application of learning that occurs after returning to the work environment.
- Comparing participant reaction to usefulness of training after two months back on the job with the reaction immediately after training.
- Documenting for agency administrators that the training is successful in covering the key points.

- Uncovering the reasons why training transfer to the work environment sometimes does not occur.

Three areas for further exploration include:

- Getting more data regarding participant response related to "lack of opportunity" for the reason that the action item has not been implemented, particularly in those areas where the item related to analyzing common errors in reasoning or demonstrating active listening skills.
- Working with the agency to address some of the issues regarding organizational reasons for not being successful in implementing action items.
- Ensuring that data is received in a timely manner to improve opportunities for making curricula changes throughout the year as required.

Conclusions

The PAPA, although certainly not a new evaluation strategy, continues to be a useful tool for assessing the impact of training. While much of what evaluators do in the way of evaluation focuses on the first two levels (reaction and knowledge), the PAPA gives a beginning look on how our training sessions impact later performance on the job. Notwithstanding the fact that it reflects qualitative data dependent upon participant self report, the PAPA does provide useful data for training directors, curriculum writers, trainers, and administrators in determining the effectiveness of the training that is provided.

The Institute has used the PAPA for several years to provide evaluative data on new workshops and on older workshops that are offered to new audiences. Our experience demonstrates its effectiveness as one more method for determining whether or not we are providing sound training with the intended effects. Given the many ways in which the data has been useful, Institute staff continue to feel that this method is a cost-effective way of assessing training. The PAPA will continue to be one of the strategies we use in our ongoing efforts to ensure that we remain relevant and targeted in our training design and delivery.

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Marcia Sanderson is Director of the Graduate School of Social Work at the University of Houston, Texas.

Joan Richardson is Training Director of the Protective Services Training Institute in Houston, Texas.

Appendix A

Advanced Risk Assessment
Planned Action Items

Identifying Risk Factors within Seven Categories that Predict Abuse/Neglect

- Watching for high-risk combinations of risk factors to more carefully/ accurately assess risk. (22)
- Learning and using the risk assessment tool, *Investigation Guide for New Risk Assessment Model* (IRA), to assess families. (13)
- Assessing families for risk factors/ being more careful/aware of risk factors. (11)
- Looking at all seven areas of risk/seeing how they are connected. (3)
- Being aware of the importance of risk factors in particular situations (severe injury/fatality, behavior/medical problems, risk in home). (3)
- Assessing risk/high risk combinations on a particular case(s) on the worker's caseload. (3)
- Conducting risk assessments/getting information to conduct risk assessments within a specified period of time (e.g., one week's time). (2)

Analyzing Common Errors of Reasoning in CPS and Developing a Personal Action Plan for OvercomingThese Errors

- Gathering a great deal of information about the family/looking deeper/asking more questions/asking why/getting more details/not assuming. (57)
- Following up on safety plan/family compliance/with service providers/before closing the case. (35)
- Looking into the long-term history of the family—case files, former workers, prior CPS involvement, criminal background checks. (31)
- Checking with others involved with the family to get a wider range of evidence (teachers, neighbors, etc). (22)

- Seeking opinions from others/staffing cases/checking with supervisors when assessing risk. (15)
- Reviewing/being open to revise/quick to revise own judgements about the family. (11)
- Providing specific documentation by taking photographs. (11)
- Not taking child's word about lack of abuse at face value. (9)
- Following "gut" instincts that tell you to look further/make you suspicious/trust your professional judgement/question "authority." (9)
- Being more aware of/avoiding common errors in reasoning. (9)
- Gathering accurate evidence due to good communication among professionals at various agencies. (6)
- Providing specific documentation by getting signed statement by doctors. (5)
- Being aware of my own issues and value system/being objective. (4)
- Attending to written, as well as verbal, information about the family. (4)

Demonstrate/Recognize Active Listening Skills Used for Gathering Critical Information

- Utilizing/practicing active listening skills with clients/while interviewing. (75)
- Using open-ended questions. (11)
- Using silence. (10)
- Using emotion labeling. (5)
- Using reflecting or mirroring. (4)
- Taking the time to listen/learning the value of listening to clients. (4)
- Using paraphrasing. (3)
- Practicing open/honest communication/stating expectations clearly. (3)
- Finding out more about the skills used in crisis negotiation, as per the video "On-Scene Guide for Crisis Negotiators." (2)
- Using minimal encouragers. (1)

Creating Interview Questions to Gather Actionable Information/Using Actionable Language in Writing

- Using more actionable statements in documentation/narratives. (27)

- Using more actionable statements/action language (unspecified). (11)
- Practicing converting less actionable to more actionable statements. (9)
- Using more actionable statements in court reports. (7)
- Using more actionable questioning skills. (5)
- Gathering more concrete information/using actionable statements in risk assessment. (3)

Developing Effective Safety Plans

- Writing more specific/concrete/actionable/detailed/measurable safety plans. (10)
- Making sure clients have the resources available to follow the safety plan/safety plan is achievable/contains options. (5)
- Knowing/understanding the difference between risk and safety. (5)
- Writing more effective/better safety plans. (4)
- Writing safety plans that are easily understood/making sure clients understand safety plan. (2)
- Using specified time frames in the safety plan. (2)
- Share safety plan skills. (1)

Improved Work Habits When Assessing Risk

- Follow up on the things I plan to do/utilize training on the job. (3)
- Prioritize caseload. (3)
- Follow policy/procedures. (2)
- Be creative.
- I will be patient with program and client while the program is getting off the ground and follow through with program director by 9/30/00.
- I will contact the CCL Licensing Automation design team by 8/18/00 to ask them to include a risk assessment tool in the new information system.
- I will attend all required training for pilot program by 9/30/00.
- A pamphlet is available to give out on alternate methods of discipline.
- By June 30th, I will determine D.'s mother's ability to care for D.
- By March 30th, I will determine placing D. with a family member, pending outcome of relative study.

- Protecting the children is the most important thing.
- Utilize handouts.
- I will start and finish my monthly summaries by 8/11/00.
- I will learn more about resources available in this area (TANF, WIC, etc.).

Discussion: "Participant Action Plans"

Thursday, May 24, 2001, 2:30 p.m.
Marcia Sanderson, *L.M.S.W.,* and Joan Richardson, *L.M.S.W., Presenters*
Michael Nunno, *D.S.W., Facilitator*

Topics of Discussion

The discussion centered on ***the process and methodology of evaluation***. The issues included:

- **The interaction of the evaluation process with transfer of learning**. The evaluation process can reinforce training content.
- **The pros and cons of outcome-based evaluation**. If you have clearly defined outcomes, evaluation tends to be easier. On the other hand, is anything l*ost* in using an outcome-based approach?
- **Using different methods of data collection**. For example, the use of e-mail as an alternative or additional method of data collection. Some computer users may be more likely to respond to e-mail, whereas others may be too overwhelmed by e-mail. In this study, regular mail has yielded a 55% response rate.
- **Balancing quantitative and qualitative methods of research**. The use of quantitative helps to identify what items group, and in what categories.
- **Defining acceptable levels of agreement/disagreement** from a quantitative perspective.
- **The use of a scale to look not only at percentages, but also at averages**. It is useful to have a point of comparison. Compare performance/outcomes of one workshop to another.
- **Concerns expressed about defining a scale as an interval scale** when not measuring a true interval. How can one interpret a quantitative measure from a qualitative concept?

If you get enough variability in the data, you can perform more in-depth analysis of it. If not enough variability, it may be better to use nominal categories.

- **The similarity of participant action plans to reaction evaluations.** There is a lot to be gained from the use of reaction evaluations.
- **The quality of training outcomes.** This is only going to be as good as the quality of the trainers. What kind of training do the *trainers* receive to facilitate the participants understanding and creation of action plans?
- **Development of a standardized format for trainers**. Scripting out what material they need to present to participants. Assisting participants directly with items is a bit more of a challenge. At this point, trainers can offer examples of wording and a time frame.
- **Consistency of action items.** The action items usually match the objectives.
- **Concern about having only 24 objectives related to developing effective safety plans.** This particular segment of training was not likely to be new content. The participants may have treated this part of the training as reinforcement of what they are already doing.
- **Benefits of narrowing the number of objectives used in training**. More in-depth focus on items that participants *really* get something out of; for example, a focus on active listening skills, if not already received in worker's training. The complexity of the task of active listening was also discussed.
- **Strengths of PAPA**. It is useful in that, in addition to addressing certain skill needs; it propels people to action.
- **Limitations of PAPA.** How does PAPA meet peoples' needs in terms of organizational issues? For example, better safety assessments need to be seen as *outcomes*, not taken as proof that workers are *doing* better safety assessments. It's only a *perception* that they may be doing things better. The outcomes are helpful in directing the change efforts of the trainers and curriculum developers.
- **Change in the role of the trainer.** The trainer *is* the curriculum. Difference between *creative* and *inspirational* trainers. Change in ways curricula are being developed; more and more, over the last ten years curricula is being

created by practitioners (not publishers). If participants are not *getting* it, it is perceived as more of a *curriculum* problem, not as much a *participant* problem.

- **Need to maintain a clinical aspect in evaluation work.** The processes we use, and the work we do, must meet the needs of families and children. It must be developmentally sound. Importance of maintaining the clinical piece of evaluation work; the work is about families and children. The clinical piece must be kept intact in order for evaluation to be relevant.
- **Strategic placement.** Evaluators should get involved in the *middle* of an organization's goals and culture. This may be the most effective placement.

Marcia Sanderson is Director of the Graduate School of Social Work at the University of Houston, Texas.

Joan Richardson is Training Director of the Protective Services Training Institute in Houston, Texas.

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The Logic Model: An A-to-Z Guide to Training Development, Implementation, and Evaluation*

Lois Wright, *M.S.S.W., Ed.D.,* and Jean W. Ross, *M.S.W., L.M.S.W.*

Abstract

The call for accountability in interventions mandates that agencies follow a careful course throughout, including an assessment that helps to define problems, parallel needs, and appropriate outcome objectives; an intervention logically designed and implemented to address these; and both process and outcome evaluation to gauge the effectiveness of the intervention. Focusing on training as an intervention, this article describes an appropriate logic model and its use as a guide in training development, implementation, and evaluation.

The tension between the increasing need for social services and decreasing funds for these services has imposed on agencies a growing demand for accountability, as measured in the benefits that programs bring the clients for whom they are planned and the effectiveness and efficiency of their delivery (Gabor, Unrau, & Grinnell, 1998; Seidl, 1995; United Way, 1994; Weinbach, 1998). Paralleling this phenomenon is a devolution of responsibility for decisions and accountability to lower organizational levels than in the past. Thus agencies on all levels must show positive results to

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continue getting the funding they need to serve their clientele and remain in business. This requires careful assessment, planning, and evaluation.

Training falls under the same kind of scrutiny as other agency programs and, like them, must prove its worth. It is not enough to do a training and then conduct an outcome evaluation after it is over. To measure training's accountability, evaluation must be an integral part of the design from the beginning, evolving from needs assessment and tailored to measure efficiency and effectiveness from the training's inception throughout its implementation. The logic model is an ideal tool to guide this process.

In this paper, the authors discuss the logic model and how they have used it in training development, implementation, and evaluation at The Center for Child and Family Studies (The Center), College of Social Work, University of South Carolina.

The Logic Model

The logic model is not a new idea, as consultant Robert Yin notes (in Horsch & Anderson, 1997); it has a history in program evaluation. What is more revolutionary, though based on the obvious, is the recognition that evaluation as a mechanism for accountability is meaningless if needs assessment, program conceptualization, intervention, or any combination of these components is flawed. Each step of a program, from the earliest talking stages to the final evaluation, must tie into a rational understanding and plan. More than ever before, agencies must accurately identify problems, design and implement programs that are carefully planned to solve them, and both continually and finally evaluate these programs to ensure that they meet their goals and objectives. The logic model offers a conceptual and practical framework for this exacting work. Essentially, *it is a tool to guide critical thinking.*

The academic literature offers little on the logic model and its use, particularly beyond the purposes of evaluation. For Yin (cited in Horsch & Anderson, 1997), the logic model "outlines the cause and effect steps that link interventions with expected outcomes" (p. 2). In one of the few articles on the logic model in its more comprehensive use, Alter and Egan (1997), who employ it in teaching social work courses, describe its value in "teaching

critical thinking in social work practice" (p. 85) and explain logic modeling as "a process of planning for purposive change" (p. 87). Julian (1997), looking at services and their outcomes from an ecological perspective, defines the logic model as "a tool for conceptualizing the relationships between short term outcomes produced by programs, intermediate system impacts and long term community goals" (p. 251).

The logic model may be used in various ways. The Louisiana Challenge Project (Louisiana Challenge Evaluation, 1998), aimed at developing transferable models to improve the academic achievement and job preparation of underserved children, is structured on a logic model. R.E.A.C.H. of Louisville (1998), working with the Family Resource and Youth Service Centers, is using a logic model to evaluate the service delivery of the latter agency. United Way of America (1996) uses a logic model in its programs and offers a logic model guide in which it quotes other agencies on their success with the model. The Ontario Network of Employment Skills Training Projects (ONESTeP) (1995) has used a logic model for clients receiving social assistance to measure outcomes in the several types of assistance programs it offers.

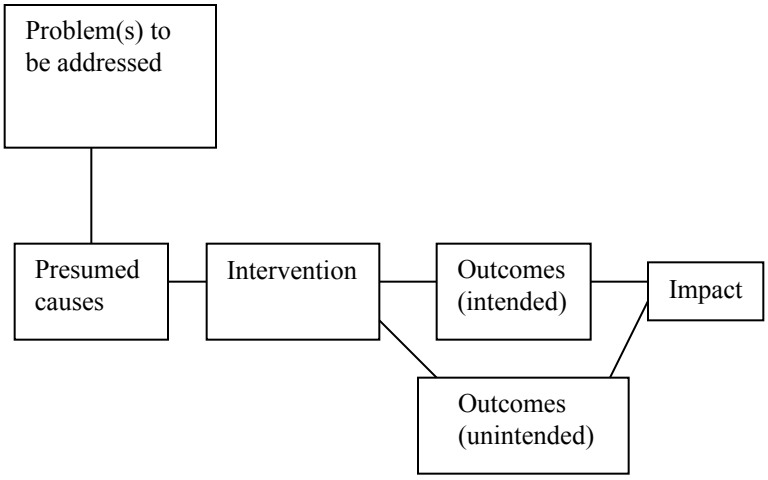
Not only are the logic model's uses varied, but the model itself may take a number of different shapes. It can follow a simple narrative form, assuming all the steps are included. It may be easier, however, to use a layout that provides visual keys to the connections between and among corresponding elements in the program. The Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention (HEC) (1997), which helps agencies plan programs with appropriate built-in evaluation components, offers a generic logic model form through the Internet. United Way (1996), the Louisiana Challenge Evaluation (1998), and Julian (1997) offer other forms.

In the literature that does exist on the logic model, there is evidence that it makes a difference in project planning and outcomes. United Way of America (1996) cites many quotes from program directors and administrators who are sold on its use. Julian, Jones, and Deyo (1995) critiqued two Columbus/Franklin County, Ohio, programs: the Family Development Project, which offered case management services to families on public assistance, and the Perinatal Addictions Program. It appeared that less successful elements of the first program might have been more positive had the planners first developed a detailed logic model.

This experience led to more intricate planning, using the logic model outline, for the second program, which was still running and thus not yet completely evaluated when the authors wrote their account.

Though there is no one official or "right" way to construct the model, it must contain all the elements that are needed to tie the program together coherently and logically. The Center uses a simple yet clear model that contains the essential elements and promotes a progression of critical thinking throughout. This model, unlike some others, contains a statement of the problem to be addressed and the problem's presumed causes. The model is presented visually in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The Logic Model
Used by The Center for Child and Family Studies



Using the Logic Model in Designing Training and Evaluation

The Center is in part a training organization that has a longstanding working relationship with the South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS) and a history of training design, delivery, and evaluation for DSS and other agencies. In this work The Center uses a logic model for training design and evaluation. The process of planning in the logic model framework is meant to ensure that the training is based on an actual and well-defined problem for

which we hypothesize causes; includes an intervention (in this case, training) that can reasonably be theorized to meet that need by addressing one or more of the hypothesized causes; sets forth expected short-term, or proximal, outcomes and is geared to look for unexpected ones; and can be continuously and then finally measured in terms of meeting the identified need, or distal outcomes. The Center's approach to each element of the model is outlined below.

Problem

Some agencies do not include the problem statement in their logic models. At The Center every logic model begins with a problem statement. This may sound obvious and may be so in program development, but it is not so obvious in training. Often in the past, training has been developed to address a topic or area but without a keen sense of why training was needed.

For example, if family reunification were the focus and training were simply developed on this topic without a thorough needs assessment, the training would lack clear objectives related to the actual needs of the agency and the professionals mandated to pursue reunification. To clarify up front, we could begin by asking the agency to describe the problem around reunification. Are children spending too long in care? Are too few being reunified? Is the rate of reunification for one class of children (adolescents, AOD-affected) inordinately low? Are reunifications not "sticking" and children returning to care? If the presumed causes can be at least hypothesized on the basis of reliable information, then these will lead directly to formation of training objectives and design. For both trainers and trainees to focus their efforts effectively and evaluate their work meaningfully, it is necessary to begin with a clear sense of the problem to be addressed.

Further, it is important not to confuse a problem with a solution. Still using the example above, if training designers state the problem as "Workers need more training in family dynamics around the return of children," they have actually bypassed the step of defining the problem and jumped to the solution. Sometimes, too, there is a general belief in the agency that workers simply need training to do their job effectively. If so, it is crucial to determine where this idea came from; whether or not it is valid; and if it is valid, in exactly what areas workers actually do need training. Last, if a problem simply cannot be found, then there is

no need to waste always scarce training resources. However, it requires very careful, logical thought to make this determination with certainty. It is more likely that a problem exists and is just harder to define than was initially supposed or that the effort to define it has gone astray at some point.

Presumed Causes

Some logic models omit this block, but we believe it is essential for several reasons. First, it helps us to think more deeply and to uncover implicit theory. As Rog (1994) states in her discussion of evaluation, an intervention plan should incorporate appropriate theoretical and empirical knowledge. Looking at the problem in all its facets in the beginning helps us not only to define and clarify it but also to see what theory or empirical knowledge might be relevant to guide our training. Thus it can help us develop the "theory of action" (Patton, 1997, cited in Center for Studying Health System Change, 1998, p. 1) that is represented by the logic model and underlies the intervention and its evaluation.

Say, for example, the agency has stated that disruption of reunification occurs because families are inadequately prepared for it. And say a presumed cause the agency says training could address is that workers are not spending enough preparation time with families just before returning their children. It would then be necessary to go deeper and form educated hypotheses about the causes for *this:* lack of knowledge on workers' part? lack of motivation? inadequate understanding of need? literally not enough time? After this determination is made, we can look intelligently at what training can and cannot address. It can address lack of knowledge and understanding of need; whether it can address the issue of motivation is problematic; it cannot address a real problem of time.

The logic model also helps us understand fully that many factors can contribute to problems. Just as there are problems that cannot be addressed directly by training, as in the above example, so with some problems there are causes that can or cannot be targeted for training intervention. By careful analysis of the problem and its contributing factors or causes, we can look at which of these might be more amenable to training intervention and therefore more likely to be the most sensible areas on which to spend energy and funds. Then we can more rationally design

training to effect change where this appears to be possible and at least have an honest discussion about what it cannot change.

Intervention

As we begin to design our intervention—in this case training—there are many options in terms of both content and method. Not only must the content clearly reflect the problem and presumed causes, but also training methods must be selected with an eye toward effectiveness.

For instance, normally skills cannot be taught through lecture alone, and collaboration is difficult to teach without actual collaborative experiences as part of the training. In addition, we will want to consider some agency contextual factors that will influence training effectiveness. For example, to what extent do supervisors support the training? Do they understand the need and value the training enough to encourage workers to attend? And are they prepared to support the training through informed supervision so training effects don't quickly disappear? Does the agency performance appraisal system support and reward higher levels of practice as being taught through training?

Beyond considering all these questions and issues, it is helpful to recognize that performance is a blend of capacity, motivation, and opportunity and to ask how training, and what kind of training elements, can influence each of these factors. Capacity, the level at which much training is targeted, includes primarily knowledge and skills. Motivation is addressed secondarily. We must ask ourselves how motivation can be addressed apart from the work environment or in the face of a difficult and unsupportive work environment. Opportunity may be even more difficult to address since it involves work environment, agency culture, legal and policy mandates and constraints, and scheduling, among other factors.

Outcomes

Outcomes are the short-term, or proximal, results of the training. Though they appear in the logic model after intervention, in reality work on outcomes must occur before or during work on the intervention. After the intervention is too late.

It is helpful to think of outcomes as a more detailed and solution-directed articulation of presumed causes. For example, if a presumed cause of unsuccessful reunification is workers' neglecting to involve biological parents during the period of substitute care, reasonable outcomes of training would be for

workers to (a) understand the importance of involving biological parents, (b) know creative strategies for involving these parents, and (c) demonstrate more occurrences of such involvement.

Desired outcomes are often hard to measure, but this is no reason to abandon either the articulation of outcomes or the attempt to measure them. At the same time, weak or irrelevant measures will incorrectly represent the results of training or will not be sensitive enough to measure them genuinely and thus will provide no guidance to change needed in the intervention to address the problem more precisely. When measurement is difficult, it is necessary to acknowledge the limitations and imperfections of the process and design the best approach possible under the circumstances.

Another part of outcome measurement is looking at unintended consequences. These are outcomes, either positive or negative, that are usually not stated in the logic model. That is to say, they are not the specified desired outcomes, though they may not necessarily be negative. If it is reasonable to expect a certain outcome that is not the one desired, this should be noted in planning the evaluation and will become more apparent in the actual implementation of the evaluation. For example, training addressed at helping workers effect successful family reunification might help them learn, simply through talking with other workers, new resources outside the agency to which to refer families for appropriate help, though this may not have been specifically addressed by training.

Impact

Impact refers to long-term, or distal, results of the intervention. While short-term outcomes are likely to address presumed causes, long-term outcomes more directly address the problem. Impact measures are often omitted because of the difficulties involved in accessing appropriate measures and using a longitudinal design and the multiple causation of most problems.

Despite these difficulties, however, impact measurement should be undertaken to keep the intervention honest. This may mean addressing long-term outcomes with shorter-term proxy measures. We know, for example, that it will take a long time to measure a desired outcome of fewer child abuse and neglect reports, so we can measure in the shorter term whether or not workers are actually spending more time with families prior to

reunification, teaching them anger control methods, helping them bolster their social support systems, and the like. Since these actions can reasonably be expected to bring about the long-term outcomes, we can accept measurement of them as proxy measures.

In measuring impact, existing data should be used as much as possible, both because this is the information available and because these data are meaningful to the system. It is crucial, however, to avoid misinterpreting these data. The relationship between the impact and the problem is not simple. There are at least three kinds of possibilities to consider. First, if impact measurement actually shows that the problem has substantially disappeared, it is possible (though not likely altogether certain because of contextual factors) that we understood the problem correctly and the intervention provided the whole solution. Second, if impact measurement shows improvement in relation to the problem, it is possible that we understood the problem correctly and were able to address one or more of the presumed causes or were able partially to address the causes. This is probably the most likely result of training and the most impact we will ever see.

Last, if impact measure shows no improvement in the problem, there are several likely reasons: (a) we effectively addressed at least some of the causes, but more causes needed to be addressed to solve the problem; (b) we effectively addressed some of the causes, but our measurements lacked sufficient sensitivity to discern any change; (c) we understood the problem correctly, but the intervention, while appropriate, was not carried out as designed or was inadequate to bring about the desired change; or (d) the intervention was irrelevant, indicating a problem in conceptualization or implementation of the intervention and a need to return to the logic model for analysis.

Implementing the Evaluation

Seidl (1995) places program evaluation "in the interface between social work practice and research" (p. 1927) and notes its application of scientific thinking and methodology to the task of assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of a program and also the quality of the services it provides. As noted above, evaluation is used to promote accountability and finally to demonstrate this to funders and stakeholders. But evaluation does not happen just at the end of a training; it also helps to monitor training as it is being implemented and to point out where it may need revision

in content, delivery, or both. Thus we evaluate both process and results.

Once the logic model has been completed, both the intervention and its evaluation will be clearly understood and explicitly stated. When this has happened, it is time to implement both simultaneously and to evaluate both process and, finally, results.

Process Evaluation

Process evaluation monitors fidelity to the intervention. In other words, it answers the accountability question: Did we do what we said we would do? This is of utmost importance because otherwise the results cannot be clearly connected to the intervention.

To understand process evaluation, it is important to understand that key elements of the intervention must be marked for monitoring. It is impossible to monitor everything, but it should be possible to identify the most essential features of the intervention to monitor. It is important to ensure that intervenors (in this case, trainers) be adequately prepared to deliver the intervention. Otherwise there is no hope of fidelity to the plan. And because a logic model does not represent "truth" but rather our best hypotheses about the problem and how to solve it, individual aspects of the intervention can be changed in the process.

The important point is that such change should result from new knowledge emanating from the intervention as it progresses, not from neglecting the intervention plan or from arbitrarily or carelessly changing it. Intentional revision of the intervention is a good thing if it grows out of observations about what is being honestly tried, according to plan, but obviously is not working.

Results Evaluation

Measurement of outcomes and impact involves carrying out the evaluation as already planned with any adaptations that may have been indicated by the process evaluation. This is the testing point for the hypotheses about the connections among elements of the logic model. Each block of the model is a potential slippage point in our thinking. It is the point for questioning our understanding of the problem and its presumed causes, the relationship between the presumed causes and the intervention (both content and methodology), the relationship between the intervention and outcomes and/or measures, and the relationship between outcomes

and impact and/or measures. If we are off in any of the connections, we can see by the logic model where the problem lies and know this is where we must start rethinking the process.

The Center's Experience with the Logic Model

The Center has found the logic model to be an invaluable tool in all its projects. As the process of developing training has evolved over the years (see Ross, Wright, Skipper, & Valentine, 1998), it has become increasingly clear that without an integrated understanding and plan from the beginning, it is impossible to predictably and responsibly address any problem through training. For this reason, The Center aims to approach each project by constructing a logic model as outlined above. There are questions in the Appendix to further help training entities with logic modeling. We are interested in hearing from other training organizations about their use of the logic model and how it has guided their development and administration of training.

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Appendix

Questions to Ask

Here are some questions that can be used repeatedly in conjunction with the model to deepen and clarify thinking.

Problem

1. What problems is training being asked to address?
2. Do problem statements make it clear what current outcomes (e.g., client/system conditions) are unacceptable or need to be modified?
3. Do problem statements make it clear what worker behavior need to be modified?
4. What evidence is available to support problem definition?
5. Does the evidence represent multiple perspectives on the problem?
6. What additional information do we need to understand the problem, and how will we obtain that information?

Presumed Causes

1. What does the agency see as causes of the problem(s)?
2. What do others see as causes of the problem(s)?
3. Are multiple perspectives on causation represented?
4. What information about causation is available from theory?
5. What information about causation is available from research?
6. What information about causation is available from practice?
7. What is the composite view of causation?
8. What is your confidence in the composite view of causation?
9. What additional work can you do if you are not satisfied with the view of causation at this point?

Intervention

1. What aspects of presumed cause can/will training address?
2. Of all trainee behaviors (thoughts, feelings, actions), which can be modified by training?
3. What knowledge, attitudes, or skills in relation to the problem(s) do trainees lack?
4. What experiences are apt to be most successful in addressing identified deficits?

5. Overall, how can motivation, capacity, and opportunity be strengthened?
6. How confident are you that the training can affect trainee behavior?
7. How confident are you that trainees' behavior changes will affect the presumed causes that were selected to address?
8. If you lack confidence, what further information or assurance do you need?

Outcomes

1. What do you expect to happen as a result of training? How will trainee behaviors have been affected directly?
2. What will you accept as evidence of behavioral change?
3. What is your level of confidence in the appropriateness and sensitivity of your measures?
4. How will you measure durability of change?
5. If expected changes are not apparent, what is your explanation and how will you respond?

Impact

1. What do you expect to be different on the job for workers as a result of training?
2. Is this directly related to a presumed cause or problem definition?
3. What do you expect to be different for clients or the agency as a result of training?
4. Is this directly related to a presumed cause or problem definition?
5. How might you know if these changes have occurred?
6. If you are not satisfied with the impact (i.e., presumed causes or the problem have not been sufficiently affected), how do you explain that?
7. Did you incorrectly understand causes?
8. Was the training inappropriate, weak, or ineffective?
9. Is impact so dependent upon other systems elements that effective training alone will not affect the problem?

Discussion: "The Logic Model"

Thursday, May 24, 2001, 3:45 p.m.
Jean W. Ross, *L.S.W.,* and Sarah Cearley, *Ph.D., Presenters*
Michelle Graef, *Facilitator*

Topics of Discussion

The group discussed ***the importance of having a conceptual framework for evaluation***. The logic model may provide such a framework. Other issues discussed include:

- **The effect of unintended outcomes.** Can they be anticipated? Unintended outcomes may have some severe consequences for organizations and/or people.
- **The difference between long term "impact" and long-term "outcome."** "Impact" may be used to discuss what happens more on the client or community level. Evaluation industry hasn't finalized terminology. Use of interchangeable terms; meanings have not been resolved.
- **The methodology used**. The choice of methodology may redefine and reshape the original questions. This model uses a parallel process between curriculum development and evaluation, which is cyclical.
- **The idea that process analysis is contradictory to a logic model**. Is the methodology applied contradictory to the findings of this study?
- **The use of the Logic Model as an organizational tool.** It may be useful in clarifying our thinking processes, keeping us honest, and following a plan. Additionally, it may be a good tool to help explain/define needs.
- **Importance of developing evaluation while concurrently thinking about needs assessment, training, and evaluation.** Needs assessments are critical in deciphering what the problems/needs really are. One can run into

problems if not anticipating all the pieces of the process concurrently.

- Looking at **the question of whether training is a part of the problem** is important.
- **Similarities/differences need to be made with causal model**.
- **The logic model is a GPRA model required of all federal agencies—**including Children's Bureau—e.g., CFS reviews. What are implications for CW evaluation and CW outcomes?
- The importance of maintaining conscious **awareness of the conceptual model(s*)*** we use.

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Evaluating Group Behavior

Anita P. Barbee, *M.S.S.W., Ph.D.,* and Pamela A. Yankeelov, *Ph.D.*

Abstract

In order to finalize and reinforce the organizational changes that have occurred over the past three years in the Cabinet for Families and Children in the Commonwealth of Kentucky, a new training was introduced and is being executed in 2001. The training is entitled *Everyone a Leader* (EAL). The purpose of the training is to build on existing interactive and communication skills, change behaviors that can lead to the improvement of internal communication processes, and develop better skills so as to deliver quality comprehensive family services. All 6,000 Cabinet employees, including permanency and protection workers, family support workers, and child support workers, receive the EAL skill sets. The evaluation of the program includes a design where 200 teams (approximately 2,000 people) will be followed from the beginning of the training, through the course of the training, and then up to a year after the completion of the training. Pre-post knowledge and skill tests for each of the two major units of the training are being utilized in the evaluation along with Internet-based surveys given at quarterly intervals after the first unit of the training is completed. The paper discusses the difficulty of evaluating this type of training and strategies to overcome these difficulties.

The Cabinet for Families and Children in Kentucky, under the leadership of Dr. Viola Miller, was restructured in 1998. As a part of the restructuring, regions were redefined, resulting in the creation of sixteen of them across the state. New managers, titled Service Region Administrators (SRAs), were chosen to lead each region. Under each new SRA, several Service Regional Administrator Associates (SRAAs) were appointed to oversee specific programs (i.e., Protection and Permanency, Family Support, Child Support) within the region. The Central Office Administrative positions also changed as a result of the restructuring effort. In order to train these new leaders in organizational development concepts and key management skills (such as personnel, budgeting, and dealing with the media), the Training Branch, in collaboration with the University Training Consortium (the eight university training outsource partners with the agency), developed a 350-hour, year-long Human Services Leadership Institute (HSLI). This was delivered to the first cohort of forty-five leaders in 1999 and to the second cohort of forty-five leaders during 1999–2000. Results of the evaluation of HSLI (Fox, Barbee, Staples, Harmon, & Sprang, in press) found that although top-level management had learned the material presented and been able to implement a great deal of it back in the workplace, it was difficult to enact all of the principles without all members of the region, office, or team understanding and following these same principles. Thus, in October 2000, Dr. Miller instituted the concept of "Everyone a Leader" (EAL).

Everyone a Leader

In October, the Training Branch, in coordination with the University Training Consortium, developed the outline for EAL, designed the delivery system, identified the people who could serve as facilitators around the state, and developed a training for the facilitators. In November 2000, over 200 facilitators were trained in the EAL concepts and continued to be trained over the next six months in the use of the Internet for training as different components of EAL rolled out.

In December 2000, the training of Central Office leadership began. From February 2001 to February 2002, all 6,000 employees of the Cabinet for Families and Children, including approximately 600 teams, will complete the EAL training. The training is first

delivered to SRAs, SRAAs, and supervisors at the regional level via a Web-based course that is supplemented by exercises and action planning led by on-site facilitators. Once the management group is trained in a unit, the supervisors then go through the training with their teams, again in the field via the Web and with on-site facilitators. There are three units that focus primarily on organizational development concepts that facilitate high-functioning teams. The segments of Unit I include training on formulating and following basic principles; setting ground rules; avoiding jumping to conclusions through the "ladder of inference process" and the "left hand column process"; how to implement the dialogue model for discussion of issues; an understanding of behavioral leadership styles; principles of conflict resolution; brainstorming; and fundamentals of meeting management. Unit II focuses on problem solving and decision making. The final unit focuses on strategic planning, team development, and customer service.

Challenges of Evaluating EAL

The number of people being trained is enormous (6,000). Furthermore, the schedule for EAL varies by region. Some regions spread Unit I over eight months, while other regions covered Unit I in one month. Regions also differed in the EAL planning process. Some scheduled the training for the whole year, whereas others waited for each component to be written before scheduling the training. Adding to the complexity of scheduling and development of measures is the fact that the training is being developed as it is being rolled out across the state. Finally, the nature of the information is focused on group behavior and high-functioning teams.

Evaluation Design

The evaluation team at the University of Louisville chose a purposive sample of 200 teams across all regions, including those teams working in Permanency and Protection, Family Support, and Child Support. This includes approximately 2,000 individuals. The plan is to track these teams for at least one year. We are conducting evaluation at the second Kirkpatrick level (Kirkpatrick, 1987) of assessing gains in knowledge and skill, as well as at the third level of transferring knowledge gained in training to the job.

We are giving pre-post tests of knowledge after Units I and III. We discovered into the process that Unit II only took half a day and adding a test would have extended the time too much. We did not have the material from Unit II until after the test for Unit I was developed and distributed (thus, we could not add Unit II content to the Unit I post-test).

We are then giving each team a survey to complete on the Web every three months after the completion of Unit I. This survey contains demographic questions for tracking purposes, an open-ended question asking each participant to recount a story about a change that has occurred in the way their team operates as a result of EAL training, and items from four questionnaires that assess several aspects of group behavior. The first set of questions assesses each person's perception of his or her own behavior in the team, with an emphasis on dialogue skills. The second set asks the participants to rate the most recent team meeting (with an indication of which one they are referring to for inter-group comparison purposes) on aspects of meeting management. The third set of questions assesses perceptions of team development, focusing on the extent to which the team has a shared mission, uses consensus for decision making, exhibits a high level of trust, and has high-functioning members who take on responsibilities and follow through with those responsibilities. The final set of questions asks participants to assess team outcomes and morale. his survey will be given every three months for up to a year to see if the skills gained in EAL improve with practice over time or deteriorate over time.

The survey is written on the Raosoft® Web-Based Survey System. This program has a mechanism via e-mail for alerting participants to go to the Web site and fill out the survey. The Web-based method is easier to deliver to such a large number of participants. This method is also much cheaper than administering paper and pencil surveys to 2,000 people at four times. The data from the survey can then be downloaded into SPSS for analysis.

The information from both types of evaluation, testing, and surveying will be reported at the regional level so as to ensure the confidentiality of the teams participating in the evaluation.

We may supplement the survey method with direct observations of a sub-sample of teams across the state to serve as a validation for the survey data and to add an additional measure of group behavior.

Conclusion

Our evaluation team feels extreme gratitude to be able to work with such an innovative organization as the Kentucky Cabinet for Families and Children. Although the evaluation challenges of this type of project are great, the outcomes should be useful for the Cabinet and the field of human services in general as we report on the results of the effectiveness of such an important training. Hopefully, next year we will have some data to share with this group from our evaluation findings on EAL.

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Discussion: "Evaluating Group Behavior"

Friday, May 25, 2001, 9:00 a.m.
Anita P. Barbee*, Ph.D., Presenter*
Sherrill Clark, *Ph.D., Facilitator*

Topics of Discussion

I. Organizational Atmosphere and Culture

The group discussed ***the impact that organizational atmosphere and culture has on worker behavior and the delivery of services***. Issues discussed included:

- **The findings of exit interviews**. Some findings indicate that workers are leaving child welfare not because of the clients but because of the organizational atmosphere; i.e., lack of supervisory support, not feeling welcomed or cared about.
- **The demonstration of improved outcomes coupled with improved organizational functioning.** This makes a great argument for agencies to improve their "culture."
- **The use of empowerment in the process.** In the early stages of the process, a lot of information/feedback was generated from the field. Many changes were made along the way in response to this feedback ,but the researchers found that making the changes became an obstacle for some people.
- **The use of peer evaluation and subordinate evaluation of leadership.** These may be very effective tools to use. Leadership training may also be valuable.
- **The cultural component of evaluation.** Results of a cultural audit in this researcher's organization showed some levels of dissatisfaction that most likely reflected tremendous changes the county was going through at the time.

Recommended Reading:

Karl Weick's book, *Sensemaking in Organizations.* This is very applicable to the topic of how people make sense of organizations.

II. The Use of Methods and Measures in Evaluation

Other points of interest discussed centered around ***the methods and measures used in the evaluation process,*** such as:

- The use of the Internet, i.e., a Web-based survey system, to improve evaluation response rates. Important to consider the impact of Internet "testing" on relatively high stakes situations and issues of confidentiality.
- **The potential to develop a predictive model.** This may be achieved by connecting child welfare indicators and by grouping variables of the agency and organization.
- **The evaluation tool and design.** The tool is similar to the embedded evaluation being used for California's Standardized Core Curriculum pilots. California's evaluation is attempting to gauge attainment of skills by abstracting this measure from the knowledge level as demonstrated through decision-making scenarios. This study's evaluation design appears to be very comprehensive. The design is moving beyond Level II evaluation to the three-month post-Level III. Some sort of schematic of the design would be very useful.
- **The benefit and use of pre- and post- focus groups**. This is an excellent way to generate a lot of good qualitative feedback. In addition, a structured meeting after the pilots provides a forum in which all the administrators, trainers, etc., can get together to evaluate and record the *process* of the pilot.
- **The use of qualitative data.** Consider ways in which the stories/narratives collected can be used. One way that this data can be quantified is by using special programs. ATLAS is one software program that categorizes and counts behaviors, i.e., quantifying qualitative data. Keep in mind that the qualitative information in of itself is important as it helps to build the story.

- **The expense of evaluation.** The absence of extra funding, coupled with the restrictions inherent in an organized labor force, will likely require a lot of individual effort and rearranging of budgets and time.
- **The nature of change and how this impacts evaluation.** What we measure often changes while we're in the process. This is to be expected and we should be prepared for this possibility. Uncertainty is an inherent part of the process.

III. Components of the Training Process

Some of the necessary ***components of the training process*** were discussed, including:

- **The systems of care, or "wraparound" services care philosophy.** Consider incorporating the notion of delivering comprehensive family services into training. It should be institutionalized as a part of the training of new people as they come on board.
- **Developing a system of training for supervisors**. Incorporate EAL principles, basic training around personnel issues, budgeting, management issues, etc., followed by a series of seminars. Later, follow up with reinforcement training.
- **A system of core manager training.** This may be an essential component to enable supervisors to buy in to the training. The supervisors will need managerial support in order to become invested in the process.
- **The value of learning how to manage change.** It is important to give people the language, skills, tools, and accountability they need to understand and manage change.

Anita P. Barbee is Associate Research Professor at the Kent School of Social Work at the University of Louisville, Kentucky.

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Using Blackboard™ to Become an "e-Trainer"

Alan David Bookhagen, *M.S.*

Abstract

This paper provides a description of a course management system for instructors and students called Blackboard™. It enables true teaching and learning innovation on the Web. Blackboard™ can be used by public human service organizations to deliver just-in-time instruction to their workforce. Evaluators can utilize on-line assessment tools, and establish and share evaluation item banks.

Staff developers, course managers, and trainers: lend me your ears. Join the thousands of public, private, institutional, and not-for-profit organizations that are using a new software tool called Blackboard™ to deliver just-in-time instruction and assessment to their workforce. Using Blackboard™, you can easily develop and deliver rich on-line experiences for the training room, use them as performance support tools on the job, conduct assessments online, and establish virtual communities and discussion groups for post-training activities.

Developed through collaboration between students and faculty at Cornell University, Blackboard™ is an easy-to-use, intuitive course management system for instructors, students, evaluators, and administrators. It enables true teaching and learning innovation on the Web using a straightforward graphical user interface. It is the first course management system developed out of academe to do so.

Blackboard™ is actually a collection of tools for: productivity; communication and collaboration; assessment and evaluation; and content management. Productivity tools assist users through the

educational experience, using calendars, task lists and reminders, address books, and information services. Communication and collaboration is accomplished through discussion boards, e-mail, and user group areas, as well as virtual chats, whiteboards, and application sharing. Assessment and evaluation tools can be diverse, from multiple-choice tests to highly complex tests utilizing item pools. Content management tools allow users to share content throughout courses.

Blackboard™ tracks what users do, manages rights and permissions, secures content, customizes experiences by roles, and reports performance on assessments. This creates a seamless experience for the user and allows instructors or course managers to view a wide range of data about a participant's experience with the materials. This data can range from discussion board postings to assessment of submitted information. The State University of New York is using Blackboard™ as its primary e-learning strategy. Hundreds of courses are on-line in every discipline.

The Erie County Department of Social Services (ECDSS), Buffalo, New York, has just begun to "ride the Blackboard™ wave" by putting its Medicaid training materials into the Blackboard™ environment. This will enable ECDSS supervisory, management, and training staff to review material usage and student assessments information.

Whether used to enhance traditional classroom teaching and learning or for distance education and assessment, the Internet has forever transformed the way we teach, learn, assess, and transfer knowledge in the digital age. Blackboard™ is but one of these tools.

Previewing Blackboard™

Preview Blackboard™ at http://www.blackboard.com. Social Work courses by David Wegenast, Buffalo State College, wegenadp@bscmail.buffalostate.edu, may be viewed by visiting http://academics.buffalostate.edu. Here you will find two courses, SWK 320: Social Services Organizations and SWK 603: Human Resource Management. ECDSS Medicaid training materials may be viewed by visiting http://www.blackboard.com/courses/HRM 316/?course_id=HRM316.

Alan David Bookhagen is Administrator of Multimedia and Distance Learning at the Center for Development of Human Services, Buffalo, New York. For information on additional social service agency applications, contact him at the Center by e-mail: Alanb@bsc-cdhs.org, or phone, (716) 796-2018.

Discussion: "Blackboard™: e-Learning Tools and On-line Assessment"

Friday, May 25, 2001, 10:30 a.m.
David P. Wegenast*, D.S.W., Presenter*
Elizabeth Lindsey, *Ph.D., Facilitator*

Irene Becker, *L.C.S.W.,* gave a brief presentation on ***Distance Learning Curricula for Child Welfare Workers,*** which has been created in San Diego.

Topics of Discussion

The group discussion centered on ***the logistics of e-learning*** and included the following topics:

- **Some possible barriers to e-learning related to technology**, i.e., lack of technical knowledge; slow equipment; incompatibility issues; slow ISPs; computers not equipped with sound cards, etc.
- **The ability to use an interactive element** to conduct office hours, answer and post FAQs, etc.
- **The importance of identifying and differentiating between learning ideals**; i.e., under what circumstances is the Internet or face-to face learning the preferred method? Also, consider how these methods relate to evaluation.
- **Keep in mind the value of "face-to-face" interaction**. One possibility is to add a visual element to the interactive process by using two-way video to personalize the interaction between instructor and student.
- **The ideal learning process would offer a mix of venues**. CPS trainers have offered very positive feedback about on-line tools. They have found that the distance learning programs provide workers with great tools for learning. At the same time, mentoring may still be better achieved in a direct, one-on-one, "live" environment.

- **Distance learning can incorporate all of Chickering's seven principles of educational excellence:** student involvement; interactive learning; contact with professor outside of class; immediate feedback; group learning, etc.
- **Distance learning offers the great benefit of not having to travel**, especially for those with budgetary and/or time restrictions.
- **Consideration of the time element for students.** The amount of classroom time has remained the same. Students must participate in both classroom and on-line assignments. Students, in theory, are supposed to dedicate between two to four hours of outside study for every hour they spend inside the classroom. The on-line element may help to "encourage" and reinforce this outside class effort.
- **Consideration of the time element for instructors.** This particular course material took about four semesters, starting from scratch, to build into an e-based learning format. Now the course is at the stage where it just requires adding to and refining for each successive iteration. The on-going teaching process of this format requires a bit more time because of the e-mail element. This may be counted as outside course preparation time.
- **Choice of course design can be customized.** There are many versions of Blackboard™ available that offer different possibilities for design. One option may be computer assisted (adaptive) testing, i.e., interactive testing that adjusts the degree of difficulty of questions based on the responses given. (One example of computer adaptive testing is provided by the GRE.). Other features that may be customized include the ability to disable certain functions, i.e., registration, access, etc.
- **A compendium of questions/items may be posted on Blackboard™**. Go through the pool manager: access to these items is restricted to registered users. Options include import pools, export pools, search pools, etc.
- **Considerations and concerns about test security.** How do you control for test-taking so that students don't cheat? How do you make items inaccessible? Since the tool is customizable, it is possible to set it so that students can't print the screen, i.e., you have the capacity to disable that function, the ability to set a time limit on access, with

one-time only access. Interest in knowing more about security issues around course info, testing security, etc.

- **Costs of e-learning and potential sources of funding.** Title IV-E has traditionally reimbursed for face-to-face training. Can distance learning be reimbursed with IV-E money? There may be regional differences in the way funds are matched. Some base reimbursement on course hours, others on travel time. This certainly is an area that needs more investigation. Those with university affiliations should have free access to the software needed to create the courses. Initial costs will be the greatest; once it's up and running it should be an efficient and cost-saving product over the long term. It is possible to register for the course as a guest. Log on to: www.courseinfo.buffalostate.edu. Look for the name "Wegenast" or a social work course, etc.

David P. Wegenast is Professor of Social Work at Buffalo State College in New York.

Elizabeth Lindsey is Associate Professor in the Department of Social Work at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro.

Irene Becker is Curriculum Coordinator for the Public Child Welfare Training Academy covering the southern region of California.

Reports on Affinity Action Groups

Thursday, May 24, 2001, 12:30 p.m. and
Friday, May 25, 2001, 11:45 a.m.
David P. Wegenast*, D.S.W.,* and Jane Berdie*, M.S.W., Facilitators*

Affinity Action Groups

This year at the symposium, lunchtime discussions focused on particular topic areas, called "affinity action groups." After the two lunch periods, the affinity action groups reported on their discussions. The reports are summarized below.

Group 1: Using Technology

The group discussed some of the challenges of getting staff interested and invested in the use of technology. It is important to look at organizational infrastructure, policies, and procedures that support the use of technology. Being available to work with the organization, agency and/or county is also critical to the effective use of technology.

One special consideration is the potential "generation gap" between older and newer workers and/or between older and younger workers. It may be instrumental to use more mature "techno-converts" to work with older workers, either chronologically or service-wise, who may suffer from "technophobia" or who may be resistant to change.

Some specific technologies discussed included:

- The use of Palm™ pilots to assist workers in the field, to be used as a resource tool to take notes while out in the field. Some counties in California and New York are using Palm™ pilots to gather evaluation data.
- www.blackboard.com for distance learning.
- Dave Wegenast's CD-Rom on Journey.

- The California Public Child Welfare Training Academy—Southern Region's CD-ROM on interviewing children.
- The development of the State of California's CalWIN data program which is internet-based.

Group 2: Training & Work Force Stability

In their discussion of worker stability and retention, the group felt that it might be instructive to examine the question "Why do workers leave?" from a different angle, i.e., "Why do workers stay?"

The group also expressed the need to expand the definition of training to include:

- Organizational development;
- Elements of collaboration; and
- Partnerships with Human Resource departments.

In efforts to increase stability, one must look at a plan for professional development that extends beyond the training room, i.e., consider mentoring and coaching that continues throughout the worker's career. The underlying competencies of workers also need to be looked at. Professional development is an important factor in the development of retention strategies.

Supervision also plays a significant role in workforce stability. Often, workers stay because they have effective supervisors. It is critical to identify what is needed to develop supervisory skills. San Diego has a continual assessment and reassessment process for supervisor skills and qualities.

Another important factor in workforce stability is the ability to manage turnover. Can we predict when vacancies will occur and reduce the length of time the agency is without staff? Is there a way to initiate more effective advance planning by anticipating/projecting rates of turnover? Another consideration is whether it is always advantageous for people to stay in the same position for years.

This discussion group plans to set up a listserv for itself as well as acquiring access to other listservs for related groups.

Group 3: Evaluation of Skill

The group discussed the need for a consensus definition of what constitutes best practice. One important factor in considering the evaluation of skill is to look at the transfer of learning to the job.

While the best place to measure skill learning is through evaluation on the job, it is necessary to gain on-site cooperation in order to accomplish this. The group discussed ways to get agency buy-in for on-site assessment.

Group 4: Federal Training Outcome Review

The group agreed that they didn't know much about this, i.e., there is a need to learn more about the Federal Training Outcome Review process. The questions that the feeds have developed appear to drive the direction of research and evaluation.

Some possible resources include:

- The Muskie School of Public Service at the University of Southern Maine has developed a binder that takes you through a mock review process.
- North Carolina just went through the actual review process.
- Oregon is in the middle of the review process.
- Rebecca Bright is a good resource re: the questions and process of the review.

The group suggested that this might be a good topic for next year's symposium.

Group 5: A National Survey of the States on Training and Evaluation in the Human Services

The group plans to conduct a Web-based survey by 09/15/01. The survey will incorporate three main areas of focus including:

1. The organizational structure of county/state administration as it pertains to training and evaluation.
2. Evaluation efforts pertaining to:
    - Planning;
    - Funding;
    - Design;
    - What is evaluated;
    - Levels of evaluation;

- Tools of evaluation; and
- Use of variables.

3. Evaluation reports and annual reports.

The group will send the survey to symposium attendees and ask for their feedback regarding the survey instrument itself and suggestions as to whom the survey should be sent to. Much assistance will be needed to identify and get the contact information of the key people (apart from the directors) to whom this survey should be targeted.

The group will use multiple forms/methods to retrieve the data, including a Web-based survey, a mail survey, and a phone survey. Quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data will be performed and a written report will be presented at next year's symposium.

Ideas for the survey may be derived from the NSTDA Standards for Success. Flyers will be distributed through NSTDA for the purpose of establishing good PR and as a means to identify potential respondents.

Group 6: Evaluation of the Transfer of Learning

The group discussed the importance of identifying key factors that influence the transfer of learning.

In practicing evaluation, the need to move beyond an overemphasis on self-report data was discussed. The use of observation and the use of case plans to identify training impact were identified as important sources of evaluation material.

It was agreed that stricter methods and a more rigorous approach to training evaluation are needed. While some called for more rigorous quantitative methodologies, others maintained that qualitative approaches are just as important to the process. Qualitative methodology may be more appropriate for examining certain types of questions: for example, the process of transfer, the factors that influence the process of moving from a novice to an experienced worker, etc.

The discussion also centered on the evaluation that some states are already implementing, i.e., Wisconsin and Ohio.

David P. Wegenast is Professor of Social Work at Buffalo State College, New York.

Jane Berdie is Director of Education and Training with Children's Services at the American Humane Association in Englewood, Colorado.

Evaluation of the Symposium: Comments on the Structure and Format

The symposium offers a great forum in which to share ideas regarding training evaluation. It allows the opportunity to discuss and share mistakes as well as successes, i.e., to identify what works and what doesn't. The ability for participants to talk candidly about mistakes provides a unique opportunity to gather some very useful information. The symposium provides a lot of stimulation!

It was noted that the formality of the process of the symposium is increasing. Concern was expressed that the symposium is beginning to lose its informal nature and is becoming more like other conferences. The group reiterated its desire to maintain the essence of the symposium as that of an informal forum in which to share and discuss ideas.

Another concern expressed was that the amount of information presented was difficult to process. The sentiment shared by several participants was that there is a need for more opportunities for discussion, interaction, and dialogue. Several suggestions were made including:

- Having shorter—not fewer—presentations, and with the use of an overall facilitator/timekeeper, keep presentations on track, allowing more time for dialogue.
- Establishing a main focus or topic for the symposium.
- Identifying and focusing on "hot issues" and ensuring adequate time for interaction and dialogue around these specific topics.
- Having fewer presentations with same/related topics. Different topics may contribute to "information overload."
- Rearranging the order of the presentations, i.e., have longer presentations first, or start with all presentation and follow with all discussion.
- Having presenters prepare and submit formal and comprehensive papers for proceedings and then focus on key points/issues for the purpose of the symposium itself, i.e., more quality control.

- Having presentations that are more narrow in scope but more in-depth. Perhaps institute a time limit of fifteen minutes in which to focus on methodological or conceptual issues, allowing plenty of time for discussion.
- Debate about whether discussions/presentations should focus more on the results of the evaluation and less on the process. Some expressed that the process is also very important, especially to those who are learning to do training evaluation.

The size and membership of the group was a matter of discussion. The target audience for the symposium was identified as evaluators, not trainers or state administrators. It was expressed that the symposium has a specific focus on training evaluation and it is very important to differentiate this from program evaluation. There are not many, if any, other places where evaluators can come together and learn from each other.

The group has expanded and needs to consider whether it wants to continue or restrict further expansion. Some feedback around this topic included:

- Noting the strength and benefits of having several partnerships represented at this symposium.
- Consideration of involving state administrators for informational purposes.
- While appreciating the idea of a small group, giving consideration to the many who would benefit from access to the symposium and the importance of not excluding them.
- The suggestion that this group formalize more presentations at NSTDA that include training evaluation. Dale Curry is heading up a Training Evaluation Committee for the annual meeting that will include some workshops, sessions, etc. Participants could then share this information through other forums.
- Other alternative resources include the American Evaluation Association meetings.

Some other logistical issues regarding the symposium were discussed including:

- Requesting (requiring?) that those who attend the symposium stay for the entire time, i.e., at least until 10 a.m. Friday. The primary purpose of the symposium is participant interaction; therefore, the presenters and the

keynote speaker should make the same commitment as all other participants.

- Having longer breaks, allowing time for more informal discussion.
- Having more frequent, but not longer, breaks.
- Allowing more time for scheduled work groups.
- The role of the facilitator: The facilitators may have added to a sense of increased formality. Some facilitators added their own questions rather than allowing the group to respond directly to the presenter.

It was decided that the Planning Committee would look at these issues/ideas and send out a draft of suggestions.

Program

Fourth Annual

National Human Services Training Evaluation Symposium 2001

Wednesday, May 23

5:00 p.m. *RECEPTION*

6:00 p.m. *DINNER*

7:30 p.m. **Welcome:** *Sherrill Clark*
Keynote Address: *Dave Wegenast*
"Measuring the Return on Investment (ROI) of the 2001 CalSWEC Evaluation Symposium"

Thursday, May 24

9:15–10:30 a.m **"Assessing Underlying Competencies"**
Presenter: *Freda Bernotavicz*
Facilitator: *Sherrill Clark*

10:30 a.m. *BREAK*

10:45 a.m.–12:15 p.m. **"Models for Evaluating Core Curriculum"**
Panelists: *Andy Peterson, Margaret Rainforth, and John Poertner*
Facilitator: *Dale Curry*

12:30 p.m. *LUNCH*

Affinity Action Groups
Facilitators: *Dave Wegenast and Jane Berdie*

1:30–2:30 p.m. **"A Comprehensive Evaluation of a Statewide Child Welfare System"**
Presenters: *Jane Berdie, Cindy Parry and Robin Leake*
Facilitator: *Naomi Lynch*

2:30–3:30 p.m. **"Participant Action Plans"**
Presenters: *Marcia Sanderson and Joan Richardson*
Facilitator: *Michael Nunno*

3:30 p.m. *BREAK*

3:45–4:45 p.m **"The Logic Model"**
Presenters: *Jean Ross and Sarah Cearley*
Facilitator: *Michelle Graef*

Friday, May 25

9:00–10:15 a.m. **"Evaluating Group Behavior"**
Presenter: *Anita Barbee*
Facilitator: *Sherrill Clark*

10:15 a.m. *BREAK*

10:30–11:15 a.m. **"Blackboard: e-Learning Tools and On-Line Assessment"**
Presenter: *Dave Wegenast*
Facilitator: *Elizabeth Lindsey*

11:45 a.m. **Wrap-up**

12:00 noon *LUNCH*

Affinity Action Groups
Facilitators: *Dave Wegenast and Jane Berdie*

Directory of Presenters and Participants

Adair, Gary Staff Development Program Manager Santa Cruz County Human Resources Agency 1020 Emeline Ave., Bldg. B Santa Cruz, CA 95061 931-454-4890 FAX: 831-454-4092 hra037@hra.co.santa-cruz.ca.us	Gary Adair is currently involved in developing an employee recruitment and retention strategy. The intended outcome is an educational pathway that will help employees develop their skills within the agency. The ultimate goal is to improve employee retention and development.
Ahmed, Fasih U. Professor Department of Sociology & Social Work North Carolina A&T State University 6108 Gold Dust Trail Greensboro, NC 27455 336-334-7894 ahmedf@ncat.edu	Fasih U. Ahmed, PhD, teaches courses in program evaluation, population studies, research methods, and statistics. He is working with Dr. Elizabeth Lindsey on the North Carolina Child Welfare Training Evaluation Project, a project of the State of North Carolina, Division of Social Services and the University of North Carolina, Greensboro.
Barbee, Anita P.* Associate Research Professor Kent School of Social Work University of Louisville Louisville, KY 40292 502-852-0416 FAX: 852-0522 Anita.barbee@louisville.edu	Anita P. Barbee received her PhD in social psychology from the University of Georgia in 1988 and her MSW from the University of Louisville in 2001. Her current projects include evaluating core child welfare training at Levels I, II, and III; evaluating the efficacy of

* *Presenters*

	alternate models of training delivery and reinforcement; and using Internet applications to evaluate individual and group behavior.
Becker, Irene Curriculum Coordinator Public Child Welfare Training Academy—Southern Region 6505 Alvarado Rd., Ste. 107 San Diego, CA 92120 619-594-3565 FAX: 619-594-1118 ibecker@mail.sdsu.edu	Irene Becker, LCSW, is currently working on a Level III evaluation regarding training on interviewing skills for children. Other projects she has been involved with include An Interdisciplinary Training for Foster Parents and Social Workers, Developing a Training Plan for Unit Assistants (paraprofessional position), Supervisor Development Academy, a federal grant to train professionals in Independent Living Skills for foster youth, and piloting two distance learning CWS courses as part of the pilot of the statewide standardized curriculum.
Berdie, Jane* Director Education & Training American Humane Association Children's Services 63 Inverness Dr. East Englewood, CO 80112 303-925-9415 FAX: 303-792-5333 jane@americanhumane.org	Jane Berdie, MSW, currently works with a variety of state and other public and private child welfare programs to develop training plans, write curricula, conduct training of staff and trainers, and conduct evaluation of training. She led the American Humane Association (AHA) team that evaluated the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Competency-Based Training and Certification Project and has contributed to the design and instrumentation of training evaluation projects in Colorado and Illinois conducted by AHA.

Bernatovicz, Freda* Director Institute of Public Sector Innovation Muskie School of Public Service University of Southern Maine 295 Water St. Augusta, ME 04330 207-626-5241 FAX: 207-626-5210 Freda.bernotavicz@state.me.us	Freda Bernotavicz received her BA with honors from the University of Nottingham and her MS from Syracuse University. She has extensive experience in competency-based approaches to human resource management and in working collaboratively with state agencies. She is certified as an assessor through the National Association of Secondary School Principals Assessment Centers and as a Behavioral Event Interviewer.
Brooks, Susan Director Northern Child Welfare Training Academy The Center for Human Services University of California, Davis 1632 Da Vinci Court Davis, CA 95616-4860 530-757-8643 FAX: 530-754-5104 sbrooks@unexmail.ucdavis.edu	Susan Brooks, MSW, is the Program Manager of the Northern Child Welfare Training Academy, The Center for Human Services at UC Davis. She has 20 years of experience in a variety of areas, including child welfare and perinatal and adult services. Currently she runs the Northern Academy and is very involved in the development and implementation of the Standardized Core Curriculum with CalSWEC.
Carlson, Marsha Curriculum & Evaluation Specialist CalSWEC/Regional Training Academy School of Social Welfare 120 Haviland Hall University of California, Berkeley Berkeley, CA 94720-7400 510-643-6400 FAX: 510-642-8573 carlsonm@uclink.berkeley.edu	Marsha Carlson, MSW, is Curriculum and Evaluation Specialist with the Regional Training Academy Coordination Project. She joined CalSWEC in October 2000. Her responsibilities include collaborating with trainers and evaluators from across the state in the development of the Standardized Core Curriculum for California child welfare workers. Previously Ms. Carlson worked at Contra Costa County Child Protective Services as a line worker and trainer.

Cearley, Sarah Center for Child & Family Studies College of Social Work University of South Carolina Columbia, SC 29208 803-777-0647 FAX: 803-777-9409 SARAHC@gwm.sc.edu	Sarah Cearley, PhD, became director of the Adult Protective Services Training Project in January 2000 and has coordinated the development of a "menu" of training curricula for staff, including: Smart Supervision: A Partnership in Learning; Effective Writing for Adult Services Court Documents; Exploitation of Adult Services Clients and Neglect/Self-Neglect of Adult Services Clients. She previously served as evaluator on the curriculum development teams for two child welfare training projects.
Clark, Sherrill Research Specialist CalSWEC School of Social Welfare 120 Haviland Hall University of California, Berkeley Berkeley, CA 94720-7400 510-642-9272 FAX: 510-642-8573 sjclark@uclink4.berkeley.edu	Sherrill J. Clark, LCSW, PhD, has been responsible for implementing a California-wide competency-based curriculum to prepare MSWs for work in public child welfare practice. Her research interests include child welfare and health policy, and social work education, especially the continuum of education and practice, how learning in the classroom is transferred to and from the field, and the relationship between education and outcomes for children and families. Dr. Clark is a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Bureau of Health Professions Primary Care Policy Fellow.
Cook, John B. Program Effectiveness & Research Coordinator CLL Education & Training Partnership 117 Pleasant St. Dolloff Bldg., 3rd Floor Concord, NH 03301	John B. Cook, MA, is currently involved with the implementation of statewide pre-service and in-service training for New Hampshire foster parents, adoptive parents, child welfare staff, and residential providers. Other projects include the implementation of a quality

603-271-7212 FAX: 603-271-4947 JBCook@dhhs.state.nh.us	assurance model involving various project aspects, such as curriculum assessment, instructor profile, and training site review. In addition, he is working on the design of a research project that will examine the impact of provider training on children in placement.
Curry, Dale Assistant Professor Family & Consumer Studies Kent State University Kent, OH 44242 330-672-2197 dcurry@kent.edu	Dale Curry was formerly Training Coordinator at the Northeast Ohio Regional Training Center, Summit County Children's Services. Some of his evaluation projects include serving as consultant to the American Humane Association on its comprehensive evaluation of the Pennsylvania Competency-Based Child Welfare Training and Certification Program and providing oversight to a comprehensive multi-population survey questionnaire feedback approach, assessing a variety of variables for the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program. Dr. Curry recently published an article, "Evaluation of Transfer of Learning in the Human Services," in *Journal of Child and Youth Care Work.*
Daly, Donna Evaluation & Resource Development Coordinator Public Child Welfare Training Academy—Southern Region 6505 Alvarado Rd., Ste. 106 San Diego, CA 92120 619-594-3563 FAX: 619-594-1118 DDaly@mail.sdsu.edu	Donna Daly is currently responsible for implementing and evaluating the effectiveness of the Child Welfare Supervisors' Development program. Other specialized projects include evaluating the effectiveness of different teaching methods and organizational development of County Health & Human Services and Child Welfare Services recruitment and retention.

Fletcher, Jane M. Project Director CLL Education & Training Partnership 117 Pleasant St. Dolloff Bldg., 3rd Floor Concord, NH 03301 603-721-4946 FAX: 603-271-4947 JFletcher@dhhs.state.nh.us	Jane M. Fletcher, MSW, is currently involved with the implementation of statewide pre-service and in-service training for New Hampshire foster parents, adoptive parents, child welfare staff, and residential providers. Other projects include the implementation of a quality assurance model involving various project aspects, such as curriculum assessment, instructor profile, and training site review. Ms. Fletcher is also involved in the design of a research project that will examine the impact of provider training on children in placement.
Graef, Michelle Research Assistant Professor of Psychology University of Nebraska Center on Children, Families & the Law 121 S. 13th St., Ste. 302 Lincoln, NE 68588-0227 402-472-3741 FAX: 402-472-8412 mgraef1@unl.edu	Michelle Graef, PhD, is developing and validating a wide range of assessments for use in the selection of Child Protective Services workers and in the assessment of these new workers' competencies. She has conducted a number of studies on various aspects of CPS staff turnover, most recently on methods for costing the financial impact of this turnover. This summer she will begin work on a new NIH grant, "The community context of rural and urban child neglect."
Grossman, Bart Adjunct Professor/Director of Field Instruction School of Social Welfare 120 Haviland Hall University of California, Berkeley Berkeley, CA 94720-7400 510-642-0722	Bart Grossman, MSW, PhD, is founding director of CalSWEC and continues to consult on the development of this consortium. For the past several years, he has been involved in California and nationally in cross-training and staff development efforts connecting child welfare and substance abuse.

FAX: 643-6126 bg47@socrates.berkeley.edu	This work has been done largely under the auspices of the Pacific Southwest Addiction Technology Transfer Center at UC San Diego. Dr. Grossman recently served as curriculum evaluator for Rutgers University's child welfare training project with the State of New Jersey Department of Youth and Family Services. He has also provided consultation on MSW education to the State of Illinois Department of Child and Family Services.
Ilian, Henry Testing & Evaluation NYC James Satterwhite Academy for Child Welfare Training Administration for Children's Services Children's Center 492 First Ave. New York, NY 10016 718-262-3236 FAX: 646-935-1604 1588CS@DFA.state.ny.us	Henry Ilian, DSW, is responsible for testing at the James Satterwhite Academy for Child Welfare Training. The Satterwhite Academy is the training arm of New York City's Administration for Children's Services, the city's child welfare agency. He is currently working on measures to accompany a New York City adaptation of the New York State Common Core training for child welfare workers. This competency-based training will be piloted in New York City in June.
Jacquet, Susan E. Research Specialist CalSWEC School of Social Welfare 120 Haviland Hall University of California, Berkeley Berkeley, CA 94720-7400 510-643-9846 FAX: 510-642-8573 sjacquet@uclink.berkeley.edu	Susan E. Jacquet, PhD, joined CalSWEC in September 2000. Dr. Jacquet manages CalSWEC's research component, including a statewide survey of public child welfare workers and ongoing surveys of Title IV-E students. She is responsible for coordinating CalSWEC's funded research process from RFP through review of proposals.

Johnson, Barrett Interim Regional Training Academy Coordinator Regional Training Academy CalSWEC School of Social Welfare 120 Haviland Hall University of California, Berkeley Berkeley, CA 94720-7400 510-643-5484 FAX: 510-642-8573 barrettj@uclink.berkeley.edu	Barrett Johnson, MSW, LCSW, has been Training and In-Service Specialist since September 2000 and Interim Regional Training Academy Coordinator since fall 2001. Mr. Johnson has worked intensively on the statewide Standardized Core Curriculum Project, coordinating the standardized core's development and piloting in spring 2001. He has worked for many years with urban children and families, with an emphasis on intervention in cases of child sexual abuse
Lally, Eileen M. Program Manager Family Services Training Academy School of Social Work University of Alaska, Anchorage 4500 Diplomacy Dr., Ste. 430 Anchorage, AK 99508 907-786-6731 FAX: 907-786-6735	Eileen M. Lally, EdD, LCSW, is in her third year of a partnership at the State of Alaska's Division of Family and Youth Services, providing training to their statewide social work staff that utilizes Title IV-E funding. She says that it has been an exciting journey and that she looks forward to hearing how other folks have accomplished meeting the training needs of their child protection workers.
Leake, Robin* Research Associate American Humane Association Children's Services 63 Inverness Dr. East Englewood, CO 80112-5117 303-925-9486 FAX: 303-792-5333 robin@americanhumane.org http://www.americanhumane.org	Robin Leake, PhD, is responsible for research design; selection or development of instruments; data collection, analysis, and interpretation; proposal and final report development; and project management. She is involved in numerous projects, including managing a multi-level evaluation of child welfare staff training for the state of Colorado.

Lindsey, Elizabeth Associate Professor University of North Carolina, Greensboro Department of Social Work 447 Graham Bldg. Greensboro, NC 27402-6170 336-334-5225 FAX: 336-334-5210 Betsy_lindsey@uncg.edu	Elizabeth Lindsey, PhD, is currently working on the North Carolina Child Welfare Training Evaluation Project. With Dr. Fasih Ahmed, she is focusing on developing and validating knowledge tests for Pre-service Training and creation of a standard set of training management reports based on participant satisfaction data for all child welfare training. She teaches the research and evaluation courses in the Joint Master of Social Work Program administered through N.C. A&T State University and the University of North Carolina, Greensboro. Other ongoing research projects involve studying how runaway and homeless youth are able to restabilize and create success in their lives.
Lynch, Naomi Director of Training Council of Family & Child Caring Agencies 19 W. 21st St., Ste. 501 New York, NY 10010 212-929-2626 FAX: 212-929-0870 naomi@cofcca.org	Naomi Lynch is the Training Director for a training consortium of over 100 child welfare agencies in the New York state. In her role, she provides a competency-based training program to new and experienced caseworkers and supervisors. She is an advocate of and collaborates with local and state governments to administer training programs that support adult learning principles and skill development. She is assisting local and state governments in transitioning to an outcome-focused training model that will be used by public and private agencies throughout the State of New York.

MacLeod, Ann-Mary Reseach & Educational Evaluation Consultant School of Social Work 7585 Lighthouse Lane University of Nevada Reno, NV 89557 775-853-8080 amacleod@nvbell.net	Ann-Mary MacLeod, BS, is currently working on an evaluation of the Title IV-E program at the School of Social Work, University of Nevada, Reno.
Mahler, Ronnie Associate Professor Buffalo State College Department of Social Work 1300 Elmwood Ave., HC 118 Buffalo, NY 14222 716-878-5327 mahlerre@bscmail.buffalostate.edu	Ronnie Mahler, PhD, ACSW, has teaching responsibilities and research interests in the area of program evaluation, mental health, and training human service workers to be culturally sensitive. Dr. Mahler's most recent evaluation project involves a quantitative and qualitative evaluation of a community-based entrepreneurial training project designed to develop self-sufficiency among low-income individuals or persons on Temporary Assistance to Needy Families.
Martin, Schuyler Office of Research and Public Services College of Social Work University of Tennessee 1720 West End Ave., Ste. 330 Nashville, TN 37203 615-963-1298 FAX: 615-329-0983 smartin@gw.utk.edu	Schuyler Martin, PhD, is the manager of training evaluation at the Social Work Office of Research and Public Services at the University of Tennessee. His current projects include workforce education and development, instructional systems, children's services, curriculum development, training evaluation, and administration.

Mathias, Chris Interim Deputy Director CalSWEC School of Social Welfare 120 Haviland Hall University of California, Berkeley Berkeley, CA 94720-7400 510-643-5440 FAX: 510-642-8573 cmathias@uclink.berkely.edu	Chris Mathias, MSW, has been Regional Training Academy Coordinator since March 2000 and CalSWEC's Interim Deputy Director since fall 2000. She heads a statewide effort to assess needs and coordinate training of public social services staff, especially those in public child welfare, throughout California. This work is done in collaboration with the five regional training academies, the California Department of Social Services, and the County Welfare Directors Association. Ms. Mathias has been working in child welfare for 15 years.
Maxwell, Helen Chief Clinical Services/Interagency Initiatives 3075 Wilshire Blvd., Rm. 934 Los Angeles, CA 90010 213-639-4813	Helen Maxwell, MSW, LCSW, is the Division Chief of Clinical Services for the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) in Los Angeles County. Current projects include the DCFS Inter-University Consortium and the California Social Work Education Center student internship programs, recruitment and retention of DCFS staff, clinical licensure supervision, program development, and interagency initiatives.
McLean, Ann L. Evaluation Specialist Northeast Wisconsin Partnership for Children & Families University of Wisconsin—Green Bay 2420 Nicolet, CL 730 Green Bay, WI 54311 920-465-2026 FAX: 920-465-2961 mcleana@uwgb.edu	Ann L. McLean, PhD, serves as Chair of the Evaluation Committee of the Wisconsin Child Welfare Training Council. Current projects she is involved with include after-training evaluation of changes in perceived competence in CORE worker competencies, and after-training evaluation of impact of supervisory CORE training on individuals (CPS supervisors) and agency.

Miyake, Richard CalSWEC Intern Supervisor Department of Children and Family Services Los Angeles County 11390 W. Olympic Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90064 310-312-6939 miyakr@dcfs.co.la.ca.us	Richard Miyake, MSW, LCSW, supervises CalSWEC interns at the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). In addition to his ongoing responsibilities at DCFS, Mr. Miyake's current projects include staff development, retention issues, and outcome measures on delivered services.
Nunno, Michael Sr. Extension Associate Family Life Development Center/DSW Cornell University MVR Hall Ithaca, NY 14853 607-254-5127 FAX: 607-225-4837 Man2@cornell.edu	Michael Nunno, DSW, is the co-principal investigator of the New York State Child Protective Services Training Institute and the principal investigator of the Residential Child Care Project. Dr. Nunno designs evaluation strategies and methodologies that measure individual performance within competency-based training programs.
Parry, Cindy* Independent Consultant in Training and Program Evaluation 7 Bobcat Lane Littleton, Colorado 80127 303-925-9414 303-948-552 cparry@americanhumane.org cfparryassociates@att.net (home)	Cindy Parry, PhD, has been responsible for several training evaluation and test construction projects in a number of states. She is an author of a new NSDTA publication, *Training Evaluation in the Human Services,* and has made numerous presentations on training evaluation and instrument development at NSDTA and other state and national conferences.
Petersen, Nancy Training Coordinator School of Social Work, MS 090 7585 Lighthouse Lane University of Nevada Reno, NV 89557 775-784-6542 FAX: 775-784-4573 nbp@unr.edu	Nancy Petersen, MSW, has been involved with two major community collaboration projects , an ongoing interprofessional workshop that was initially developed by several agencies, and most recently, the first annual community conference, held on May 4, 2001. In addition, she is conducting a needs assessment for a

	distance education social work program in rural Nevada and also beginning the first formal program evaluation of Title IV-E and non-IV-E students hired by the local child welfare agencies.
Peterson, N. Andrew* Research Director & Assistant Professor Center for Social & Community Development School of Social Work Rutgers University 100 Joyce Kilmer Ave. Piscataway, NJ 08854 732-445-0512 FAX: 732-445-4154 Andypete@rci.rutgers.edu	At the Center for Social & Community Development, Dr. Andrew Peterson leads a department of 20 researchers working on a variety of contract and grant supported evaluation studies in child welfare, public health, education, organizational and community development, substance abuse prevention, and community policing.
Poertner, John* Director Children and Family Research Center University of Illinois 1207 W. Oregon Urbana, IL 61801 217-244-5224 FAX: 217-244-5220 jpoertne@uiuc.edu	John Poertner, DSW is Director of the Children and Family Research Center, a collaboration between the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He has conducted public child welfare research and training projects for over 20 years and has had an ongoing interest in evaluation of training.
Rainforth, Margaret* Curriculum Specialist Central California Child Welfare Training Academy CSU, Fresno 5310 Campus Dr., MS 102 Fresno, CA 93740-8031 559-278-8065 FAX: 559-278-7229 rain4th@mindsync.com	Margaret Rainforth received her PhD in Social Welfare from UC Berkeley. As Curriculum Specialist at the Central California Child Welfare Training Academy, she write, edits, and evaluates curricula and mentors trainers. Currently, she is "on loan" to CalSWEC to create and implement the Standardized Core Curriculum Evaluation.

Richardson, Joan* Training Director Protective Services Training Institute 4800 Calhoun St. Houston, TX 77204-4494 713-743-8130 FAX: 713-743-8888 jrichardson@uh.edu	Joan Richardson, LMSW, has been Training Director for the Protective Services Training Institute of Texas since 1993 and coordinates statewide training for CPS, APS, Child Care Licensing, and intake staff and supervisors. Prior to this, she worked with the New York State Department of Social Services for 13 years, managing Family and Children Services training contracts. She served on the Board of Directors of NSDTA for four years.
Rodgers, Angela Project Manager Portland. State University Child Welfare Partnership 520 S.W. Harrison St. Portland, OR 97201 503-725-8157 rodgersA@cwp.ssw.pdx .edu	Angela Rodgers, PhD, is a Research Assistant for the Child Welfare Partnership training unit that conducts core training for all new child welfare caseworkers in the state of Oregon. She is currently developing a project agreement for an ongoing evaluation/assessment of the training to be presented to the State Office of Services to Children and Families in hopes that the office will be willing to fund such an endeavor.
Ross, Jean W.* Writer/Editor Center for Child & Family Services College of Social Work University of South Carolina Columbia, SC 29208 FAX: 803-951-3517 jeanross@netside.com	Jean W. Ross, MSW, LMSW, is currently collaborating with Dr. Sarah Cearley on adult protective services training design and implementation. In addition, she is helping to develop an independent living training program for foster parents, agency and group home workers, and foster adolescents in which the adolescents will play a major role in implementation and evaluation.

Sanderson, Marcia* Director Protective Services Training Institute University of Houston-GSSW 4800 Calhoun Rd. Houston, TX 77204-4492 713-743-8140 FAX: 713-743-8888 msanderson@uh.edu	Marcia Sanderson, LMSW-ACP, has been the Director of the Protective Services Training Institute since 1993. In 1999, she also assumed the role of Director of the Child Welfare Education Project, a Title IV-E stipend program at the University of Houston Graduate School of Social Work. She teaches grant writing in the master's program and program evaluation as a part of a continuing education workshop on Program Planning and Proposal Writing.
Srinivasan, Meera Senior Evaluation Specialist Bay Area Academy San Francisco State University 1600 Holloway Ave. San Francisco, CA 94134-4161 415-338-6213 510-357-0049 FAX: 415-338-0917 msriniva@sfsu.edu	Meera Srinivasan, MSW, PGDCC, PhD, currently serves on the faculty of San Francisco State University. She is a Senior Evaluation Research Specialist at the Bay Area Academy and is currently developing tri-model evaluation tools for training academies training CPS workers.
Thomas, Annette Training Coordinator 10355 Slusher Dr., Ste. 1 Sante Fe Springs, CA 90670 562-903-5013	Annette Thomas is a Children Services Administrator in the Training Section, the Core Academy Trainer on Child Safety, and currently a member of the Core Academy Redesign Structure Workgroup.
Tucker-Tatlow, Jennifer Training & Evaluation Specialist Public Child Welfare Training Academy—Southern Region 6505 Alvarado Rd., Ste. 107 San Diego, CA 62120 619-594-3811 FAX: 6198-594-1118 jttatlow@projects.sdsu.edu	Jennifer Tucker-Tatlow's areas of specialization include program development, implementation, and evaluation for the Child Welfare Supervisors Development Academy; evaluation of the effectiveness of different teaching methods; organization development for county human service agencies; and research on social worker recruitment and retention.

Wegenast, David P.* Professor of Social Work Buffalo State College 185 Parkside Avenue Buffalo, NY 14214 716-836-5220 FAX: 716-836-5220 wegenadp@bscmail. buffalostate.edu	David P. Wegenast, DSW, is the founder and former director of the Center for Development of Human Services and past president of the National Staff Development and Training Association, APHSA. Current interests include use of e-learning tools in graduate and undergraduate social work education and training, and conducting research on human service training and evaluation in the states and territories. He is currently writing a book, *Understanding Human Service Organizations.*
Yatchmenoff, Diane Research Director Child Welfare Partnership Graduate School of Social Work Portland State Univeristy 520 S.W. Harrison St. Portland, OR 97201 503-725-8079 yatchmd@cwp.ssw.pdx.edu	Diane Yatchmenoff, PhD, is responsible for the development and oversight of all research conducted by the Child Welfare Partnership. Current projects include an evaluation of Oregon's Title IV-E Waiver of foster care funds, an evaluation of the implementation of a statewide reform of child protective service delivery, and the evaluation of a federally funded kinship care project. Under development are evaluation projects focusing on the training provided by CWP to caseworkers in the state's child welfare system and an "application of knowledge" project to promote the dissemination and utilization of research in both training and practice.