

## Appendix 2-1: CalSWEC/CSSR Collaboration: Developing Research Coursework for Title IV-E Students

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### CalSWEC/CSSR Collaboration Developing Research Coursework for Title IV-E Students

CalSWEC is the nation's largest coalition of its kind working to provide professional education, student financial aid, in-service training, and workforce research--all directed toward developing effective, culturally competent public service delivery to the people of California.

For over 20 years CalSWEC's child welfare programs have supported the development and professionalization of the child welfare workforce through, stipends, student support and delivering a specialized curriculum that prepares the student for a career in public child welfare.

To date CalSWEC's Title IV-E Stipend Program has graduated over 5,000 students and with a retention rate of over 80%.

The specialized curriculum is delivered in several ways, primarily through the infusion of curriculum competencies that are mapped to the MSW curriculum. Over the years, CalSWEC has sought to enhance the curriculum by funding research based curriculum development projects that are aligned with California's Statewide Research agenda.

This collaboration between CalSWEC and CSSR's Performance Indicators Project is a new way in which we are seeking to enhance the Title IV-E MSW curriculum. The Child Welfare Performance indicators project houses all outcomes data in child welfare in California and is built upon the federal outcomes in the Child and Family Services Reviews and California's Outcomes and Accountability System. This dynamic data base tracks all children in foster care and the related outcomes in California and also serves as a model for the entire nation.

The goal of this collaboration is to develop a year-long MSW research curriculum designed to prepare graduating cohorts of Title IV-E MSW students to be:

- experienced users of the publicly available administrative child welfare data
- well-versed in their county field placement's performance goals
- consumers of research
- able to use data to track outcomes in order to improve practice
- well-prepared for leadership roles in county child welfare agencies

This project aligns with CalSWEC's mission is "to facilitate the integration of education and practice", with the ultimate goal of improving the lives of children and families who use public child welfare services.

On March 16, 2011 a symposium was held to present the curriculum that is currently being piloted to a group of research faculty across the state of California. The goal of the symposium was to solicit feedback, to open a dialogue about the course and to discuss ways in which other faculty might use the coursework in in other social work programs in California. Another goal of the symposium was to develop strategies to enhance engagement between county child welfare agencies, research faculty and students to better meet the research needs of the counties.

The materials in this packet provide you with a summary of the meeting discussion along with the some of the course materials that have been developed to date.

In the Summer of 2011, more materials will be released and the next steps identified in the Symposium report (document #2) will be developed and publicized.

This is an exciting new curriculum enhancement for Title IV-E students and we are looking forward to further forums of this type to generate a transformation in the way research is taught to Title IV-E student across the state.



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## Background and Overview of Piloted Course (Attachment A, B, C)

A PowerPoint slide was presented and covered the following areas and topics of discussion.

- Motivation from perspectives of CDSS, CSSR, and CalSWEC
- Student anxiety and resistance to research
- Different pedagogical models for instruction
- CSSR site features that lend themselves to opportunities for student research coupled with development of practical data analysis skills
- Opportunities to help students develop answerable research questions relevant to their county child welfare agency
- Fall and Spring course outline
- CalSWEC fall survey results, plans for follow-up

## Small Group Lunchtime Discussion (Attachment D)

Participants were asked to have discussions over the lunch break that covered a set of questions on engaging student, skill and competency development, the pros and cons of junior social scientists vs. consumers of research. The following is a synthesis of those discussions.

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### *How can we best engage students in research and data analysis?*

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- Practicality use real life examples that are connect to the research
- Case studies, examples
- Turning “worst case scenario from the practice world” into project/questions
- Bringing those with real world experience/experts into class to discuss research to practice
- Those experts need to have good translational skills
- Provide examples for how research and practice are the same and different
- Use students interests and personal experience for projects
- Bridge or create a pathway of learning from qualitative to quantitative
- Use assessment instruments as door into quantitative
- Tie research project or activities into field instruction learning agreement

- Research is about operationalizing social work practice and intervention

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*What research and data analysis skills do child welfare workers need in the field?*

*What research competencies do we want IV-E students to graduate with after 2.5 semesters of research coursework in an MSW program?*

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- How to use excel
- How to read and evaluate research reports i.e. sample size, fatal flaws, limitations, conflation
- Theory to practice linkage
- Communication of the data/findings
- Develop understanding of EBP to be able to knowledgeably assign services to clients.
- Case data review using rubric then move to quantitative (student readiness)
- Or
- Begin with quantitative then move to qualitative
- Knowing how to gather information
- Critical thinking, decision making about next steps in intervention
- Learn how to make the connection of the data to the next step in intervention to answer the question “why”

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*Pros and cons of attempting to train IV-E students as “Junior Social Scientists” vs. “Consumers of Research”?*

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- What skills should we be teaching students? Should we focus on outcomes to practice or should we train people to run complex multivariate analysis.
- Students feel research is disconnected from practice and have anxiety about statistics and data.
- Timeline that doesn’t really allow students to really learn research, superficial coverage of research methods. Turns out students that don’t fully understand research and then they further retreat from data.
- Focus on the concept of statistical literacy—ability to produce students who can consume research, think for themselves, practical data analysis skills.
- To get students past their anxiety, the course has the students identify their topics by the 4<sup>th</sup> week of the course.
- Students have a narrow view of research, RCT’s etc., not the use of administrative data as research.
- What about the 2 competing model—informed consumers of data and research vs. junior social scientist model? The latter is very difficult to do because of student background (lack of math and statistics) and not enough time to really teach methods.

- Also, these skills are not used in the field and burdens the agencies if they are done. Because if student feels they need to retrieve their own data rather than use the agencies administrative data this places more of a burden on the student and the agency. When we know that use of administrative data would be of greater value to the agency.
- How do we make the case within our departments for why the consumer model makes sense.
- The perception is that the only model that is worthwhile is the social scientist model.
- Who is helping us make the case? And how do we make the case?
- Need to generate a set of competencies for research that is part of a practice methods class.
- Integrate practice methods and research so you can see the practical application of the research and to discover the questions they want to ask and the data to be used to answer the question.
- Will be asset to the field if student is comfortable with data, how to analyze and understand the outcomes.
- Masters student tend to be ideological it is helpful for them to look at aggregate data and to see if their ideology accurate.
- The CWS/CMS data base now has the capability to query it and add knowledge, it is not regurgitated information.
- Not about advocating one against the other. It is important to come up with the pedagogy to make it work for the students, so that it works with the students practice.
- Need to develop research minded practice and practice minded research.

## **Course Materials and Discussion of Experiences to Date (Attachment E, F, G)**

- See examples of Course Materials and Discussion of Experiences to Date

## **Curriculum development—Group Discussion (Attachment H)**

### *Format of research course for IV-E students*

- Make this course an elective
- Require agency participation
- Field instruction activities that connect with research course
- Emerging practices and connection to data
- Module-on database use
- Use newspaper articles/media as source for questions/projects
- County involvement, regional consortia, use county plans for project ideas

### *Curriculum design*

- Train faculty to use data set
- Packaged as a transferable set of skills
- Faculty module
- Focus on IVE students/CSSR data
- Consider how to link with in-service training
- IVE agency supervision field instruction module
- Case Scenarios/questions—building into the class activity “how data are used”
- Ask students about challenges they are encountering
- Research agenda to faculty
- Integrate into seminar
- Develop IVE coordinator module

### *Supplemental work*

- Executive summary of the background, history and pedagogical approach to the curriculum
- CWDA presentation is needed
- Present at EBP Symposium/RTN
- Poster session for students—community education connection
- Testimonials from students
- Website capture of case examples
- Consider how to integrate into RTN website

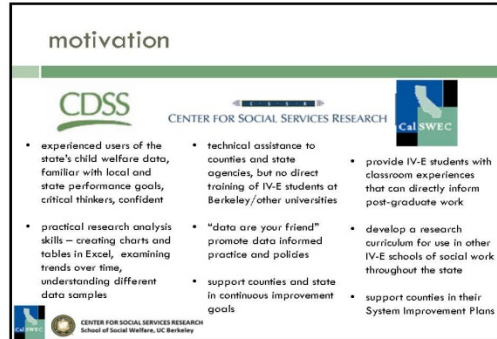
### *Next steps?*

- Other schools not here need to be exposed
- Webinar to others
- Video conference
- On demand on line training intro to CSSR website
- Agenda item on regional CWDA meetings—use PPT
- Create access to county staff to help line staff learn how to use the data
- Crosswalk this work to the in-service training
- Develop consultation time from CSSR for faculty to use
- Create video demo of website that can be a stand-alone or embedded into the course materials.



IV-E MSW Research Curriculum:  
Using Child Welfare Administrative  
Data to Track Child Welfare Outcomes  
and Improve Practice

March 16, 2011 Presented at CalSWEC's Symposium on IV-E Research Coursework

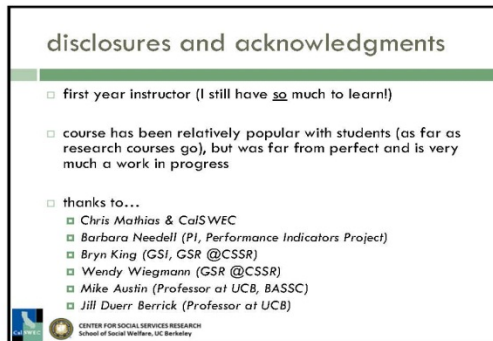


### motivation

CDSS  
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- experienced users of the state's child welfare data, familiar with local and state performance goals, critical thinkers, confident
- technical assistance to counties and state agencies, but no direct training of IV-E students at Berkeley/other universities
- provide IV-E students with classroom experiences that can directly inform post-graduate work
- practical research analysis skills – creating charts and tables in Excel, examining trends over time, understanding different data samples
- "data are your friend" promote data informed practice and policies
- develop a research curriculum for use in other IV-E schools of social work throughout the state
- support counties and state in continuous improvement goals
- support counties in their System Improvement Plans

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### disclosures and acknowledgments

- first year instructor (I still have so much to learn!)
- course has been relatively popular with students (as far as research courses go), but was far from perfect and is very much a work in progress
- thanks to...
  - Chris Mathias & CalSWEC
  - Barbara Needell (PI, Performance Indicators Project)
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  - Mike Austin (Professor at UC8, BAASSC)
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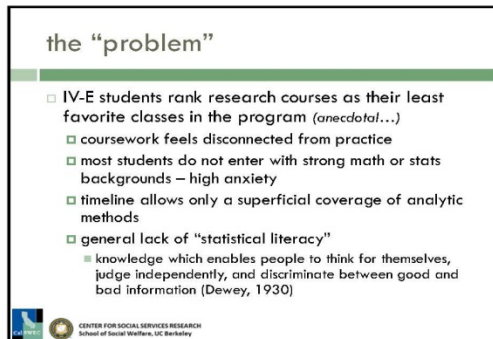
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### objectives for today

- open exchange of ideas
  - engaging students in research?
  - what skills should we be teaching?
  - effective techniques for instruction?
  - how do we support students and agencies in developing projects that are both useful and feasible?
- format of research course for IV-E students
  - stand alone section (also open to non IV-E students)?
  - drop-in teaching modules for instructors to use?
- discussion of curriculum design
  - what do instructors need?
  - how do we ensure this does not sit on a shelf?

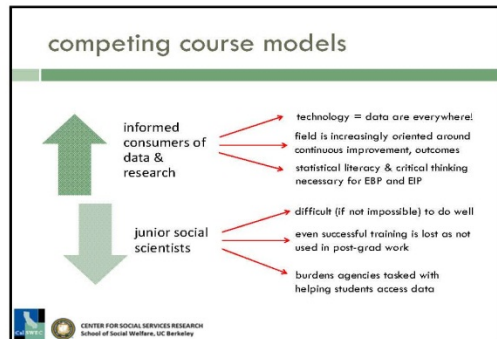
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### the "problem"

- IV-E students rank research courses as their least favorite classes in the program (*anecdotal...*)
- coursework feels disconnected from practice
- most students do not enter with strong math or stats backgrounds – high anxiety
- timeline allows only a superficial coverage of analytic methods
- general lack of "statistical literacy"
  - knowledge which enables people to think for themselves, judge independently, and discriminate between good and bad information (Dewey, 1930)

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### competing course models

informed consumers of data & research

- technology = data are everywhere
- field is increasingly oriented around continuous improvement, outcomes
- statistical literacy & critical thinking necessary for EBP and EIP

junior social scientists

- difficult (if not impossible) to do well
- even successful training is lost as not used in post-grad work
- burdens agencies tasked with helping students access data


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## IV-E MSW Research Curriculum: Using Child Welfare Administrative Data to Track Child Welfare Outcomes and Improve Practice

March 16, 2011 Presented at CalSWEC's Symposium on IV-E Research Coursework

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## competing course models



**informed consumers of data & research**

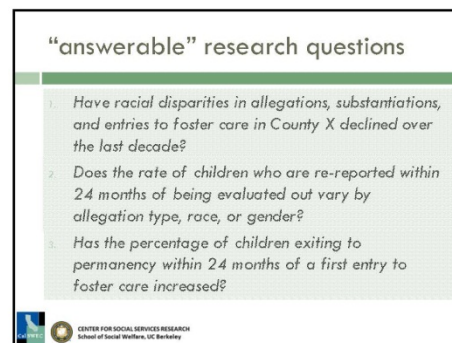
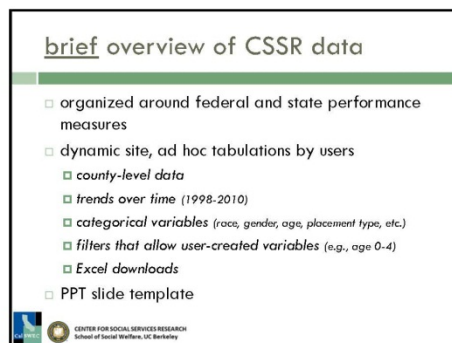
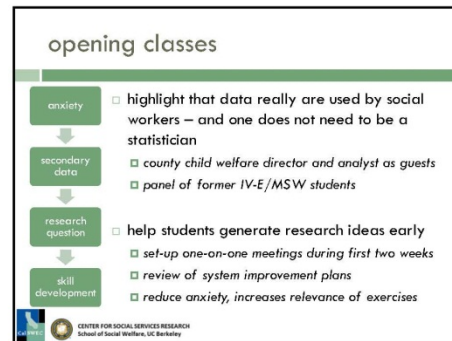
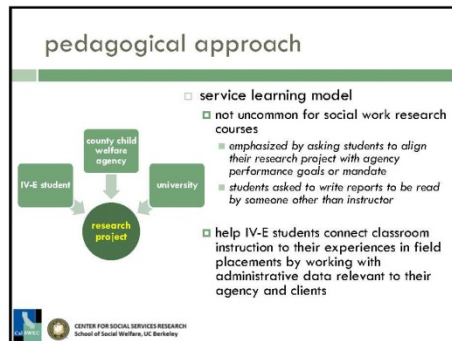
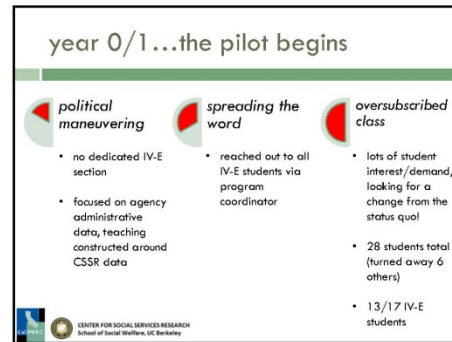
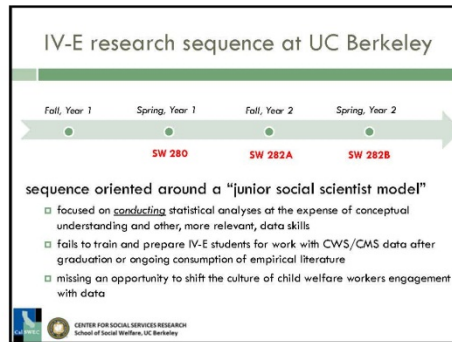
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## fall semester overview

- Class #1: Opening class*
- Class #2: The relevance of data in the current policy environment*
- Class #3: How data are being used to drive child welfare practice and policy*
- Class #4: The language of research*
- Class #5: The importance of "statistical literacy"*
- Class #6: Informing agency performance goals*
- Class #7: Data 101*
- Class #8: Presenting tabulated and graphical data*
- Class #9: Placing administrative data in context*
- Class #10: Lessons in using (and missing) data*
- Class #11: Cardboard projections from existing data*
- Class #12: Coding data for statistical analysis*
- Class #13: A "behind the scenes" tour of a multivariate analysis*
- Class #14: Closing class*

## spring semester overview

- Class #1: Opening class*
- Class #2: Descriptive statistics*
- Class #3: Measures of correlation*
- Class #4: Testing for group differences (1)*
- Class #5: Testing for group differences (2)*
- Class #6: Ratio measures*
- Class #7: Regression analysis*
- Class #8: Trend analysis*
- Class #9: Other statistical methods (a conceptual overview)*
- Class #10: The technicalities of data presentation*
- Class #11: Data interpretation and dissemination (1)*
- Class #12: Data interpretation and dissemination (2)*
- Class #13: Data interpretation and dissemination (3)*
- Class #14: Closing class*

## modifications for next year?

- ☐ orientation of classes around case studies
  - ☐ engage students in real examples of agency work with data, provide a conceptual link between research and practice
- ☐ early instruction in Excel basics
- ☐ greater consultation with counties

## curriculum

|                           |                        |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| syllabi                   | fall and spring        |
| structured class outlines | learning objectives    |
|                           | powerpoint slides      |
|                           | data exercises         |
|                           | discussion points      |
|                           | small group activities |

## dissemination &amp; longer-term

- ☐ follow-up with research instructors
  - ☐ CSSR site orientations
  - ☐ webinars for curriculum overview / Q&A
  - ☐ ongoing adaptations based on feedback
- ☐ compilation & dissemination of IV-E research reports?
- ☐ method for continuing discussion and sharing teaching ideas?

## looming (lunch) questions...

- ☐ How can we best engage students in research and data analysis?
- ☐ What research and data analysis skills do child welfare workers need in the field?
- ☐ What research competencies do we want IV-E students to graduate with after 2.5 semesters of research coursework in an MSW program?
- ☐ Pros and cons of attempting to train IV-E students as "Junior Social Scientists" vs. "Consumers of Research"?

### Format of research course for IV-E students?

1. *Stand-alone section focused exclusively on CSSR data (also open to non IV-E students)?*
2. *Drop-in modules for instructors to use within traditional research course?*
3. *Generalized curriculum emphasizing analysis of administrative agency data, with teaching examples from CSSR data?*
4. *What format might work best in other schools?*
5. *How are research sequences currently organized in other schools?*



### Curriculum design

1. What training/support do instructors need?
2. How do we ensure this does not sit on a shelf?
3. How do we support students and agencies in developing research projects that are both useful to the agency and feasible for the student to complete, given limitations of time and training?



### Supplemental work

1. *How might we begin to compile real examples of how research has informed practice in California? Case studies to help engage students...*
2. *How can we further involve counties? Generate ideas for research projects?*



Next steps?