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Synopses of Projects
Jane Berdie, M.S.W.
jberdie@msn.com

Assisted in the design of embedded evaluation for two federally funded Child Welfare Recruitment and Retention supervisor training projects:

1. **Jordan Institute, University of North Carolina School of Social Work** (contacts are PI Nancy Dickinson, ndickins@email.unc.edu, and curriculum writer and trainer Evelyn Williams, ewms@email.unc.edu). Two embedded evaluations have been piloted and revised for use in training. One focuses on knowledge and the other on ability to identify use of a supervisor engagement skill.

   The first is a multiple choice knowledge test designed to support recall of training information about work force trends and to guide discussion of implications for child welfare supervision. The subject matter includes state-specific child welfare vacancy and hiring data, forecasts about national work sector shifts, and varying expectations and motivations of workers that are associated with staying in or leaving a job. Trainer notes about correct answers and the discussion of implications are provided.

   The second evaluation assesses the trainees’ ability to apply learning about a model of supervisory interactional skills that promotes or inhibits worker growth. The model (adapted from Insoo Kim Berg and Susan Kelly) addresses two paradigms of supervisor interaction – one that is supportive of worker growth and one that is not. Each paradigm has a number of “hallmarks” that tend to promote or inhibit worker development, e.g., “supervisor is the source of knowledge and worker is the receptacle” (from the inhibiting paradigm) and “holding the worker responsible for his/her own learning” (from the promoting paradigm). The evaluation exercise is designed to assess the trainees’ ability to recognize which “hallmarks” are present in dialogs between supervisors and workers. The trainees first watch and listen to the trainers read a dialog between a supervisor and worker. They then read a handout containing the dialog. Next to each supervisor statement, they write the number of the hallmark that most accurately reflects the statement. The trainer then processes the answers using trainer notes. This is repeated for a second dialog.

2. **Maine Child Welfare Training Institute, University of Southern Maine** (contacts are PI Freda Bernotavicz, Freda.bernotavicz@maine.gov, and evaluator Teresa Hubley, Teresa.A.Hubley@maine.gov.)

   An embedded evaluation was designed to assess trainees’ ability to identify good performance by supervisors during panel screenings of child welfare caseworker applicants. The two areas of performance are panel members’ ability to a) conduct the panel interview (ask standard questions and follow up with clarifications and prompts) and b) rate the applicant’s response in terms of a set of criteria (e.g., “provides at least one example of information that would lead to a positive decision”). For the embedded evaluation exercise, the trainees watch a video of a scripted panel interview. Then, with both the script and a scoring guide in front of them, they rate the supervisory panels’ performance in the two areas on a scoring sheet. Trainers have an answer sheet to help them process the exercise.
Child Welfare Training Project Description  
(Dale Curry)

The North American Certification Project

I have been involved in the development of a national certification exam for child and youth care workers. The exam is predominantly a situational judgment exam requiring practice judgments from the examinee based on case studies elicited from the field. The instrument construction involved:

1. The identification of child and youth care worker competencies and a Code of Ethics for North American child and youth care workers. This involved the work of several work groups and several years of discussion and refinement.
2. Prioritization of competencies (weighting of competency areas-number of items for each). This involved ratings by expert panel members.
3. Solicitation of case studies from the field.
4. Development of knowledge and situational judgment items from the case studies pertaining to each competency area.
5. Assessment from an expert panel regarding the most correct answer for each item and a judgment regarding the relevance of the item to the competency area.
6. Second review by the expert panel of the entire exam.
7. Pilot/review of the exam for possible cultural bias and readability.

In addition to the construction of the exam, the project members have also:
1. Developed a supervisory assessment of worker competence rating instrument to serve as a concurrent criterion for validation of the exam.
2. Identified pilot sites/validation sample.
3. Identified testing teams and a standardized process for test administration.
4. Developed contracts between pilot agencies and NACP regarding the testing process and certification of pilot examinees.

The project is currently in the data collection phase. Project results will be initially disseminated at the 8th International Child and Youth Care Conference in Montreal in October, 2006.
Synopsis of Training Evaluation Project

Evaluating and Mentoring Child Welfare Trainers for Content Fidelity and Competencies

Description

**Background:** Utah Division of Child and Family Services is a state administered system. The division is nearing completion of a plan that is part of a settlement agreement in effect since 1994. The Professional Development Team (training team) of the division has had a number of roles in completing this plan. The final tasks include the provision of quality assurance for the training of the five core modules of the division’s practice model. These modules are trained in each of five regions as part of the new employee training program of the region. Regional trainers have been involved in training these modules to new employees since 2002. Three of the five modules have received extensive revisions during this period. Training group sizes have declined and adaptations and innovations have been made during training.

**Purpose:** In order to assess the need for revisions to the two remaining unrevised modules and to assess the degree of fidelity to the five modules as they are currently written, four tools were created for use in two separate assessments.

**Method:** (1) An in person interview was conducted with each regional training manager to complete a survey which was provided to them well in advance. (2) Observations of a complete module were conducted in each region.

**Tools. Interview:** (1) The in person survey included 12 questions that reviewed their time spent in training each module, their group size and composition, adaptations and sequence changes made to the activities in each module, and various follow-up issues for participation and recording of training information. (2) A chart of activities for each module, showing the primary concepts for the activity, was provided in advance and during the interview to record which activities were being used and any adaptations that had been made. Observation: Two charts were used for the observation. One chart was for recording the fidelity to the original concepts on a Likert scale. The other chart provided a list of activities for assessment of trainer competencies for each trainer and activity. The competencies included:

- The trainer covered the important concepts of the activity.
- The trainer was well prepared.
- The trainer used a variety of methods to effectively cover the key concepts of the activity.
- The trainer demonstrated positive responsiveness to participant questions, comments and non-verbal behaviors.
- Learner verbal and non-verbal behaviors indicate that training delivery was successful.
- The trainer was able to focus participants on practice of training content in training and post-training application of the training content in their work.
**Results:** (1) Results will be compiled for each activity. These results will be discussed in the trainers’ monthly meeting, communicated in summary to administration, and used to make revisions to activities and modules. (2) Results will also be communicated to individual trainers.

**Mentoring:** The observer for the training modules is also the designated mentor for the trainers. This person will discuss the strengths of the trainer in a private interview. At the trainer’s request needs and possible changes in preparedness, delivery, and interactions with participants will also be discussed.

**Discussion:** The division is currently exploring the use of mentoring as an evaluative process. The trainers are a pilot group receiving competencies, training, mentoring and evaluation as a test of this process.

**Contact:**
Midge Delavan  
Utah Division of Child and Family Services  
Mdelavan @ utah.gov
The South Carolina Department of Social Services contracts with The Center for Child and Family Studies (The Center) to develop competency-based curricula that reflect best practices in social services. In South Carolina, the child welfare system is managed by a governor-appointed state director, with a county office in each of the 46 counties. The core curriculum, what we call “basic training,” is mandated for all new workers and is delivered monthly in the same central location for workers across the entire state.

Child Welfare Basic Training

The Center developed a revised five-day basic skills caseworker training. Knowledge, attitudes, and self-report of skills usage are currently be evaluated for each group that attends training during a 12-month period (training is held once a month). Three months after participation in training, trainees are surveyed to evaluate transfer of learning. Additional evaluation tasks call for sample case reviews and focus groups. Organizational impact of the training will be assessed by measuring turnover of the training group, individual client time in the system, and client satisfaction with their case outcome.

Management Training Series

The management training series is being developed as a blended learning curriculum that pairs computer-based learning applications with the traditional classroom setting. Trainees will attend five in-class sessions over a three-month period. In between class sessions, trainees will access learning material in a specially created online environment. Group discussions, webinars, and evaluation tools will be part of the online learning environment.

Leadership development will be the focus of the training. Topics will include: leading during times of crisis and change; strategies for capacity building; coaching and mentoring; developing and managing resources; and building resilience.

The training will be piloted in July 2006

SC DSS Program Improvement Plan (PIP)

The Center strives to make evaluation results relevant and useful to DSS and has linked relevant trainings and their evaluation results with PIP outcomes. Although The Center was designated to provide some specific trainings to target PIP outcomes, there are other PIP issues that are influenced in the many trainings provided to child welfare workers.
Contact Information

Christina Munro Derrick, M.P.H.
Research Associate
803.777.8494
cderrick@sc.edu
National Human Services Training Evaluation Symposium
Child Welfare Training Evaluation Synopsis

A. Title of Child Welfare Training Evaluation Project

Culturally Competent Systems of Care Practices with Hispanic Children and Families

B. Brief Description

Through a collaboration between the University of Texas at Arlington School of Social Work, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, and the Texas Christian University Department of Social Work the two goals of this project are to: (1) develop a curriculum to improve the knowledge and skills of Texas child welfare supervisors and caseworkers in Hispanic culture, cultural competence, and the development and utilization of Systems of Care as a practice model with Hispanic children and families, and (2) to review and enhance the University of Texas at Arlington School of Social Work curriculum and develop field placements focusing on services to Hispanic children and families. The training approach includes one day of face to face training plus a second half-day of follow up activities and technical assistance for 30 supervisors and 120 caseworkers. The project builds on the existing partnership of the three collaborating entities, and incorporates input from a Community and University Panel of Experts in curriculum development and evaluation.

C. Context for the Project

This project serves the state of Texas, which is a state administered child welfare system. Hispanic children and families comprise 35% of the population in Texas, compared to 14% of the U.S. population, making this training particularly relevant for child welfare practitioners in Texas. The state has a standardized core curriculum that is mandated for all new employees. This training is considered an advanced curriculum that builds upon existing curriculum used by the state agency.

D. Contact Information

Alan J. Dettlaff, Ph.D.         Joan R. Rycraft, Ph.D.
Project Evaluator            Principal Investigator
Texas Christian University    University of Texas at Arlington
TCU Box 298750                Box 19129
Fort Worth TX 76129           Arlington TX 76019
a.dettlaff@tcu.edu            rycraft@uta.edu
Child Welfare Staff Recruitment and Retention:  
An Evidence-Based Training Model  

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, School of Social Work,  
Jordan Institute for Families  
October 1, 2003 – September 30, 2008  
Nancy S. Dickinson, PI

Summary

The intent of this Children’s Bureau funded project is to develop, field test, implement, evaluate and disseminate an integrated, evidence-based resources and curriculum model that will improve the ability of public child welfare supervisors and managers to recruit, select and retain a competent and committed child welfare workforce. Project goals are to:

- Increase the ability of county agencies to recruit a favorable pool of candidates for child welfare positions by developing a recruitment toolkit
- Increase the ability of child welfare managers and supervisors to select qualified child welfare staff by developing a competency-based selection process
- Increase the likelihood that child welfare workers will remain employed with the agency because of increased skills and behaviors on the part of supervisors and managers that impact retention
- Disseminate an integrated, evidence-based model of resources and curriculum that will significantly increase recruitment, selection and retention of public child welfare staff.

The resources and curriculum will be field tested in 2 North Carolina sites and delivered to supervisors, managers and directors in 17 North Carolina counties. An experimental evaluation will compare outcomes within each of the trained counties before and after training and with outcomes in 17 control counties. A more competent and stable child welfare workforce is one projected benefit of this project for those agencies that incorporate the resources and curriculum into agency activities. Ultimately, children and families will benefit, since low staff turnover is a factor in improved outcomes for children and families.

Nancy S. Dickinson, MSSW, Ph.D.  
Jordan Institute for Families  
UNC Chapel Hill School of Social Work  
301 Pittsboro St., CB #3550  
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3550  
919-962-6507  
919-843-9827 fax  
ndickins@email.unc.edu
The University of Nebraska–Lincoln Center on Children, Families and the Law (CCFL) provides pre-service training to all new Protection and Safety (CPS) Workers employed by the Nebraska Health and Human Services System. This state-administered system requires new workers to complete a 6-month employment practicum, divided into three phases, with a combination of class and field training and limited case assignments. Recent and current CCFL training evaluation projects include:

♦ **Evaluating Trainee Reactions**
  - Collecting, summarizing, and reporting trainees’ written ratings and comments for each training unit
  - Revising existing evaluation criteria to allow trainees to provide feedback on 1) knowledge and skills evaluations and 2) the technical quality of videoconference training (i.e., ability to see, hear, and speak with the trainer and other trainees)
  - Developing annual reports to identify trends in feedback within and across training units and trainers

♦ **Evaluating Trainee Knowledge and Skills**
  - Refining existing knowledge assessments to respond to curriculum changes
  - Creating new knowledge assessments
  - Refining and improving existing skills assessments, such as for testifying, documenting, and meeting with families

♦ **Evaluating Trainee Attitude and Behavior**
  Collecting and summarizing trainers’ behavioral ratings and comments regarding trainee attitudes and behavior in each training class (e.g., alertness, respectfulness, participation, punctuality, etc.)

♦ **Reporting Trainee Progress**
  Preparing routine trainee progress reports that summarize trainee assessment scores, performance feedback, and attitude and behavior evaluations; distributing reports to trainees and supervisors

♦ **Evaluating Job Performance**
  - Providing in-service training to supervisors across the state on the use of a probationary performance evaluation tool that assesses 17 performance dimensions
  - Analyzing trainee and probationary employee job performance data
- **Developing Supervisor Training and Training Evaluation**
  
  Working with subject matter experts to conduct job analysis and design curriculum for new supervisors, including design of training evaluation measures
Carol J. Harper, MPA
University of Washington, School of Social Work
Northwest Institute of Children and Families

*Three current major training evaluation efforts:*

1. **Evaluation of Washington State’s IV-E (Child Welfare Training and Professional Development) (CWTAP).** Determine the impacts and benefits of CWTAP on Washington State’s public child welfare system and its ability to effectively serve children and families. A number of data gathering approaches are being developed for implementation no later than July 2006. The four major research domains:
   1. CWTAP participant as a *student* (whether new to child welfare or a current CA employee) and their acquisition of quality education which prepares them to work as a public child welfare professional;
   2. CWTAP graduate as a *professional* committed to ongoing professional development and career advancement with CA;
   3. Children’s Administration and its ability to recruit and retain a diverse qualified staff who promote field innovation and best practice; and

2. **New Social Worker (Academy) Level Two Training Evaluation – Finalize and Maintain the Tool’s Validity and Reliability.** My current role is the finalization of the knowledge assessment tool developed for new social workers (Academy), will a plan to ensure that the tool remains a valid and reliable measure. On a monthly base, determine, what, if any training, practice approach, or policies changes are planned (being trained) by the state. If changes occur, review written documents and engage in discussions to determine appropriate actions, including but not limited to the development and field testing of new items, within the existing tool. Annually, conduct statistical analysis to determine the appropriateness of all new items in order to maintain the validity and reliability of the tool.

3. **New Social Worker (Academy) Training Evaluation Follow-Up Study.** Conduct six-month follow-up with recent Academy graduates to determine the usefulness and field application of the training curriculum and materials/information. Two generic, universal instruments will be developed and used for this purpose. One will be developed for completion by the social worker to share his or her thoughts, and a second for completion by the social worker’s supervisor. This effort will build upon knowledge gained in 2006. In 2006, follow-up focus groups were conducted with a sample of 25 Academy graduates. From this evaluation insights were gathered on approaches for the development of the generic instruments.
The Ohio Child Welfare Training Program (OCWTP)

Project Title: Maximizing the Use of Technology in Training Evaluation Activities

Description: Since 1987, the OCWTP has collected and reported training output data to improve workshop design, monitor trainer performance, and manage the system. In 2002, the OCWTP expanded evaluation activities to include measuring the learning that occurs during training and the transfer of new knowledge and skills from training to the job. The higher levels of training evaluation currently focus on the mandated Caseworker and Supervisor Core training (approximately 500 caseworkers and 100 supervisors attend the Core series each year.) The OCWTP is field testing different technologies to maximize efficiencies in evaluation data collection, analysis, and reporting. Technologies include:

The Classroom Performance System (CPS) has been used since 2004 to collect demographic data, pre-and post-test results, and focus group sessions feedback after Core workshops. CPS reports individual and aggregate data. In addition, CPS data is transferred to Excel, and then to the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis and reporting (demographic data, test results, and focus group responses are linked by assigning each training participant a CPS key pad number.)

Beginning January 2007, SurveyMonkey, an online survey tool, will be used to:
- Collect demographic and test data from new caseworkers and supervisors. Prior to attending Core training, a caseworker or supervisor will complete a demographic and pre-test survey through SurveyMonkey. Then, after attending all Core modules, the caseworker or supervisor will complete the post-test survey through SurveyMonkey. The SurveyMonkey demographic data and test results will be transferred to Excel and then to SPSS for analysis.
- Collect data to assess the transfer of new knowledge and skills from training to the job. Approximately three months after a Core series is completed, training participants and their supervisors will be sent an assessment survey to measure the transfer of new knowledge and skills to the job, and collect information about non-training barriers and enablers.

Beginning March 2007, GoToMeeting, an online collaboration tool, will be utilized to orient supervisors and trainees to the transfer-of-learning assessment tool described above. GoToMeeting will allow county agency staff from across Ohio view and participate in a discussion of the assessment tool without leaving their county agencies. During the GoToMeeting sessions, the OCWTP evaluation research consultant will walk through the assessment tool, explain the purpose of the activity, discuss how to record observations, answer questions, etc. GoToMeeting sessions will be recorded, allowing supervisors and trainees to review the sessions at any time as a refresher.
Ohio has a state supervised, county administered (88 counties) child welfare system. In 2005, the OCWTP (which trains county agency staff, adoption assessors, foster parents, and includes the Title IV-E University Partnership Program) provided over 4,000 days of training on 161 topic areas. New caseworkers and supervisors are required to complete Core training their first year (102 hours for caseworkers; 60 hours for supervisors.)

Contacts:
Kyle Hoffman, Institute for Human Services
614.251.6000
khoffman@ihs-trainet.com

Dr. Tim McCarragher, University of Akron
330.972.5976
mccarra@uakron.edu
North Carolina Child Welfare Training Evaluation Project

Project Description

Our contract with NC Division of Social Services has multiple components as indicated below:

♦ Develop, validate, update, and report scores for Pre-Service and four core child welfare training knowledge assessments.
♦ Prepare summary Participant Satisfaction Form reports.
♦ Provide technical assistance to training vendors around evaluation of their curricula and other deliverables (including instrument development, data analysis, and report-writing).
♦ Provide technical assistance on evaluation issues to the Title IV-E Child Welfare Educational Collaborative
♦ Facilitate review and analysis of selected curricula for consistency and redundancy, including identification of policy and practice issues that training needs to address.

Context for the Project

North Carolina has a state supervised/county administered child welfare system. There is a statewide mandated core training for all child welfare staff, job-specific advanced training, and additional specialized training available for more senior staff. There is also specialized training for new child welfare supervisors and a new advanced supervisor training, focused on helping employee transfer learning from the classroom into the agency is currently under development.

North Carolina is in process of moving to a Multiple Response approach to child welfare, and we have been involved in helping to evaluate learning outcomes related to some of the new curricula that have been developed to train child welfare workers and supervisors in this new process and policy.

Contact Information

Dr. Elizabeth W. Lindsey
UNCG Department of Social Work
P. O. 26170
Greensboro, NC  27402-6170
(336) 334-5225
Betsy_Lindsey@uncg.edu
Subsidized Social Work Education for Child Welfare Workers: Workforce Effects

Together with the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, the Social Work Education Child Welfare Consortium has been funding coursework for child welfare workers with the goal of stabilizing and adding increased professionalism to the workforce. As the Project Director, my team has evaluated the effects of the “no charge” courses by sending a survey to each participant two times a year. For the first two years we used mail and for the last two years we placed the survey on the intra-net, the internal inter-net connection accessible by the workforce. Our finding show satisfaction with the courses and the intent to remain in the workforce. There are no contractual obligations for remaining. Our major problem is increasing our response rate; it remains at about 25 percent regardless of the survey delivery. This year we are sending the surveys first to the staff development coordinators who are asked to electronically forward the survey to workers. We have coded the surveys by county and will send follow-up requests where needed. We do not know how many workers obtained their MSWs and if any have left the system. That is our next step.

This takes place in every county that the Office of Children and Family Services serves in New York State. It does not include the New York City counties or boroughs as they are called. In New York City the Administration for Children’s Services is the child welfare agency that operates with a separate budget, and administration. I work for both agencies as Senior Research Associate and Fellow of the Social Work Education Child Welfare Consortium. My part-time position is funded by the Office of Children and family Services and the New York Schools of Social Work. I also hold the position of Professor of Social Work, Wurzweiler School of Social Work, Yeshiva University.

Susan E. Mason, Ph.D., LCSW
Professor
Wurzweiler School of Social Work
Yeshiva University
2495 Amsterdam Ave.
New York, NY 10033

Phone: 212-960-0806
Fax: 212-960-0821
E Mail: Masonse@yu.edu
Developing Best Practices & Competency-Based Curriculum for South Carolina Residential Child Care Agencies

Through a cooperative agreement between the South Carolina Association of Children’s Homes and Family Services & Residential Child Care Project at Cornell University
April 2006 to June 2008

Description

The purpose of the project is to develop, implement and evaluate a training and curriculum system that supports and maintains best practices knowledge and skill competencies for residential child agencies, organizations and staff. Best practices will be grounded in theory and will support strong programmatic elements in residential care.

The project will design and develop a comprehensive statewide and competency based best practices curriculum for direct care workers for South Carolina’s residential child care facilities. The project will train a cadre of agency trainers for each of the 47 member agencies and ensure on-the-job use of best practices knowledge and skills through supervisory strategies, organizational assessment participation-centered management strategies, and continuous quality improvement.

A quasi-experimental design with random assignment to intervention and control groups will test effectiveness to increase organizational congruence, more positive organizational cultures, increased knowledge and skills, and on-the-job use of best practices.

Michael Nunno, D.S.W.
Family Life Development Center
College of Human Ecology, Cornell University
607-254-5127
man2@cornell.edu
There are three primary types of state funded training evaluated by the Child Welfare Partnership: core, foster/adoptive/relative/kinship caregiver training, and distance delivery (Net Link). There is also an evaluation of training funded by a Children’s Bureau rural training grant. Approaches employed to evaluate these trainings include:

- **Daily and/or weekly participant feedback.** Classroom trainings use written surveys where participants assess satisfaction with the training, their own learning, and provide information about intent to apply learning. Distance delivery trainings, such as Net Link, use the on-line survey tool, Survey Monkey. Frequency of feedback determined by type of training and trainer.

- **Evaluation of Learning Objectives.** Participants self-assess their learning compared to the stated learning objectives of the training as a component of the participant feedback process.

- **Follow up participant feedback.** Approximately 45 days after training participants complete an electronic survey via the on-line survey tool, Survey Monkey.

- **Peer evaluation.** Trainers and the evaluator worked together to develop a Trainer Observation Tool. The group modified and combined two peer evaluation tools used in other states to develop the tool. The purpose of the tool is to provide trainers with a structured and supportive method for giving feedback to in-house and contracted trainers based on best practices.

- **Embedded evaluation.** The evaluator is working with trainers to create opportunities to observe learning (for participants to demonstrate skills or knowledge acquired) within two major programs: the revised core curriculum and rural training institute.

One of the functions of the Child Welfare Partnership (CWP), in the Graduate School of Social Work at Portland State University, is to provide training to child welfare staff and caregivers across Oregon. Oregon has a state administered child welfare system. There is a core curriculum mandated for all caseworkers to complete prior to carrying a case which is currently under major revision.

Kirstin O’ Dell  
Portland State University  
Child Welfare Partnership  
4061 Winema Place NE  
Salem, OR 97305  
503-725-8071  
kodell3@chemeketa.edu
Summary of Current Training Evaluation Projects

- **Strategic Planning for Training Evaluation for the California Social Work Education Center.** This project involves facilitation, with Jane Berdie, of a statewide coordinated approach to planning for training evaluation. Specifically:
  - Development, with the Macro Evaluation Sub committee of the California Training and Education Committee (STEC), of a multi-level plan for training evaluation, in support of PIP requirements.
  - Application of this framework to common core training for new caseworkers; including
    - An item bank for knowledge tests for five common core areas, child maltreatment identification, risk and safety assessment, human development, case planning and management, and placement/permanence
    - Item analysis and Rasch model scaling to produce valid and reliable tests.
    - A scenario-based skills evaluation exercise and supporting curriculum for recognition of physical abuse.
  - An evaluation of mentoring programs for new workers conducted in the Northern and Central Academies. Phase 1 of this evaluation is underway and involves the comparison of self and supervisor ratings of competence for new workers with mentors, to ratings for new workers who are not in mentoring programs. It also will compare ratings for workers who make more extensive use of the mentoring program (as evidenced by mentor logs) with those who make less use of mentor services. Phase 2 will involve direct measurement of a skill (case planning) in the field.
  - Technical assistance to counties and Academies in training evaluation issues.

- **Evaluation of the Northern California Children and Family Services Training Academy’s trainings for caseworkers and supervisors:** This project has included the development of new assessment protocols and instruments to assess trainee learning of key skill competencies in new and advanced caseworker training.
  - Knowledge tests have been developed, validated and implemented for caseworker core training in legal issues and human development.
  - Anchored rating scales were developed and used to assess trainee performance on a scenario-based, videotaped role-play interview. Assessments were focused on the rapport building or fact-finding stages of the interview protocols, and on either a child or adult interviewee. They provided information on trainee skills, as well as, formative feedback used in course revisions.
  - Pre and Post knowledge testing has been implemented for MEPA training to assess trainee learning and to compare results obtained with traditional classroom delivery to on-line course delivery.
Evaluations have been developed and pilot tested for an advanced strengths-based training series. The first of these is a pre-post assessment of attitudes and a participant action plan with a telephone interview follow-up for a course for supervisors in fairness and equity issues.

Evaluation of Denver University’s Training for Healthy Marriage and Family Formation. This includes design of formative evaluation tools, attitudinal and knowledge assessments, and follow-up of transfer of learning with Participant Action Plans.

Consultation to the State of Washington on development of a post Academy knowledge test for new caseworkers. It includes test item review and development, item analysis and scaling, and the development of scoring criteria and a subtest structure to identify areas for further study. It also involves consultation and technical assistance on issues in high stakes testing, such as differential item functioning.
Current Research Related to Training and Professional Education Issues
of Robin Perry, Ph.D.

I recently completed research and wrote an article that empirically examines whether the educational background of child welfare workers in Florida impacts upon performance evaluations of their work. This article will appear in the summer of 2006 in *Research on Social Work Practice* and is entitled “Do Social Workers Make Better Child Welfare Workers Than Non-Social Workers.” Ten leading scholars in the field of social work and training evaluation have written critical responses to this article (to be published in the same journal issue). These responses further debate and discussion about: competency-based practice, the efficacy of Title IV-E training programs, and the notion of whether social work is a proprietary authority in the provision of specialized child welfare training and education. The research study involves a proportionate stratified random sample of supervisor and peer evaluations of child protective investigators and child protective service workers. ANOVA procedures were utilized to test if performance scores on a multitude of items differed for workers with university degrees in social work, psychology, sociology, criminology, education, business, and other fields. Findings suggest the ratings of social workers skills and competency did not statistically differ from those workers with other educational backgrounds on 20 measures of performance. It is argued that the educational background of child welfare workers (in Florida) is a poor predictive variable of their performance as evaluated by supervisors and peers. However, more research is needed to determine if performance evaluations of workers are positively correlated with successful service outcomes with clients.

In addition to this research, I am involved in a multi-state collaboration (that includes CalSWEC) that has designed a research study that aims to test the extent to which educational background and participation in Title IV-E social work education programs has a significant and meaningful impact upon child welfare outcomes. Finally, I provide consultation to select public child welfare and community based care agencies in Florida on workforce, training, and evaluation-based activities.

Contact Information:

Robin Perry, Ph.D.
College of Social Work
Florida State University
2500 University Center, Building C
Tallahassee, FL   32306

850-322-1901
reperry@fsu.edu or robin_perry_phd@hotmail.com
Alabama Certification Training

Since 1990 I’ve been working with teams of technical assistants from The Child Welfare Institute, The Child Welfare Policy & Practice Group, Policy-Practice Resources, and Human Systems & Outcomes, developing family-centered, community-based, strengths-needs practice with the State of Alabama. We designed ACT, SET, & MAPP trainings, and our evaluations have been traditional, that is Kirkpatrick Levels I & II, independent of practice. To meet the requirements of a Settlement Decree, we’ve also conducted formative evaluations of practice using Quality Service Review (QSR).

We did not originally plan QSR as evaluation of the trainings, but since about 2000 it’s become clearer to more of us that we’d missed that potential in this methodology. This year the external consultants who lead QSR (in particular Dr. Ray Foster, Director, Human Systems & Outcomes) and some State planners, are learning 1) how to recognize the QSR data that yield Levels III-IV training evaluation, and 2) how to analyze those data for Levels III & IV feedback. QSR is also helping evaluators and planners to recognize transfer of learning (TOL) opportunities:

1. Supervisors have needed more coaching, and continuing reinforcement to practice ACT Skills, so they could become TOL Champions:
2. Supervisors especially need to practice:
   - Solution Focused Questions
   - Concreteness, and
   - Reframing problems or emotions as needs.
3. Supervisors periodically need:
   - To practice ACT Skills with families and
   - Reinforcement for coaching ACT Skills as TOL with their staff;
4. If the conscious modeling of ACT Skills by all levels of leaders had been strategically reinforced, the new practice culture could have been sustained more consistently.

In the future, QSR can be recalibrated when Levels III & IV evaluation of training is a useful goal for a developing system:

- The QSR Protocol rating criteria can be modified to specifically cue Reviewers to ACT Skill Objectives;
- More Reviewers who have demonstrated mastery of ACT Skills could be recruited, perhaps from among Trainers, Curriculum Designers, and Master Practitioner-Supervisors.

Douglas Pratt
Policy - Practice Resources Inc.
3786 Evans Rd.
Atlanta, GA 30340
770-723-9105
770-723-9105
ppr-edp@juno.com
New York City Common Core Training

In 2003 we imbedded a Kirkpatrick Level III evaluation method, *Skills Progress Assessment* (SPrA), that starts within Common Core training for new Case managers, extends through OJT, and continues as standard operating procedure in full-time practice.

**SPrA evaluates:**

- Each new Case Managers’ development of Core Skills over time;
- Common Core Skills of each training cohort over time;
- Common Core Skills aggregated across cohorts over time.

Since 2004, SPrA Level III results show an increase in both the skills and strategic use of the NYC Framework of Practice for new Case Managers compared with their Supervisors. Supervisors had been trained in the Common Core Skills followed by training in the SPrA evaluation method in 2004 and 2005, but we found that their capabilities had eroded without a TOL strategy, and retention of new Case Managers was declining.

Evaluation as Development

SPrA functions as both a training evaluation and a development process. As a development process, SPrA supports Supervisors’ evaluation (“assessment”) and coaching of Common Core Skills. To boost Supervisors’ capabilities, this year we began mentoring OJT and caseload Supervisors to use SPrA in Transition Conferences helping new Case Managers graduate from OJT into full-time practice.

Intervention to Enhance SPrA Evaluation

SPrA supports Supervision that mirrors the NYC Framework of Practice. That is, evaluations and coaching by Supervisors are strengths-needs based and practitioner-centered. The Director of Evaluation, Dr. Bob Highsmith, the Executive Deputy Director, Dr. Mayra Juliao-Nunez, and I planned pilot interventions:

1. Remedial Supervisory SPrA trainings,
2. Followed by coaching selected Supervisors in SPrA Conferences,
3. To be evaluated at Levels I, III and with rates of retention in each Borough as the Level IV measure.

**Level I evaluations** of the pilot were done by traditional questionnaire; **Level III evaluations** were done using a SPrA form with Supervisors who were directly observed and coached. Results suggest most target needs are being met, and we’re using these data to refine the training and coaching interventions. Next we’ll:
1. Deliver the intervention in another Borough,
2. Begin developing internal capacity by training NYC leaders to provide the interventions indefinitely, and
3. Refine the intervention based on Levels I, III, IV evaluation.

Douglas Pratt
Policy - Practice Resources Inc.
3786 Evans Rd. Atlanta, GA 30340
770-723-9105
Fax: 770-723-9105
ppr-edp@juno.com
University of Southern Maine: Child Welfare Training Institute

Program: Adoptive Foster Family Training (AFFT)
Content Area: Skills and knowledge necessary for a successful adoptive or foster family placement
Length: The required “Fundamentals” training is 8 Sessions
Audience: Maine adoptive and foster families
Funding: Title IVE
State Partner: Maine Office of Child and Family Services. Maine’s child welfare functions are all coordinated at the state level by this agency.

The Training: The AFFT program includes a 24-hour introductory course known as “Fundamentals of Foster and Adoptive Training” and 6 “Toolbox” core in-service trainings consisting of one-day workshops on focused subjects.

The Training Theory: The “Fundamentals” course is based upon a series of competencies identified as essential to successful placement. Toolbox sessions address a sub-set of these competencies. Current competency areas (each with several specific competencies) are:

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<tr>
<th>Competency Area</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Systems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive Behavior Support</td>
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<td>Professional Team Member</td>
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<td>Health and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding Safety Needs</td>
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Learning objectives:
- Participants will have reached a level of self-reflection regarding their own readiness that will answer the crucial question of whether they are able and willing to serve.
- Participants will demonstrate knowledge of the competency areas and be able to identify aspects of the competencies in which they will need further training and support.

Instruction Methods: “Fundamentals” is taught using a mixture of lecture, panel discussions, videos and class activities, all supported by a handbook. The course is taught by a group of trainers, stationed throughout the state, which meets in a central location to share concerns and collaborate on methods. The “Toolbox” sessions vary in method by trainer. The trainers may be contracted consultants. Some modules may be taken in a web-based format.

Numbers Trained: As many as 35 rounds of “Fundamentals” training are taught per year with an average of 15 participants. All households planning to adopt or foster a child must complete this training prior to licensing. An average of 12 “Toolboxes” are offered per year, each Toolbox training being 6 hours in length.

Evaluation Activities:
- Review and revision of outcome measures, including competencies
- Conducting periodic surveys of past participants, including class follow-up and needs assessments
- Analyzing retrospective pre-test assessments of every class
- Gathering and periodically reviewing reaction sheets from every class

Contacts:
Leslie Rozeff [leslie.rozeff@maine.gov]
and
Teresa Hubley [teresa.a.Hubley@maine.gov]

**See also: http://www.cwti.org/
In Fiscal Year 2006, the Protective Services Training Institute was charged with conducting training needs assessments for four program areas of the Department of Family and Protective Services: Adult Protective Services (APS), Child Care Licensing (CCL), Child Protective Services (CPS), and Statewide Intake (SWI). The Department of Family and Protective Services is a state based program with regional administrative districts. The overall goal of the training needs assessments was to provide information for planning annual training efforts for all of DFPS.

In October 2005, program liaisons to PSTI selected 6-11 persons from each program area to serve on an advisory group that participated by email in a standardized questionnaire about worker training needs. Forty-one staff including key policy, supervisor, training, and practice staff for each program area participated in the advisory group process. The questionnaire asked about: New, evolving, or challenging policy areas in programs that would benefit from new or additional training, skills in working directly with clients/providers/callers that need enhancement, critical skills in working with the community or the public that need to be developed, issues in the work environment that negatively impact productivity that could be addressed through training, additional training topics that have been identified as needed or desired by staff, and training efforts already planned for programs in the coming year.

From the responses, surveys were developed for each program. Each survey included 40-44 training topics to rate on a scale of 1-5 related to level of need for training, with one open-ended question. Surveys took less than ten minutes to complete.

Program-specific survey distribution was electronically initiated in January from program assistant commissioners to workers, supervisors, managers, and trainers in their respective programs. Staff had two weeks to complete the survey. Reminders were sent out to encourage participation halfway through this process.

A total of 3,033 surveys were returned. Response rates are calculated based on estimated numbers of program workers and supervisors. Overall return rate was 53%. Program return rates were 69% in APS (n=462), 68% in CCL (n=290), 47% in CPS (n=2055), and 74% in SWI (n=226).

**APS:** The top ten highest needs for training in APS included: working with persons deemed competent who place themselves at risk, are noncompliant with medications, or are hoarding; investigating exploitation; sexual abuse investigation with clients who are nonverbal or mentally retarded; mental illness; stress and change management techniques; legally sound casework and testimony; time and workload management; techniques for working with persons with head injuries and/or mental retardation; interviewing techniques with clients who are nonverbal; and resources, services, and eligibility of other agency programs.

**CCL:** The top ten highest needs for training in CCL included: corrective and adverse actions, uncovering the truth, weighted standards, central registry and background matches, techniques
for interviewing young children, child-to-child sexual behavior, techniques for interviewing children and youth with limited mental capacity, stress management techniques, taking action on identified risk concerns, and legal aspects.

**CPS:** The top ten highest needs for training in CPS included: methamphetamine use, time and workload management, effects of different substances on users and on children, stress and change management techniques, mental health needs of parents and children, learning Spanish, substance abuse, sexual abuse perpetrators, medical consent, and family violence.

**SWI:** The top ten highest needs for training in SWI included: how the CPS forensic model affects the way workers obtain information, general information on Medicare and Medicaid, AccessHR, programs under the HHSC umbrella, information about case-related special requests in APS (CRSRs), updates on changing policies in other DFPS programs, current information on mental health issues and new medications related to children and adults, how APS and CPS reform efforts impact SWI, knowledge of medical and mental health conditions that affect APS clients, and understanding standards violations and abuse/neglect issues in CCL/RCCL.

**Contact:**
Marcia Sanderson, Director, PSTI
MSanderson@mail.utexas.edu

or
Charlene Urwin, PSTI Curriculum Director
CUrwin@mail.utexas.edu.

*This project was completed in conjunction with Jane Norwood, Director, Center for Policy and Innovation, DFPS.*
Title of project: Hawaii Title IV-E Child Welfare Training Academy Evaluation

Brief description of the project: The training evaluation project conducts evaluation and research related to the Title IV-E child welfare training for Hawaii’s Department of Human Services. The training evaluation project was developed in 2005 in response to Hawaii’s Program Improvement Plan (PIP), with specific attention to evaluating the effectiveness of training for child welfare supervisors, line workers, and foster parents. The project also conducts the evaluation of the IV-E child welfare training for MSW students. The Hawaii Title IV-E Training Academy is a joint collaboration project of the Center for Training, Evaluation, and Research of the Pacific (CTERP) under the University of Hawaii’s School of Social Work and Hawaii’s Department of Human Services.

Context for the project: The training evaluation project serves the child welfare system in Hawaii, which is a state-administered system. A standardized core curriculum is mandated in Hawaii.

Contact information:
Bernadette Sangalang, Ph.D.
Director of Evaluation and Research
Hawaii Title IV-E Child Welfare Training Academy
Center for Training, Evaluation, and Research of the Pacific
School of Social Work
University of Hawaii
1800 East West Road, Henke Hall
Honolulu, HI 96822
(808) 956-9364
bbs@hawaii.edu
Use of the Supervisor’s Guide as a Measure of Transfer of Outcome-Based Training Practice skills in the Supervision of Child Welfare Workers

Pilot Study Synopsis

T. Maureen Sinclair, LMSW
Professional Development Program – Rockefeller College
Maureen.Sinclair@dfa.state.ny.us

Since the mid 1990’s, the NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) has been developing a system of training for child welfare supervisors and caseworkers known as Outcome-Based Training (OBT). OBT focuses on the achievement of the three national child welfare outcomes: safety, permanency, and well-being, as well as casework role outcomes and their contribution to the three system outcomes. The rationale that supports a training emphasis on casework practice skills is that workers’ ability to employ them advances the achievement of these child welfare outcomes. New York State’s child welfare system is state supervised/county administered. Its Common Core Curriculum, recommended for all public child welfare workers and mandated for all CPS workers, is based on OBT principles.

Since its inception, OBT has been evaluated in terms of its utility in enhancing workers’ ability to demonstrate improved focus and emphasis in their casework practice. However, agency and worker feedback, offered anecdotally, has raised questions about the impact of organizational culture and supervision on the transfer of learning beyond training. The literature highlights “transfer of training” as a target for strategic intervention to gain a better understanding of the conditions that facilitate transfer and the extent to which post-training casework practice “washes out” training effects (Wehrman, Shin, & Poertner, 2003).

In consultation with the NYS Office of Children and Families (OCFS), the Child Welfare Institute of Atlanta (CWI) has developed “A Supervisor’s Guide to Assessing Practice.” The focus of a pilot study currently underway is the efficacy of The Supervisor’s Guide to enhance supervisory focus on casework practice skills and role outcomes. As an on-the-job support following intensive classroom exposure to OBT, the Supervisor’s Guide to Assessing Practice is intended to facilitate transfer of training.

A pilot of the Supervisor’s Guide to Assessing Practice is currently being conducted in two New York State counties. Thirty-one supervisors and approximately 54 caseworkers are participating in the pilot study.