

**IMPACT OF WORK ENVIRONMENT
ON TRAINING TRANSFER:
CHILD WELFARE WORKERS' EXPERIENCES**

By

Christine Lichti, B.S.W.

**A Practicum
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of**

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**Impact of Work Environment on Training Transfer:
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**A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University
of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree
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ABSTRACT

Inservice training has gained popularity in the field of child welfare. Program planning literature suggests that evaluation should be included in any program plan. Unfortunately, evaluation is often a missing component in in-service training programs. When conducted, evaluations frequently focus on the training event itself and stop short of assessing whether training participants have applied the training on the job. The work environment is increasingly recognized as impacting successful transfer of training. Grounded theory methodology was used in this largely qualitative evaluation of transfer of Competency-Based Inservice Training (CBIT) at Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS). Post training evaluations were analysed to determine work environment factors that may inhibit transfer. One hundred and twenty social workers who had completed the CBIT at WCFS were sent the "Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard" (Curry & Chandler, 1999, p.43). Fifty-four percent (65) of the sample completed and returned the survey. Theoretical sampling was used to select twelve respondents to participate in focus group interviews. The preliminary evaluation results were shared with each focus group participant and their feedback was integrated into the final report. Participants evaluate the CBIT event positively overall. They are applying parts of the training in their work, but application is inhibited by factors in their work environment. High workload is the most significant barrier to their application of the training. The findings of this evaluation are discussed in light of the literature regarding the competency-based approach, social work education and training in child welfare, and management of inservice training programs. Finally, some recommendations to improve the transfer of CBIT at WCFS are provided.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Overview

Many child welfare agencies across Canada and the United States provide inservice training to their staff. A significant amount of research has gone into curriculum development with particular attention being paid to adult learning strategies, sequencing and job relevance of the training. Most research emphasizes the importance of training evaluation, however in practice this part of the training cycle is frequently omitted. Even when evaluation takes place it usually focuses on the training event rather than whether trainees have applied the information and skills learned in training at their workplace. This is concerning given the crucial decisions that are required of child welfare workers and the time and money that is dedicated to training.

A further area of inquiry concerns the factors that contribute to transfer of training. The literature talks about 'transfer of learning' and 'transfer of training'. Both refer to the use of knowledge, skills or attitudes gained in training in the day to day tasks on the job (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Curry, 1997; Tannenbaum & Yukl, 1992). The term 'transfer' is used to signify this process. It is understood that a combination of factors associated with the individual trainee characteristics, training design and work environment contribute to effective transfer of training. While a significant amount of research has examined the impact of individual trainee characteristics and training design on transfer, the impact of the work environment has been largely ignored.

This practicum report describes an evaluation of an inservice training program at a particular child welfare agency. This research was conducted as part of the completion of my Master of Social Work degree. Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS) was chosen as the evaluation site. This Agency is using the Competency Based Inservice Training (CBIT) developed by the Institute for Human Services (IHS) in Ohio, a training program that was adopted by the Department of Family Services of the Government of Manitoba in 1991. The qualitative research design included: 1) analysis of data that was gathered in a post training evaluation at the training event (referred to as the "Post Training Evaluation"); 2) data collection and analysis through use of a survey instrument called "The Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard" (Curry & Chandler, 1999, p.43); 3) focus group interviewing and 4) participant feedback. Grounded theory methodology was used to direct data collection and analysis.

Practicum Setting

Winnipeg Child and Family Services is the largest provider of child welfare services in the Province of Manitoba. Its expenditures for the year ending March 31, 2000 were in excess of \$73,000,000. Its staffing complement includes approximately 510 effective full time positions and over 300 hourly paid support workers. The six program areas that fall under the Program Services umbrella are:

- 1) Community Based Early Intervention
- 2) Services to Children and Families
- 3) Resources in Support of Services
- 4) Alternative Care/Permanency Planning

- 5) Quality Assurance, Research & Planning
- 6) Aboriginal Liaison Program

The organizational chart provides an overall picture of the structure of the organization and the programs included within each program area (Appendix A).

In the year ending on March 31, 2000, the total number of Voluntary Services Families served by Winnipeg Child and Family Services was 349. The total number of families who received Protective Family Services was 2,263, with 1,150 children in those families being in temporary care of the Agency on March 31, 2000. The total number of children who received Agency services while remaining in the care of their parents was 4,663. During the year ending March 31, 2000, there were 5,625 Protective Services Intakes opened.

Still in the year prior to March 31, 2000, Children in Permanent Care of the Agency totalled 1,486. Post legal adoption services were delivered to 1,893 people. There were 83 Agency adoptions completed.

As of March 31, 2000 the Agency was managing 1,066 licensed foster homes. During the year ending March 31, 2000 the total number of days care (for children in the care of the Agency) was 766,860. (Source: Winnipeg Child and Family Services Annual Report 1999/2000).

Topic and purpose

My interest in this topic grew out of my personal experience as a social worker. I entered the child welfare system after several years of social work experience in non-mandated social service agencies. In the midst of the intensive introduction to the

politics, policies, and procedures of Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS), I would often reflect on how someone with little experience as a social worker learned to balance the intensity of workload, client-worker interaction, and system issues. At the time WCFS was several years into the implementation of an in-service training program aimed to “provide training in the core competencies of child welfare practise” (WCFS Personnel Policy Re: Competency-Based Training, February 18, 1997). The Competency-Based Inservice Training Program, “Core Curriculum for Child Welfare Caseworkers” was being delivered to caseworkers throughout WCFS.

I was particularly interested in the experience of social workers as seen within the organizational context. During my initial exploration in this area, I wondered if social workers at Winnipeg Child and Family Services viewed the training as contributing to their ability to carry out the day to day work of a Family Service Social Worker. I wanted to know what they identified as barriers to implementing their training. In an attempt to answer some of these questions I engaged in research on training in child welfare (Lichti, 1996).

In addition to an extensive literature review of inservice training in the social services, in the spring of 1996 I conducted interviews with several key stakeholders in the Competency Based Inservice Training (CBIT) program at Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS). This included social workers from WCFS who had participated in CBIT. I found that each of these social workers had a positive evaluation of the trainer and curriculum. Their overall perspective was that when training was completed, they had every intention of implementing it, but encountered barriers that prevented them. They identified a number of factors as interfering with implementing the training. These

included: lack of relevance to their role, caseload size, lack of supervisory and co-worker support, conflict between the philosophical perspective of the Agency and the curriculum, conflict between the mission and goals of the Agency and the curriculum, and lack of concrete procedures to support transfer within the Agency. Each of them experienced their lack of ability to implement the training as demoralizing and noted that the momentum they had gained at training disappeared very quickly upon their return to the work place.

Despite these somewhat discouraging findings, I entered this research with the assumption that both employees and organizations want training to be useful. Training should result in increased knowledge, new skills or changed attitudes. Ultimately these changes should lead to an improved product or make a positive impact on the people one is serving (positive results)(Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Curry, 1997; Tannenbaum & Yukl, 1992; Tziner, Haccoun, & Kadish, 1991).

The purpose of this research was to evaluate Competency Based Inservice Training with particular attention to effective transfer. It provides an overall evaluation of the training, but focuses particularly on transfer and factors that influence transfer within the post training transfer environment.

Potential significance

The implementation of inservice training in Manitoba was in response to a need expressed by people at all levels of the child welfare delivery system in the province (Child and Family Support Branch, 1987; Sigurdson & Reid, 1987). Unfortunately, since the adoption of the Competency Based Inservice Training (CBIT) program in 1991 there

has been no evaluation of the effectiveness of the program. This is a concern for several reasons. First, it is not clear that the training program met the need that was expressed in the late 1980s when the need for training was clearly articulated (Child and Family Support Branch, 1987; Sigurdson & Reid, 1987). Second, there is no information about whether the training program meets the current needs of people in the child welfare system. Third, even if the training meets an expressed need, there is no information to indicate that training has changed the way training participants do their jobs. Evaluation of CBIT training at Winnipeg Child and Family Services could provide information about the impact of training as it is currently being delivered and result in suggestions for improvement.

Another issue raised in the literature is concerning the cost effectiveness of training. In a field where time is at a premium one needs to consider the monetary cost as well as the cost related to direct service time lost when at training. Both the employee and organization want time away from the work site to be well spent. In the absence of evaluation, significant amounts of money are spent on training staff without evidence that it is effective. Some studies estimate that trainees transfer only 10-13% of their training into their day to day work (Curry, Caplan, & Knuppel, 1994). Evaluation of training could result in more efficient use of training dollars.

It is hoped that the information gained from this evaluation will point to interventions Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS) can implement to improve the supportiveness of the transfer environment and can be used to develop methods of evaluating the Competency Based Inservice Training at WCFS with particular attention

to transfer. In a more general sense this research will contribute to the larger body of literature regarding training and transfer.

Framework and general research questions

I used Daniel Katz and Robert Kahn's (1978) work about organizations as a theoretical framework for this research. Mary Ann Scheirer (1981) used this framework in her research about the implementation of innovative programs in organizations. Katz and Kahn (1978) and Scheirer (1981) view organizations as dynamic and interactive social systems. These systems have macro, intermediate and micro levels that are interrelated and dynamic.

McDonald (1991) was interested in the extent to which training was transferred to the workplace and suggested the use of Katz and Kahn's framework for analysis of this issue. McDonald (1991) asserts that,

[I]f behavioral change within the organizational context, as opposed to that present at the training site, is the more meaningful benchmark against which training effectiveness should be evaluated, then knowledge and understanding of factors and conditions that operate at the organizational (macro), work group (intermediate) and individual (micro) levels should assume central positions in both training evaluation and training management efforts. (p.273)

The following research questions guided the collection of data for this evaluation:

1. How do social workers* at Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS) evaluate the Competency Based Inservice Training (CBIT) overall?
2. Is the training relevant to the work of social workers at WCFS?
3. To what extent do social workers at WCFS believe they transferred knowledge and skills from CBIT to the workplace?
4. How do social workers describe the transfer environment at WCFS?

- What factors do they identify as helping them transfer knowledge and skills from training to the workplace?
- What factors do they identify as hindering their transfer knowledge and skills from training to the workplace?
- How do they weigh the impact of the various supportive and inhibiting transfer forces?
- What interventions do they suggest WCFS could implement in order to decrease the impact of inhibiting factors and increase the impact of supporting factors for transfer of training?

*The term 'social workers' is used to refer to the study subjects. For the purposes of this evaluation 'social workers' refer to individuals who are responsible for case management in working with children and families. Job titles assigned by WCFS include Family Service Social Workers, Intake Social Workers, Permanent Ward Social Workers, and Peri-natal Social Workers. While not all individuals in these positions at WCFS are university educated social workers, a Bachelors degree in social work is a requirement of the job and the majority of people in these positions have social work degrees.

Limitations

This research will be an in-depth examination of the issue of transfer for social workers at Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS). While this research asks questions about the social worker's overall evaluation of the Competency Based Inservice Training program, it does not specifically answer the question of whether this training program addresses the needs of the social workers at WCFS. The focus of this

evaluation is the implementation of the training on the job and the factors that influence this process in the post training transfer environment.

This research relies on self-evaluation as a way of measuring the extent of learning and transfer. The transfer environment is described by the evaluation participants. It does not provide a perspective on the transfer process or the transfer environment as seen by others within the setting. There is some criticism of the reliability of using self-assessment reports as a way of measuring transfer of training. However, Guthrie and Schwoerer (1994) argue that self-assessment is increasingly used for needs assessment, selection of trainees and in the development of training programs. They suggest that gaining information about individual and contextual factors that influence these choices may also provide valuable information regarding transfer of training. "Thus, attention to participants' attitudes and perceptions, and other relevant individual and contextual factors, may enhance the effectiveness of organizations' training efforts" (Guthrie & Schwoerer, 1994, p. 419).

The grounded theory methodology chosen for this research will not generate results that can be generalized to other populations. The intent of this evaluation was to gain an in-depth understanding of the participant's experience with applying Competency Based Inservice Training in the transfer environment at Winnipeg Child and Family Services. The evaluation results could however, provide ideas for research and practices that could be applied in other settings. This is consistent with qualitative research which "acknowledges the limitations of generalizability while assisting the readers in seeing the potential transferability of the findings" (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 197).

Learning Goals

As a student and Family Service Social Worker at Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS) I saw this practicum as an opportunity to integrate my formal education with my experience in the field of child welfare. As a researcher with particular interest in the administration of social services, my primary goal was to conduct an evaluation of Competency Based Inservice Training at WCFS with particular attention to transfer and the transfer environment. During the course of this evaluation I wanted to:

- a) expand my knowledge of the administration of social service programs in general and inservice training programs in particular, paying special attention to transfer of training and the transfer environment.
- b) conduct a program evaluation within a large social service organization. It was important for me to have practical knowledge of issues related to entry, politics, timing and ethics in program evaluation.
- c) design an evaluation that can be useful to WCFS. Given this, it is important to acknowledge that this evaluation was initiated by my own interest in the topic. Therefore, I took several steps to gain Agency support and approval to conduct this research.
- d) expand my knowledge of qualitative research methods and carry out its practical application. I was interested in using individual and group interpersonal skills in the administration of individual interviews and focus groups.
- e) use grounded theory in conducting a program evaluation. I was intrigued with this approach's treatment of the participant as the expert and interested in the ability to see

process and interaction in the data. I was also interested in exploring questions about the utility of using grounded theory in program evaluation.

- f) incorporate my dual role of evaluator and Family Services Social Worker at WCFS in the process. It is not unusual to use in house evaluators in social service organizations. I wanted an opportunity to learn about the challenges inherent in having this dual role and develop ways of using it to enrich the research process.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The mandate of a child welfare agency, to protect children and strengthen families, is both complex and critical to society. Children are the most vulnerable in our society and the family continues to be recognized by most people as the best environment for them to be raised. Despite this, many children are at risk of abuse and neglect within the very unit that is to provide sustenance and nurturing. Front line staff of child welfare agencies is entrusted with the responsibility of making assessments and interventions that have a significant impact on families, children and the community. Workers are prepared for this responsibility in various ways throughout Canada and the United States. In the last twenty years there has been an increase in in-service training programs for child welfare workers.

The following examination of in-service training in child welfare with special attention to transfer and the transfer environment will be organized in six sections. The first section will include a discussion of the current issues in policy and practice in child welfare, which form the context of training for social workers. A discussion of in-service training programs will dominate the second section. The literature regarding transfer of training will be presented in the third section, highlighting such aspects as the theoretical basis for this discussion and factors that impact on effective transfer. The impact of the work environment as a unique and often overlooked factor in the transfer process is examined in the fourth section. The fifth section focuses on management of training and

transfer and provides several models suggested in the literature. Finally, a discussion of areas of further research will form the sixth and final section of this literature review.

Current Issues in Policy and Practice in Child Welfare

Child welfare practice in the 1990s has become increasingly demanding and complex (Miller & Dore, 1991; Myers, 1994; Pecora, Whittaker et. al., 1992). Front line workers are facing increasing caseloads with fewer resources to refer people to in the community. The needs of children and families are growing in complexity (Miller & Dore, 1991), with many children coming into care later in life, but with problems that are more entrenched. The public is more aware of the realities of physical and sexual abuse, but in many cases lack a clear understanding of the role of the child welfare agencies in intervening in families. Public scrutiny is growing, placing increasing pressures on workers to conduct accurate assessments and appropriate interventions.

At the same time new approaches to practice, which emphasize home-based family-centred services, are growing in popularity. Permanency planning is accepted as being in the best interests of the child. Cultural sensitivity and culturally appropriate services are increasingly recognized as legitimate and practised with varying degrees of consistency. The protection/prevention debate continues with increasing demand for service and pressure to limit expenditures prompting more discussion about narrowing the mandate. Organizational change, much of which is forced by fiscal restraint, is a constant reality.

A discussion of policy impacting child welfare from a macro level always includes the issue of poverty. It is an accepted fact that a high incidence of poverty is

related to child abuse and neglect as evidenced statistics gathered by child welfare agencies (Pecora, Whittaker et.al., 1992; Wharf, 1995). Analysts insist that something must be done to address poverty if we are to solve concerns of neglect and abuse of children. Policies directed at development and delivery of culturally sensitive services are in existence and of interest to researchers (Lovell & Thompson, 1995). The establishment of First Nations agencies are one example of culturally sensitive policies being implemented in the community. Organizational issues in child welfare continue to dominate policy discussions. Fragmentation of services, lack of innovative programming, distance of services from the community and the lack of attention to comprehensive personnel policies are a few of the themes that are brought forward by academics and practitioners alike.

Two areas of policy and practice that have a significant impact on training are social work education and the trend of declassification in the social service sector. While thorough exploration of the role of professional education and inservice training in the area of child welfare is beyond the scope of this literature review this area is highlighted because of its relevance to the topic. Some of the relevant issues are raised however further research in this area is required in order to gain an understanding of the entire scope of the issue.

Child welfare has been one of the most frequent employers of social workers both in Canada and the United States. The literature (Seaberg, 1982) speaks to the struggle that schools of social work have had in meeting the needs of employers in the field. In the process of writing my practicum proposal I interviewed five front line child welfare staff. They were selected in a non-random fashion in order to get some perspectives from

individuals who had completed the Competency Based Inservice Training (CBIT) (3), individuals who had extensive experience in child welfare (2) and an individual who had experience in another province. I asked these people a series of questions about barriers to implementing best practice, needs of child welfare workers regarding training, the role of professional education and training, the amount of training they have received, their evaluation of CBIT and finally their evaluation of whether the Agency they work for places enough emphasis on training.

Each social worker interviewed noted a significant gap between the kinds of skills and knowledge they received in their Bachelor of Social Work program and those that were required when they began their careers in child welfare (Lichti, 1996). Social workers cited areas such as counselling, child development, file recording, time management, identifying and investigating abuse as areas they believed required more specialized training than they received in their undergraduate social work program.

The five administrators and collaterals interviewed echoed the concerns of front line staff, stating that the university is not producing a "good product" (Lichti, 1996) and expressed disappointment in the Faculty of Social Work's inability to make the changes being asked for in the community (Lichti, 1996).

Universities have attempted to respond to the concerns of employers (Lichti, 1996), however change in academia is slow (Seaberg, 1982) and many in the community see the changes that are taking place as insignificant. A faculty member in the Faculty of Social Work at University of Manitoba suggested that the responsibility of preparing students for practice should be shared between the university and community. The need for more specialized training at the university level in areas such as child development,

risk assessment, stress in the workplace and family continuity and preservation was acknowledged. While there is critique of the content of social work programs, some noted that it is not fair of the child welfare system to expect the university to produce fully equipped child welfare specialists (Lichti, 1996).

Despite what may be short comings of university curriculum, there is recognition in Canada (Giesbrecht, 1992; Schmidt, 1996; Williams, 1997) and in some pockets of the United States (Pecora, Whittaker et. al., 1992; Young, 1994) that university level education is essential for the delivery of quality child welfare services. Williams (1997) points to the Gove report (1995) from British Columbia and Giesbrecht Report (1992) from Manitoba as “recognition of the need for academic education for practice” (p. 79) in Canada. Williams quotes the Giesbrecht report as stating “a university education is a necessary step in becoming a professional” adding that “there are no shortcuts in this process” (p. 79).

Discussion of the role of inservice training and university social work education would not be complete without mention of the unique experience in social work education in Canada when compared to the United States. According to McKenzie (1996), in the United States, historically, emphasis went into Master of Social Work programs rather than Bachelor of Social Work programs as in Canada. Child welfare workers in the United States tended to have community college degrees or other bachelors level degrees.

Inservice training programs first became popular in the United States. It is thought that the initial impetus for inservice training in the United States was the lack of professional training for child welfare workers. In most parts of Canada, Bachelor of

Social Work degrees are a requirement for employment in a child welfare agency (McKenzie, 1996). However, there are regions where this was not the practice (Schmidt, 1996) and agencies such as native agencies where there is a shortage of educated people to fill the positions (Giesbrecht, 1992).

The discussion about professional education and inservice training usually also includes mention of the trend toward declassification, reclassification or deprofessionalization (Abbott, 1992; Pecora & Austin, 1983; Seaberg, 1982). Pecora & Austin (1983) suggest that declassification is a national trend in the United States. They maintain that declassification is seriously threatening the social work profession and social service programs.

Abbott's (1992) discussion of professionalism notes that professions that lack clearly identified boundaries and address complex problems that have no clear solutions are vulnerable to 'interprofessional poaching'. The move toward social workers' roles being largely case management has resulted in a minimization of the skill and knowledge required to perform social service jobs. Pecora & Austin (1983) observe that individuals without social work degrees who have little or no appreciation for professional social work staff often occupy supervisory and management positions in social service organizations. This is often accompanied by an attitude that views experience as of equal or greater value than education (Giesbrecht, 1992; Pecora & Austin, 1983) and influences hiring practices in agencies, particularly during times of fiscal restraint. Finally, Pecora and Austin note that personnel departments are overwhelmed with other responsibilities and do not study and establish clear guidelines of knowledge, skill and abilities required

for social service positions. Therefore they are without empirical data to justify hiring social work educated staff.

The relationship between declassification and training for skills specific to child welfare is complex. On the one hand declassification is much easier to do when one has a comprehensive skill based training curriculum available for new employees. On the other hand, Seaberg (1982) notes that declassification has worked against the development of effective training approaches. The literature does not suggest that there is a linear relationship between declassification and training, however it is significant to note that both issues have become important in the literature during a time when funding to social services is being cut.

In-service Training in Child Welfare

Training as one Aspect of Personnel Policies

Training if it is to be effective should form one component of an integrated, comprehensive human resource management system within an agency. The first step in the process of developing a training program is an assessment of the training needs. Peter Pecora and several of his colleagues (Pecora & Schinke et.al.1983; Pecora & Dodson et.al., 1983; Pecora, 1989) have done a considerable amount of research on the topic of training needs assessments. They (Pecora & Schinke, 1983) have listed three methods of conducting staff training needs assessments: task based, knowledge based and worker/ability characteristic. The task-based approach assesses worker's ability to fulfil particular functions of the job, while the knowledge based approach explores areas of information in which workers may feel they need more expertise. The worker/ability

characteristic model combines aspects of the task and knowledge based approach and adds items that examine the aspects specific to workers' individual characteristics. Pecora & Schinke (1983) endorse the worker ability characteristic approach as the most comprehensive method of assessing worker's training needs.

Some assessment tools separate organizational or non-training barriers from those that can be dealt with in training (Institute for Human Services, 1994). This is significant in that it separates out the issues for social workers, their supervisors and the organization as a whole. The organization can then develop appropriate strategies to address the various barriers. Most assessment tools also have a method of rating the significance of the skill or knowledge for the worker's job and frequency of use. All this information is then compiled and training priorities are developed as a result.

The purpose of training can differ depending on the needs of the agency. First and foremost, the goal of training is the development of a competent workforce that delivers quality service for consumers. Secondly, training can be a part of organizational change as described by Cohen and Austin (1994). These authors describe a process of organizational change that incorporated training as one component of moving toward growth and development within the organization. Thirdly, training is sometimes implemented as a way of developing standard approaches to service across a region (Lichti, 1996; Miller & Dore, 1991). In the example of Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS) where the dissolution of six agencies prompted the beginning of WCFS in 1991, there were significant variations in philosophy and practice depending on the area. It was hoped that training workers using materials from the Institute of Human Services would at least give people within the Agency a 'common language' in which to

discuss their work (Lichti, 1996). Fourthly, implementation of a new policy, program or philosophy of service is often aided by training directed at explanation of the new approach and discussion of its application. Finally, a trained workforce can provide a basis for arguing for further funding or program and policy changes.

It is important to note that training is only one method that agencies and governments use to ensure quality, consistent services to clients. Other methods include assessment tools such as risk assessment (Jones & McNeely, 1981) or the multidimensional developmental assessment developed as part of the Looking After Children program in Britain (Jackson, 1995). Protocols are often developed in order to ensure that workers follow agency policies and procedures when conducting investigations. Horejsi (1981) suggests they are helpful in that they provide a step by step approach to complex tasks.

Approaches to Training

The vast majority of training programs found in the literature were developed in the United States and in some cases have been adapted for use in Canada and other countries. Most child welfare training programs are administered and delivered by government departments or child welfare agencies (Cheung et. al., 1991; Miller & Dore, 1991; Pecora et. al. 1985; Titterington, 1990). There are some exceptions to this as with the training program described by Jones & McNeely (1981) which is an integral part of an Master of Social Work program specializing in family development and family services.

The majority of child welfare training programs provide training which emphasize the skills and knowledge necessary to perform casework functions required of the child

welfare worker, however some programs note the importance of training concentrating on values and attitudes as equally important. Pecora et. al. (1985) draw particular attention to the impact that training can have on workers' attitudes to different kinds of intervention. Pecora's article describes the evaluation of a program designed to training workers in the delivery of home-based family-centred services. This approach to working with families is supported by a set of values and principles that are new to the child welfare system in the past fifteen years. Therefore training must go beyond skill and knowledge development and include discussion of values and principles that support the approach.

Delivery of culturally sensitive services has become increasingly important in Canada (Lovell & Thompson, 1995; Wharf, 1995) and the United States (Stevenson et. al., 1992). Training regarding cultural, ethnic and religious knowledge, skills and sensitivity is growing and these training programs tend to emphasize attitudes or values held by workers.

Stevenson et. al (1992) describe a training program that includes examination of workers' values, knowledge and skills and emphasizes the interaction between the client system and worker as significant to the service delivery. Finally, Titterington's networking model for training is unique among those training approaches examined by this author. It emphasizes social support networks as a significant resource for foster parents both in terms of social support and in the retention and development of new skills and knowledge. This program provides a comprehensive approach to training including community development, team building between social workers and foster parents, program development for further para-professional development.

A combination of classroom teaching and field education is typical of most child welfare training programs. The extent to which field education is structured and tied in with the classroom component varies depending on the program's design. In many training programs in-services are delivered in blocks of several days to a week, over a period of a number of months. Some training programs incorporate the development of an implementation plan as part of the training. In between classroom training participants are in the field applying the training in their work with children and families.

In the example of the Participant Action Plan Approach described by Delewski et. al. (1986) the method of implementing training in the workplace doubles as a program evaluation tool. Participants choose several concepts learned in training that they want to apply to their jobs. They are taught to write clear and specific action plans that include time frames for implementation. Finally, each item is shared with other participants, who assist with revisions, develop concrete ideas for implementation and possible impacts of such actions.

Supervisors often play an important role in practical application of learning from training to the workplace. The supervisors are a key component of training delivered by the Tennessee Department of Human Services (Miller & Dore, 1991). In this Social Counsellor Certification program supervisors take responsibility for orientation of new staff and assist them in their professional development. The Washington State Department of Social and Health Services' (Miller & Dore, 1991) program requires supervisors to work with staff to develop an individualized training plan based on their training protocol. This plan is reviewed at regular intervals.

It is important to note that despite the emphasis on developing and following specific plans for application of training, many programs and organizations rely strictly on the self-motivation of training participants in the transfer process.

The content of in-service training programs for child welfare workers centres around several key topics with variations in emphasis and depth. The most frequently listed areas include: case management, permanency planning, risk assessment, legal issues and process, child development, impact of neglect and abuse on children, ethnically sensitive practice, and home-based, family centred practice.

Self care components that address issues like burn out and stress are built into some training programs, however for the most part appear to be excluded from the core curriculum and included as a separate in-service or specialized training. Shannon & Saleebey (1980) noted the need for such training while delivering training focussed on improving knowledge and skills for child welfare workers. Their observations led to the development of a six session program including strategies for relaxation, mind/body connections, physical fitness, and recognition of burnout and stress.

While the literature has made a strong case for evaluation of training, in practice, evaluation is frequently a lost component. In the case of several programs described, lack of funding was cited as the reason the evaluation component had not been developed (Miller & Dore, 1991). Some organizations do not have personnel to carry out the evaluation or implement the recommendations. Even when evaluations are conducted they tend to be process rather than outcome oriented. "There seems to be an implicit assumption that training is valuable, yet evaluations of training rarely go beyond the

typical 'reaction/satisfaction' questions that participants complete at the end of training sessions" (Curry et al., 1994, p. 8).

Research into training programs conducted by this author (Lichti, 1996) found that the majority of programs used participant evaluations as the primary evaluation tool. There are several examples of other evaluation tools in the literature. A project initiated in Tennessee (Miller & Dore, 1991) used a certification exam, which was implemented four to six weeks following the completion of the course. The Institute for Human Services uses evaluations of worker satisfaction, workers' assimilation of knowledge and trainer observation as tools to evaluate the effectiveness of their training program (Miller & Dore, 1991). A method that could be used more frequently is surveying co-workers or supervisors for their observations of changes (Shannon & Saleebey, 1980). Rooney's (1988) study used audio tapes to test if people transferred task-centred training. He found that trainees used the skills more than the control group but also did some parts incorrectly. The use of audio tapes was a helpful way to learn what trainees were doing in practice and provided insight into areas that needed more training.

Curry has developed "The Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard" (HSTEP) (Curry & Chandler, 1999). It is a tool for research and evaluation of training in the field of human services. The advantages of this measure are that it requires very little time to complete and provides the organization with insight into the trainee's evaluation of training. The HSTEP was developed using Kirkpatrick's (1975) four level approach to evaluation of training. Kirkpatrick suggests that evaluation of training can occur on four levels; first, the participant's reaction, second, the amount of learning that occurs, third,

the extent to which behavioural changes are transferred to the work situation and fourth the amount of impact on clients or results of training and transfer.

Some authors note that more instruments for evaluation need to be developed, while others insist tools for evaluation were available but not used. Curry et al., (1994) suggests that needs assessment and evaluation of training are closely linked. They go on to say that organizations routinely collect information in the form of critical incident documentation, monitoring by government departments, staff turnover rates and exit interviews that could be used for these purposes but “this information seldom is systematically reviewed for its needs assessment value” (p.9). There is strong support for training evaluation by both researchers and training managers. The most rigorous test of training success is whether training has been applied in the work context.

The focus of this practicum is the evaluation of a particular competency-based inservice training program delivered at Winnipeg Child and Family Services. The remainder of this section on in-service training in child welfare will focus on the development of the Competency-Based Inservice Training program, its implementation in Manitoba and a critique of the competency-based approach.

Development of the Competency-Based Inservice Training System

According to Hughes & Rycus (1989) Target: Competent Staff - Competency-Based Inservice Training for Child Welfare the following steps are essential to the development and operation of a training system that is both comprehensive and competency-based:

- Identifying competencies
- Developing an individual training needs assessment
- Developing standardized training curricula

- Developing a system for the delivery of training
- Developing a computerized administration, monitoring and tracking system.

These steps were followed in developing the Competency Based Inservice Training program. A list of competencies was developed for caseworkers, supervisors and managers, child welfare executives, foster caregivers and juvenile services workers. In each of these job categories core competencies, specialized practice competencies and related skill competencies were listed.

Competencies are the cornerstone of a competency-based inservice training system. They are the foundation of training needs assessment and they guide curriculum development. ...There are two essential elements in the proper development of competencies. First, they must be written in terms that reflect competence. To be competent is to have the ability, that is, the knowledge and skill to perform a task. ...Second, competency statements are groupings of elements of knowledge and skill that are logically related to specific job tasks. The scope of each grouping should reflect the complexity of the job tasks and their relative importance. (Hughes & Rycus, 1989, p. 17)

These competencies were developed using information gathered from caseworkers and supervisors in the field. They were asked to respond to the questions: "What knowledge and skill do I need to do the job? In which areas do I need further education and training?" (Rycus & Hughes, 1995) Responses were then organized into categories. The list of competencies can be revised on an ongoing basis using feedback from the needs assessment tool.

The Individual Training Needs Assessment is a tool intended to provide information to a child welfare caseworker, their supervisor and agency regarding the areas of training need (Institute for Human Services, 1994). Hughes & Rycus (1989) note the importance of distinguishing between capability and performance when assessing training needs. They emphasize that a needs assessment tool should measure capability

not performance. "Using knowledge and skill language also assures that we maintain the critical distinction between the ability to perform and actual performance" (Hughes & Rycus, 1989, p. 18). Measurement of performance should be left to annual performance reviews.

The Individual Training Needs Assessment (ITNA) is unique in that it is completed by the individual caseworker along with their supervisor, therefore providing a good follow up to the worker's performance evaluation. Second, it provides an avenue for reflecting areas that have not been achieved because of "non-training barriers to performance". Third, mastery of the skill or knowledge area is viewed along with the information regarding how important it is for the individual worker's job. The Institute for Human Services recommends the completion of the ITNA on a yearly basis. It is intended that the individual(s) in charge of training within an organization will use the results of the ITNA to plan training activities.

A distinction between "knowledge and skill deficits" and "Non-Training Barriers To Performance" is made in the Individual Training Needs Assessment (ITNA). The instructions for completion of the ITNA define these non-training barriers and identify the level at which they should be addressed within the child welfare agency.

Not all performance problems are the result of knowledge and skill deficits. A training need exists when a caseworker does not have essential information or does not understand concepts necessary for his job, or has not mastered the skills required to perform job tasks. At times, caseworkers may have the necessary knowledge and skill, yet still fail to perform job tasks for other reasons. These 'Non-Training Barriers to Performance' should be identified and addressed through other management activities. (Institute for Human Services, 1994, p.i)

Competency Based Inservice Training (CBIT) curriculum has been developed for caseworkers, supervisors and managers, child welfare executives, foster caregivers and

juvenile services workers using the competencies referred to above. The CBIT core curriculum for caseworkers is the focus of this research project and the CBIT program at Winnipeg Child and Family Services. This part of the curriculum is divided into four modules each focusing on a different area of child welfare work. The four areas include 1) family-centred child protective services, 2) case planning and family-centred casework, 3) the effects of abuse and neglect on child development, and 4) separation, placement, and reunification.

These modules are taught in separate segments over a three to four month time frame. The entire core curriculum takes 14 full days of in-service training to complete. Its content is developed around the 52 competency areas determined to represent the core of child welfare practice. Each module teaches values, concepts and skills that are reinforced in the other areas. The values that are incorporated into the curriculum are centred on decisions that are both in the best interests of the child and family-centred. The concepts of permanency planning for children and reunification with family are key to this approach. The result is an integrated training package.

This training package was developed over a 15-year period and is adapted based on the feedback received in the various locations it has been implemented. It is to be used as “part of an integrated system of orientation, formal training, on-the-job coaching and feedback, and assessment of ongoing training needs” (Institute for Human Services. no date provided. About the Core Curriculum for Child Welfare Caseworkers). Many States and child welfare agencies in several provinces in Canada have adopted this curriculum.

The Ohio Department of Human Services has also developed a “Training Orientation and Optimal Learning Manual (TOOL)”. This manual is to be used in

conjunction with training for supervisors. Teaching supervisors how to support transfer of learning is the primary goal of this workshop and manual. It is designed to complement the Competency Based Inservice Training-Core curriculum for Child Welfare Caseworkers.

The TOOL Manual was developed to help supervisors provide important on-the-job training activities in an effective, yet time-efficient way. The Manual serves two important purposes; orienting new workers to their jobs, and promoting transfer of learning from Core training to the job” (Ohio Department of Human Services. No date provided. Training, Orientation and Optimal Learning (TOOL) Manual for Caseworkers: Instructions for Supervisors., p.v).

Development of an inservice training program in Manitoba

Knowledge of the context in which Competency-Based Inservice Training was implemented in Manitoba is important in order to understand its implementation at Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS). There have been significant changes in delivery of child welfare service in Manitoba over the last fifteen years. Native agencies have been established and given the mandate to provide child welfare services on reserves. The Children’s Aid Society of Winnipeg was decentralized in 1987 and six community agencies governed by community boards were developed. These agencies underwent yet another change in 1991 when the government decided to dissolve them and form WCFS.

Additionally, numerous studies and reports (Geisbrecht, 1992; Sigurdson & Reid, 1987; Suche, 1992) have been conducted and made recommendations for training of child welfare workers. A training needs assessment was conducted by the Child and Family Support Branch in 1987 (Child and Family Support, 1987). It concluded that training regarding child abuse should be incorporated into a comprehensive

developmental training package, which should be preceded by a training needs assessment.

Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS) was the first to begin looking at the materials developed by the Institute for Human Services (IHS) as a possible program for implementation in Manitoba. The implementation of a comprehensive inservice training program for child welfare workers within the province of Manitoba officially began in 1991. At that time, the Child and Family Support Branch (now known as the Child Protection and Support Services Program) of Department of Family Services in Manitoba proposed that the province of Manitoba adopt the Competency-Based Inservice Training material developed by the Institute for Human Services in Ohio. The Terms of Reference of the Provincial Coordinating Committee, Manitoba Child Welfare and Family Support (December 1996) state that the Manitoba Competency-Based Inservice Training Program is a provincial initiative whose goal is “[T]o develop a comprehensive, province-wide, competency-based inservice training system for all child and family services staff” (p.1).

In order to develop such a system, the Child and Family Support Branch (CFSB) entered into a partnership with the child welfare agencies in the province. This included consultation with aboriginal agencies in order to ensure that the curriculum was culturally appropriate. Various options for curriculum, including Competency Based Inservice Training were shared with Dakota Ojibway Child and Family Services (DOCFS). Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS) was exploring options for training during this time and they, along with DOCFS were enthusiastic about the curriculum. WCFS is the largest child welfare agency in the province and its support of the project was a

powerful contribution to its success (Personal correspondence, CFSB staff, April 9, 1999).

The structure designed to oversee this initiative originally included a Provincial Coordinator for Training, Central Management Organization (CMO), Provincial Coordinating Committee (PCC) and Regional Training Managers. The Provincial Coordinator for Training and Regional Training Managers continue to have an active role in the delivery of Competency Based Inservice Training (CBIT) in Manitoba. The Provincial Coordinator for Training is a staff person at the Child Protection and Support Services Program. In the past this individual was the chairperson of the CMO. Originally, the PCC served as an advisory committee to the Executive Director of Child and Family Support (now called the Child Protection and Support Services program). This committee has not been operational for several years. The CMO was comprised of representatives of child welfare agencies throughout the province. Its role was to provide overall administration and coordination of the CBIT program throughout the province. At this time the CMO is not operational. The CMO stopped meeting at the point when the previous Provincial Coordinator for Training retired. The Provincial Coordinator for Training staff position was vacant for one year and when it was filled the CMO was not reconvened in light of the fact that there could be significant changes to training throughout the province with the initiation of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry Child Welfare Initiative. The Regional Training Managers are appointed by the various child welfare agencies in the province. These individuals were responsible to the CMO for effective implementation of the CBIT program in their particular region of the province and now answer to the Provincial Coordinator for Training. Each agency is responsible

for assessing training needs and scheduling training for its own staff. The Director of Human Resources at Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS) acts as the Regional Training Manager for WCFS. (Provincial Coordinating Committee, Manitoba Child Welfare and Family Support, CBIT Program, Terms of Reference, December 1996; Personal Correspondence with the Provincial Coordinator for Training March 1996, April 1999, February 2001, and June 2001.)

Evaluation of Competency Based Inservice Training in Manitoba

The Child Protection and Support Services Program (CPSS), formerly the Child and Family Support Branch, has implemented a training evaluation (for the purposes of this evaluation this will be referred to as the "Post Training Evaluation") to be completed by participants at the end of each training module (see Appendix B). To date this is the only form of data collection that is being conducted for purposes of evaluating Competency Based Inservice Training in Manitoba. The trainer who conducts the training and the Provincial Training Coordinator reviews these evaluations. Unfortunately, the Province of Manitoba has not purchased the computer program that was developed by the Institute for Human Services to analyze the data, so the province does not have detailed evaluation information. All of the evaluations are in storage at the CPSS. The Provincial Coordinator for Training is intending to manually compile the quantitative statistics from the Post Training Evaluations for use as feedback for trainers (Personal Correspondence, Provincial Coordinator for Training, February 2001).

Elaine Hawkins (no date provided) conducted an evaluation of the Competency Based Inservice Training at Dakota Ojibway Child and Family Services. This evaluation used the data from an Individual Training Needs Assessment (ITNA) conducted prior to

training, ITNA conducted 1 ½ to 2 years after the training, and a written examination. The evaluation found that there was a significant reduction in the deficiency scores (ITNA), and there were “increases in the degree in which case workers mastered all knowledge and skill described in each competency grouping”. All workers benefited from the training to some degree, however “workers with the least experience benefited more”. The majority of learning appeared to have occurred in the modules called “Case Planning and Family Centred Casework” and “The Effects of Abuse and Neglect on Child Development.”

Critique of the competency based approach to in-service training

While the competency-based approach has gained popularity, there are critics of this approach (Csiernik et al, 2000; Dominielli, 1996; Williams, 1997). Lena Dominelli (1996) offers a critique of the rise in popularity of competency-based training in social work. She examines the issue from her experience working as an academic in the social work profession in Britain where the competency based approach has become “standard practice and is institutionalized by legislation that regulates its application in specific field and occupations” (Csiernik, et al., 2000, p.55). Dominelli suggests that competency-based training approaches have become popular within the context of “globalization of the economy, internationalization of the nation state and fragmentation of society into isolated individuals and groups at the mercy of market forces” (p. 153). This view is supported by Csiernik et al. who suggest that it is both “a market driven and a government supported philosophy” (p.55).

The competency-based approach is said to have developed out of behavioral and functional analysis (Csiernik, et al., 2000). It has been criticized for its functional analytic approach (Csiernik et al., 2000; Dominelli, 1996; Williams, 1997).

Educational objections to functional analysis include its failure to grasp properly issues relating to professional values and its tendency to concentrate upon typical cases rather than the kind of unpredictable, messy situations professionals need experience, skill, and confidence to handle appropriately (Williams, 1997, p. 72).

Dominelli's (1996) critique goes further, suggesting that the competency based approach is ideologically in conflict with social work values because "it presupposes that:

- what needs to be done in each situation is known and infallible;
- resources are adequate for the tasks at hand; and
- social work relationships operate in a social vacuum" (p. 168).

Dominelli (1996) makes the argument that a competency based approach is the 'politically correct' way to approach the delivery of social work services. She suggests that,

"The discrete and fragmented vision of the social work task embodied in the competency based approach is useful in controlling the workers, consumers and providers who respond to contract specification set out by the state. Contrary to the claims made of it, the competency based approach reflects a highly politicized view of social work and provides the rationale for my claim that it is the only *politically correct* form of social work that currently exists in Britain. Those espousing social justice and humanity are 'politically *incorrect*' (p. 170).

In conclusion, Dominelli (1996) suggests that the competency-based approach will deprofessionalize social work and separate service providers from their clients. "In abstracting individuals, whether users or workers, from their social context and the political realities of life, competency based approaches perpetuate a postmodernist trap – the inability to recognize and deal with structural inequalities – a prime concern of social work"(p.173).

Despite this critique the competency based approach to training has been adopted largely because it provides an approach that is measurable (Csiernik et al. 2000; New York Office of Children and Family Services, no date provided) The New York Office of Children and Family Services has however suggested,

The shortcoming of most competency-based training methods, however, is the definition of the competencies themselves. The skills that are defined tend to be lower-level and task-oriented, with the training designed to ensure that workers can demonstrate a reasonable capacity for performing the identified tasks.

Williams (1997) adds that social work values promote striving for excellence, not just competence. Csiernik et al. (2000) suggest that “while the premise is that CBET could improve the overall quality and consistency of child protection service delivery and thus prevent further loss of life, there is a dearth of literature or evaluative studies to validate CBET” (p.56).

Transfer of Training

Regardless of the type or purpose of training, the ultimate goal is that the training will be used in the day to day work of the participants. The literature reflects the theory behind effective transfer and an examination of how the transfer process works.

Theoretical traditions

References to effective transfer of training appear within several theoretical traditions. Historically, the literature was embedded in theory regarding cognitive ability or functioning. This area explores theories about teaching as it interacts with people’s cognitive ability to learn and retain information. Concepts such as identical elements, general principles, stimulus variability, response availability and conditions of practice were explored and tested for their impact on effective transfer (Curry, 1997).

The second body of research addresses the problem of transfer from the perspective of individual psychology. It looks at the interaction between the individual trainee's characteristics and their ability to transfer training. This body of research explores the impact of previous training experiences, motivation to engage in training, and relevance of training content or subject matter. It also looks at the individual trainee's confidence level, need for achievement, sense of efficacy, ability to manage anxiety, and metacognitive ability (Curry, 1997). The emphasis here is on the attitudes, beliefs and motivation the individual trainee brings to the training event and transfer process.

The third area of research has its foundation in social psychology. Instead of looking at the behavior of individuals in isolation, it deals with individuals in organizations. The behavior of people is viewed within the context of a social organization or social structure. This is associated with theory about organizations and examines issues of management of organizations or programs. Personnel management is also included in this field. Curry (1997) suggests that this area could be referred to as research that is "environmentally/ecologically-oriented" (p.16).

Dividing the discussion of transfer theory into these theoretical traditions is helpful in gaining an understanding of the foundation of the various fields of inquiry. However, given the complexity of the transfer process and the interaction of cognition, individual psychology and the sociology of organizations in the transfer process, it is understood that each body of research has contributed toward an understanding of what makes effective transfer.

Transfer Process

If transfer is the goal of training then an important process question is: “How should a training program be designed and delivered in order to produce optimum transfer?” Baldwin and Ford (1988) emphasize that the transfer process goes beyond learning and retaining information and includes ‘generalization’ and ‘maintenance’ of that information. They refer to these as the ‘conditions of transfer’. Information is applied on the job and this is continued over time. Changes in the individual trainee’s method of doing his/her job are the indicators that transfer has occurred.

Baldwin and Ford (1988) have developed a model to illustrate the transfer process (Appendix C). They used this model as a framework to guide their review of the literature on transfer. The transfer process consists of “training in-put factors, training outcomes, and conditions of transfer” (Baldwin & Ford, 1988, p.64). The three input factors are ‘trainee characteristics’, ‘training design’ and ‘work environment’. ‘Learning’ and ‘retention’ are identified as training outputs. The conditions of transfer include ‘generalization’ and ‘maintenance’. Baldwin and Ford (1988) suggest that training input factors and training outcomes have both direct and indirect influence on the conditions of transfer.

Most authors studying transfer agree that trainee characteristics, training design and work environment are the three main factors influencing transfer (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Gregoire, Propp & Poertner, 1998; Tannenbaum & Yulk, 1992). Individual trainee characteristics “consist of ability or skill, motivation, and personality factors” (Baldwin & Ford, 1988, p.64). Tannenbaum & Yulk (1992) also include trainee attitude and expectations and aptitude-treatment interactions. Curry et al. (1994) provide the most

comprehensive, accessible definition: "Individual trainee characteristics include skill and motivation level, ability to learn and apply knowledge, learning styles, personality factors (attitudes and values), level of education, age, life experiences, degree of burn-out, and training expectations" (p.8).

Training design has been the focus of most research regarding factors that influence transfer. It includes the incorporation of learning principles, the sequencing of training material and the job relevance of the training (Baldwin & Ford, 1988). Variables that are specific to the training event itself are also said to be important training inputs. These include the skill of the trainer and the setting in which the training is conducted (Curry et al., 1994 & Curry, 1997).

Parker's training cycle (Ulschak, 1983) is often referred to as a helpful model for training design. The sequence suggested is: conduct needs assessment, develop training objectives, design curriculum, design/select training methods, design evaluation approach, conduct training, and measure results. Curry et al. (1994) suggest that each part of the training cycle should be developed with effective transfer in mind.

Work-environment characteristics "include climatic factors such as supervisory or peer support as well as constraints and opportunities to perform learned behaviours on the job" (Baldwin & Ford, 1988, p.64). This goes beyond action or inaction by supervisors or peers and includes policy and practice regarding training that is promoted by organizational leaders, and formal or informal rules or practices regarding transfer that are in place within the organization.

Historically work-environment characteristics have not received a lot of attention in the literature (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Curry et al., 1994; Curry, 1997; McDonald,

1991; Rouiller & Goldstein, 1993; Ulschak, 1983). There are few empirical studies that examine the impact of the work environment on transfer (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Tannenbaum & Yukl, 1992). Practitioners and researchers point to the importance of further study in this area. The studies that do exist, however limited in number, do provide evidence that the work environment is a key component in the transfer process (Guthrie & Schwoerer, 1994; Rouiller & Goldstein, 1993; Tracey, Tannenbaum, & Kavanagh, 1995).

The Work Environment as a Factor in Transfer

Training programs happen in a context. They are not independent of their surroundings, but rather are intimately (sic) caught up and dependent on what is happening around them. To not realize the constraints and opportunities of that environment could be fatal; to the training venture (and to the person in the training seat). (Ulschak, 1983, p. xxi.)

An extensive review of the literature regarding the work environment follows.

In their research on transfer, Tracey et al. (1995) operationalized the term 'work environment', to refer to transfer of training climate and continuous-learning culture. Their research provides a distinction between climate and culture within an organization. "Organizational climate refers to the shared pattern of meanings among organizational members about specific and salient organizational elements. Organizational culture refers the shared pattern of meaning about a comprehensive set of organizational elements" (p.242). Perceptions about climate are developed when "organizational members pay attention to salient organizational characteristics, such as policies, reward systems, and managerial behaviors, they attach meaning to those characteristics on the basis of their

personal values, beliefs, needs and other individual characteristics” (Tracey et al., 1995 p. 240).

Tracey et al. (1995) have adopted an ‘integration perspective of organizational culture’. They suggest that this perspective “proposes that (a) culture is clear and understandable, (b) organizational members share similar perceptions about the meaning of various organizational events and activities, and (c) the relationships around various cultural manifestations (i.e., event and activities) are interpreted similarly among organizational members.” (p.242) This sort of consensus only happens over time and once it is established can be easily identified. Examples of organizational culture include continuous learning culture or safety culture.

Tracey et al. (1995) go on to describe the transfer climate. They suggest that the transfer climate refers to people’s perceptions of “characteristics” of the work environment that support or inhibit the application of training to the job. “These organizational characteristics include overt managerial and peer support for training and development programs, performance appraisal systems that account for behavior and skills acquired in formal training programs, and so on” (Tracey et al., 1995, p. 242).

Rouiller & Goldstein (1993) also examined organizational transfer climate. They identified situational cues and consequences in the work environment as key to attaining positive transfer. Situational cues include: (a) “goal cues” or the setting of goals to use the learned material, (b) “social cues” which arise from behaviors and influence from coworkers, (c) “task cues” which refer to the design and nature of the job itself and (d) “self-control cues” referring to permission trainees have to practice what was taught. Positive and negative feedback, punishment and no feedback are considered

consequences in the work environment. Rouiller and Goldstein conclude that their theories require further study, however if the same results are found, then “organizational analysis assessing transfer climate should be a requirement in determining if the organization is ready to support its training program (p.389).” Taking this even further they suggest that training members of the organization to provide a supportive organizational transfer climate may be just as important as skills training.

Some authors point out the importance of attention to work environment factors and intervention both before and after training (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Curry et al., 1994; Gregoire et al., 1998; Tannenbaum & Yukl, 1992; Ulschak, 1983). “One mistake commonly made by training personnel is to provide too much information in a training session, compared to the number of interventions undertaken before and after a training session” (Curry et al., 1994, p.10). Tannenbaum & Yukl’s review of the scientific literature regarding training and development in an organizational context addresses the pretraining and post training environment. In the pretraining environment they include environmental cues and signals, trainee input and choice and pretraining preparation. The post training environment areas include the transfer environment and post training activities.

Related research

There are a significant number of studies that attempt to measure the impact of work environment factors on transfer. Curry (1997) studied transfer by social workers in the child welfare system in Ohio. All of the measures depended on self-report of transfer by the workers themselves. He attempted to identify important transfer factors (driving and restraining forces) as well as measure if transfer could be predicted by an assessment

of a participant's perceived transfer field at the end of training. Qualitative and quantitative methodology was used in the gathering and analysis of data. There were three steps to Curry's research. First he asked participants in the Ohio training program to complete a Transfer Potential Questionnaire at the completion of the training event. The data collected provided descriptive information about workers' perceptions of the training event, their personal attitudes and the work environment before, during, and after training. In order to organize the results into a manageable number of factors Curry conducted Principal Components Analysis with Varimax rotation. Eleven factors emerged including:

- a) Trainer Adult Learning and Transfer Strategies
- b) Training Relevance and Applicability to the Job
- c) Supervisory Support for Training Application
- d) Top Management/Organization Support
- e) Application Plan
- f) Participant Perceived Learning
- g) Participant Motivation to Attend Prior to training
- h) Participant Prior Experience with Training and Application
- i) Coworker Support for Training and Application
- j) Training /Organizational Congruence
- k) Pretraining Preparation (p. 47)

Curry's (1997) second step was to distribute the "Evaluation Postcard" (more recent literature refers to this as the Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard) three months after the training was completed. This measure was designed to collect

participants' perceptions of transfer using Kirkpatrick's four levels of training evaluation: reaction/satisfaction, learning, behavior change and client benefit. It also gave participants an opportunity to list factors that helped or hindered their application of training to the job. Curry conducted quantitative analysis of the results of the Evaluation Postcard and the Transfer Potential Questionnaire in order to determine whether one could predict transfer based on participant's perceptions at the end of training and the importance of the transfer factors. The qualitative portion of the Evaluation Postcard was analyzed in order to add depth to the understanding of the transfer process. Participants' comments were summarized and organized according to the 11 factors noted above.

Finally, Curry (1997) conducted a follow-up telephone interview on a sample of 19 participants. He wanted to study the factors that had contributed to transfer in greater depth and understand why the participants sometimes reported their transfer outcomes differently than what would have been predicted using the results of the Transfer Potential Questionnaire alone. For example, some participants transferred training despite the fact that at the end of training they assessed their transfer field as not being supportive to training.

Both the quantitative and qualitative measures found that training participants were satisfied with the training, felt they had learned a lot and had applied their learning. In general the results indicated that participants felt there was support for training and transfer. Most participants had not experienced pretraining preparation either for the training or transfer. The three key transfer factors that were identified were training relevance, trainer adult learning and transfer strategies and perceived learning.

One interesting finding was that there were differences between new and experienced workers. Curry (1997) found that there were significant differences in the transfer potential variable and perceived application variable for core and non-core participants. Core participants in the Ohio program have less than six months experience in child welfare, whereas non-core participants are more experienced workers. Core participants reflected a higher transfer potential and perceived transfer. The same held true in all factor scores with the exception of the factor, Participant Motivation to Attend prior to Training. This is understandable given that participation in the core curriculum is mandatory. Curry suggests that the lower scores for the experienced workers may be because they have a larger body of knowledge and experience to draw upon. He found that when he compared participants with high transfer scores with those with low transfer scores, the experienced workers had significantly higher scores than those in the low transfer group for all 11 factors. On the other hand, core participants in the high transfer group scored significantly higher than the low transfer groups on only 2 factors, "training relevance and applicability to the job" and "perceived learning". Of the 68 items on the Transfer Potential Questionnaire the high transfer group core participants scored significantly higher on only 3 items. Curry (1997) suggests this may be because "different factors were more or less important in promoting transfer for newly hired core participants than for non-core participants" (p.55).

Secondly for participants attending core, the "Transfer Potential Questionnaire did not appear to be a valid predictor of perceived transfer"(Curry, 1997, p. 55). Curry suggests that this may be because core participants had an unrealistically high expectation

of transfer support or because they were afraid of making an honest assessment due to still being in their probationary period.

Gregoire et al. (1998) conducted research regarding the supervisor's role in transfer of training. This study attempted to measure the frequency with which supervisors engaged in behaviors supportive of transfer and the extent to which these behaviors contributed to worker's perceptions that training was beneficial. Two factors were identified: the 'identify factor', which included variables that described the supervisor's role in helping the worker identify training opportunities and the 'support factor' which listed variables related to the supervisor's role in providing tangible help for workers to attend training and attempt new behaviors upon their return. The study found that an increase of supervisor support was associated with a perceived increase in the impact of training. The factor associated with identification did not make a significant contribution to training impact.

Tracey et al. (1995), in their examination of work environment that was mentioned above, found that transfer of training climate and continuous-learning culture directly related to post-training behaviours. A social support system appeared to play a central role in training transfer. Rouiller and Goldstein (1993) studied learning and climate. "It was concluded that, in addition to how much trainees learn in training, the organizational transfer climate of the work situation affects the degree to which learned behavior will be transferred onto the actual job" (p.377).

Tziner, Haccoun, & Kadish's (1991) research found that people who perceived their environment as supportive to using new skills, who were assessed to have an internal locus of control, and participated in a relapse prevention exercise were seen by

their supervisors as using the skills taught in training. This research shows the interaction of individual characteristics, training design and work environment.

Other studies look at the interaction between environmental factors and individual trainee characteristics. Ford, Quinones, Segó and Sorra's (1992) study of technical skills training for airmen showed that upon returning to the workplace the airmen received differential opportunities to perform trained tasks. In addition, the differences were related to supervisory attitudes and workgroup support as well as the trainee's self-efficacy and cognitive ability. Huczynski and Lewis (1980) compared two groups of people involved in management technique training. They identified characteristics to distinguish learning 'experimenters' and 'non-experimenters'. It was discovered that transfer was more successful when the boss 'sponsored' the training. In this study, individual characteristics alone could not predict transfer. Organizational factors found to inhibit training transfer included 'overload of work', 'crisis work', and 'failure to convince older workers'. "The main facilitating factors were related to the preparedness of the superior to listen to new ideas and allow experimentation with them. The management style and attitudes of the trainee's boss were found to be the single most important factor in management training transfer (Huczynski & Lewis, 1980, p.227)."

McDonald (1991) conducted research on a training program designed to train state law enforcement officers in "At-Scene Accident Investigation". McDonald notes that this training program was particularly suited to evaluation of post-training use of learning as 85% of the training was designed to teach participants to "demonstrate and perform practical, routine job behaviors" (p. 275). This made the development of an index of each participant's "post-training use of learning outcomes" much easier. First

McDonald developed 17 statements to capture feedback on participants' use or non-use of skills or techniques taught in the training. He asked participants to think of the most serious motor vehicle accident they had investigated in the previous six months and asked them to answer the questions with that situation in mind. Scores from these questions were added to form a training use index. This served as the dependent variable for the study. Secondly, McDonald asked participants to respond to 20 "problem/condition statements". These statements were a listing of problems or conditions that might inhibit training use and were compiled after extensive literature review and field interviews with individuals working in law enforcement agencies. Participants were asked, once again to think of the same accident they had when completing the training use index and respond on the magnitude of the problem (was not a problem, was a minor problem, was a moderate problem, was a major problem). McDonald ensured that all major components of the organizational context were included in the 20 problem condition statements by using the tri-level organizational analysis framework developed using the work of Scheirer (1981) and Katz & Kahn (1966). Finally each participant was asked to answer two attitude or opinion subscales designed to measure respondent's attitudes toward training content and appropriateness for use in the day-to day work setting and accident investigation as a work function and worthwhile job responsibility.

McDonald (1991) found that five factors surfaced as the problems and conditions impeding transfer. These included (a) weak administrative commitment and follow through, (b) perceived external agency support, (c) perceived work environment motivators and incentives, (d) personal attitude, and (e) personal competency/capacity. He noted that that macro, intermediate, micro-level paradigm was quite useful as a

framework for categorizing and organizing contextual determinants of training impact. He does however suggest that "further research is needed to evaluate its overall desirability as a tool for conceptualizing and organizing expanded evaluations of training impact and for improving the overall management of the training enterprise" (p.277). Finally, McDonald tested for how much each factor contributed to variance in training use. He found that personal attitude was the most significant predictor of training use, followed by external agency approval or support, personal competence/capacity and finally administrative commitment/follow through. McDonald notes that it is somewhat understandable that personal attitude was seen to be the greatest contributor and administrative follow through and support the least, given their respective proximity to daily work behavior. McDonald suggests that the impact of administrative follow through/commitment may be underrated. He suggests further studies in this area are needed, possibly qualitative studies "using more direct measures, taken at primary macro and intermediate data sources" (p.278).

Models

Curry et al. (1994) proposes a "comprehensive model of transfer assessment and intervention" (p. 8), which he calls the Transfer of Training and Adult Learning model (TOTAL). This model identifies potential points of transfer intervention at various levels of the organization and suggests that managers plan specific strategies to promote transfer based on the TOTAL assessment.

TOTAL "examines the positive and negative transfer forces affecting all three of Baldwin's factors (individual trainee, training design and work environment)-before,

during and after a training workshop” (Curry et al.,1994, p.11). Curry suggests that an organization could identify positive and negative transfer forces. Whether transfer will occur could be measured by assessing whether the total number and strength of the positive transfer forces is greater than the total number and strength of the negative transfer forces. Curry (1994) does not give any suggestion for how one measures the strength of transfer forces. He does however suggest that action and inaction of key individuals in the organization can impact these transfer forces. The individual trainee, supervisor, training personnel, coworker and administrator are identified as the “key actors” within the organization. The TOTAL intervention steps are shown in Figure 1. Curry also developed a grid for mapping transfer intervention or action. It is illustrated in Figure 2.

Suggestions for Further Research

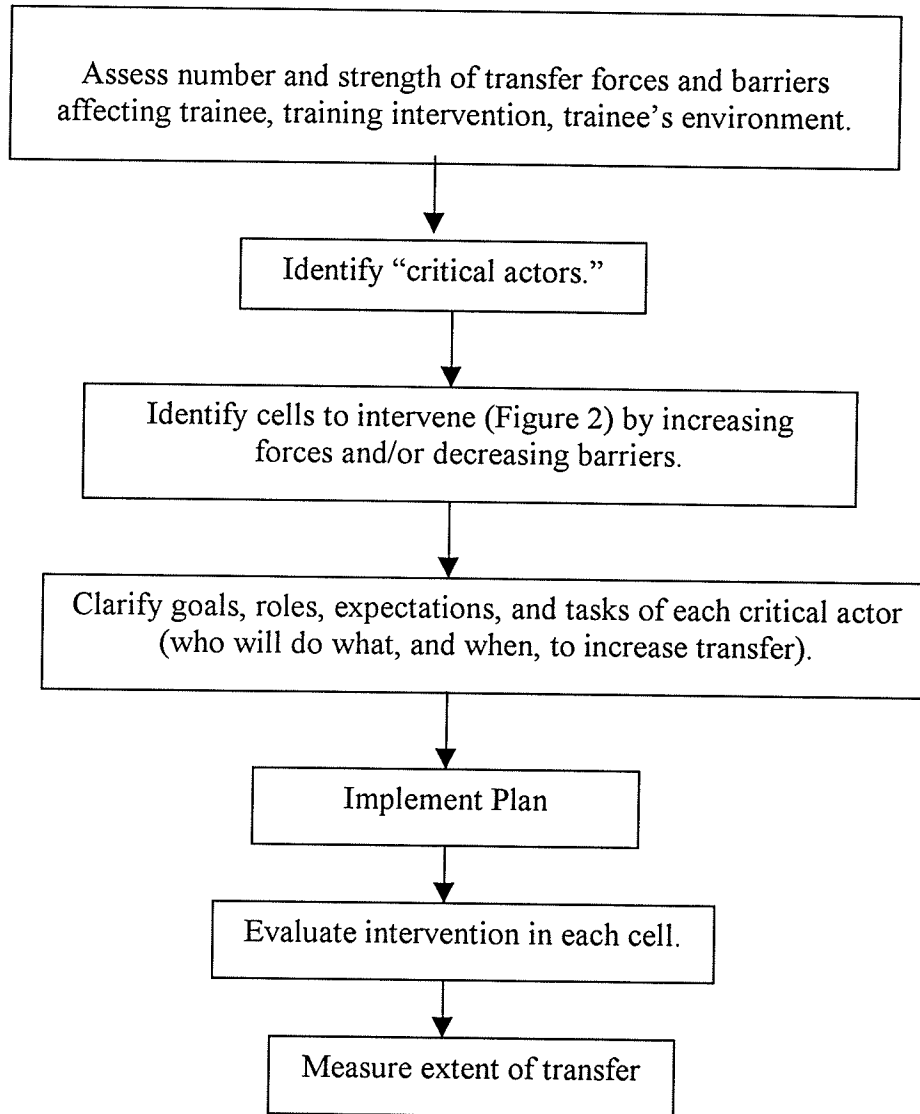
There are two major problems with the research examining work-environment characteristics and transfer. The first issue is the static nature of the research in relation to the dynamic nature of the transfer process. The 'strong' support for the importance of environmental characteristics to transfer is based solely on correlational studies in which causality can not be inferred. What is needed is the identification of key work-environment variables and the operationalization of these variables. (Baldwin & Ford, 1988, p. 85)

The second issue is the criterion problem, ie. use of self reports of behavioral change as the major measure of transfer (Baldwin & Ford, 1988).

“Most of the existing research has focused exclusively on one input factor (design, trainee, work environment) rather than attempting to develop and test a framework that incorporates the more complex interactions among these training inputs” (Baldwin & Ford, 1988 p. 99). Consequently we have a limited knowledge base about

Figure 1

TOTAL Intervention Steps



Curry, D.; Caplan, P.; Knuppel, J. (1994) Transfer of training and adult learning (TOTAL). Journal of Continuing Social Work Education, 1 (6), 12.

Figure 2

TOTAL Intervention

| | Before | During | After |
|---------------|--------|--------|-------|
| Trainee | | | |
| Trainer | | | |
| Supervisor | | | |
| Coworker | | | |
| Administrator | | | |

Curry, D.; Caplan, P.; Knuppel, J. (1994) Transfer of training and adult learning (TOTAL). Journal of Continuing Social Work Education, 1 (6), 12.

which input factors have the greatest impact on transfer under various conditions (such as type of organization or type of training program). The interaction between the three factors is crucial to understanding the transfer process. Ultimately the literature notes that transfer is a complex, dynamic process and the research developed to measure it must respond to that complexity.

In addition the vast majority of the research has been quantitative in nature. As such it provides little in-depth information about the experience of training participants in their attempts to apply the training on the job. McDonald (1991) states that future studies should examine the impact of administrative commitment on transfer. He suggests that qualitative research may be appropriate and suggests data collection at the "macro" and "intermediate" levels of the organization (p.278).

"Research is needed in which measures are taken at multiple intervals to examine the interactive effects of work characteristics and time on skill utilization and skill decrements after completion of a training program" (Baldwin & Ford, 1988, p.85).

Inservice training in child welfare has developed within the context of social, economic and political change. The literature suggests that the popularity of inservice training has grown during a time when fiscal restraint in the broader social service system has gained acceptance in society. At the same time, poverty continues to be a factor associated with abuse and neglect of children, there is increased awareness of child abuse and neglect and both these factors have lead to increased demand for services and accountability for actions taken by child welfare workers.

Training is one aspect of a human resource system designed to improve the effectiveness of intervention with children and families. Inservice training is

implemented in order to increase skills and knowledge, support organizational change or implement new policies or approaches to intervention with families. Regardless of the purpose of training, its use on the job is an important indicator of its effectiveness. Literature on transfer suggests that a variety of factors influence transfer including those identified with training design, the training participant and work environment. The influence of the work environment on transfer is gaining increasing attention in the literature. Initial research suggests that effective transfer is more likely if the child welfare organization has a plan that provides concrete support for transfer at all levels of the organization. A fit between the mission of the organization and the philosophical approach of the training, opportunity to use the training, supervisory and co-worker support are key factors within the work environment. The overall emphasis in the literature is that transfer doesn't just happen naturally, but must be planned and managed by the organization.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Overall approach and rationale

This practicum took the form of a program evaluation using grounded theory methodology, a qualitative approach to doing research. In this chapter I will begin by describing the theory behind this methodological orientation. Then the evaluation site and the design of the sampling procedures will be described. The ways in which confidentiality, anonymity and informed consent were addressed in the research will be explained, followed by a description of the data collection and data analysis. Strengths and limitations of the research methods used, will be explored and finally, I will address ethical and political considerations that went into decision making in the course of conducting this evaluation.

Program Evaluation

One of the challenges of program evaluation is balancing the interests of doing good research, and providing useful feedback to a program. Program evaluation also needs to acknowledge the special interests of various stakeholders and work within the political challenges these concerns introduce. Program evaluation is research conducted in the real world. While methodologically sound program evaluations are desired, many authors suggest that in program evaluation, unlike more academic forms of research, one must balance methodological interests with those of utility and politics (Berk & Rossi, 1990; Herman, 1987; Reamer, 1998).

Implementation research was chosen for this program evaluation. In the process of gathering program information in order to begin this practicum, it became clear that the Competency Based Inservice Training program at Winnipeg Child and Family Services was still in the development phase. In many ways the program activities of the last eight years had directed at building the foundation and it is just starting to be delivered to its target population (this will be explored further in the site description).

This evaluation examined a program goal that is implicit in the implementation of the Competency Based Inservice Training (CBIT) program at Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS). Program documents do not address the issue of transfer explicitly, however interviews with key stakeholders both internal and external to the Agency indicate that transfer of knowledge and skills from training to the workplace is one of the goals of implementing the training. Data collected during interviews with social workers in the course of this evaluation and those conducted prior to it indicate that social workers within WCFS see application of the training as important (Lichti, 1996; personal correspondence CBIT trainer, April 8, 1999).

“Implementation refers to all of the activities focused on the actual operation of a program. How do we know if a program is being implemented well or poorly? Implementation evaluation gives the answer by providing information that can be used to change program design and the method of program delivery” (Love, 1992, p. 135). This evaluation examined program activities including those that are conducted in order to maintain an ongoing Competency Based Inservice Training (CBIT) program at Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS). It also looked at ways in which application of training was supported or inhibited within the organization. Finally, it explored the role

that the transfer environment played in the transfer. This was done by reviewing the program files, interviewing various stakeholders both internal and external to WCFS, and finally conducting various data collection and analysis procedures in order to understand the social worker's evaluation of the CBIT event, their experience of transfer and the transfer environment. My intent was to provide the program and the Agency as a whole with feedback that could be used to improve transfer of CBIT at WCFS. This is in keeping with one aspect of program development. "All the time a program is in this implementation stage, subject to trial and error, the staff is trying to operationalize it suitably and adapt it as necessary to work in their particular setting" (Herman, 1987, p. 13).

Love (1992) refers to Rossi and Freeman's (1985) views about evaluation of program implementation. Rossi and Freeman suggest that there are two major issues to be concerned with when conducting an evaluation of program implementation. They are "coverage" and "service delivery". "Coverage" refers to participation in the program. While participation in Competency Based Inservice Training is mandatory, coverage remains a relevant concern when one considers the need to prioritize who is to receive the training first and according to what rationale. "Service delivery" refers to how the program operates. "The essential ingredient for evaluating service delivery is describing the program processes which help the participants achieve outcomes. These may include how often or for how long activities occurred, or how the activities combined to affect outcomes at various levels of analysis" (Love, 1982, p. 139).

As was described in the research questions, there were several goals in conducting this research. First, to provide a description of the Competency Based Inservice Training

(CBIT) program at Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS). Second to evaluate the training program from the perspective of social workers at WCFS. Third, to gather self-assessment information from social workers about the extent they have transferred the information and skills. Fourth to identify and describe those forces within the transfer environment that social workers found supported or inhibited transfer. And finally, to gather ideas for improving transfer of CBIT at WCFS.

“Implementation evaluations must examine the organizational context of programs closely. This includes program structure, policies, management, methods, resources and the outside environment” (Love, 1982, p. 157). The program description includes information about the context of the Competency Based Inservice Training program at Winnipeg Child and Family Services. The program description was expanded as more information was gathered throughout the research process.

Qualitative Research

The literature refers to the importance of choosing a methodology that is consistent with the research's goals. There are several reasons for choosing a qualitative research design for this evaluation. First, I was aware that the Competency Based Inservice Training program at Winnipeg Child and Family Services had not been evaluated. I wanted to use methodology that would search out all the possible answers rather than a narrow research question that may eliminate important aspects of the area of inquiry. A qualitative methodology would allow for a design that could provide an opportunity for a range of responses from people; thereby minimizing the chances that

the key concepts would be missed altogether (Bowers, 1988; Fortune & Reid, 1999; Herman, 1987; Marshall & Rossman, 1999).

Second, I wanted to choose a methodology that was suitable for an organizational environment that was in the midst of constant change. The site description that follows will give further insight into the rapidly changing environment at Winnipeg Child and Family Services. The literature on qualitative and quantitative research methodology points out that the two approaches have different views about the importance of producing research results that are replicable. In quantitative research one of the measures of good research is that it is replicable. In order to make research replicable one must control for change. In social research controlling for change is very difficult. "Qualitative research does not claim to be replicable. The researcher purposefully avoids controlling the research conditions and concentrates on recording the complexity of situational contexts and interrelations as they occur naturally" (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p.195). Marshall and Rossman (1999) assert that qualitative researchers can respond to traditional social science concern for replicability by asserting that "qualitative studies by their very nature (and, really, all research) cannot be replicated because of real world changes" (p. 195).

My third reason for choosing a qualitative research design was related to the importance of considering context when evaluating a program (Herman, 1987; Marshall & Rossman, 1999). This type of research fits the practice of inquiry in the social work field. "Ironically, context, ... is essential to the conceptualization of social work practice. The capacity of qualitative methods to access the detail and complexity in the context of clients' lives and in the process and context of social work practice is increasingly

identified as valuable by practice researchers” (Hess & Mullen, 1995, p. 12). The child welfare system is extremely complex. I felt that if my research was to be helpful to Winnipeg Child and Family Services as an organization or people who work within the system it would need to acknowledge and include the complex dynamics and forces at play both within and outside the Agency. A qualitative approach allows the researcher to gather in-depth information about a program in context (Fortune & Reid, 1999; Kirby & McKenna, 1989; Marshall & Rossman, 1999) and draw conclusions or make recommendations with that in mind.

Kirby and McKenna (1989) talk about the importance of “critical reflection on the social context” (p. 129). This involves examining the “social reality” within which people exist. “The context is the fabric or structure in which the research, or the research participants’ experiences, has occurred. It only makes sense that if we are to fully understand the data and affect change we must try to understand contextual patterns and how they are sustained and controlled” (Kirby & McKenna, 1989, p. 129).

Fourth, I wanted to use a design that could capture the dynamic nature of the transfer process. As was stated above, Baldwin and Ford (1988) criticize existing research as being too static in nature. They suggest that the key work-environment variables need to be identified and operationalized. Most of the research referred to in the preceding literature review identified factors that influence transfer, however few provided an in-depth understanding of the factors and how they influence transfer. Grounded theory methodology is particularly suited to identification and operationalization of factors as well as tracing how they impact transfer. The description of the grounded theory methodology below discusses this in greater detail.

Fifth, I felt it was important that the research design be such that participants could gain from their involvement (Marshall & Rossman, 1999) and their contribution to be respected. Child welfare work is intense and fast paced. Opportunities to reflect on the work are not frequently available. It was hoped that participants in this research would find their participation to be an opportunity to reflect on the impact of training on their work and gain further insight into the factors that influence their ability to transfer information and skills from training to the workplace. Kirby & McKenna (1989) talk about the importance of “intersubjectivity” in doing research. Intersubjectivity is “an authentic dialogue between all participants in the research process in which all are respected as equally knowing subjects” (p. 129).

Giving priority to intersubjectivity and critical reflection on the social context throughout the analysis ensures that we are able to hear and affirm the words and experiences of the research participants and at the same time be able to critically reflect on the structures that influence the actualities of their lives. (Kirby & McKenna p. 130)

Finally, I chose a methodology where my interest in the research topic and role as a Family Services Social Worker at Winnipeg Child and Family Services would be a resource to the research process. A qualitative approach sees the researcher’s immersion in the research site as an advantage. It builds in mechanisms in the data collection and analysis to guard against bias or the reduction of analytic ability because one is too close to the phenomenon being studied (Bowers, 1988; Fortune & Reid, 1999; Kirby & McKenna, 1989; Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994).

Grounded Theory

Inductive Approach

Grounded theory is a qualitative research method that seeks to develop theory from the data collected (Berg, 1998; Bowers, 1988; Chamaraz, 1983; Fortune & Reid, 1999; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This is often referred to as inductive research. In contrast quantitative research methods that begin with a theory and set about to prove or disprove it are referred to as deductive. Both deductive and inductive approaches are logical models of inquiry. With induction, the researcher begins with empirical observations and then uses systematic procedures to look for patterns in order to develop a theory from what has been observed. In deductive research, one begins with a theory and develops a hypothesis that is then tested by using empirical observations. (Babbie & Halley, 1994; Berg, 1998; Strauss & Corbin, 1990)

Experts in grounded theory suggest that the researcher intentionally begin the research process without thoroughly formulating the research questions, conducting an exhaustive literature review or mapping out exactly where the research process will go (Bowers, 1988; Chamaraz, 1983; Fortune & Reid, 1999; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This is suggested so that the researcher is open to the cues in the data collected. The researcher is to engage in a dynamic research process that involves moving between analysing the raw data, examining relevant literature, drawing on knowledge gained from personal experience and returning to the field to collect more data (Bowers, 1988; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). "Therefore, data collection, analysis, and theory stand in reciprocal relationship with each other. One does not begin with a theory, then prove it. Rather, one

begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.23).

I conducted an extensive literature review, examined program documents, and researched information about the evaluation site and program prior to conducting the evaluation. This was done in order to determine what aspect of the Competency Based Inservice Training could be evaluated and to develop some initial research questions. These questions were then revised as the research progressed. The dynamic process of moving back and forth between data collection and analysis, the literature, observations in the field, the research questions and ‘memoing’ was critical to this evaluation.

Theoretical Sensitivity

Theoretical sensitivity is a central concept within grounded theory methodology. “Theoretical sensitivity refers to the attribute of having insight, the ability to give meaning to data, the capacity to understand, and capability to separate the pertinent from that which isn’t” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 42). A person can gain theoretical sensitivity from a thorough review of the literature and professional experience. Data collection methods that allow an in-depth understanding of the subject’s world also contribute to the researcher’s theoretical sensitivity. Bowers (1988) uses Park’s term “marginality” (p.43) to describe the position of the researcher in grounded theory research. She speaks to the importance of becoming involved in the world of the research subject enough to understand it and at the same time remaining outside of it enough to analyse it. For example, examination of literature on program management and evaluation assisted me in stepping outside my role as a social worker at Winnipeg Child and Family Services and critically examine the data that was being gathered.

The data analysis procedures are an important aspect in the development of the researcher's theoretical sensitivity. The researcher is instructed to ask questions about the data, develop hypotheses and test them against the data, and develop theoretical frameworks about concepts and their relationships. At each step the researcher must return to the data to determine if any concepts have been missed and test if the theory is reflected in the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This approach encourages the researcher to 'interweave' data collection and analysis as this back and forth process increases the researcher's sensitivity to concepts, their meanings and relationships in the data (Bowers, 1988; Charmaz, 1983; Fortune & Reid, 1999; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The critical role of this process was evident as the evaluation proceeded. There was an ongoing struggle between wanting to move forward in the research project and staying true to the process. The process proved beneficial in analysis, new insights, confidence that the findings were truly contained in the data and directing the next step in the research.

Coding

Analysis of the information collected is conducted by coding the data according to a variety of methods. "Codes serve to summarize, synthesize, and sort many observations made in the data. By providing the pivotal link between the data collection and its conceptual rendering, coding becomes the fundamental means of developing the analysis" (Chamaraz, 1983, p. 112).

I used the terminology outlined by Kirby & McKenna (1989) to label the various steps involved in open coding. The following terms are taken directly from Kirby & McKenna's (1989) work:

Bibbit: a passage of a transcript, piece of information from the field notes, a section of a document or snippet of conversation recorded on scrap of paper that

can stand on its own but, when necessary, can be relocated in its original context. (p.135)

Properties are characteristics of bibbits, the themes or identifies which are located within a bibbit. Each bibbit may have several properties. (p.137)

Categories are groups of bibbits which have common properties and seem to “go together”. These cannot be described until the category contains enough information. (p. 137)

Strauss & Corbin (1990) name three types of coding: open, axial and selective coding. “Open coding is the part of analysis that pertains specifically to the naming and categorizing of phenomena through close examination of the data” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.62). At this stage the data is broken down into parts and examined closely by asking questions and comparing similarities and differences found in the data. This stage of analysis is the reason that grounded theory is often referred to as the constant comparative method of analysis (Glaser, 1992; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The process of asking questions should challenge assumptions and lead to new discoveries. “Discovering and describing the characteristics (dimensions) of the objects (categories) and identifying the salient objects (core categories) in the object world are the first steps in a grounded theory analysis” (Bowers, 1988 p. 47).

Axial coding is the second method of coding data. Strauss & Corbin (1990) suggest that axial coding is a complex process. It involves conducting “four distinct analytic steps almost simultaneously” (p.107). These steps include: (a) Developing hypotheses about the relationships between sub categories and a category. This involves making causal conditions, context, intervening conditions, action/interactional strategies and consequences explicit. (b) Verifying the hypothesis against the data. (c) Continuing

to search for properties of categories and subcategories as well as dimensional locations, as in the open coding stage. (d) Exploring the variations in the phenomena and comparing each category and its subcategories. (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) At this stage in the data analysis one can begin to develop mini-frameworks or diagrams to illustrate the data. The framework can be useful in guiding further sampling and data collection, which can then be used to judge the usefulness of the framework (Fortune & Reid, 1999).

The researcher can then move to selective coding. At this stage one is to be moving from lists of concepts to theory development. Selective coding should assist the researcher in “getting the story straight, developing a clear story line, and translating these into an analytic story” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 142). The selection of a core category and relating all major categories to the core category and each other is key to the procedures conducted in selective coding (Glaser, 1978; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). At this stage one is ensuring that the theory is grounded. In order to do this one must validate the theory against the data. The theory must be evident in the data in order for it to be maintained. One is also looking for exceptions or situations where the theory does not hold up. The explicit accounting for discrepancies may be unconventional for quantitative and some qualitative research, however Strauss & Corbin (1990) suggest they are essential for grounded theory studies.

The incorporation of process into the analysis is key to qualitative research and grounded theory in particular.

Consistent with the framework of symbolic interaction, the grounded theory researcher is interested in the social processes by which ‘reality’ is constructed and maintained. Consequently, an important theoretical category for the grounded theory researcher is the strategy(ies) used by the actors (subjects) involved. Very often the core category is itself a process. (Bowers, 1988, p. 49)

Strauss & Corbin (1990) refer to this as looking for process and contingency in the data.

Process is found by “linking action/interactional sequences” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.143) and contingency is defined as “an unanticipated/unplanned happening that brings about a change in conditions” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 143). This part of the analysis takes the dynamic nature of the phenomenon into consideration. It looks at change and examines the cause of change. Strauss & Corbin (1990) suggest that change can occur for one of three reasons. It can occur because of a set of conditions, intervening conditions or consequences of previous action/interaction. Noting links between categories is the first step toward identifying process in the data.

The practice coding bibbits according to as many categories as were evident proved very helpful in analysing the data and finding connections between the categories. Connections between categories emerged in the process of data collection, but these were then confirmed by doing cross-referencing. This gave me confidence that the connections between categories were in fact found in the data and not simply imposed on it.

Analysis in grounded theory is complete with the development of a “conditional matrix”. This is “[A]n analytic aid, a diagram, useful for considering the wide range of conditions and consequences related to the phenomenon under study. The matrix enables the analyst to both distinguish and link levels of conditions and consequences” (Strauss & Corbin , 1990, p. 158). Part of the process is developing conditional paths. This is “[T]he tracking of an event, incident, or happening from action/interaction through the various conditional and consequential levels, and vice versa, in order to directly link them to a phenomenon.” At this stage the analyst is developing an explanatory framework. Strauss & Corbin (1990) suggest that this step is what distinguishes grounded theory from other

qualitative methods. The phenomenon being studied is put into a larger context. When doing grounded theory the larger conditions that affect the phenomenon must be considered (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). These could be, but are not limited to, economic, political, social and cultural forces. Kirby & McKenna (1989) refer to this as “critical reflection on the social context” (p. 129).

Memos

Memos are used to record the researcher’s analysis (Bowers, 1988; Glaser, 1978; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The memo serves as an “ongoing record of theory development” (Bowers, 1988, p. 51). According to Glaser (1978), “The *core stage* in the process of generating theory, the bedrock of theory generation, its true product is the writing of theoretical memos. If the analyst skips this stage...he is *not* doing grounded theory. ...*Memos are the theorizing write up of ideas about codes and their relationships as they strike the analyst while coding*” (p. 83).

In the early analytical stages memos are used to list categories and their dimensions. As the research progresses they record comparisons that are made and relationships that are established. Throughout the research process memos are used to record decisions about sampling, changes in direction of the research or areas of interest that were not pursued. Experts emphasize the importance of labeling and dating each memo for the purpose of organizing findings and identifying the steps in the analytical process (Glaser, 1978; Kirby & McKenna, 1989). Thorough recording of the analysis in the form of memos allows others to examine the quality of the research.

The practice of keeping memos or a ‘process/reflections’ journal, as I called it, was crucial to this research process. I wrote reflections on the content and process in the

course of developing the practicum proposal, however at the point of beginning the practicum itself this was done in a more systematic manner. My 'process/reflections' journal contained documentation of the steps of the process as well as reflections on the content gathered throughout. I wrote these memos throughout the practicum process and kept them in a binder. Early on in the practicum I decided to combine both process and content notes. This was done in order to reduce the amount of deliberation that went into memo writing. While not specifically stated, this is in keeping with Glaser's (1978) comments that one should not edit what is written in memos. "First, good prose is irrelevant, and often a dragon in the heart of many an analyst who has been raised to 'write correctly' at all times. The point of memos is to record ideas, *get them out*, and the analyst should do so in any kind of language - good, bad or indifferent. Sentence construction and punctuation is irrelevant at this stage. The idea is the thing" (Glaser, 1978, p. 85).

The following quote from the process/reflections log illustrates the importance of both the process and memo writing.

I am struck by the many layers of learning that I have gone through (and continue to go through) in this research process. It really is a matter of reading the literature (about grounded theory, training, transfer) over and over again at different points in the research. I didn't really understand the value of analysing my process/reflection notes until I started doing it and conceptualizing the data wasn't clear to me until I reread Glaser this morning and then the link to what Kirby and McKenna call conceptual baggage." (Memo April 26/01)

Theoretical Sampling

Theoretical sampling allows data from initial research to direct the next step in data collection.

Theoretical sampling is a means 'whereby the analyst decides on analytic grounds what data to collect next and where to find them.' 'The basic question in

theoretical sampling is: What groups or subgroups of populations, events, activities (to find varying dimensions, strategies, etc.) does one turn to next in data collection. And for what theoretical purpose? 'So this process of data collection is controlled by the emerging theory'. (Strauss, 1987, p.38-39)

Theoretical sampling is different depending on the type of coding being conducted. When one is at the stage of conducting open coding, the purpose of sampling is to find as many relevant categories as possible and spell out their properties and dimensions. "Sampling is open to those persons, places, situations that will provide the greatest opportunity to gather the most relevant data about the phenomenon under investigation" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 181). Sampling in this instance can be purposeful, systematic or fortuitous. When conducting axial coding one is looking for as many differences as possible at the dimensional level in the data. This is referred to as relational and variational sampling. According to Strauss & Corbin (1990) "[T]he important thing to remember (again) in relational and variational sampling is this: The seeking of different sites, subjects, or documents is not the real issue. You have been concerned with sampling on the basis of theoretically relevant concepts" (p. 186). When one moves to selective coding, sampling becomes directed and deliberate. At this point it is referred to as discriminate sampling. "In discriminate sampling, a researcher chooses the sites, person, documents that will maximize opportunities for verifying the story line, relationships between the categories, and for filling in poorly developed categories" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.187).

The researcher continues this process until theoretical saturation is attained. Theoretical saturation is achieved when no new or relevant data seem to emerge regarding a category, the category development is dense, the relationships between categories are well established and validated (Fortune & Reid, 1999; Kirby & McKenna,

1989; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). “The final grounded theory to emerge from the analysis would include all four theoretical categories (core categories, strategies, conditions, and consequences) and how they interrelate” (Bowers, 1988, p.51). Kirby & McKenna (1989) suggest that determining the strength of a category is related to saturation not the number of quotes in it. The deciding factor about whether you’ve reached saturation in a category is whether you continue to find new dimensions when you add bibbits. “When analytical files have reached saturation, statements about links between categories can be made with confidence. If no saturation occurs, statements about tendencies within categories or links between categories can be made” (Kirby & McKenna, 1989, p. 138).

The time limitations for conducting this evaluation did not allow for data collection to the point of saturation. The data in the categories was quite dense but I did not collect data to the point that I could be confident that no new properties would emerge. Several authors suggest that the research can still contribute to knowledge in the field without reaching saturation (Kirby & McKenna, 1989). Practical considerations often come into play in relation to saturation. “Practically speaking, the sampling concepts of saturation of information and diminishing returns may have to be balanced with limitations of time, money, and other factors that impinge upon the research enterprise (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p.64).”

Evaluation Site

The site description includes information about Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS) and the implementation of Competency Based Inservice Training (CBIT) at WCFS. Information for this section was gained from a review of the CBIT

program files at WCFS, interviews with key informants including the staff of WCFS, CFSB and trainers. This researcher's knowledge of WCFS due to being an employee of the Agency for six years was advantageous for gaining entry to conduct the research and having knowledge of key informants who could provide information that was not written in program files but could be verified with key people.

This practicum was conducted at Winnipeg Child and Family Services. The mission statement for the Agency states,

Winnipeg Child and Family Services is a community agency mandated under provincial legislation to support and strengthen families and work together with the community for the protection and care of children and the prevention of child abuse and neglect. We will provide and advocate for a range of services that respect social, cultural, linguistic, racial and spiritual heritages to meet the changing needs of children, families and communities. (Winnipeg Child and Family Services, Program Management Reorganization Plan, April 1999)

Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS) provides child welfare services to families within the City of Winnipeg and several rural communities including the towns of Headingly, St. Norbert and several rural municipalities in Eastern Manitoba. WCFS has about 520 effective full time positions. It provides a range of services including crisis intervention, after hours emergency services, family service work, foster care, adoption, family preservation and reunification intervention, independent living assistance for teens, school liaison, in home family support, community outreach, parent support programs, aboriginal liaison and quality assurance, research and planning. It also has a corporate service that addresses public education/public relations, human resources, information technology needs and provides accounting and legal services.

In 1998-1999, Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS) underwent a reorganization of both its corporate and program functions. The major change was from a

geographically based organizational model that included four distinct geographical areas (Central, Northwest, Southwest and East) to a program based model which is organized according to program functions (Appendix A). This was really the final stage of integrating what were at one time six separate agencies providing child welfare services to distinct geographic areas within the city of Winnipeg and the eastern part of the province of Manitoba. In 1991, the provincial government dissolved the six agencies and formed WCFS. A chief executive officer was appointed and the six agencies were amalgamated into four areas, however the infrastructure that was in place in the respective agencies was maintained in the four areas that made up this new Agency. As such each area had its own structure, programs, policies and procedures. Some standardization and integration had occurred since 1991, however an external review revealed that a final transition to one agency was essential (Prairie Research Associates, 1997). The physical moves that were the culmination of this strategic planning and reorganization process took place in September 1999.

In February 2000, the provincial government announced the initiation of changes to the child welfare system in Manitoba. The province signed a memorandum of understanding with the three key aboriginal constituencies in the province, the Manitoba Metis Federation, Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, and Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, an Aboriginal political organization of 25 communities in northern Manitoba. This memorandum commits the provincial government to implementing the recommendations of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry regarding child and family services. The most concrete outcome will be the delivery of child and family services by agencies managed by aboriginal people for aboriginal people who live off reserve within

Manitoba. This will impact Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS) because to this date it and Jewish Child and Family Services are the only agencies with a mandate to provide child and family services to people within the City of Winnipeg. Aboriginal people, including Metis, status and non-status, comprise a significant proportion of clients serviced by WCFS. As of April 30, 2001 66% of the children in Agency care and 55% of the families open as Protection Family Services files were aboriginal. As of December 31, 2000, 76% of the children who were Permanent Wards of the Agency were aboriginal (Personal Correspondence, Winnipeg Child and Family Services Program Manager, June 19, 2001.)

Participation of program staff as active participants in the evaluation process is very important to the success and utilization of the evaluation findings (Love, 1982; Reamer, 1998). "Experienced evaluators reduce resistance and improve utilization by adopting a participatory approach and involving program personnel as partners in the evaluation process" (Love, 1982, p. 157). Engaging staff from Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS) in the design of this evaluation was challenging. There are several reasons for this. First, there is only one Program Manager and one Executive who are responsible for Competency Based Inservice Training (CBIT) at WCFS. Second, the Manager's role at WCFS is as the director of Human Resources and CBIT is a small portion of the job description. Third, WCFS was involved in a major reorganization process during 1998 and 1999 and the energies of those in management have been directed at preparing for the changes and making the necessary adjustments following them. In addition, before the organization had reoriented itself, the provincial government

announced the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry Child Welfare Initiative. This initiative would require major changes for the organization at all levels including Human Resources.

Given that the primary reason for the initiation of this evaluation was for the purposes of completion of my graduate studies, I decided to proceed and involve program staff as much as was practically possible. Winnipeg Child and Family Services staff responsible for Competency Based Inservice Training were helpful in providing information for development of the program description and expressed an interest in the results of the research. They were not actively involved in the research design or implementation.

Gaining formal support from an organization is essential for evaluation to take place. The Quality Assurance, Research and Planning Program (QA,R& P) at Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS) was instrumental in gaining entry to do this evaluation at WCFS. The Program Manager and staff at QA,R& P expressed a willingness in supporting this research endeavor. The Program Manager was a member of my practicum committee and presented the idea to Executive Management at the WCFS for formal approval for the research to proceed.

Design

As was mentioned earlier, I began researching in the area of training in child welfare in 1996 (Lichti). That research included a total of eleven individual interviews including staff at Winnipeg Child and Family Services, the Child and Family Support Branch and the larger social work community in Winnipeg. In 1999 and 2000, I conducted three more interviews (this time including Competency Based Inservice

Training (CBIT) trainers), reviewed program files and spoke with key stakeholders in an attempt to develop the CBIT program description, narrow my research questions and gain support for conducting a program evaluation.

At the outset of this practicum, I proposed to conduct five steps of data collection and analysis. The first two were to involve analysis of data that was collected at the training event. One was a list of non-training barriers called "Parking Lot Issues" that were collected throughout the training. The second involved analysis of one question from the Post Training Evaluations completed by training participants at the conclusion of the training (Appendix B). The third step was to distribute a survey called The Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard (Appendix D). Data analysis conducted during these first three steps was to be used to further develop the interview guides for the remaining two data collection steps.

As the fourth step I proposed to conduct two focus groups. The plan was for one focus group to be comprised of social workers who attended training after 2 or more years of experience as a social worker in child welfare. The other focus group was to be comprised of social workers who attended training with less than two years experience as a social worker in child welfare.

Finally, I proposed that I would conduct individual interviews of approximately 6 social workers at Winnipeg Child and Family Services.

Sampling

I had proposed to use a variety of sampling methods in the course of conducting this research. This included purposive and theoretical sampling.

Post Training Evaluation

Post Training Evaluations (PTE) from the most recent completed rounds of Competency Based Inservice Training were included in the research, these included evaluations from two training groups that were conducted between February and June 2000. Evaluations from the most recent training groups were included because they would be reflective of the current work environment at Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS) and it was thought this would be more useful to WCFS than examining PTEs from the more distant past.

While it wasn't always possible to identify the specific work role of a participant (sometimes they identified themselves as a 'social worker' rather than using their job title), when it was, those training participants who were not social workers responsible for case management (ie. Supervisors, Foster Care Workers etc) were excluded. In total 107 Post Training Evaluations were included in the sample. Out of the entire sample, 58 participants had responded to the question "Are there any specific barriers that you may encounter which may interfere with implementing 'best practice' as taught in this module? Please be specific whenever possible."

Human Service Training Evaluation Postcard

I had originally proposed to include only Family Service Social Workers in the sample for Human Service Training Evaluation Postcard_distribution, however I decided to expand the sample to include any social worker within Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS) who did case management with client families and had completed Competency Based Inservice Training. Both theoretical and practical reasons led to my decision to expand my sample size. First, I returned to my proposal and noted that

“Theoretical sampling is different depending on the type of coding being conducted. When one is at the stage of conducting open coding the purpose of sampling is to find as many relevant categories as possible and spell out their properties and dimensions” (Proposal p. 39). Expanding the sample size seemed to be supported theoretically. The practical reasons for the decision to expand sample size followed from the theoretical reasoning. They included:

- Increasing the likelihood that the research would be useful to WCFS as it would include a larger proportion of the population that was trained.
- Eliminating the assumption that Family Service Social Workers would have transferred more successfully because the curriculum was most relevant to their work.
- Approximating the sample included for the Post Training Evaluations.
- Increasing the options for sorting for future data collection steps. With a larger sample I would be likely to be able to sort according to program or experience in child welfare when attending training.

In the end, I included Intake, Family Service, Permanent Ward and Perinatal social workers in the sample. I had to do some additional work to ensure that the Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard survey instrument was sent to people who had completed the training and were currently employed by Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS). The WCFS lists of people who had completed Competency Based Inservice Training (CBIT) were not entirely accurate for my purposes, as they included names of people who were no longer Agency employees. Therefore I obtained the list of all social workers in the Agency who had completed CBIT and compared it with the December 2000 Agency phone list. The comparison of these two lists assisted in the

development of my sample. During an informal conversation, it was discovered that there were some Agency employees who had completed the training but were not on the Agency's master list. I provided this information to staff in charge of CBIT statistics at WCFS. I did not take any measures to update the list as it was decided it would delay the data collection too much. As a result there are some people who were excluded from the research but would have technically qualified. It is unknown how many people this includes.

A few people were excluded as study subjects. This was due to (a) having a dual relationship with the researcher (co-worker and immediate family member) or (b) being direct co-workers of the researcher. This totaled 7 people of the entire population of FSSW, Intake, Permanent Ward and Perinatal social workers at Winnipeg Child and Family Services.

Focus groups

The plan was to select a sample from those participants who responded to the Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard (HSTEP) questionnaire using a theoretical sampling method. In addition, sampling needed to be reflective of the kind of coding that would be conducted. While open coding had already been conducted on the Post Training Evaluation and HSTEP responses, the research was largely still at an exploratory stage, therefore it was decided that maximum variation sampling would be employed. This form of sampling is discussed by Maykut & Morehouse (1994) who suggest that its use is appropriate "where the research attempts to understand some phenomenon by seeking out persons or settings that represent the greatest differences in that phenomenon" (p. 56). The goal of this kind of sampling is to "select persons or

settings that we think represent the range of experience on the phenomenon in which we are interested” (p. 57).

With the research focus ‘transfer in the work environment’ in mind, further inquiry was to be directed to the post training work environment barriers and supports to transfer. I decided to use the phenomenon of transfer to select people for the focus groups (theoretical sampling). Questions 3, 4, & 5 on the Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard provide a self-assessment report on transfer. (“I have used the knowledge and skills I learned in CBIT on the job.” “As a result of using the knowledge and skills from CBIT, I have observed client progress.” & “ As a result of CBIT, I am a more effective worker.”) Curry (1997) calculated the sum of each participant’s responses to determine where people placed themselves within the range. I used the same procedure as one criterion for sample selection. This is an example of using a quantitative measure within what is largely a qualitative research endeavor.

I chose to use an additional criterion ‘years of experience at time of training’, for selection and creation of two focus groups that were distinct from each other. The Competency Based Inservice Training curriculum was designed for workers who are new to child welfare. As has been stated, Winnipeg Child and Family Services decided to train all workers. At least three questions come to mind when considering this. First, is there a difference between perceived transfer for new or experienced workers? Second, do experienced workers identify different post-training work environment factors than those with less experience? And finally, do experienced workers experience these post-training work environment factors differently than new workers?

With these questions in mind, I decided to have one focus group comprised of people who had taken Competency Based Inservice Training within the first two years of working as social workers in child welfare (26 people or 40 % of the respondents to the Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard (HSTEP)). The other was comprised of people who took the training after having 2 or more years experience working as a social worker in child welfare (39 people or 60% of the respondents to the HSTEP).

In order to follow this sampling method, first the Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard respondents were divided into two groups. One represented workers who had less than two years experience when they took the training (<2 years) and the other represented workers who had two or more years experience when they took the training (2+ years). Then the same selection patterns were followed for each group. Participants were chosen first based on their transfer score with an attempt made to represent the whole range of transfer scores within each group. If there was more than one person representing a particular transfer score I turned to the responses to the open ended question, 'Please list factors that helped or hindered your application of learning on the job'. I then checked which category was represented by the answer. In the end the idea was to have the broadest representation of transfer scores and categories as possible in each focus group.

This sampling method proved to be quite complicated. First of all, it was time consuming because invitations to participate were sent to 8 participants and then further invitations were sent as potential participants declined participation. Secondly, selection based on qualitative responses was somewhat arbitrary because I could not be sure which participants would consent to being in the group. No one from either the highest transfer

or lowest transfer scores consented to participate in the focus groups so the participants represented people in the medium range in terms of transfer. The entire sample of –2 years participants were invited to participate in the focus group and in the end 5 people consented.

One of the things that I should have done is have the person who was confirming attendance at focus groups check to ensure that participants were assigned to the right group according to when they took the training. One participant in the 2+ focus group had in fact taken the training prior to being with the Agency for two years. It is not clear why this occurred except to surmise that after answering the demographic information on Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard the participant had an opportunity to rethink when they took the training and realized that it had actually been prior to 2 years experience.

Another unanticipated variable was that one participant had actually taken the training while with another child welfare agency and then moved to Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS). In order to ensure that my results reflected only experience at WCFS I was careful to ask for this clarification during the focus group and then only report on the parts that related to WCFS specifically.

Participant feedback

Every individual who participated in the focus groups was invited to provide feedback regarding the descriptive results of the research.

Confidentiality, Anonymity and Informed Consent

In research involving individual participants the two most important ethical considerations are informed consent and protecting participants' anonymity (Reamer, 1998). Reamer (1998) discusses several aspects that should be included in gaining informed consent from research participants. Participant's involvement should be voluntary. Participants must be provided with a description of the purpose of the research and the researcher must ensure that they are competent to consent to participation. Sometimes consent is implied simply by the participant's willingness to participate in an interview for example.

Qualitative research usually involves a relatively small number of participants. As a result confidence that the researcher respects the anonymity and confidentiality of the participant is particularly crucial. In a field like child welfare in a small province like Manitoba, it is also important to take special care to protect the identity of participants because they can be easily deduced from context alone.

While employees of a social service agency may not be as vulnerable as clients, it is still important to recognize the risks of their involvement in research. The research participant may share sensitive information about their work team, supervisor or self. They may fear upper management reprisals if they honestly reflect their perspective on an aspect of the evaluation. Several steps were taken to ensure the confidentiality of information gained through the various data collection methods.

Program Records

The program records do not contain information that is confidential.

Post Training Evaluations

No identifying information appears on the Post Training Evaluation (PTE) or the Parking Lot Issues Lists. The people who completed the PTE were participants in training events and gave their implied consent to Child Protection and Support Services Program (CPSS) and Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS) by completing the evaluations. This material is maintained by the CPSS Program with the Department of Family Services of the Government of Manitoba. I requested and received a letter granting me permission to analyse this material (Appendix E).

The evaluations contain other identifying information about the training module, trainer(s), date and location as well as the participant's current position, years in the position, and years in child welfare. This practicum was not intended to be an evaluation of the trainer however, the Post Training Evaluations (PTE) do contain an evaluation of the trainer. Therefore, out of respect for the trainers this researcher wrote a letter describing the research being conducted and outlining the measures that would be taken to ensure anonymity and confidentiality were maintained (Appendix F). Flexibility is important to the research design. Given the possibility that I could return to the PTEs later in the analysis, I felt it was important to set out my plan for ensuring the anonymity of the trainers in the event that reference to them was made. In addition, all PTE and/or photocopies will be returned to the Child Protection and Support Services Program after the Practicum is approved by the Practicum Committee.

The Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard

The Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard (HSTEP) was coded in a double blind fashion to avoid any possibility that I could identify the subject and at the

same time allow me to use the responses to direct the theoretical sampling later in the research process. Staff with the Quality Assurance, Research and Planning Program (QA, R & P) assisted by assigning a code number to each name on the research subjects list. Names and matching codes were stored at the QA, R & P office and were not accessible to the researcher. An instructional letter (Appendix G) accompanied the HSTEP. The subjects gave their consent by completing and returning the HSTEP survey. All data will be destroyed after the Practicum Committee has approved the Practicum.

Focus Groups

The Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard had been coded in order to protect people's identity. I provided the staff at the Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS) Quality Assurance, Research and Planning Program with the appropriate identity code and they sent an invitation letter regarding the focus group out to that participant via e-mail (Appendix H). This was also to ensure that participants did not feel coerced to participate in the research due to having direct contact with the researcher.

The protection of participant's confidentiality and anonymity played a part in deciding on the location for the focus groups. This concern had to be balanced with convenience of location and suitability of the room for conducting a focus group. The location that was chosen was a boardroom in an Agency office. The entrance was separate from the other Agency space. Signs were posted directing people to the room so that they did not have to sit in a waiting area or ask for directions, therefore revealing to colleagues that they were participating in the research. The room was completely enclosed and was not close to any high traffic area.

Prior to beginning the focus group all participants were asked to sign a form indicating their informed consent to participate in the research (Appendix I). This consent explained the purpose of the research and the methods that the researcher would employ to ensure anonymity of the participant. It noted the intent to audio-tape the focus group and described the measures that the researcher would employ to ensure the security of the tape.

Audio-tapes of focus group interviews were transcribed for analysis. A transcriber from outside field of social work was chosen. This researcher explained the concern for confidentiality to the transcriber and requested commitment to keep all information contained in interviews confidential. Focus group participants were given code names in the transcripts. The generic term “participant”, was used to refer to study subjects in the reporting of the findings. If a participant’s name appeared in the focus group interview dialogue this was replaced with a code name. I kept a list of actual names attached to code names for use in further theoretical sampling. This list along with any other identifying information was kept in a locked filing cabinet at my home. All data will be destroyed after my Practicum Committee has approved my Practicum.

Participant Feedback

A cover letter describing the feedback required and outlining that this stage is also voluntary and will be kept confidential was emailed to each focus group participant (Appendix J). Feedback from focus group participants was recorded using the previously assigned code names. The generic term “participant” was used to refer to study subjects in the reporting of the feedback.

Data collection

Organizing the data

Organization and storage of the data collected is important in order to ensure that no data is lost and to aid in its accessibility for analysis. Kirby and McKenna (1989) provide a detailed guide to what they call “managing the data”. They suggest that the researcher develop an a) identity, b) tape, c) document, d) content, and e) process file. The identity file should contain all identifying information about the research participants and the corresponding code names or numbers. The tape file contains any video or audio recordings that are identified by a code name in order to ensure confidentiality. The document file contains the original transcripts, field notes, surveys. All material in this file should remain in its original form in order to ensure that the researcher is always able to return to the original data if needed. Copies of the contents of this file can be made for purposes of analysis. These copies can be coded and should be stored in the content file. The process file contains a step by step record of the research process. Finally, analysis files are developed at the point when data analysis begins. Analysis files consist of content and process files. The analysis: content files are labeled to represent each category that is developed in the course of the research. The analysis: process files contain information about the “dynamics of the research process” (Kirby & McKenna, p. 144). They contain information pertaining to the process of collecting and analysing the data like the experience of working with the research team, the researcher’s experience in conducting coding or the timing of the research.

Kirby & McKenna’s (1989) system for organizing the research endeavor proved to be invaluable in my research process. It was time consuming to get established but taking

the time to organize the information already gathered in my research process allowed me to develop a deeper understanding of the research process itself. I followed Kirby & McKenna's (1989) instructions quite closely, establishing the files both on my computer and in my paper filing system. Keeping all of the data and documents organized is an essential part of doing research. I had not anticipated how much time or how important this would be to the research endeavor.

The first three steps of data collection that I proposed to complete were the Post Training Evaluation, Parking Lot Issues Lists and the Human Service Training Evaluation Postcard.

Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard

Curry's (1997) Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard (HSTEP) survey instrument was adapted for the purposes of this research to ask for participant's evaluation of the entire Competency Based Inservice Training package and questions regarding demographics were added. The survey instrument was sent in the form of a postcard with the HSTEP on one side and demographic information on the other (Appendix K). It was printed on yellow card paper so that there was less chance of it getting lost in all the other information that comes across social workers' desks. The postcards were sent out in early January and a reminder letter (Appendix L) was sent one week later.

Parking Lot Issues

I had intended to analyse items included on Parking Lot Issues Lists collected at the training. During the course of the training event each trainer makes a practice of noting trainee concerns that cannot be addressed at the training event per se. These are

called "Parking Lot Issues". As participants raise concerns they are written on a flip chart, following the training the trainer has the list typed and forwards it to the Provincial Coordinator for Training and the respective Regional Training Managers. In the case of training hosted by Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS) that would be the Regional Training Manager at WCFS. The lists typically include examples of system issues that might interfere with transfer (Personal Correspondence, Competency Based Inservice Training trainer, April 8, 1999). Unfortunately, there were no lists available for the period September 1999-June 2000.

The Provincial Training Coordinator assisted in my search for the Parking Lot Issues Lists and at a meeting with the trainers asked them about the whereabouts of these lists. The trainers indicated that they routinely forwarded the lists to the Child Protection and Support Services Program along with the Post Training Evaluations, however the participants in the more recent training events were not contributing to the lists. As a result I was not able to include this step in my data collection or analysis.

Focus Groups

The letters inviting people to participate in focus groups were sent out via e-mail at the end of February. A follow up telephone call was conducted in order to remind participants and speed up the 'recruitment process'.

The development of the Focus Group Interview Guide (Appendix M) was reflective of the reciprocal nature of grounded theory methodology where the earlier data collection and analysis are used to direct later steps in the process. The literature review, revised research questions (Appendix N) and initial data analysis of the Human Services

Training Effectiveness Postcard and Post Training Evaluation were used extensively toward the development of questions for focus group participants.

Despite the fact that the main purpose of this data collection stage was to get information about transfer, it was decided that the Focus Group Interview Guide would include some questions about the training event itself. There were two reasons for this decision. First, the literature clearly reflected that the training event was a factor in effective transfer. I decided that if I omitted these questions it would be impossible to draw any conclusions about the impact that the training event itself had on transfer. Excluding this area could mean that the research would be lacking information about a significant contributor to transfer process. Secondly, responses to the Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard open-ended question about factors that helped or hindered the participant's application of learning on the job included many statements that were related to the training event itself. Factors related to the training event that appeared to require further exploration in terms of their influence on transfer were the relevance of the training content, the participant's perceived learning, the design and delivery of the training and Winnipeg Child and Family Services's training policies and practices.

In the area of 'Perceived Transfer', the qualitative information gathered from the Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard indicated that transfer had occurred but it was not clear how participants would evaluate the extent of transfer, so questions were included to illicit further data in this area.

The Post Training Evaluation and Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard both provided some data regarding the transfer environment. It was decided that

further data would be gathered by asking participants about the role various players within the child welfare system in Manitoba played in supporting the implementation of Competency Based Inservice Training on the job. This approach to asking the questions was influenced by the work of Scheirer (1981), Curry (1994) and McDonald (1991). Scheirer's (1981) "Analytical Framework for the Study of Social Program Implementation" suggests that examination of program implementation should include macro-level components, intermediate-level processes and individual-level variables. Curry's (1994) discussion of a "comprehensive model of transfer assessment and intervention" (p.8), which he calls the Transfer of Training and Adult Learning model (TOTAL) suggests that it is important to examine the impact various people in an organization can have on transfer.

McDonald's (1991) research used a tri-level organizational analysis framework developed using the work of Scheirer (1981) and Katz and Kahn (1966). His results showed that personal attitude was seen as the greatest contributor to training use and administrative follow through the least. He surmised that this may be related to the respective proximity of these factors to daily work behavior and thought that the influence of administrative follow through or commitment may be underrated. Therefore a question was developed that asked participants, "After you completed CBIT and returned to your work, what helped you to use the information in your day to day work?" This question was introduced with the statement, "We're going to move on to talk about the situation in the work environment, by that I mean your entire work context, individual unit, program area, Agency as a whole and in relation to government. Now, I want you to focus on those factors in your work environment (as opposed to at the training event) that

helped you to use the training on the job” (See Focus Group Interview Guide, Appendix M). Participants were invited to respond first to this open-ended question and then guided to think about the contribution that the staff at the Child Protection & Support Services Program, (commonly referred to as ‘the Directorate’), Winnipeg Child and Family Services management, supervisors, and co-workers had made to their ability to transfer Competency Based Inservice Training.

Participants were not asked about barriers to transfer as it was determined that based on the feedback from the Post Training Evaluation and Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard discussion of barriers would probably occur without much prompting.

Finally, a question about suggested transfer interventions was added in order to gather information from workers about ways in which transfer of Competency Based Inservice Training could be further supported. This question mirrored the question about the transfer environment in that it prompted participants to think about the contribution players at the various levels of the child welfare system in Manitoba could make toward improving transfer.

In mid March, I reworked my Focus Group Interview Guide and pretested it with the social workers in the Family Service Unit where I work. A staff person with the Quality Assurance, Research and Planning Program, assisted by observing and providing feedback. It was very valuable to do a practice run and get feedback from the team members and observer from Quality Assurance. I revised the Focus Group Interview Guide based on their feedback and my own observations. I also wrote an introduction to use at the beginning of the focus group (Appendix O).

The two focus groups were conducted on March 20, 2001. A staff person with the Quality Assurance, Research and Planning Program (QA, R & P) of Winnipeg Child and Family Services assisted by completing a written record of the focus group interaction. This individual was introduced and her position with the Agency described at the beginning of the focus group. There is some possibility that the presence of this person may have influenced participants' responses. In order to address this concern confidentiality was assured and the QA, R & P staff person sat a distance from the group while recording the interaction.

The groups were audio taped. I hired someone to transcribe the audio-tapes and the result was approximately 45 pages of transcript for each group (1 ½ spaced). There were 5 participants for the -2 group and 7 for the 2+ group. At first I was concerned that 5 would be too few people however I found that it simply allowed for more discussion and each person was able to share their perspective to a greater extent than in the group involving 7 people.

Participant Feedback

Focus group participants were provided with a point form summary of the evaluation results (Appendix P) and a draft of the complete results chapter. They were invited to provide feedback either by telephone or e-mail.

Data analysis

The data from the Post Training Evaluation (PTE) and Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard (HSTEP) was analysed using open coding. This data was coded four times before categories that appeared to reflect the data accurately were found. A big

part of the challenge at the beginning of the coding process was to find a pattern in the data, but refrain from imposing the pattern onto it. I found the lack of structure to be disconcerting. In an effort to find some order, before I started analysing the PTE or HSTEP, I looked over the literature review in the proposal and from that began to develop what I thought might be a list of factors that would be applicable to transfer at Winnipeg Child and Family Services. I developed my categories list from these factors and proceeded to code the PTE. After coding I reviewed my approach and decided that the categories I had developed were too narrow and were dividing the data up too much. I decided to take a fresh look at developing a categories list. At the same time I referred back to the literature on grounded theory and qualitative analysis. I began by referring back to Strauss (1987) particularly his chapter on Codes and Coding (p. 55-81) and the work of Kirby & McKenna (1989). I also reviewed the PTE question that participants were answering as well as my corresponding research question.

It was difficult to develop category titles that fit the data. I turned to Scheirer's (1981) "Analytical Framework for the Study of Social Program Implementation" and decided to try to use it for coding the Post Training Evaluation. After coding I typed each bibbit in a list with the corresponding category title. If the bibbit fit in more than one category I included them in both and provided the cross-reference code in brackets at the end of the sentence.

I then went to the Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard (HSTEP) responses. Before coding them I read through all of the responses and developed lists of factors people listed as helping or hindering transfer. These became my categories. I then coded all of the HSTEPS and developed lists of each bibbit with the corresponding

category. At this point I felt that I needed to refer, once again, to the literature on grounded theory. I found Maykut and Morehouse's (1994) discussion of the constant comparative method complemented Kirby & McKenna (1989). Both authors use Glaser & Strauss (1967) as the original source for their methods.

I then wrote a summary of each list and developed what Maykut and Morehouse (1994) call a "rule of inclusion" for each category. After doing this I began questioning the use of Scheirer's (1981) framework, as I seemed to be forcing the bibbits to fit the categories. I was concerned I was also putting more meaning onto some of the bibbits than they actually contained (i.e. I would put something in the macro level category when people didn't specify that it was macro).

I decided to return to the data and use Maykut and Morehouse's practice of developing a "discovery sheet" (p. 132-133). Glaser (1992) suggests that category names must come from sociological constructs or in vivo codes. I kept the suggestions of both these sources in mind as I developed a discovery sheet. I looked for in vivo codes in particular as I felt they would keep me close to the data, but I also wrote down what might be sociological constructs or terms that grow out of program management or training management theory. All the bibbits from the Post Training Evaluation and Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard (HSTEP) were already on computer. I then took the bibbit lists and combined them into a list for 'hindered' and a list for 'helped' (the application of training on the job). I reviewed all of the bibbits by comparing them with the original HSTEP returns to ensure that they had the correct identity code, I had transcribed them correctly and there was no information missing.

Then I saved a master list of each, enlarged the print so that it was easier to read and printed them off, the 'helped' list on white paper and 'hindered' on yellow.

I decided I would try the method suggested by Maykut and Morehouse (1994) and literally cut and paste each bibbit with the appropriate category. I returned to my discovery sheet and chose the first category name that popped out. I decided to call it 'reality vs. ideal'. It seemed that this phrase had come up in the data a lot and if I coded the data in this way I might learn something interesting.

I then developed the category: 'refresh/rehash'. I found it interesting that a large number of people commented that the training had been a review. Some saw this as a help, others a hindrance.

The next category I developed was called 'utility'. There were a number of participants who specifically commented that the training was useful or that they had used the ideas presented.

I continued category development in this pattern until I finished putting all of the bibbits with the appropriate category. Then I compared the category titles with the ones I'd used in the earlier rounds of coding. I found that using the in vivo codes or categories that emerged while examining the data proved to be much more useful than when I developed categories strictly from terms found in the literature. I was able to look at the data in a fresh way and was much more confident that my categories actually reflected what the participants were saying.

Again I returned to my research questions, revised them (Appendix N) and I decided to use them to form the main categories and then develop sub categories from there. I then developed categories using the discovery sheet as a starting point and the

literature and previous category lists to develop the most meaningful category title possible. The categories fit into four main areas:

1. Training event
2. Perceived transfer
3. Transfer environment
4. Transfer interventions suggested

(See Appendix Q).

Once I had developed the category and code list I returned to the bibbit lists from the Post Training Evaluation and Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard and coded them all. Using the coded bibbit lists I made lists for each category and ordered them alpha numerically. I then printed the lists, and reviewed them to ensure that I had not omitted any bibbits when cross referencing, or omitted bibbits altogether. I then decided that when I had bibbits that had several distinct categories included, I would underline the part that referred to the category in question. That way I didn't have to take the comment out of context but could clearly see what part of it applied to the category. Bibbits that included several categories were coded as such and cross-referenced. I then saved these revised lists and printed them.

After doing that I reviewed them for properties and developed property titles. I then created a new list with the property titles and corresponding bibbits below. Finally I wrote a summary of each category.

The Post Training Evaluation (PTE) served as the beginning of category and property development. The categories were expanded with the Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard (HSTEP) responses. I did not pursue any further analysis of the

PTE and HSTEP at this point, but moved on to planning for data collection through the use of focus groups.

Focus Groups

I began my analysis only after reviewing and editing each transcript. This was important because the transcriber was not familiar with Winnipeg Child and Family Services or the child welfare field and therefore some terms had been transcribed incorrectly. Accuracy of the transcript is crucial for the data analysis process that follows. I coded each transcript using the codes that were developed for the Post Training Evaluation and Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard and added new codes as new categories emerged. I developed category lists of bibbits (see revised categories list Appendix R). I then identified properties of each category and identified them by assigning a different colour of highlighter marker. Rather than reorganizing the category lists according to the properties represented I simply identified them by using several colours of highlighter markers. I completed two drafts summarizing the descriptive information found on each of the category lists. The second draft was a chart depicting the distinctive information gained from each focus group as well as experiences, views or opinions that were shared by both groups (Appendix S).

The process of analysis including describing and analysing was cyclical in nature. I did 'memoing' throughout, some writing of an analytical nature and met with staff at the Quality Assurance, Research, and Planning Program to begin the process of documenting overall themes that were emerging. The research questions were used as a way of organizing our process.

I continued with my analysis by engaging in 'cross referencing' and 'hurricane thinking', both methods that are suggested by Kirby and McKenna (1989). Cross referencing refers to looking for the presence or absence of links between the categories and noting them in order to begin to develop patterns or trends in the data (Kirby & McKenna, 1989). Hurricane thinking involves developing a visual depiction of the analysis by organizing the categories in relation to the research question (Kirby & McKenna, 1989). Both these processes provided further insight into links in the data and possible explanations regarding training and transfer.

For the cross-referencing I printed out the categories list that was developed after analysing focus groups. Then I went category by category, printing a different category list for each category. I drew a box around the category I was cross-referencing and highlighted the various dimensions using the same colour of highlighter for the property that I had when I analysed the categories. In addition beside each dimension that was cross-referenced with a dimension in the original category I put a line for each time that the cross-reference had occurred. I colour coded these lines according to whether the bibbit was found in the Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard and Post Training Evaluation transcripts, or one of the two focus groups. When I started it was unclear to me if I would need to code according to where the bibbits originated but I decided that that amount of detail was not difficult to include so decided to do it just in case.

This was quite time consuming and required a lot of concentration. I found I was relying heavily on the accuracy of my earlier coding where I had put the other category codes found in the bibbit in brackets. Some further coding was done in the process of

cross-referencing, as there were some connections that were missed the first round of coding. I had initially been getting caught up in the detail when doing the analysis. In the end I tried to look at broad strokes connections between the categories and point out specific dimensions that were connected within that.

I conducted analysis of the memos in order to document the process of data collection and further my analytical thinking about the data and analysis conducted throughout the research process. This was done by reading through all of the memos and noting the concept or theme in the margin. These concepts and themes were then compiled into a list that was then used to develop my discussion and conclusions chapter. Reviewing the memos assisted in examining how my own views might have impacted the research results. Through out the process I returned to the actual data collected to ensure that all concepts were in fact evident in the data.

Analysis of the research process as documented in the memos was essential in my later recounting of it for this final report. Given that each decision and step in the process can not be outlined explicitly in this report, the documentation in my journal allowed me to provide an accurate summary of the process.

Strengths and Limitations of the Methods

“So what is a successful evaluation? To anticipate a bit, an evaluation attains practical perfection when it provides the best information possible on the key policy questions within the given set of real-world constraints” (Berg & Rossi, 1990, p. 9). Most research has limitations, however efforts to ensure that it is credible are very important. Inductive research and evaluation should be relevant in the workplace (Strauss & Corbin,

1990; Berg, 1998; Reamer, 1998; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). "The aim [of the deductive approach] is to create knowledge in the grand sense, as opposed to the aim of the inductive approach, whose goal is to gather information for a practical purpose" (Reamer, 1998, p. 31). The credibility of the research should not be jeopardised in order to make it relevant to the workplace.

Marshall & Rossman (1999) refer to the work of Lincoln and Guba for the four key concerns when judging qualitative research. "The first is credibility, in which the goal is to demonstrate that the inquiry was conducted in such a manner as to ensure that the subject was accurately identified and described" (p.192). This is the reason that qualitative research emphasizes gaining an in-depth understanding of the issue being studied. It is also crucial that the researcher defines the "parameters" of the study and clearly identifies through the research questions what the study is about (Marshall & Rossman, 1999).

The second construct proposed by Lincoln and Guba is transferability "in which the researcher must argue that his findings will be useful to others in similar situations, with similar research questions or questions of practice" (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 193). Some suggest that the transferability or generalizability of qualitative research to other settings is problematic. "To counter challenges, the researcher can refer to the original theoretical framework to show how data collection and analysis will be guided by concepts and models" (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 193). This can also be dealt with by using more than one data source to develop an understanding of an issue. This is referred to as triangulation (Fortune & Reid, 1999; Marshall & Rossman, 1999). The more that a finding is replicated using different kinds of data collection, the more generalizable

the findings are. "Data from different sources can be used to corroborate, elaborate, or illuminate the research in question. Designing a study in which multiple cases, multiple informants, or more than one data-gathering method are used can greatly strengthen the study's usefulness for other settings" (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 194). This research endeavor included three separate steps of data collection with the sample for the first being different than that of the later two steps.

The third construct is dependability "in which the researcher attempts to account for changing conditions in the phenomenon chosen for study and changes in the design created by an increasingly refined understanding of the setting"(Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 194).

The final construct, confirmability, "captures the traditional concept of objectivity". Could the findings of the study be confirmed by another? "By doing so, they remove evaluation from some inherent characteristic of the researcher (objectivity) and place it squarely on the data themselves. Thus, the qualitative criterion is, do the data help confirm the general findings and lead to the implications" (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 194)? A detailed documenting of the research process is important in order to be able to confirm the findings. Marshall & Rossman (1999) refer to the earlier works of Marshall (1985a, 1990) which recommend four "additional criteria for assessing the value and trustworthiness of qualitative research" (p. 195). She suggests that the design and methods must be explicitly detailed, the research questions and the data's relevance should be made explicit and rigorously argued, the study be situated in a scholarly context, and records must be kept so that the research can be examined by others.

Strauss & Corbin (1990) outline criteria for the research process and empirically grounding the theory. A lot of emphasis is put on outlining the research process in the final report. In order to ensure that the theory is grounded the researcher must ensure that concepts are generated and systematically related. There should be many conceptual linkages and the categories must be well developed so that there is conceptual density. Variation and specification should be built into the theory and clearly linked to the data. Broader conditions that affect the phenomenon must be built into the explanation. Process should be taken into account. Finally, theoretical findings should be significant (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

The various steps were taken to ensure that my own views and biases were explicit in the research process. In addition to keeping a process and reflections log, I completed some conceptual baggage reflections including completing the Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard. I reflected on how I would have answered the Post Training Evaluation question about barriers. My immediate reaction to the focus group interviews was audio taped, this included discussion with the staff person from the Quality Assurance, Research & Planning program who was the written recorder at the Focus Group Interview. Each of these steps assisted with making my personal views evident and as something to be included in the analysis.

As mentioned earlier, I wrote memos to document the research process throughout. This included decisions regarding various steps of the process and conceptual thinking about the findings. The process was documented as the research progressed in order to ensure accuracy and detail.

Research participants responded positively to this research approach. The results chapter will address issues of response rate, which was quite high. In addition, those who participated in focus groups shared their opinions thoughtfully and without reservation. It was clear from the discussion that participants in the focus groups were interested in the research topic and wanted to talk about their experiences and opinions. Many expressed their appreciation to me for doing this evaluation. The process of sharing a draft of my results with the focus group participants made me much more confident of my findings.

This evaluation is limited by the fact that the findings are based on self report information of social workers at Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS). The findings would be strengthened if perspectives of supervisors, collaterals within WCFS (foster care, adoptions, family support), managers, external collaterals, and clients would have been examined.

The absence of intensive Competency Based Inservice Training staff involvement in the design of this program evaluation is unfortunate in that this researcher has missed an opportunity for learning. It may also decrease the potential for the research to be used. This is a limitation of the research but it is also an example of how program evaluation must respond to the real life situation of the program or Agency where it is being implemented.

All data regarding the training event that was gathered using the Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard and Focus Group Interviews is retrospective. This is a limitation of the research. Many participants had taken the training several years prior to this research so their memory of how much they learned etc. may be compromised by the passing of time.

It should be noted that the question on the focus group interview guide concerning the use of training on the job was confusing for participants. They were confused about whether the question was asking them how much of the curriculum they had applied or with what percentage of their client families had they applied the training. This question would need to be clarified if further research in this area was to be conducted.

Kirby & McKenna (1989) refer to the importance of “critical reflection on the social context” (p.129). This evaluation attempted to view the experience of both the research participants and the Competency Based Inservice Training program in context. While it may not have examined all aspects of the context, it did address the child welfare system in the context of larger society, training in the context of an Agency that employs professionals but requires specialized skill building and Winnipeg Child and Family Services in the context of a child welfare system in Manitoba which is fraught with contradictions, inconsistencies and highly politicized.

Ethical , Political and Practical Considerations

When conducting qualitative research, the extent to which one enters the world of the participant means that some other considerations are also important. The ability to relate to others is essential in the conduct of qualitative research. Marshall and Rossman (1999) suggest that interpersonal skills are key to the success of qualitative research. In order to conduct such research one must build trust, maintain good relations, respect norms of reciprocity and consider ethical issues. According to Marshall and Rossman (1999) this includes an “awareness of the politics of organizations as well as sensitivity to human interaction” (p.85).

I have attempted to be sensitive to the politics and reality of Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS) in the design of this evaluation. My description of the Competency Based Inservice Training program attempted to demonstrate the WCFS is a partner with the CFSB in this venture and as such has power over only some aspects of the training. I have also been conscious of impact that the reorganization has had on everyone in the organization and attempted to design an evaluation that respects the limited time for new projects.

I respect the commitment that Winnipeg Child and Family Services and individual participants have made in order for me to conduct this evaluation. I made a commitment to share my results with the Agency and individual participants. Participants were given the opportunity to provide feedback on an initial draft of the results and will be provided with a summary of the research upon its conclusion. Ensuring that a comfortable and convenient setting was provided for the focus groups and providing refreshments and food for participants were concrete ways in which the research participants' efforts were acknowledged.

Much of the literature speaks about showing respect for participants by taking time to build trust. While building trust is important, in this research workload demands were a more prominent concern for participants. Participant's limited time for participation in evaluation was taken into consideration in designing this evaluation. This was part of the appeal in using Curry's Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard as a data collection instrument. In addition, focus groups were limited to 1 ½ hours in length and participants were given a point form version of the results and a complete version to choose from when providing feedback. It is likely that the fact that I am a

Family Service Social Worker at Winnipeg Child and Family Services assisted in establishing trust with research participants.

My aim was to design an evaluation that respected both the organization that served as the evaluation site and the individual participants. This involved careful analysis of the data to ensure that it reflected the views of the participants and researching the details of the Agency and its context so that it was accurately described. Attention to careful data analysis was particularly important given my dual role as an employee of Winnipeg Child and Family Services and evaluator. There is no doubt that I entered this research with my own opinions and observations about Competency Based Training at Winnipeg Child and Family Services. My own experience contributed to the evaluation throughout by prompting questions, identifying key sources of information and having a general understanding of the structure and practices of Winnipeg Child and Family Services. Any finding that reflected my own views had to be evident in the data collected in order to be included in the final report.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

This chapter provides a description of the implementation of Competency Based Inservice Training at Winnipeg Child and Family Services. This is followed by the quantitative results of the Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard and corresponding demographic information. The qualitative results from data collected through the Post Training Evaluation, Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard, Focus Group Interviewing and Participant Feedback form the bulk of the evaluation results found this chapter.

The Human Resources Department at Winnipeg Child and Family Services currently has a Director and 5.5 staff positions. The 5.5 staff positions include an Executive Assistant, an Employee Relations and Benefits Coordinator, a Benefits Officer, a Human Resources Staffing and Classification Coordinator, a half time Human Resource Specialist for Family Support Workers and an Aboriginal Liaison Coordinator. The program is responsible for staff recruitment, selection, orientation, terminations and leaves of absences; management of personnel files, benefits, performance appraisals, maintaining a job evaluation program and human resources information system and training and professional development. The administration of Competency Based Inservice Training fits within the training and professional development aspect of the program.

The staffing complement for managing the Competency Based Inservice Training (CBIT) program at Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS) has remained consistent throughout its implementation at WCFS. The Director of Human Resources and the Human Resources Executive Assistant have been responsible for providing management and administrative support to the program. CBIT is a small part of the job description of both the Director of Human Resources as well as the Executive Assistant. Given the magnitude of the responsibilities of these two positions it is not surprising that a detailed plan regarding the management of the CBIT program including the transfer of the training has not been completed. In addition, despite the fact that the training is specific to provision of basic child protection services, it does not appear that there has been pressure for more specific management of transfer from managers or supervisors in the Program Services area of the Agency. Despite this, the CBIT program has developed over time. Following is a description of the development of the CBIT program at WCFS.

Implementation of Competency Based Inservice Training at Winnipeg Child and Family Services

Competency-Based Inservice Training was an initiative of the Child Protection and Support Services Program of the Government of Manitoba. The process of implementation at Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS) began with management and supervisory staff of WCFS taking the Competency Based Training for Managers and Supervisors from November 1993 – January 1994. Later in 1994, The Individual Training Needs Assessment was conducted within WCFS. This needs assessment tool has not been conducted at WCFS since then.

In 1994/95 the first group of staff completed the core training modules with training conducted by trainers from Institute for Human Services (IHS). Still in 1995 supervisors received an overview of the core training curriculum for workers. This was done in an attempt to assist supervisors in supporting the workers once they returned from training. During this time, IHS trainers trained qualified individuals from Manitoba who were interested in becoming trainers. By the spring of 1996 two groups of workers began the core training curriculum taught by trainers from Manitoba.

Priority was placed on training all Family Service Social Workers and their supervisors in the core competencies. Training in the specialized areas and related competencies has not been offered to date. The Winnipeg Child and Family Services Project Description/Summary –Approved Service Projects: 1997/98 for Competency-Based Training states that, “[T]he priority for Service Unit attendance shall be Family Service Units, Foster Care Units, Family Support, Adoption and then Volume Management. All spaces not used shall be available to other regions and agencies” (p.3).

There are several policies and practices that have guided the implementation of Competency Based Inservice Training (CBIT) program at Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS). These decisions were made in an attempt to support transfer of training. In 1996 a decision was made to send service units to training as a group and have their supervisors go through the training with them. On Feb. 18, 1997 a “Personnel Policy regarding Competency-Based Training” was adopted within WCFS. It provides an overview of CBIT program and includes training guidelines including mandatory attendance, coverage while at training, and monitoring of attendance.

In April 1997 supervisors at Winnipeg Child and Family Services attended the "Training, Orientation and Optimal Learning (TOOL)" workshop referred to above. A manual by the same name accompanied the training and was provided for each participant to keep for future reference. The intention was to ensure supervisors could support the social workers in their service units in the application of training to their job.

In May 1997 Competency-Based Training Attendance Policy Guidelines were adopted within Winnipeg Child and Family Services.

By April 2000, with the exception of a few people, all experienced Family Service Social Workers at Winnipeg Child and Family Services had completed the Competency Based Inservice Training Core Curriculum. Training was now being delivered to other program areas including foster care, family preservation and reunification and adoption. The Agency was now at the point where it could deliver the training to its intended target group, new workers to child welfare. This was timely given the significant turnover in staff during 1999/2000 and the large number of new employees to the Agency.

Despite the fact that this program has been in existence for eight years, this evaluation is timely given the fact that the program is now being delivered to its targeted staff. Existing social workers' evaluations of the training and extent of transfer are probably shared with new employees in the context of the service unit. Given this, and the likelihood that the opinions and practices of experienced workers might influence new workers' approaches to the training and its application, I decided to include both new and experienced social workers in the evaluation.

Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard Quantitative Results

Following is a description of the quantitative information gathered from the Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard (HSTEP) and the attached demographic questions. It should be noted that I received a considerable amount of positive feedback for conducting this evaluation. This was further supported by the excellent response rates I had for each of my stages of data collection. One hundred and twenty (120) HSTEP postcards were sent out and 65 (54%) were completed and returned. In terms of total amount of experience in child welfare, only 6% of respondents fit in the 0-2 year category. This is not surprising given that the Agency does not provide Competency Based Inservice Training to employees until they are close to the end of their six month probationary period and the fact that the training program takes 3-4 months to complete. Twenty nine percent said they had between 2 and 5 years experience, 26% had 5-10 years experience. The largest percentage of participants, 38%, had ten or more years experience. (See Table 1)

In terms of child welfare experience prior to taking Competency Based Inservice Training (CBIT), 40% said they had less than two years experience in child welfare prior to taking the training. This is quite a high percentage given the fact that the Agency has been working at training all existing employees while trying to provide the training for new hires to the Agency. The remaining 60% were distributed pretty evenly across the other categories with 20% being in the 2-5 year category, 23% having 5-10 years experience prior to taking the training and 17% having 10 or more years experience in child welfare prior to taking CBIT. (See Table 1)

Table 1

Experience and timing of taking Competency Based Inservice Training

| | Less than 2 yrs | 2 - 5 yrs | 5 - 10 yrs | 10 + yrs |
|--|--------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Total experience in child welfare | 4 (6%) | 19 (29%) | 17 (26%) | 25 (39%) |
| Experience in child welfare before taking CBIT | 26 (40%) | 13 (20%) | 15 (23%) | 11 (17%) |

There was an almost 50/50 split between those who had experience as a social worker outside of child welfare and those who did not. Seventy six percent of respondents either had no experience in other social service agencies or less than two years. This sample shows a strong majority of participants with little social work experience outside of child welfare. (See Table 2)

The question about post secondary education asked participants to check all categories that applied. Table 3 shows the results from this question.

Not surprisingly, there was a very high percentage of respondents who had university education. Eighty nine percent of the respondents to the Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard (HSTEP) had a university level social work degree. Of the 11% who did not have a university level social work degree, one had a Master's degree in another discipline, two had Bachelor's degrees in another discipline, 2 had certificates in social work, 2 did not specify. Following is more detailed information about the educational level of the HSTEP respondents.

Detailed education statistics:

| <u>Level of education</u> | <u>Number of respondents</u> |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| BSW | 35 |
| BSW + other bachelors | 19 |
| Other Bachelors | 2 |
| MSW | 4 |
| Other Masters | 1 |
| Other | 4 |

| <u>Detailed education statistics summarized:</u> | <u># of respondents</u> | <u>Percentage</u> |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------|
| MSW | 4 | (6%) |
| BSW (19 have other bachelors degrees as well) | 54 | (83%) |
| No BSW (University level social work degree) | 7 | (11%) |

Table 2

Years Experience Working as a Social Worker in other Social Service Agencies

| N/A | Less than 2 yrs | 2 - 5 yrs | 5 - 10 yrs | 10 + yrs |
|-------------|-----------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| 31 (48%) | 18 (28%) | 7 (11%) | 5 (8%) | 3 (5%) |

(1 missing)

Table 3

Post Secondary Education

| BSW | MSW | Bachelor | Masters | Other |
|-----|-----|----------|---------|-------|
| 57 | 4 | 24 | 1 | 4 |

Table 4 provides a summary of the responses to the statements on the Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard (HSTEP). Seventy-nine percent of the HSTEP respondents said that they either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement **‘overall I was very satisfied with CBIT core modules’**. Very few people were undecided with regard to this statement. Seventeen percent said they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. That is still a significant percentage to say that overall they were not satisfied with the Competency Based Inservice Training modules. This data collection instrument does not provide an opportunity for respondents to specify which part they were not satisfied with or in what way they were not satisfied.

“During CBIT I learned a substantial amount of information.” Sixty six percent of respondents said they agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Nine percent were undecided. And one quarter of the respondents said they either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

“I have used the knowledge and skills I learned from CBIT on the job.” Respondents were not as confident of this as they were of the two previous statements. While there are still 66% who either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement, the proportion who strongly agreed was only 6%. The proportion of people who were undecided was 14%. Nineteen percent said they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

“As a result of using the knowledge and skills from CBIT, I have observed client progress.” This is the area where there is a marked drop in respondents’ ratings. Only 19% said they strongly agreed or agreed to this statement and the remaining 81%

are either undecided, disagreed or strongly disagreed. Almost 50% said they are undecided, leaving the remaining 22% in the disagree or strongly disagree category.

“As a result of CBIT, I am a more effective worker.” Almost half the participants (48%) stated that they either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Thirty three percent were undecided and 19% indicated that they either disagreed or strongly disagree with this statement.

The quantitative results provide a starting point for understanding how participants evaluated Competency-Based Inservice Training and their own transfer. The qualitative results that follow expand on these results by providing an in-depth explanation of participants' evaluation of training and transfer at Winnipeg Child and Family Services.

Qualitative Results

Qualitative Data from Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard and Post Training Evaluation

This information was used to develop initial categories and begin development of properties. Areas of training event, transfer and transfer environment were developed at a preliminary level using the qualitative data.

Demographic Information About Focus Group Participants

As was explained above, in the course of this evaluation I conducted two focus groups. One was comprised of individuals who had less than two years experience in child welfare prior to taking the training. This group is referred to as the –2 years group.

Table 4

Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard Quantitative Results

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Total |
|--|----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------|-------|
| 1. Overall, I was very satisfied with CBIT core modules | 9 (14%) | 42 (65%) | 3 (5%) | 7 (11%) | 4 (6%) | 65 |
| 2. During CBIT I learned a substantial amount of information. | 7 (11%) | 36 (55%) | 6 (9%) | 15 (23%) | 1 (2%) | 65 |
| 3. I have used the knowledge and skills I learned from CBIT on the job. | 4 (6%) | 39 (60%) | 9 (14%) | 11 (17%) | 1 (2%) | 65 |
| 4. As a result of using the knowledge and skills from CBIT, I have observed client progress. | 3 (5%) | 16 (25%) | 32 (49%) | 13 (20%) | 1 (2%) | 65 |
| 5. As a result of CBIT, I am a more effective worker. | 4 (6%) | 27 (42%) | 21 (33%) | 11 (17%) | 1 (2%) | 64 |

The other group was comprised of participants who had two or more years experience in child welfare when they took the training, they are referred to as the 2+ years group.

Please note that in order to protect the anonymity of research participants, all names of participants have been replaced with a pseudonym. The names that appear in this document are not the actual names of the research participants.

The -2 years focus group was comprised of 5 women, 3 were Family Service Social Workers and the remaining 2 were Permanent Ward Social Workers. In terms of total years of child welfare experience the range was from 1.5 years to 8 years. One participant had under 2 years experience in child welfare, another participant had 3-5 years, and the 3 remaining had 5 –10 years experience in child welfare, with the average being 5.2 years. (See Table 5)

Experience in child welfare prior to taking Competency Based Inservice Training ranged from 5 months to 1.5 years with the average being 0.9 years. (See Table 5)

The 2+ group was comprised of 5 women and 2 men. Two were Permanent Ward Social Workers, 2 were Family Service Social Workers and 3 were Intake Social Workers. In terms of total years of child welfare experience the range was from 2.5 – 29 years. There were 3 participants with 10+ years, 2 participants with 5-10 years, and 2 participants with 2-5 years experience. (See Table 6)

In terms of experience prior to taking CBIT, 3 participants had 10 or more years, 3 had 2-5 years, and 1 person had 1.5 years. (See Table 6)

Table 5

Profile of -2 focus group participants

| Current position | Years experience in child welfare | Years experience in child welfare before taking CBIT |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| FSSW | 8 | 1 yr. |
| PWSW | 3 | 5 mo. |
| PWSW | 6.5 | 1 yr. |
| FSSW | 1.5 | 4-6 mo. |
| FSSW | 7 | 1.5 yrs. |

Table 6

Profile of 2+ focus group participants

| Position | Total years child welfare experience | Years child welfare experience prior to taking CBIT |
|----------|--------------------------------------|---|
| PWSW | 5.5 | 2 |
| FSSW | 29 | 27.5 |
| ISW | 4.5 | 3 |
| FSSW | 2.5 | 1.5 |
| ISW | 8.5 | 4.5 |
| ISW | 23 | 19 |
| PWSW | 22 | 20 |

FSSW – Family Service Social Worker
 ISW – Intake Social Worker
 PWSW – Permanent Ward Social Worker

Qualitative Results Combining Data from Post Training Evaluation, Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard and Focus Groups

Following are the descriptive results from analysis of Post Training Evaluations, Human Service Training Evaluation Postcards and Focus Group Interviews. The following results are organized in sequence according to the area addressed by each of the four research questions.

Training Event Overall

1. Content was relevant to the work these participants engage in on a daily basis.

Several aspects of the training content were referred to by the participants. These included information from Core 102, case planning and family-centred casework; 103, the effects of abuse and neglect on child development and 104, separation, placement, and reunification. The module on separation, placement, and reunification was most frequently referred to by the participants. This module seemed to have raised participant's awareness of the impact of bringing children into care and provided concrete ideas for causing as little disruption as possible for the child. Core 101 (family-centred child protective services) was the only module that participants uniformly agreed was dry, boring, and too basic. One participant stated, "I think in terms of the parts that were too basic, I found the first module was very much too basic. I mean to even somebody just coming out of university, like, this was Social Work 101" (FG/2+Anne12).

Participants felt that the training content related specifically to their work but was not advanced enough to address the complex issues they were dealing with on a daily basis.

Sometimes the examples that they gave, were, I found a little too simple. Where we deal with such complex, multi-problematic families and children, that it touched on maybe one piece...(FG/-2Kate15).

Participants also qualified their comments about relevance of the curriculum with concerns that workload issues and lack of resources were not accounted for in the training.

2. The delivery and design of the training was seen as acceptable overall.

Participants referred to the impact of the trainer's skills, various training techniques and the design of the Competency Based Inservice Training overall. There were mixed opinions as to whether the trainers' acknowledgement of work environment barriers decreased the level of frustration participants felt about these barriers while at the training event. One person said:

caseload numbers far out weighed what could be manageable meeting the proposed documentation protocols. The facilitator did not want to acknowledge that case management following CBT protocols is unrealistic and therefore lost any commitment for participants to even try to apply such. (HSTEP 54)

One focus group participant noted that an understanding trainer was not enough to curb the problems created by the lack of fit between the training and the realities of the job. "I had quite a sympathetic presenter, but I still was overwhelmed with frustration" (FG/2+Gail14).

Various training techniques including the use of slides, music, colouring, group work, handouts, checklists, and case discussion were mentioned by participants. There was mixed opinion about the effectiveness of these training techniques. The -2 group

seemed to tire of the group work and presentations by training participants. They indicated that this training technique had already been overused in university.

There was some feedback regarding the overall design of the training. This was regarding the duration of each of the training modules, the amount of information delivered during the modules and the time back in the work environment between modules. None of these issues was explored enough to make statements about their effectiveness.

Participants gave a relatively positive evaluation of the trainers, suggested that the training techniques used were quite effective and made some suggestions for changes to the overall design of the training. The design and delivery of the training event did not appear to have either a strongly positive or negative influence on transfer, but existed as a relatively neutral factor.

3. All participants felt that most of the training was a review of information and skills they had acquired in their university education and/or in their experience on the job.

The Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard and Post Training Evaluation responses included numerous references to the training being a good 'refresher' or review. These comments were made by participants who took the training when they had less than two years experience in child welfare and those with two or more years experience when they started Competency Based Inservice Training. A participant with more than 10 years experience when they took the training provided the following feedback, "not a lot of info that was new to me, but a good refresher" (HSTEP 44). According to one participant who had 5-10 years experience in child welfare when they

took the training, “CBIT was a good re-learning experience” (HSTEP 91). Someone with 2-5 years experience commented that a hindrance to application of learning on the job was, “Models which were too basic – repetition of BSW material” (HSTEP 29). Finally, a participant with less than two years experience said something that helped the application of learning on the job was to “refresh areas of child development, abuse, assessment and intervention especially ‘Goals & Activities’” (HSTEP 103).

The feedback from focus group participants supported and provided more depth to the findings from the Post Training Evaluation and Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard. All focus group participants felt that most of the training was a review. There were some interesting differences in how each group described their learning experience. Participants in the 2+ group used the training as a refresher and a way to refine skills they already had. “Yeah, I found that some of the things that ... I knew already helped me to refine some of the skills rather than learning something new it was learning how to do it...(better).” (FG/2+Anne12). Another participant said it provided a new perspective,

I think the part that I found the most helpful was the case planning and kind of how to approach the case. Some of the other areas were, I think more of a review of the information I already knew. So as far as implementing new information a lot of it I kind of knew from over the years. But certainly the getting your mind around approaching things in a different way and whether I actually wrote it down, say in my dictation or it was just kind of in your mind when you’re assessing a family or the kinds of questions one is asking so, its changed the way I do things. (FG/2+Leah20)

Participants in the –2 years group talked more specifically about the Competency Based Inservice Training being a review of material they had already learned in university, either in the BSW or Arts education. The following excerpt from the focus group transcript illustrates this view.

FG/-2Kate11: I think a lot of the skills were there. (already) There was some direction in implementing them maybe. ... I found ...the child development piece ... was awful repetitive. ... having just, done some of those courses in Arts and in Social Work I found that core to be pretty tough to get through. ... some of the diagnostics about recognizing abuse and thinking 'well, I've been doing this job a year, if you can't recognize that'-....

FG/-2Chris11: I just want to make sure that I understood you right. When you were talking about the effects of abuse and neglect on children you said that was difficult to get through, that was because it was...

FG/-2Kate12: Not emotionally difficult, but difficult in that it was repetitive, um I had taken information of that nature and I know that I didn't just represent, (myself) it was a feeling in general that that was the hardest core for me to get through.

In the participant feedback about the preliminary results one individual felt strongly that the content of Competency Based Inservice Training, particularly its practical nature was not included in the social work university curriculum. This comment points to the importance of gathering further data in this area prior to drawing firm conclusions. This individual had graduated with a BSW more than 25 years ago and it is possible that the social work curriculum has changed over the years.

4. Participants' responses indicated support for Winnipeg Child and Family Services' policies of mandatory attendance and caseload coverage, but suggested changes for some practices surrounding the training event.

While the issue of mandatory training was not raised explicitly, related statements indicated that there was acceptance that the training was and should continue to be mandatory for all staff at Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS). Some participants noted that some WCFS staff would not have attended training if it had been voluntary. The comment of a participant who came to the training with 27 years experience seemed to sum up the overall perspective all participants.

I've been around for a fair period of time like Leah, and I learned some new things but also looking at the review part where people have been around a long time it was a good process. I believe, like Gail, I had a difficulty with the fact that there was certainly stuff that was very basic and maybe at times boring. And I have difficulty with being bored. But I think it was a good process to force me through. And I think at the end of it, I felt comfortable with the feeling that a good review is something we need and probably should have them more often- (FG/2+Tim11)

Some participants noted that their more experienced co-workers were not enthusiastic about the training and that when they attended the training, no one else in their service unit wanted to. This could indicate that people would not necessarily have attended the training voluntarily.

Caseload coverage for individuals attending training was viewed as essential. Most participants indicated that they were provided caseload coverage while at training. Some participants struggled with leaving their case related work for the duration of training and felt compelled to return calls while at training and/or meet with clients and go into the office after a day of training.

One participant in the -2 year group stated that she was not provided with case coverage while at training. This individual had been told prior to training that she would not be responsible for responding to caseload issues while at training. However, when it came time to attend training she was told she would have to check her messages and be responsible for finding someone to attend court on her behalf or attend herself. The following statement indicates the impact this had on her training experience.

... And I said 'what's the point of me going because I won't get my certificate, why not wait'. And I felt that was a big struggle. I didn't like having that pressure, 'cause I really wanted to go to core training and learn. But not have to check my messages four times a day and wondering if somebody got this emergency call that was left on there, and all those kinds of things. (FG/-2Sandra44)

Participants were unanimous in their recommendation that Competency Based Inservice Training should be offered early in a worker's employment with Winnipeg Child and Family Services. Comments on the Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard indicated that the training would be more beneficial if it was offered closer to a worker's date of hire. It is important to note that this feedback came from both experienced workers and those with less than two years experience on the job. One person said that a hindrance to using the training was, "CBIT not being offered until I had been working at CFS for 1.5 years. It should be offered immediately to new workers" (HSTEP 29).

A focus group participant who had more than 8 years experience in child welfare shared her observations of what happens to workers who are new to Winnipeg Child and Family Services as well as her opinion about when the training would be most effective.

And it would be nice if they were implemented as training for when you come into the Agency you take CBIT. Not this well, five years down the road maybe we'll send you or-. It needs to be part of the training process, there- like I look at new workers coming on to the Agency and they're kind of like 'here's your cases, go!' And there isn't even any orientation let alone the training. It should be implemented right from the get-go. You're coming onto the Agency, here's the courses, you need to go take those first, then you'll start. (FG/2+Anne43)

There was some discussion about taking the training prior to doing casework, however the opinion of this participant in the -2 group points out the advantages to taking the training after beginning work in the field of child welfare.

...I actually think that by having it a few months after you start your job you, being a kind of a 'green' social worker that it does allow you to apply certain cases. Like when they're talking you can think about particular cases ... and you have the opportunity to do the group work and apply a particular case So that was maybe one plus of having it a little further in, into the job -. (FG/-2Brenda8)

While no specific timeline was explored, based on participants' feedback regarding their own experience, a tentative conclusion that an Agency social worker should begin Competency Based Inservice Training within their first six months of employment can be suggested.

The Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard indicated that there was mixed opinion about the merits of taking the training as a service unit. This issue was explored further in focus groups where participants seemed to be of the opinion that the drawbacks to attending training together with the entire service unit outweighed the benefits of the practice. These participants explained that the reason for sending entire units to the training together was to engage in 'team building'. The added benefit was thought to be that everyone in the unit would be 'on the same page' when they approached casework. These participants concluded, however that the training was not designed in such a way that any team building happened.

... I think it was nice to go with the unit because we went for lunch and stuff like that, but because of the style of the teaching and splitting up into groups with this many people, you really weren't operating as a unit. Like, I think it would be beneficial for a unit to be dealing with a lot of the issues but that didn't really occur. We were with a number of other people so there really, ultimately wasn't a purpose for going as a group in terms of staff development or units' development. (FG/2+Tim17)

One participant had an experience that was unique from the others in the focus groups. In her situation attendance as a team was beneficial. "... I personally found it very helpful to go with the whole unit because afterwards, we kind of built on it and spent a team day away, kind of devising an assessment form and so on, strictly based on modules of CBT" (FG/2+Leah17).

One of the interesting findings from the focus groups was that the -2 group pointed out that one of the advantages of attending training as an individual was that you could meet a variety of people and learn from their experience. "Also, not going as a unit, you got to meet a variety of different people ...(with a different) levels of experience, education, background. We had people from up north, ... I think it was better than going the time I went with my unit, gave you an opportunity to meet new people" (FG/-2Kate5).

It is important to note that three of the four focus group participants who attended the training with their unit did so only after they had already been through it as an individual. These individuals did not feel that there were any benefits to attending the training a second time and felt quite strongly that sending service units to the training together should not be a priority.

The participant who attended the training on one occasion and went with her service unit found it beneficial. The benefits for this participant appeared to be linked to the fact that the unit did some follow up work together. This participant provided some helpful clarification in her feedback to the results,

...with the exception of our supervisor, none of us had previously attended the training. I do agree there is little value to require staff to attend the training more than once but I still feel there is a benefit for units to attend together to promote the implementation of the training and ongoing support in using the knowledge in the day to day business. (Leah -results feedback)

5. There was general agreement that the training was valuable and should be continued.

This overall assessment came from participants in the 2+ and -2 groups. One person's comments appeared to be reflective of most focus group participants.

I guess I'd just like to say that I think the CBT program is a valuable program. And I certainly think there are things that could be done differently, whether it's more support from management, better locations or whatever-. But I would hate to see the Agency just kind of disregard it and throw it out and try something else – it's good to have a training that hopefully all staff will be on the same page at some point and I think this is a good tool (FG/2+Leah42).

For many participants it was a struggle to identify the actual source of their knowledge and skills for child welfare work. Even with that in mind the comments of the participant quoted below indicate participants still felt the training was important.

.... And I think that the reality of our job is you get, you absorb some of this, but you get all of it on the job, you get all of this experience and this knowledge in real life. You get it working with your families, you get it working with your supervisors. That's the reality of the job. And this is, it's a good starting point ... and its important but personally I don't know how much of my skills I have today are from this training as opposed to the day-to-day work but it is important despite that. It is still important. And it should be supported. (FG/-2Brenda47)

Perceived Transfer

- 1. Competency Based Inservice Training is being used in the day to day work of these participants, however no one is using all of the training or applying it to the full extent that it was taught with all of their client families.**

Participants were asked to evaluate the extent to which they applied the training in their day to day jobs by choosing a number on a scale of 1 –10, with one being not at all and 10 completely. The participants in the 2+ group scores ranged from 5-9. One person said that she prioritized certain cases to use the training extensively and for those cases she would rate herself at a 9, whereas the others she would rate herself a 5. Using her high score, the average was 6.3, while using her low score the average was 5.7. The –2 group self assessment of use ranged from 4-7.5, with average being 5.7. Most participants rate themselves as implementing just about half of the training.

Participants spoke about the various ways in which they were using the training. There was discussion that the training heightened participants' sensitivity to certain issues,

I think if there's one module that really stuck in my mind and continues to stick in my mind and that I probably use on a scale of one to ten, probably an eight, is the last one, separation placement, -. I certainly consider whether a kid is coming in to care or not and will put in a great amount of work and or alternatives to try and not bring a kid into care, especially I mean- . It changed my thinking around infants. I think I went into the competency based thinking that, you know, well, if they're not really aware of their surroundings, and its not going to affect them as much. And certainly talking about the attachment and so on really makes me think twice, if not ten times before bringing a kid into care. (FG/2+Anne20)

One participant felt that the training had helped her be more change oriented and focused in her work with client families,

Yeah, particularly over the years with setting goals, objectives, goals, activities, so on, instead of general statements, you know when your working with a family. 'We'll monitor the family'. Well what does that mean? You know, for me, it made me focus on, what needs to change what does the client see needs to change and how specifically is that going to happen. So at the end, you either meet your goals or you don't meet the goals. So it was more concrete and I think it helped me as a worker move forward in working with the clients and help clients see that this is what they have chosen to work on or appeared to be a goal that was mutually in common. (FG/2+Leah11)

Yet another person reviewed the training material when she wrote assessments,

(I) did an assessment about a month ago where I said okay, I know all these behaviors but let me find a better way to sort of frame it. So I went back to my modules and thought 'oh, yeah, it says it really well says what I wanted to say'. And some of the other physical handouts and check sheets, I use that on a quick basis - (FG/-2Pamela24)

Others talked about the importance of having a common language to use in writing reports or discussing case situations throughout the Agency.

... There were a number of modules, the case planning and the child development pieces that I found very helpful. Especially as I used the language from those modules in writing memos to my boss, to get money, to get things done, case recording-. Any document that I write I implement the language at least from

those modules and the- certainly, the separation placement and reunification module I agree with this group, it was an excellent piece and pretty helpful I think to everyone. ... (FG/2+Don22)

Still others noted the difficulty of implementing the training as it was intended.

... you definitely see the effects of the abuse and neglect and the attachment issues on a day-to-day basis. And all of those, how that impacts long term ... and like Pamela was saying also, even though we do have more time as a Permanent Ward (worker) to some degree where it's not completely crisis oriented all the time. Still you can't implement that ideal placement of a child and the build-up to it and how you do it properly - you just can't. (FG/-2Brenda21)

... I think whenever you go to training, or you get new information you sort of want to implement it. So I think I tried specifically the case planning piece to try and get myself organized - 'Cause I mean, clearly it makes sense. But typically, like all things, its too much work and too much time and-.But I think you still go through those things in your head, like you may not write down activity but you're thinking okay now 'what exactly do I have to do'. ... (FG/-2Kate24)

One interesting finding was that participants in the 2+ group appeared to be acutely aware that they were not applying the training to its full potential. They seemed to feel personally responsible for this 'failure' in application of the training. Several participants talked about the guilt associated with making decisions that were not reflective of 'best practice' as they had been taught in Competency Based Inservice Training.

... but I like to be able to, even with other resources and other units you always can refer the 'best practice' so at least you're on the same board. It didn't really make any difference a lot of the time, but at least you felt like at least you're in conjunction with other people, their thoughts-. It's like you sort of knew what you should be doing and it was shared guilt, and (laughter), *really*, that's very positive... (FG/2+Tim23)

I think a lot of the comments that happened in our unit afterwards was ya, even at the unit meetings sometimes we would bring up a case example, somebody just wanting to get some feedback from their coworkers in terms of ways to go with a case. And a lot of comments that would come up would be something from Competency-based and a lot of the people would be saying 'yeah, it would be nice, if-, but-.' Just time restraints and case loads just didn't allow for using Competency-based and then we did get the guilt thing. (FG/2+Anne24)

These statements seemed to resonate with all participants in the group. Participants in the -2 group did not talk about feeling guilty that they were not able to implement the training to its full extent. It is not clear if this was not part of their experience or simply was not mentioned in the group. This group seemed that there was more acceptance of the fact that transfer was limited.

Transfer Environment

- 1. There is a lack of fit between the kind of work environment required to carry out 'best practice' as taught in the Competency Based Inservice Training curriculum and the work environment at Winnipeg Child and Family Services. Participants often referred to this as the 'ideal world' vs. the 'real world'.**

Competency Based Inservice Training - Training, Orientation and Optimal Learning Manual (TOOL) states that "Best Practice refers to the highest standards of child welfare practice, the ideal case planning and methodologies that would optimally serve families and children" (Ohio Department of Human Services & Institute for Human Services, TOOL Manual, no date provided, Glossary). 'Real World' as used by participants was understood to mean the work environment at Winnipeg Child and Family Services where participants are faced with excessive workload demands and resource shortages. There was considerable intensity contained in the participants' comments regarding this issue. One participant said, "Lots of info given based on 'best practice' and not in reality. In reality we would all like to do best practice-unfortunately that doesn't exist!!" (HSTEP 129). Another emphatically stated, "Get serious. This is the hardest part of this module is recognizing how far our lack of resources (staff) keep us from best practice" (B4-12).

This theme emerged in the focus group interviews as well. Participants spoke about the ongoing tension between the concepts and practices taught at Competency Based Inservice Training and the practice environment they would be returning to after training.

At the time I was a Family Service Worker. It was good that I was learning new things and practicing them, but it was overwhelmingly frustrating as well because I knew in the real world I wasn't going to be able to implement to the same, even remotely in the same caliber as being taught. It was taught in an ideal best practices framework. And we don't have an ideal best practices Agency. So it was good, it was just, it was tough for me. I really appreciated the new skills and the new ideas and I was beyond belief frustrated that I wasn't going to be able to apply them most of the time- (FG/2+Gail13)

Comments about the gap between the ideal world of 'best practice' and the 'real world' at Winnipeg Child and Family Services were more prevalent in the 2+ group. Participants in the -2 group commented that it was only once they had experience in the field that they realized that the concerns expressed by more experienced workers who had been in their training group, applied to their work situation as well. It appeared that when the -2 group took the training they had not yet had the opportunity to be fully aware of the challenges they would experience in implementing the training.

...And seeing the workers who had been around a really long time really challenging the material. Like challenging the presenter 'how can we do this in our day-to-day work and how does this really fit in?' that was very interesting. Coming back now after having more experience, I can see where those challenges are very relevant. (FG/-2Brenda8)

There was some indication that the -2 group viewed the training as separate and unrelated to the work environment. This group appeared to be more accepting of the fact that it was impossible to implement the training to its fullest potential. That was just the

way it was. "You had to complete the training, go through it and attend it and that was it" (FG/-2Brenda28).

2. Participants do not see the Directorate or Agency Management as providing concrete assistance in implementing the training.

It was only when prompted to reflect on what staff at the Directorate or Agency management had done to support the implementation of the training that the role of these players was mentioned by focus group participants.

Participants in both groups were at a loss to suggest anything that Winnipeg Child and Family Services management had done to support the implementation of Competency Based Inservice Training. One participant said, "There's no global strategy clearly in place that addresses the resources that would be needed to implement Competency Based Inservice Training" (FG/2+Gail31).

Another described what happened when she returned to work after completing the training.

For me, the material went into the filing cabinet and that was it. And there was no follow-up whatsoever in terms of how to implement certain assessment techniques or case planning techniques. Nothing at all. It was not discussed as a unit or anything else like that. Nothing. It just wasn't.

You know I worked in the core area at the time. It was like you were back into your caseload, back into chaos and you just do what you had been doing – you develop your own way of doing it. (FG/-2Brenda27)

In addition to feeling that there were no concrete strategies in place whereby staff at the directorate or Agency management were supporting the implementation of Competency Based Inservice Training, the focus group discussions indicated that participants felt that staff at the directorate and their Agency management were out of

touch with the issues they were facing in the field. "...I think they're quite removed from you know what is happening for Family Service Workers, any of the front line workers. And yes, certainly, they've all had child welfare experience but I think their experience was many, many years ago for a number of them ..." (FG/2+L35).

There's a huge credibility gap obviously, between the Directorate or Agency on a management level and certainly on worker level. And I think no different than our management should be encouraged to be more part in terms of occasionally talking or attending staff meetings or units, to pick up, sort of a feel for what's going on. It's just a bureaucracy for the most part, I mean I think there's some good people there but (it's) become very bureaucratic and political- (FG/2+Tim36)

Even in situations where participants recognized Competency Based Inservice Training had been integrated into documents, like the Case Management Standards being developed by the Directorate, they felt that no attention was paid to matching the policies with the realities in the field.

I think in the same way that people look at CBT and say, yeah, this is a good idea, yes, this is best practice, but not with these caseloads. The same thing happens with the standards, we look at the standards they're certainly something to aspire to, but not with the case loads that we're running. So they've-, the Directorate has put forward something that is good in itself, but they also have to follow it up with more staff, more finances, more resources to be able to meet those standards, to be able to do those things. You can look at the old standards, we're not even meeting those, so how can we possibly meet the new standards? (FG/2+Anne34)

There was a clear sense that participants did not feel that there was anyone in positions of power who was advocating for change that would facilitate improving services for clients. In the words of one participant, "We have nobody speaking for the community of child and family services in terms of best practice" (FG/2+T41).

3. Participants are receiving a range of support/assistance from their supervisors in applying Competency Based Inservice Training.

One person talked about how her supervisor had created a context that encouraged the use of the training,

I think it was the support from the supervisor who had also taken the training with the unit. Who also happened to be the trainer for one of the other modules. So at that time my supervisor was extremely committed and I'm sure still is. But was very committed to the CBT and encouraged all of us in the unit when we went back to work, to use the knowledge and the language and so on that we had learned. (FG/2+Leah22)

Another individual talked about their supervisor being 'driven' by best practice. This individual shared the precise way in which the supervisor prompts him to use the Competency Based Inservice Training case planning material. He added that he felt that the support of the supervisor was absolute despite the fact that there was really no reprieve from the continual reminders to consistently work in a best practices framework. His comment suggests that his supervisor's persistence has inspired him to be a better worker.

Well, I'm very fortunate. I work at a unit where I have a supervisor who is *driven* (laughter from group) by best practice and he lives it; it is his entire life, especially during the workday. So he drives us all to strive for best practice. Everyday. He wants goals set and he wants them checked and he wants them double checked and he wants time frames put around when you're going to check, who you're going to check with, why would you check. But that's where he lives his life. And so in terms of supporting us, that, that's absolute, it's within that but it comes pretty hard at us all of the time. And for me, I didn't always believe in best practice because I knew that the Agency itself was guaranteeing us mediocre practice or less at times because of workloads and such-. But it's been quite nice working in the unit I am currently with and having CBIT and a supervisor who lives that. So it's fit together real well. (FG/2+Don26)

One participant talked about the importance of the supervisor's role in assisting with the application of the training.

And I think a lot of our ability to use this rests with our supervisors. To be perfectly honest, ... I feel that I have learned so much from her (supervisor). I learned a lot from my previous supervisor but it was a different form of supervision, it was more fear-based (laughter) on my part (*laughter*). It was a lot of anxiety. So if you have a supervisor that's supporting you and trying to do these things and is not getting after you because what you *didn't* do. That's going to get us to do these things that we've learned and to be better workers. (FG/-2Liz45)

At the same time there was recognition that there are limits to the supervisor's impact in a context where there are multiple factors that influence transfer. One participant noted that even supervisors would benefit from concrete support from management for the implementation of the training. She suggested that a package of material that could be used during a team day might be helpful.

4. Participants report that there is a broad range in the extent their colleagues at Winnipeg Child and Family Services are implementing Competency Based Inservice Training.

A number of participants in the 2+ group spoke about experiences they had discussing Competency Based Inservice Training in the context of case planning with their service units. There were some individuals in this group who had not had this experience, but the majority had the opportunity to discuss strategies for implementation with their service units.

It was acknowledged that the extent of implementation of the training was influenced by the expectation of the other members of the service unit. One person talked about moving from a service unit where all the workers were using Competency Based Inservice Training (CBIT) in their file recording to another service unit where they were not. It was clear that the supervisor set the tone for the team and in the new context the expectations were different. The combination of overtime required to maintain file

recording that reflected CBIT and the lack of supervisor or co-worker expectation resulted in this person decreasing her use of CBIT in file recording.

The -2 group did not talk about doing case consults with their service units. Three participants mentioned that when they took Competency Based Inservice Training (CBIT) they were only one of two people in their unit who had attended CBIT so there was really no one with whom to consult. The other two participants said that the training was really not discussed in their service units once they returned from training.

In both focus groups some participants had experiences of working in more than one service unit or getting files transferred from other service units within Winnipeg Child and Family Services. These individuals mentioned that these experiences led them to conclude that not everyone was implementing Competency Based Inservice Training and that standards regarding quality of file recording in particular, varied greatly throughout the Agency.

5. Participants have a strong desire to be able to provide Competency Based Inservice Training 'best practice' service to their clients.

Post Training Evaluation and Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard responses indicated that for the most part participants felt that they would be able to provide better service to their clients if they were able to deliver services following some of the suggestions given at Competency Based Inservice Training. The following statements reflect the struggle this presented for workers. One person said, "Sometimes caseloads are high and you don't have as much time as you'd like to do the best possible job (C1-04)". Yet another added,

Case load and complexity: While wanting to implement a number of practices/techniques, I am not sure how to do so given the numbers of cases I have and the various stages I am at with each. In addition, it feels like while some of the techniques would be extremely useful the time required might prevent using them all the time. (C2-07)

The following discussion at the 2+ focus group demonstrates participant's struggles with changing the way they do their work in order to incorporate Competency Based Inservice Training.

FG/2+Anne24: In case conferencing, during a unit meeting we would say 'CBT suggests that we try this' or that we go this route or that we try this piece or we put this support in. And a lot of the comeback was 'well, that would be nice if, we had the support to actually do that or had the time to actually do that or if we had the resources to actually do that.

FG/2+Chris24: And then-

FG/2+Anne25: And then we'd decide to make that other decision that's less than best practice because of the restraints of time, personnel, resources, funding, so on.

FG/2+Chris25: So in the end it was a process of going back to what you would have done in the first place.

FG/2+Anne25: Yeah, but feeling guilty about it. (laughter)

FG/2+Chris25: Other people had experiences of talking about cases in their units, CBIT coming up?

FG/2+Mary25: Yes

FG/2+Chris25: Mary is saying yes, Gail is saying no. Esther is saying yes. Leah is saying yes.

FG/2+Tim25: I think actually constantly, especially in staff meetings, you know in particular, in conversations, philosophical conversations constantly come up. And I think over the same issues that we're talking about right now, I think dealing with our continual frustrations in terms of practice.

FG/2+Chris25: So it usually would come back to the frustrations of not being able to implement as much as you'd like?

FG/2+Tim25: Absolutely.

It was clear that participants had taken the initiative to implement the training where they could. A number of participants had developed strategies or taken measures to be able to use the training. One participant had put all of the printed material from training in a binder so that she could easily refer to it while writing assessments etc. Several people talked about prioritizing cases so that they could implement the training in at least some situations.

6. Workload is the primary factor participants cite as inhibiting implementation of Competency Based Inservice Training.

The volume of work was the most frequently mentioned barrier to 'best practice' stated on the Post Training Evaluation and the factor that hindered application to the job stated on the Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard.

Many people simply wrote "Caseload", "Caseloads too high", "Caseload demands!" Others provided some description of how the volume of work interfered with carrying out 'best practice'. "Don't always get to know child/family to do a comprehensive assessment. Not enough info., Not enough time to get info" (B3-08).

The image of workers being pulled in many directions comes through in the response of this participant, "Multitudes of conflicting demands particularly with regard to paperwork" (C2-02).

The focus group interviews provided additional information about the various ways in which workload interfered with the application of training on the job. For those participants who had two or more years experience in the field prior to attending the training, the workload realities of their day to day job interfered with their ability to

envision using Competency Based Inservice Training on the job even while they were at the training event.

... A lot of people that were there for the training in the group I was in, were saying, 'you know well that's all nice', it would be really good practice, and that we would be able to make real headway with the clients, but when you have 45-50 cases, there's no way that you're going to be able to apply some of those things. And the presenter, unfortunately, down-played the case load versus being able to do the proper work which just compounded the frustration. (FG/2+Anne14)

One participant talked about the long term impact of working in an environment where the workload is excessive.

... Given what we are forced to deal with on a day-to-day honestly, I don't think they (staff at the Directorate) have a good handle on what it's like to be driven as hard, over time. I think we all have bursts of energy where we can put in incredible hours and time for periods. Blocks of time. But, what I'm reading from the Directorate in terms of the standards, impossible to achieve, and I don't think that they have quite yet figured out, or are even, maybe they're not even prepared to deal with the question-. But there is no way we can implement the standards that are coming to us, it's impossible. (FG/2+Don33)

There was also an understanding that numbers do not reflect the amount of work one has,

... Workload is everything and numbers DO NOT reflect it. Of course not. I mean my caseload sits at 33 which is, I think, reasonable but I've got five families that drive me absolutely nuts from Monday right through Friday. Phoning me 3 and 4 times a day, special request, placements breaking down, aunts and uncles wanting information, wanting guardianship, all this kind of stuff playing in, trying to get money, green sheets, whatever. (FG/-2Leah34)

There was definitely a sense that participants had tried various ways to implement the training despite the problems with excessive workload. Several people talked about adapting the training for use even in a context where time is limited,

... I remember we talked about the theory of attachment, like this is how you place a child, these are things you should be doing. Now, within time limits, these are things you can be doing. And its funny the one thing that sticks out in my mind is ..., you know what, yes, ideally you should be doing all these

preplacement, developing a relationship-. 'I know you have to drop a kid off and leave, so what you do, go walk in the house, leave the house for five minutes, take the kid for a slurpee, comeback, takes five minutes'. You know what? I do that all the time. In my mind, it's realistic so- (FG/-2Pamela20)

Other participants related ways in which they prioritized which cases they would apply the training to,

I think what I ended up doing was varying on the cases that I thought, 'this is someplace where if I put in the time, we can really make a difference'. So I would pick and choose the cases where I thought, 'you know what, I'm going to put the time in to do it this way, because this is good practice'. And the other ones, I'll continue to do as I did so I kind of met that middle ground in terms of saying at least, you know, 'I can't save all the starfish on the beach but maybe I can save this one'. ... I might have taken three cases where I would apply what the skills and refined skills that I've learned through CBIT. (FG/2+Anne19)

7. Resource shortages were seen to inhibit transfer however this concern was not explored enough to determine which resources are more critical than others.

Post Training Evaluation and Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard responses included quite a number of comments that resource shortages interfered with implementing the training, however many of the statements were general in nature and did not specify what specific resources were lacking. This lack of specificity was also evident in the comments of focus group participants. However, there were some suggestions that provided clues to what resources were most lacking.

Frequently the comments about resources were included in statements about participants struggling with the many demands on their time,

I am concerned about counseling, family counseling- We (Winnipeg Child and Family Services) haven't followed up with our contract with Family Center, we have Interfaith-. There doesn't seem to be a lot of support for a family reunification program or any expansion of that-. Social workers have no time. At one point where I first started five years ago and came to the Agency, I could do some work with the families, it's been impossible for the last several years. So we're at a loss in terms of providing a case plan, in terms of providing

ready access to the services that are required. So I mean, this doesn't work. (FG/2+Tim31)

In other situations there were logistical issues that interfered with applying the training.

And I think that was a frustrating piece too, in terms of coming out of CBT and writing up case plans that had goals, objectives and activities and so on-. It was really nice but I could remember writing down some of these things and thinking 'this is all really nice in print, but I know it's not going to happen because they don't have the resources to do'. Like, you were talking before, to have a visit with an infant everyday, the transportation, ... we cover the rural area and unfortunately, Winnipeg Child and Family has 'perimeteritus'. So there's no way, if you have a kid placed in Steinbach, or way out in Ste. Anne, that the infant is going to come in everyday for a visit. It would be nice to have best practice and to put it into the case summary, you know, in terms of the case planning, but it wasn't going to happen. So why write it down? (FG/2+Anne29)

There was one reference to a situation where Competency Based Inservice Training had in fact legitimized the use of some resources when they wouldn't have been before,

...getting support for things like funding for a support worker so that infants can come in for visits everyday, is something that I received after the training that I don't know if I would have got before. But that base, I believe CBT had an impact on that. On the ability to say this is a newborn baby, it's coming in everyday for visits and getting the support to do that. (FG/2+Mary21)

One participant shared his perspective that workers' responses to clients due to lack of resources were sometimes misinterpreted as disrespect or racism.

I think it's an effect because unfortunately, our Agency is viewed by certain communities as not respecting -. And I think it's an effect in terms of not having the resources and the workers not having the time to treat people sometimes with the respect that they deserve or sensitivities sometimes. ...Realistically, I have clients who are culturally the same as me that would be having the same complaints because I do not have the time and wherewithal to provide them good service-. So if they were a different color, race or religion than me they could be saying 'I'm doing it for other reasons' and the reality is, it's time, and it's resources and unfortunately, like those are the issues. (FG/2+Tim42)

8. Organizational changes that Winnipeg Child and Family Services engaged in from 1998 - 1999 were viewed as disruptive and not addressing the identified needs of the participants.

Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard responses indicated that change within the organization was having an impact on workers' abilities to implement training. One participant commented, "Constant changes in Agency organization has made it difficult to learn on the job" (HSTEP 116).

Participants were concerned that rather than addressing the important issues, or following through on implementing initiatives like Competency Based Inservice Training, reorganization in the Agency was distracting the energies of the Agency's management.

Well, especially with the reorganization in the middle of this. It seems to have taken the attitude of well, 'let's just do this for now and we'll worry about that other stuff later'. They don't have that view about, 'if you just do this for now, this, this, this and this are going to go wrong, or this, this, this and this isn't going to be met.' And the lack of leadership or the lack of direction that's spawned from this reorganization it's just been complete chaos for workers – nobody seems to know who to go to for anything because nobody seems to be running the ship anymore. (FG/2+Anne37).

I was just going to say that prior to the reorganization the union and the Agency were talking about workload measurement tool and they said 'well, we're going to put that off, we're going to deal with that, but then we're going to reorganize first'. We all said, 'you don't need to reorganize you need to get more workers' and then, you know-. And now there's the AJI (implementation of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry) so they're not dealing with that again-. So I guess, the frustrating piece is that, it always feels like *that* is the *least* of their concerns when those of us who are doing the work, that is our *biggest* concern. And so when we're always concerned about two very different things, I don't know how they can help us in implementing stuff. (FG/2+Mary41)

Even participants who had many years of experience in the child welfare system found the reorganization disruptive.

And I think with the reorganization, certainly, that didn't help matters, you know in 1999, and then the renovations and everything else. And I guess I have been

through a few reorganizations in Winnipeg Child and Family Services, Children's Aid of Winnipeg-. Um, I have to say that this last reorganization has been the most difficult, the most stressful and the most disorganized. I'm still really, rather appalled that we haven't learned anything over 20 some odd years and add to that higher expectations and management being like 'out there' kind of thing (FG/2+Leah40).

Transfer Interventions Suggested

- 1. Participants felt that larger system issues were impacting their ability to implement Competency Based Inservice Training. They believed that the Directorate and/or Winnipeg Child and Family Services management should take responsibility for addressing these concerns.**

When it came time for suggestions for changes that would support the implementation of Competency Based Inservice Training, workload was once again the central concern.

I think in my mind, workload is the biggest issue. So wherever it comes and whether it comes from higher even than the directorate, if that means government in terms of dollars that are attached to have more people but to work with fewer families where you would have the liberty and the luxury of time to implement some of them (CBIT strategies). (FG/-2Pamela32)

Participants felt that the staff at the Directorate were out of touch with the nature of the work in the field. They wanted to be consulted in the implementation of any new standards or policies and felt that policies should be reflective of the realities of the field.

But when things like the standards are being written find out not just from supervisors or upper management, what is actually happening at our level and build on that and make it realistic because I think with the standards now, all it does is make us feel more guilty, that we're not able to meet-, and those are *minimum* standards those aren't even maximum standards-. (FG/2+Leah35)

There was some reference to the need for the directorate to be more visible and make themselves available as a resource to line staff.

I mean, they need to come out to units and tell us who they are and what they're doing and how they can help us and-. You know? I've had people from the directorate be a part of a multidisciplinary team for case planning which has been phenomenal. Because they can pull in the superintendent of the school division,

they can pull in this person and that person. They can get the money there, they can advocate on the kids' behalf. And it's been really good planning and things have happened. But it's just very rare and people just don't realize that they're there and you can use them because they're not making themselves known. (FG/2Brenda37)

Unfortunately, the view of the participants in the 2+ group was that Agency management did not understand their circumstances. With the exception of the support of their supervisors, they appeared to feel isolated in their efforts to manage the challenges of their day to day work. One participant spoke about the benefits of Agency management and front line workers communicating with each other.

I really feel if management were better connected to us. If management talked to us and listened to us on a regular basis, then management could develop a better global long-term vision and short-term vision and actually coordinate so that we're not running around like chickens with our heads cut off. And I don't accept that they can't lobby, for more workers. I *do not* accept that – I understand that it's hard, it feels impossible, however, that's the reality. And *if* they had that vision, I know they are as overworked as we are, I know that, but if they had that vision and that communication with us, then they would be able to lobby more effectively because they'd have our information to back their lobbying efforts" (FG/2+Gail39).

Another participant spoke about the importance of having proactive leadership,

Senior management certainly needs to be spending more time in the future thinking rather than putting out fires. And I think that's what they do a lot of – is they spend just about everyday of the work life putting out fires and dealing with problems and the stuff that's in your face. I don't think they have that future vision of how we're going to get the best practice. (FG/2+Don37)

All participants were aware that Agency management was limited in their power to solve the workload problem by hiring new staff. Some participants suggested steps that could be taken to minimize duplication of work and make it more efficient.

I think when we're talking about what management could do and you can talk about this side of the spectrum, ya, more workers so that the caseloads can be decreased, more resources, and so on. I think I've gone from (that to), that's never going to happen so let's deal with some of the smaller things.' Like let's get computer systems that work, let's get the forms that are inputted in the computer,

that are actually templates, ...-. ...Deal with little things that just end up frustrating you and taking more time that you don't already have to put into case work. You're frustrated because now you need to email and fax, and call the Family Support Services Unit to let them know that one, you're sending a fax, two, you need to call them to tell them that the fax is there so they know that you need the family support and also send them an email just in case that person didn't get a phone call or whatever. It's redundant and it's just inefficient, ineffective of use of your time and your time is limited already to do your case work.. (FG/2+Anne38)

Another participant said,

... whether it's the directorate asking for a report, exceptional circumstance for this, that and the other. I mean they ALL want the same information, the parent's name, the kids. I mean sometimes I'll write several pieces of written stuff in one day and it's all information over again. And it's like couldn't I just punch something and you get birth dates and names and that would just free you up-. (FG/-2Pamela35)

2. Participants suggested several things that the Directorate or Winnipeg Child and Family Services management could implement in order to directly influence the implementation of Competency Based Inservice Training.

Some suggested the importance of incorporating the Competency Based Inservice Training into the work that they already do,

I mean, they could have some kind of standardized form or something, for case assessments, case planning that they have to make sure we implement throughout each unit in the Agency or that kind of a thing. (FG/-2Brenda33)

Participants in the -2 group suggested that Agency management needed to provide some leadership and structure that would facilitate reviewing Competency Based Inservice Training material.

Encouragement of refresher of days and times. Like if you've got an all-afternoon staff meeting 'here's an exercise to do with your staff', where you're reviewing some of the CBT stuff. Quick refresher course - I mean you leave it to individual supervisors in units and you know what that's like. 'Ah, I don't know let's bring the snack, like I really don't care, I don't have the energy'. So for something that's provided, gives you an opportunity to brainstorm. (FG/-2Pamela40)

Others suggested the importance of having the supervisor use the Competency Based Inservice Training material more directly in the context of supervision.

in supervision you take one case a week. Or you really work through one of those modules and try and do the step-by-step planning and assessment and intervention and all of that with a particular case. You know, once a month, which would be another way as a refresher or as a group, team building day. (FG/-2Brenda40)

Still other participants talked about the need for more advanced training or opportunities to step back and reflect on how one is conducting the work. "And every couple of years you should be subjected to reviewing what you're doing and re-evaluating your own practice. ... This makes you reevaluate some of the things you do. Because we do get caught up in what's easy for us" (FG/-2Kate43).

Participant Feedback

All but one of the 12 focus group participants provided feedback regarding the preliminary results. Of the 11 people who provided feedback, 7 had read both the short and the long version of the results. All participants who provided feedback indicated that the results reflected what they felt had been said in their focus group. Some people provided some clarification, additional information or a further opinion. Many people expressed their appreciation for being invited to participate in the focus group.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

This chapter will provide a forum for discussion of the themes and concepts that have emerged during the course of this evaluation. It is hoped that this discussion will contribute new conceptual thinking to the area of competency based training, transfer and the impact of the work environment. This chapter argues that while participants in this evaluation saw the problem of excessive workload as the key factor that was inhibiting their application of training to the job, the problem needs to be considered in context with the other factors in the work environment at Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS). In addition the competency based approach to training in child welfare needs to be placed in the context of the current social, political and economic context. Strategies for addressing this problem and its impact on transfer are then suggested in light of the literature on the work environment and transfer. Recommendations for improved work environment support for training transfer at WCFS will be suggested. Finally I will review my learning goals.

The 'real world/ideal world' conflict experienced by participants' needs to be seen in the context of the critiques of the competency approach found in the literature. The overriding concern of participants in this evaluation is that there is a lack of fit between the kind of work environment required to carry out 'best practice' as taught in the Competency Based Inservice Training curriculum and the work environment at Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS). Their concern was specific to WCFS, however in light of the literature it is important to consider that the conflict may grow out

of a larger ideological conflict that is created when competency training is applied in child welfare.

Social workers who participated in this evaluation are professionally educated. Ninety percent have university level social work degrees. It can be suggested then that they approach their work in child welfare with the social work values of empowerment and seeing the client in the context of their environment. In addition, the Child and Family Services Act (1985) in Manitoba provides a framework for carrying out the mandate that suggests that families should be seen within the context of the community and intervention should involve providing resources to strengthen the family in that context. This Act provides a framework for the mandate that includes the provision of prevention and protection services.

All of this must be placed in the context of what Dominelli (1996) refers to as the “major societal shifts” (p. 153) including a more market driven approach to addressing social problems. In addition, it is important to recognize that competency approaches to child welfare have been imposed in situations where funding in the area of social services in general has been decreased. Csiernik et al. (2000) suggest that this approach has been adopted by child protection agencies in the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and parts of the United States. “In each nation, the introduction of CBET in child protection was the direct response to highly publicized deaths of children” (Csiernik et al., 2000, p.56). Governments have seemingly adopted this approach in order to demonstrate that they have taken steps to ensure that child protection workers are equipped to respond to the individual problems of families. In doing so they have done little to address the social realities that are contributing to problems in the family situation. In the face of decreasing

community resources and increasing demand experienced by social service organizations it is not surprising that management in these organizations adopted the competency based approach.

The competency based approach may also have provided a solution to the problem social service organizations have been voicing concerning their experience that university faculties of social work were not 'producing' social workers who were ready for practice in the field. Rather than university faculties of social work and child welfare organizations joining forces in challenging the government's approach to social service provision, the two appear to have remained isolated in their separate worlds and blamed each other for the problem.

This experience appears to be evident in the Manitoba context as well. A discussion paper dated May 25, 1995, regarding Agency's role with Social Work Students who do their field placements at the Agency was found in the Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS) Competency Based Inservice Training files. The writer identifies the tension in the relationship between WCFS and the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Manitoba. The writer acknowledges the appropriateness of the faculty providing a critique of the child welfare system, but argues that the critique has become Agency specific rather than directed at the system. The paper further suggests that the complaint of the Agency is that the "university based curriculum does not adequately prepare student[s] for the field" (p.2)

A division between front line social workers and managers in child welfare agencies also appears to have allowed the reduction of funding for social services in general to continue unchallenged. Participants in this evaluation expressed concern that

Agency management was not listening to their concerns for increased resources to meet the needs of their clients, but had accepted the government's agenda that there were no more resources available. This is not surprising given that front line social workers have the advantage of seeing the social and economic situations of their client families on a daily basis. Managers on the other hand, are working in a context removed from this reality and are immersed in the reality of an environment that demands justification of expenditures despite rising demand for service and increasing costs in providing those services.

It is important to point out that within the Manitoba context funding to child welfare agencies has increased. At the same time however, there were significant reductions in funding to community based non-mandated agencies, social allowance rates, employment insurance, education and health care. This in turn has heaped increasing demand on child welfare agencies who given their mandate are legislated to provide services where needed.

Increase in funding to Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS) was the result of over expenditures, mostly in the area of child maintenance not increase in staff. One of the understandings going into the reorganization at WCFS in 1999 was that there would be no increase or reduction in staffing levels. Surprisingly, many participants in this evaluation appeared to have accepted their lot and are expecting themselves to manage within existing resource levels. At the same time they appeared to be demoralized by the situation and this seemed to be compounded by the fact that they felt WCFS management was not listening to their concerns.

This situation may be exacerbated by the fact that professionals expect to be consulted on issues of practice and policy. The participants in this evaluation voiced their desire to, not only contribute to the process of shaping the policies and practices of the Agency, but also see their views reflected in the final product. The model used for the 1998/99 strategic planning and restructuring process at Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS) included working groups comprised of Agency staff from all levels of the organization. These groups were to develop proposals for the restructuring of each of the program areas. This model had the potential to both use the expertise of professional staff in planning for the organization and develop a management plan that would move the organization toward its identified goals. The Chief Executive Officer's Report Management's suggests that the process was "open and transparent" (WCFS 1998/99 Annual Report, p. 5) and the result was a plan that reflected the ideas of the Agency's staff, Board and members of the community. "Reorganization plans will finally be fulfilled – the same plans developed by the Agency's staff, its Board members and members of the community. The strength of this plan is that the plan was created by you – all of you who took the time to provide input or ideas" (WCFS 1998/99 Annual Report, p. 6).

Unfortunately, from the perspective of the participants in this evaluation, the reorganization plan was not reflective of their vision for the delivery of child welfare services at Winnipeg Child and Family Services. This experience appears to have further solidified the perception that Agency management is not sensitive to the realities in the field.

Moving beyond these more ideological concerns to the fact that Winnipeg Child and Family Services has been a partner in the Competency Based Inservice Training (CBIT) program in Manitoba and has provided the training to its employees, it is important to consider the evaluation's findings regarding implementation of the training. Participants in the evaluation suggest that the training is applicable to their work and contributes to their ability to provide good service to their clients. Participants have accepted that CBIT should be implemented and see themselves as largely responsible for that implementation.

In terms of the impact of the work environment on training at Winnipeg Child and Family Services, two issues rise to the fore:

- 1) excessive workloads, resource shortages and disruption due to organizational change and
- 2) the absence of plan for transfer of training and specific strategies for supporting implementation throughout the Agency.

These two realities have worked together to create a situation where participants feel overwhelmed with the responsibility to implement the training and hampered in do so by factors completely beyond their control. In light of this, several points deserve particular mention.

Recommendations

- 1. The overlap between Competency Based Inservice Training curriculum and that taught at the university level should be examined.**

One finding in this evaluation that was particularly surprising was that participants with less than two years experience in child welfare prior to taking

Competency Based Inservice Training said that the training was a review of information they had gained in university. Given the cost of sending employees to training, both in terms of salaries and service loss, this finding should be explored further. (It costs approximately \$160 in salary and benefits to send an entry level social worker at Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS) to training for a day. This is calculated using Entry A of the Band 5 Social Work scale plus 14% for benefits. This calculates to \$2240 for the entire 14 days of training.) (Personal correspondence WCFS HR staff, June 19, 2001.)

This could have the added benefit of providing an avenue for building bridges between the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Manitoba and Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS). It could serve as forum for discussion about the role of the Faculty of Social Work and WCFS in preparing social workers for doing child welfare. Faculty of social work students and faculty and Agency management and staff could share experiences and information toward the development of methods of preparing social workers for practice that are complementary to each other.

2. Adaptation of Competency Based Inservice Training could be considered once areas of overlap between the Competency Based Inservice Training and University curriculum have been identified.

Adaptation of Competency Based Inservice Training (CBIT) would likely require a collaborative effort on the part of the Child Protection and Support Services program and child welfare agencies throughout the province. This is because CBIT as it is delivered in Manitoba is managed by the Child Protection and Support Services Program of the Department of Family Services and delivered to child welfare workers employed

by various Agencies and government departments throughout the province. Such a collaborative effort could have the added benefit of building bridges between child welfare agencies throughout the province. It should be noted that adaptation of CBIT would be further complicated by the fact that the CBIT material is copywritten. Any significant adaptation of the curriculum would only be possible with the approval of the Institute for Human Services.

3. Winnipeg Child and Family Services should draw on the expertise of staff within the Agency and form a group to develop a management strategy for transfer of Competency Based Inservice Training.

Examination of the Competency Based Inservice Training program files revealed no concrete plan for management of transfer of (CBIT) at Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS). Despite this, documents in the CBIT program files indicate that there is an awareness of the need for someone to provide leadership and management in the area of professional development and training for staff at WCFS.

For example, in February 1997 a "Proposal for a Training Coordinator Position" (Competency Based Inservice Training files, Human Resources, Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS)) was drafted. Attached to this proposal is an internal memo to WCFS Executive Management from the Directors of Service of the then four areas of the Agency. This memo suggests there is a need for "coordination of professional education and training for Direct service staff" of WCFS. The memo dated May 8, 1996, further outlines the "need for an Agency-wide position focused on the ongoing development and coordination of the following:

1. Our leadership and liaison role with the B.S.W program at U. of M. and, in particular, the Field Placement;
2. The Competency-Based Training Program
3. Orientation and specialized staff training.”

A discussion paper focuses on the Agency's role with Social Work Students who do their field placements at the Agency dated May 1995 is attached to this memo. This discussion paper promotes the implementation of a staff position dedicated to professional education and Competency Based Inservice Training for other Agency staff.

In addition, the Human Resource Administrative Working Group, Report to Agency Management, dated February 1999, which was developed during the Agency's strategic planning and reorganization process in 1998/99, includes a proposal for a position titled "Professional Development and Student Placement Coordinator". Part of the proposed role of this person was to manage the Competency Based Inservice Training for Caseworkers and Supervisors. The Agency's Program Management Reorganization Plan (April 1999) outlines the "service configuration, staffing allocation and housing" for each of the programs (p.9). In it, staffing allocations for the Human Resources Program are outlined and this position is absent in its entirety.

In light of the fact that resources have not been dedicated to this area in the past, it seems futile to suggest the implementation a staff position to provide direction and management for a transfer plan at Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS). This evaluation revealed that integration of Competency Based Inservice Training (CBIT) into the climate of WCFS, through policies and practices, exists but is piecemeal. A few documents like the performance evaluations used by the Services to Children and

Families Program and the file recording protocol developed by the Intake Department in May 2001 reflect portions of CBIT. There are some supervisors who are integrating CBIT into their supervision and participants report that the 'language' of 'best practice' is understood throughout the Agency. One resource that has gone virtually untapped is the contribution that Agency employees who are CBIT trainers could make toward transfer efforts within the Agency. These individuals are keenly aware of particular portions of the CBIT curriculum and understand the importance of management support for transfer of training. Efforts to develop a management strategy for transfer may be more successful if the Agency's already existing internal resources were tapped. The enthusiastic participation of Agency social workers in this evaluation gives some indication that Agency employees are interested in sharing their ideas and expertise. A management strategy around transfer of CBIT could also serve as a vehicle for getting feedback and generating solutions for problems experienced by workers in the field and could tease out if the issue is workload, resources, communication, technology, policies or practices.

4. The supports for transfer that exist within the Competency Based Inservice Training approach developed by the Institute for Human Services should be implemented at Winnipeg Child and Family Services.

Implementation of these supports would include the Transfer Orientation and Optimal Learning (TOOL) manual and training which has been provided to supervisors at Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS). While this evaluation did not examine the extent of its use at WCFS, it did not uncover evidence that use of it is prevalent. This resource is available for use throughout the Agency and could serve as a resource to supervisors who want to provide more direct support for the implementation of

Competency Based Inservice Training through the supervision of social workers on their service teams.

5. A comprehensive plan for evaluation of Competency Based Inservice Training and transfer at Winnipeg Child and Family Services should be developed.

An evaluation plan should be developed as part of an overall management plan for Competency Based Inservice Training (CBIT) and transfer at Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS). Without such a plan, evaluation would have little impact on the implementation of CBIT at WCFS and could lead to further reinforcement of the message that application of the training is the sole responsibility of front line social workers and their supervisors.

6. Evaluation of impact of Competency Based Inservice Training on client outcomes should be included in the evaluation plan.

Csiernik et al. (2000) suggest that, “while the premise is that CBET could improve the overall quality and consistency of child protection service delivery and thus prevent further loss of life, there is a dearth of literature or evaluative studies to validate CBET” (p.56). Participants in this evaluation indicated that they had observed client progress as a result of their use of the training, however this issue was not explored at any depth within this evaluation. Even informal forums for sharing success stories and strategies for implementation could provide social workers with more ideas and encouragement for implementation of the training.

Suggestions for Further Research

As with much research, this evaluation provides insight into areas that require further exploration.

The role of university level social work education and inservice training in preparing child welfare workers for practice is one that merits further study. This should go beyond examination of the curriculum issues and explore the concerns related to professional education and inservice training. This is a particularly timely issue given the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry Child Welfare Initiative in Manitoba and the challenges that a shortage of university educated social workers of aboriginal decent presents to the task of staffing aboriginal child welfare agencies.

With regard to the issue of workload, this evaluation is only a starting point in understanding of this issue. Even within the context of Winnipeg Child and Family Services, the problem of workload needs to be studied further in order to understand what factors contribute to social workers citing high workload as the primary problem in implementing Competency Based Inservice Training. This research provided suggestions for addressing the workload problem that should be explored. These include ineffective/inefficient use of technology, the impact system change, and the lack of structured opportunities to use the training.

Examination of Learning Goals

I would like to conclude by reviewing my learning goals and reflecting on how the process of conducting this evaluation changed me as a person. As a student and FSSW at Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS) I approached this practicum

viewing it as an opportunity to integrate my formal education with my experience as a social worker in the field of child welfare. As a researcher with particular interest in the administration of social services, I chose to focus on the management of inservice training program and the evaluation of transfer at WCFS in particular. During the course of this evaluation I was able to:

- a) develop a deeper understanding of the place of inservice training in the context of human resource initiatives in an organization. I also gained a greater awareness of the role of management in the development of a transfer plan for training within an organization.
- b) conduct a program evaluation within a large social service organization. I was disappointed that both Agency circumstances and my timeline did not allow for a more participatory approach to the research. I was however, able to adapt my research to fit with the circumstances of WCFS and the participants in my study. I learned a lot about the importance of paying careful attention to ethical issues and the challenges inherent in the politics of doing evaluation. For example, I found myself wanting to steer clear of the 'workload' issue because it has been talked about a lot without seemingly any progress being made. In the end the data demanded that the concern be made explicit in the results.
- c) design an evaluation that has the potential to be useful to WCFS. This was challenging given the organizational changes taking place both within the Agency and its environment. Given this I turned my attention to developing an evaluation design that addressed the needs of the subjects. I was rewarded with enthusiastic responses from research participants throughout this project. I am hopeful that the

evaluation results and the conceptual thinking that emerged will contribute to the development of Competency Based Inservice Training at WCFS.

- d) develop my understanding of the contribution qualitative research can make in the social sciences. I was able to develop my skills as a focus group moderator and refine my abilities to pursue ideas and seek clarification from focus group participants. Time did not allow further data collection through individual interviews; therefore that learning experience was not realized.
- e) immerse myself in the grounded theory and experience the interactive nature of grounded theory methodology, moving back and forth between data collection, analysis, the literature and my own reflections on the data. This was truly an experience of immersing myself in the data in order to understand it in-depth and stepping back from it in order to develop concepts and themes. The method pushed me to examine by own views and biases and be open to new ideas or explanations in the data. I found the data analysis to be systematic and the same time creative.
- f) demonstrate the utility of using grounded theory in program evaluation. The time consuming nature of the process of data collection and analysis when using grounded theory may limit its application in a setting where resources for research are limited. However the benefit of the depth of the description and conceptual thinking may outweigh this limitation.
- g) accomplish the challenge of moving between my roles as a Family Service Social Worker and Program Evaluator. These two roles were truly a complement to each other, with my immersion in the field keeping my research connected to the practical

work world of the participants and my research allowing for critical reflection when faced with practicing social work in the field.

I would like to conclude with some reflection on what the process of conducting this evaluation taught me about life in general and how it contributed to my ongoing development as a person. The most important thing I learned was to trust my insight, analysis and instincts about the research process. I realized that I love to learn, analyse things, listen to people's recounting of their experiences and opinions and make sense out of it all. I particularly enjoy the challenge of understanding how theory and practice connect.

I learned that flexibility is essential. At first I tried to force the work to fit into my predetermined timeline. Eventually it sunk in that I was, after all, supposed to learn something in the process therefore knowing each step in advance was not only unrealistic, but completely beside the point.

I experienced the benefits of alternately being immersed in the research and stepping back from it. Both 'states' were essential to the data collection and analysis, not to mention my own sanity!

Anyone who knows someone who has completed a Masters degree knows that some other pursuits or interests need to be set to the side. It took a long time (years!) until I actually made my research the primary focus of my life. When I did, I found out that my friends understood, the laundry could wait and the rest of the world could get along without me. I was able to let go of my own need to meet other people's needs (sound like a social worker?) and learn that the world didn't fall apart. In the process, I found that I

actually liked the solitary nature of the process, as it allowed for reflection that is otherwise missed in the busyness of life.

I learned again that I am a process person and am very thorough. Process and outcome are closely linked in my mind. Process is much more important to me than reaching the goal. I did learn too that sometimes you have to bring closure even though you know there is much more to be known. My findings are offered to the reader with the greatest humility about how much there is to know about training, transfer and the work environment.

Summary

In conclusion, in-service training programs for child welfare workers are one way to equip them for the complex task of providing quality services to children and families. Competency based approaches to training in child welfare have become increasingly popular in the context of decreasing social spending by governments. Regardless of the political agendas in the implementation of training programs, transfer of training to the work environment is critical if the training is to have its desired effect. Work environment factors are increasingly recognized as impacting the transfer process. It is hoped that this evaluation of transfer of Competency Based Inservice Training and the impact factors in the work environment at Winnipeg Child and Family Services had on this process provides a unique contribution to research in this field.

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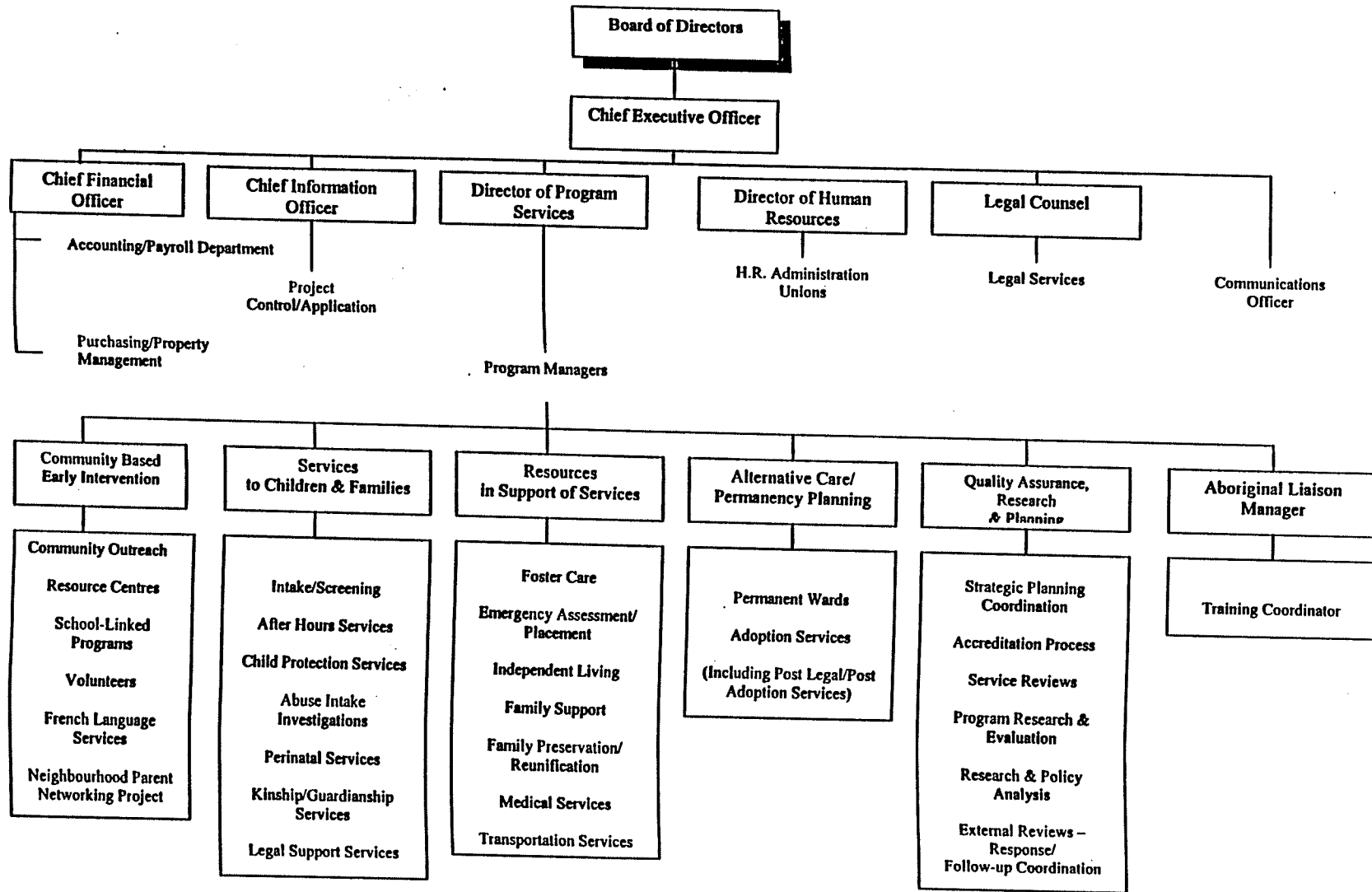
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

**Winnipeg Child and Family Services
Organizational Chart**

**WINNIPEG CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES
Organizational Chart – 2001/2002**



APPENDIX B
Post Training Evaluation

Manitoba Competency-Based Inservice Training Program

Manitoba
Family Services



Training: _____ Date(s): _____
 Trainer(s): _____ Location: _____

Please provide us with an honest assessment of this training session. Your input will help to improve the quality of this training. Please explain any fair or poor ratings. Feel free to continue your comments on the back of this form.

ONLY COMPLETE EVALUATION FORMS CAN BE FACTORED INTO THE TRAINER'S OVERALL EVALUATION SCORE – PLEASE BE SURE TO ANSWER ALL THE QUESTIONS.

| CONTENT | Excellent | Very Good | Good | Fair | Poor |
|--|-----------|-----------|------|------|------|
| <i>Organization:</i> How coherent and well developed was the content? Did it follow logically? How well were you able to follow the train of thought? | | | | | |
| <i>Use of Time:</i> How well did the trainer arrange the content to make the most effective use of the allotted time? | | | | | |
| Comments: | | | | | |
| TRAINER | Excellent | Very Good | Good | Fair | Poor |
| <i>Knowledge of Topic:</i> How well did the trainer know and understand the concepts and issues of the topic area? | | | | | |
| <i>Responsiveness to Group:</i> How well did the trainer relate to the group, answer questions, and respond to concerns? | | | | | |
| <i>Ability to Relate Training to Practice:</i> How well did the trainer help group members relate and apply course content and knowledge to child welfare practice? | | | | | |
| <i>Teaching Strategies:</i> How well did the trainer use methods of presentation best suited to content (i.e. lecture, discussion, exercises, audiovisuals, and handouts)? | | | | | |
| Comments: | | | | | |
| RELEVANCE | Excellent | Very Good | Good | Fair | Poor |
| To what degree was the content appropriate to meet your assessed job training needs? | | | | | |
| To what degree was the content appropriate for your skill level? | | | | | |
| Comments: | | | | | |

DIVERSITY ISSUES

Diversity refers to differences in culture, gender, socioeconomic status, sexual preference, religion, physical disability, and age. *Culture does not merely refer to ethnicity or race, but to the complex system of values, beliefs, and attitudes; spiritual or religious systems; traditions; art and artifacts; and standards of behaviour that regulate life within a particular group of people.*

| | Excellent | Very Good | Good | Fair | Poor |
|---|-----------|-----------|------|------|------|
| How well did the content of the training address cultural issues and issues of diversity? | | | | | |
| How well did the trainer promote and facilitate discussions of culture? | | | | | |
| How well did the trainer demonstrate cultural sensitivity and competence in response to the cultural differences evident in the training group? | | | | | |
| Please explain your ratings regarding cultural issues: | | | | | |

| TRAINEE | Excellent | Very Good | Good | Fair | Poor |
|---|-------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|------|------|
| What was your level of understanding of the topic covered prior to the training? | | | | | |
| How would you rate your participation in this training session? | | | | | |
| What is your level of understanding now? | | | | | |
| How would you rate the group process/dynamics in supporting your learning? | | | | | |
| What ways did you participate in this training session? | | | | | |
| Are there any specific barriers that you may encounter which may interfere with implementing "best practice" as taught in this module? <i>Please be specific whenever possible.</i> | | | | | |
| Is there anything else you would like to contribute regarding the training structure, location, notification, registration, trainer, etc? | | | | | |
| Your Current Position: | Years in This Position: | | Years in Child Welfare? | | |

**PLEASE BE SURE THAT YOU HAVE FILLED IN A RESPONSE TO EACH QUESTION.
THANK YOU!**

Revised March 1998

WPCW/CBCT-98.FM

APPENDIX C

**Baldwin & Ford's
Model of the Transfer Process**

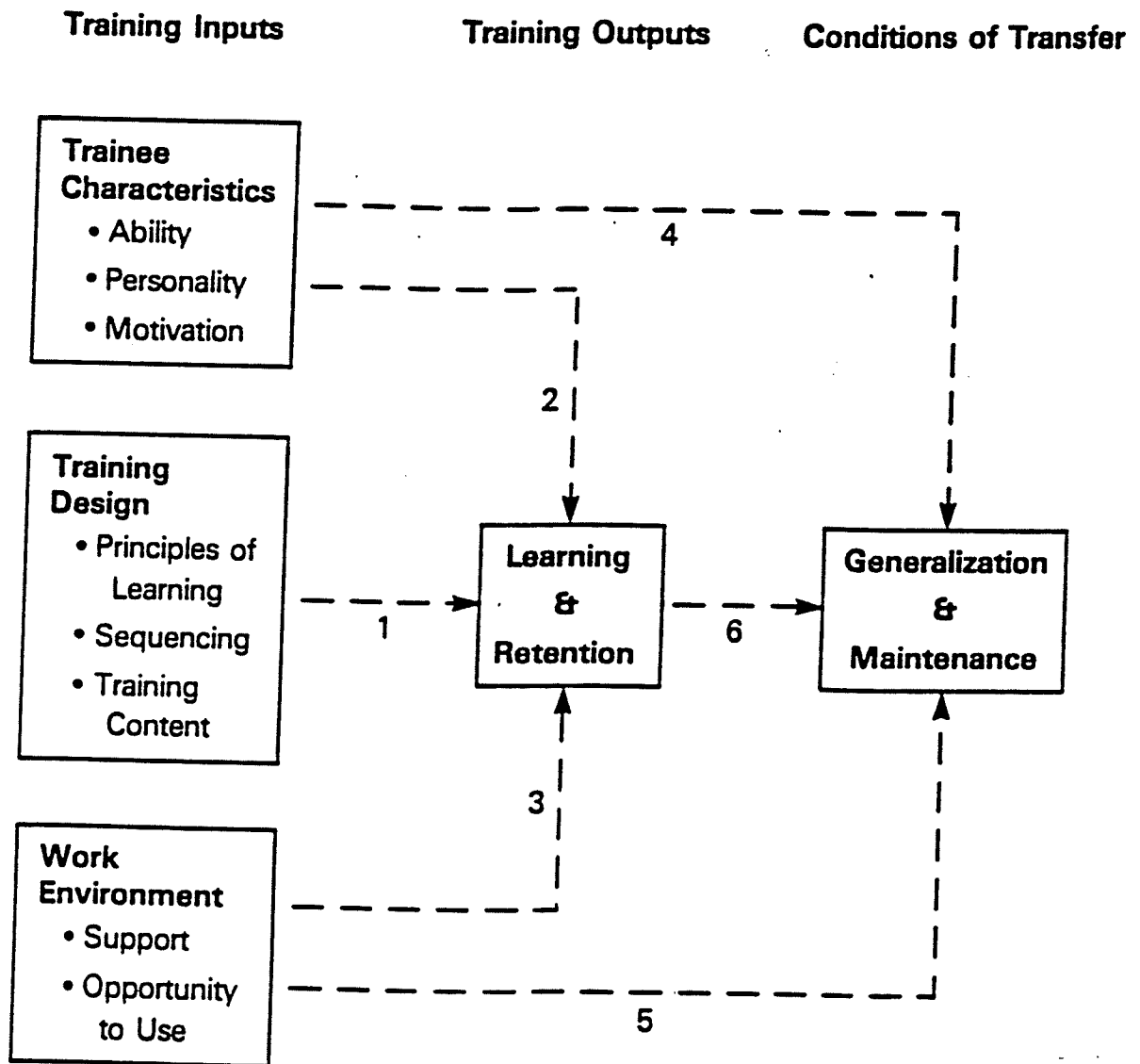


Figure 1: A Model of the Transfer Process

Baldwin, T. & Ford, K. (1988). Transfer of training: A review and directions for future research. *Personnel Psychology*, 41, 63-105.

APPENDIX D

Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard

HUMAN SERVICES TRAINING EFFECTIVENESS POSTCARD*

| | | | | | |
|---|----|---|---|---|----|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Please respond to the statements below using the following scale: SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, U=Undecided, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree | SA | A | U | D | SD |
|---|----|---|---|---|----|

CBIT = Competency Based Inservice Training (all 4 core modules)

- | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Overall, I was very satisfied with CBIT core modules. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. During CBIT I learned a substantial amount of information. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. I have used the knowledge and skills I learned from CBIT on the job. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. As a result of using the knowledge and skills from CBIT, I have observed client progress. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. As a result of CBIT, I am a more effective worker. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Please list factors that helped or hindered your application of learning on the job.

Helped:

Hindered:

*The questions on this postcard were designed by Dale Curry and can be found in:
 Curry, Dale (1997). Factors affecting the perceived transfer of learning of child protection social workers. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Kent State University, p. 138.

PLEASE COMPLETE DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON OTHER SIDE



APPENDIX E

**Letter of Permission from
Child Protection and Support Services**



Family Services
and Housing

Child Protection and
Support Services

2nd Floor - Suite 201
114 Garry Street
Winnipeg MB R3C 4V5
CANADA

(204) 945-6964
FAX: (204) 945-6717
December 4, 2000

Ms. Christine Lichti
Box 13
Starbuck MB R0G 2P0

Dear Ms. Lichti:

Re: Request for Approval to Access Training Evaluation Results

I am replying to your letter dated November 27, 2000, requesting approval to access participant evaluations submitted at the end of core competency-based training sessions. You requested approval to access this information as part of your practicum toward a master of social work degree.

As the evaluation forms you wish to access were not signed and the information you are seeking will not lead to identifying individual trainees, the privacy provisions of *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FIPPA) would not apply. To access personal (identifying) information, you would require the consent of each of the persons who completed and submitted the evaluation form at the end of the training session.

The information you wish to access does not appear to fall under the mandatory exceptions to disclosure under FIPPA. The mandatory exceptions are as follows: privacy of a third party; business interests of third parties; Cabinet confidences; and, information provided by another government.

Your purpose in requesting access to the information is to look at whether agency workers have been able to implement the training in their day-to-day work with families. This will involve identifying and describing those factors within the post-training work environment that either support or inhibit the application of training on the job. This purpose is consistent with the intent of the evaluation process. Participants were advised at the end of each training session that the evaluations would be used to assist the trainers in making the sessions more useful.

- 2 -

I am therefore approving your application to access the evaluation forms as requested on the understanding that you will do so with the consent of the trainers involved and will share a copy of your evaluation results with our office.

Good luck in your endeavour.

Sincerely,

- Bev Ann Murray
A/Executive Director

KC/cj

APPENDIX F

Letter Assuring Trainers' Confidentiality

October 11, 2000

Dear Trainer,

I am a student of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and am conducting a practicum as part of my Master of Social Work degree. My research is on transfer of learning from inservice training to the workplace. I will be using Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS) as my research site and hope to gather information about the factors that Competency-Based Inservice Training Program (CBIT) participants found to support or inhibit their efforts to implement the training in their work environment.

Much research has emphasized the impact of the training design and the attributes of the individual trainee on transfer of learning. More recently, researchers and practitioners are noting the importance of a supportive work environment in the transfer process. As you are aware, several aspects of the CBIT curriculum refer to this factor as well. For example, the acknowledgement of 'non-training barriers' in the Individual Training Needs Assessment, the 'Parking Lot' issues noted at training, and the 'Training, Orientation and Optimal Learning' workshop provided for supervisors.

As part of my data collection I am proposing to analyse one part of the training evaluations collected after each module of CBIT core curriculum. I am interested in analysing the responses to the open ended question which asks participants, "Are there any specific barriers that you may encounter which may interfere with implementing 'best practice' as taught in this module?" Analysis of this open-ended question will provide some initial information about forces that participants thought would inhibit transfer.

I know that the training evaluations contain sensitive information about each participant's evaluation of you as the trainer. I want to emphasize that I am not conducting an evaluation of the trainer. Should there be any reference to trainers and their influence on the participant's overall evaluation of the training the following steps will be taken to protect the identity of the individual trainer. First, confidentiality will be maintained by attaching a code to the trainer's name and reporting any findings using the generic term 'trainer'. Second, the identity of the trainer will not be revealed in the reporting of the research findings.

I hope this provides you with sufficient information about the purpose of my research. Please feel free to contact me at 944-4345 if you have any further questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Christine Lichti
M.S.W. Candidate

APPENDIX G

Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard Instructional Letter

January 8, 2001

Dear Participant,

I am a student of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and am conducting a practicum as part of my Master of Social Work degree. I am conducting an evaluation of the Competency-Based Inservice Training (CBIT) Program at Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS).

This evaluation will gather information from Family Service, Intake, Perinatal & Permanent Ward Social Workers who have completed the training. It will examine the extent to which they have implemented the information and skills taught in CBIT in their day to day work with client families. Most importantly it will identify and describe those forces within the work environment that supported or inhibited transfer of training.

There are several parts to this research. I will be analyzing the Post Training Evaluations and the Lists of "Parking Lot" Issues that were completed at the training. In addition, I am asking you to complete the Human Services Training Evaluation Postcard (enclosed). Finally, I will be inviting some workers to participate in a focus group and/or an individual interview. You may receive a phone call inviting your participation in a focus group or individual interview sometime in the next few months.

Your participation in this evaluation is completely voluntary.

All information that you provide is completely confidential. You will notice that the enclosed Postcard has been coded to ensure confidentiality. Staff with the Quality Assurance, Research and Planning Program of WCFS has assisted by assigning a code to each participant's name. Names and matching codes will be stored at the Quality Assurance, Research and Planning Program office and will not be accessible to me. All data gathered using this Postcard will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in my home office. Following the acceptance of this practicum by the members of my Practicum Committee all identifying information will be destroyed.

Your participation or non-participation will have no effect on your relationship with WCFS in any way.

A high return rate is very important to this study. I know that you are busy meeting the day to day demands of your work with children and families. This survey was designed to require as little of your time as possible. Please respond to all five questions. I would also like to gain an understanding of what factors helped or hindered your application of training on the job. Please list them in the space provided. Finally the opposite side of the card asks for some demographic information.

Please take a few moments now to complete the Postcard. An addressed envelope is provided. It can be returned to me at the Pandora Unit through WCFS interdepartmental mail. Thank you for taking the time to participate in this research. If you have any questions please can contact me at 944-4345.

Sincerely,

Christine Lichti
MSW candidate

APPENDIX H

Invitation Letter for Focus Groups

Dear Participant,

February 28, 2001

You are being invited to participate in a focus group that will be conducted on March 20, 2001 from 9:00 – 10:30 a.m. This focus group is a part of the evaluation of the Competency-Based Inservice Training (CBIT) Program at Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS) that I am conducting for my MSW practicum.

Your participation in this focus group is completely voluntary. Your participation or non-participation will have no effect on your relationship with WCFS in any way.

I have taken several steps to ensure that your identity is protected. As such, Michelle Ashdown, a support staff with the Quality Assurance, Research and Planning Program (QA,R & P) at WCFS is assisting me in the process of inviting your participation in this focus group. I have provided staff at the Quality Assurance Program with the code numbers of the people to be invited to participate in this focus group. I am only aware of the code numbers and do not know or have access to the corresponding names. The list of code numbers and corresponding names is only available to the staff at the Quality Assurance Program. Michelle is forwarding this letter to you and may be following up with a telephone call. There will be no way for me to identify which participants have declined involvement in the focus groups.

Should you choose to participate in this focus group you will be asked to sign a consent form indicating that your participation is voluntary. You can choose to terminate your participation in the focus group at any time.

The focus group will be conducted on March 20, 2001 from 9:00 to 10:30 a.m. in the boardroom at the WCFS office at 720 Broadway Ave. Refreshments will be provided. (There should be a few perks ☺ !!) There will be 8-10 other social workers participating in the group. I will facilitate the group and Kim Thomas (Quality Assurance) will be assisting by recording. It will be audio taped in order to assist in my analysis of the results.

As stated in my earlier correspondence, this evaluation will gather information from WCFS Social Workers about the extent to which they have implemented the information and skills taught in Competency Based Inservice Training in their day to day work with client families. Most importantly it will identify and describe those forces within the work environment that supported or inhibited transfer of training. This focus group is an important part of the evaluation process as it will provide more depth to the feedback that I have already received through the Human Services Training Evaluation Postcard (yellow card) sent in January 2001.

I recognize that each of you have many demands on your time. Should you choose to participate in the focus group I am committed to ensuring that it begins and ends on time. Thank you for considering this request. Please take a moment to respond to this invitation. You can respond to Michelle Ashdown either by email mashdown@fs.gov.mb.ca or telephone (4398). Your prompt response is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Christine Lichti
M.S.W. Candidate

APPENDIX I

Informed Consent for Participation in Focus Group

INFORMED CONSENT FORM
For Individuals Who Participate In Focus Groups

I understand that, Christine Lichti, is conducting an evaluation of the Competency-Based Inservice Training (CBIT) Program at Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS).

This evaluation will gather information from Social Workers about the extent to which they have implemented the information and skills taught in Competency Based Inservice Training in their day to day work with client families. Most importantly, it will identify and describe those factors within the work environment that helped or hindered application of training on the job.

I understand that this focus group will be 1 ½ hours long. I understand that the focus group will be recorded on paper and audio tape. I understand that I can ask questions throughout the focus group. I understand that I can refuse to answer any question(s) or stop my participation in the focus group at any time.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw my consent and discontinue participation at any point. I understand that my participation or non-participation in the focus group will not effect my relationship with WCFS in any way.

I understand that as a participant, my right to privacy will be maintained through the use of a code name for my actual name, in addition, my name will be replaced with "Social Worker", "worker" or "participant" in the final report. I understand that information provided will remain confidential and will not be shared with my employer. The evaluation results will only be presented in aggregate form.

I understand that my real name and identifiable information will be kept in Ms. Lichti's locked filing cabinet in her home office.

I understand that all identifiable information will be destroyed after acceptance of Ms. Lichti's practicum report by the Practicum Committee.

I understand that I will be able to receive a summary of the evaluation results if I request.

I understand I can contact Christine Lichti at 735-2726 if I have questions regarding the evaluation.

Having read and understood the above conditions, this confirms that I

(please print)

hereby consent to voluntarily participate in the evaluation study conducted by Christine Lichti, a graduate student with the Faculty of Social Work, University of Manitoba.

DATE: _____ SIGNATURE: _____

PLEASE NOTE: I would be interested in receiving a summary of the evaluation results.

Please send this copy to the following address:

APPENDIX J

**Letter Inviting Feedback
From Focus Group Participants**

May 28, 2001

Dear focus group participant,

I have attached two documents for your review. The first is a point form listing of the results of my practicum research (called 'results short version') and the second is an expanded form of the first document including descriptive detail about each point (called 'results long version'). Both of these documents are in draft form and will be revised based on feedback from you and the other focus group participants.

Your participation in this final step of my research is completely voluntary. I would appreciate any feedback you are willing to contribute. In order to make this as easy as possible I would suggest you begin by reading the 'results short version' and reflect on the following two questions.

- Do these results accurately reflect what you recall being the views of the focus group you participated in?
- Is there anything you would like to add or expand on in terms of your individual perspective on the views that were shared?

The second document ('results long version') is quite lengthy so reading it in its entirety is completely optional. I am providing it so you can scan it,

- To ensure that my interpretation of your contribution to the focus group interview reflects what you wanted to convey. Some people have been quoted directly. **Please pay specific attention to any quotes that are attributed to you.**
- To ensure that your anonymity maintained. Each participant has been given a pseudonym and I have removed other identifying information like references to specific work locations. **If you are concerned that your anonymity is being compromised by this report please let me know so I can make the necessary changes.**

Anyone who would like to read the long version and give feedback based on it is welcome to do so. Please specify if you are giving feedback based on the short or long version.

As with previous steps in this research measures have been taken to ensure your privacy and confidentiality is maintained.

Your right to privacy will be maintained through the use of a code name for your actual name, in addition, your name will be replaced with "Social Worker", "worker" or "participant" in the final report. The information provided will remain confidential and will not be shared with your employer. The evaluation results will only be presented in aggregate form.

Your real name and any identifiable information will be kept in my locked filing cabinet in my home office.

All identifiable information will be destroyed after acceptance of this practicum report by the Practicum Committee.

You are welcome to respond to me either by e-mail or phone (944-4345). Should you choose to make comments directly on the documents, please remember that you have to save them on your "U" drive, make the additions, save them again and attach the "new" document to an email and send it to me. Please make sure your comments are distinct from the rest of the document either by using a different colour or putting them in *italics*.

Please provide your responses by Monday June 4. If you have no feedback to give please respond indicating the same.

Thank you for taking a few minutes to review the results. Your feedback will be incorporated into the final report, which I hope to have completed by mid June.

Thanks again for your contribution to this research.

Christine Lichti
M.S.W. Candidate

P.S. Your code name is

APPENDIX K

Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard Demographics

Demographic Information

Code # _____

- 1. I have x # years experience working as a social worker in a child welfare agency.
 Less than 2 yrs 2 - 5 yrs 5 - 10 yrs 10 + yrs

- 2. In addition, I have x # years experience working as a social worker in other social service agencies.
 N/A Less than 2 yrs 2 - 5 yrs 5 - 10 yrs 10 + yrs

- 3. I started Competency Based Inservice Training after I had x # years of experience as a social worker in child welfare.
 Less than 2 yrs 2 - 5 yrs 5 - 10 yrs 10 + yrs

- 4. In terms of post secondary education, I have a (check all that apply):
 Bachelor of Social Work Master of Social Work
 Bachelor's Degree _____ Master's Degree _____
 (please specify) (please specify)
 Other _____
 (please specify)

- 5. I am in a Family Service Intake Perinatal Permanent Ward position at Winnipeg Child and Family Services.

PLEASE COMPLETE OTHER SIDE —————▶

APPENDIX L

Human Services Training Effectiveness Postcard Reminder Letter

January 17, 2001

Dear Study Participant,

You recently received a Human Services Training & Evaluation Postcard (yellow card) and letter which asked for your feedback regarding the application of Competency Based Inservice Training on the job.

Many of you have already completed and returned the postcard. Your speedy response is greatly appreciated!! You can disregard this notice.

If you have not already done so, please complete the postcard and return it to me at the Pandora Unit through interdepartmental mail, as soon as possible. I need your responses by **January 25, 2001** in order to include your opinions in my research.

Thank you for your participation in this research.

Sincerely,

Christine Lichti
M.S.W. Candidate

APPENDIX M
Focus Group Interview Guide

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE

Starting with the training event itself. I want you to be able to go back there in your mind. I've posted the 4 modules in order to jog your memory.

1. I would like hear your overall evaluation of the training event.

That's a big question. When you respond to it, I'd like you to think about several aspects of the training:

- was the content relevant to your job
- Did you learn new knowledge and skills
- Was the training presented using techniques that prompted you to think about ways you could use it with your client families.
- What about the Agency's attendance policy and practices regarding timing of attending training, freeing people up to attend.

Moving on, I wonder how much you think you've used the training? Could tell me,

2. On scale of one to ten, to what extent do think you use the training in your day to day job.

- Can you give me some concrete examples....
- so you've hardly used it all...
- what about your clients, have you seen client progress or change as a result of using the training?

Now that we've talked about this for a while-are there are any people that would like to change their rating.

We're going to move onto talk about the situation in the work environment, by that I mean your entire work context, individual unit, program area, Agency as a whole and in relation to government. Now, I want you to focus on those factors in your work environment (as opposed to at the training event) that helped you to use the training on the job.

3. After you completed CBT and returned to your work, what helped you to use the information in your day to day work?

I have six questions that direct you to areas I would like you to address, we'll move through them fairly quickly. If you want to go back at any point just say so:

- What does your supervisor do to assist you with using the training?
- What about your coworkers, how have they helped you to use the training?
- What strategies have you used to improve your own use of CBIT?
- What specific steps has WCFS management taken to assist you in implementing the training in your day to day job?
- How does the Directorate actively support the use of CBIT at WCFS?
- Of all the things that have been done to support your use of the training what has been the most important? Anything else you would like to add?

Part D – Suggestions for improvement of the work environment so that application of the training is more strongly supported

4. Finally, what would you like to see change?

Once again, I will lead you through six questions. We can go back to an earlier question at any time. We'll go top to bottom in the hierarchy this time.

- What could the Directorate do to more actively support the use of CBIT at WCFS?
- What could WCFS management do to further support the use of CBIT within the Agency?
- How could your supervisor improve his/her support of your implementation of the training?
- What would you like your coworkers to do to help you with using the training?
- Name one thing you could do to improve your use of CBIT.
- If you could ask for just one change, what would it be?
- Anything else you would like to add?

5. Is there any area that I have not asked about that you really wanted to talk about today? Anything you would like to add as a final word?

APPENDIX N
Revised Research Questions

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How do Social Workers at WCFS evaluate the CBIT training in terms of its **usefulness** in their job overall?
 - Do they believe that the training resulted in **learning or change** in knowledge, skills, attitudes
 - Is the training **relevant** to the work of social workers at WCFS?
 - How do the **Agency's policies and practices** around training event impact on usefulness of training. (Ie. Attendance, proximity to beginning of work in child welfare)
2. To what extent do Social workers believe they **transferred** knowledge and skills from CBIT to the workplace?
 - Examples of what was used
 - Still untapped potential with regards to use?
3. How do social workers describe the transfer environment at WCFS?
 - What factors in the post training organizational context do Social Workers identify as helping them transfer knowledge and skills from training to the workplace? (Ie. System, workgroup, individual)
 - What factors in the post training organizational context do social workers identify as hindering their transfer knowledge and skills from training to the workplace? (Ie. System, workgroup, individual)
 - How do social workers weigh the impact of the various supportive and inhibiting transfer forces? (ie. You said that supportive supervisor, file recording policy and own motivation helped you transfer, what would you say is the most important

single factor. Or you say that workload, foster care resource restrictions and constant system change interfere with transfer, what would you say is the most important single factor?)

4. What interventions do social workers suggest WCFS could implement in order to decrease the impact of inhibiting factors and increase the impact of supporting factors for transfer of training?

APPENDIX O
Introduction to Focus Group

March 20, 2001

Introduction to Focus Group

Welcome and thank you for taking the time to participate in this research project.

Please have a seat at the table. Help yourself to coffee, tea or juice and something to eat if you like. This is going to be an intense hour and half so you'll need all the energy boosters you can get.

Okay? Everyone settled and have something to eat? There is paper and a pen at your place. The top page has some information for you to fill out. I'd like you to write down your name, the unit you work in, your position in the unit, number of years child welfare experience as a social worker and how many years of child welfare social work experience you had when participated in CBIT.

While you are thinking about that I'll take some time to describe what we will be doing together today and suggest ground rules that should make our time here productive and interesting for everyone.

First of all, many of you have probably heard of focus groups, but some may not know what they are really all about. There is no mystery here. A focus group is one method of gathering information and opinions from people (others you may be more familiar with are individual interviews and written surveys). It is sometimes called a 'focused group interview' and it is used in social and market research.

Focus group interviews are usually recorded in order to ensure no opinion gets lost. This group will be recorded both in writing and on audiotape. Kim Thomas will provide the written record, the tape recorder you can see, but hopefully will forget about as soon as we get going.

Focus groups work best when participants feel free to share their opinions and there is dynamic interaction between group members.

All focus groups must be moderated. That's my job. It's the moderator's job to get as much information as possible about the topic during the time that the group is together. There are several things that I will be doing to ensure that happens:

First, I have a series of questions that I will be going through with you. You will notice that I will be reading each question verbatim from my interview guide. That way I can ensure that I ask the same questions of your group as I do the other.

Second, I will be encouraging each of you to share your opinions and experiences. I really need to know what you think and how you feel about the things we're going to be discussing, and I'd like you not to edit yourself. It would be ideal, from my point of view, if everything that comes into your mind comes out of your mouth. We don't get this opportunity in our work as social workers much so take advantage of it!

This is not a test. There is no right or wrong. And please don't leave something unsaid because you think it is 'unimportant'. Any reaction you have is right and important.

At the same time, it is crucial that I can hear each person speak both today and later when I review the tapes. You may have had an experience of listening to tape recorded conversation and discovering that when two people are speaking at once you can't figure out what anyone is saying. I can't afford to lose one word. So if someone is talking and you have something you are dying to say (incidentally, that's what we're hoping for because that means you are here and involved), I will ask you to hold it a minute. Please don't forget what you were going to say, write it down if you like. I won't forget that you were going to say something and I'll get back to you....

Besides saying what comes to your mind I want you to feel free about responding to whatever anyone else says. You don't have to agree. If somebody says something, and you all sit there nodding and smiling, I'll assume that the person is speaking for the group, and I depend on you not to let me go away misinformed. So if somebody says

something and they're not speaking for you, say so. Even if you think it's a little niggle. It may not be little for me. If a fistfight breaks out, I'll interrupt it, but anything short of that is controversy and its fine.

Okay, lets see. I asked you not to edit, and to try not to talk all at once, and to disagree if you disagree...is there anything else.?... Oh, for the next hour and a half we're here and the world ends at the door. We know it doesn't but I would like your undivided attention. Is there anyone who is expecting to be interrupted? Can we turn cell phones off? The washrooms are ...no need to ask for permission. Just hurry back.

What I mean when I say the world ends here is - I am concerned about you. Your experiences, thoughts and opinions. So if a question is asked don't say what your co-worker thinks, or your supervisor. Just you.

Finally, each of you has signed a consent to participate in this focus group. In it I assure you that your identity will be protected and confidentiality maintained. I would ask that each of you respect the identity and confidentiality of the other participants in the group. I have asked you to be frank and direct in the sharing of your opinions. I am sure you would agree that that is easier to do if you can trust that your confidentiality will be protected.

How does that sound? Can we move on? Okay... Now lets find out who we all are. Would you start here and say what you wrote on the pad. And go around the table.

Just a quick piece about my research and then we'll get into the questions.

I am conducting this research in partial completion of a Masters Degree in Social Work. It is an evaluation of the Competency-Based Inservice Training (CBIT) Program at Winnipeg Child and Family Services (WCFS).

I am interested in the extent to which social workers believe they have implemented the information and skills taught in Competency Based Inservice Training in their day to day work. Most importantly, I hope the research will identify and describe those factors within the work environment that helped or hindered the application of training on the job.

I chose this topic partly because of my own experience. I entered child welfare after working as a social worker in non-mandated services for about 7 years. When I started at WCFS I was extremely grateful for the experience I had coming into the Agency. There was lots to learn - not the least of which was working within a mandate, the written and unwritten procedures of the Agency and court work, but at least I was aware of many community resources, I'd worked with people in crisis, dealt with angry clients and learned some healthy boundaries between work and the rest of life.

In the midst of this I starting asking myself how people without previous experience managed in this complicated setting. At the time CBIT had been offered at the Agency for a few years and I was interested in what it might contribute to worker's ability to do the work. I began by researching various approaches to child welfare training and then moved on to ask, so do people actually use their training? If they do, then what helps them with that? If they don't why not what is getting in the way.

This focus group is the second step in my data collection process. As you know, I sent out Human Service and Training Effectiveness Postcards and have also looked at the Training Evaluations. The research and its results will be written as a final report. I hope to have an opportunity to share the results of the research with management at WCFS. The director of training at the directorate has asked for a copy of the final report. Ultimately, I want to get my degree!!!

So, enough preamble:

There are four overall areas that my questions will guide you through:

1. the training event itself
2. your use of the training
3. ways in which your use of training was supported within the work environment, and finally
4. Suggestions you have for improving support for use of the training at WCFS

I want to spend the bulk of our time on the last two areas so lets begin

APPENDIX P
Point Form Results

TRANSFER OF INSERVICE TRAINING IN A CHILD WELFARE AGENCY: AN EVALUATION USING GROUNDED THEORY

RESULTS

By Christine Lichti
MSW Candidate
May 28, 2001

Following are the descriptive results from analysis of Post Training Evaluations, Human Service Training Evaluation Postcards and Focus Group Interviews.

TRAINING EVENT OVERALL

1. Content was relevant to the work these participants engage in on a daily basis.
2. The delivery and design of the training was seen as acceptable overall.
3. All participants felt that the training was a review of information and skills they had acquired in their university education or in their experience on the job.
4. Participants' responses indicated support for WCFS' policies of mandatory attendance and caseload coverage, but suggested changes for some practices surrounding the training event.
5. There was general agreement that the training was valuable and should be continued.

TRANSFER

1. CBIT is being used in the day to day work of these participants, however no one is using all of the training or applying it to the full extent that it was taught with all of their client families.

TRANSFER ENVIRONMENT

1. There is a lack of fit between the kind of work environment required to carry out 'best practice' as taught in the CBIT curriculum and the work environment at WCFS. Workers often refer to this as 'real world' vs. 'ideal world'.
2. Participants do not see the Directorate or Agency Management as providing concrete assistance in implementing the training.
3. Participants are receiving a range of support and/or assistance from their supervisors in applying CBIT.
4. Participants report that there is a broad range in the extent that their colleagues at WCFS are implementing CBIT.
5. Participants have a strong desire to be able to provide CBIT 'best practice' service to their clients.
6. Workload is the primary factor participants cite as inhibiting implementation of CBIT.
7. Resource shortages are also seen to inhibit transfer however this concern was not explored enough to determine which resources are more critical than others.
8. Organizational changes that WCFS engaged in in 1999 were viewed as disruptive and not addressing the identified needs of the participants.

INTERVENTION

1. Participants felt that larger system issues were impacting their ability to implement CBIT. They felt the Directorate or WCFS management should address these concerns.
2. Participants suggested several things that the Directorate or WCFS management could implement in order to directly encourage the implementation of CBIT.

APPENDIX Q
Categories List

Categories Developed when Analysing Post Training Evaluation and HSTEP

1. Training Event
 - a) Content
 - b) Design & delivery
 - c) Perceived learning
 - d) Agency's training policies and practices
 - e) Other

2. Perceived Transfer
 - a) Used
 - b) Observed Client Progress
 - c) Am a better worker
 - d) Other

3. Transfer Environment
 - a) Training/Organizational Congruence
 - External
 - Internal
 - Other
 - b) Organizational Supports /Barriers
 - External
 - Directorate
 - Other
 - Internal
 - Organization of Agency as a Whole
 - Top Management
 - Other Internal Programs
 - Supervisor
 - Co-workers
 - Individual
 - Other
 - c) Practice Issues
 - Opportunity to Use
 - Nature of the work
 - Type of work
 - Volume of work
 - Complexity of work
 - Other
 - d) Resource Issues
 - External
 - Programs
 - Other
 - Internal
 - People/Staff
 - Financial
 - Programs
 - Other
 - e) Other

4. Transfer Interventions Suggested

5. Satellites

6. Quote

APPENDIX R
Revised Categories List

Category List for Focus Groups

1. Training Event
 - a) Content
 - b) Design & delivery
 - c) Perceived learning
 - d) Agency's training policies and practices
 - e) Other

2. Perceived Transfer
 - a) Used
 - b) Observed Client Progress
 - c) Am a better worker
 - d) Other

3. Transfer Environment
 - a) Training/Organizational Congruence
 - External
 - Internal
 - Other
 - b) Organizational Supports /Barriers
 - External
 - Directorate
 - Other
 - Internal
 - Organization of Agency as a Whole
 - Top Management
 - Other Internal Programs
 - Supervisor
 - Co-workers
 - Individual
 - Other
 - c) Practice Issues
 - Opportunity to Use
 - Nature of the work
 - Type of work
 - Volume of work
 - Complexity of work
 - Other
 - d) Resource Issues
 - External
 - Programs
 - Other
 - Internal
 - People/Staff
 - Financial

- Programs
 - Other
 - e) Other
- 4. Transfer Interventions Suggested
 - a) Training/Organizational Congruence
 - External
 - Internal
 - Other
 - b) Organizational Supports /Barriers
 - External
 - Directorate
 - Other
 - Internal
 - Organization of Agency as a Whole
 - Top Management
 - Other Internal Programs
 - Supervisor
 - Co-workers
 - Individual
 - Other
 - c) Practice Issues
 - Opportunity to Use
 - Nature of the work
 - Type of work
 - Volume of work
 - Complexity of work
 - Other
 - d) Resource Issues
 - External
 - Programs
 - Other
 - Internal
 - People/Staff
 - Financial
 - Programs
 - Other
 - e) Other
- 5. Satellites
- 6. Quotes

APPENDIX S

**Descriptive Chart
Of Focus Group Findings**

Description of Focus Group Findings
Organized According to Categories

| Descriptions that reflect both groups span the width of the page | |
|---|--|
| 2+ group | -2 group |
| 1a. Training Event: Content | |
| i. Relevance | |
| Participants felt that the training content was relevant to their work. | |
| There were qualifiers but they were related to much of the material being a review and problems with barriers to implementation in the work environment. | This group was also concerned that barriers to implementation (in the work environment) decreased the training's relevance. |
| ii. Specific training content | |
| Core 102, 103, 104 were highlighted as having the most useful content and where participants learned the most. | |
| There was general agreement that 101 was too basic for everyone. | |
| Participants seemed to find 104 the most enjoyable module. | |
| 1b. Training Event: Design and Delivery | |
| i. Trainer | |
| Overall participants gave a positive evaluation of the trainers. | |
| There were mixed opinions as to whether the trainer's acknowledgement of work environment barriers decreased the level of frustration participants felt about this work environment barriers while at the training event. | These participants reported not being conscious of the work environment barriers to application while at the training but in retrospect see them as significant. |
| ii. Training Techniques | |
| Group work/discussion was the most frequently mentioned training technique. | Various training techniques including the use of slides, music, colouring, group work, handouts, checklists, case discussion were mentioned. |
| There seemed to be mixed opinion about these training techniques, probably related to individual preference and learning style. | |
| N/A | This group seemed to tire of the group work and presentations saying they'd had their fill in university. |

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| iii. Overall Training Design | |
| N/A | This group found the diversity of people who attended training (including amount of child welfare experience, location of their work: rural, urban, north, job description) contributed to their learning experience and was very interesting. |
| N/A | It was suggested that it was helpful to have the training delivered over an eight month period. |
| N/A | In general, participants felt that the training days were long and that after three days of training their ability to learn and retain information decreased. |
| 1c. Training Event: Perceived Learning | |
| i. New Information/Review | |
| Participants felt that most of the training was a review. | |
| Those participants with 15 years or more experience used the training as a refresher and to refine skills they already had. | These participants pointed out that the material was a review of material they had learned in university, either in their BSW or Arts education. |
| Most participants felt that it was good to get this kind of a review, however one person who had received similar training in other provinces felt it was a waste of time. | These participants felt that the training was important despite the fact that it was a review. |
| ii. Specific Modules | |
| Participants pointed to modules 102, 103, & 104 as providing them with helpful/useful information. | |
| N/A | This group was more specific about certain content in 102 and 103 being a repeat of university education. |
| 104 appeared to have had the most significant impact on everyone in the group | |
| 101 was noted as the least useful and most repetitive of information already known. | |

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| iii. Kind of Learning | |
| People in this group talked about refining their skills, learning some different approaches to working with families and gaining increased sensitivity to the impact of separation, placement and reunification of children. | This group seemed to find the training to be more knowledge development and awareness raising than skill building. Given the fact that their university education was in the recent past they appeared to be looking for skill building rather than knowledge development, which had been the focus of their university education. |

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| 1d. Training Event: Agency's training policies and practices. | |
| i. Timing of taking training relative to start date | |
| Training should be offered within the first six months of starting with WCFS. | |
| ii. Sending units to training together | |
| Attending training two times in order to attend with your work team was not seen as beneficial. | |
| While the premise of sending units together was that of team building, the training event was not designed in a way that facilitated this. | |
| The benefit of teams having shared language was not seen as so significant as to merit sending teams together. | |
| Only situation where sending the unit together seemed to be beneficial was where it was followed up with a team day used to develop an implementation plan. | N/A |
| iii. Mandatory Training | |
| There was general acceptance that the training is mandatory. | |
| iv. Coverage | |
| Some participants in this group found it difficult to leave their work to attend training. Some of these individuals felt that it was too long to leave their casework. Others felt that the case coverage provided did not have sufficient family specific background to make good decisions or was emergent only and that was insufficient. | These participants seemed to be glad for permission to leave their casework and attend training. |

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| N/A | While most participants were provided coverage while at training some had been instructed by their supervisors to check messages, return calls and attend court. |
| | Lack of communication from the Agency's training coordinator to the supervisor resulted in one person missing the first module and needing to take it at the end of her training. |
| 2a. Perceived Transfer: Used the knowledge and skills | |
| i. Examples of use | |
| Various aspects of 102, 103 & 104 are being used on a regular basis. | |
| ii. Range of use | |
| Everyone was using the training to some extent. | |
| No one was using all of the training or applying it to the full extent that it was taught with all of his or her client families. | |
| Use ranged from the way participants approached a case situation (thinking) to writing an assessment or plan (concrete evidence). | |
| 2b. Observed Client Change | |
| One participant in this group mentioned this as the most important motivator for her implementation of the training. Others in the group agreed. | N/A |
| 2c. Perceived Learning: Am a Better Worker | |
| While not explicitly stated participants appeared to feel they were better workers as a result of taking the training. | |
| 3a. Transfer Environment: Training and Organizational Congruence | |
| There is a sharp contrast between what is taught as best practice and the possibilities for implementation of that practice in the work environment. | <p>This group recognized that what was taught as 'best practice' could not be implemented to the full extent in the work environment.</p> <p>This group reflected that given their experience to date (since training) they understood and agreed with the experienced worker's challenges that these 'best practice' ideals did not mesh with the reality of the work environment.</p> |

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| Despite this assessment this group felt considerable guilt about not providing 'best practice' services to their client families. | This group did not express feeling guilty that they were not able to provide 'best practice' services to their clients. |
| These participants felt that a common ideology and language about what was meant by best practice was understood throughout the Agency | This group seemed to convey a much more distinct separation between the training event and the work environment. (Did that, now back to work.) |

3b. Transfer Environment: Organizational Supports and Barriers

i. Directorate

| | |
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| <p>This group believed there was a huge gap between the expectations of the Directorate (as reflected in standards) and the reality of front line work.</p> <p>There was a concern that staff at the Directorate did not know the realities of front line work. They were unsure if staff at the Directorate wanted to know the realities of front line work.</p> | <p>This group said that until recently the role of the Directorate was largely unknown to them.</p> <p>There was a growing awareness that people at the Directorate have considerable power and influence when they do become involved in case planning.</p> |
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ii. Agency as a Whole

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| Agency as whole is allowing mediocre practice to continue because they aren't addressing workload. | Understanding that CBIT endorsed by Agency as a whole, but are unsure if Agency is committed to implementing it. |
| Agency is throwing new workers into casework without proper preparation. | N/A |

iii. WCFS Management

Participants are at a loss to suggest anything that WCFS management has done to support the implementation of CBIT

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| <p>The perception of the group was that excessive workload was interfering with the implementation of training and Agency management was not addressing that issue, nor did they have a plan to address it.</p> <p>There was a perception that the gap between upper management and line workers was widening —that management doesn't have the same concerns/priorities as workers.</p> <p>There was an understanding that the power of Agency management is limited but also a wish that they would provide a voice lobbying the government and community for the resources to provide best practice in child welfare.</p> | <p>N/A</p> |
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iv. Internal and External Resources

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| <p>This group felt that there was an understanding of what is meant by best practice throughout the Agency.</p> | <p>N/A</p> |
| <p>N/A</p> | <p>This group felt that external resources would benefit from CBIT training.</p> |

v. Supervisor

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>There was general agreement that supervisors are an important source of support for implementing the training.</p> | |
| <p>Participants felt their supervisors agreed with the principles taught in CBIT.</p> | |
| <p>There was a range in the extent to which supervisors actively supported implementation – some who very specifically provided support and supervision using CBIT materials and principles, others who were supportive when CBIT concepts were brought to them by workers.</p> | <p>Participants felt their supervisors provided excellent supervision but did not necessarily see it as directly reflecting CBIT.</p> |
| <p>Participants felt that supervisors understood their real world dilemmas and were communicating them to upper management but any progress toward change stopped there.</p> | |

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| vi. Co-workers | |
| Most participants in this group had the experience of discussing cases with co-workers and using CBIT to inform the development of potential case plans. These discussions included an attempt to fit CBIT suggestions with realities of workload and Agency resources. When the discussion moved to implementation most CBIT suggestions had to be abandoned due to work environment barriers. | This group did not talk about discussing case examples with co-workers within a team meeting context. |
| It was acknowledged that there was a wide range of the extent that CBIT was implemented by their colleagues throughout the Agency (as reflected in file recording and experienced by those who had worked in several different units). | |
| N/A | This group had experienced resistance toward use of the training from the more experienced workers. |
| vii. Individual | |
| In general participants had attempted to implement the training. | |
| Workload interfered with implementation but people dealt with that by choosing only a few cases in which to use the training or chose certain parts of the training to implement. | |
| Use decreased for several reasons, including was not expected by supervisor, excessive use of overtime in order to implement, co-workers weren't implementing, case plans could not be carried out anyway (work environment barriers). | N/A |
| 3c. Transfer Environment: Practice issues | |
| i. Type of Work | |
| Check transcript | Workers described a broad range of activities involved in their jobs: crisis intervention, advocacy, referrals, relating to internal and external resources, administrative work including report and letter writing, disbursements, scheduling, securing and monitoring appropriate placements for children in care, assessing risk and providing public education. |

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| Check transcript | There was general agreement that being a Permanent Ward worker allowed for more long term planning and wasn't as crisis oriented as Family Service Work. |
| ii. Volume | |
| Workload was seen as the primary reason that the training was not implemented. | |
| For some people in this group, workload interfered with their ability to leave their casework behind when they attended the training. | This group appeared to have little difficulty leaving their casework behind in order to attend training. They wanted and appreciated the coverage they received. |
| iii. Complexity | |
| | There was an understanding that the families these participants worked with had complex problems. These participants would welcome additional training that would address the complex situations they were facing. |
| v. Work Processes | |
| Participants talked about the lack of: effective technology, use of the technology available, organization of work and clarity regarding authority causing inefficiencies in their work process. | |
| N/A | This group talked about the difficulty in executing plans in a timely manner unless there was direct involvement by staff at the directorate or Agency management level. |
| iv. Opportunity to Use | |
| Participants were implementing the training due to their own initiative or encouragement from supervisors. | Participants were implementing the training due to their own initiative. No one in the group talked about supervisors requiring the use of CBIT. |
| No one talked about Agency sanctioned policies or practices that required application of CBIT by workers. | |
| There was no shortage of situations where workers felt they could utilize the training, but use was hindered by workload and resource shortages. | |
| 3d. Transfer Environment: Resource Issues | |
| i. Internal-Staff | |
| This group made several references to staff shortages. | |
| ii. Financial | |
| Check transcript | Check transcript |

| | |
|---|-----|
| iii. Programs | |
| One person talked about a concern that they did not have time to family work/counselling and also had difficulty accessing these services both internally and externally. | N/A |
| iv. Resources in General | |
| Participants frequently referred to a lack of resources being a problem in the work environment. | |

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| 3e. Transfer Environment: Other |
| Participants felt that the reorganization of 1999 and the anticipated changes due to implementation of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry were disrupting any ability for the Agency to make progress on other long term initiatives (ie. Work assessment tool, visioning etc.). |
| Workers felt that the Directorate and Agency Management believed that reorganization in itself would solve serious workload problems. Staff believe that workload problems are due resource shortages, coordination and communication problems within the Agency. |
| Workers felt that many of the changes over the past several years (either due to reorganization or renovations) lacked logical sequencing and either did not invite or ignored worker input. |

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| 4b. Transfer Interventions: Organizational Supports and Barriers | |
| i. Directorate | |
| There participants suggested that in order for the directorate to work toward supporting the implementation of CBIT they would need to familiarize themselves with the realities in the field (by talking directly to line workers). | Staff at the directorate should be more visible to front line workers/interact with workers. |
| Staff, finances and additional resources would be needed in order to attain 'best practice'. | Something will need to be done about workload if increased implementation of training is to occur. Ie. More money for staff, reduce/narrow the mandate. |
| N/A | Could standardize forms based on CBIT-result integrated into daily work (but this hinged in time being available to actually complete the forms |
| ii. Agency | |
| Provide CBIT to new workers earlier in their careers at WCFS. Provide orientation to new workers. | Provide training to new workers and free them up to attend training without needing to respond to case issues. |

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| iii. Agency Management | |
| Discussion returned to the need to address the workload issue as key to supporting transfer. | Agency Management should ensure workers can attend training without obligation of case responsibilities. |
| Participants want Agency management to show some leadership, communicate a vision for WCFS and lobby government. | |
| Communication with front line workers is crucial for a strong voice to government and the community. | |
| iv. Supervisor | |
| | This group thought supervisors could be more deliberate about using CBIT principles as a basis for case planning-in supervision. |
| | The supervisor should ensure workers can attend training without obligation of case responsibilities. |
| v. Coworker | |
| N/A | N/A |
| vi. Individual | |
| Individuals need to be responsible with their time and implement best practice. | |
| vii. External | |
| | Several people in this group felt that external collaterals (schools, Employment and Income Assistance, Children's Advocate) would benefit from learning the CBIT, Family-centred, strength based approach to practice. |
| 4c. Transfer Interventions: Practice Issues | |
| Decreasing workload was seen as the most important factor impacting practice. | |
| Participants freely contributed ideas about other efficiencies that could be implemented in order to address workload. These included improved information system, computerized forms that are user friendly, clarified modes of communication (is everyone using email and checking it regularly), clarification regarding who has authority to provide approval to disburse monies related to case planning, assistance with some administrative tasks, reduce amount of paperwork required to access resources. | |

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| | There were suggestions that second level/advanced training would be appreciated. |
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| 4d. Transfer Interventions: Resource issues | |
| There were few specific suggestions with the exception of requests for more funding for increased staffing levels or more resources in general. | |
| 5. Satellites | |
| There were frequent references to feeling guilty for not providing client families with services that reflect 'best practice'. | N/A |
| There was a concern that accounting is engaging in case planning when they are able to override approval that has already been gained from the supervisor and assistant program manager. | N/A |
| This group shared the belief that the provinces of Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia had much more progressive child welfare programs and provided training to their workers earlier in their child welfare careers. | N/A |
| Separate First Nations agencies are in conflict with principles taught in CBIT as well as aboriginal thinking and beliefs. This move is the result of poor treatment of people (regardless of race) due to workload demands. | N/A |
| | Some in this group thought that caseloads had decreased, but workload was still too excessive. |