

Evaluation of Alberta Children's Services Delegation Training (2005 Pilot)

by

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ABSTRACT

A combination of quantitative and qualitative data analysis was utilized in the evaluation of a six module training program designed for new caseworker staff within the Alberta Ministry of Children's Services and Delegated First Nation's Agencies. A total of 102 participants completed the five modules of training over 32 sessions scheduled during the training program pilot. Evaluation data included the use of participant workshop feedback, participant pre-test and post-test knowledge improvement for each completed module of training, facilitator feedback and supervisor surveys. Evaluation outcomes demonstrated that the *Alberta Children's Services Delegation Training Program* provided new casework staff with the skills, knowledge and competency development required to provide intervention services to children, youth and families as mandated under the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act*.

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CHAPTER ONE: OVERVIEW

Introduction and Rationale

For over 20 years the *Alberta Child Welfare Act (1985)* guided and shaped child protection practice in the Province of Alberta. The *Child Welfare Act* legislation, albeit unintentionally, supported a practice approach that relied heavily on court driven processes. These practices usually required a child to be under the care of the Director or minimally placed at home with court ordered expectations for parental behavior. Services to children and their families were provided, for the most part, through private agency contracts and the role of the case manager took on the feel of a brokering system whereby the worker monitored service provision and reviewed family progress through the use of regular case conferencing. Additionally, service support options were mandated for families requiring less intrusive service support, with the underlying intention of preventing the family from moving into crisis and ultimately the need for protective services. However, over time the demand for protective services began to outweigh the ability to provide and monitor preventative services to children, youth and families and a one stream approach to services began to emerge.

In 2001, Alberta Children's Services Minister Iris Evans, directed a review of child protection legislation and case management practice across the province in an effort to determine whether the legislation and service provision were meeting the needs of Alberta's children, youth and families. The review of Alberta's Child Welfare legislation and existing case management practices, lead

to significant recommendations for legislative and practice changes in the field of child protection services. Further exploration of the *Child Welfare Act Review* results and recommendations will be examined in Chapter Three. As a result of the review recommendations and subsequent changes to the legislation a shift in practice direction for children's services staff occurred. The legislation was renamed the *Child Youth and Family Enhancement Act* and incorporated clearer definitions around criteria for finding a child in need of intervention, provided a legislated differential response to service provision to children, youth and families, and provided legislated guiding principles to be utilized in the assessment, decision making and case planning for children and their families. Additionally, a direction for practice approach occurred in the requirement within the legislation for caseworker's to conduct extensive assessment activities at the front end of service provision to families that emphasized engagement and relationship building between the worker and the child, youth and family. As a result of the legislation, social work practice was mandated to move away from brokering services to families toward caseworkers providing supports by way of risk, safety, parenting and service support assessment, and an emphasis on client engagement and worker-client relationship and on collaborative practice.

Given the now mandated shifts in approach to practice, it was determined that training would need to be developed for all Ministry and Delegated First Nations Agency staff in order to train everyone in applying new legislation all the way from knowing the content of that legislation, through being able to use the

new regulated forms, apply the new policy and procedural expectations, to making the expected practice shifts outlined above.

Additionally, it was determined that training would need to be developed for all staff hired post November 1, 2004, the implementation date for the revised legislation. The training to be developed for the new hired staff was to include a focus on the legislation, mandated services, policy and procedural guidelines, and the technical or core competency expectations for caseworkers providing intervention through legislated differential responses available through enhancement and protection services. Core competency expectations derived from competency criteria that had been developed in conjunction with caseworkers, supervisors and management teams across the province. These competency criteria were defined broadly to encompass an entry level of competency expectation for all staff in children's services and to provide a base from which to further develop competencies as workers progressed through their career paths. The purpose of the training program was to link the existing legislation, policy and procedures and direction for casework practice with the provincial expectation for consistent and well documented case planning and clearly identified decision-making processes supported by the legislated mandates for service provision to children, youth and families.

As a front line practitioner I felt it was my responsibility to participate in the review process for the *Alberta Child Welfare Act*, and believed that many of the changes made within the revised legislation reflected a direction for practice that modeled best practice approaches to working with children, youth and families.

As such, I applied for and became one of the twelve front line staff seconded to train the *Child Youth and Family Enhancement Act* between January and November 2004. I was subsequently re-seconded in January 2005, to help develop the second stage of training for casework staff hired post November 1, 2004 and found myself working toward a pilot training roll out schedule to begin at the end of February 2005. Participating in the first phase of the training roll out on the legislation and practice changes and becoming involved in the development and delivery of the second phase of training, presented me with a unique opportunity to combine my interest in the training program development and delivery with my growing desire to know whether or not the training actually delivered the goods. More and more, I wanted to find out if the training provides casework staff with the necessary knowledge and understanding to do the newly mandated work with children, youth and families. What was most interesting for me as both a case practice generalist and investigator under the former legislation and now as a trainer to the new legislation, was whether or not the training had any impact on workers' knowledge about their role and whether it provided an opportunity to facilitate the exploration and understanding of their practice as caseworkers. I wanted to know if the training provides participants with the tools and processes to support them with doing court work, documentation, referencing of the legislation, case planning, critical thinking, interviewing and assessment techniques, and whether it teaches them how to use the legislation and information technology systems to support their documentation and decision-making processes. I also wanted to know if the

training could move people beyond learning information about the new child intervention legislation toward practice change. That is, I wanted to find out if trainees would, having learned the new rules and laws, also change the way they worked with families by incorporating into their practice the best possible strategies for assessment, service provision and supports.

I believed that the training should allow for opportunities to both provide the knowledge necessary to perform the job as well as exploration of how that new knowledge could be applied in case practice. I took the opportunity presented to me as a trainer and I approached my employer, in this case the Director of Human Resource Management Supports, Molly Turner, and was granted permission to conduct, as part of my requirements toward the completion of my graduate program, a preliminary evaluation of the training program developed for new hired staff.

Thus the primary purpose of my thesis was to conduct an inquiry about how the training program prepared new caseworkers for their practice and whether they gained knowledge and understanding of their role, could articulate employer expectations for best practice and could plan-fully engage in ongoing competency development in practice. However, once the evaluation process began, it became clear that I would also need to address issues encountered in evaluation design and implementation as related these related to methodology, tools and evaluation direction set out by Alberta Children's Services. The issues I encountered while conducting the evaluation are central to this thesis and will be explored in the chapters that follow.

Chapter Two sets the stage for Alberta Children's Services transition from the *Alberta Child Welfare Act* to the *Child Youth and Family Enhancement Act* and the subsequent training program direction and development. A review of the history of *Alberta Children's Services Delegation Training Program* planning, design, delivery and implementation processes played a key role in informing the direction for the literature review in Chapter Three. In that chapter, I reviewed literature relevant to program evaluation, the use of competency models and to adult learning styles and the influence of adult learning styles on training program design and delivery, as well as existing program evaluation outcomes of training programs similar to the program developed for Alberta's child protection staff. Chapter Four outlines the evaluation methodology and Chapter Five reviews the results of the data analysis as related to the key evaluation outcome targets. A critique and discussion of the evaluation process, outcomes and recommendations will be highlighted in Chapter Six, the final chapter.

CHAPTER TWO: ALBERTA CHILDREN'S SERVICES TRAINING

History

In 2001, a *Child Welfare Act* Review Committee was struck by the Minister of Alberta Children's Services, Iris Evans, for the express purpose of assisting in the development of recommendations for changes to legislation governing Child Welfare practice in the province of Alberta. This committee, chaired by MLA Harvey Cenaiko, was comprised of individuals representative of Alberta Children's Services, Delegated First Nations Authorities, the provincial government, and legislative and legal policy analysts. A number of individuals with specialized knowledge and experience relating to specific areas in the existing legislation were also consulted throughout the process. In particular, specialists and researchers in the field of child development, attachment, family violence, foster care and aboriginal issues were consulted.

The first stage of the review took place between June and September 2001. Efforts during this stage of the review process focused on "researching child welfare legislation, policy and best practices across the province, nationally and internationally including the United States, United Kingdom, Europe, Australia and New Zealand" (Alberta Children's Services, 2002, p. 35). Additionally, a process and criteria for the development of recommendations was established.

In an effort to be as inclusive as possible during the review process, stakeholder meetings were held throughout the province and requests were made to stakeholders for verbal and written submissions. Stakeholders included

front line staff, foster parents, police, educators, family support agencies, contracted service providers, youth who had been or were currently in care, and community members with an interest in services provided through Children's Services. Stage two of the review was structured to include a wide range of discussion areas that were identified through research, the existing *Child Welfare Act* mandates, and stakeholder feedback. Topics included: early childhood development; early intervention and prevention; fetal alcohol syndrome; family violence, addictions; protective services; children with mental health problems; permanency planning; private guardianship; post-guardianship supports; parental accountability; transitional supports for youth; First Nations; Aboriginal, Métis, and Inuit; confidentiality and release of information; resources for children with disabilities; adoption; advocacy; accountability; appeal mechanisms; foster care; and collaboration.

The stakeholder review process took place between October 2001 and April 2002. Over 140 meetings were held with more than 600 submissions received for analysis. The *Child Welfare Act* Review Committee spent another six months consolidating the information received from the review process and drafting up key recommendations to be reported to the Minister of Children's Services. The recommendations were reviewed by a team of legal experts and written in legislative language that would reflect the intent of the recommendations and would hold up to any potential challenges from, for example, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Once the recommended legislative changes were complete, the Minister of Children's

Services presented the changes through the introduction of a Bill, to the Legislative Assembly for reading and acceptance.

In March of 2004, the final reading and acceptance of the amended *Alberta Child Welfare Act* was passed in the Legislative Assembly. Regulations and policy were redrafted to work with the newly renamed legislation, the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act (Enhancement Act)*, and training of Ministry of Children' Services staff commenced April 1, 2004. The *Enhancement Act* was proclaimed November 1, 2004 and is now the primary legislation guiding direct intervention services. The training of experienced ministry staff took approximately six months to complete and involved several hundred participants ranging from administrative support, caseworkers, supervisors, managers, senior team leaders, to chief executive officers and assistant deputy ministers. The training was comprised of a four-day core component, one-day licensing, administration and overview trainings, and half-day training for adoption, supports for permanency and condensed training. Condensed and overview training was comprised of half and full day training sessions that briefly described the key changes to the legislation and impacts on service delivery and was offered to contract agency staff, educators, police and other service support agency personnel. Twelve trainers were hired from direct service positions across the province to facilitate all training sessions over the six-month period. In hiring of the trainers those responsible considered their range of experience and education in direct service provision, previous training and public speaking abilities and demonstrated skills in conflict resolution and team building. Trainers

were provided with a two-month preparation period before beginning the training itself. During the two months of preparation, trainers were provided with a copy of the revised *Child Welfare Act*. This copy of the legislation combined the *Child Welfare Act* with outlined changes for the renamed *Child Youth and Family Enhancement Act*. The trainers had the opportunity to work in teams of four that reviewed the legislative changes page by page and diagramed flow charts and tables to assist trainers in understanding sections of the legislation. The teams also met with the Executive Manager responsible for the implementation of the revised legislation, to seek clarification and understanding of the intent of the changes and additions to the legislation. Additionally, trainers were encouraged to reflect on their practice and discuss how the legislative changes would impact practice direction in the future. This author was one of the twelve trainers seconded by the ministry to conduct this massive training initiative.

Along with training for experienced staff, training was also required for new staff entering the employ of the Alberta Ministry of Children's Services. Therefore, the training for newly hired staff, formerly entitled Child Protection Services (CPS) training and known recently as *Child Welfare Act* Training (2000-2004), had to be restructured to incorporate the revised legislation and significant changes in philosophy and approaches to intervention practice.

As a result of the numerous changes to the body of the legislation and the shift in the philosophy underpinning the legislation and new practice approaches, the Ministry concluded that the development of the training materials required a "hand's on" approach. A hands on approach meant that the Ministry, through

Workforce Development, took the lead in developing the training materials collaboratively with the contracted program designer, The Performance Group, and seconded four front line experienced casework staff as trainers for the program. The seconded trainers each had more than five years experience in the field, familiarity with adult learning approaches in conjunction with a training and facilitation background, a working knowledge of the revised legislation and an understanding of best practice approaches. Trainers were located within the Workforce Development unit and were accountable to the Training Project Lead. Workforce Development was responsible for providing training and support to the seconded training staff, as well as being responsible for updating of course materials, and ongoing scheduling and delivery of the training program to new hired staff across the province.

Previously, through the *Child Welfare Act* Training, the materials had been developed by and delivered through an external contractor. Although Workforce Development personnel had input into training content, they did not have control over course scheduling, training staff or training location. In an effort to ensure that the new materials reflected practice based skill development in combination with the desired theoretical concepts and legislative changes, the decision was made to utilize a team of individuals that included the seconded trainers, training consultants from Workforce Development, and the independent contractor. Additionally, working committees were struck that included individuals with specialized expertise in the areas of legislation, structure and policies, core competencies, permanency, aboriginal culture, legal and court processes, and

casework practice issues as well as front line caseworkers, supervisors and managers from the Regional and DFNA offices. Finally, given the new training materials and the new approaches to training, it was also decided that a process for evaluating the effectiveness of the materials and the training was required.

Alberta Children's Services Training Program

Overview

Alberta Children's Services has been transformed by significant changes to their legislation and these changes have had a direct impact on front line delivery of services to children, youth and families. The *Strengthening Families, Children and Youth* (Government of Alberta, 2002) document outlined several key areas for legislative change that included recommendations for improved permanency planning for children, enhanced ability to respond to the needs of families, increased involvement of Aboriginal people in planning for their children in care, greater emphasis on multidisciplinary and collaborative case planning, shortened time in care, and the need for concurrent planning.

Consideration was given to feedback received on the previous training program, the *Child Welfare Act Training*, and it was determined that the *Alberta Children's Services Delegation Training Program* would now include six modules of training versus the eight provided in the previous training package. The six modules are focused as follows: 1) Legislation, Structures and Processes; 2) Suicide / Intervention Training; 3) Pathways to Permanency; 4) Court/Legal Processes; 5) Working with Aboriginal Communities; and 6) Casework Practice Considerations. The materials were delivered by experienced and facilitator

trained front-line practitioners as noted earlier. Accessibility to the training was improved along with timeframes for completion, with the expected end date of training to occur within four months of starting the first module. The modules were broken into units to allow for flexibility in the training and the ability of participants to challenge components of the training in which they are already knowledgeable. The modules now range from two to five days in length with breaks for on the job integration of the learning. The modules are built upon the Ministry's core competency guidelines and target all adult learning styles through the combination of trainer presentation, experiential exercises, small and large group guided discussion, audio visual aids, practice and simulation exercises and guided reading activities. The Ministry's core competencies had been developed collaboratively with workers, supervisors and senior management from both Regional and Delegated First Nation Agencies. It was determined early in the design stage of the training program that the competencies should function as both role identifiers for entry level caseworkers in addition to providing a starting point in the planning for ongoing competency development through the use of a learning plan developed between the trainer, caseworker and their casework supervisor. Each module of training was piloted at eight sites across the province. This was an unusual move on the part of the department but was deemed as necessary due to the number of training sessions that were put on hold during the restructuring of the training materials. The pilot was scheduled and implemented February 28, 2005 with the roll out of the first module.

Ministry Core Competencies and Best Practice Performance Indicators

Human Resource Management Supports, a Division of Alberta Children's Services, has employed a collaborative approach to many of their project initiatives including the development of the Ministry's core competency model for best practice in child intervention services. Working groups were formed that included participants from corporate services and the regional and DFNA office sites. Caseworkers, supervisors, managers, CEO's and DFNA Directors as well as Human Resource specialists assisted in the design of the competency profiles now used in training design and delivery within the Ministry. The Core Competencies have been updated periodically since the original version was developed in January of 2003 and are recently undergoing changes as a result of the December 2006 implementation of the new casework practice model. The Ministry's Core Competencies target several areas that include:

- Legislation, Organization and Systems;
- Professionalism;
- Partnership and Teamwork;
- Communication;
- Values;
- Theory and Practice; and
- Diversity.

Within these core competency categories are key statements about what worker's will be able to do and includes skill, behavior, attitudes, motive and any other personal characteristic that is essential to perform a job. For example, in the first category, *Legislation, Organization and Systems*, one statement is

written as follows: “the human service worker will be able to know, interpret and apply relevant legislation, regulations and policy” (pg.1), while another states, that “the human service worker will be able to identify systemic issues and advocate for improvements within the organizational structure” (Alberta Children’s Services, Core Competencies, pg.4).

An in-depth review of Alberta Children’s Services Core Competencies (2005) is not within the scope of my master’s thesis, however it is important to note how the competencies were developed, what the key categories for competency in the workplace are and what the influence of the competencies exerted on the training design and delivery processes. What follows is a brief introduction to five of the six *Delegation Training Program* modules, the design process for each module and the key learning objectives highlighted by the committee members. The sixth module, *Applied Suicide Intervention Strategies Training* or ASIST, was designed and delivered by an independent contractor and excluded from the evaluation process.

Module One: Legislation, Structure and Processes

This module was designed to provide a detailed review of the child intervention services system and the role of the caseworker within that system. An extensive review of the legislation, mandated services, criteria for finding a child in need of intervention, the intake, assessment, investigation and case management role and regulated forms and processes was built into the training design and delivery methods. Learning objectives were established by a committee of experienced caseworkers, supervisors, trainers, and Ministry

personnel with expertise in the legislation, policy, case practice competencies and best practice approaches. The overarching learning objectives for the module were established and it was determined that the participant would be able to:

- Describe the role of Children’s Services in the provision of child intervention services;
- Describe how their role fits within the systems and processes;
- Reference and knowledgeably discuss legislation, organization and systems within the Ministry, Child and Family Service Authorities (CFSAs) and Delegated First Nation Agencies (DFNAs);
- Work within the relevant legislation, regulations and protocols within and between Ministry and DFNAs; and,
- Begin assessing their learning by using the Ministry’s Caseworker Learning Plan, by creating a portfolio and by keeping a personal learning journal” (Alberta Children’s Services Delegation Training, 2005, Module One, p.3).

Each unit within the module further defined the overall learning objectives and these were compared back to the core competencies and best practice indicators. For example, one of the core competencies identified in *Legislation, Organization and Systems* was that the worker would be able to “to know, interpret and apply relevant legislation, regulations and policy” (ACS, Core Competencies, 2005). Best performance indicators for this statement include the worker demonstrating a working knowledge of, or demonstrating and ability to

access current information on standards, legislation, policies and practice directives that govern their work. Another best performance indicator simply indicates that the worker attend required training regarding legislation, regulations and policy and as a result of that training be able to explain practice decisions according to the legislation, regulation and policies.

Module Three: Working Towards Permanency

The development of this module of the Delegation Training also involved a collaborative team approach that included adoption workers, permanency support caseworkers, foster care workers, casework supervisors, DFNA representatives, trainers and Ministry personnel with expertise in the area of foster care, adoptions, permanency planning, legislation and policy. The module was designed to be delivered over a three and a half day period and focus on the continuum of services and planning for children who come into care of the director starting with initial contact with the child and family, through temporary placements to long term placements, decision making and options for permanency. A great deal of time would be spent on exploring the concepts of permanency and concurrent planning as well as the interrelationships with key stakeholders including parents/guardians, foster parents, kinship care resources, Metis resources and First Nation Designates. Learning objectives for this module included participants being able to:

- “Describe how concurrent planning supports the principles of the Matters to be Considered;

- Define who should be involved in the concurrent planning process and how their involvement is obtained;
- Demonstrate the steps in developing a concurrent plan;
- Describe the process in accessing alternative dispute resolution processes;
- Identify permanency options;
- Describe how the information consolidation, genogram and ecomap support best practice in planning for permanency;
- Describe when a Transition to Independence Plan is used;
- Demonstrate the steps of developing the Transition to Independence Plan;
- Identify when a temporary placement may be required; and,
- Identify their ongoing learning needs by using the Caseworker Learning Plan” (Alberta Children’s Services Delegation Training, 2005, Module Three, p.1).

One of the Ministry core competencies highlighted in this module of training can be found in *Partnership and Teamwork* where workers will be able to “work collaboratively and productively with others to achieve results” (ACS, Core Competencies, 2005, pg. 10). Best practice performance indicators point to workers demonstrating a practice that reflects documented, consultative, collaborative and effective use of community resources and that the worker has supported participation and equal opportunities for sharing in the decision-making regarding the planning and delivery of services. The core competencies also look to the category of *Values* and the best practice performance indicators

highlighted in this section. In particular, workers being able to “demonstrate respect toward clients, colleagues and community members” (pg. 13), with performance indicators reflecting language choice such as using ‘we’ versus ‘us’ and ‘them’, and response of the worker in a manner that demonstrates that they value the other’s feelings, opinions, time and backgrounds for example, returning calls promptly and following up on promised tasks.

Module Four: Legal / Court Processes

This three day training module was developed to include a joint training delivery method that involved one of the Ministry trainers and a lawyer from Family Justice. It was felt that since court processes were still integral to the protection stream of child intervention services new workers should have as much opportunity as available to explore court issues and procedures in light of paperwork, docket court and hearing matters and to be able to ask questions and practice court simulations with real lawyers and judges. With this in mind, the legal court module of the *Delegation Training Program* was designed to introduce the caseworker to the legal authorities provided for within the legislation, roles and functions of the caseworker in carrying out the legal mandates, and the role and function of the caseworker in preparing documents, working with children, youth and families through the court processes, preparing to give evidence and dealing with court outcomes as they relate to the worker, the child, youth and their families. The Legal court module committee comprised of lawyers from Family Justice, court caseworkers, casework investigators, caseworker

supervisors, and trainers. The committee determined that the key learning objectives for new caseworkers would include them being able to:

- “Outline the structure of the court system in Alberta and highlight the jurisdiction of each court;
- Describe the various pieces of legislation that impact the role of the caseworker;
- Articulate the role of the caseworker when interacting with the court system;
- Describe the caseworker’s role in working with the family pre, during and post court involvement; and,
- Identify your ongoing learning needs by using the Caseworker Learning Plan” (Alberta Children’s Services Delegation Training, 2005, Module Four, p. 1).

As mentioned in module one, the section on legal court processes highlights the first category of the core competencies, namely the workers knowledge, understanding and application of legislation, organization and systems.

Module Five: Working with Aboriginal Communities

Module five of the Delegation training program for Alberta Children’s Services had a number of challenges built into the design process. There are over a hundred reserve communities in Alberta with ten very distinct core Aboriginal cultural groups that included; Beaver, Blackfoot, Cree, Dakota (Stoney), Dene, Dene Tha’, Metis, Saulteaux, Stoney (Nakoda), and Tsuu T’ina. In addition, there currently are 18 Delegated First Nation Agencies (DFNA) that

provide child intervention services to the majority of the reserve communities within the province. The training design committee for this module included DFNA representatives from the three treaty areas within the province, a member from the First Nation Liaison Unit, Metis Settlement, Metis Nation of Alberta Association, casework supervisors from regional and DFNA offices, along with training staff and Ministry personnel with knowledge of Aboriginal initiatives and youth strategies. After a great deal of debate it was recommended that this model of training focus on learning objectives that look to caseworkers being able to:

- “Identify the demographics of Aboriginal Communities (the core groups) in Alberta,
- review the demographics of Aboriginal children in care,
- identify governance structures of First Nation and Metis;
- review protocols with Aboriginal communities regarding children in care,
- discuss the factors, both historical and current, that have laid the foundation for the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginals,
- Describe how these factors impact current practice;
- Describe how funding mechanisms work within DFNAs and the impact on service provision,
- identifying status of Aboriginal persons as related to the legal terms;
- identify processes for establishing relationships with Aboriginal families and communities; and,

- examine your beliefs and reevaluate in light of new knowledge” (Alberta Children’s Services Delegation Training, Module Five, p.2).

It was also recommended by this committee that *Working with Aboriginal Communities* module be delivered on a reserve setting in partnership with the DFNA’s and that whenever possible elders, guest presenters and DFNA casework supervisors take the lead in training with support from the Ministry trainers.

Core competencies highlighted in this module of the Delegation Training are varied and cover most of the categories including *Legislation, Organization and Systems, Professionalism, Partnership and Teamwork, Communication, Values and Diversity*. In particular, under the section in the core competencies on diversity workers are asked to “practice in a manner that reflects understanding of and respect for cultural, ethnic, spiritual and lifestyle diversity” (pg. 17) and they demonstrate this by seeking out formal and informal educational activities regarding diversity to broaden perceptions and sensitivities, assisting clients in accessing resources specific to their culture, and recognizing and confronting discriminatory practices and attitudes in themselves and in others (Alberta Children’s Services, Core Competencies, 2003).

Module Six: Casework Practice Considerations

This final module of the Delegation Training Program involved three separate committee groups recommending design and delivery approaches to the material included in this module. The three groups comprised of external expertise from the field of Addictions, Family Violence and Fetal Alcohol

Spectrum Disorder in addition to casework supervisory staff and Ministry trainers. After much discussion, it was determined that this module of training should introduce participants to three specialized areas in practice and provide them with opportunities to discuss overlapping of issues within families, implications for practice, introductory strategies for intervention and opportunities for further learning. Additionally, this module should provide participants with the opportunity to explore a strength-based practice approach with children, youth and families and reflect on their personal models for practice in light of Ministry expectations of their role, best practice direction and competencies. Learning objectives for this module included participants being able to:

- “summarize the interrelationships of the Delegation Training modules;
- describe the relationship between theory and practice in relation to child intervention services;
- begin to articulate your personal practice model;
- employ casework practice considerations for frequently encountered and specialized issues including addiction issues, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and family violence;
- review your plan for self care and self management; and
- identify and document your ongoing learning needs using the “Caseworker’s Learning Plan” (Alberta Children’s Services Delegation Training, Module Six, p. 1).

Core competencies highlighted in this final section of the *Delegation Training Program* speak to theory and practice and ask workers to be able to

“identify, articulate, and demonstrate application of one’s own personal practice approach”(pg. 14) by demonstrating a willingness to ask others for help when dealing with a situation or issue that is an area of personal weakness for them, being aware of their own personal beliefs and values without expecting others to adopt their style, even declaring what their personal practice approach is and then being open to evaluating it within the context of work they are doing (Alberta Children’s Services, Core Competencies, 2003).

A commitment to competency-based training and adult learning directly informs the training and evaluation of workers in Alberta. In the following chapter, I review the literature on competency-based training, adult learning styles and issues surrounding competency-based education and training programs. Additionally, I review the literature on evaluation theory and practice and the most commonly used approaches for evaluating training programs similar to the *Alberta Delegation Training Program*.

CHAPTER THREE LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Given my focus on evaluating a training program that is based on working with competencies as the basis for understanding child welfare practice, the literature review contained within this chapter explores several key topic areas that influenced the design, delivery and implementation of the *Alberta Children's Services Delegation Training Program* that include: competency based training, adult learning styles and issues surrounding competency-based education and training programs, as well as evaluation theory and practice and the most commonly used approaches for evaluating training programs similar to *Alberta Delegation Training Program*.

The literature review began with initial forays using various internet search engines including Google, MSN.Com, and Yahoo. Terms explored included word combinations such as evaluation of child protection training programs, training in children services, evaluation design, training program design, training development for child protection staff, program evaluation, evaluation tools, adult learning styles, adult learning models, models for evaluation, child welfare training initiatives, competency-based training, evaluation of competencies in the workplace, and competency models. A further search for information related to the topic of program evaluation specific to training programs developed for child welfare agencies and government programs was conducted with assistance provided by the Alberta Government Library. The service provided by the library includes dedicated full time research technicians who have access to all on site

library resources: journals, books, government documents and other publications and access to search engines available through universities and colleges within and outside the province of Alberta.

Competency Based Education and Training

Competency is grounded in knowledge and skill (Sullivan, 1995). Skill which is the basis for competency, is defined by Sullivan (1995) as “a task or group of tasks performed to a specific level of competency or proficiency which often use motor functions and typically require the manipulation of instruments and equipment” but also applies to knowledge and attitude based skills as demonstrated through an activity such as counseling (p.1). Middleman (1984) describes competency, as it relates to performance, to include some depth of “knowledge, judgment, experience, style, self-image and skill that is applied when and where needed to accomplish a task” and goes on to add that competence is more than a personal quality but functions in the context of environment and as such refers to “what one does in relation to a changeable, even cantankerous environment” (p.249). Knowledge, according to Gagne (1984), is not a singular construct. Gagne posits five distinct learning outcomes that highlight three types of knowledge, motor skill acquirement and attitudes: 1) Procedural knowledge includes concepts, rules and procedures such as language, scientific reasoning or how to drive a car and involves sequences for tasks where one step leads to another and so on. 2) Declarative knowledge involves being able to state something factually such as the day of the month, demonstrate meaningfully connected prose that is learned and then recalled

such as the words to the Canadian National Anthem, and provide information that is organized much like a chronological timeline of events. 3) Strategic knowledge refers to skills in knowing when and how to use the first two, declarative and procedural knowledge. Strategic knowledge enables the participant or learner to exercise a degree of control over the processes involved in solving problems and to continue to utilize their knowledge base, critical thinking capacity and experiences as they develop. 4) Motor skills refer to the achievement of a specific sequence of motor or muscular movement that underlies a skill, such as a surgeon's precision during open heart surgery or a professional basketball player's jump shot. 5) The final learning outcome identified by Gagne (1984) is attitudes. Attitudes speak to internal states that influence the choice of personal action that an individual may make in any given situation.

Competency has been defined by Sullivan (1995) as "a skill performed to a specific standard under specific conditions" (p.1)" and by Rycus and Hughes (2000) as "a grouping of elements of knowledge and skill necessary for the effective performance of a job task-- Competent staff would have the ability, that is, the requisite knowledge and skills to proficiently perform their jobs" (p. 5). Barrie and Pace (1997) define competency as embodying the ability of an individual to transfer and apply skills and knowledge to new situations and environments that addresses all aspects of work performance including the ability to multitask, prioritize and be able to deal with the responsibilities and expectations of the work environment. Simply stated, competencies consist of a

combination of knowledge, skills and abilities that are necessary in order to perform a specific task or function in the work setting. In a commentary on research on competencies by Leung (2002), Vin Diwakar (2002) highlights an approach to understanding the development of higher order or meta-competencies through a series of four stages starting with knowledge, progressing through to know how and show how and concluding with the application or doing (performance).

In job performance, knowledge, skill, ability, and understanding are all components of competency and are not separate and distinct concepts. Workers require knowledge relevant to their roles, the appropriate skills to perform tasks associated with their work, the ability to correctly apply their knowledge and skills for the job and an understanding of what they are doing that demonstrates independence like the capacity for questioning their own and other's values and assumptions, and the critical role of the system influencing their work (Hase, 2002; Kerka, 1998)

The use of competency models in training design and evaluation is not a new concept and has for the past thirty years gained momentum in the United States, New Zealand, Australian and the United Kingdom (Hase, 2002; Kerka, 1998; Leung, 2002). While there are those, for example Harris, Guthrie, Hobart and Lundberg (1995), who hail competency based education as the answer to improvements within the education and training world, there are others who feel it poses limitations (Kerka, 1998). Opposing viewpoints on the topic of competency based education and training arise mainly out of the United Kingdom

and Australia where there has been more time to study the impact of the competency approach in training. Critics of competency based training (CBT) argue that the approach is “conceptually confused, empirically flawed and inadequate for the needs of a learning society (Kerka, 1998, p.1). Kerka in offering her critique speaks to a lack of common understanding of the competency criteria being used and notes that the competency criteria assigned to roles is difficult to assess in terms of specific indicators linked to performance achievement and is therefore difficult to study. Other criticisms, as noted by Leung (2002), argue that it is extremely difficult to identify a range of competencies that broadly cover work roles and represent the types of knowledge relevant to the competency identified.

Additionally, Leung argues that competency based approaches in education and training are based primarily on behaviorist principles whereby work roles are broken down into small identifiable tasks (Kerka, 1998; Leung, 2002). A concern with this approach to education and training is that narrowly defined competencies that are not suitable for learning in a higher education environment will dominate the curriculum (Leung, 2002). Kerka (1998) adds that behaviorist approaches have often been noted as ignoring the connections between tasks, the personal attributes that underlie performance, the meaning and intention associated with the task, the context and effect of interpersonal and ethical aspects. The constructivist view of learning embraced by Kerka suggests that individuals make assessments and review these through reflection and change their behavior accordingly, constantly reconstructing relevant and useful

knowledge as they interact with the situation and environment. Such complex work cannot therefore be captured in statements premised on the competency approach.

Sullivan (1995) highlighted other potential limitations to CBT, namely, concerns about maintaining consistency in the training approach without support and assistance to trainers, flaws in the process for identifying the competencies essential for the job and training approaches that do not reflect or support competency attainment within the program. For example, for competency-based training to be effective, it must include the use of case scenarios relevant to the job, and simulations and role play situations that challenge the learner to utilize knowledge and demonstrate competency for the task. Without these types of learning opportunities it is difficult to assess the participant's knowledge and skill level and ultimately determine where they are at in their competency development for the job.

Proponents of competency-based education and training suggest that if organizations adhere to stringent criteria in the use of CBT or Comprehensive Competency Based In-service Training (CCBIT) Systems, in particular within the field of child welfare, training must address the needs of the organization at the right time with the right training for the right people (Rycus & Hughes, 2000; Sullivan, 1995). A failure of many in-service training programs, not based on the competency-based approach, is that individual learning needs were not identified and as a result the quality, effectiveness and relevance of the training did not promote positive impacts on job performance and organizational outcomes

(Rycus & Hughes, 2000). Watson (1990) stated that competency based training approaches were especially useful in training where the participants were required to attain a small number of specific and job-related competencies.

Other benefits to CBT include the focus on participants learning competencies required in the performance of their job, confidence building as the individual achieves or masters specific competencies, participants becoming aware of the specific competencies they have achieved, a more efficient and effective use of training because the trainer facilitates learning rather than merely providing information, and more varied training experiences for learners because training can be broken into individual, small group and large group learning activities that promote knowledge sharing and self learning (Sullivan, 1995). Training that builds competency and confidence by providing participants with an understanding of the levels of performance that are expected from them and makes clear how their knowledge and skills will be evaluated both organizationally and at their worksite is useful to the participant in planning for their ongoing competency development and future training needs.

Comparative Training Initiatives in Child Welfare Practice

In my attempt to locate competency based training programs within Western Canada's Child Welfare front line protection work I found that very few government agencies have conducted in-depth program evaluation of their training for new hired staff. Personal contact with Grace Atkinson, training manager, for British Columbia's "Caring for First Nations Children's Society," an agency that provides delegation training for the First Nations and Aboriginal Child

and Family Services agencies, supports the limited evaluation literature of Child Protection training programs to date.

Personal contact with Chris Gay, Manager, Education Services Strategic Human Resources Branch Ministry of Children and Family Development also produced similar feedback on the evaluation process of new hire training for British Columbia's Children's Services. British Columbia's Justice Institute currently is entering into an evaluation of the Ministry's new hire program and therefore published results were not available. Research that was available and presented as similar in field of scope, that is, Child Protection training for new hires, was predominately from the United States. The following summary of this body of research is specific to the states of Ohio, Florida, Tennessee and Washington.

Ohio Child Welfare Training Program

A training assessment initiative conducted by the Institute for Human Services for the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services provides a framework for evaluation that nicely parallels issues faced by Alberta Children's Services (McCarragher, Hoffman, & Rycus, 2003). Namely, there were significant changes in federal law impacting practice considerations in Child Welfare for the State of Ohio. Issues noted in the assessment report included shortened timelines for placement of children, increased focus on finding permanent homes for children, court documentation and procedural changes, and social considerations in practice decision making around domestic violence and poverty (McCarragher et al., 2003). In addition, the report noted that

supervisors felt an inability to have regular one-to-one contact with their supervisees, due to other organizational barriers. Supervisors also noted a lack of specific casework skills in new workers and as a result found it difficult to coach and support their staff in critical skill areas (McCarragher et al., 2003). As a result of the shift in law and changing job responsibilities, Ohio Child Welfare training programs had to be restructured to meet the skill development needs of new staff as well as advanced skill training for supervisors.

As noted in Ohio's statewide training assessment, "data from the national literature review and from key informants throughout North America confirmed that building skills requires a continuum of interventions beginning with hiring the right people for the job and continuing throughout their employment. Skills cannot be mastered solely through classroom training: there must also be targeted interventions before and after classroom workshops."(McCarragher et al., 2003). Strategies for improved learning recommended by assessment participants included: increased opportunities for newly hired staff to shadow more experienced staff; a desire to work with coaches or mentors in developing their skills; to attend enhanced orientation programs; shortened timeframes for training and to have that training delivered closer to home thus reducing costs and travel time; and to have supervisory guidance on specific casework practice issues (McCarragher et al., 2003).

The Ohio Child Welfare Training Program (OCWTP) evaluation process itself was comprised of several layers of evaluation. In particular the evaluation team conducted a review of prior evaluation outcomes and feedback studies

completed by the OCWTP in an effort to direct the formulation of questions for future research and to create a chain of evidence that would allow the OCWTP to more accurately interpret results from future training evaluations (McCarragher et al., 2003). Additionally, the evaluation process included formative and summative evaluations of all the OCWTP workshops. Both evaluation formats were representative of two key evaluation frameworks; 1) Donald Kirkpatrick's four level model of training evaluation; and, 2) the American Humane Association's Levels of Evaluation that expanded on Kirkpatrick's model. Formative evaluations used by the OCWTP looked at the participant's response to the training, trainer's performance, relevance of the training for the group and identified problems with the curriculum content and training delivery (McCarragher et al., 2003). Summative evaluations were used to gather relevant data to determine whether the training program had resulted in certain predetermined outcomes. For example a summative evaluation might look at training effectiveness as it relates to whether a skill taught in the training is reflected in the daily work of the participant (McCarragher et a., 2003).

Florida, Tennessee and Washington State Program Initiatives

Similar training initiatives have been documented in Florida, Tennessee and Washington State (Miller & Dore, 1991). Each of these three states was faced with training development issues for both new and experienced staff in Child Welfare. The Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services was legislated to provide child protection services (CPS) to all newly hired staff and subsequently created training academies across the state for the express

purpose of training delivery (Miller & Dore, 1991). The program consisted of a two week core training session, followed by a week of field shadowing and a final week of training in a specialty area such as foster care, adoption, protective services and investigation (Miller & Dore, 1991). Evaluation of this training initiative focused on the effectiveness of the training materials, trainers, and training sites. Organizational evaluations were also conducted with the expectation that longer term evaluative initiatives would also occur (Miller & Dore, 1991).

The Tennessee Department of Human Services also created a training initiative for all new workers that included a one week orientation, one week of classroom training, two weeks of on the job training that reinforced classroom instruction, another week of classroom training, two more weeks of on the job training followed by a final week of residential training in case planning. These new trainees spent a final two weeks on the job training in preparation for a final exam. In total the training program consisted of 10 weeks of training combining classroom work with on the job skill development (Miller & Dore, 1991). Unfortunately, due to financial constraints, an evaluation of this training initiative has been somewhat limited. Thus only participants were asked for their feedback on satisfaction with the training, and the impact of the training on job performance was not evaluated. (Miller & Dore, 1991).

Washington State Department of Social and Health Services was also legislatively mandated to provide training to their child protection services (CPS) staff. The initial design of their training programs included a six week core

training session. However, due to severe budget constraints the program was refined to include only the most essential content and a three week program was offered in place of the six week program (Miller & Dore, 1991). The first week of this program consisted of orientation to the department and its functions and to the CPS theory and policies. The second week of training offered workers a brief overview of issues pertinent to CPS such as maltreatment and interviewing of children. During the final week, the workers are taught case planning and intervention techniques. In addition to an exam that was issued at the end of each week and on the job training occurring for a week in-between each training session, the new workers were required to complete an individualized training plan (Miller & Dore, 1991). The department then conducted a program evaluation gathering participant responses to the training however did not assess the impact of the training on worker performance on the job (Miller & Dore, 1991).

Training and the Adult Learner

Literature on learning models is quite extensive and I realized early in the research process that I would need to focus on models that influenced the training design and delivery of Alberta Children's Services training program. Four key learning models were reviewed and included Kolb's (1976) Learning Style Inventory; Gregorc's (1982) Style Delineator, Phillips (2004) DIRT model of learning styles and Rycus and Hughes (2001) four levels of learning as related to targeted evaluation strategies.

Zemke and Zemke (1995) in discussing adult learners noted that "adults can be ordered into a classroom and prodded into seats, but they can't be forced

to learn (p. 32).” *Alberta Children’s Services Delegation Training* is considered mandatory and one of the challenges curriculum developers and trainers face with mandatory training is the creation of materials and learning environments that engage the adult learner. To summarize Zemke and Zemke (1995) you can force them to go but you can’t force them to learn. However, optimal training opportunities can be created during the curriculum design process when consideration is given to motivational factors that may already exist for the adult learner and through the facilitation that occurs during the learning experience (Zemke & Zemke, 1995). Gray, McKenzie, Miller and Shasky (1997) further support Zemke & Zemke (1995) by noting that in order for a training program to be successful in improving individual performance, consideration of the linkage between the trainee’s characteristics and behavior change must be assessed. Gray et al. (1997) identified the trainee’s characteristics to include their motivation and learning styles. In a survey of 140 state government agencies across 30 states the type of training methods most commonly used in programs developed for new staff included: group discussion, lecture, role play, computer assisted approach, case studies, simulation and/or games, self guided study and independent projects. Gray et al. (1997) also indicate the most commonly utilized training methods included group discussion, lecture and case studies.

It would appear that a growing trend in training development includes a multitude of training techniques that target various adult learning styles in an attempt to engage the learner. Thus, Brethower and Smalley (1998) as cited in Holton, Bates & Naquin (2000) noted, that the development of training is moving

toward performance based instruction that is both learner and organization centered. Performance based instruction looks to how the learner is applying training to on the job performance. Holton et al. (2000) clarify this by stating the training industry is undergoing a transformation from a focus on learning for knowledge to an emphasis on learning for performance. Rycus and Hughes (2001) further expand on the themes noted by Zemke & Zemke (1995) by suggesting that learning is heightened when provided in a sequential manner. For example when dealing with competency-based training systems, there must be a staged sequence of training events that reflect a 'building upon' approach to integration of the training materials and objectives as they relate to competency development.

Also important to adult learning is an exploration of participant learning styles which can inform a variety of models and approaches for learning within a training environment (Phillips, 2004). Two particular models that Phillips mentions include David A. Kolb's Learning Style Inventory and Anthony Gregorc's Style Delineator (Gregorc, 1982; Kolb, 1976). Both models provide four learning style preferences but with very different terminology to describe them. For Gregorc the four styles include: 1) the concrete sequential learner; 2) the concrete random learner; 3) the abstract random learner; and 4) the abstract sequential learner. Gregorc describes the concrete sequential learner as an individual who learns best when provided with hands on activities, step by step instructions and real life examples. The concrete random learner excels in their learning when provided with a stimulus rich environment and independent study

opportunities. The concrete random learners do not like to read directions and find too much structure limiting. Gregorc's view of the abstract sequential learner is that this individual works well when materials are well organized and they can work alone without distractions. The abstract sequential learner likes written, verbal and visual instructions and is a highly verbal and logical learner so lecture format works for this individual learner. The final type of learner Gregorc describes is the abstract random learner. This type of learner likes relationships and does well in group discussion and when they have time for reflection and evaluation of personal experiences. Abstract random learners also like case studies, video material and group work.

Kolb's Learning Style Inventory describes four learning styles as well as four learning cycles. The learning styles include: 1) the converger; 2) the accommodator; 3) the diverger; and 4) the assimilator (Kolb, 1976). Kolb (1976) describes a *converger* as the type of learner who wants to solve a problem through the use of hypothetical deductive reasoning, the *diverger* as the type of learner who relies on brainstorming and multiple perspectives as part of their problem solving approach, the *assimilator* as the type of learner who solves problems using inductive reasoning and the *accommodator* as a person who solves problems by carrying out plans and experiments. In describing learning cycles, Kolb and Fry (1975) speak to learning cycles that involve the concrete experience, reflective observation, active conceptualism and active experimentation. Concrete experience involves learning from feelings or reactions to experience that has influenced the learner. Reflective observation

looks to learning as obtained from watching and listening and active conceptualization looks to learning obtained from thinking and analyzing. The final cycle of learning is active experimentation, that is, learning by doing.

Hugh Phillips (2004) posits the DIRT model of learning styles that is framed within an interactive training perspective and was influenced by Kolb's Learning Style Inventory and Gregorc's Style Delineator. These four types of learning styles include the "doer's", the "influencer's", the "relaters" and the "thinkers" (Phillips, 2004). The *doer's* are individuals in training who excel at completing learning tasks quickly. These learners are gifted with the ability to focus and work with intent in the training environment. The *influencers* are learners who love to get involved, they value training that moves quickly and that is very interactive and they do well in group work. The *relaters* are learners who are sensitive to their fellow participants in training and often enjoy discussion. Relaters model amazing listening skills and help build harmony in the training sessions. Relaters also value group work and look to find consensus. The final category of learner that Phillips (2004) defines is the thinkers. Phillips (2004) describes the *thinkers* as wanting to get it right, that is to say, the quality of work is far more important to these learners than quantity. This type of learner prefers in-depth discussions and comprehensive examinations of ideas that are supported by evidence. They also prefer a question and answer approach to learning sessions (Phillips, 2004). Phillips has taken the learning concepts presented by Gregorc and Kolb and presented them in a manner that through sheer description locates the individual to their learning style. Additionally,

Philips proposes that trainers also fall within these four types of learning styles and often develop training activities that reflect their learning approach.

Recognizing the tendency of a trainer to lean toward curriculum exercises that facilitate their personal learning style allows the trainer the opportunity to develop activities that balance out the needs of all the learners within their training environment.

Similar to a model of training and evaluation first presented by Donald Kirkpatrick in the late 1950's that looked at student reaction, learning, behavior and results, Rycus and Hughes (2001) present four levels of learning that include: learner awareness; knowledge and understanding; application of knowledge and skills to the job; and skill development. Further review of these four levels of learning as they relate to targeted evaluation strategies follows.

Level I: Learner Awareness

Learner awareness is used as a prompt for both the curriculum developer as well as the facilitator/trainer to look at how to gain the learner's attention, gain an understanding of what they "need to know" and develop ways to clarify for the learner the relevance of the training to the profession and specifically to their jobs (Rycus & Hughes, 2001). Rycus and Hughes (2001) recommend that, in order to elicit what learners already know, develop self-awareness and recognize areas for further learning, training methods should utilize a variety of approaches. These approaches could include a combination of trainer presentations or lecture, audiovisual aids and experiential exercises with learning outcomes ranging from being able to identify the rationale for the training, describe

pertinent issues and potential problem areas, know the learning goals and objectives and identify specific competencies they will learn by attending. The most common evaluation tools used for this level of training involve feedback questionnaires, scales or surveys where participants give their opinions about the training experience, how relevant it was to their role at work, and whether their expectations for the training were met (Burry, 1999; Government of Alberta, 1987; Reid & Beard, 1980; Roat, 1988).

Level II: Knowledge/Understanding

Rycus and Hughes (2001) proposed that this level of learning is particularly critical to obtain in a training environment, especially for individual's working in Child Welfare as workers rely heavily on knowledge of legislation, policy and procedures to facilitate service provision to children, youth and families. Additionally, caseworkers are required to exercise a level of understanding of their role and best practices in order to assess and determine the best possible services to families. This stage of learning is comprised of two sub-stages with the first being acquiring knowledge and the second being the acquiring of understanding (Rycus & Hughes, 2001). Knowledge is commonly described as the process of learning, remembering and being able to repeat back this information in a factual or descriptive way. Understanding expands on knowledge through the individual's ability to accurately interpret the meaning of the information and sorting out any inconsistencies, gaps or illogic in the information (Rycus & Hughes, 2001). For example, a caseworker may have the knowledge to explain why a particular assessment tool is necessary for use in

their practice but lack the understanding necessary to going beyond the confines of the tool itself to consider other factors that may improve assessment reliability. Rycus and Hughes (2001) use the example of “risk assessment” in practice. Knowledge dictates that a worker can explain the use of the tool and why. Understanding takes the worker beyond the how and why of the risk assessment to weighing other factors that may impact the accuracy of the assessment such as environmental influences, interpersonal and personal factors, and family strengths.

Level II training activities often challenge the learner’s self awareness, their belief systems, knowledge base and critical thinking approaches. Recommended training methods for this level include the use of trainer presentation, audiovisual aids, group exercises, guided group discussions, and experiential exercises. Rycus and Hughes (2001) suggest that during this stage of training, the learners should be able to: articulate the key concepts of the content of the training and how they interrelate; integrate new learning into their previous knowledge and beliefs; and apply their learning creatively to various practice based problems. Evaluation tools often used at this level of training include the use of pre and post-tests that assess the level of knowledge gained during the training session, opinion surveys that attempt to elicit the participant’s attitude about what they have learned and it’s usefulness in the work setting, and the use of experimental / control groups (Barry, 1999; Jones & Okamura, 2000; Government of Alberta 1987; Roat, 1988; Sullivan, Egan & Gooch, 2004).

Level III: Application of Knowledge and Skills to the Job

The activities in this stage of learning are designed to reinforce how the training applies to the day-to-day work of the learner. The details of the learning should reinforce the desired practice outcomes and best practice principles of their profession. Clarification of the learner's role and responsibilities within their job and a presentation of the sequence of steps as part of the implementation of on the job tasks should reflect their new learning and is essential at this stage of training (Rycus & Hughes, 2001). Methods of instruction should include group discussion, simulations, case examples, audio visual aids that demonstrate the application of concepts to practice, use of action or learning plans, and on the job learning activities (e.g. shadowing, mentoring, coaching, supervised practice and feedback) (Rycus & Hughes, 2001). The outcome focus for the learner during this stage of training should be on increasing their competency and skill level to meet job expectations. Evaluation tools commonly used to assess on the job performance improvement after training exposure include the use of pre and post training interviews, written or phone surveys and the development of action or learning plans in training that are later followed up with an in person or over the phone interview (Gregoire, 1994; Halford, Moore, Wilson, Farrugia & Dyer, 2004; Jones & Okamura, 2000).

Level IV: Skill Development

Although at first glance similar to level three learning, level four learning expands on the abilities of the learner to incorporate training into a higher level of skill development. Rycus and Hughes (2001) describe this process as simple

versus complex skills development and use. The development of complex skills occur over an extended period of time and often is a result of observing others perform the skill, modeling that skill through practice and feedback, and performing the skill often enough to be able to perform the task without conscious thought (Rycus & Hughes, 2001).

Recommended methods of training include demonstration activities, modeling, experiential exercises, guided practice opportunities, feedback and coaching, self assessment and action or learning plan development (Rycus & Hughes, 2001). This level of training and skill development is often more difficult to evaluate as learning occurs both in the training environment and on the job. Evaluation tools are used to evaluate learning at this level upon completion of training through in person interviews or on line surveys. Observation tasks involving third party individuals are used on job sites either through a direct supervisor, or if funding is available, through the use of a private contractor. Trainers/facilitators are often involved in feedback questionnaires related to the participant's skill development within the training sessions and participate in triad meetings post training with the participant and supervisor. Occasionally pre-course questionnaires are sent to the participant and their direct supervisor and then followed up with a post training questionnaire and an interview sometime between 10 days and 6 months post training (Kanak, Maciolek & O'Brien, 2005; Government of Alberta, 1987).

Theories and Models for Program Evaluation

Evaluation theory continues to evolve as the field of evaluation practice develops (Shadish, Cook, & Leviton, 1991; Shadish, 1994). As Shadish et al. (1991) state “more than anything else social program evaluation is a practice-driven field” and point out that it has only been in the last 20 years that the importance of combining the practice of evaluation with the theory that underpins has been reviewed (p.20). Theory, as Shadish et al. (1991) state, “connotes a body of knowledge that organizes, categorizes, describes, predicts, explains, and otherwise aids in understanding and controlling a topic” (p.30). Shadish and colleagues further add that “ideal evaluation theory would describe and justify why certain evaluation practice will lead to particular results across situations that evaluators confront” (p.30-31). Accordingly, evaluation theory should provide clarity on the types of evaluation activities, processes and goals, explain relationships between the evaluation activities and the processes and goals they facilitate, and empirically test propositions in order to identify and address those that conflict with existing research or other critically reviewed knowledge about evaluation.

Five fundamental issues have been presented that under-grid practical program evaluation and these include: 1) social programming; 2) knowledge construction, 3) valuing, 4) knowledge use; and, 5) evaluation practice (Shadish et al., 1991; Shadish 1994). The first fundamental issue looks to evaluation in light of the ways that social programming and policies develop, improve and change. As Shadish et al.,(1991) propose, evaluation of social programs

focused on problem solving social issues inherently assume that the programs can be improved by small or incremental changes, better program design, and replacement of bad programs with better programs and as such, theories of social programming must demonstrate whether or not these things can be done and how. Thus questions to consider when evaluating social programming are: what important problems does the program address, can the program actually be improved and if so, is this worth doing and if not what is worth doing (Shadish et al., 1991).

The second fundamental issue, knowledge construction, seeks to understand the ways researchers learn about the social impacts resulting from training, that is: what knowledge is worth having, who determines this and how does it impact program design. Shadish et al.,(1991) argue that what is inherently implied by evaluators is that they can provide knowledge that is somehow worth having and that it is based on scientific methodology. The argument being made by evaluators is that there are some methods for constructing knowledge that are better than others. Theories of knowledge make three kinds of assumptions: 1) about ontology, or the nature of reality; 2) about epistemology, or the justification for knowledge claims; and 3) about methodology, or how knowledge is constructed (Shadish et al., 1991). Therefore, questions to be considered when applying knowledge and construction to practical evaluation include looking to who determines the knowledge to be obtained, what supports this knowledge as being the right knowledge and whether the evaluator wants to provide their data with the aim of

improving the program or with some other aim such as using the evaluation data and information to inform theory or for some other purpose.

Valuing is the third fundamental issue underpinning practical program evaluation and looks to ways values can be attached to program description by the designers themselves therefore it cannot be assumed that programming, especially social programming, is value free or that evaluation of programs is completely unbiased. Shadish et al., (1991) argue that there is an implicit notion that evaluation serves the public good without a common understanding or explanation of what that means. Theories of valuing should assist evaluators in making value problems known in their evaluation work and debate the pros and cons of the results (Shadish et al., 1991). In examining the values that underpin evaluation, questions that should be considered include asking is this program a good program, who determines whether the program is good and how do they justify this conclusion (Shadish et al., 1991).

Knowledge use has been described by Shadish et al. (1991) as the ways in which social science information is used to modify programs and policies. Theories of knowledge use have three elements that include a description of the possible kinds of use, a depiction of timeframes in which use occurs and an explanation of what the evaluator can do to facilitate use (Shadish et al., 1991). Without theories of knowledge evaluators run the risk of providing information that cannot be used. Shadish et al., (1991) argue that knowledge theory can assist evaluators in assessing the role of new information in program decision-making and in making recommendations for practice direction, as well as in

knowing what information would effectively aid in determining such an assessment with a view to deciding what kinds of use practitioners want their work to facilitate. Accordingly, questions that guide this process of evaluation should look to how the evaluator arrives at the answers to the questions posed during the evaluation process or how do the evaluator comes to know something, how confident he or she is in these answers and what causes the evaluator to be confident in these answers.

The fifth and final fundamental issue in practical program evaluation is evaluation practice. Evaluation practice looks to the tactics and strategies evaluators use in their evaluation work, especially in light of constraints they face such as financial constraints, resource availability and timeframes restrictions (Shadish et al., 1991). An underlying assumption with practice evaluation is that practitioners actually want useful advice about how to make their decisions about programming given the constraints under which they work. Elements of practice evaluation look at whether or not an evaluation should be done, what the purpose of the evaluation should be, what role the evaluator plays, what questions will be asked, what evaluation design will be used and what activities will be carried out to facilitate use (Shadish et al., 1991). Questions considered in evaluation practice look to how evaluators evaluate in light of their skills, time, and resources in addition to evaluation feasibility, questions to be asked and answered and evaluation methodology.

As highlighted by Shadish et al., (1991) practice evaluation requires a great deal of thought prior to implementation and stresses that before an

evaluation process can begin several questions must be answered in order to establish a common understanding between the client and the evaluator about the expected outcomes of the evaluation activities. Evaluation literature recommends that the desired outcomes be measurable, prioritized and include answers to the following questions (Brown (2002); Griffith (2002); O'Sullivan (2004); Rossi, Lipsey, & Freeman (2004); Wholey, Hatry, & Newcomer (2004)):

1. What is the purpose of the evaluation?
2. What resources are available to conduct the evaluation activities?
3. What are the obstacles for conducting the evaluation?
4. How can these obstacles be overcome?
5. Where and when should the evaluation activities be conducted?
6. What data should be collected?
7. Who should participate in the study?
8. What variables need to be measured?
9. How should the variables be measured?
10. What are the ethical considerations that must be considered?
11. How should the data collected be organized and analyzed?
12. How will the findings be disseminated?

Two models of training program evaluation I reviewed and included in my thesis are Donald Kirkpatrick's *Four Levels of Evaluation* and the American Humane Association's Levels of Evaluation, a ten level evaluation model (Kirkpatrick, 1994; McCarragher et al., 2003). Both models have been used

extensively in evaluation of Child Welfare Training programs in the United States and Canada.

Donald Kirkpatrick's Four Levels of Evaluation

The following is a brief overview of Kirkpatrick's four levels of evaluation as described in the guide for evaluation designed by the Personnel Administration Office (1987) of the Government of Alberta, by Kirkpatrick himself in a 1994 edition of his work and as presented by McCarragher et al. (2003). *Level one* describes the participant's reaction to training. Also referred to as participant response, evaluation feedback is often solicited through the use of questionnaires that include qualitative and quantitative question and answer formats, scales, surveys and open group verbal feedback. Participants are asked how they feel about training and this data is either qualitatively or quantitatively analyzed. If scales are used then the evaluator looks to how the participant feels about the training based on how strongly they agree or disagree with various statements in the evaluation form. If questionnaires are used that incorporate open ended questions or comments then the evaluator categorizes written feedback from the participants into common themes and analyzes these to determine general overall feelings associated with the training. The information sought is usually related to the methods of instruction, program content, course organization and facilities. *Level two* evaluation looks into the participant learning that takes place during the course. This level of evaluation examines the principles, facts, skills and attitudes the participant has gained from the training. There is a measurement of knowledge / skills gained through the training through

the use of pre and post-tests or pre and post-assessments of learning and skill development.

When considering *level three* training evaluation, the focus shifts to behavioral changes of the trainee on the job or 'on-the-job performance.' Again this level of evaluation examines the impacts of training on participant's skill development as it is implemented in the work setting. *Level four* evaluation reviews learning as it relates to results to the organization. This level of evaluation looks to the overall impact that training has on the organization or job environment. Specific evaluation measures the costs, improvement to morale, lower absenteeism, attrition, and productivity for the total organization or department. Unfortunately, this level of evaluation tends, especially within a government system, to be costly and time consuming and rarely done on an ongoing basis within the organization. Level four evaluation is broader in scope, usually most effective when longitudinal in design and often contracted to an independent evaluator outside of the organization structure thus making it more costly and for some organizations, in particular non-profits, prohibitive.

American Humane Association

McCarragher et al. (2003) also considered the American Humane Associations (AHA) Levels of Evaluation in their review of training evaluation models. The AHA model expanded on Kirkpatrick's four-level Model by building in a continuum of evaluation that incorporated both formative and summative evaluation (Parry & Berdie, 1999 as cited in McCarragher et al., 2003). The AHA model consists of 10 levels of evaluation. The first step on the continuum of

evaluation is the *Course Level*, this step of the evaluation has the participants rate the content, structure, methods, materials and delivery of the course itself. The second step, the *Satisfaction Level*, looks to the trainee's feelings about the trainer, the quality of the training materials, the training environment and the methods used in the presentation of the materials. The third step of the evaluation process, the *Opinion Level*, looks to the trainee's attitudes toward the value of the training, how they view their own learning, the relevance of the training, and their expectations on how training would enhance on the job performance. These first three steps of evaluation fit nicely into level one of Kirkpatrick's model, the reaction of the participant's to the course as presented.

Step four of the AHA's model for evaluation looks to the participants *Knowledge Acquisition Level*. This refers to the degree that participants in the training have learned and can recall information, including facts, definitions, principles and concepts. Multiple choice or pre and post test tools are often used to assess knowledge acquisition. Step five expands on step four's acquisition of knowledge to determine the participants *Knowledge Comprehension Level*. Knowledge at level five looks to determine the degree to which the participants understand complex ideas and concepts and their ability to recognize how these concepts are used in their practice. When comparing these two steps of the AHA model to Kirkpatrick's model they fit within level two, learning.

Steps six and seven of the AHA model, look at the participants *Skill Demonstration Level* and *Skill Transfer Level* (McCarragher et al., 2003). This type of evaluation is done to determine the participant's application of learning in

the performance of tasks within the training environment and in direct practice situations. What Kirkpatrick describes in level three of his model as behavioral changes on the job. The AHA's final three steps of evaluation, *Agency Impact*, *Client Outcomes*, and *Community Impact Levels*, all relate to evaluation that addresses the impact of training on a broader scale. Evaluation at these levels might assess impact of training on community partnership collaboration and improved outcomes for intervention services provided to children, youth and families. Like Kirkpatrick's level four, results to the organization, these three steps of the AHA model are costly and time consuming evaluation approaches. Worthwhile in determining the impacts of training on the broader spectrum of service to children, youth and families but not always conducted on an ongoing basis in order to continually monitor and improve training and intervention strategies.

In developing, designing, delivering competency-based training the literature suggests that we must pay attention to:

- Training design and delivery that incorporates knowledge of adult learning styles through the use of clear learning objectives, skill practice opportunity, independent, small and large group activities, lecture, shared experiences and the use of multimedia materials.
- Training that builds upon learning and competency development while acknowledging and supporting participant's ability to self reflect, incorporate new experiences, re-construct meaning and build upon their own learning outside the training environment.

- The inclusion of activities into the training design and delivery that challenge participant's self-awareness, belief systems, knowledge base and critical thinking.
- Training that models and informs best practice approaches.
- The use of a collaborative training planning process that includes the perspective of those directly impacted by the initiative including trainers, caseworkers, casework supervisors, management and organizational leaders.
- The use of evaluation strategies that are planned, purposeful, measurable, and answer the questions guiding the evaluation process.

Evaluation Strategies

Costello (1989) identified five areas in program evaluation that speak to measuring of competence: 1) knowledge and understanding; 2) skills and application ability; 3) values; 4) personal qualities of the worker; and 5) task performance. The most recommended methods used to evaluate competence in these five areas include: pre-post design, written exams, case study application, simulations, field observations, on the job assessment, skill evaluation and conferences with supervisors (Costello, 1989). Middleman (1984), Pecora (1985) and Cheung, Stevenson and Leung (1991) raised concerns about evaluation standards in practice and outlined four as follows: 1) the relationship between the test and real life competencies begs the question about who decides the valuing of the tests' criteria; 2) concerns about the social

consequences of the test in particular, whether or not it fairly reflects different racial and ethnic groups; 3) evaluation standards, attitudinal and behavioral components of child protection services work remain difficult to measure; and 4) retention of knowledge, skills and attitudes over time, after training, pose significant challenges to evaluators due to a variety of factors including the financial constraints that preclude multiple testing or evaluation over time, the confounding effects of interviewing variables such as experience and additional supervision, and additional training.

A series of surveys conducted at Child Protective Services (CPS) training sites identified broad topic areas covered in training programs for new caseworkers however did not reveal the specifics of the training provided and the major focus for the evaluation that was conducted, looked to test participants mastery of content (Jones, Stevenson, Leung & Cheung, 1995). Priorities for CPS training were unclear and Jones et al. (1995) recommended that future evaluation efforts look to clarify questions such as what is considered to be the most critical content areas for caseworkers to know, who determines the content, and is training designed only for entry level workers and if so how does this impact program development.

In order to narrow the evaluation data analysis, the data collected should be relevant to addressing the outcome expectation inherent in the research questions. Therefore, the evaluation strategy should attempt to incorporate a combination of formative and summative feedback opportunities from the training participants to be used, once analyzed, to answer the evaluation question and to

inform potential training program changes. Formative information collected from participants in the piloted training modules will indicate to the evaluator whether or not the piloted materials are on track or need to be improved before full implementation of the training program. Summative information collected from participants in the training post-pilot will provide further clarification of the overall training program effectiveness at full implementation. One approach to this type of joint evaluation could be in the form of pre-test/post-test questionnaires in combination with participant feedback sheets. Pre-test/post-test questionnaires are useful as a way for participants to assess their increase in knowledge as a direct result of the training. Another approach to evaluation would include a participant feedback questionnaire. This questionnaire would focus on how the participants viewed the training module overall and in particular how they rate the training for content, skill development opportunities, relevance to the job and what they considered most /least valuable about the training. The two evaluation formats combined would provide the evaluator with information about knowledge gains and the participant's satisfaction with the training as it relates to skill and competency development.

Additionally, information gathered from secondary sources, such as the participant's casework supervisor, would be helpful in obtaining perspective of the training as it relates to skill development for their new workers. This evaluation approach focuses on after-training integration of the course materials into day-to-day practice. One approach to gaining this type of feedback could be in the form of a survey/interview questionnaire either completed on line, over the

phone, through an interview process or as part of a triad meeting between the trainer, caseworker and supervisor. The survey questionnaire could be designed to gather administrative data, for example years or months of service, gender, position, and role in the organization. However, the key role of this type of evaluation tool would be to gather feedback from the casework supervisor about the integration of the training into caseworker's job skills and whether the training increased worker competencies required for the position. The difficulty with this type of evaluation feedback is that it does not take into consideration other influences such as mentoring, shadowing, and other on-the-job experiences that may have contributed to improvement of the workers skills and competency development.

Ultimately, it would be ideal to collect evaluation data from as many organizational sources as possible impacted directly by the training initiative, for example regional managers, CEO's and Directors, and the Ministry's Senior Management Teams. Program evaluation that looks at assessing the effectiveness of the training design and delivery from an organizational standpoint would take into consideration delivery timeframes, location, costs, travel, cover off issues, consistency in approach to practice across the province, and meeting Ministry expectations around knowledge of legislation, role expectation and performance criterion that ultimately lead to providing children, youth and families with best possible service outcomes that lead to reduced risk and safety concerns.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of the evaluation inquiry of the *Alberta Children's Services Delegation Training (2005 Pilot)* was to determine how the training program prepared new caseworkers for their practice and whether they gained knowledge and understanding of their role and could articulate employer expectations for best practices. Jones et al. (1995) note that the focus of program evaluation in many States with child protection services training was to test participant's mastery of content and viewed knowledge as the basic building block in most training programs. But when polled, many training staff suggested that program evaluation evaluates trainee satisfaction, thus prompting Jones et al.(1995) to argue that while this type of evaluation "yields important information [it does] not provide evaluation of the impact of training on mastery of content or demonstrated ability to perform job tasks"(pg. 120). Still, most evaluation that is undertaken in an organizational setting such as Children's Services is driven by organizational goals and objectives and "for an organization to achieve its goals and objectives its staff must perform certain activities and engage in specific behaviors..."(Hughes & Rycus, 1989, p.1).

In order for workers to be able to carry out their job related tasks and meet organizational goals and objectives certain conditions must be met: 1) the worker must have the competence, that is the ability to perform the job including the requisite knowledge, skills and understanding of relevant facts, concepts, principles, values and relationships and the capability of applying knowledge in

the performance of job tasks; 2) the caseworker must have the motivation to want to perform the job; and 3) the work environment which includes the system, structure and resources must facilitate the worker's job performance (Hughes & Rycus, 1989). Training is one way to facilitate competence development of new workers to support organizational goals and objectives and as such, evaluation aims to reflect organizational accountability by producing evidence that the organization in question has examined workers' abilities to meet the organization's job requirement.

In order for me to conduct the evaluation of *Alberta Children's Services Delegation Training Program* I sought and obtained permission from the Director of Human Resource Management Supports (HRMS). However, permission was granted with the understanding that Workforce Development, a unit within HRMS and the project managers of the delegation training program, would determine the evaluation questions to be answered and would provide the evaluation tools used to collect the data. Workforce Development wanted control of the evaluation from the outset and identified three key desired outcomes for the delegation training program that were to shape the evaluation: 1) Participant's knowledge and skills relevant to their on-the-job performance and competency were to show clear improvement; 2) Casework supervisor's indicate they are satisfied that the delegation training has prepared their new workers for the job; and, 3) The training materials were to meet the objectives of the pilot, which meant specifically, that the training program materials and delivery approaches

were to address gaps identified in a previous evaluation report conducted by Malatest & Associates Ltd, in April 2004.

Gaps identified by Malatest and Associates included:

- More opportunities for practice of skills within the training program;
- Need to support the ability to provide development of core competencies;
- More emphasis required within the training on the legislation and its application;
- More emphasis required within the training on the processes involved with screening, investigation, and case management;
- Need to develop content in the program related to Aboriginal issues and culture;
- Need to develop content in the program related to addiction issues;
- Need to develop content in the program related to child development issues (for child intervention services); and
- Address a lack of communication between facilitators and supervisors throughout the training process

It was believed by the training program development team that if they included clear training objectives that reflected the Ministry's core competency criteria, skill practice exercises relevant to the casework, and knowledge of relevant legislation, policy, procedures and best practice expectations of the Ministry that the program evaluation outcomes would strongly reflect participant and supervisor satisfaction with the training in preparing the new worker for their job.

I had no say either in the design of the evaluation or its implementation. Instead, I was simply provided with secondary data that I analyzed. The evaluation data with which I was provided data came in two forms: qualitative data in the form of responses to open-ended questions contained within the pre-ordained evaluation tools; and quantitative data generated through pre and post test assessment scores and rated responses to Likert scale questions contained within the pre-ordained evaluation tools and surveys. This data was collected at the end of each training session by the program trainers and forwarded for collation by training session. Data forwarded on for use in the training program evaluation inquiry was free of any identifying information about the people who were the sources of this information.

The questions that guided the analysis related to the three desired outcomes described above and are as follows:

Desired Outcome One: Participants knowledge..

- 1) Is the program effective in helping staff to develop the knowledge and skills required to implement the legislation and perform their role as identified in the core competencies?
- 2) Are participants satisfied that the program adequately prepared them for casework practice i.e. increased confidence, competence and practice opportunities?
- 3) What did participants consider the most/least helpful about the program?

Desired Outcome Two: Casework Supervisors satisfaction...

- 1) Are casework supervisors satisfied with the impact of the program on the quality of caseworker performance on the job?
- 2) What areas of the program are key for supervisors to know in order to be able to support their staff?
- 3) What specific activities have supervisor's implemented to support continuous competency development of their new staff?

Desired Outcome Three: Training Materials meet the objectives...

- 1) Does the program accommodate and support a variety of learner needs and styles?
- 2) Were the skill practice exercises relevant to the development of caseworker competencies?
- 3) Were the gaps identified in previous evaluations of the former program addressed?

The evaluation tools provided by Workforce Development included pre-post test assessments for each training module, developed by the independent program design contractor, participant workshop evaluations, trainer workshop evaluation, triad outcome form and supervisor survey. A description of the tools used in the collection of the evaluation data will be provided in a subsequent section of this chapter.

Evaluation Methodology

Alberta Children's Services presented five of the six training modules included in the *Delegation Training Program Pilot* to newly hired caseworkers

from the 10 Child and Family Services Authority Regions and 18 Delegated First Nations Agencies over a period of 10 months. The sixth module, *Applied Suicide Intervention Strategies Training* was provided through the provincial agency responsible for the design and training of this program. The training modules varied in content, delivery methods, and training time, ranging anywhere from two to five days in duration. Content and delivery methods determined the length of each of the modules, for example, the first module *Legislation Structure and Processes* provided a broad overview of several key concepts that included reviewing the Ministry's vision, mission and business goals, the legislation and mandated programs, the processes involved in differential response to intervention and the skills required to facilitate intake, assessment, investigation and ongoing case management. The modules that followed, for example *Working Toward Permanency and Legal/Court Processes* narrowed the focus of training content specific to the topic and were not as broad in scope as the first module and therefore less time was needed in delivery.

Participants

There were a total of 123 participants who started in the training program divided between eight training groups and six training sites. Training was provided at several training locations based on training needs, participant numbers and availability of facilitators'. Providing eight piloted groups allowed for a larger volume of data to be collected over the period of the pilot and provided the opportunity to address training wait lists and to ensure that new casework staff received training in a timely manner. Class size varied from training session

to training session with the maximum number of participants sitting at 24. The smallest group size in any given training session was five. Training groups were kept intact whenever possible, that is to say, there were times when a participant was unable to attend training with the original group they were assigned at initial registration and so may have had to join another group within the piloted sessions. Additionally, class size was impacted by maternity and illness leaves, work site transfers, employment termination and work schedule constraints.

Participants in the evaluation of the *Alberta Children's Services Delegation Training* were caseworkers newly hired by the Alberta Ministry of Children's Services or Delegated First Nation Agencies that required mandatory delegation training. The participants varied in their level of experience and included staff members working for the Ministry of Children's Services in roles previously not requiring delegation. Although about twenty individuals in the four pilot groups were highly experienced workers the majority of the 123 participants were new workers and most were recent graduates of college and university social work programs. The number of participants in each module varied from 70 to 123 because of attendance inconsistencies, maternity leaves, and illness.

Evaluation Tools

Four pre-approved evaluation tools designed by Workforce Development, Strategies and Support Services Division of the Ministry of Children's Services, were used to conduct the evaluation. These tools had to meet Ministry standards for confidentiality and be pre-approved for use through the Ministry's legal services as pertinent to *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy*

legislation governing any information obtained from business contracts, staff, and clients. The evaluation forms collected from training participants had to provide participants with an option of providing personal information and include a confidentiality statement ensuring any personal information provided would be protected. A combination of pre/post-test assessment tools, participant feedback questionnaires, trainer feedback questionnaires and supervisor survey / interview techniques were employed. A description of the evaluation tools follows:

Pre-test / post-test.assessment tool. The pre-post assessment tests designed by the independent contractor as part of their contract agreement with Alberta Children's Services sought to answer whether the training increased participant's knowledge and skill necessary to the work. A sample of the pre test assessment for module one of the *Delegation Training Program* pilot is attached as Appendix A. Questions contained in the pre-post assessment tests were intended to correspond with Workforce Development's pre-identified caseworker competency expectations for each module. Directions on the use of the tool were provided by the trainer and participants were asked to rate each question contained in the pre and post tests on a scale of one through five with one (1) indicating they knew nothing about the subject matter, three (3) meaning they knew something about the subject matter and five (5) demonstrating they knew a lot about the subject matter contained in the question. Participants were also asked to calculate the total score of their responses to the questions contained in the pre test, that is, add up all times they responded with a number one, two, three, four and five and total this score. The participants were then provided with

the training and then asked to complete the post test assessment for that module rating and scoring in the same way as the pre-test assessment. They were then asked to fill out a pre-post test gains table, see Appendix B, that listed their pre-test score and their post-test score and draw a line between the two scores. The difference between the scores indicated the change in participant's perception of their knowledge and confidence levels for the course content. The pre-post test gain sheet was handed in with the participants workshop evaluation forms at the end of the training session.

Pre-test and post-test assessments, if used correctly, can potentially be an important source of evaluation information. However, the pre-post tests utilized for the Delegation Training modules had limitations. Specifically, it was not clear exactly what the pre-post tests were designed to measure. For example, were the tests designed to measure knowledge gains, participant's confidence in the knowledge they had and subsequent changes to that knowledge confidence resulting from their exposure to training, or to provide participants with an opportunity to assess their competency improvement for the job over the training period. Analysis of the data obtained from the pre-post test assessments becomes somewhat cloudy in light of this lack of clarity.

Participant workshop feedback. At the end of each session, the participants were given the participant feedback questionnaire, entitled "How do you rate the Workshop", see Appendix C. The questionnaire, also developed by Workforce Development and consisting of six sub categories that include feedback on course content, course design, trainer and learning activities, course

environment, course results and self-paced delivery. However, before this tool was included as part of the evaluation process, internal approval within the Ministry was obtained as part of an internal ethics review. The participant feedback form does not include any participant identification information but does ask the participants to name the trainer for that module session, the location, date of training and the module for which they are providing feedback. Participants were also asked to assign a personal code to the form and to use that personal code on each evaluation form they complete during the delegation training pilot. In this way data could be tracked throughout the training by participant code without jeopardizing confidentiality. Trainers assigned a participant to collect the questionnaires and place them in an envelope that was then forwarded to Workforce Development for collation of the data used in the analysis of the training program.

The participant workshop evaluation form, much like the pre-post test assessments, also presented with limitations in terms of the questionnaires effectiveness in providing useful evaluation data. Evaluative limitations identified in the participant workshop evaluation questionnaire included: 1) vague or unclear evaluative statements unrelated to the evaluation target outcomes such as questions about participant's agreement with whether training materials were useful and well written; 2) missing evaluative statements related specifically to evaluation target outcomes such as participant's satisfaction with the training providing them with competencies to do the job and listing specific key competency areas for them to rate or statements about what learning styles were

addressed in the program that met the participant's learning needs; and, 3) lack of directions included on the form about how to correctly fill out the workshop evaluation questionnaire.

Supervisor survey / questionnaire. The evaluation tool for this level of evaluation, also designed by Workforce Development, was broken into categories with specific competency driven questions, see Appendix D. Supervisors were asked to assess whether learning transfer had taken place by indicating the level of competency they felt their staff member was demonstrating at the completion of the training program. In essence, supervisors were asked to indicate their satisfaction in terms of whether the staff member was always and fully demonstrating the competency, somewhat or sometimes demonstrating the competency, not fully understanding or demonstrating the competency, the competency does not apply to the worker and their current role and/or they have not yet observed the worker in the competency area. The competencies in questions were knowing and using the legislation appropriately; understanding and using appropriate court processes; demonstrating professional and effective communication; identifying, substantiating and documenting instances of child maltreatment; the use of approaches that fit with children's development and cultural needs and case planning and decision-making, while also demonstrating critical thinking.

Those who designed the evaluation also recommended conducting one post training group interview that would include the caseworker, supervisor and trainer after completion of all six program modules. It was thought that

conducting such an interview after completing all of the training modules would allow the participant time for integration of the training to on the job performance and supervisors an opportunity to assess their workers ongoing competency development and learning requirements for the job. Again, confidentiality of the participants was maintained and the information was forwarded onto Workforce Development for data collation.

The supervisor survey, of all the evaluation tools used during the Delegation Training Program pilot period, was the most comprehensive questionnaire specific to competency expectations for new caseworkers within Alberta Children's Services. Unfortunately, the tool was changed part way through the evaluation process and shifted from a survey looking at supervisor's satisfaction with the training program in preparing their new caseworker for the job to a competency-based observation tool used for ongoing learning and competency development plans for the new worker. This shift in focus for the use of the tool in the evaluation process undermined the original purpose of the tool as related to the key target outcomes for the evaluation, specifically, supervisors satisfaction with the program in preparing their new worker for their job. A second limitation to the tool was in the poor response rate which will be discussed in further detail in the next chapter with a review of the evaluation results.

In addition to the supervisor survey a group meeting or triad meeting was conducted once the participant had completed all six of the training modules. Supervisors were asked to confirm whether their new worker was demonstrating

the core competencies on the job. The group meeting format was loosely identified as an informal conversation to provide discussion about the participant's ongoing learning and competency development plans, confirm completion of the training program and discuss any training issues that may have occurred for the participant. Very little evaluative information was obtained during the group meeting other than the supervisor's confirmation of the participant's application of competencies on the job.

Trainer/Facilitator feedback. As with the participant feedback questionnaire the four delegation trainers were asked to fill in a facilitator feedback questionnaire. The facilitator feedback form included similar questions outlined in the participant feedback form for the workshop and provided the trainer with an opportunity to evaluate the training program's design, content, and delivery method as well as rating participant learning opportunities for each training module. The trainers completed this questionnaire for each of the piloted training modules. Trainers were also asked to assign a personal code to their feedback forms in order to track data from each of the piloted modules. The questionnaires were submitted to Workforce Development and the data collated and then submitted for analysis of the training program. An example of the Facilitator Feedback Questionnaire is included in Appendix E of this document.

As with the participant workshop evaluation questionnaire, the facilitator's feedback questionnaire presented with evaluative limitations. The evaluation statements were vague and in some cases did not pertain to the overall purpose of the evaluation inquiry. Although facilitator's were asked to rate the training on

whether they felt the training content met knowledge and skill building requirements of the participants, the questionnaire did not ask facilitator's to rate whether or not they felt the training provided participants with improved confidence, competence or understanding to do the job. This was pertinent information to the purpose of the evaluation inquiry, namely in providing data relevant to the three evaluation target outcomes.

Procedure

At the beginning of each training session participants were asked to complete the pre-test assessment questionnaire and at the end of each session they were asked to complete the same questionnaire by way of a post-test. The pre-test questionnaire contained a series of competency based questions particular to that module of training and was used to assess participant's confidence with their knowledge of the subject content prior to training. The participant's were then provided the training and asked to answer the same series of questions at the completion of their training session. The participant's were asked to submit their pre-test and post-test scores for each training session to Workforce Development. Additionally, participants were asked to complete a workshop evaluation rating their agreement with a number of statements about the training content, design, instruction and delivery. The workshop evaluation was collected by the trainer and submitted to Workforce Development.

Once all six of the training program modules were completed participants were asked to provide their supervisors with a survey questionnaire based on the Ministry's core competency requirements for casework positions. This

questionnaire was included at the back of their final training module, *Casework Practice Considerations*, and contained directions for the supervisor on how to rate their new workers knowledge, understanding and competency for a variety of tasks related to their on the job performance. Once supervisors had completed the survey they were asked to review the results with their new worker in preparation for the group interview and in planning for ongoing training and learning supports to aid continued competency development for the job. The participant and their supervisor were then asked to arrange for the group meeting with the trainer and these meetings took place anywhere from two to four weeks post training completion. In addition to providing feedback on how the participant was doing with their competency and learning plan development, the group meeting provided an opportunity for the participant and supervisor to comment on the training program overall in preparing the new worker for the job, recommend future training needs for staff, and the process for worker delegation at the regional level. Supervisors were then asked at the end of the group meeting to fax or mail in their completed survey feedback form to Workforce Development. The trainer was also asked to complete a one page group meeting (Triad) outcome form to be submitted to the training program coordinator (see Appendix F). The form indicated the supervisor was in agreement with the worker demonstrating the necessary competencies for the job and the trainer's recommendation for certification.

Trainers were asked to complete a facilitator feedback form for each session of training they delivered. The facilitator feedback form was submitted to

Workforce Development along with class attendance sheets and each participant's evaluation feedback and pre-post test scores.

At the end of the training program pilot period the data submitted to Workforce Development was collated on spreadsheets and categorized by training group, module sessions, facilitator and supervisor feedback responses, and pre-post test scores. The raw data was then provided to this writer for data analysis as related to the three guiding evaluation questions.

Data Collection and Analysis

As noted above, data was collected initially by the four delegation trainers after each module of training had been completed or submitted by supervisors by fax or mail and forwarded to Workforce Development for collation of the data. It should be made clear that as a trainer, I also collected feedback questionnaires and conducted triad interviews and forwarded this information on to Workforce Development. These tasks were part of my job requirements as a seconded employee of Alberta Children's Services. Data analysis and evaluation of the training program was conducted by me post data collection and was not part of my job description as a delegation trainer. Data analysis was conducted on my personal time as part of the requirements of completion of my masters program through the University of Victoria.

The data was provided to me by the Ministry in its entirety and was not linked to the participants who provided it and was in a completely anonymous format. As such, it met the requirements for full waiver by the University of Victoria's Human Research Ethics Board under the category that the research is

limited to a “secondary analyses of anonymized” data. Analysis of the data included a breakdown of the data as it relates to each module of training and then as it relates to the three categories for hypothesis. That is, the needs of the participants, on the job performance indicators, and training design and materials.

Design Issues

The purpose of my thesis was to evaluate the training program developed by Alberta Children’s Services, and not to evaluate the tools used in the data collection. However, the evaluation tools utilized during the *Delegation Training Program Pilot* proved to have several limitations that impacted the results of the data analysis. In particular, problems were encountered with the evaluation tools when assessing the data results in relation to the targeted training outcomes and guiding questions. For example the participant workshop evaluation forms included questions that were poorly worded, and did not address the intent of the evaluation, that is: the question did not assess participant’s satisfaction with the training in providing them with the knowledge, skill and competency development to perform their job. As well, participant workshop evaluation questions were often phrased in the abstract or in general terms for example:

- written materials and handouts were useful and clearly written; or,
- the workshop learning objectives were clearly defined.

These sorts of questions made it very difficult to discern exactly which materials were useful and clearly written and which were not and just which learning objectives were or were not clearly defined.

Questions that would have clearly linked to evaluation target outcome and guiding questions might have asked participants to rate on a four point scale their level of satisfaction with the training program providing them with the knowledge and ability to:

- Describe their role as a caseworker;
- Reference and describe the interrelationships between the legislation, regulations, policy and procedures and apply these in their practice;
- Understand the importance of the legislated guiding principles contained in the Matters-to-be-Considered section of the *Act* and be able to discuss, document and describe how they influence their decision-making and case planning direction;
- Complete a protection investigation and support my recommendations for closure, ongoing assessment or service provision; or
- Knowledgeably discuss the impact of addictions on assessment of parental and child capacity.

Such questions would have allowed me to speak to specific outcomes; unfortunately the questions that were asked did not afford me that opportunity. Still, the participant evaluation form did ask participants to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with questions about the course content, instructors, materials, and workshop presentation. This information provided a general sense of participant's perception of the training in terms of workshop and material flow and their assessment of instructor capabilities. Participants were also

provided with an opportunity to respond to open ended questions about what aided or hindered their learning within the workshop.

Kirkpatrick's (1994) level one evaluation approach fits for the type of information sought through the participant workshop evaluation as provided by Workforce Development, namely, describing participant's reaction to the training. Level two evaluation approaches, as posited by Kirkpatrick (1994), would have taken a look at the learning that had taken place for the participant and would have aligned more closely with the objectives of the evaluation as proposed both by myself and Workforce Development at the beginning of the evaluation planning process. Similar problems were encountered in the trainer or facilitator workshop evaluation form as the question format was as abstract and general as the participant evaluation tool.

During the analysis, the pre-post-test assessment scores were averaged for each training session group using analysis of variance (ANOVA) and then averaged across the number of groups for each individual module. The only module that ANOVA could not be used with was module five, *Working with Aboriginal Communities*, as there were only two groups of pre-post-test assessment scores and a minimum of three are required for ANOVA. The remainder of the evaluation data was converted to percentage values. For example, the number of responses for each participant questionnaire statement was divided into the total responses provided for each level of agreement within that group. So, if there were ten (10) participants in a given training session and eight (8) responded to the questionnaire statement with agree or strongly agree

then 80% of the participants for that particular group agreed the training program met the statement requirements for their training experience. Raw scores were totaled for each module of training and percentages were calculated on agreed or strongly agreed responses for each statement. The same process was used for the facilitator (trainer) and supervisor survey responses on levels of agreement and/or satisfaction.

Open ended question responses contained in the participant workshop evaluation form were documented by Workforce Development with a note as to how many participants responded in the same way to a particular question. That is, if there were five participants in the training session that indicated they liked having a knowledgeable instructor then a number five was put behind the response statement on the raw data sheets for that session. Common themes were noted, in the open ended question responses, across the groups for each module of training by totaling the number of participants who had made very similar statements, for example comments about room temperature, whether they liked guest presenters, or found the instructors knowledgeable, experienced and aided their learning.

The evaluation data provided allowed for analysis on two levels of Kirkpatrick's model of evaluation: Level one, participants and casework supervisor's reaction to or feelings about the training; and Level two, learning that had taken place in the training through the use of pre-post test assessments and the workshop evaluation and supervisor survey data. Although there had been some thought by Workforce Development to use the supervisor's survey to

assessment on the job performance it was ultimately set up, at the beginning of the training initiative, to assess supervisors' satisfaction level with new worker's competencies for the job. This tool could have provided an initial snapshot of Kirkpatrick's level three evaluation criteria of participant's transfer of knowledge and skill to on the job performance. Unfortunately, the response rate to the survey was small, the tool did not reflect evaluation information related to on the job performance specifically and was changed mid way through the process effecting its construct validity in light of the evaluation targets.

CHAPTER FIVE: EVALUATION RESULTS

Introduction

The results of the evaluation of the *Alberta Children's Services Delegation Training Program Pilot* are highlighted in this Chapter. As stated previously, this evaluation was meant to determine whether the *Delegation Training Program* was delivering what it promised, specifically, training that develops new workers job competencies as defined by the revised legislation and therefore, provides worksites with confident, competent, knowledgeable and skilled caseworkers who understand the legislation, their mandates under the law, and engage in good casework practice processes again, as defined by the revised legislation. The client, Alberta Children's Services Workforce Development, indicated three key desired outcomes for the training evaluation. The first considered the participants' impressions of the training program, the second focused on casework supervisors' expectations of the program and the final outcome looked at the program design and how it addressed competency development, content gaps and learning styles.

As reviewed in the last chapter, there were a number of limitations encountered in the way in which analysis could be conducted, limitations that had a direct impact on the kinds of results that I could lay claim to. I will discuss these limitations and related methodological problems in Chapter six.

Results

I will present the results as follows: 1) findings from the participants' survey and comparisons of participants' pre-post test scores for each completed

module as they relate to participants' impressions of the training program, 2) findings from the supervisors' survey and the triad phone calls conducted with supervisors, caseworkers and trainers pertaining to casework supervisor's impressions of the program; and 3) findings from participant, facilitator and supervisor surveys as linked to program design, content gaps and training approaches to learning. Information has been based on the data provided from these surveys with a participant total of 123 newly hired caseworkers, four trainers, and 81 supervisors over the training program pilot period running from February 28, 2005 to December 16, 2005.

Table 1 provides an overview of the types of evaluation tools used and corresponding response rates. The response rates represent raw data totals for each questionnaire or survey statement and were used in percentage calculations represented in the remaining data tables presented in this chapter.

(Refer to Table 1 next page)

Table 1 Composition of evaluation responses

Survey Instrument	Total Number of Participants	Total Completed Responses
	Over all modules	
Participant Workshop Survey	549 Respondents	527 Responses
Participant Pre and post Test Scores	549 Respondents	379 Responses
Supervisor's Survey	81	14
Triad phone call or in person meeting	102	81
Facilitator's Survey	20	14
Total	1301	1015

Note: Response rate excludes those who were on medical/maternity leave, no longer working with Alberta Children Services or Delegated First Nation Agency, or caseworkers not required to complete all six of the modules.

Section One: Participants Impressions of the Training Program

Two sources for data were used to answer three guiding questions around participants' experience of the training program: the participants' workshop evaluation response and pre-test and post-test assessment scores. The workshop evaluation forms speak to participant's level of agreement with statements about the training design, content, instruction and delivery. In particular, the response rate to the following statements was analyzed:

- The training content was relevant to my job;
- I will be able to apply what I have learned from this workshop to my job;
and
- My knowledge increased as a result of the training.

Additionally, results related to the common themes noted in the participants responses to the open-ended questions about what they found least/most valuable about the workshop as well as what interfered with their learning are included. The results will be presented as they relate to each of the three questions that Workforce Development determined would guide the target outcome related to participant's perception of the training program.

Participants' Impressions: Question One

Did the participants feel the program was effective in helping them to develop the knowledge and skills required to implement the legislation and perform their role as identified in the core competencies? As indicated in Table 1.1., training participants agreed or strongly agreed that the training provided them with content relevant to their job (91.62%), that their knowledge increased

(91.26%) and they felt confident they could apply what they learned in training to their work (94.54%). The remainder of participants, just under 10%, either did not respond to the statement or indicated they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

These results appear to support participants' satisfaction with the program providing them with the knowledge, skills and confidence to do their job, however there was no evaluation data available for the analysis that indicated whether participants related what they learned to improved competency in their work. The data serves to provide a basic picture or initial snapshot of participant's feelings about the training program, or as described by Kirkpatrick's (1994), provides a first level view of the evaluation that simply looks at participant's reaction but does not probe into the level of learning participant's experienced during the training event. Kirkpatrick (1994) recommends for evaluation to move into the next level, or Level II, pre-test and post-test assessments of learning and skill development could be useful in determining what participant's believed they had learned as a result of the training.

(Refer to Table 1. 1 next page)

Table 1.1 Participants indicate level of agreement with statements specific to course content, application of skills on the job, and knowledge changes resulting from the delegation training...

Participants responses to workshop statement:	Strongly Disagree	%	Mildly Disagree	%	Agree	%	Strongly Agree	%	Don't know/ No Response	%	% of Agree/ Strongly Agree
Content was relevant to my job	4	0.73%	15	2.73%	90	16.39%	413	75.23%	40	7.29%	91.62%
I will be able to apply what I have learned from this workshop to my job	2	0.36%	7	1.28%	103	18.76%	416	75.77%	34	6.19%	94.54%
My knowledge increased as a result of the training	5	0.91%	21	3.83%	80	14.57%	421	76.68%	29	5.28%	91.26%
Program Totals	11	.67%	43	2.61%	273	16.58%	1250	75.90%	103	6.25%	92.47%

N=110

Total Responses=549

Note: when percentages are calculated rounding occurs. Rounding results in a total percentage that may be less than 100 or slightly greater than 100%.

Source: Participant's Feedback Survey ACS Delegation Training Pilot

For each of the delegation training modules participants were asked to rate their knowledge confidence on a series of competency-based questions prior to training and again at the completion of their training module. Table 1.2 provides a summary of the average participant pre-test and post-test assessment scores across the five modules included in the training program evaluation.

There are two modules in particular that stand out with respect to changes between the pre-test and post-test scores: Legal Court (71.71%) and Working Toward Permanency (56.24%). However, scores changed for each module with varying degrees of difference ranging from 38 to 56%.

Table 1.12 Provides a summary of the average pre-test, post test and differences between scores across all Delegation Training Program modules...

Delegation Training Modules	Average Pre Test Scores	Average Post Test Scores	Average Score Change	% of Change Between Scores
Legislation	135.91	187.65	51.74	38.07%
Permanency	138.84	216.92	78.08	56.24%
Legal-Court	84.98	145.92	60.94	71.71%
Aboriginal Communities	93.10	132.41	39.31	42.22%
Casework Practice	120.23	156.35	36.12	30.04%
Average Total of Mean Scores	114.61	167.85	53.24	47.66%

Total pre and post test scores across all training sessions =379

Delivered Sessions with pre and post test scores= 32

Source: Participant pre and post test scores from each module of the delegation they completed

Tables 1.13 through to Table 1.17 provide a breakdown of participants average pre-test and post-test scores across each training module. The difference between the average pre-test and post-test scores minimally provides the evaluator with a sense of participant’s confidence in their knowledge growth resulting from exposure to the training program. Although the pre-test and post test questions were based on the Ministry’s core competency expectations for

new workers, the ranking of participants responses to each of the competency-based questions was not provided as part of the evaluation data. This information may have provided further evaluative data that would have strengthened an argument for direct impact of the training on participants learning for job.

Again, it is difficult, based on the data provided, to make any conclusion about the relevance of the pre-test and post-test scores. A positive increase between the participants pre-test and their post-test score would lead one to believe that they had learned more about the subject matter as a result of the training experience. However, a number of variables could also have influenced the participants change in scores such as the time of day the tests were administered. For example, all of the pre-tests were administered first thing in the morning at each of the training sessions and the post-tests were administered in the afternoon of the final day of training. Participants' performance on the tests may have been impacted by the time of day the tests were administered due to things such as fatigue factors and concentration. However, as a baseline indication of what participant's feel their confidence improvement has been regarding the knowledge, skills and competencies they have for the job, the pre-test and post-test scores may prove to be useful in the ongoing development of the training program.

Table 1.13 Group participants' average pre-test, post-test and differences between scores for module one of the Alberta Children's Services Delegation Training Program: Legislation, Structure and Processes (Pilot Data)...

Training Groups	Average Pre Test Scores	# of Participants Who took the pre test	Average Post Test Scores	# of Participants Who took the post-test	Average Difference between Scoring	% of change between scores
A	137	8	182	8	45	32.85%
B	105	10	178	10	73	69.52%
C	155	9	205	8	50	32.26%
D	139	16	197	16	58	41.73%
E	138	24	202	24	64	46.38%
F	135	7	209	7	74	54.81%
G	137	10	215	10	78	56.93%
H	140	6	202	6	62	44.29%
*Weighted Mean Total	135.91		187.65		63	47.35%

N=90/89

* Note: The weighted mean was used to calculate mean totals over a range of groups included in the pilot evaluation for each module.

Source: Participant pre and post test scores from each module of the delegation they completed.

Table 1.13 provides an overview of the first module of the training program, *Legislation, Structure and Processes*, and it can be seen that there was a wide variety of score change indicated by the participants. The percentage of change ranges from 32 to 69%. This rather wide range could be explained when taking into consideration that two of the piloted groups included a large number

of participants who had many years of front-line experience and were making position changes that required them to re-train to the new casework practice guidelines. Their pre-existing experience and knowledge would impact how they rated the module for new information.

Table 1.14 Group participants' average pre-test, post-test and differences between scores for module three of the Alberta Children's Services Delegation Training Program: Working Toward Permanency (Pilot data)...

Training Groups	Average Pre Test Scores	# of Participants Who took the pre test	Average Post Test Scores	# of Participants Who took the post-test	Average difference in Scoring	% of Change Between Scores
A	134	7	226	7	92	68.66%
B	134	10	199	10	65	48.51%
C	153	9	227	9	74	48.37%
D	151	13	205	13	54	35.76%
E	142	20	222	20	80	56.34%
F	108	9	198	9	90	83.33%
G	133	20	223	20	90	67.67%
H	148	14	226	14	78	52.70%
*Weighted Mean Total	138.84		216.92		77.87	57.67%

N= 102

* Weighted mean was used to calculate mean totals over a range of groups included in the pilot evaluation for each module.

Source: Participant pre and post test scores from each module of the delegation they completed.

Table 1.15 demonstrates that across all eight pilot groups of the *Legal-Court* training, the average increase in the score differences was 72.30%. This was followed by module three, *Working Towards Permanency*, as shown in Table 1.14 which demonstrates an average increase in the score change at 57.67%.

Table 1.15 Group participants' average pre-test, post test and differences between scores for module four of the Alberta Children's Services Delegation Training Program: Legal/Court Processes (Pilot Data)...

Training Groups	Average Pre Test Scores	# of Participants Who took the pre test	Average Post Test Scores	# of Participants Who took the post-test	Average difference in Scoring	% of Change Between Scores
A	77	8	142	8	65	85.38%
B	89	5	151	5	62	69.66%
C	76	12	145	12	69	90.29%
D	90	7	151	7	61	67.04%
E	88	16	143	16	55	61.76%
F	82	18	144	18	62	75.40%
G	89	13	150	13	61	69.11%
H	92	9	147	9	55	59.78%
*Weighted Mean Total	84.98		145.92		61.25	72.30%

N=88

* Weighted mean was used to calculate mean totals over a range of groups included in the pilot evaluation for each module.

Source: Participant pre and post test scores from each module of the delegation they completed.

It should be noted that modules five and six were slated as the final two modules for delivery in the piloted training program. Some groups were collapsed into sessions together and others were scheduled past the completion of the pilot timeframe. Therefore, these groups pre and post test scores were not included in the raw data for evaluation. Missing data is most notable in module five, *Working with Aboriginal Communities*, Table 1.16. However, the data that was provided appears to be in a consistent range (41.67%) with other modules and may represent a true reflection of participant's perception of knowledge gains for the delivery of this module despite the small group size and therefore may be used as a baseline for comparison in future evaluation of the training program.

(Refer to Table 1.16 next page)

Table 1.16 Group participants' pre-test, post-test, and differences between scores for module five of the Alberta Children's Services Delegation Training Program: Working with Aboriginal Communities (Pilot Data)...

Training Groups	Average Pre Test Scores	# of Participants Who took the pre test	Average Post Test Scores	# of Participants Who took the post-test	Average difference in Scoring	% of Change Between Scores
A	90	20	129	20	39	43.33%
B	100	9	140	9	40	40.00%
C						
D						
E						
F						
G						
H						
*Weighted Mean Total	93.10		132.41		39.50	41.67%

N=29

* Weighted mean was used to calculate mean totals over a range of groups included in the pilot evaluation for each module.

Source: Participant pre and post test scores from each module of the delegation they completed.

Additionally, the comparatively low percentage (30.04%) in the change of scores shown in Table 1.17, *Casework Practice Considerations*, does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that the module failed to provide the same level of knowledge attainment or skill development opportunities that other

modules may have. Of all the modules contained within the training program, this module provided content that was both theoretically driven and educational in design. It was predicted at the design phase of this module that many of the new staff hired would have had some academic or prior work exposure to information on addictions, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, family violence and self-reflective practice approaches and thus not experience the same level of knowledge gains evidenced in other modules.

Table 1.17 Group participants' pre-test, post-test and differences between scores for module six of the Alberta Children's Services Delegation Training Program: Casework Practice Considerations (Pilot Data)...

Training Groups	Average Pre Test Scores	# of Participants Who took the pre test	Average Post Test Scores	# of Participants Who took the post-test	Average difference in Scoring	% of Change Between Scores
A	108	7	150	7	42	38.89%
B	125	18	168	18	43	34.40%
C	134	9	169	9	35	26.12%
D	128	10	162	10	34	26.56%
E	119	14	142	14	23	19.33%
F	106	13	146	13	40	37.74%
*Weighted Mean Total	120.23		156.35		36.17	30.51%

N= 71

* Weighted mean was used to calculate mean totals over a range of groups included in the pilot evaluation for each module.

Source: Participant pre and post test scores from each module of the delegation they completed

Participants Impressions: Question Two

Were participants satisfied with the program adequately preparing them for casework practice (i.e. confidence, competence, and practice opportunities)?

As mentioned in the chapter on methodology there were limitations with the evaluation tools used during the training program pilot. One of the limitations is that the participant workshop questionnaire did not include questions about participants' satisfaction with the training program *adequately* preparing them for casework practice. Therefore, no specific data was available to address this particular evaluation program question.

Participants Impressions: Question Three

What did participants find the most/least helpful about the program?

Further support for the training program's approach to knowledge, skill and competency development can be found in participants responses to open-ended questions about what supported or interfered with their learning.

Table 1.31 highlights some of the common themes indicated by workers written comments on the participant workshop evaluation feedback forms. Forty five (45) participants felt strongly that having knowledgeable instructors who were engaging and flexible in their approach aided in their learning processes. A further 11 participants added that having front line experienced trainers was an asset to their learning experience.

(Refer to Table 1.31 next page)

Table 1.31 Participant Response to Workshop Question: What supported your learning?

<p>Theme#1: Instructors</p> <p>Having knowledgeable instructors who were engaging and flexible in their approach (45); front line experienced instructors(11);experienced co-trainers (5);Guest presenters like elders(10)</p>
<p>Theme#2: Implications for practice</p> <p>I have learned a lot which I feel I will be able to apply within my practice/this workshop put my job into perspective (6);mock docket court and feedback was invaluable (15); first hand sharing of experiences(21);learning how to read and interpret the legislation(6).</p>
<p>Theme#3: Course Materials</p> <p>All the information was of great value, good information in binders(12); hands on activities (10); Handbook provides clear and precise steps for caseworkers to follow (5); videos(8); information on Family Violence, Addictions and FASD(8).</p>

Note: Figures located within the brackets indicate number of responses that fit within the themed statements

Source: *Participants Feedback Survey ACS Delegation Training Pilot*

Participants also highlighted in their feedback that having opportunity to share practice experiences, learn the legislation, practice skills and obtain feedback gave them a better understanding of their job.

Most feedback received on what interfered with participant’s learning, as seen in Table 1.32, centered on physical environment issues at training sites (15), the desire for the training materials to include more audio visual aides, less repetition of information across all of the modules and more challenging information (25) and disruptions from source such as cell-phones, supervisors,

and class mates who were talking during lecture or sleeping during training sessions (31).

Table 1.32 Participant Response to Workshop Question: What interfered with your learning?

<p>Theme #1: Physical Environment of training site</p> <p>Background noise of air conditioner kicking in(2); would like a room with natural light; too cold or too warm in the room(10); sometimes noisy with people in the halls(3)</p>
<p>Theme #2: Materials used in training</p> <p>Add more audio visual material to the workshop (9); clarify learning objectives (4); repeating things learned in other training sessions (6); some information was a bit basic (6).</p>
<p>Theme #3: Activities in training session</p> <p>Make them more stimulating (5); provide more time as felt rushed (9)</p>
<p>Theme #4: Disruptions</p> <p>Cell phones and telephone calls during the workshop(6); people talking while instructor talking(13); people sleeping during workshop(6); external disruptions like people eating, supervisors pulling workers out of training and people outside of the training room (6)</p>

Note: Figures located within the brackets indicate number of responses that fit within the themed statements

Source: Participants Feedback Survey ACS Delegation Training Pilot

Section Two: Casework Supervisors' Expectations of the Program

Questions posed to supervisors through the use of survey and group (triad) meetings specifically highlighted competency based criteria for their caseworker's on-the-job performance. These questions included caseworkers understanding and application on tasks such as being able to describe their role, substantiating child in need of intervention, demonstrating an understanding of court processes, gathering evidence, documentation, inclusion of cultural considerations in case planning and decision-making, ability to use critical thinking and ability to effectively communicate. A further opportunity was provided to supervisors during a triad meeting to confirm that their new worker was demonstrating competencies for the job. Of the 81 completed triad meetings only 14 supervisors forwarded their survey responses to Workforce Development for inclusion in the evaluation analysis despite follow up attempts by the Delegation trainers through email reminders for the submissions. Possible explanations for such a low response rate on the supervisor surveys will be explored in the following chapter.

Supervisors Impressions: Question One

Are casework supervisors satisfied with the impact of the program on the quality of caseworker performance on the job? Table 2.1 demonstrates that on average over the range of questions asked, 84.96% of supervisors indicated they were *somewhat satisfied* or *satisfied* that their caseworker was demonstrating identified competencies at the work site. It should be pointed out that supervisors also identified those areas where they had not observed the worker

applying the listed competency or noted that the caseworker's current position did not include the competency as criteria for that job. An example of this type of trainee includes foster care support workers, permanency workers and Family Support for Children with Disabilities (FSCD) workers. For those participants who filled these types of positions assessing competency for court processes and investigation or initial assessment tasks was difficult and percentages for response were lower. This is most notable with a 42.86% satisfaction rate on caseworker's understanding of court processes and their role within the court system. Eight of the 14 responses indicated the supervisor had not observed the competency or it was not a function of the worker's role.

(Refer to Table 2.1 next page)

Table 2.1 Casework supervisors' level of satisfaction with training program competency development for new caseworkers demonstrating identified competencies at their job worksite at the time the survey was completed...

	N/A to worker job function at time of survey	Not Observed	Somewhat Satisfied	Satisfied	Total Survey Participants	% including n/a or not observed	% of questions answered indicating Somewhat to Satisfied
Caseworker can describe their role within child intervention system	0	0	3	11	14		100.00%
Caseworker can identify, substantiate and record indicators of child in need of intervention (physical, sexual, emotional abuse, neglect, and abandonment)	0	5a	12a	53a	14	7.14%	92.86%
Caseworker understands court processes and their role within the court system	5	3	3	3	14	57.14%	42.86%
Caseworker demonstrates through documentation, an understanding of how to gather evidence and present information to support a court application	2	2	6	4	14	28.57%	71.43%
Caseworker understands and includes cultural considerations in decision-making and case planning	0	0	1	13	14		100.00%
Caseworker demonstrates correct use of assessment at various stages of involvement with a family (intake, initial assessment/investigation, extended assessment, and all plans)	14b	9b	24b	51b	14	23.47%	76.53%
Caseworker demonstrates an ability to use critical thinking to support decision-making and problem-solving approaches	0	0	4	10	14		100.00%
Caseworker demonstrates an ability to effectively communicate	0	0	1	13	14		100.00%
Caseworker demonstrates an awareness of impact of self on others	0	0	3	11	14		100.00%
Total Responses	21	19	57	169	266		84.96%

N=14

Notes: 1) The notation “a” indicates that there was one question with five sub-categories and the responses were collapsed resulting in 14 respondents scoring each option choice for a total of 70 possible responses (12+53)/70=92.86%. 2) The notation “b” indicating that there was one question with seven sub-categories and the responses were collapsed resulting in 14 respondents scoring each option choice for a total of 98 possible responses (24+51)/98=76.53%. 3) “Not applicable” (n/a) to workers role indicates caseworker not actively engaged in the particular competency area as a result of their position responsibilities. For example a foster care worker would rarely be required to prepare for or attend court as part of their usual responsibilities. 4) “Not observed” indicates that at the time of the survey the supervisor had not observed the caseworker in this area of competency and so was unable to rate the task for satisfaction

Source: Supervisor Feedback Surveys ACS Delegation Training Pilot

The responses reflected in the supervisor survey are further supported by response to a single question asked during the group meeting conducted after the participant had completed all six modules of the delegation training program. Supervisors were asked to confirm whether their new caseworker was applying competencies on the job. Of the 81 completed group (triad) phone calls or in person meetings conducted at the end of the participant’s training program, it was noted, as seen in Table 2.12, that all of the supervisors confirmed the caseworker was applying expected competencies on the job. There were a total of 102 participants who completed all six of the training modules during the pilot period. Another 21 completed the training program after the pilot end date. Of the 102 participants that completed the training 21 did not complete a group or triad meeting due to a variety of reasons including maternity leave, employment change, or they participated in the training as part of an auditing function of their role within the organization.

Table 2.12 Supervisor indicates agreement with caseworker demonstrating competencies on the job...

Triad Meeting Statement:	Supervisor Agreed with statement	Supervisor Disagreed with Statement	Triad meeting not required	Training completed after pilot	Totals
participant is applying competencies	81	0	21	21	123

N=123

Source: Alberta Children’s Services Delegation Training Triad Form

Supervisors Impressions: Question Two

What areas of the program are important for supervisors to know in order to be able to support their staff? Of the 14 completed supervisor surveys only 9 had completed the open ended questions asking supervisors to identify what they would need to know about the training program in order to support their caseworker's ongoing competency development. As Table 2.12 outlines, of the responses reported, 66.66% wanted training program outlines and 44.44% indicated a desire to know about skills practice their workers were receiving and to have trainers provide them with feedback.

(Refer to Table 2.12 next page)

Table 2.12 Program areas that supervisors indicated they needed to know about in order to support their staff in their ongoing competency development...

Program Areas Identified by Supervisor:	Need to know	I don't know / No response	Total Responses	% of Responses indicated a program need
Training Program Outlines	6	3	9	66.66%
Skills Practice Opportunities	4	5	9	44.44%
Training Locations	1	8	9	11.11%
Trainer Feedback	4	5	9	44.44%
Other Training Opportunities	2	7	9	22.22%
Other (please specify)				
Practical	1	7	9	22.22%
Waves of Training	1			
Totals	19	35	54	

N=14

Source: Supervisor Feedback Survey for ACS Delegation Training Pilot

Supervisor's Impressions: Question Three

What specific activities have supervisors implemented to support continuous competency development of their new staff? When asked about the types of support they provided their staff at the worksite, all of the respondents indicated they used progressive caseloads and scheduled supervision. Just over half (55.55%) of the supervisors indicated they also used applied learning plans,

mentoring and job shadowing as support methods for ongoing competency development of their new workers.

With such a small sample group, 9 out of a possible 81 respondents, it is difficult to determine whether the responses noted in Table 2.13 would be appropriate to generalize about support practices across the province for ongoing competency development of new caseworkers. More comprehensive evaluation might provide stronger support for the data collected during this evaluation phase.

(Refer to Table 2.13 next page)

Table 2.13 Specific activities that supervisors indicated they implemented to support continuous competency development for their new staff.....

Strategies Used to Support Worker Competency:	Supervisor Currently Uses	No Responses	Total Responses	% who used the activity
Applied Learning Plan	5	4	9	55.55%
Supported Advanced Training	4	5	9	44.44%
Mentoring in the field	5	4	9	55.55%
Progressive Caseload	9	0	9	100.00%
Arrangement of Job Shadowing	5	4	9	55.55%
Scheduled Supervision	9	0	9	100.00%
Other (please specify)				
In house training	1			
Case consulting	1			
Setting performance goals	1			
Total Responses	40	23	63	63.49%

N=14

Responded=9

Source: Supervisor Feedback Survey for ACS Delegation Training Pilot

Section Three: Program Design

One of the key issues presented at the outset of the training program design was to ensure that the content and delivery approach met commonly understood adult learning needs. That is to say, the program would incorporate as many methods as possible that would stimulate participant learning. Training delivery would include a cross section of reading assignments, lecture, small and large group discussions, skill practice opportunities, audio visual materials, overheads, and time to process the information being provided. Additionally, the content design would incorporate clearly articulated learning objectives directly associated with expected practice competencies at the worksite. Finally, it was important to determine whether an integral part of the success of the program design had to do with the use of experienced front line workers as training facilitator's.

Program Design: Question One

Does the program accommodate and support a variety of learner needs and styles? Tables 3.1; 3.12; and 3.13 all provide information on participant's and facilitators' views of the program content and delivery approaches. Important to note is that 92.18% of participants agreed that the program and facilitator's provided them with a variety of learning opportunities. In particular, as seen in Table 3.1, participants highlighted that having knowledgeable and well informed instructors, clearly defined learning objectives and the instructor's use of their own as well as participant's examples in training was instrumental to their learning process.

However, evaluation data was not available to answer whether the training program provided specific learning approaches that met the participant's learning style or needs. For example, the participant responses noted in Table 3.1 ask the participant to indicate their level of agreement with the training providing them with: learning objectives that were clearly defined; adequate time for discussion, well delivered lectures and whether they agreed that the instructor was knowledgeable and well informed and provided illuminating examples. The participants were not asked to describe their level of satisfaction or agreement with the program providing them with specific learning approaches, for example indicating what learning activities work for them, were they provided for in the training program and did they aid in the participant's learning.

(Refer to Table 3.1 next page)

Table 3.1 Participants' level of agreement with the following statements about the training materials and instruction delivery...

Participants response to workshop evaluation statement:	Strongly Disagree	%	Mildly Disagree	%	Agree	%	Strongly Agree	%	Don't know / no response	%	% Agree and Strongly Agree
Learning objectives were clearly defined	2	.36%	10	1.82%	113	20.58%	398	72.50%	35	6.38%	93.08%
Adequate time for discussion	6	1.09%	22	4.00%	123	22.40%	371	67.58%	40	7.29%	69.95%
Lectures were well delivered	4	.73%	18	3.28%	106	19.31%	388	70.67%	43	7.83%	89.98%
Instructor was knowledgeable and well informed	0	.0%	10	1.82%	72	13.11%	445	81.06%	35	6.68%	94.17%
Instructor gave illuminating examples and solicited them from participants	3	.55%	10	1.82%	86	15.66%	428	77.96%	33	6.01%	93.62%
Totals	15	.55%	70	2.55%	500	18.21%	2030	73.95%	186	6.78%	92.18%

Responses=549

Source: Participant feedback survey ACS Delegation Training Pilot

As indicated in Table 3.12, on average participants indicated that they felt the training program materials should stay the same (84.58%) with a majority of

participants identifying handouts, audio visual and group activities as being appropriate the way they were presented in training sessions.

However, what is missing from the evaluation data is the ability to cross reference participant’s responses to questions about on the job components of competency development. That is to say, was their competency development enhanced through training, worksite experiences and learning opportunities, or a combination of both and how can these impacts be highlighted for use in ongoing development of training design.

Table 3.12 Program areas of the Delegation Training Pilot that participant’s identified as important to either have stay the same, be increased or decreased in the materials and delivery method across all modules.....

	Increase	%	Decrease	%	Stay the Same	%
Amount of Course Content	51	9.29%	38	6.92%	460	83.79%
Course Difficulty	46	8.38%	9	1.64%	494	89.98%
Pace	80	14.57%	40	7.29%	429	78.14%
Amount of Audio Visual	81	14.75%	18	3.28%	450	81.97%
Amount of Handouts	23	4.19%	10	1.82%	516	93.99%
Group Activities	94	17.12%	18	3.28%	437	79.60%

Responses =549

Source: Participant Feedback Survey ACS Delegation Training Pilot

Supervisors have already indicated, through this evaluation process, that they use a variety of techniques at the worksite to support ongoing competency development of their new workers such as: mentoring, job shadowing, case conferencing and progressive caseloads. Evaluation of worksite competency development strategies would be helpful in determining the strength of both the training program and worksite components and potentially identify tangible training methods that could be incorporated into the existing training model.

A cross comparison, through facilitator feedback on participants' response to the training delivery model, supports what participants indicated as useful learning opportunities. As demonstrated in Table 3.13, facilitators were asked to rate their observation of participant's reaction to some of the training delivery methods. There was strong agreement among the facilitators' that the training provided interactive and stimulating learning opportunities for the participants. (Refer to Table 3.13 next page)

Table 3.13 Facilitator’s levels of agreement with statements indicating participants’ response to training delivery mode.....

Facilitator response to evaluation statements:	Strongly Disagree	Mildly Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	% Agree or Strongly Agree
Participants asked questions and were engaged in learning	0	0	3	11	100.00%
Participants responded well to tasks and group exercises	0	0	2	12	100.00%
Participants comfortably expressed their concerns	0	1	3	10	92.85%
The workshop activities stimulated participant learning	0	1	6	7	92.85%
Totals	0	2	14	40	96.43%

N=14

Source: Facilitators Feedback Survey ACS Delegation Training Pilot

Program Design: Question Two

Were the skill practice exercises relevant to the development of the caseworker competencies? Table 3.2 illustrates feedback from both facilitator’s and participants on their level of agreement with the training program providing

materials and activities that promoted their learning, knowledge and skill development.

Again, as indicated in Table 3.13, participants agreed that the learning activities and exercises greatly aided their learning. Facilitators supported participants' feedback and indicated strong agreement with the content providing knowledge and skill building opportunities for the participants.

Table 3.2 Participants and facilitators level of agreement with the training program providing materials and interactive activities that promoted learning, knowledge and skill development....

	Strongly Disagree		Mildly Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Don't Know/ No Response		Total Responses	% of Agree and Strongly Agree
Participant Response: Participatory learning activities and exercises greatly aided my learning	5		16		126		377		43		549	91.62%
Facilitator Response: The content met knowledge and skill building requirements of the participants	0		0		3		11		0		14	100.00%
Totals	5	.89%	16	2.84%	129	22.91%	388	68.92%	43	7.64%	563	91.83%

N=563 Responses

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding effects.

Source: Participant and Facilitator Feedback Survey's ACS Delegation Training Pilot

Program Design: Question Three

Were the gaps identified in previous evaluations addressed? A previous contracted training initiative had been extensively evaluated in a two phase evaluation process completed in April 2004 by Malatest and Associates Ltd. Gaps in the training design and delivery had been identified in that report and during the development of the *Alberta Children's Services Delegation Training Program* these gaps were reviewed and carefully considered in the design of the program materials and delivery approaches.

83.48% of supervisors surveyed indicated they were satisfied that their new caseworkers were demonstrating ability, knowledge and understanding overall in areas of competency related to previously identified gap areas within the former training model. This suggests that the current training program was successful with incorporating topic areas that had been missing in the former training design.

The development of the supervisor's feedback survey took into consideration previously identified gaps and Table 3.3 incorporates their responses to questions related to the caseworker's understanding and implementation of the legislation, their ability to complete a screening, initial assessment/investigation, and extended assessment, and ability to knowledgeably discuss and reference the mandated services under the legislation. Additionally, supervisors were also asked to indicate whether they felt their caseworker understood child development and the unique structure of Aboriginal culture and were using their knowledge in their decision making and case planning processes.

Unfortunately, the supervisor's feedback survey was missing questions on caseworkers' competencies in the area of addictions, level of communication between trainers and supervisors, and communication with supervisors with regard to the details of practice skill opportunities provided within the program. Future evaluation efforts should look at incorporating survey questions related to those identified gaps not already assessed.

(Refer to Table 3.3 next page)

Table 3.3 Supervisor’s level of satisfaction with caseworkers’ understanding and demonstration of specific activities identified as gap areas in a prior version of training...

Supervisor indicates level of satisfactions with the following survey statements::	N/A to workers job function at time of survey		Not Observed		Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Satisfied	% of Somewhat Satisfied and Satisfied
Caseworker understands and implements the legislation appropriately	1		0		0	0	10	45	98.21%
Caseworker demonstrates an ability to complete a: Screening, initial assessment/investigation, and extended assessment	4		4		0	0	6	28	80.95%
Caseworker knows the mandated services provided for within the legislation and can reference them	21		1		0	6	20	50	71.43%
Caseworker understands the unique structure of Aboriginal Culture and demonstrates how to work with Aboriginal families and community	0		0		0	0	2	12	100.00%
Caseworker understands and includes knowledge of child development in decision-making and case planning	0		0		0	0	2	12	100.00%
Totals:	26	11.61 %	5	2.23%	0	6	40	147	83.48%

N= 14

Total Responses=224

Note: Some questions had a number of subcategories that for the purpose of the table were collapsed thus the numbers appear to reflect a larger number of responses than the 14 completed surveys would indicate. Percentages were calculated on the total number of responses versus the total number of completed surveys.

Source: Supervisors Feedback Survey ACS Delegation Training Pilot

CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION

As I stated in my introduction, I volunteered to conduct a preliminary evaluation of the training program developed for newly hired staff because I wanted to know and I believed my employer wanted to know, how the training program prepared new caseworkers for their practice and whether they gained knowledge and understanding of their role, could articulate employer expectations for best practice and could plan-fully engage in ongoing competency development in practice. As I also stated in the introduction, I found that once the evaluation process began, that the evaluation design and methodology that was handed to me to implement was riddled with difficulties.

Several problems were encountered during the analysis of the data that included issues with the evaluation tools used to collect the data, missing data, poorly collated data and lack of clarity around what was actually being measured by the tools as related to the key evaluation targets established by Workforce Development. As these problems emerged one after the other, it became clear that the evaluation results could not speak to the key evaluation targets set forth by Workforce Development and as such could not determine whether the training program delivered what it promised to the satisfaction of both the training participants and their casework supervisors.

Although, the evaluation results were not completely without merit, and in fact some of the evaluation questions could be answered, the significant questions relating to participants and supervisors satisfaction with the program could not fully be supported. Participant data was either missing, only partially

available or questions were not included on the evaluation tools that would elicit the responses necessary to answer the evaluation target objective. For example, participants were not asked in the surveys that they completed, whether they felt the training program provided them with increased confidence, competence or understanding for the job, nor were they asked if they had a clear understanding of their employers expectation for best practice, or for that matter what they understood best practice to be in light of the training they had received.

Additionally supervisors were asked to complete a survey that originally asked them to rate their satisfaction level with their new workers being able to demonstrate core competency criteria on the job. However, two problems were encountered with the supervisor survey data: the first, included a change to the survey tool midway through the evaluation of the pilot program that changed the focus of the tool from a satisfaction rating to a rating of how well the worker demonstrated the competency; and the second problem encountered involved the limited survey responses from supervisors. As mentioned, only 14 supervisor surveys were submitted during the evaluation pilot timeframes out of a possible 81.

The methodological issues experienced during the analysis of the evaluation data began to reshape the discussion I expected to have about my thesis objectives and moved it from a focus on the results of the evaluation analysis as related to the key evaluation targets to a focus on how things can go sideways during the evaluation process. As I reviewed my notes for this chapter I realized I could have created an additional chapter for the specific purpose of

exploring the pitfalls of evaluative inquiry as I experienced them. However, in order to keep my discussion brief I will provide a short list of problems encountered during the evaluation of the *Alberta Children's Services Delegation Training Program (2005 Pilot)* and the influence these issues had on the evaluation overall.

Problems Encountered

I have already mentioned two problems encountered with the use of the evaluation tools during the training program pilot. The first, involved participant workshop evaluation questionnaires and the second involved the surveys sent out to casework supervisors. Since I had no involvement with the creation of the participant evaluation survey and did not receive the evaluation data until after the program pilot was complete, I was not aware that there might have been statements missing from the questionnaire that would have been important to answering the evaluation outcome targets. Even if I had observed that the form was missing important evaluation statements I was not in a position, during the pilot, to make any changes to the master forms. Additionally the participant workshop evaluation questionnaires contained statements that were not pertinent to the purpose of the evaluative inquiry and were also missing important instructional information on how to complete the form. The missing instructional information contributed to problems with incomplete evaluation forms, such as participant's filling out one side of the form but not the second side or incorrectly marking their responses to the statements or not marking statements at all.

Recommendations were made at the end of evaluation to Workforce Development about changes to their participant workshop forms and the questionnaires have been simplified and now include only those statements that reflect evaluation data that speak directly to evaluation targets. Additionally, as part of the requirements that Workforce Development must meet for international training accreditation, instructions and learning objectives for each module of training are now attached to the participant workshop evaluation forms.

The supervisor survey, as mentioned already, was changed part way through the program pilot. This highlighted two issues encountered during the evaluation process: that a lack of communication existed between me and the program managers about the impact this might have had on the evaluation outcomes as related to their targets for the program evaluation and the actual impact the changes had on the analysis of the data received. Evaluation data is not currently being gathered through the use of the supervisor survey, however the tool itself could be tremendously useful in the future for gathering supervisors impressions of new workers on the job skill demonstration, before and after training, especially if the information gathered informs both the new worker and the supervisor about ongoing learning and competency development supports and training needs.

Also problematic to the evaluation analysis process was the way in which the evaluation data had been collated. All data collected from the evaluation tools were entered onto the excel spreadsheet provided to me for the purpose of the analysis. This included incomplete evaluation questionnaires where

participants had only partially answered questions or answered questions on the front of the form but not on the back of the form. Consequently, when I received the raw data I quickly saw that the numbers did not add up. The number of participants did not match the number of responses provided for each statement on the participant questionnaire. Ultimately I had to decide to use all data in the form of number of responses to each statement versus number of participants who had completed the questionnaire. The data was also provided in a format that made it difficult to calculate. The data came in the form of raw figures in addition to percentage figures based on incorrect numbers and formulas. I took the data provided and restructured the spreadsheet to provide only the key statements, Likert scale choices and raw numbers for each response by group, and then by total across all groups in the pilot for any given module of training. This was done for all three evaluation tools and for the pre-post test scores. Again, recommendations went forward to Workforce Development on alternatives to data documentation and spreadsheet formats have since been modified.

The pre-test and post-test assessments completed by participants prior to training starting and then again at the completion of their training session also posed problems for the evaluation analysis. The pre-post test assessment tools were created by an independent contractor as part of the training design process and were used as a tool for participants to assess their knowledge gains resulting from the training. However it was difficult to gauge what would have been an appropriate range for improvement in scores over time between testing and so by themselves the scores did not provide strength for the argument that training

directly aided participant's improvement in knowledge. Any number of other factors could have explained the participants perception of knowledge improvement, most relevant would be that the majority of participants were carrying caseloads throughout their training experience and this in combination with their previous knowledge, experience, casework supervision and practice opportunities could have impacted their confidence for the work and this was reflected in their score changes between day one of training and day three or four or five of training.

As a result of the delays in analysis of the data due to problems with the tools, missing or partial data and issues with the formatting of the raw data, timeframes for completion of the evaluation were extended beyond the February 2006 deadline. In fact, the actual completion of the evaluation analysis did not take place until September 2006. The problems encountered with the evaluation of *Alberta Children's Services Delegation Training Program* speak to Rycus and Hughes (2000) argument that for good competency-based program evaluation, the organization and the evaluator must carefully plan and consider critical components of the entire evaluation process from start to finish. Particularly, the organization goals and objectives for the training program in relationship to staff expectations for learning and competency development for their practice. Evaluation then looks to where the two overlap and both the organizational needs and the participant needs are met.

Competency-Based Training and Evaluation

As introduced in the chapter reviewing the literature, competency-based training (CBT) is somewhat controversial in the training and education field, in particular overseas in Australia, New Zealand and Great Britain. One of the main arguments opposing the use of CBT is around the issue of who decides what the competencies are for the job, how competency performance is measured both in terms of the training environment and on the job, and when using formal evaluation processes how do you capture in the tools and the data competency and competency performance criteria and at what level (Kerka, 1998; Leung, 2002).

In the beginning of the evaluation process for the *Delegation Training Program* I had expressed an interest in finding out how the training program would prepare new caseworkers for their practice and whether they would gain the necessary knowledge and understanding for their role and could articulate employer expectations for best practice in light of the revised legislation. Going through the evaluation process of the Ministry's training program I realize now that it is extremely difficult to assess how successful the program was in meeting the competency requirements of a new caseworker. Standard evaluation tools, such as pre-post test assessment and workshop evaluation questionnaires, are limited in the way they elicit competency based information and performance assessment from training participants, facilitators and casework supervisors. Minimally these tools speak to how much a participant has learned versus what they learned and how they are applying that in the training environment and back

at their worksite. Sullivan (1995) has presented the argument for competency based training to be effective it must include the use of case scenarios relevant to the job, and role play situations that challenge the learner to utilize their knowledge and demonstrate their competency for the job. However, an assumption hidden in the use of these types of learning opportunities in training is that they actually provide valuable assessment of competency performance when in fact the existing evaluation tools do not reflect this data at all. What I mean by this is that unless there is some formal testing within the training environment or an appropriate tool is used to assess the competencies demonstrated in the classroom environment, such as capturing how the participant uses critical reflection on both the demonstration of the skill and the understanding of its application outside the training environment, then we continue to miss evaluation opportunities.

Costello (1989) highlighted the most common forms of competency-based evaluation as including: pre-post test design, written exams, case study application, simulations, field observations and on the job assessment. Many of these evaluation designs require a fairly comprehensive look at the employers desired competencies and best practice expectations for the work in conjunction with specific competency indicators needed in order to measure how workers are employing or demonstrating these competencies. Without this information training cannot provide the necessary knowledge, skill and practice opportunities that would support the identified competencies being developed or even strengthened. Unfortunately, organizations may not always have clear

expectations around what the extent of their competency requirements are for any given position, may not have clear and specific observable indicators for the demonstration of those competencies and direction for how these are incorporated into internal training programs. Assessment and evaluation then becomes more difficult as a result of unclear competency criteria and moves more toward trainee satisfaction versus did the program deliver what they needed it to deliver. In-depth assessment tools such as case study application, role play simulations, and written exams are generally not developed in these cases where the organization is unclear about its training goals and objectives.

In addition to assessment or evaluation of competencies within the training environment there should also be assessment and evaluation of competencies performed on the job. New workers may have a variety of learning styles that include the need to incorporate knowledge with practice experience, the hands-on practical knowledge and skill application, and this begs the question, how do we assess or evaluate their competency development and performance at their respective worksites? This speaks to level three of Kirkpatrick's (1994) model for program evaluation that seeks to establish whether or not participants transferred their training experience to their job in a way that demonstrates their competency understanding and abilities.

Evaluation of new caseworker's competency for the work is even more complicated than assessing within a controlled classroom environment, especially in the field of child protection or intervention work. There are a multitude of variables that impact these new caseworkers that include: the

supervisor; their work team; caseloads numbers; complicated client issues such as drug abuse, alcohol addictions, family violence, poverty, racism and mental health issues; and their own personal practice models, experience and value systems. Supervisors are often the main source for evaluation information in terms of how a new worker is coming along in their practice and their competency development. However, many supervisors are not provided with the tools or training to evaluate competencies at various stages of the caseworkers practice development. Inconsistency then arises around competency evaluation in the field and this was clear during the evaluation of the *Delegation Training Program*. The limited responses from the supervisor survey could have been attributed to many reasons but one might include their inability to actually observe their new worker performing the competencies and therefore not feeling confident in filling out a survey that spoke to competencies.

At a recent orientation for supervisors on a new casework practice model for Alberta Children's Services, many supervisors indicated that they were not only supervising high numbers of workers in their units but also carrying caseloads themselves along with having to take care of numerous administrative tasks within their practice. Clearly, supervisors struggle with how to do good practice supervision that includes being able to evaluate their new caseworkers progress in the field. In order to effectively evaluate new caseworkers demonstration and understanding of the employers competency and practice expectations supervisors ought to be provided with an evaluation tool that provides useful assessment information that not only tells them where there

worker is at in their competency level but also provides a mechanism for supporting further competency learning and development. One example of this could be in the use of real case file information as part of an evaluation mechanism that would provide the supervisor and the caseworker with an opportunity, through guided written and discussion format, to explore specific demonstration of competency categories such as, for example, collaborative practice approaches and processes. Whatever evaluation tool is used or developed it should speak to the organizations competency expectations, provide observable and measurable competency criteria, and be fairly easy to incorporate into existing supervisory practices.

Conclusion

Despite the setbacks I experienced during Alberta Children's Services Delegation Training Program evaluation I learned an incredible amount about competency-based training and evaluation processes. The research available for program evaluation is broad and covers private and public sector evaluation approaches. Although not too dissimilar, public sector evaluation is limited by the very nature of the organizational structure, time and budgeting constraints, contract processes and training design options. The type of evaluation that is necessary to determine the level of impact that competency based training has on casework performance, especially in Children's Services, would need to be much more comprehensive than what exists now and extend into the field post training completion. Longitudinal study would also be valuable in informing the employer about ongoing competency development and/or decline as well as

possible recommendations for training requirements, design and supports.

Longitudinal evaluation may also provide indication of how much information caseworkers are retaining specific to the training they received and possibly how that information is then converted into understanding and application of competencies at a much higher level of practice. Again, how the evaluation tools are structured will determine how successful they are in measuring the organizational goals and achievements as related to program expectations.

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Appendix A

Sample Pre-Test Assessment Module One Delegation Training

Appendix A: Sample Pre-Test Assessment Module One Delegation Training

Pre-Assessment Module One

In order to track your learning and skill-building throughout the module, please complete the following pre-assessment. At the end of the module, you will have opportunity to take the “assessment” again and compare your results.

1 I know nothing about this	2	3 I know something about this	4	5 I know a lot about this				
1. describe the vision, mission, and core business of Children’s Services				1	2	3	4	5
2. review the background of the <i>Child, Youth & Family Enhancement Act</i>				1	2	3	4	5
3. describe the underlying philosophy of the <i>Child, Youth & Family Enhancement Act</i>				1	2	3	4	5
4. outline the mandated services delivered under the auspices of the <i>Child, Youth & Family Enhancement Act</i>				1	2	3	4	5
5. review the structure of the Ministry				1	2	3	4	5
6. locate and knowledgeably discuss legislation related to the Ministry, DFNAs and community partners				1	2	3	4	5
7. summarize key definitions within the <i>Act</i>				1	2	3	4	5
8. describe the significance of the Matters To Be Considered and their impact on practice				1	2	3	4	5
9. demonstrate how to read legislation by explaining the elements of the <i>Act</i> and how they contribute to the meaning of the <i>Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act</i> including <i>Regulations</i>				1	2	3	4	5
10. describe the interrelationship between the <i>Act, Regulations, policies and procedures</i> including forms				1	2	3	4	5
11. define child abuse				1	2	3	4	5
12. describe the main kinds of child abuse				1	2	3	4	5

13. demonstrate knowledge of criteria for assessing a child in need of intervention services (child abandonment, child abuse—physical, sexual, emotional—and neglect)	1	2	3	4	5
14. identify First Nations Bands in Alberta	1	2	3	4	5
15. identify governance structures of First Nations in Alberta	1	2	3	4	5
16. identify Métis Settlements in Alberta	1	2	3	4	5
17. identify Métis structures in Alberta	1	2	3	4	5
18. discuss the Aboriginal demographic population in Alberta	1	2	3	4	5
19. discuss demographics of Aboriginal children in care in Alberta	1	2	3	4	5
20. identify Delegated First Nations Agencies (DFNAs) and First Nations Liaison Units (FNLUs)	1	2	3	4	5
21. involve Aboriginal communities in permanency planning for their	1	2	3	4	5

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1 I know nothing about this	2	3 I know something about this	4	5 I know a lot about this	
children					
22. describe the role of the caseworker	1	2	3	4	5
23. describe the benefits and challenges of casework practice	1	2	3	4	5
24. outline the delegation process as it applies to caseworkers	1	2	3	4	5
25. describe professional authority and influence and its impact on others	1	2	3	4	5
	1	2	3	4	5

26. outline the principles of casework practice					
27. identify the tools the caseworker brings to the role	1	2	3	4	5
28. identify the critical elements of documenting and tracking information	1	2	3	4	5
29. outline the key considerations in organizing and analyzing case-related information	1	2	3	4	5
30. demonstrate the generation of a genogram and an eco map	1	2	3	4	5
31. outline strategies to ensure personal safety and self-care	1	2	3	4	5
32. examine personal biases about Aboriginal people and other cultural groups;	1	2	3	4	5
33. assess personal readiness for the role of a delegated caseworker	1	2	3	4	5
34. assess the alignment of your personal values and beliefs with the philosophy, principles and practices underlying the <i>Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act</i>	1	2	3	4	5
35. identify the components of successful performance	1	2	3	4	5
36. describe the process used for casework practice in child intervention services	1	2	3	4	5
37. review the various agreements and orders	1	2	3	4	5
38. outline the key considerations in gathering case-related information	1	2	3	4	5
39. identify standards and procedures for obtaining pertinent information and decision-making at various stages of the casework process	1	2	3	4	5
40. outline the assessment and decision-making process	1	2	3	4	5

41. describe the linkage of assessment activities from screening, assessment/investigation, extended assessment, case plan development, case plan review and permanency planning	1	2	3	4	5
42. prepare for a screening interview;	1	2	3	4	5
43. describe the process for assessing risk	1	2	3	4	5
44. practise strategies for conducting initial assessment interviews	1	2	3	4	5
45. demonstrate the completion of an initial assessment record	1	2	3	4	5

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1 I know nothing about this	2	3 I know something about this	4	5 I know a lot about this	
46. outline the steps in the investigation process and demonstrate completion of associated records	1	2	3	4	5
47. complete a safety assessment and plan	1	2	3	4	5
48. describe the various plans used to support permanency planning	1	2	3	4	5
49. assess personal confidence and competence	1	2	3	4	5
50. summarize the issues and challenges of working with the <i>Enhancement Act</i>	1	2	3	4	5

**Columns total (add the number of responses in each column)
Multiply by the value of each column**

Grand total (add all columns)

Pre-Post Test Gain Table for Each Module

Pre-Post Test Gain Table

1. Calculate your pre-assessment score and draw a line in the column on the left that represents your score.
2. Calculate your post-assessment score and draw a line in the column on the right that represents your score.
3. The difference between column 1 and column 2 represents your gain in knowledge.

Pre Assessment		Post Assessment
	250	
	240	
	230	
	220	
	210	
	200	
	190	
	180	
	170	
	160	
	150	
	140	
	130	
	120	
	110	
	100	
	90	
	80	
	70	
	60	
	50	

Participants Workshop Evaluation Questionnaire



HOW DO YOU RATE THE WORKSHOP

Human Resource Management Services

Course Name:	Date(s)
Instructor(s) Name:	Location:

To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

(Circle one number)

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Mildly Disagree
3. Mildly Agree
4. Strongly Agree

Strongly Disagree	Mildly Disagree	Mildly Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	-----------------	--------------	----------------

Workshop Content

- | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| 1. The workshop learning objectives were clearly defined. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. The content was relevant to my job. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. I will be able to apply what I have learned from this workshop to my job. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

My overall rating for Workshop Content is:

(Check one box) Excellent Good Fair Poor

Instructor(s)

- | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| 1. The instructor(s) was knowledgeable and well informed. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. The instructor (s) was well prepared. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. The instructor(s) listened and responded effectively to questions and concerns. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. The instructor(s) gave illuminating examples and/or solicited them from the participants. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. The instructor(s) presented the materials in a clear and logical way. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

My overall rating for the Instructor(s) is:

(Check one box) Excellent Good Fair Poor

Materials (Handouts & Audiovisuals)

- | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Written materials and handouts were useful and clearly written. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. The instructor(s) made effective use of audio/visual (PowerPoint, videos, overheads, etc.) to aid my interest and learning. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. The materials were organized and easily accessible. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

My overall rating for Materials is:

(Check one box) Excellent Good Fair Poor

Workshop Presentation (Design & Delivery)

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. The course objectives are clear to me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. The material was presented in a clear and logical manner. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. Participatory learning activities and exercises greatly aided my learning. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. There was adequate time for discussion. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. Lectures were well delivered and informative. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. My knowledge increased as a result of the training. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

My overall rating for Workshop Presentation is:

(Check one box) Excellent Good Fair Poor

How Would You Improve This Workshop?

(Put a checkmark beside only those statements that clearly indicate your preference.)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clarify the workshop learning objectives. workshop. | <input type="checkbox"/> Reduce content covered in workshop. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increase content covered in workshop. | <input type="checkbox"/> Update content covered in workshop. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Make workshop activities more stimulating. organization. | <input type="checkbox"/> Improve workshop |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Make the workshop less difficult. difficult. | <input type="checkbox"/> Make the workshop more |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Slow down the pace of the workshop. workshop. | <input type="checkbox"/> Speed up the pace of the |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Allot more time for the workshop. workshop. | <input type="checkbox"/> Shorten the time for the |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Add more AV material to the workshop. workshop. | <input type="checkbox"/> Have less AV material in the |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Distribute more handouts in the workshop. the workshop. | <input type="checkbox"/> Distribute fewer handouts in |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spend less time on lectures. trainers | <input type="checkbox"/> Front line experienced |

Additional Suggestions or Comments?

What was least valuable about this workshop:

What was most valuable about this workshop:

Was there anything that interfered with your learning during this workshop?

Overall rating of this workshop, is:
 [Scale: 1 (low) - 10 (high)]

The information that you provide in this form is to be used in the evaluation of the course, presenter(s)/ facilitator(s), and presentation methods. It is collected under the authority of, and in compliance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, and will not be used for any other purpose.

Appendix D

Supervisor Survey Delegation Training

Appendix D: Supervisor Survey Delegation Training

Supervisor Feedback - Delegation Training

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. The intention of the survey is to provide Workforce Development, a branch of Alberta Children’s Services, with necessary information about your perception of the newly designed Alberta Children’s Services Delegated Training Program. Your feedback will be used to guide further modifications of the training content and materials to reflect knowledge, skill and competency development for caseworkers working in intervention services. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Caseworker can describe their role within the child intervention system?

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Caseworker understands and implements the legislations (CYFEA) appropriately?

Matters to be Considered:

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Need for Intervention:

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Child and Youth Advocate:

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Children’s Procedural Rights:

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Caseworker demonstrates ability to complete a Screening:

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Initial Assessment/Investigation:

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Extended Assessment:

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Genogram:

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Information Consolidation:

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Ecomap:

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Caseworker knows the mandated services provided for within the legislation (CYFEA) and can reference them?

Enhancement:

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Protection:

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Adoption:

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

International Adoption/Adoption Registry:

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Licensing:

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Child and Youth Advocate:

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Child and Youth Supports

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Caseworker can identify, substantiate and record indicators of a child in need of intervention?

Physical Abuse:

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Sexual Abuse:

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Emotional Abuse:

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Neglect:

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Abandonment:

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Caseworker understands court processes and their role within the court system?

Evidence:

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Applications:

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Hearings:

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

As a witness:

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Preparing families for court:

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Preparing witnesses for court:

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
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Instructing department lawyer:

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Caseworker demonstrates, through documentation, an understanding of how to gather evidence and present information to support a court application?

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Demonstrates ability to prepare and present a case to court?

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Understands and includes cultural considerations in decision-making and case planning?

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Understands the unique structure of Aboriginal culture and demonstrates how to work with Aboriginal families and community?

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Demonstrates correct use of assessment at various stages of involvement with a family?

Intake/Screening:

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Initial Assessment/Investigation:

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Extended Assessment:

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Concurrent Planning:

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Enhancement Planning:

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Transition to Independence Planning:

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Secure Services Planning:

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Caseworker understands and includes knowledge of child development in decision making and case planning?

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Demonstrates an ability to use critical thinking to support decision-making and problem solving approaches?

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Demonstrates an ability to effectively communicate (written or verbal)?

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Demonstrates an awareness of impact of self on others?

Children/Youth:

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Parents/guardians:

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Community partners, professionals:

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Coworkers:

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Team members:

Not applicable	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
----------------	-----------	--------------------	-----------------------	--------------

What activities have you implemented to support continuous competency development for your new worker?

- Applied Learning Plan
- Supported Advanced Training
- Mentoring the Field
- Progressive Caseload
- Arrangement of Job Shadowing
- Schedule Supervision
- Other (please specify):

What areas of the program are key for supervisors to know in order to be able to support their new staff?

- Training program outline
 - Skills practice opportunities in training
 - Training locations
 - Trainer feedback
 - Other training opportunities
 - Other (please specify):
-

How many years of months in your current position as a supervisor?

How many years of experience with Alberta Children's Services?

What training did you receive to prepare you for supervision?

What training would you like for your supervisory role?

Appendix E

Facilitators Feedback Questionnaire



Facilitator Feedback

Course Name:	Date(s)
Instructor(s) Name or Personal Code:	Location:

To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

(Circle one number)

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Mildly Disagree
3. Mildly Agree
4. Strongly Agree

Strongly Disagree	Mildly Disagree	Mildly Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	-----------------	--------------	----------------

Workshop Content

1. I was well informed about the workshop objectives.	1	2	3	4
2. The leaders guide was detailed and simple to follow.	1	2	3	4
3. The content met knowledge and skill building requirements of the participants.	1	2	3	4

My overall rating for Workshop Content is:

(Check one box) Excellent Good Fair Poor

Participants

1. Participants were able to grasp concepts and information presented.	1	2	3	4
2. Participants asked questions and were engaged in learning.	1	2	3	4
2. Participants responded well to case examples and engaged in the group discussions.	1	2	3	4
3. Participants responded well to tasks and group exercises.	1	2	3	4
4. Participants comfortably and appropriately expressed their concerns.	1	2	3	4

My overall rating for participant engagement in learning is:

(Check one box) Excellent Good Fair Poor

Materials (Handouts & Audiovisuals)

1. Written materials and handouts were useful and clearly written.	1	2	3	4
2. Effective use of PowerPoint, videos, overheads, etc. was incorporated into the materials.	1	2	3	4
3. The materials were organized and easily accessible.	1	2	3	4

My overall rating for Materials is:

(Check one box) Excellent Good Fair Poor

Workshop Presentation (Design & Delivery)

1. The workshop activities stimulated participant learning.	1	2	3	4
2. The activities and exercises provided sufficient practice and feedback opportunities.	1	2	3	4
3. There was adequate time for discussion.	1	2	3	4
4. My knowledge increased as a result of the training experience.	1	2	3	4

My overall rating for Workshop Presentation is:

(Check one box) Excellent Good Fair Poor

How Would You Improve This Workshop? (Put a checkmark beside only those statements that clearly indicate your preference.)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clarify the workshop learning objectives. workshop. | <input type="checkbox"/> Reduce content covered in workshop. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increase content covered in workshop. | <input type="checkbox"/> Update content covered in workshop. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Make workshop activities more stimulating. organization. | <input type="checkbox"/> Improve workshop |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Make the workshop less difficult. difficult. | <input type="checkbox"/> Make the workshop more |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Slow down the pace of the workshop. workshop. | <input type="checkbox"/> Speed up the pace of the |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Allot more time for the workshop. workshop. | <input type="checkbox"/> Shorten the time for the |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Add more AV material to the workshop. workshop. | <input type="checkbox"/> Have less AV material in the |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Distribute more handouts in the workshop. the workshop. | <input type="checkbox"/> Distribute fewer handouts in |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spend less time on lectures. trainers | <input type="checkbox"/> Front line experienced |

Additional Comments:

What aspects of this module were least helpful to the participants?

What aspects of this module were most helpful to the participants?

Were there sections in the module where insufficient time was allotted and where? Please suggest how much time you think should be allotted.

Were there sections in the module where too much time was allotted and where? Recommendations?

Did any unforeseen problems arise during the session? If so, what were they and what steps did you take to resolve the problem(s)?

Overall rating for successful delivery of this workshop, is:

[Scale: 1 (low) - 10 (high)]

The information that you provide in this form is to be used in the evaluation of the course, presenter(s)/ facilitator(s), and presentation methods. It is collected under the authority of, and in compliance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, and will not be used for any other purpose.

Triad Form for Group Meeting

