COMMON GROUND

A FORUM FOR IDEAS, OPINIONS, INNOVATIONS

ISSUE 35, FEBRUARY 2007

Ohio is set to embrace a new way of evaluating the OCWTP Core Curriculum that will help measure not only the learning that occurs as a result of attending Core workshops but the transfer of learning from Core workshops to the workplace.

Since 1987, the OCWTP has collected participant feedback at the end of training using the standardized workshop evaluation form. This feedback is used to measure participant satisfaction with the training, improve workshops and training facilities, and monitor trainers. Now, as a result of a Steering Committee decision to institute a more rigorous evaluation process, the OCWTP recently started to pilot a new evaluation process for Caseworker and Supervisor/Manager Core workshops.

According to the American Society for Training and Development, and the Learning Resources Network, while most organizations (77%) measure the value of training using satisfaction surveys at the end of workshops, very few organizations (36%) try to measure the learning that occurs as a result of training, and even fewer organizations (15%) attempt to measure if training resulted in a change of behavior. To our knowledge, only one child welfare training program in the country – Kentucky – has evaluated its training program at these levels.

Ohio's first field test of the new measures began January 2007 with a Caseworker Core round in Southwestern Ohio.

The field test includes the following steps:

• Prior to attending Core Modules, caseworkers complete a pre-training test in their agency, using an online assessment tool. Caseworkers then attend all Core modules. Upon completion of all Core modules, caseworkers complete a post-training test, in their agency, again using an online survey.

• The pre- and post-tests are analyzed and individual test results are sent to caseworkers and their supervisors. Test results are not reported as a score or percentage but,

A HIGHER LEVEL OF EVALUATION
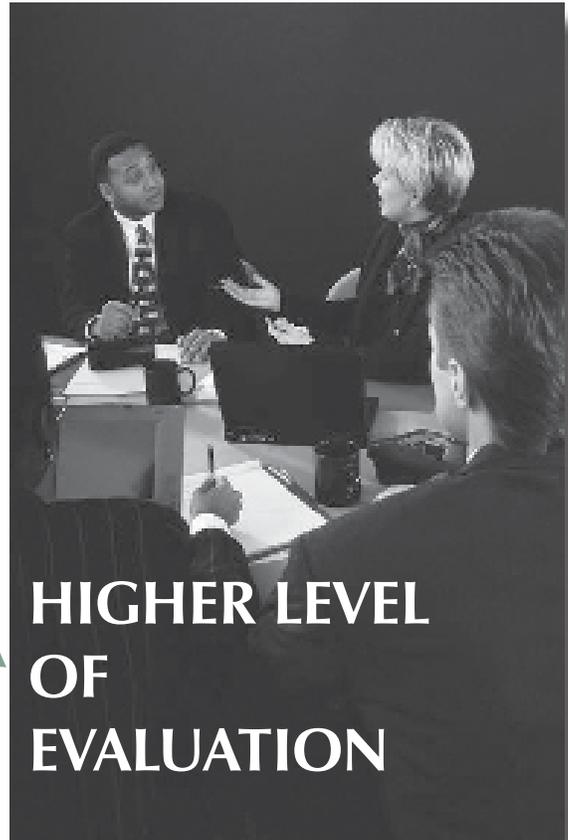
rather, indicate whether or not a caseworker improved or did not improve on questions focused on a particular content area covered in Core training. For example, a caseworker and their supervisor may learn that the caseworker showed no significant improvement from the pre-test to the post-test in the area of "Engaging Families."

• Three months after the last Core Module is completed, caseworkers and their supervisors will complete an online assessment of the caseworker's application of Core knowledge and skills on the job.

In addition to giving us information about individual learners, aggregate test results will be used by curricula developers, the trainer development work team, and the OCWTP Steering Committee to help the OCWTP continue to improve training.

The OCWTP intends to begin evaluating all Caseworker and Supervisor/Manager Core trainees in this manner, starting in 2008.

COMPETENCIES:
What Trainers Need to Know: Part Two

This is the second of two articles explaining how competencies are used in the OCWTP. The first article (Common Ground, 10/06) explained how the OCWTP uses competencies to determine the scope and depth of content to be delivered in training. This article describes how trainers can apply principles of adult learning using competencies to develop workshop curricula.

When you fully understand which competencies should be covered in your workshops, you can determine the breadth and depth of the workshop, as well as the most appropriate training strategies for each part of the workshop.

Competencies are descriptions of skill and knowledge needed to conduct specific job tasks. They reflect the specific sequence of adult learning, from building awareness through skill development. Trainers can use competencies to determine the appropriate level of learning for their workshop. By determining which content areas will be addressed at which level, the trainer determines the scope of the workshop. Furthermore, specific training strategies are appropriate for specific levels of learning.

Adults learn in a specific sequence referred to as "levels of learning." For optimal learning and skill development, this sequence must be followed in each workshop. (i.e., workers cannot become competent in conducting investigations until they are knowledgeable about content areas, such as factors contributing to abuse and neglect, interviewing strategies, coordinating investigations with law enforcement, etc.)

Skipping levels results in staff with gaps in their knowledge and who attempt to use skills without the requisite understanding. The results can be disastrous for families and children! Workshops vary in scope and in the amount of time spent on each level. For example, overview workshops provide information on a variety of topics, to an understanding and application level (see below). Advanced workshops quickly review awareness, knowledge, and understanding learned in pre-requisite workshops, and develop skills.

Level I: Awareness

Adult learning principle:
Adults need to understand the importance of the material to be learned, and be motivated to learn it.

Level I provides an awareness of the problem or need, describes the scope of the information to be learned, and clarifies proposed objectives. Presenting and clarifying the rationale for training creates learning motivation and provides a conceptual framework to help trainees organize new information.

Example of competency language indicating Level I:
    "Aware of the importance of…"

Appropriate training strategies include initial presentation of information by the trainer; exercises drawing out trainees knowledge about the topic; "What's In It For Me" exercises;

and audiovisuals to further explain the importance of content to be learned.

Level II: Knowledge and Understanding

Adult learning principle:
Adults attend training to increase their job competence and to find answers to specific issues or questions at work.

Level II provides trainees with knowledge (comprehensive, factual information) about the topic. Understanding enables trainees to master the relationships and links between the elements of knowledge, and fit those elements into an integrated conceptual system. Gaining understanding allows trainees to generalize information to other problems or settings, and manipulate the information to solve problems.

Examples of competency language indicating Level II:
    "Knows legal protection afforded to children…"
    "Understands family and case circumstances…"

Appropriate training methods include presentation of information (lecture, or audio-visual), or group discussion to elicit information from trainees. This should be followed by guided group discussion challenging participants to consider the information from all perspectives; identifying potential contradictions in the information, and clarifying relationships between elements of knowledge; exploring trainees' pre-existing beliefs; and highlighting fine points or subtleties.

Level III: Application

Adult learning principle:
Adults need to know how information applies to them in current job tasks.

Level III describes how the newly acquired knowledge and skills can be applied to the job. This includes clarifying the worker's

role; describing the steps to implement the task; identifying how the knowledge or skill may need to be modified for use on the job; and how to overcome potential barriers to implementation in the work setting.

Examples of competency language indicating Level III:
  "Knows how to collaborate with…"

Appropriate training strategies include small group discussion of case examples or case problems; demonstrations; experiential exercises to help trainees define and refine their perceptions of their job responsibilities, and to delineate steps in implementing new knowledge or skill.

Level IV: Skill Development

Adult learning principle:
Adults are problem-centered in their approach to learning, and need to develop specific skills in order to competently conduct their job tasks.

Level IV includes the development and refinement of the capacity to perform a task or activity. Skill development proceeds in stages including modeling, practice, repetition, mastery, proficiency and habituation. The first two stages can occur in the classroom, the last stages occur only with on-the-job-training, mentoring, and coaching.

Training at Level IV without following the described sequence creates an "automaton" who performs certain behaviors, but who likely has no idea of why the task is performed, and who cannot appropriately modify or adapt behavior to different situations.

Examples of competency language indicating Level IV:
  "Can initiate juvenile court action…"

Appropriate training strategies include demonstrating, modeling, experiential exercises, and role-playing, followed by group and trainer feedback, self-assessment, and action planning.

This article was adapted from:

Levels of Learning:
A Framework for Organizing Inservice Training;
Judith S. Rycus, PhD, MSW, and Ronald C. Hughes, PhD, MScSA
http://www.narccw.org/TRAINet/
Resource%20Paper%202.pdf

References: Knowles, M. S. (1990) The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species (4e), Houston: Gulf Publishing.

Recent Publications Of Interest:

Confronting Barriers to Adoption Success

Authors: Judith S. Rycus, Madelyn Freundlich, Ronald C. Hughes, Betsy Keefer, Emily Joyce Oakes (2006)

Journal: Family Court Review v. 44 (2), April 2006, p. 210-230

This article describes three broad categories of barriers that undermine successful adoption outcomes: intra-organizational and intersystem obstacles, such as inconsistent policy, insufficient staff, staff turnover, lack of technology, and unmanageable workloads; chronic lack of specialized services to address the special needs of adopted children and their families; and widespread lack of knowledge and understanding regarding the unique dynamics of adoption. Potential solutions and promising practices are discussed. 71 references.

The Basics of Adoption Practice: A Bulletin for Professionals

Authors: Pam Severs and Betsy Keefer Posted on the *Child Welfare Information Gateway* at: http://www.childwelfare.gov/bugs/f_basicsbulletin/

This particular bulletin provides fundamental information to new adoption social workers about key concepts and trends in adoption practice including types of adoption, assessments, involving birth parents, openness, matching children and families, involving youth, pre-finalization and post-adoption services.

New Year's Resolution – Be more fiscally organized!

If you are self-employed, such a resolution can no longer be an empty promise. We have some suggestions from experienced trainers on staying fiscally organized:

Use your calendar to keep record of training and all your expenses (training supplies: candy, toys, markers, tape, etc. and office supplies, equipment, mileage, meals, hotel expenses). Save your receipts; make xerox copies if you must turn them in to collect payment. File your calendars with the rest of your records. You never know when you might need to check a date or an expense. You will

also need this backup if you are chosen for an IRS audit.

You can purchase software to create a spreadsheet to summarize and to track your expenses.

Check contract details with what you have noted in your calendar to make sure that the date, topic, and location are correct. Inform the RTC of any changes or corrections, rather than noting them on your contract, and do the same thing with outlines, handouts, and equipment checklists.

When first starting as a self-employed professional it may

be helpful to set up a separate bank account just for taxes. Put a percentage of money from every check in that account until it's time to pay quarterly taxes.

Consider keeping a running list of all the trainings you have done and how much you should be paid for each training. As checks come in cross them off. This way you have an account of what's received and what's outstanding.

Our Fiscal Director, Sandy Aska, recommends keeping your training check stubs with data pertaining to the where,

what, and when of trainings, and how much you were paid. You can compare your 1099-M tax form with your check stubs to make sure your tax form is correct.

Last but not least, consider hiring an accountant. You can learn a lot from them about organizing your expenses and records in a way that will save you money in the long run. If you need information about allowable tax deductions, check out the IRS self-employed website at: http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/index.html.

MEPA CORNER

Trainer Question:
What is the purpose of a MEPA Monitor?

ODJFS Response:

The Ohio Administrative Code rule 5101:2-33-11 requires each public children service agency (PCSA) and private child-placing agency (PCPA) to have a MEPA Monitor. The MEPA Monitor should be fully knowledgeable of the federal MEPA Act, as amended and all of the OAC rules that relate to making placement decisions for a child, based on the child or family's race, color, or national origin (RCNO).

When a caseworker or supervisor in a PCSA or PCPA has reason to believe that the child's RCNO should be considered as one of the factors in the placement decision, the MEPA Monitor should review the request and determine if there is sufficient information to justify the referral of the child for an individualized assessment. Likewise, upon completion and review of the assessment by the licensed professional, the MEPA Monitor is required to be a part of the final decision as to whether RCNO should be a placement consideration factor.

The MEPA Monitor will be invited to all pre-adoption staffings and adoption matching conferences on children in the agency's custody. The MEPA Monitor does not need to attend all meetings; however, it would be advisable for the MEPA Monitor to attend any session where a JFS 01688 is in effect, to monitor the agency's discussion and use of RCNO in its placement decision-making process. The OAC rule requires, at a minimum, that the MEPA Monitor review any placement decision where the child had been assessed for RCNO.

Send inquiries for the MEPA Corner to Charlotte Osterman at costerman@ihs-trainet.com.

CORTC

The Central Ohio Regional Training Center has several staff changes. Kelly Horn is the new Secretary of the Staff Training Program. Previously, she worked as a data entry operator at the West Region area of Franklin County Children Services. Sheila Holmes is the Clerical Support to the Foster Care Training Program. Previously, she worked as a Secretary in the Foster Care Department of Franklin County Children Services. Lydia Holloway will assume the responsibilities of managing the Learning Resource Center and staff training in the area of basic computer skills.

During the fall quarter, the CORTC held 28 sessions of required CAPMIS training. This resulted in several workshop cancellations due to low participant registration. CORTC staff apologizes for any inconvenience and we are thankful for your patience and understanding.

SEORTC

Long time SEORTC Foster Parent Training Coordinator Mikki Butcher left for new adventures. SEORTC happily welcomes Tracie Stein, from Athens County Children Services, as the new Foster Parent Training Coordinator. Tracie has several years of experience as an intake screener for ACCS and has commented how much nicer people are on the phone now that she is at the RTC.

SWORTC

After six months without administrative support, SWORTC is excited to welcome Terrie Stockton as the new secretary. Terrie comes from Hamilton County JFS' fiscal section and has her LSW. Terrie has already proven her value in the short time she has been at the RTC, and everyone is pleased to have her on the team.

SWORTC, along with the other RTC's, is making a concerted effort to ensure all scheduled workshops have up-to-date content outlines and bibliographies with workshop materials on file. Trainers can expect to be asked to make sure handouts are checked for quality and relevance and that agenda items fit into the competencies being trained. It is very important that the content of each workshop be accurate and relevant to the work of caseworkers, supervisors and foster parents. We thank you in advance for making an extra special effort on this.

ECORTC

ECORTC is working with the Ohio Network of Child Advocacy Centers (ONCAC) to provide three opportunities for child welfare and law enforcement staff to attend the forensic interviewing training *"Beyond the Silence."* This collaboration gives ECORTC an opportunity to share resources and provide training to a multi-disciplinary population, while maximizing the impact on the system. For more information go to: www.oncac.org.

ECORTC is also asking that training outlines be developed using the OCWTP Universe of Competencies. It is also time to update training bibliographies, outlines and agendas. We encourage you to make sure the RTC has your newest information FOUR WEEKS prior to the training. The bibliography requirement will give participants a wealth of follow-up resources important to their learning process.

ECORTC teamed with Guernsey County Library to offer some of our trainings at the new branch facility near the I-77 Cambridge exit. This location will serve as an overflow training room (if available) and for trainings that need more parking. The RTC will contact trainers if their trainings will be held at that site.

WORTC

The WORTC reluctantly said goodbye to their Foster Parent Training Secretary and Data Manager, Susan Butler. Susan will be missed particularly by foster parents in the Western region who counted on her to find training within a reasonable driving

Ukraine Visits NEORTC

NEORTC hosted *The Development of Child Welfare Services in Europe and Asia: An Opportunity to Provide Suggestions for Best Practice*, facilitated by Ruby and Lynn Johnston.

The Johnstons have done extensive work in the Ukraine, and helped bring child welfare professionals to the United States to learn about our child welfare system and share their efforts in building Ukraine's budding system. Participants were startled to learn the average monthly salary of a Ukrainian professional is about $200 a month, and that once a Ukrainian child is placed in a foster home they cannot be adopted internationally. The Ukraine hosted their **first** adoption training in 2006!

Pictured from Left to Right 1st Row, Roman Korniyko, President, Father's House; Ruslan Malyuta, Vice-President, Father's House; Yulia Skolobanova, State Services for Minors; Konstantine Yakubenko, Deputy Director, Child Rescue. 2nd Row, Lynn Johnston, Ruby Johnston, Trainers and Facilitators

In late January, trainers received a mailed notice directing them to the OCWTP website to view the revised trainer-related policies. These policies were approved by the OCWTP Statewide Steering Committee and will go into effect on March 1, 2007.

Why read the policy manual?
Isn't it stuff trainers already know?

Test your "policy IQ" with this quick quiz (answers at the end of this article):

a. What are OCWTP's three categories of trainers?
b. Which Training of Trainers (TOT) are required and which are recommended?
c. Can you bring someone to an RTC to watch you train?
d. How far in advance do RTCs need your handouts?

If you are stumped by these questions, then take five minutes to inform yourself by reading the policies. Being knowlegeable about expectations can make you easier to work with, and more likely to get hired by the RTCs. As you read the manual, pay close attention to the policies highlighted below.

Policy Highlights

Trainers who are county employees and whose job description includes training responsibilities, cannot be paid to train for the OCWTP. This policy includes foster caregiver trainers. County employees who do not train for their county can be paid their hourly rate by the OCWTP. These trainers should only train within their home region if at least 2/3 of the trainees for a particular class are not from the trainer's home county.

The OCWTP workshop evaluation form was recently updated and, as a result, the generally accepted overall score was raised from 4.0 to 4.2. If a workshop evaluation score falls below 4.2, the trainer may receive technical assistance. Trainers can also receive technical assistance if they request it; comments on the evaluations indicate areas of concern; the RTC has a concern; or it appears, from the evaluations, that trainees are not improving their level of understanding. Technical assistance should be viewed as an educational tool to enhance training skills.

Trainers cannot use workshops as opportunities to sell, advertise, or otherwise promote services. Trainers should only recommend resources that they believe to be best practice. If a trainer has a personal connection to the resource, he or she should reveal that connection to the trainees.

If trainers identify an issue they feel needs the OCWTP's attention, they should take the issue to an RTC or the OCWTP State Training Coordinator (IHS). The issue will be addressed in a work team and, if not resolved, taken to the OCWTP Statewide Steering Committee.

Trainers have a number of responsibilities they must meet.

These responsibilities are laid out in the contract that trainers sign for each workshop. Please note that the contract has been updated to reflect the changes in policy. It is possible that payment could be withheld if responsibilities are neglected.

Responsibilities include:

- Trainers should arrive to the training site at least 30 minutes before the workshop begins.

- Trainers should make every effort to honor contracted training dates. It is very difficult for RTCs to make changes once the calendar has been mailed. Unreliable trainers may not be re-hired.

- Trainers must create a bibliography of any research used to develop a workshop, and submit it with a detailed workshop outline to the RTC. RTCs may approve the outlines and bibliographies, or they may request additional information. Trainers cannot train a workshop that has not been approved.

- Trainers need to get prior approval from the RTC for any co-trainer or guest speaker they want to use. In most cases, the RTC will want to interview the person, so requests should be made well in advance of the workshop date.

- Trainers should be actively involved in the process of becoming culturally competent. Cultural competence is an important goal of the OCWTP.

- Trainers should respect client confidentiality by not using names or other identifying information in workshops. Trainees should be encouraged to do the same.

- Trainers should not use any material – articles, video

Policy Revisions Continued

clips, music, etc. – for which they do not have permission from the publisher. Trainers are expected to comply with Federal Copyright Law.

The OCWTP wants to ensure trainers have time to familiarize themselves with the policies prior to their enactment. Therefore, the revised policies will take effect on March 1, 2007, approximately 30 days after they are posted on the OCWTP website.

To view the policies, go to www.ocwtp.com, and click "For Trainers."

The RTCs are in the process of revising RTC standards to comply with the new policies. If there is a discrepancy between the policy and the standard, follow the policy as it is the most current, until revisions are complete.

The RTCs are also asking you to update all of your data. This includes content outlines; creating a short biography of yourself; making sure you have quality handouts; and that training content is relevant to the population being trained.

Thank you for your time and commitment to the OCWTP. Questions or concerns can be addressed to Kelley Gruber at kgruber@ihs-trainet.com or Lois Tyler at: ltyler@ihs-trainet.com.

ANSWER KEY:

a. Certified: trainers of standardized curricula; Approved: trainers of specialized and related curricula; One Time Only: trainers who will train only once within the state of Ohio.

b. The TOT on Presentation Skills is required prior to training for all trainers. The TOT on Culture and Diversity must to be completed by all trainers within one year of their approval date. All other TOTs are recommended, depending on need. For example, if a trainer is developing a workshop, he/she should take the TOT on Curriculum Development.

c. All observers must be approved, in advance, by the RTC.

d. Handouts for all non-standardized curricula should be received by the RTCs no later than four weeks prior to the workshop unless the trainer has written approval to make other arrangements.

LISTSERV -
are you in the loop?

If you are not receiving the OCWTP trainer listserve, you are out of the loop!

Listserv emails were sent to active trainers in June, August, and October, and a test listserv message was sent on December 11th.

Listserv is an important service providing you with announcements and resources you don't want to miss because they are important to your training profession.

If you are not receiving this valuable tool, check the SPAM folder in your email system for the listserv.

To keep the listserv message from going into SPAM, add LISTSERV@LISTSERV.OCWTP.COM to your contacts or address book. If you have any questions or if your email changes, contact Kelley Gruber, ASAP, at: kgruber@ihs-trainet.com

HOLD THESE DATES

February 20-21, 2007	Curriculum Development
February 22-23/	Culture and Diversity
March 8-9 2007	
March 5-7, 2007	Presentation Skills
March 8, 2007	Pre-Training of Trainers
March 9, 2007	Classroom Performance System
April 26, 2007	PowerPoint TOT
June 12, 2007	Transfer of Learning

www.ocwtp.com

To register, contact Debra Sparrow at dsparrow@ihs-trainet.com

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SINCE 1986

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