Using Simulation Training to Teach Child Protection Investigators in Illinois-
Program Evaluation of the Child Protection Training Academy

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Betsy P. Goulet, Susan Oppegaard Evans, and
Monico Whittington-Eskridge

Presentation at 2019 National Child Welfare Evaluation Summit
August 20, 2019
Three Teams with Important Roles

• Illinois Department of Children & Family Services (DCFS), Office of Learning & Professional Development
  Monico Whittington-Eskridge, Deputy Director

• Simulation Training Program at Child Protection Training Academy (CPTA), University of Illinois at Springfield (UIS)
  Betsy Goulet, D.P.A., Principal Investigator
  Susan Oppegard Evans, Executive Director
  Amy Wheeler, Lead Facilitator
  Taylor McCarthy, Coordinator

• Program Evaluation Team at Children and Family Research Center (CFRC), School of Social Work, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
  Theodore Cross, Ph.D., Principal Investigator
  Yu-Ling Chiu, Ph.D.
Today’s Panel

• CPTA at UIS Simulation Training Highlights (20 minutes)
  – Discussion and Questions
• CFRC Evaluation Summary (20 minutes)
  – Discussion and Questions
• DCFS Simulation Expansion and Practice Implications (10 minutes)
  – Discussion and Questions
• Questions and Answers (10 minutes)
Traditional Training of CPS Investigators

- Classroom based
- Focus on procedures, requirements etc.
- Little training simulates actual work experience
- Research across disciplines: only 10-15% of training transfers to the workplace
Value of simulating child protection work in training

• Practicing the behavior
• Getting feedback from debriefs
• Observing other trainees’ actions and debriefs
• Trainees are more engaged
  – Sensory – visual, auditory, olfactory
  – Emotional
  – Critical thinking
• Best way to determine the field is not for you
2010
• Dr. Goulet’s experience of simulation training at the National Child Protection Training Center in Minnesota.

2014
• DCFS contracted with Dr. Goulet DCFS for a year of research and development to advance a simulation training program.

2015
• UIS refurbished one of the structures to serve as a mock house.
• The Child Protection Training Academy Statute (P.A. 99-0348) was passed in August.
• Dr. Goulet and Ms. Evans re-designed classroom training and designed the simulation training.

2015
• Dr. Goulet and Ms. Evans worked with Chief Officer Whittington-Eskridge to prepare additional classroom trainers to work from the new curriculum.

2016
• The first combined classroom and simulation training was conducted in February.

2019
• DCFS expanded a site in Chicago.
Child Protection Training Academy (CPTA)

• Developed family residence and courtroom simulation labs at UIS for CPS investigators
• Partnership with Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)
• Training all new Illinois investigators since February 2016 (N=645)
CPTA Training Team

• Simulation trainer
  – Former DCFS investigator and long-time classroom trainer
  – Has trained hundreds of DCFS investigators

• Standardized patients
  – “Actors” who play role of family under investigation
  – From Southern Illinois University School of Medicine’s Standardized Patient Program
  – Also trained to provide feedback to professionals (doctors and now child protection investigators)

• Courtroom professionals
  – Current and retired judges and lawyers
  – Play roles resembling their real life experience
Connection to Classroom Training

- New DCFS investigators have six weeks of classroom Foundation Training
- Followed by four days of simulation training at CPTA
- New Foundations Training Curriculum written by simulation training developers
- A representative case is discussed throughout classroom and simulation training
- Problem Based Learning (PBL)
# A Simulation Training week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Door Knock</td>
<td>Scene Investigation</td>
<td>Fishbowl Interviews</td>
<td>Pre-Hearing Meeting with Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collateral Calls</td>
<td>Interspersed with Individual Debriefs</td>
<td>Interspersed with Individual Debriefs</td>
<td>Court Prep Training</td>
<td>Court Simulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debrief</td>
<td>Overall Debrief</td>
<td>Supervision</td>
<td>Overall Debrief</td>
<td>Overall Debrief</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Program Evaluation of CPTA at UIS

- **FY2017 Evaluation**
  - Stakeholder and trainee interviews
  - Observation of simulation training
  - Post-training satisfaction survey analysis

- **FY2018 Evaluation**
  - Study of simulation training process
  - Investigator survey

- **FY2019 Evaluation**
  - Review of the updated training model
  - Daily Experience of Simulation Training (DEST)
  - Updated post-training satisfaction survey analysis
  - Turnover study

Program Evaluation of CPTA at UIS (cont.)

Implementation
- Program Description
- Key Ingredients

Quality
- Appraisal of Certification Training
- Trainees’ satisfaction

Outcome
- Trainee’s Level of Confidence
- Difficulty of Developing Investigation Skills on Job
- Turnover Intention
- Turnover Rate
### Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inputs</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom training</td>
<td>Trainees receive in-class and on-line training</td>
<td>Trainees acquire content knowledge</td>
<td>Investigators are better prepared for practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trainees participate in simulations of child protection duties</td>
<td>Trainees demonstrate competence in simulations of child protection duties</td>
<td><strong>Short-Term</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simulation Lab Training</td>
<td>Trainees observe others in child protection simulation</td>
<td>Trainees develop better understanding of child protection duties</td>
<td>Increased quality of child protection investigations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trainees receive feedback on their performance in simulations</td>
<td>Trainees develop child protection decision-making skills</td>
<td><strong>Intermediate</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trainees observe others receiving feedback on their performance in simulations</td>
<td>Trainees communicate effectively about child protection issues</td>
<td>Greater job satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trainees provide feedback on others’ performance in simulations</td>
<td>Trainees experience reduced anxiety in their child protection duties</td>
<td>Greater voice in shaping worker training and support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trainers comment on and provide supplementary information regarding simulation experiences</td>
<td>Trainees experience greater confidence in their abilities as child protection workers</td>
<td><strong>Distal</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trainees ask questions in classes and debriefs and receive useful information and support</td>
<td>Investigators are better able to integrate compassion and investigative skill</td>
<td>Children are safer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Investigators have greater knowledge of and ability to work with allied disciplines</td>
<td>Better relationship between families and DCFS</td>
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<td>Investigators are more empowered to provide feedback on training</td>
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<td>Investigators are better prepared to work with supervisors</td>
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<td>Investigators can produce more evidence-based documentation</td>
<td>Diminished investigator turnover</td>
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<td>Investigators feel greater confidence and less anxiety in their work</td>
<td>Improved relationship between investigators and supervisors</td>
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**Outcomes:**

- Increased quality of child protection investigations
- Greater job satisfaction
- Greater voice in shaping worker training and support
- Diminished investigator turnover
- Improved relationship between investigators and supervisors
- Families have a more positive experience of DCFS investigations
- Families are more likely to receive services that match their needs
Appraisal of Certification Training

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<th>Activity</th>
<th>Sim</th>
<th>Non-Sim</th>
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<td>0.55</td>
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<td>Info from collateral contacts</td>
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<td>0.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Documentation</td>
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<td>0.36</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Overall skill as an investigator</td>
<td></td>
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Quality

Data Source: Investigator Survey
Rules of thumb on magnitudes of Cohen's d: 0.2-Small; 0.5-Medium; and 0.8-Large

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Data Source: Investigator Survey
Sim group’s appraisal of their simulations 1 to 2 years after they received them

Data Source: Investigator Survey
Trainees’ Satisfaction with Simulation

Data Source: Post Training Survey
Satisfaction is high throughout but has decreased somewhat over time.
Trainees’ Level of Confidence During the Simulation Training Week

Note: The Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficients of the DEST scale (13 items) at each of the six time points were all larger than 0.9, which indicates excellent internal consistency of the scale.

Data Source: Daily Experience of Simulation Training (DEST)
On average, the trainees’ level of confidence increased 28% between the baseline and last day.

Note: The Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficients of the DEST scale (13 items) at each of the six time points were all larger than 0.9, which indicates excellent internal consistency of the scale.

Data Source: Daily Experience of Simulation Training (DEST)
Cohen’s d statistic shows large increases in confidence between baseline and Friday.

Data Source: Daily Experience of Simulation Training (DEST)
Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance

• A repeated measures ANOVA was conducted with the 41 respondents who completed the DEST at every time point.

• Differences across time points were statistically significant for all 13 items.

• The mean confidence level of all CPS work skills also differed significantly across 6 time points.

• The confidence level of working as a DCFS investigator increased 48% between the baseline and last day.
Difficulty of Developing Investigation Skills on Job

- Investigators rated difficulty of developing nine investigation skills during their time at DCFS (1 very easy to 4 very difficult).
- The greatest difficulty was reported for the skills of testifying in court (30.8%), investigating abuse and neglect allegations (26.5%), and creating evidence-based documentation (26.0%).
- The sim group averaged almost half a point lower (b=-.44) on creating evidence-based documentation and on acquiring the skill of testifying in court (b=-.67), when other variables were statistically controlled.

Data Source: Investigator Survey
## Turnover Intention

### Comparing Non-Sim and Sim Groups on Intention to Leave their Job

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<th>Question</th>
<th>Difference in Odds</th>
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<td>Looking for another job within DCFS</td>
<td>4.19 greater odds for non-sim group (p &lt; .05).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaving DCFS if another job becomes available</td>
<td>3.55 greater odds for non-sim group (p = .06).</td>
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Control Variables: Age, Race, Education, Social Work degree, Caseload in the past 30 days, Tenure in Child Welfare; Tenure as a DCFS investigator, and Job satisfaction

Data Source: Investigator Survey
Job Turnover

• Observation period: two years from starting job.
• At Month 18, 37% of pre-sim group had left their job compared to 20% of sim group. At Month 23, the turnover rates for the two groups almost converge.
• The odds of leaving their job for the pre-sim group was 1.8 times greater than those of the sim group.

Data Source: DCFS employment data
Implications

• Many findings suggest positive impact of simulation training
• Trainees appreciate sim training highly and report several positive effects
• Some of the most positive effects concern unique advantages of sim training (e.g., simulation of testifying)
• Sim-trained trainees were less likely to be thinking about leaving their job and stayed longer at the job
  – But we must be cautious because sim-training and non-sim trained eras could differ in numerous ways
Limitations

• Some professionals did not participate in the focus group and interviews.
• We cannot generalize from the CPTA team to all simulation trainers.
• Many investigators did not complete surveys.
• Comparison of sim-trained and non-sim-trained confounded with history
  – Investigators hired before and after 2016 may differ in many ways in addition to sim-training
  – Classroom training has also been improved since 2016.
• We lack objective data about investigators’ performances.
Current plans

- Evaluate Chicago Site with similar methods:
  - Daily Experience Of Simulation Training (DEST)
  - Analysis of Post-Training Satisfaction Date
  - Implementation Evaluation

- CPTA expanding training to experienced workers and supervisors
Conclusion

Sim training is a promising practice:

• Deserves ongoing support
• Should be tested with various skills and types of trainees
• More research in other states is needed
  – It would be good to compare counties with sim training to counties without sim training
Practice Implications

• Current Implications:
  – Expansion of audience beyond new Investigative hires
    • Supervisors
    • Veteran staff
  – Adding More Specialties
    • DCFS and Private Sector Agency Staff
    • High Risk Intact Staff
    • Foster Care/Permanency Staff
  – Launching of the Chicago Simulation Center
    • Collaborative Partnership with the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and UIS
    • South-side of the City in an Urban Setting
    • Addition of a Multi-purpose Room
Chicago Simulation Center
Building Skill and Capacity

• Future Implications:
  – Launching a Simulation and Learning Center in Southern IL
  – Moving Beyond Direct Service:
    • Experiential Learning for Licensing and Legal Staff
    • Foster/Adoptive Parents
    • Incorporation of Youth and Parent Voice in the Development of Scenarios
    • Partnerships with Community Partners and Key Stakeholders
Thank you

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