Assessing an Innovative Method for Training Child Protection Investigators

Yu-Ling Chiu, Theodore P. Cross, Betsy P. Goulet, Susan Oppegard Evans, Monico Whittington-Eskridge, and Amy B. Wheeler

SSWR Annual Conference in San Francisco, CA
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Three Teams with Important Roles

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

• Simulation Training Program at Child Protection Training Academy, University of Illinois at Springfield
  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, School of Social Work, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
  Theodore Cross, Ph.D., Principal Investigator
  Yu-Ling Chiu, Ph.D.
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
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=572)
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
# 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 Debrief</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></td>
<td>Overall Debrief</td>
<td>Supervision</td>
<td>Overall Debrief</td>
<td>Overall Debrief</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Program Evaluation

• Initial Evaluation (FY2017)
  – Post-training satisfaction survey analysis Interviews with key formants, including two trainees
  – Observation of simulation training

• 2nd Year Evaluation (FY2018)
  – Study of simulation training process: focus groups and interviews
    – Investigator survey

• 3rd Year Evaluation (FY2019)
  – Turnover study
  – Daily Experience of Simulation Training
Investigator survey

- To assess the impact of simulation training on DCFS investigators’ experience of their work.
- An online survey was sent to all current DCFS investigators
- 259 DCFS investigators (35% response rate)
- Analysis compared investigators with simulation training (n=122) and investigators without simulation training (n=115)
# Scales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How well Certification Training prepared them for their job</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1-very poor to 5-very well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty of acquiring different skills as an investigator</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1-very easy to 4-very difficult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1-very dissatisfied to 4-very satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnover Intentions Scale</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which simulations were useful (simulation training group only)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1-strongly disagree to 4 strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness of simulation training for preparing them for their work (simulation training group only)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1-useless to 5-very useful</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See the attachment for more details
## Sample characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample characteristic</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>83.5% were females</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>The median age was 41 to 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>58.1% were white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Background</td>
<td>65.7% had a master’s degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>55.5% had a degree in social work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure in Child Welfare</td>
<td>61.7% had more than 10 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure as a DCFS Investigator</td>
<td>51.3% had two years or less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caseload in the past 30 days</td>
<td>53.1% had a caseload of 11 to 25 cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33.1% had more than 25 cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simulation Training</td>
<td>51.5% had received simulation training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sim-trained group rated their Certification Training more highly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Sim</th>
<th>Non-Sim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engaging families</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing child safety</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigating abuse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Info from collateral contacts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documentation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborating with other disciplines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testifying in court</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrating compassion and investigative skill</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall skill as an investigator</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cohen’s d values:
- .53
- .36
- .36
- .46
- .55
- 1.09
- .50
- .43
Sim-trained group rated their Certification Training more highly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cohen’s d</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Cohen’s d</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engaging families</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>3.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing child safety</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>3.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigating abuse</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>3.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Info from collateral contacts</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>3.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documentation</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>3.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborating with other disciplines</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>3.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testifying in court</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>3.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrating compassion and investigative skill</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>2.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall skill as an investigator</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>3.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sim - Sim-trained group
Non-Sim - Non-Sim
### Difficulty of Acquiring Investigation Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Creating evidence-based documentation</th>
<th>Testifying in court</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>SE B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simulation Training-No</td>
<td>0.445</td>
<td>0.221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.008</td>
<td>0.071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race-White</td>
<td>0.199</td>
<td>0.137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Degree</td>
<td>0.028</td>
<td>0.143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work Degree</td>
<td>-0.085</td>
<td>0.135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caseload in the Past 30 Days</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 to 10 cases</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 25 cases</td>
<td>0.110</td>
<td>0.202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 25 cases</td>
<td>0.460</td>
<td>0.209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure in Child Welfare</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 2 years</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 to 5 years</td>
<td>0.596</td>
<td>0.263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 10 years</td>
<td>0.310</td>
<td>0.225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10 years</td>
<td>0.144</td>
<td>0.223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure as an Investigator</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 6 months</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 12 months</td>
<td>-0.543</td>
<td>0.275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 2 years</td>
<td>-0.234</td>
<td>0.247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 to 5 years</td>
<td>-0.188</td>
<td>0.369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 5 years</td>
<td>-0.538</td>
<td>0.332</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* \(p<.05\) ** \(p<.01\) *** \(p<.001\)
## Turnover Intention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Move Inside DCFS (n=190)</th>
<th>Leave DCFS (n=183)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exp(b)</td>
<td>Exp(b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simulation Training-No</td>
<td>4.192*</td>
<td>3.546*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job satisfaction</td>
<td>1.182</td>
<td>1.706</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30 years old</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40 years old</td>
<td>0.750</td>
<td>0.773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50 years old</td>
<td>0.546</td>
<td>0.475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60 years old</td>
<td>0.904</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61 years and older</td>
<td>1.208</td>
<td>1.250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race-White</td>
<td>0.608</td>
<td>1.078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Degree</td>
<td>1.815</td>
<td>1.340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work Degree</td>
<td>1.166</td>
<td>1.498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caseload in the Past 30 Days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 to 10 cases</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 25 cases</td>
<td>1.559</td>
<td>2.434*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 25 cases</td>
<td>0.886</td>
<td>0.921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure in Child Welfare</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 2 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 to 5 years</td>
<td>0.451</td>
<td>0.287**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 10 years</td>
<td>0.561</td>
<td>1.473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10 years</td>
<td>1.079</td>
<td>1.326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure as an Investigator</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 6 months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 12 months</td>
<td>1.793</td>
<td>1.796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 2 years</td>
<td>0.611</td>
<td>0.813</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 to 5 years</td>
<td>1.178</td>
<td>0.686</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 5 years</td>
<td>1.078</td>
<td>2.045</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.06 *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001
## Satisfaction with simulation training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean Post-training N=154 (FY2017 Evaluation)</th>
<th>Mean On the job N=110 (FY2018 Evaluation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The scenario environment was realistic. I was able to incorporate my training into practice</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The SIM lab provided a realistic experience of the challenges I will face when working in the field</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating in the scenarios helped to increase my confidence in my role</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The debriefing sessions provided valuable feedback</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1-strongly disagree to 4-strongly agree
Sim group’s appraisal of their simulations

- Collateral contacts/supervision simulation
- Knock on the door simulation
- Pre-hearing meeting with parents simulation
- Court hearing simulation
- Debriefs with me individually
- Group Debriefs

1-useless to 5-very useful
Summary of Findings

• Sim group rated their certification training more highly.
• Sim group reported less difficulty acquiring skills of...
  – Creating evidence-based documentation
  – Testifying in court
• No sim vs. non-sim difference on job satisfaction
• Sim group were less likely to answer yes on:
  – I am actively looking for a position at another department of DCFS.
  – As soon as I find a better job, I will leave DCFS.
• Sim group continued to value simulations even 1 to 2 years after training.
Limitations

• Only a minority of investigators participated in the survey.

• The investigator survey measured investigators’ subjective reports and lacks objective data on their performance.

• Sim training vs. not receiving sim training is confounded with year started as DCFS investigators
  – We may not be able to control for all differences
  – Can’t rule out other history-based explanations for differences between sim and non-sim groups
Implications for CPTA

• “Feedback is the pathway to mastery”
  • Brené Brown

• Improving critical thinking skills:
  – Problem Based Learning
  – Enhancing documentation/Information gathering

• Reality of the environment
DCFS 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 a Simulation Center in Chicago
    - Expanded University Partnership with UIS and UIUC
    - South-side of the City in an Urban Setting
    - Addition of a Multi-purpose Room

- **Future Implications:**
  - 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

- **Illinois DCFS**
  Monico Whittington-Eskridge Monico.Whittington-Eskridge@illinois.gov

- **Child Protection Training Academy at UIS**
  Betsy Goulet bgoul2@uis.edu
  Susan Evans sevan6@uis.edu
  Amy Wheeler awhee6@uis.edu

- **Children and Family Research Center at UIUC**
  Theodore Cross tpcross@illinois.edu
  Yu-Ling Chiu chiu22@illinois.edu
## Difficulty of Acquiring Investigation Skills

1. Engaging families  
2. Assessing child safety  
3. Investigating abuse and neglect allegations  
4. Collecting information from collateral contacts  
5. Creating evidence-based documentation  
6. Collaborating with professionals from other disciplines  
7. Testifying in court  
8. Integrating compassion and investigative skill in my work  
9. Overall skill as a DCFS investigator

## Job Satisfaction

1. How meaningful the work is  
2. Significance or importance of the work  
3. Ability to help people  
4. My workload  
5. Quality of the supervision I receive  
6. Opportunities for advancement  
7. Being valued for my work  
8. Cultural sensitivity in DCFS  
9. My physical safety  
10. Working conditions in my office  
11. Data entry/documentation

## Turnover Intention

1. I am starting to ask my friends/contacts about other job possibilities.  
2. I am actively looking for a position at another department of DCFS.  
3. I am actively looking for a job outside of DCFS.  
4. I am actively looking for a job outside of DCFS because I’m having a concern of my physical safety.  
5. As soon as I can find a better job, I will leave DCFS.  
6. I am seriously thinking about quitting my job.