



**CHILDREN AND FAMILY  
| RESEARCH | CENTER**

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

# Experiential Training for Child Protection Investigators: The UIS Simulation Training Lab Experience

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## Child protection investigators must learn an enormous amount in a short period

- Procedures and requirements
- Engaging families
- Decision-making
- Problem solving
- Dealing with multiple disciplines and venues, including court
- Emotional demands and reactions



# Training of CPS Investigators

- Most CPS training done in traditional classroom
- Much training concerns procedures, requirements etc.
- As little as 10-15% of training content transferred to workplace
- Very little is experiential



# Value of Experiential Learning

- Approximates practice situation
- Engages a wider range of sensory data and brain functioning—visual, auditory, olfactory
- Emotional component that is missing from classroom training
- Value is intuitive: Would you want to travel with a driver or pilot who only had classroom training?
- Best way to determine a field is not for you



## University of Illinois at Springfield Simulation Labs Program

- Developed family residence and courtroom simulation labs to provide experiential learning for CPS investigators
- Partnership with Illinois Department of Children and Family Services
- Training all new IL investigators since March 2016





# Youtube Videos

## **Betsy and Susan Intro for Conference Participants**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Xxm0zGb1xc&feature=youtu.be>

## **Overview of Simulation Training Program**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MbRXVyn9dWI>

## **Clips of Simulations**

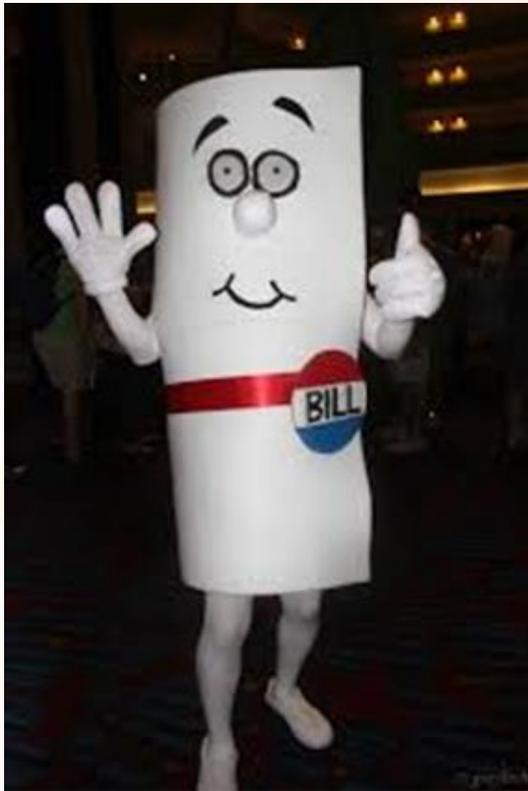
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nZlpHIJ35Z0>

## **Dedication of the Simulation Training Lab ( see especially 11:37 to 18:26)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FriOvDCdQ9Q>



# Illinois Public Act 99-0348



Provides that the Department of Children and Family Services shall establish a child welfare training academy for child protective investigators and supervisors employed by the Department or its contractors.....laboratory training facilities that include mock houses, mock medical facilities, mock courtrooms, and mock forensic interview rooms that allow for simulated, interactive, and intensive training.



## Preliminary Process Evaluation by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

- Observation of simulation training
- Review of program documents
- Secondary analysis of post-training surveys
- Interviews with:
  - The program developers
  - Key professional stakeholders involved in the implementation of the program
  - A small number of graduates of the program



## Connection to DCFS Foundation Training

- New DCFS investigators have six weeks of training in classroom...
- Followed by three days of simulation training at UIS
- New Foundations Training Curriculum written by sim training developers (Susan & Betsy)
- A representative case is introduced early in training and discussed through classroom and simulation training -- “Life of the Case”



# Actors Have a Strong Role in Simulations

- Partnership with SIU School of Medicine's Standardized Patient Program (SPP) and Resident Training
- SPP actors play family members in simulated residence and court
- Trainees report that actors are life-like and compelling
- Retired and active professionals play roles in court simulations



## Larger context of UIS Simulation Training

DCFS support for changes in training and engagement of new investigators

UIS Chancellor & Administration support for Facility and Interim Funding

Child Protection Training Academy provides labs for Child Advocacy Studies (CAST) Curriculum



National Child Protection Training Center support for simulations and CAST

Children's Justice Task Force support for equipment



# Implementation of Simulation Training

- First training: February 2016
- 17 trainings to date
- Approximately 10-14 investigators per training
- N=233 investigators trained as of June 2017
- Sim training now required of all new DCFS investigators



# Sequence of a simulation training week

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Introduction/ Supervision	Knock on the Door Simulation	Scene Investigation Simulation	Pre-hearing meeting with parents
Collateral calls 1. Reporter (ER nurse) 2. Attending physician (ER doc) 3. Alleged perpetrator's mother (grandma) 4. Primary care physician	Interspersed with individual debriefs	Interspersed with individual debriefs	Court simulation
Debrief	Overall debrief	Overall debrief	Overall debrief

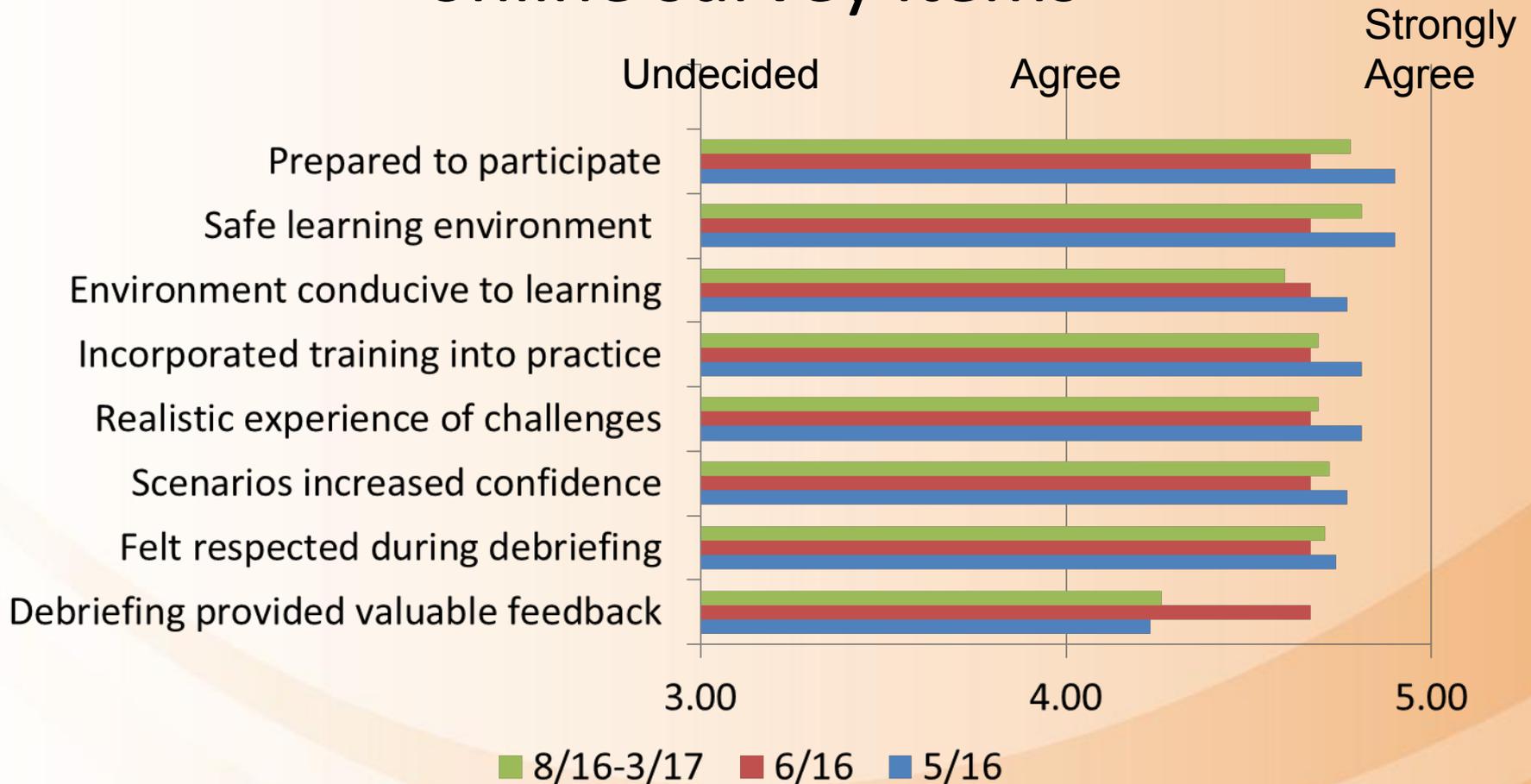


# Methods of learning

- In-class and on-line training
- Participation in simulations
- Observing others in simulation
- Personal feedback/debriefs
- Observing others receive feedback
- Providing feedback to fellow trainees
- Supplementary information/supervision from trainers



# Average scores on post-training online survey items



Sources: Items – Betsy Goulet & Susan Evans; Data Collection – Sweet, P., Center for Applied Information Technology, Western Illinois University



# Feedback from Post-Training Survey: Themes

- Value of simulation training
- Extending it to more skills and locations
- Devoting more time to simulation training

Sources: Items – Betsy Goulet & Susan Evans; Data Collection – Sweet, P., Center for Applied Information Technology, Western Illinois University



# Value of Simulation Training

The SIM Lab is an awesome opportunity to receive "hands on" experience in Training. This will be the "closest" that one can get to real life, prior to being out in the Field as an Investigator.

The simulation lab was an amazing experience. I felt it was as realistic as it could have been and it was a great general idea of the expectation of an investigation.

I definitely feel that more time and attention was given to this training than any other training with the department...I feel a lot more money and time was spent training future workers the right way. I am unsure how long this type of training has to last given the budget, but I am very glad I was able to go through it.

This was the best DCFS training I have had thus far. I feel very confident in my ability to implement information gained. I am also aware of the things I need to continue to work on to grow.

...it took myself away from my environment and put me in an environment set for learning.



## Value of simulation training (cont.)

My experience in the simulation lab was valuable to me because I was able to experience that "first" knock on the door and all the nervousness and anxiety that comes with it, so now, I feel more secure in my ability as an investigator to go and introduce myself to future clients.

The Sims were outstanding to experience and receive feedback. Equally important the physiological and psychological intent was powerful in strength and weakness to know for ourselves the reaction to each and every incidents presented to us through the sims.

Discussing procedures is beneficial in a classroom setting is, but physically applying techniques in simulation had a more dramatic, memorable and deeply ingrained effect on my learning and retention.

This was by far the best experience I have had in regards to being able to APPLY the skills we learned in class. The actors and environment were realistic and I quickly forgot that I was part of a simulation



# Extend simulation training

- Entire investigation/different parts
- Interview a child
- Urban/city environment
- Initial report
- Protective custody
- Investigations in hospitals or schools
- More characters: police, doctors, substance abuse clients
- Safety assessment and planning
- Simulations in real neighborhoods
- Train investigators who have been in the field a while
- Train private agency workers



## More time for sim training needed

It is not realistic to participate in a simulation for 5 minutes when in reality the investigator would be at a home for a much longer period of time.

Wish it could be incorporated throughout the training, as opposed to the very end.

Please, please keep the Simulation Lab and extend it to another week.

I would encourage more simulation labs training as one week is NOT enough. Please add more of the simulation labs...More simulation labs I can't say it enough.

**MORE SIM. MORE SIM, MORE SIM.**

I would have liked more time in the simulation in order to progress through the full process of an investigation. It would have been helpful to have more time to interview the parents one on one prior to the scene investigation.



## More time for sim training needed (cont).

The simulation was extremely beneficial and although training time is limited, the more simulations that can be incorporated into the training, the better.

I do not believe there is sufficient time afforded to this SIM lab. I think that this SIM should be incorporated throughout the training on numerous occasions with clear objectives given to individuals for each scenario.

There needs to be more SIMS in my opinion and there needs to be more SIM scenarios. Even if it is just through video.

My recommendation is that there be more simulation time. It would be great to follow a case in "real time" to show what is expected on the day or at least the sequence of when it is supposed to happen.

I think future classes would benefit from spending the entire training in Springfield and alternating between the classroom and the sim lab.



## More time for sim training needed (cont).

It is the best training that I have ever been through with the Department. The only thing that could be better is more of this type of training.

I feel that there should be more than just one week of simulation lab.

More time in each SIM Lab activity would be helpful. More time in SIM Lab scene reenactment would be especially important. It would be good to give us more time to be able process the scene more thoroughly, do measurements for inculpatory and exculpatory evidence, take more photos, identify safety risks, etc. More days in the SIM Lab would be beneficial.

As our class was large, each worker could have used more time in the SIM house.



## Questions from program evaluation

- “Dose”: how much sim training is needed?  
Cost effectiveness?
- Travel and cost demands of one state sim training center
  - Satellite sim training?
- How do you measure trainee change in a safe learning environment?



# Future Goals for Sim Training Program

- Develop pilot training for supervisors (incorporating Models of Supervision)
- Increase supervisor ability to support simulation training
- Simulations for other child welfare practices
  - Intact
  - Permanency
  - Training for multidisciplinary teams
- Participate in the National Simulation Consortium to develop best practices



# Our emails

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