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Graduate School

1998

PATTERNS OF CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD) ACTIVITIES OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES OR WELFARE IN VIRGINIA

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Dissertation Approval Certificate

This is to certify that the dissertation prepared by Anita H. Prince entitled
Patterns of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Activities of Social Workers
in Local Departments of Social Services of Welfare in Virginia
has been approved by her committee as satisfying completion of the dissertation
requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Director of Dissertation   Pass   Fail

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Committee Member   Pass   Fail

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Dean. Graduate Studies   Pass   Fail

April 20, 1998
Date

PATTERNS OF CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)
ACTIVITIES OF SOCIAL WORKERS
IN LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES OR WELFARE
IN VIRGINIA

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University

By

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May, 1998

Acknowledgements

Proper acknowledgment of the completion of this particular degree is much easier to write and could be much longer than the dissertation itself. I will start with my Committee because they are the immediate reason that this lifelong learning journey has had this milestone.

I would like to thank my Director, Dr. Carroll Londoner, for rescuing me from the abyss. I would like to thank Dr. Sam Craver for his attention to every "whit and tittle", Dr. Jon Wergin for his "license" to do the study, Dr. Marilyn Biggerstaff for her time and persistence, and Dr. Rebecca Moak for setting this particular course for me when I first "observed" what it meant to be an adult scholar.

I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Jim MacMillan and Dr. Rosemary Cafferella . They were my first professors when I returned to college as a "non-traditional" student. I would like to thank them and Dr. Michael Davis because each, in their own way, encouraged me to "stay in school".

For me, learning has been rich and lifelong. I was set well on my way by my mother who encouraged that, "you can never know enough", and continues to live her life that way. I have been supported by my husband and daughter for all of these many years, and could never fully acknowledge their sacrifices. Life is a journey and I have miles to go…

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Abstract

PATTERNS OF CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD) ACTIVITIES OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES OR WELFARE IN VIRGINIA.

By Anita H. Prince, Ph.D.

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Virginia Commonwealth University, 1998.

Major Director: Dr. Carroll A. Londoner, Professor, Educational Studies

Individuals employed as social workers in local public welfare agencies in Virginia are not required to have a social work degree or mandated to participate in continuing professional development activities as a condition of their employment. The study employed survey research to investigate Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities of Social Workers employed in local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia. Two social work-related focus groups and an expert panel of adult educators helped identify CPD activities used to construct the survey. The resulting twenty (20) CPD activities, used as the dependent variables for the study, were: formal education, mandatory training, voluntary training, supervision, mentoring, coaching, shadowing, formal peer interaction, informal peer interaction, instructing others, instructional development, computer-based learning, work-related teams, professional meetings, professional memberships, professional licensure/certification, testing/ inventories,

professional reading, professional writing and critique, and reflective practice. The independent variables, employee characteristics of job class, program/practice area, total years of employment in a local agency, highest level of education, major, and agency class, were also surveyed. A proportionate, stratified random sample, N= 330, of social work staff in Virginia's local public welfare agencies was surveyed. The overall response rate was 62.7% (N = 207). For each of the twenty CPD activities, survey respondents were asked whether they had participated in the activity "ever", "within the last 3 years", and , if so, their assessment of the "impact" of the activity on their practice. Significant differences were found for impact on practice between those who had participated within the last three years in an activity and those who had not. There was statistically significant evidence that there is some association of certain CPD activities with time in the job and with area of practice. Two activities which had some of the highest levels of participation and were identified as contributing to professional development were professional reading and shadowing. Professional writing had the least participation, but a high level of impact for those who do participate. Further study of the relationship of the length of time employed and program/practice area hold some promise for identifying CPD patterns.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the study was to explore the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities of Social Workers employed in local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia. The study required inquiry into two disciplines. One was the discipline of adult education and training, specifically, the area of continuing professional development. The other was the discipline of social work and related public welfare social work. The Continuing Professional Development of Social Workers employed in public social services in Virginia was a place where the two disciplines intersected.

As will be seen in the context of this study, the job title "social worker" is misleading. Most of those employed as social workers in Virginia's local Departments of Social Services or Welfare have neither a social work degree or formal social work education, nor are they required, generally, to engage in any continuing professional development. Nevertheless, they are assigned many of the same tasks as professionally educated social workers and are vested with extraordinary responsibility and authority.

Statement of the Problem

In Virginia, an individual is not required to have specific professional social work-related education or training to be hired to a position within the Social Work/Social Work Supervision job classification in public Departments of Social Services or Welfare. In fact,

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for nearly a decade, 1981-1990, a college degree was not required. On November 17,
1997, the State Board of Social Services passed a motion to allow local Departments of
Social Services to consider comparable experience in exchange for a degree(s), again
diminishing the degree requirement.

Once hired, individuals are not required to participate in any on-going continuing
professional development. Information about whether an individual attended certain state-
sponsored events is available for many employees, but it is limited to the question of
attendance. There is a dearth of information about the nature and extent of any continuing
development activities being undertaken by Virginia's public welfare social workers.

Social work in public Departments of Social Services or Welfare is highly visible,
challenging, and even dangerous work. The attendant level of responsibility and authority
of those employed as social workers gives them the potential to affect virtually every
citizen of the Commonwealth. Most often, their work is with some of Virginia's most
vulnerable citizens, children and the elderly. It is reasonable for the public to expect that
individuals hired to do the work be well-prepared and that they maintain their professional
preparedness. Therefore, it is essential to know the extent of their continuing professional
development in order to evaluate and support their job preparedness.

Background of the Problem

Who are the public welfare "social workers" in Virginia? They are the 1650 to
1850 individuals employed by the 124 local public welfare agencies in the Commonwealth
to provide essential human services within their respective communities (Virginia

Department of Social Services, Local Agency Personnel System [LAPS], 1994, 1995,

1997). The variance in the numbers is due to a turnover rate of 20 to 25 percent, about

350 positions per year, and unfilled positions (188 at the time of the study)(Sirry, 1990).

Neither statistic--total number of individuals employed at any given time or the turnover

rate—has changed much in the last decade and a half (comparison of raw data Virginia

Department of Social Services, LAPS, 1981, 1994,1997).

The nature of their work and who public welfare social workers are expected to be

are significant. They are expected to be "professionals" qualified to serve some of society's

most vulnerable populations, including children and adults who are abused, neglected, or

exploited. These social workers are the "first response" in child and adult protection cases.

They are frequently the only resource for services to ameliorate serious social problems

and attendant human suffering. The work requires a high level of skill in human service

delivery, extensive knowledge of law and policy, and, at times, great personal risk.

Who they are not is what makes this group of social work practitioners a unique

and particularly important group for study. As a group, they are not regulated by the

Commonwealth's social work licensure law, which has substantial standards for education

and professional development. They are not embraced by the profession with whom they

are associated by title. They are not highly regarded, judging by professional standards

such as compensation and working conditions. They are not held to any code of ethics for

professional conduct as members of a professional organization or as established in

credentialing statutes.

Those employed by local public welfare agencies may be called "social workers",
but two out of three do not have a beginning professional Bachelor of Social Work (BSW)
degree or a professional Master of Social Work (MSW) degree, or even any social work
education at all (Virginia Department of Social Services, LAPS, 1994, 1997). Individuals
hired for any job in the Social Work job series in Virginia's public welfare agencies are not
required to have a degree in social work or required to have a prescribed course of study
to prepare for the complex and stressful jobs they must do. That practice is based on a
policy of the State Board of Social Services and an exemption to the statute licensing
social work.

The statute regarding the licensing of social workers states, "The requirements for
licensure provided for in this chapter shall not be applicable to . . . [p]ersons employed as
salaried employees or volunteers of the federal government, the Commonwealth, a
locality, or of any agency established or funded, in whole or part, by any such
governmental entity . . . " (License to Practice, Code of Virginia, Section § 54.1-3701,
1966). For nearly a decade, from 1981 to 1990, no college degree was required for public
welfare social work jobs by policy of the State Board of Social Services. In 1990,
however, the State Board of Social Services issued the policy which reimposed the degree
requirements for the Social Work and Social Work Supervision classification series:

> Effective September 1, 1990, applicants for the Service Program/Service Program
> Supervision classification series vacancies must possess a minimum of a
> baccalaureate degree in the Human Services field in order to be evaluated for the
> position vacancy.

> If an individual does not indicate the possession of a baccalaureate degree in the Human Services field on the application, he will not be qualified for the position.
>
> Once the applicant has noted the possession of a baccalaureate degree in the Human Services field on the application or resume, the evaluation process will continue using knowledge, skill, and ability criteria.
>
> Individuals employed in the classification series prior to the adoption of this regulation who do not possess a baccalaureate degree in the Human Services field will be retained in their current classification or any lesser classification without having to meet the degree in the Human Services field requirement. This includes the same classification in another local agency. These individuals will be required to meet the degree requirement in the Human Services field for application to any higher classification other than their current classification. (Degree Requirements for Social Work/Social Work Supervisor Series, Virginia Register of Regulations,1990, p. 3549 [hereafter, VR 615-01-90])

This policy was a step in the right direction, but on November 18, 1997, the State Board

of Social Services approved Board policy to allow local directors of social services to

"consider comparable experience in exchange for a degree(s)" (State Board of Social

Services, 1997).

Continuing Professional development (CPD) becomes very important considering

that pre-employment preparation for very complex work is not assured and that the nature

of public welfare practice continues to change. The statute establishing the Child

Protective Services (CPS) program in Virginia (Child Abuse and Neglect, Code of

Virginia § 63.1-248, 1976), does require that the Department of Social Services provide

training to prepare caseworkers to work with families and children. Only recently has there

been a move to require that anyone attend.

Prior to 1994, the only mandate for CPD applied to Child Protective Services

(CPS) staff conducting investigations of non-familial abuse and neglect. CPS staff were

required to attend a four-day in-service training which covered related policy and

investigation techniques. That mandate affected about 250 social workers statewide. A

1994 joint legislative resolution requested that:

> ...the [State] Department of Social Services . . . i) establish minimum competency
> standards for all new CPS workers, ii) assess existing worker competency on a
> biennial basis, iii) require that all new CPS workers who perform child sexual
> abuse investigations do so under direct supervision until deemed competent by
> their supervisor, iv) require that all new CPS workers complete a needs assessment
> instrument prior to the end of their probationary period, v) require that all new
> CPS workers complete the appropriate training as indicated by a regular needs
> assessment, and vi) require that all new CPS workers complete policy training
> prior to the end of their probationary period. (Implementation of Child Protective
> Services Competency-Based Training, HJR 82, 1994)

Such a plan was approved by the State Board of Social Services and took effect in

January 1995. The plan specifically required that all CPS staff attend three courses

through the Virginia Institute for Social Services Training Activities (VISSTA). VISSTA is

a collaborative training development and delivery system administered through the

Virginia Commonwealth University School of Social Work, the Virginia Department of

Social Services' Division of Service Programs, and five (5) VISSTA Area Training

Centers housed at four (4) local Social Services agencies in different areas of the state.

During the eighteen-month implementation period, January 1, 1995 through June

30, 1997, all CPS staff hired prior to January 1, 1996 were required to "attend or test out

of the three (3) mandated courses...[a]ttend the Department's CPS policy training"

(Virginia Department of Social Services Broadcast, December 12, 1995). The test to be

exempted from mandated training was offered during February through April, 1996 to

those hired prior to January 1, 1996. The test was a knowledge-based instrument

developed by local agency CPS line staff and supervisors in conjunction with VISSTA at the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Social Work. The tests were administered statewide through the VISSTA Area Training Centers.

Staff hired or assigned to CPS investigations since January 1, 1996, are required to complete an Individual Training Needs Assessment (ITNA) instrument administered through VISSTA and the Department's CPS policy training program during their probationary period (6 months); complete the three mandated VISSTA courses within one year of employment; and complete any of six (6) basic child welfare courses identified as needed on the ITNA through VISSTA within 18 months of employment. These requirements are specific to "minimum training requirements" (Virginia Department of Social Services Broadcast, December 12, 1995) of a particular group of local social workers. The mandate affected approximately 700 child welfare social workers statewide.

Other program areas, such as adult services, do not have any requirement to provide training. There are no other requirements or mandates for continuing professional education, training, or development of any sort for public welfare social workers in Virginia, and there is no consistent effort to track the professional development activities of public welfare social workers.

Given the demands of the work and the educational and continuing professional education, training, and development exigencies, how do local Departments of Social Services or Welfare maintain a qualified social work staff? This study explored the kinds of continuing professional development activities public welfare social workers undertake

to enhance their own development and the perceived impact of those activities on professional practice.

Scope of the Problem

This picture of the landscape of "social work in public welfare" is not unique to Virginia. Social workers employed in public welfare are a hybrid. Their professional status is in question (Adams, 1998; Brawley, 1983; Council on Social Work Education, 1993; Dobelstein, 1985; Esposito & Fine, 1985; Millar, 1986; Miller & Dore, 1991; Pecora & Austin, 1983; Olsen & Holmes, 1982; Samantrai, 1992). Their affiliation with the social work profession is considered by some to be tenuous, at best (Adams, 1998; Kravitz, 1991; Sirry, 1991; Terpstra, 1991; National Association of Social Workers, Practice Standards, 1981; U.S. Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect, 1993). In addition, their continuing professional development is something about which relatively little is really known (Gleeson, 1992; Gleeson, Smith, & Dubois, 1993).

Continuing professional development, like social work in public welfare, is also a hybrid. In most professional fields its content is usually defined by the specific discipline of a given profession, such as architecture, law, medicine, finance, or social work. At the same time, the "process" is not the practice of the discipline (Becher, 1987; Cohen, 1985; Houle, 1980; Jahr, 1993 ; Nowlen, 1988; Slaughter & Silva, 1983; Wangerin, 1991; Wilshire, 1990). What has emerged is a comparative approach to continuing education where the "process" is frequently shared with those whose expertise is educational processes and procedures rather than discipline content. For purposes of this study,

continuing professional development (CPD) is operationally defined as a professional's

ways of learning, once employed, by means of education, training, or development, singly

or in some combination, as distinguished by Nadler in 1985 (see Definition of Key Terms,

p. 23).

Justification to Study the Problem

The lack of proper maintenance of a qualified workforce for public welfare

practice has been called a national crisis (Dore & Kennedy, 1981; Jayaratne & Chess,

1984, 1985; Rycraft, 1990). Recruitment problems, high turnover rates, stress, and

burnout are pervasive (Arches, 1991; Ewalt, 1991; Jayaratne & Chess, 1984, 1985;

Vinokur-Kaplan & Hartman, 1986). Contributing forces are the nature of the work, high

caseloads, on-call duty, insufficient salaries and promotional opportunities, lack of agency

support, and inadequate training (Russell, 1987).

In 1979, Daley referred to the maintenance of a qualified workforce as a

"smoldering problem" (p. 375) in child protective services (CPS). Commenting on just

one program area of public welfare practice, Virginia's Commissioner of Social Services

stated, "Child Protective Services in Virginia, as across the nation, is under a great deal of

scrutiny and one of the most prominent issues is staff qualifications" (Virginia Department

of Social Services Broadcast, December 12, 1995). Because of the continuing pattern of

increased demands and dwindling support, the problem has grown to include all service

program areas. Much is at stake and there are many stakeholders in addition to the public

welfare social workers. Other stakeholders include social work professionals with whom

they are associated, the public which employees them, other professionals who work with them, and recipients of their services. For these reasons, the preparation, recruitment, retention, and continued growth and development of the public welfare workforce warrants attention.

Preparation

First, regarding preparation, there is a debate about whether social work education effectively prepares an individual for social work in public welfare (Booz-Allen & Hamilton, 1987; Dhooper, Royse, &Wolfe, 1990; Lieberman, Hornby, & Russell, 1988; Olsen & Holmes, 1982; Seaberg, 1982; Stein, 1982; Stein, Gambrill, & Wiltse, 1978; Vinokur-Kaplan, 1987; Wiltse, 1982). According to Gibelman (1983), "It has long been assumed that social work education provides the relevant body of knowledge and skills for public agency work. However, there is evidence to suggest a growing incongruence between public agency practice and social work skills and education" (p. 21). Shank (1993) observed that in reacting to public sector job reclassification [i.e., deprofessionalization of the work], the proliferation of government contracting for prescriptive case management, professional licensing criteria, and competition with other disciplines, social work has "put forth efforts to develop a marketable commodity and carve out a market niche for its product...which has a tighter 'fit' with private than with public sector practice" (p. 1).

Recruitment

Next, consider recruitment. It is reported that a substantial percentage of practitioners in social work are in public employment (Thyer & Biggerstaff, 1989). Approximately 46% of those graduating with a Bachelors of Social Work (BSW) and 27% of those with a Master's of Social Work (MSW) are employed in social services agencies, including public welfare (Teare & Sheafor, 1994). But, there is a persistent gap between the number of public welfare social work positions to be filled and the number of professionally educated social workers willing and able to fill them (U.S. Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect, 1993). One recent report (Adams, 1998) is that fewer than 3 percent of all trained social workers are government employees.

Child welfare is the largest service program area in public welfare. National studies of child welfare consistently show that professionally educated social workers comprise generally no more than 40% of the social work staff in public agencies. Not all of those are public welfare agencies (Lieberman, et al., 1988; Council on Social Work Education, 1993; Shyne & Schroeder, 1978; Vinokur-Kaplan, 1986; Vinokur-Kaplan & Hartman, 1986).

There is much diversity in the educational backgrounds of individuals hired to practice social work in Virginia's local Departments of Social Services or Welfare. Statistics from the State Department of Social Services (1994) indicated that approximately 33 percent of social workers employed had degrees in social work, 23 percent of which were Bachelors of Social Work (BSW); 31 percent had "related [to

social work] degrees", such as psychology, sociology, and counseling; and the remainder
had "other" [not related to social work] masters degrees, baccalaureate degrees, associate
degrees, or no degrees.

Those percentages remained remarkably stable for more than a decade in spite of
changes in hiring practices over time, including a period from 1981 until 1990 when no
degree was required to be hired (Virginia Department of Social Services, LAPS, 1981,
1990, 1994). Department data from late 1997, showed that about 39 percent of the social
workers employed in local agencies held degrees in social work, 71 percent of which were
Bachelors of Social Work (BSW); 31 percent had "related" degrees; and the remaining 30
percent had "other" degrees, or no degree.

Retention

High turnover rates exacerbate the recruitment problem (Gleeson, et al., 1993). In
a national study of turnover of workers in child welfare, Vinokur-Kaplan and Hartman
(1986) found a turnover rate of 20 to 25 percent, which has remained fairly consistent for
the last decade. Virginia experiences a similar turnover rate (LAPS 1981, 1990, 1994,
1995, 1997, Sirry, 1990).

Growth and Development

Finally, regarding continued growth and development, there is no apparent
consistent means by which "continued professional growth and development" among
public welfare social workers is operationalized, evaluated, or encouraged. Relatively little
is known about public welfare social work staff, especially about their continuing

professional growth and development (Gleeson, 1992; Gleeson, et al., 1993).

Learning in adulthood is a highly personal activity (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991) which takes place in many contexts, both formal and informal. Continuing professional development is an evolving concept from the larger field of adult education (Cervero, 1988; Houle, 1980; Knox, 1993). It focuses on just that portion of development which is associated with an adult learner who is already a "professional". Continuing professional development takes place in both formal and informal ways (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991; Houle, 1980). The literature on continuing professional development is replete with studies of how and why professionals continue to learn (Ajzen & Driver, 1992; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Cervero, 1988; Cervero & Azzaretto, 1990; Fishbein & Stasson, 1990; Grotelueschen, 1985; Grotelueschen & Caulley, 1977; Henry & Basile, 1994; Houle, 1980; Houle, 1984; Houle, 1992; Knox, 1987; Knox, 1990; Knox, 1993; Russell, 1990; Sinnott, 1994). What clearly emerges is that there is a complex set of contributing personal and situational influences.

The literature on continuing professional development addresses the social work profession (Cervero, 1988; Houle, 1980), but it refers to those who have a formal social work education. The professional development literature related to public welfare social workers has generally had one of two foci. One is the relevance of social work education to preparation for public welfare practice. The other concerns single modes of continuing professional learning such as the educational role of supervision (Gambrill & Stein, 1978; Kadushin, 1985) or the relevance of in-service training (Austin, Brannon, & Pecora, 1984;

Baer & Federico, 1978; Clark & Grossman, 1992; Miller & Dore, 1991; Olsen & Holmes, 1982; Seaberg, 1982; Vinokur-Kaplan & Hartman, 1986). Studies of continuing professional development through in-service programs have received most of the attention in the social work literature. Those studies have been almost exclusively of child welfare staff; especially child protective services.

Little empirical research has been conducted regarding the role of informal means of continuing professional learning (Gleeson, 1992; Gleeson, et al., 1993); or the multiple formal and informal means by which public welfare social workers continue their professional development. Three surveys that support the significance of examining public social workers' continuing professional learning in other ways were conducted by Gleeson and Smith (1987); Fryer, Poland, Bross, and Krugman (1988); and Gleeson (1992).

Gleeson and Smith's study (1987) on how child welfare workers learn produced findings consistent with literature on continuing education in the professions (Cervero & Dimmock, 1987; Cervero, Rottet, & Dimmock, 1986; Houle, 1980; Houle, 1984; Lynton, 1984). They found that multiple factors contribute to the acquisition of practice competence through a lifelong learning process. Fryer et al. (1988) conducted a national survey of child protection workers regarding their needs, attitudes, and utilization of professional resources. They found evidence that multiple factors contributed to the job satisfaction and self-perceived professional skills of respondents.

Gleeson (1992) found that "life experiences, supervision on the job, self-directed learning projects, agency-sponsored in-service training, formal degree education, and

professional continuing education all contribute to acquisition of essential practitioner

knowledge and skills" (p. 15). In both the Gleeson and Smith (1987) and Gleeson (1992)

studies, social workers rated the contribution of life experience, self-directed learning, and

supervision on-the-job higher than agency sponsored in-service training, formal degree

education, or professional continuing education outside of the employing agency.

Social work in the public welfare arena is difficult and growing more so (American

Association for Protecting Children, 1987; Arches, 1991; Rycraft, 1990). That is due to

the increasing number and complexity of cases coupled with a decrease in both monetary

and human resources to provide services (American Association for Protecting Children,

1987; Besherov, 1987; Miller & Dore, 1991; Stein, 1982; NASW Practice Standards,

1981; U.S. Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect, 1993).

A trend which threatens to further erode essential human resources is what is

referred to as the "deprofessionalization" of public welfare social work, which actually

began nationally in the mid-1960s (Brawley, 1983; Dobelstein, 1985; Millar, 1986; Pecora

& Austin, 1983; Olsen & Holmes, 1982; Samantri, 1992). Social work in Virginia's public

welfare agencies mirrors these national trends. While many reasons might exist for the

difficulty in recruiting and retaining qualified staff to fill social work positions (Ewalt,

1991; Fryer, et al., 1988; Millar, 1986; Rycraft, 1990; Vinokur-Kaplan & Hartman, 1986),

no systematic study of the issues has been undertaken in Virginia.

Summary of the Problem

- Public welfare "social workers" in Virginia are not required to have beginning professional (BSW) or professional (MSW) social work education.

- In Virginia, approximately 60 percent of those currently employed as social workers in public welfare agencies do not have a social work degree.

- Of that 60 percent, about half have educational backgrounds considered "not related to social work" by the State Department of Social Services, the directing authority for the Commonwealth's public welfare programs.

- This pattern is consistent over time (at least a decade and a half) within the State and reflects national trends of almost thirty years.

- Once hired, social workers employed by Virginia's local Departments of Social Services or Welfare are not mandated to have any continuing professional development beyond minimum training requirements within the first six months to one year of employment

- A turnover rate of 20 to 25 percent of social work staff diminishes the impact of gains in professional development from on-the-job experience accruing from "longevity"

- Their field of practice serves some of our society's most vulnerable populations, is constantly in flux, and is becoming increasingly more complex and difficult.

- Virginia is but one of twenty-one states and the District of Columbia which exempts employees of governmental and/or other public agencies from licensure

laws governing the practice of social work (American Association of State Social Work Boards, 1993)

-effectively guaranteeing a two-tiered system of professional practice

-which perpetuates the devaluing of social workers in public welfare

-and the continued disenfranchisement of those they serve

Purpose of the Study

This study had a twofold purpose. The first was to construct a profile of continuing professional development (CPD) of social workers employed in local Departments of Social Services or Welfare (public welfare agencies) in Virginia. CPD includes any education, training, or development activities undertaken, singly or in any combination. The second purpose was to examine any emerging patterns of those CPD activities.

The intent was to characterize the continuing professional development (CPD) of public social work staff in such a way that it would contribute to improved understanding of their continued professional development needs and aid planning and decision-making by various stakeholders. Policy makers, employers, current and potential providers of both professional education and CPD stood to benefit from the findings. The hope was to discover the role of CPD in maintaining a currently employed workforce of social workers in public welfare agencies in Virginia who are qualified and current in their practice.

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed to guide the study:

1.   What are the employee characteristics of Social Workers in local Departments of
      Social Services or Welfare in Virginia?

2.   What are the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities of Social
      Workers in local Departments of Social Services of Welfare in Virginia?

3.   What are the patterns of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of Social
      Workers in local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia?

4.   What, if any, relationship exists among employee characteristics, i.e., degree. field
      of study, job classification, program area, years of experience, employing agency
      (Virginia Department of Social Services agency classification I-IV) and patterns of
      CPD of Social Workers in local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in
      Virginia?

Significance of the Study

Studies of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) have been conducted with
public welfare social workers. Generally, they have been limited to specific program areas,
usually child protective services, or single means of CPD, such as in-service training,
professional reading, and the use of supervision. One study (Fryer, et al., 1988) attempted
to survey utilization of professional resources by a national sample of child protection
workers. Means of distribution of the survey through agency representatives and biased
conditions of some responses created major limitations.

While two other studies (Gleeson, 1992; Gleeson & Smith, 1987) investigated multiple means of CPD, the samples were non-random, voluntary samples of both public and private child welfare workers in Illinois. Additionally, the means of CPD were studied in relation to perceived competence (ability) to do the job, rather than a measure of job satisfaction. A study of CPD of public welfare workers had not been conducted in Virginia.

Participation in professional development (Gleeson, 1992; Roat, 1988; Rycraft, 1990; Zober, Seipel, & Skinner, 1982) had been suggested as contributing to level of job performance and retention of human services staff. A study of "stayers" and "leavers" among child welfare workers (Shapiro, 1974) cited a lack of training opportunities as a major reason given for leaving. In a qualitative study of "reasons for staying", with a small sample of child welfare staff (23) in Colorado, Rycraft (1990) found that training opportunities were reported as contributing to decisions to remain in public welfare social work.

Participation in a broad range of CPD activities had not been studied with a social work population. Significant relationships between continuing professional development and employee characteristics that could have a number of implications: recruitment and retention of qualified staff, improved performance of staff, mandating continuing education, offering or supporting continuing education activities in new ways; or deciding to allocate resources now used for education and training differently such as salary raises, hiring of additional staff, or subsidies for specialized caseloads. States with profiles similar

to Virginia's might benefit, if not from the outcomes themselves, from a means of studying

continuing professional development and its relationship to employee characteristics.

Methodology and Analysis of Responses

The study employed survey research procedures to answer the research questions.

A listing of individuals employed in the Social Work/Social Work Supervision

classification provided by the state Department of Social Services (1997) was used to

select a proportionate, stratified random sample of the population. The researcher

developed a survey instrument to gather information on employee characteristics and

continuing professional development activities. The survey instrument was mailed to each

subject selected for the study.

The researcher collected, coded and entered the data and used the Statistical

Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 6.1 for Windows to analyze the data. Both

descriptive and inferential procedures appropriate to the study were employed. The

analysis of the data included univariate and bivariate statistical procedures.

Definition of Key Terms

For this study, the key terms were operationalized as follows:

Profession: A "folk concept" that is historically and nationally specific (Becker, 1962;

Friedson, 1986); " . . . a changing historic concept with particularistic roots in those

industrial nations that are strongly influenced by Anglo-American institutions" (p. 32); a

"coherent organization" of professionals which has succeeded in "carving out a labor-

market shelter" (Friedson, 1986, p. 59); characterized by an underlying discipline or base

science (foundation theory), applied science (practice theory), specific skills and attendant attitudes (Schon, 1983).

Professional: An individual with formal knowledge which creates qualification for a particular job, from which others who lack such qualification are routinely excluded (Friedson, 1986). One who has the "capacity to think about, make judgments about, and integrate knowledge in . . . work" (Specht, Britt, & Frost, 1984).

Practice of Social Work: "The system of organized activities carried on by a person with particular knowledge, competence and values, designed to help individuals, groups, or communities toward a mutual adjustment between themselves and their social environment" (NASW, Practice Standards, 1981, p. 1). "The rendering or offering to render to individuals, families, groups, organizations, governmental units, or the general public service which is guided by special knowledge of social resources, social systems, human capabilities, and the part conscious and unconscious motivation play in determining behavior" (Professions and Occupations, Code of Virginia, Section § 54.1-3700, 1976).

Profession of Social Work: As characterized by Hall (as cited by Minahan, et al., 1987), it includes "the use of professional organizations as a major reference, a belief in public service, self-regulation, a sense of calling, professional autonomy, and a specialized knowledge base." (p. 351)

Social Worker: "A person trained to provide service and action to effect change in human behavior, emotional responses, and the social conditions by the application of the values,

principles, methods, and procedures of the profession of social work" (Professions and

Occupations, Code of Virginia, Section § 54.1-3700, 1976).

Deprofessionalization (also declassification and reclassification): "The removal or

alteration of social work training and experience from social work positions that have

typically required them." (Teare & Sheafor, 1994, p. 9). "A policy that reduces the

educational and work-related experience required for public social service jobs (Pecora &

Austin, 1983, p. 421). It is characterized by:

1. reduction of educational requirements for entry level jobs;
2. assumptions that all baccalaureate degrees are interchangeable;
3. combination or replacement of job classes in such a way that functions requiring a greater amount of education are ignored or eliminated;
4. failure to recognize professional skills or social workers with bachelor's (BSW) and master's degrees in social work;
5. substitution of experience on year for year basis for required education for both job entry and promotion to senior staff and supervisory levels;
6. division of positions with broad areas of responsibility into positions with tasks that are assumed to be relevant for technicians. (Pecora & Austin, 1983, p. 421)

Local Departments of Social Services or Welfare (public welfare agencies): The 124

public social service or welfare agencies across Virginia established by statutory authority

granted to localities, counties and cities, by the Code of Virginia.

Agency Class I-VI: The classification system employed by the State Department of Social

Services based on a formula for computing the number of classified positions allocated to

an agency. The formula takes into account standards for allocating positions based on the

types and numbers of cases served by a locality and overall locality demographics. The

result places agencies into categories by size of staff and also reflects the public welfare

demographics of the locality. The range of Class I to Class VI is from smallest to largest.

Board of the Department of Social Service: The appointed state-level body created by statutory authority of the Code of Virginia which has responsibility to establish minimum entrance and performance standards for employees of state and local Departments of Social Services or Welfare.

Social Workers of Local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia: Those job classifications falling into the Social Work/Social Work Supervision classification series as defined by the Virginia Register of Regulations (Degree Requirements for Social Work or Social Work Supervision, VR 615-01-90, p. 1386), i.e., Senior Social Work Supervisor, Social Work Supervisor, Principle Social Worker, Child Protective Services Worker II, Senior Social Worker, Child Protective Services Worker I, and Social Worker; and exempted from requirements of licensure (Professions and Occupations, Code of Virginia, Section § 54.1-3701, 1976).

Continuing Professional Development: A framework for understanding key assumptions regarding learners, providers, and the content and process by which professionals learn. (Scanlan, 1985). In particular, professionals' ways of learning, both formal and informal, by means of education--preparation for a defined job in the near future; or training--related to the job and oriented toward problem solving; or development--learning for the general growth of the individual and the organization-not directly job-related (Nadler, 1985).

Continuing Professional Development Activities: On-going learning activities, formal and informal, through which professionals acquire expertise (Cervero, 1988; Houle, 1984).

Chapter Summary and Overview of Succeeding Chapters

This chapter provided an overview of the study of the patterns of continuing professional development of social workers in public welfare agencies in Virginia. It included the purpose of the study, statement of the problem, national scope of the problem, justification to study the problem, research questions and hypotheses, significance of the study, a brief statement of proposed methodology and analysis procedures, and definition of key terms.

Chapter Two is a review of the literature related to this study. It is divided into two major sections, a brief overview of the evolution of public welfare social work practice and a brief overview of continuing professional development theory and research.

Chapter Three describes the methodology, research questions, hypotheses, general design, population and sampling procedures, instrumentation, field testing, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures, and delimitations of the study. Chapter Four presents the results of the study. Chapter Five discusses and interprets the study results, compares the findings to those reported in the literature reviewed in Chapter Two, and discusses implications of the findings for various stakeholders and for future studies.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The review is designed to provide the reader with a frame of reference for the study of continuing professional development activities of social work staff in public social services or welfare practice in Virginia. The review is divided into two major sections:

- a brief overview of the evolution of the practice of social work in the public welfare sector in the United States, and the contributing roles of

    -the evolution of professional social work education and

    -governmental involvement; and

- a brief overview of continuing professional development,

    - theory, and

    -research, particularly related to social work;

The purpose for reviewing the roles of professional social work education and government is to provide some insight into how a distinct group of professionals, who are often alienated from others of similar title, came to be. The overview of continuing professional development (CPD) provides some background for understanding the concept as it is used in this study. In addition it highlights some interesting parallels between the development of the fields of social work and of adult education and training in the area of CPD.

The Evolution of the Practice of Social Work in the Public Welfare Sector

The Role of Professional Social Work Education

Charity work and philanthropy became known as "social work" in the United

States in about 1910 (Leiby, 1985). In its nascent years, social work preparation began

with agency-based training programs. They were likened by Lubove (1985) to the early

apprenticeship models of other disciplines such as law and medicine. The Children's Aid

Society of Pennsylvania had a training program as early as 1882 (Trattner, 1989).

In the late 1800s leaders in the "pre-social work movement" in the United States

recognized the importance of aligning with colleges and universities. By then there was a

tradition of more than 25 years of the proliferation and evolution of institutions of higher

learning in this country. Medicine and law had both moved toward affiliation with

academia. Insufficient resources to provide training in the practice settings, little

commonality among agencies in terms of establishing a discipline (Austin, 1986), and

contemporary influences of emerging professions (Leighninger, 1987) spurred the

development of schools of social work (Burke, 1992).

Anna Dawes pled the case for a means by which those leaving active social work

practice could transmit their acquired knowledge at the 1893 International Congress on

Charities, Corrections, and Philanthropy (Trattner, 1989). Cautioning against too close an

alignment with universities, in 1897, Mary Richmond lent her support to social work

education in a school setting (Leighninger, 1987).

In 1898, the New York Charity Organization opened the "first professional training program" (Thyer & Biggerstaff, 1989, p. 13). It was a six-week, non-credit, tuition-free summer school of what would become the New York School of Philanthropy in 1901 (Leighninger, 1987). Burke (1992) compared it to the early proprietary schools of law and medicine. In the summer of 1903 (Leighninger, 1987), the summer sessions offered by the private agencies were expanded into a one-year program; and then, a two-year program in 1910.

In 1907, the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy became affiliated with the University of Chicago (Trattner, 1989). By 1917 there were seventeen schools of Social Work (Burke, 1992). The Association of Training Schools for Professional Social Work was organized through a coalition of several schools in 1919 (Leighninger, 1987), later becoming the American Association of Schools of Social Work (AASSW). In 1920, Sophonisba Breckinridge and Edith Abbott, successfully transferred their Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy to the University of Chicago as a graduate professional school. The New York School of Philanthropy was incorporated into Columbia University (Burke, 1992). By 1923 all twenty-five social work programs, with the exception of some independents, had become affiliated with an accredited university.

In 1924 the AASSW raised membership standards to require that all member schools be university affiliated. In 1927 AASSW membership requirements included an organized curriculum, a responsible administrator, a course of study of at least one year, and a university affiliation for any new school. By 1930, all but four of the 28 member

schools of AASSW were university affiliated (Burke, 1992). During this period, post-baccalaureate education for social work was clearly emerging, but the norm was baccalaureate level education (Burke, 1992; Shank, 1993).

In a related development, in 1912, the Intercollegiate Bureau of Occupations in New York established a division for the placement of social workers on a national basis (Pins, 1965). Later becoming the National Social Workers Exchange in 1917 (Pins, 1965), its purpose was to "encourage adequate preparation and professional training" for social workers (American Association of Social Workers Papers 1918-1955, cited in Shank, 1993, p. 6). According to Deardorff (cited in Shank, 1993, p. 6) members of the Exchange had diverse preparation ranging from no college to a year of specific social work training.

In 1921, the Exchange reorganized (Pins, 1965) as the American Association of Social Workers (AASW) which required four years of experience and/or graduation from a two-year course from an approved school of social work for membership (Shank, 1993). One year of supervised experience and graduation from an accredited college or university qualified for a junior membership in the organization.

A significant issue related to the professional status of social work emerged during the 1920s when Abraham Flexner challenged whether social work was a discipline (Morales & Sheafor, 1980). The Milford Conference, first meeting in 1923, brought together social work leaders concerned with problems produced by disparate conceptions of the nature of casework [social work] (Minahan, et al., 1987). In an attempt to develop

a generic concept of casework, a report, completed in 1928, was produced identifying its generic aspects.

In his 1929 presidential address to the AASW, Porter Lee, also chairman of the report committee and director of the New York School of Social Work, made a case for a generic base for social work practice, regardless of practice setting (Minahan, et al., 1987; Thyer & Biggerstaff, 1989). Attendees agreed that sufficient similarities of practice existed to argue the existence of a common base of knowledge defining social work, and, consequently, a common base for preparation to practice (Austin, 1986; Leighninger, 1987).

The AASW organization promoted preparation for social work at the graduate level and during the 1930s the professional community, influenced by Flexner and the "medical model", began to promote the requirement of a graduate degree for social work practice (Kindlesperger, 1963, 19-20, cited in Shank, 1993). According to Shank (1993), "by 1939, the AASW had increased its membership requirements to include only those schools who [sic] had a two year graduate level program" (p. 8).

Several public colleges and universities, especially land-grant institutions, concerned with their public service mandate, disagreed with the AASW position and formed the National Association of Schools of Social Work Administration (NASSA), in 1942, with the stated purpose of providing qualified social workers for employment in public services and to recognize undergraduate social work education (Burke, 1992; Shank, 1993). Programs offering graduate social work education were not interested in

preparing individuals for public assistance programs (Kendall, 1966, p. 4). The result was

a rift between two approved accrediting bodies for social work education--AASSW,

internally oriented to raising professional standards, and NASSA, externally oriented to

meeting the demand for public social service work (Burke, 1992, Morales & Sheafor,

1980; Shank, 1993).

In 1945, a Joint Committee for Education for Social Work under the leadership of

Esther Brown of the Russell Sage Foundation, and supported by the U.S. Children's

Bureau and Joint Committee on Accrediting, met to resolve the conflict (Kendall, 1966. p.

6). Agreement was not reached. However, in 1946, thirteen schools and practice

associations established the National Council for Social Work Education to resolve the

conflict (Leighninger, 1987). The Hollis-Taylor Report of 1951, commissioned by the

National Council became a landmark study that clearly supported the AASSW position

that professional social work education should be provided at the graduate level. It also

acknowledged undergraduate social work education's role as a semi-professional

curriculum to train social work technicians (Burke, 1992; Shank, 1993). The Council on

social Work Education (CSWE) officially merged the National Council on Social Work

Education, AASSW and NASSA in 1952 (Shank, 1993).

In the same period, several social work membership organizations planned a

merger which created the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). A new

conflict arose between NASW and CSWE over who should have responsibility for

professional development and membership activities (Shank, 1993). In 1961, the

resolution was that CSWE would have responsibility for all social work education and

NASW would be responsible for professional membership activities.

In the 1960s, growth in the human services field, as in the 1940s, created a severe

shortage of qualified social workers in the public sector (Daly, 1965). This resulted in the

passage of Title VII, Section 707 of the Social Security Act which authorized the

appropriation *of funds for the development of undergraduate and graduate departments

of social work (Wolfe, 1973), again acting to promote undergraduate social work

education, at least in the eyes of the public sector (Austin, 1986; Raymond & Atherton,

1991; Shank, 1993). A joint committee of NASW and CSWE meeting in 1968

determined:

> The BA Degree with an undergraduate program in social work provides a base for
> a responsible point of entry in the practice of social work . . . Experience in the
> field has demonstrated that the social worker at the BA level can provide many
> important and valuable services which do not require graduate education . . . . It is
> important that they become identified with the goals and values of the profession
> ("Report on Recommendation of the CSWE-NASW ad Hoc Committee on
> Manpower Issues", 1968, p. 6, cited in Shank, 1993, p. 13).

In 1974, CSWE implemented a set of accreditation standards for undergraduate

social work programs requiring a liberal arts base; content in social work practice, social

welfare policy and services, human behavior and the social environment, and social

research; and the establishment and expansion of undergraduate programs in social work

(Austin, 1986). During the 1980s there were several attempts to examine some of the

issues which seemed to continue to separate social work professionals on the nature of

and appropriate preparation for practice in the field (Anderson, 1985; Biggerstaff &

Kolevzon, 1980; Costin, 1981; Hartman, 1983; Kolevzon & Biggerstaff, 1983; Teare,

1979; Teare, Higgs, Gautier, & Feild, 1984). The 1980s also produced a leveling off of

what was a proliferation of BSW programs over the previous two decades (Shank, 1993).

Related to the evolution of professional social work education and professional

organizations for social workers is the evolution of credentialing and legal regulation of

social work. It is significant that from "random entry into the field", beginning in the late

19th century, until 1934 when Puerto Rico passed the first social work credential statute,

the profession was absent of governmental regulation (Thyer & Biggerstaff, 1989, pp. 14-

18). Virginia enacted its social work licensure law in 1966 (DeAngelis, 1993; Thyer &

Biggerstaff, 1989). Wisconsin became the last jurisdiction to enact its licensing law in

1992 (DeAngelis, 1993). While significant, licensing is by no means the only way in which

government plays a role.

The Role of Government

Early forms of welfare in America were generally non-governmental and included

such activities as assisting neighbors with the construction of houses, sharing food, and

taking in orphans and widows (Ginsburg, 1983). Later, more organized forms of early

welfare included such activities as operating burial societies and providing insurance for

widows and orphans (Federico, 1980), still operating in a non-governmental environment.

The evolution of the more complex organization of the industrial society produced

greater dependence of individuals on one another as work for wages created the need to

exchange wages for goods and services. As the industrial state grew, the ability of non-governmental agencies and local governments to provide for the disadvantaged and needy lessened (Ginsburg, 1983).

Widespread poverty and the failure of local agencies and communities to provide sufficient resources following the crisis of economic collapse in 1929 and the Great Depression, resulted in the Social Security Act of 1935 (Minahan, et al., 1987). "One of the principle architects of the act was a social worker, Harry L. Hopkins" (p. 744). In addition to creating a national social insurance program, and cash assistance to the impoverished aged, blind, disabled, and families with dependent children, the Social Security Act provided for services to rural infants and children, thus providing linkages between social work and governmental welfare at the national level (Ginsburg, 1983).

However, there were too few social workers, particularly those involved with the poor, to meet the personnel needs of the resulting relief programs. Some social workers were hired as administrators or to provide direct services to children. But, many state authorities believed that those with backgrounds other than social work would be more efficient relief program managers.

A proliferation of programs in the 1940s created even more jobs in public sector social work than there were professionally trained social workers to fill them (Millar, 1986). As Daly (1965) observed, during the Kennedy-Johnson years of the 1960s, growth in the human services field, as in the 1940s, again increased the demand. Two other forces also significantly impacted public welfare personnel recruitment.

The 1962 Social Security Act changes provided funding for training for staff development and continuing education programs, which probably served to ameliorate the effects of hiring non-social-work-degreed individuals. At the same time, social workers played an active role in arguing for the separation of eligibility determination functions from service delivery functions in public welfare (Dobelstein, 1985). What Dobelstein termed the "bifurcation of social work and social welfare", others viewed as the "deprofessionalization" of public sector practice (Brawley, 1983; Millar, 1986; Pecora & Austin, 1983; Olsen & Holmes, 1982; Samantri, 1992).

More significantly, the 1960s began a period of changes in hiring practices to address discriminatory hiring practices (Minahan, et al., 1987). One approach was the "relaxing" of educational requirements, either for a specific degree or for any degree. Another was that of hiring former welfare recipients to perform eligibility determination functions or serve as casework aides to those hired as social workers. Once hired, and subsequently gaining related work experience, those same individuals had the opportunity to be transferred or promoted into other positions.

Substantial social service cutbacks occurred during the Reagan-Bush administrations of the 1980s. To reduce the cost of operating mandated programs, the existing practice of hiring staff with fewer professional qualifications who could be paid less became even more attractive. This furthered practices of declassification, reclassification, and deprofessionalization and threatened to undermine public welfare practice (Millar, 1986).

Summary of the Section

Social work's own struggle for identity, the continuing debate about what constitutes professional social work education, the direction of professional credentialing and legal regulation, and the pressures of non-discriminatory employment practices all contributed to the current state of practice in public welfare social work. The result is that social workers in public welfare form a distinct population which has different employee characteristics and different continuing professional development needs than can be assumed from their title. Tracing the history of the evolution of public welfare social work highlights how they are not only distinct, but alienated from the social work profession as a group.

In a remarkably parallel fashion, continuing professional development has evolved in such a manner that one might argue whether it is a distinct area of practice within a professional discipline--adult education and training--and, whether it has a distinct population of professional practitioners. The next section is intended to provide a framework for understanding key assumptions regarding continuing professional development and its relationship to social work in public welfare.

Overview of Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

As stated in the Introduction to the study, learning in adulthood is a highly personal activity (Miriam & Caffarella, 1991) which takes place in many contexts, both formal and informal (Miriam & Cafarella, 1991; Houle, 1980). Continuing professional development (CPD) is an evolving concept from the larger field of adult education

(Cervero, 1988; Cross, 1981; Curry & Wergin, 1993; Houle, 1980; Knox, 1993). It focuses on just that portion which is associated with an adult learner who is already a "professional".

In particular, it encompasses professionals' ways of learning by means of education--preparation for a defined job in the near future; or training--related to the job and oriented toward problem solving; or development--learning for the general growth of the individual and the organization, not directly job-related (Nadler, 1985). The literature related to CPD is replete with studies of how and why professionals continue to learn (Ajzen & Driver, 1992; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Cervero, 1988; Cervero & Azzaretto, 1990; Fishbein & Stasson, 1990; Grotelueschen, 1985; Grotelueschen & Caulley, 1977; Henry & Basile, 1994; Houle, 1980; Houle, 1984; Houle, 1992; Knox, 1985; Knox, 1990; Knox, 1993; Russell, 1990; Sinnott, 1994). What clearly emerges is that there is a complex set of contributing personal and situational influences.

Three Approaches to Defining Professions

Three approaches to defining professions emerging from the literature are the static approach, the process approach, and the socio-economic approach (Cervero, 1988). The static approach is perhaps the oldest and most associated with Abraham Flexner, who believed that a profession is defined by certain objective standards that can be identified. He identified six characteristics essential for an occupation to claim professional status: intellectual operations, material derived from science, definite and practical ends, educationally communicable technique, a tendency toward self-organization, and altruism.

It was Flexner who, in 1929, challenged whether or not social work was a profession (Trattner, 1989).

In 1974, Rose observed that social work, as an occupation, was still applying the generic criteria of Flexner to achieve higher status. Subsequently, in two special issues of Social Work (1977; 1981) discussion of the conceptual framework of social work practice evidenced the continuing struggle to achieve consensus on the social work profession's definition and purpose. Since the 1960s the static approach has received such criticism that it is rarely used to study professions as a concept (Friedson, 1986). In 1985, Brown (cited in Minahan, et al., 1987) challenged the field of social work not to be so preoccupied with creating the structure of a profession that it produce a gap between the practitioner and those to be served.

In addition to the approach itself, the characteristics of a profession as proposed by Flexner have come under scrutiny. In a special issue of Social Service Review on "altruism", Wakefield (as cited in Austin, 1994) made the connection between altruism and the social work profession. Austin (1994) challenged the connection as conceptually flawed arguing, "Social work as an organized profession, consisting of a particular group of individuals--social workers--who are part of a specialized occupation--social work--at a particular moment in history, is confused with a system of social welfare institutions, particularly those involved in 'minimal distributive justice.'" (p. 437)

The process approach is so named because it refers to a continuum of professionalization (Vollmer & Mills, 1966). It presumes a natural sequence of evolution

which is not a one-way street. An occupation can become more or less professionalized;

or, as is suggested with public welfare social work, "deprofessionalized". The process

approach acknowledges the dynamic condition of contemporary occupational structures

(Cervero, 1988). And, as Houle (1980) observed, the approach recognizes that all

occupations are worthy of sympathetic study by continuing professional educators.

Additionally, the process approach emphasizes the relationship of professions to society

(Cervero, 1988).

A third approach is the socio-economic approach whose major proponents such as

Becker (1962) and Friedson (1986) argue that profession is a "folk concept" that has

historic and national roots. Friedson takes the idea one step further by suggesting that

profession is a "changing historical concept with particularistic roots in those industrial

nations that are strongly influenced by Anglo-American institutions" (p. 32). In this view,

the major purpose of a profession is to carve out a market shelter.

The literature seems to support that the practice of social work has been

successfully argued, at some point, from each of these approaches to defining professions.

Operationally, the terms profession and professional for this study have characteristics of

both the process and socio-economic approaches.

Professionals' Ways of Knowing

Two major, but contrasting, views of how individuals learn have shaped much of

the research since the 1970s (Cervero, 1988). The first is associated with cognitive

psychology which uses schema theory to describe how knowledge is acquired and

organized (Glaser, 1984). Associated with this view of knowledge are the concepts of practical or procedural knowledge which is knowledge "that" (Rumelhart & Norman, 1981).

In contrast, the second is associated with process thinking and declarative knowledge which is knowledge "how" (Schon, 1987). Houle (1980, 1984) expanded on this thinking to propose a typology of how individuals learn which proposed three means of acquiring knowledge--inquiry, which is the process of creating some new synthesis, idea, technique, or policy or strategy for action; instruction, which is the process of disseminating established skills, knowledge, or sensitiveness; and performance, which is the process of internalizing an idea or using a practice habitually, so that it becomes a fundamental part of the way in which a learner thinks about and undertakes work.

Three studies have empirically tested Houle's typology of how professionals learn. Cervero & Dimmock (1987), in a study with staff nurses in a hospital, found that, while Houle's typology is complete in its description of educational activities, instruction can be further sub-divided into group and self-instruction. Kovalik (1986) in a similar study with clergy found four dimensions of educational activity which he termed self-inquiry, self-instruction, reinforcement, and inquiry/reinforcement. Polancic (as cited in Cervero, 1988) in a study with clinical laboratory scientists found results most consistent with Houle's.

Regarding professional education in general, Schon (1987) in his work on the "reflective practitioner" argued that professional knowledge is most usefully conceptualized as arising from reflection in action. Brookfield (1988) discussed a similar

conceptualization of adult learning which he termed critical thinking. Critical thinking

refers to the habit of examining experiences through reflection to assess their truth or

value in order to transform ideas and beliefs. Brookfield (1985a) argued, "To counter this

danger of adult education becoming solely a service-oriented, responsive and reactive field

it is important that adult educators develop a philosophical rationale to grant their practice

order and purpose" (p. 45). Brookfield (1986, 1992, 1993) further developed the concept

in terms of how educators can best bring about such changes within many instructional

settings.

Houle's typology, Brookfield's critical thinking, Schon's reflective practitioner, and

other conceptions of professionals' ways of knowing, have all found their way into the

social work literature concerning the development of its practitioners. Some social work

writers (Evans, 1976; Kolevzon & Maykranz, 1982; Leonard, 1975; Rein & White, 1981;

Pilalis, 1986), influenced by Kuhn's (1962) conception of scientific paradigms have

concurred that there is more than one way to define theory and practice and the

relationship between them. According to Hindmarsh (1993), theory and practice are "two

socially constructed and interlinked activities which, together, form the whole of the

learning cycle . . . . Education, it is assumed, requires recognition of the characteristics of

the adult learning process" (p. 102).

Hindmarsh (1993) identified what she termed three modes of discourse in a case

study of the interface of social work education with practice--technical rationality,

practical reflectivity, and critical reflectivity. Each is based on certain assumptions about

science--positivist, interpretive, or critical, respectively. "Each mode is aligned to

particular human and political interests and, in turn, each can be linked to a particular level

of reflectivity, purpose and philosophy of education, concept of theory and practice and

their relationship, and a particular construct of the 'good' practitioner" (pp. 108-109).

Technical rationality is positivist or empirical-analytical based. This mode assumes

that the goal of knowledge is to control and manipulate the environment (Hindmarsh,

1993). Knowledge is regarded as value free and objective and is applied to achieve some

given end which is efficient and effective. According to Hindmarsh, this mode of discourse

has dominated the practice of social work and was at the root of the separation of social

work education and practice promoted by the Charity Organization movement of the late

19th century.

Practical reflectivity is interpretive and based on hermeneutics, the science of

interpretation, explicating and clarifying assumptions (Hindmarsh, 1993). The intent is not

technical control, but clarification, with the aim of achieving consensus of meanings and

goals. In this mode, "good" social work practice is relative. The "reflective practitioner"

(Schon, 1987) engages in a constant process of interpretation, action, reflection, and

adjustment. The purpose is to improve communication, understanding and social

interaction through consensual norms or common value commitments.

Critical reflectivity is based on principles of critique and action in a socio-political

context (Hindmarsh, 1993). Reality is viewed as "socially constructed, historically

determined, and mediated through institutionalized relationships of class, gender, race and

power" (p. 111). This mode supports action which has the goals of liberation and well-being and criticizes that which is restrictive and oppressive. The practitioner in this mode is considered to be" critical or critical reflective . . . addressing problems by restructuring situations in the name of principles such as humanity, justice, and equity (p. 111).

Patterns of Participation

Cervero (1988) argued that Houle's typology of learning would be better termed a typology of "participation". He asserted that learning should refer to the processes through which cognitive changes take place in the mind. "Participation is an activity that has the potential of producing learning" but does not guarantee it (p. 61). A significant portion of the literature in continuing professional education deals with participation. It seems there is an assumption underlying much of the research on the ways in which adults learn that it is of paramount importance to know what motivates or deters participation. Much of the literature is specific to particular target audiences of adults (Cervero, 1988). Grotelueschen (1985) has developed extensive research on professionals' reasons for participation in continuing education. The research has produced evidence that "across professions the most important cluster of reasons is professional improvement and development, followed by professional service, collegial learning and interaction, professional commitment and reflection, and personal benefits and job security" (Cervero, 1985, p. 65). Houle (1980) describing what he termed one's "zest for learning" stated, "The extent of the desire of an individual to learn ultimately controls the amount and kind of education he or she undertakes" (p. 124).

One means of categorizing variables for study was proposed by Cline (1984) in work with teachers which incorporated a typology of delivery modes and methods which might be applied in other settings. Table 1 depicts Cline's delivery modes with their associated learning methods.

Table 1.

Delivery Modes and Associated Learning Methods

Job-embedded delivery modes	Credential-oriented modes
Interaction with consultants	College coursework
Demonstration, modeling	Summer Institutes
Committee work for planning	Workshops for credit
Team teaching	
Curriculum analysis	
Combination of above	
Job-related delivery modes	Professional organization-related mode
Workshop with leader(s)	Conventions
Teacher exchanges	Conferences
Site visits	Journals/monographs
Training packets	
Mobile units	

Job-related delivery modes

Computer-assisted instruction

Teacher centers

Self-directed modes

Conferences

Research

Independent study

Travel

Field trips

CPD and Social Work

Social work has an interesting historical relationship with adult education. The

social settlements which began with Toynbee Hall in London in the 1880s and which

served as a model for Jane Addams' Hull House founded in 1886, aimed to "study and

ameliorate the living conditions of the poor by any means possible, but chiefly through

adult education [underline added for emphasis]" (Houle, 1992, p. 11). Hawkins (cited in

Houle, 1992) reported on a study of various agencies and programs in the 1930s, "when

social work was still essentially a private, voluntary enterprise, not well defined or

understood" . . . . many of whose "activities . . . were basically educative in character" (p.

185). Despite its relationship to adult education as a provider, social work has received

little attention in the literature in terms of the continuing professional education of its own.

The literature in continuing professional development contains a few references to the social work profession (Cervero, 1988; Houle, 1980), but it generally refers to those who have a formal social work education. There is a paucity of data about the continuing professional development of public welfare social work staff. What there is has focused on single variables (Gleeson, 1992; Gleeson, Smith, & Dubois, 1993), "an approach demonstrated to be inadequate for continuing professional education research" (Gleeson, 1992, p. 15). Adding to the inadequacy of the research is that there is no apparent consistent means by which "continued professional growth and development" among public welfare social workers is operationalized, evaluated, or encouraged.

The professional development literature related to public welfare social workers has generally had one of two foci. One is the relevance of social work education to preparation for public welfare practice (Baer & Federico, 1978; Booz-Allen & Hamilton, 1987; Clark & Grossman, 1992; Gibelman, 1983; Olsen & Holmes, 1982; Stein, 1982). The other is the relative value of single delivery modes of continuing professional learning, such as the educational role of supervision (Gambrill & Stein, 1978; Kadushin, 1985) or in-service training (Austin, 1979; Austin, Brannon, & Pecora, 1984; Baer & Federico, 1978; Clark & Grossman, 1992; Miller & Dore, 1991; Olsen & Holmes, 1982; Seaberg, 1982; Vinokur-Kaplan, 1986; Vinokur-Kaplan & Hartman, 1986). Studies of continuing professional development through in-service programs have received most of the attention in the social work literature.

Little empirical research has been conducted regarding the role of informal means

of continuing professional learning (Gleeson, 1992; Gleeson, et al., 1993) or the multiple

means, formal and informal, by which public welfare social workers continue their

professional development. Four studies from the most current literature support the

significance of examining public welfare social workers' continuing professional learning

(Fryer, et al., 1988; Gleeson, 1992; Gleeson & Smith, 1987; Rycraft, 1990). Two which

support the significance of examining public social workers' continuing professional

learning in multiple ways were conducted by Gleeson and Smith (1987) and Gleeson

(1992).

Gleeson and Smith's study (1987) on how child welfare workers learn produced

findings consistent with literature on continuing education in the professions (Cervero &

Dimmock, 1987; Cervero, Rottet, & Dimmock, 1986; Houle, 1980; Houle, 1984; Lynton,

1984). They found that multiple factors contribute to the acquisition of practice

competence through a lifelong learning process. Gleeson (1992) found that "life

experiences, supervision on the job, self-directed learning projects, agency-sponsored

inservice training, formal degree education, and professional continuing education all

contribute to acquisition of essential practitioner knowledge and skills" (p. 15).

Contributions of life experience, self-directed learning and supervision were rated as

contributing considerably more to acquisition of essential knowledge and skills than formal

degree education, professional continuing education, and agency sponsored in-service

training. In both the Gleeson and Smith (1987) and Gleeson (1992) studies, social workers

rated the contribution of life experience, self-directed learning, and supervision on-the-job

higher than agency sponsored in-service training, formal degree education, or professional

continuing education outside of the employing agency.

The Gleeson (1992) study is most consistent with the purpose of this study. The

study surveyed one hundred and fifteen child welfare workers and their immediate

supervisors from five Illinois child welfare agencies. The study posed two research

questions: (a) "To what degree do child welfare caseworkers credit their level of

competence in their current positions to each of six learning methods?" (p. 18) (b) "What

influence does education and experience have on caseworkers' ratings of the contributions

of six learning methods to their current level of competence?" (p. 19). The workers were

asked to rate their own competence in 77 knowledge and skill areas previously identified

as essential to successful child welfare practice. They also rated the degree to which

different learning methods (formal degree education, professional continuing education,

agency sponsored in-service training, supervision, self-directed learning, and life

experience) contributed to their competence in each knowledge/skill area (1 = no

contribution; 2 = some contribution; 3 = powerful contribution). Supervisors rated each of

their supervisees in each knowledge or skill area.

To answer the first research question, mean scores were computed for

respondents' ratings of the contribution of each of the six learning methods to each of the

77 knowledge and skill areas. Then, subscale scores were computed to measure the degree

to which caseworkers attributed their overall level of competence to each of the six

learning methods. If a caseworker rated one of the 77 knowledge and skill areas as "unimportant" to their job, the item was not included in the calculation of the mean or subscale scores. The ratings of contribution of the six learning methods from most to least were life experience, supervision on the job, self-directed learning, agency sponsored inservice training, formal degree education, and professional continuing education.

To answer the second research question, contribution subscale scores were correlated with highest degree (masters = 1, bachelors = 0); field of study (social work = 1, other = 0); experience in the current job (measured in years); experience in the current agency (measured in years); experience in the field (measured in years); hours of professional continuing education outside of the agency (completed in the last year); hours of agency sponsored inservice training (completed in the last year); and frequency of supervision (1 = less often than monthly, 2 = monthly, 3 = bi-weekly, 4 = weekly, 5= more often than weekly). Findings were that supervision appeared to be valued by most of the caseworkers in the sample (p.23). Those who met more frequently with their supervisors rated the contribution higher than those who met less frequently. Caseworkers with masters degrees credited formal degree education as contributing to their competence more than did those with bachelors (p. 24). The contribution of formal degree education to competence decreased with experience on the job. As experience increased, agency-sponsored inservice training, self-directed learning, and life experiences were rated as contributing more to competence. Professional continuing education outside of their employing agency was rated higher by those who participated more in that type of activity.

The more case workers participated in professional continuing education outside their agencies, the lower they rated the contribution of agency inservice training. Conversely, the more caseworkers participated in agency inservice training, the higher its contribution rating. The more experience on the job the higher the contribution ratings of self-directed learning and life experience (p. 23). The findings of the study support the assertion that the study of how child welfare social workers learn "must be multi-faceted and must include informal as well as formal learning methods" (p. 23).

Since the Gleeson (1992) study is the one most closely related to this study, it is important to discuss its strengths and limitations. Strengths include that the survey instrument was pre-tested in a previous study (Gleeson & Smith, 1987). The instrument demonstrated good reliability of the subscales using three separate measures--coefficient alpha, .98; split-half coefficient, .89; and alternate forms coefficients, .80 and greater. A 95% response rate was attained for the survey by having subjects complete the surveys individually during group administration at the offices of participating agencies. Supervisors' ratings of employee competence were obtained as a means of confirming the self-report of workers' competence. Those results were reported in another study (Gleeson & Dubois, 1990). Limitations of the study include a non-random, voluntary sample and self-report. Only 35 (31%) of the respondents were employed by public welfare agencies and were from predominantly rural southern counties of Illinois. The survey did not include programs other than child welfare.

Summary of the Section

What constitutes a profession, hence a professional is still debated. Consequently, what constitutes continuing professional development is still an emerging concept. Considerable attention has been devoted to the study of why professionals engage or do not engage in continuing professional education. Less effort has been devoted to identifying what forms of learning are employed, particularly when taking the broader view of continuing professional development of which education is only a part. Typologies of modes of learning such as Houle's have received some empirical support and could provide a schema for constructing further studies.

Whatever the underlying reasons for participation, there is still a dearth of empirical research on various modes of learning. Little research on modes of learning has been done with public welfare social workers and has tended toward studies of only one or two modes, usually in-service training. The role of informal learning methods has been largely ignored in the literature on the development of social workers. A multi-faceted approach has been undertaken in only two recent studies. In both studies, respondents rated life experience, self-directed learning, and supervision as contributing more to essential knowledge and skill than agency in-service training, formal degree education, or professional continuing education. In order to create opportunities for learning which address the varied ways adults learn, it seems important to better understand what those ways are and in the context of the specific profession.

In his discussion of the concept of self-directed learning Brookfield (1993) described it as "an inherently political idea [which] comprises an important strategic opening in building a critical practice of adult education . . . . As such, the concept has some powerful political underpinnings which, if made explicit, could play a significant role in awakening the critical spirit in American adult education" (p. 227). Clearly, at present, the continuing professional development of public welfare social workers in Virginia is left to self-direction. If made explicit, could it not also play a significant role?

Conway and others (1987) argued that "if key facets can be identified that contribute to overall job satisfaction, presumably one could increase overall job satisfaction by changing or augmenting only one of those facets" (p. 49). Training had not been identified as a factor in previous models of job satisfaction. Conway's analysis led to identification of the facet of "training" as contributing to job satisfaction. Rycraft (1990) conducted exploratory qualitative research through the use of in-depth interviews of 23 child welfare workers in Colorado. The study looked at factors contributing to decisions to stay on the job as opposed to the numerous studies which have examined job turnover and burnout among public welfare staff. Rycraft's study yielded results that suggest that the opportunity to receive job training influenced decisions to remain employed.

Chapter Summary

The review of the literature has included the evolution of social work practice in the public welfare sector, theoretical and research bases for conceptualizing continuing professional development. Tracing the historical roles of social work education and

government in the evolution of public welfare social work provides some basis for

understanding the uniqueness of those social workers. It illuminates the areas of concern

for their development as professionals. The review of theoretical models and related

research of continuing professional development provides a conceptual understanding for

the selection of variables and instrumentation which are discussed in Chapter III,

Methodology. It also provides evidence of the paucity of information available about

public welfare social workers' development. The review provides a basis to argue that

more empirical data are needed to help inform decisions of a number of stakeholders.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter overviews the study's methodology including the general design, research questions and hypotheses, population and sampling procedures, instrumentation, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures, delimitations of the study, and a brief chapter summary. The purpose of the study was to explore the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities of Social Workers of Local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia. The study examined the types of continuing professional development activities undertaken, specific employee characteristics, emerging patterns of continuing professional development, and associations between employee characteristics and continuing professional development activities undertaken.

General Design

Survey research is an appropriate strategy for exploratory research. Survey research is descriptive in nature and concerned with the present (McMillan & Schumaker, 1989). The study employed survey research design strategies recommended by Erdos (1970) and Dillman (1978) to gather information about continuing professional development activities and employee characteristics of Social Work staff in Virginia's Local Departments of Social Services or Welfare.

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A mailed survey consisting of the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Activities Inventory and the Personal Data Form (PDF) (see Appendix A) was sent to a proportionate, stratified random sample of Social Work staff of local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia. The sample was drawn from a listing of individuals employed in the Social Work job class, as of October, 1997. The listing was obtained, by permission, from the Virginia Department of Social Services. Responses to the survey served as the data for analysis (see Appendixes B and C).

<center>Research Questions and Hypotheses</center>

The following research questions were posed to guide the study:

1. What are the employee characteristics of Social Workers in local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia?

2. What are the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities of Social Workers in local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia?

3. What are the patterns of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of Social Workers in local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia?

    To test the research question the following null hypothesis (H_o :correlation= 0) was used:

    H_{o1} There are no statistically significant relationships among continuing professional development activities of Social Workers in local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia.

4.   What, if any, relationship exists among <u>employee characteristics</u>, i.e., degree, field

of study, job classification, program area, years of experience, employing agency

(Virginia Department of Social Services agency classification I-VI) and <u>patterns of</u>

<u>CPD</u> of Social Workers in local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in

Virginia?

To test the research question the following null hypotheses (H_o :correlation= 0)

were used:

H_{o2} There is no statistically significant relationship between <u>degree</u> and

<u>continuing professional development activities</u> of Social Workers in local

Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia.

H_{o3} There is no statistically significant relationship between <u>field of study</u> and

<u>continuing professional development activities</u> of Social Workers in local

Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia.

H_{o4} There is no statistically significant relationship between <u>job classification</u>

and <u>continuing professional development activities</u> of Social Workers in

local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia.

H_{o5} There is no statistically significant relationship between <u>program area</u> and

<u>continuing professional development activities</u> of Social Workers in local

Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia.

H_{o6} There is no statistically significant relationship between <u>years of experience</u> and <u>continuing professional development activities</u> of Social Workers in local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia.

H_{o7} There is no statistically significant interaction among <u>employee characteristics</u> and <u>continuing professional development activities</u> of Social Workers in local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia

Population and Sampling Procedures

At the time of the study, the total number of positions for social work staff in local Departments of Social Services or Welfare agencies in Virginia, as defined in the regulation entitled <u>Degree Requirements for Social Work/Social Work Supervision Classification Series</u> (Virginia Register of Regulations, VR 615-01-90), was 1864 positions. The total number of individuals employed in those positions was 1676. Total figures for the study population size vary due to a substantial rate of turnover and unfilled positions of between 20 and 25 percent (LAPS 1981, 1990, 1994,1995, 1997; Sirry, 1990). Job classifications within the Social Work and Social Work Supervision series include: Senior Social Work Supervisor, Social Work Supervisor, Principle Social Worker, Child Protective Services Worker II, Senior Social Worker, Child Protective Services Worker I, and Social Worker. Other social service staff classification series, such as Employment Services and Benefits Programs, were not included due to substantial differences in employment requirements and the nature of those jobs.

Proportional, stratified random sampling was employed to select individuals to be surveyed. Stratification was based on the State Department of Social Services' Agency Classifications I-VI (see Definitions, Chapter I, p. 22). The sample was drawn using an existing Local Agency Personnel Data (LAPS) enumeration of social workers in local agencies (October, 1997).

The listing was divided into Virginia Department of Social Services Regions of which there are five (5). The regions were not listed alphabetically. Within each region the listing was alphabetical by local agency; counties first, then cities.. Within each locality, individuals were listed by position level from highest to lowest, and by date of entry into that position level, from earliest to most recent. For example, the names of individuals employed in Amelia County were listed together and before the names of individuals employed in the City of Alexandria. Within each agency listing, supervisors' names appeared before line workers' names; a supervisor hired in October, 1990 preceded a supervisor hired in November, 1990.

Citing a study on small sampling techniques by the research division of the National Education Association, Krejcie and Morgan (1970) constructed a table for determining sample size. The formula for calculating the required sample size was $s = X^2NP (1 - P) \div d^2(N - 1) + X^2P (1 - P)$, where $\underline{s}$ is the required sample size, $\underline{X^2}$ is the table value of chi-square for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level (3.841), $\underline{N}$ is the population size, $\underline{P}$ is the population proportion (assumed to be .50 to provide the maximum sample size), and $\underline{d}$ is the degree of accuracy expressed as a

proportion (.05). Based on Krejcie and Morgan's table, a sample of 320 was determined

to be sufficient for the study, given the population size and proposed study variables.

However, two additional considerations regarding the study population suggested

a slightly larger sample size. The first consideration was the turnover rate within the

population. That concern was for the possible effect on response rate if a large number of

surveys were mailed to individuals included in the sample where the position had since

become "vacant". There was no predictable way to know the effect of vacancies on either

the total number in the population or the distribution or location of those vacancies at any

given point in time.

The second consideration had to do with the Agency Class I- VI distinctions. Class

I agencies have many times fewer employees than Class VI agencies; but there are more

Class I agencies, 20, versus 3 in Class VI. Also, Class I agencies are more geographically

dispersed across the state than Class VI. Even with a stratified sample, over-sampling of

Class I agencies by surveying more individuals was considered for the potential to yield

some important information without greatly increasing the total number of surveys.

Increasing the overall sample size by ten (10) to a total of 330 individuals, was

determined to be equivalent to sampling a population approximately twenty-percent (20%)

larger than the population (positions) enumerated. The sample size was set at 330 to

address the concerns of vacancies and the characteristics of Class I agencies.

To calculate the proportions for each stratum of the sample, Agency Class I-VI, a

count of the total number of positions available was made and compared with a count of

the total number of filled positions to determine an overall vacancy rate (89.9%). Then a

vacancy rate was calculated for each class to determine whether any classes had

disproportionate vacancy rates compared to the overall vacancy rate. Rates ranged from

86.5% to 91.0% and were considered to be acceptably close to the overall rate.

A proportionate sample size was calculated for each class within the total sample;

first using the number of available, then filled positions. Calculations of proportions

resulted in fractions of a percent which were rounded to the nearest whole number. The

resulting proportions for available and filled positions were very similar, but not exactly

the same. Because the results were so similar, a decision was made to use an interpolation

of the available and filled proportions to determine final proportions for each class. These

results were then used to determine the proportions of the strata. Table 2 represents the

stratification of the sample by Agency Class I-VI.

Table 2.

Sample Stratified by Agency Class I- VI

| | Available | | Filled | | Interpolated |
Class	Positions	n_1	Positions	n_2	Sample Size
Class I	52	9	46	9	.9
Class II	156	28	135	27	28
Class III	667	118	607	120	119
Class IV	210	37	190	37	37
Class V	342	61	300	59	60
Class VI	437	77	398	78	77

Note. N = 330; n_1 = calculated sample size for available positions rounded to the nearest whole number; n_2 = calculated sample size for filled positions rounded to the nearest whole number. The surveys were distributed based on the Interpolated Sample Size.

Next, all available positions were consecutively numbered within each agency class. Tables of random numbers from several sources (Babbie, 1979; Borg & Gall, 1989; Li, 1964; Loether & McTavish, 1976; Moore & McCabe, 1989) were used to select subjects for the study. If a selected number fell at a vacant position, the next random number was used. The process continued until the proportionate number of subjects was drawn from filled positions in each class.

Instrumentation

In conducting survey research, the investigator usually has one of three options regarding the choice of instrumentation: use an existing instrument without modification, use an existing instrument with modification, or develop an instrument. No existing instrument was available. In addition, according to R. M. Cervero (personal communication, March 9, 1995) the use of a profession-specific instrument is a particularly desirable choice when the population has uniquely defining characteristics such as the case of social workers in public welfare in Virginia.

The survey instrument for the study was a researcher-constructed instrument. The first part of the survey was a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Activities inventory. Each item in the CPD section of the survey represented a type of activity individuals might undertake to further their continuing professional development. This section of the instrument elicited data on participation in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities and respondents' self-assessment of the contribution of those activities to their professional development. The section was developed through a two-step process described in more detail in a subsequent section.

The second part of the survey, the Personal Data Form (PDF) was used to collect important employment and education information about respondents, i.e., current job classification, total time in current job classification, total time as a social worker in Virginia, total time employed as a social worker with any agency other than a local Department of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia, the nature of other

agencies/organizations in which employed as a social worker, current primary

program/practice area, program/practice area in which most experienced, highest degree,

major or specialization of highest degree, highest degree at time of first employment with

a Department of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia, major or specialization of highest

degree at the time of first employment with a Department of Social Services or Welfare in

Virginia, agency FIPS Code/locality number. Decisions about employee characteristics to

include in the survey were based on the review of literature, consideration of legal

constraints related to the use of Department of Social Services LAPS data, and licensing

and certification requirements of professions in Virginia.

Construction of the Instrument

It was not the purpose of this study to develop an instrument for general use in

measuring continuing professional development (CPD). It was the intent to construct a

means by which data could be collected in a consistent and representative way for the

population under study. There was no existing instrument for surveying the categories of

continuing professional development activities which adequately addressed the purposes

of this study.

The option, to simply modify and use the instrument used in Gleeson's study

(1992) was rejected because of the threats to validity posed by such modification (Cook &

Campbell, 1979). There were several threats to construct validity in using the Gleeson

instrument. One threat was that the Gleeson study asked respondents to rate the

contribution of six learning activities to perceived competence (ability) to do certain job

tasks specific to child welfare. Continuing professional development is not just job-task specific; it is a broader construct which includes preparation to do future work (Nadler, 1985). In addition, the Gleeson study limited the learning activities respondents were asked to rate. The purpose of this study was to construct a profile of as many continuing professional development activities of social workers in local agencies in Virginia as were identified by respondents. Finally, the Gleeson study surveyed a different population. Without construct validity, other issues of validity and issues of reliability are of little importance.

Construction of the CPD section of the survey was accomplished through a two-step field-testing process. In the first step, focus groups were employed to assist the researcher in identifying and defining continuing professional development activities. A pilot test of a draft of the survey based on input from the focus groups was subsequently employed to refine items, clarify language, and critique the format.

Step 1: Focus Group

The first step was to conduct focus groups. The first focus group included six individuals representing different areas of expertise and levels of understanding of continuing professional development, social work practice, and survey research, i.e., a former social service employee, a human service employee from another state agency, a member of the faculty from a school of social work, an individual familiar with survey research design, a college graduate unfamiliar with survey research design.

The approach with the first focus group was based conceptually on the work of Cline (1984), which was related to the relevance and quality of in-service training for educators; and that of Gleeson & Smith (1987), on how child welfare caseworkers learn.

Cline categorized various "delivery methods" of professional development of teachers into various contexts, or "modes". The delivery modes included: job-embedded modes, job-related modes, credential-oriented modes, professional organization-related modes, and self-directed modes. Table 1(see Chapter II, p. 43) depicts the listing of delivery modes and related methods identified by Cline. Categories of professional development activities identified by Gleeson and Smith (1987), and similar to Cline's modes, included: formal education, work experience, supervisory relationship, in-service training, professional continuing education completed outside the employing agency, self-directed learning projects and life experiences outside of work.

An outline of the agenda for the focus groups can be found in Appendix D. Group members were first oriented to the purpose of the study and the nature of a "focus group". They were then given index cards and asked to write, one per card, situations which they considered to represent CPD activities they had
undertaken. After completing the individual task, focus group members were asked to share their responses with the group. After hearing responses from others, focus group members were asked to add any additional professional development activities they had not previously identified. The responses were recorded on index cards, one activity per card, but in a different color ink to easily identify added responses.

Group members were then asked to indicate, for each activity (index card), when they had last engaged in the activity. Next, group members were asked to indicate for each activity (index card) whether or not they considered their participation to have been "formal", "informal", or "both".

Finally, the group was asked to compare their responses to the conceptual organizations of Cline (1984) and Gleeson and Smith (1987) and to verify or modify categories of CPD and activities within those categories. Both group-generated and researcher-constructed examples were used to verify the categories and reach some consensus regarding the placement of activities within categories. A second focus group of six individuals, representative of the population to be studied was conducted, using the same process as described with the first focus group. Participants for the second group were solicited from one local Department of Social Services (see Appendix E).

The information recorded on the index cards generated by the two focus groups was subsequently reviewed with a small expert panel of adult educators to create the final structure of items to include on the CPD section of the survey. The researcher then used professional development references (Craig, 1996; Reynolds, 1993; Tracey, 1985) to construct definitions. Examples of activities generated by the focus groups were used to further clarify the meanings of activities.

Twenty items were developed for the CPD. Each item represented a type of CPD activity, contained a definition and an example, and asked respondents to, "answer

whether or not you have EVER engaged in the activity for your continuing professional

development (CPD), 'YES' or 'NO'; if your answer is 'YES', then answer whether or not

you have engaged in the activity WITHIN THE LAST 3 YEARS, 'YES' or NO'; and if

you answer 'YES' to EITHER of the questions, indicate your assessment of that type of

activity's IMPACT ON YOUR PRACTICE, that is contributing in a positive or

meaningful way, by rating it having 'low' impact to having 'high' impact."

Step Two: Pilot of the Survey

The second step was verification of the appropriateness, inclusiveness, and

distinctiveness of CPD categories by pilot testing the instrument. The draft survey was

field tested with a small sample of individuals (15) representative of respondents to the

study. They were asked to respond to the survey and then evaluate it using a form

including the following questions: (a) How long did it take you to complete the survey?

(b) Which parts of the survey did you find unclear or confusing? (c) What suggestions do

you have for changing the wording? (d) What suggestions do you have for changing the

"flow" of the survey? (e) What suggestions do you have for changing the overall

appearance of the survey? Further field testing was not found to be necessary based on the

results of the pilot.

An advanced copy of the survey instrument was mailed to a representative of the

League of Social Services Executives, the organization composed of all directors of local

Social Services and Welfare in Virginia. That organization gave approval for mailing of

the instrument directly to agency staff at their respective agency addresses. Final approval

was contingent on a review of the instrument by the organization's designee prior to mailing. That approval was obtained and the League's representative from the Personnel Sub-Committee issued a Department of Social Services Broadcast on November 21, 1997 announcing the study (see Appendix F).

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

In the context of validity and reliability, "...survey research may be seen as generally weak on the former and strong on the latter" (Babbie, 1979. P. 347). Babbie also says, "Reliability is a clearer matter. Survey research, by presenting all subjects with a standardized stimulus, goes a long way toward eliminating unreliability in observations made by the researcher. Moreover, careful wording of the questions can also reduce significantly the subjects' own unreliability" (p.347).

Validity

Construct-related evidence for validity is "an interpretation of meaning that is given to a set of scores...to assess a trait or theory that cannot be measured directly" (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993, p.225). Construct validity was addressed by using recent, related models of continuing professional development from the literature to frame the work with the focus groups. Face validity is concerned with the degree to which a measure "appears to measure what it purports to measure" (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 256). The use of two focus groups of subject matter experts to develop the content of the survey and a subsequent expert panel of experts to further refine the CPD activities strengthened the face validity of the instrument.

Reliability

According to McMillan and Schumacher (1993), reliability refers to "the consistency of measurement, the extent to which the results are similar over different forms of the same instrument or occasions of data collecting" (p. 227). The survey was pilot tested with a representative group. No substantive recommendations were made to add, delete or change the activities or the activity definitions; only minor revisions to examples were suggested by the pilot group. Responses to the survey by the study sample yielded few comments and all 207 returned surveys were completed as instructed.

Data Collection Procedures

The investigator sent a packet of survey materials including an instrument and a self-addressed stamped envelope to each respondent. A letter informing them of the purpose of the study and their selection as a respondent was part of the survey instrument. The cover letter reviewed the purpose of the study, requested participation in the survey, and emphasized the confidentiality of responses. The return envelopes and surveys were number coded to allow for follow-up for return of the surveys and subsequent comparison with available information (LAPS data) on non-respondents to determine if they differed in some important way from respondents.

The survey packet was sent to each of the sample members at their agency address on November 24,1997. Each subject was asked to complete the survey and return it in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope by "12 NOON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12th"

(1997). One week prior to the return date requested on the survey (December 5, 1997), a reminder postcard printed on brightly colored card stock was mailed (see Appendix G).

Due to a low response rate, a second mailing of surveys was done on January 5, 1998 with a new return date of January 20, 1998. Surveys were re-mailed to subjects in the Class IV agencies due to a relatively small number of filled positions from which to sample. Using the same sampling techniques as originally employed, replacement surveys were mailed to different subjects in the Class V and VI agencies. Telephone calls and written requests were made between January 12 and January 23, 1998 to several agencies to encourage participation when response rates for Class IV, V, and VI agencies continued to be low.

<div align="center">Data Analysis Procedures</div>

The researcher used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 6.1 for Windows to analyze the data. Several statistical analysis procedures, appropriate to the study and the specific research questions, were used to analyze the data. The researcher coded the responses, constructed data and syntax files, entered the data, and ran the statistical procedures. The responses produced nominal and ordinal level data for analysis. Univariate and bivariate data analyses are reported in Chapter IV.

Univariate Analysis of Data

The univariate analysis procedures employed included frequency counts, percentages, measures of central tendency (median and mode) and dispersion (range) for each of the independent variables (employee characteristics), i.e., job class, time in current

job class, total time as a social worker in Virginia, time as a social worker other than in a

local social services in Virginia, other agencies/organizations where employed as a social

worker, current primary practice area, area of most practice, highest education level at

time of first hire, major at time of first hire, current highest level of education, major of

current highest level of education, FIPS/agency code, and region; and frequencies,

percentages, and measures of central tendency (median and mode) for each level, i.e.,

formal education ever, formal education within the last 3 years, and level of impact on

practice, of the twenty dependent variables (continuing professional development

activities).

Bivariate Analysis of Data

      "One of the most useful tools for bivariate or multivariate analysis of nominal and

ordinal data is the cross-classification table " (Agresti & Finlay, 1986, p. 198), or

"crosstabs", as it is most commonly known. When data to be analyzed are nominal and

based on frequencies of observations in categories, a non-parametric measure, chi-square,

is a "means of answering questions about association or relationship based on frequencies

of observations in categories" (McMillan & Schumaker, 1989, p 369). The chi-square

statistic is designed to test for independence between two nominal variables" (Agresti &

Finlay, 1986, p. 203).

      The first level of bivariate analysis was completed by running crosstabs for each

independent variable with each level of each of the dependent variables. One of the

requirements to apply the chi-square test is an adequate cell size of five (5) or more

observations. From the crosstab results, cell frequencies of the independent variable were examined to form logical groupings to collapse categories of the independent variables so that assumptions about cell size for the use of a <u>chi-square test of independence</u> could be met.

Next, crosstabs, employing the chi-square statistic, were run for each independent variable with each other independent variable to determine that statistical significance did <u>not</u> exist between independent variables, or that its presence could be interpreted in such a manner that further analysis would not be compromised. Statistical significance was determined based on the reported p-value that is calculated by the SPSS procedure.

The chi-square test of independence was conducted for each independent variable with each dependent variable. An independent samples chi-square test was employed because the study had more than one independent variable. Where data fell into a 2X2 table after categories were collapsed and where statistical significance was previously found with more categories, a Fisher's Exact was used to correct for small cell size.

The researcher treated response categories for the question related to "impact of practice" as ordinal level data for analysis; although some argument might be made that responses are interval level data. "When at least ordinal measurement has been achieved, the Mann-Whitney $\underline{U}$ test may be used to test whether two independent groups have been drawn from the same population" (Siegel, 1956, p. 116); that is, "whether two uncorrelated means differ significantly from each other" (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 356). The Mann-Whitney $\underline{U}$ test was used to compare the responses to the question of "impact on

practice" by those who had participated in the activity, but not in the last 3 years, with those who had ever participated in the activity and had participated in the last 3 years. Results corrected for ties were reviewed for their significance. T-tests for independent samples were also run to examine the results if the data were treated as interval rather than ordinal level data. The results of the Mann-Whitney and t-tests were compared.

Kruskal-Wallis 1-way ANOVA is a nonparametric test for use with data where the independent variable categories are nominal and the dependent variable responses produce ordinal level data. The Kruskal-Wallis test uses mean ranks in place of N observations to test the null hypothesis that "$\underline{k}$ samples come from the same population or from identical populations with respect to averages" (Siegel, 1956, p. 184). It is a nonparametric substitute for the t-test for uncorrelated means. Ridit scores are calculated and used to compute a chi-square where the $\underline{df} = \underline{k} - 1$ to determine the level of significance. The ridit score of a response category equals the proportion of observations below that category plus half the proportion in that category " (Agresti & Finlay, 1986, p. 181). Results are reported as $\underline{H}$ values.

The Kruskal-Wallis 1-way ANOVA was used to analyze responses for the question on "impact on practice" for each of the dependent variables with each of the independent variables to reduce the risk of Type II error in interpreting the results that could result from using a lower order chi-square test. The chi-square statistic, corrected for ties, was used to determine level of significance.

Delimitations of the Study

The study was limited to a sample of those individuals providing social work services through local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia. The generalizability of the results is best for similar populations, such as those who are employed in local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia in the future. The results might also be generalizable to those employed in other local Departments of Social Services or Welfare and the District of Columbia which exempt public welfare social workers from social work licensing requirements.

Chapter Summary

The chapter proposed the methodology employed for the study and included general design; research questions and hypotheses; population and sampling procedures; instrumentation, including construction of the instrument and field testing; data collection procedures; data analysis procedures; and delimitations.

The general design of the of the study was survey research. The research questions and hypotheses were concerned with the continuing professional development activities and employment characteristics of Social Workers of Local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia.

The population of 1676 social service staff of local Departments of Social Services or Welfare agencies in Virginia employed in the Social Work/Social Work Supervision classification were sampled using a proportionate, stratified random sample. A researcher-developed instrument was used to collect the data which was analyzed by the researcher using appropriate univariate and bivariate statistical analysis procedures and SPSS 6.1 for

Windows. The study was delimited by the research methodology and the specific

population studied.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The study had a two-fold purpose. The first purpose was to construct a profile of

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities of social workers employed in

local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia. The second purpose was to

examine any emerging patterns of those CPD activities. This chapter presents and

discusses the findings of the study related to each of the four research questions.

Conclusions and recommendations related to the findings are discussed in Chapter V.

The data for this chapter were obtained from responses to a researcher-constructed

survey of social workers from among the 124 local Departments of Social Services or

Welfare in Virginia. The two-part survey gathered data on continuing professional

activities and employee characteristics, respectively.

At the time of the distribution of the survey, there were 1864 social work

positions, statewide, within the local departments of social services. Of those, 1676

(89.9%) positions were filled by individuals who met the criteria for respondent selection.

Surveys were mailed to a sample of 330 individuals selected for the study. The overall

return rate was 62.7% (N = 207). Of the returned surveys, all 207 were usable to address

each of the research questions. The survey sample was proportionately stratified using the

State Department of Social Services' Agency Classes I through VI.

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Table 3 presents data on sample size and return rates for each of the strata.

Table 3.

Sample Size and Return Rate by Strata

Class	n	Returns	Return rate
Class I	9	6	66.6
Class II	28	18	64.3
Class III	119	85	71.4
Class IV	37	20	54.1
Class V	60	43	72.8
Class VI	77	35	45.5

Note. N = Total number in a sample. Total surveys N = 330. Total returns N = 207. The number in a subsample = n. The strata are represented by n.

Description of the Sample and Findings Related to Research Question One

Research Question 1 asked: What are the employee characteristics of Social Workers in local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia?

Tables 1 through 14 in Appendix H present the frequency and percent of respondents for each of the employee characteristics.

Employee Characteristics

Job Classification

Most (82.1%) of the respondents fell within the job classes of Social Worker,

Child Protective Service (CPS) Worker I, or Senior Social Worker. Of the 207

respondents, 50.2% were employed in the job class of Social Worker. Two individuals

reported their job class as Social Worker III which was not identified within the

classification series information provided by the Department.

Time in Current Job Class

The length of time in current job class ranged from less than 3 months to more

than 10 years. Only 6.8% of respondents had been in their current job class for 6 months

or less; about 14%, 1 year or less. More than one-third (36.4%) of the respondents had

been in their current job class at least 3 years; about half of the respondents (49.5%), 5

years; 29%, 10 years or more. The median time in current job class was 5 or more years,

but less than 10 years.

Total Time as a Social Worker in a Local Department of Social Services in Virginia

Responses for the total time as a social worker in a local department of social

services in Virginia ranged from 3 to 6 months up to 10 years or more. Median total time

was 5 or more years, but less than 10 years.

Total Time as a Social Worker Other Than in a Local Social Services in Virginia

More than half of the respondents (55.9%) reported that they had never been employed in a social work position with any agency other than a local department of social services in Virginia. Of those who reported employment with an agency other than a local social services, 11.3% reported 10 or more years of employment with other agencies.

Other Agencies Where Employed as a Social Worker

Because the question allowed for multiple responses by a respondent, it is important to distinguish that responses to this question were not equal to the number of respondents. Seventy-eight respondents reported employment as a social worker other than with a local department of social services in Virginia. The largest number of responses to the type of organization were to non-profit ($N = 41$). Responses to whether the employing agency were in Virginia or outside of Virginia were 58 responses to employment in Virginia, 47 to employment outside of Virginia, and 7 to employment both in and outside of Virginia. Of those who reported 10 or more years of employment as a social worker, other than with a local department of social services, 52 responses were employment within Virginia; 40 responses, employment outside of Virginia; and 4 responses indicated employment in both.

Current Primary Program/Practice Area

There is considerable diversity of program/practice areas within the Social Work

job class. Service Programs (SP), which is the most generic program designation within

the Social Work series, is listed on the LAPS as the primary practice area for most

individuals in the Social Work job class. The Virginia Department of Social Services Local

Agency Personnel (LAPS) listings used for the study included the following job

function/program areas listings within the Social Work job class which were included in

the study: Service Programs (SP), Child Protective Services (CPS), Foster Care (FC),

Child Adoption (CA), Day Care (DC), and Adult Protective Services (APS). In sampling,

any positions which listed other programs as the primary service area were treated as

vacant positions. Additional job function/program area listings within the Social Work job

class which were not included in the study are noted in Table 5 in Appendix H.

Child welfare was reported as the primary program/practice area by the majority

(63.8%) of the respondents. Adult services, by comparison, represented only 16.9% of

respondents.

Program/ Practice Area of Most Experience

Child welfare was reported as the program/practice area of most experience by a majority

of respondents (62.6%). Adult services was reported as the program/practice area of most

experience by 15.5% of respondents. There was little difference in results for current

primary program/practice area and program/practice area of most experience. Individuals

remain in the program/practice area in which they are first employed. Program/practice

area of most experience was subsequently used as the independent variable to represent
"program area", also referred to as "practice".

Highest Level of Education at First Hire

Most respondents held a bachelors degree at the time they were first employed
with a local Department of Social Services or Welfare (78.7%). Six individuals' highest
level of education at the time of employment was a high school diploma.

Major at First Hire

More than half of respondents reported their major as social work compared to all
other reported majors. An equal number of respondents (27) had degrees in Psychology
and Sociology.

Current Highest Level of Education

Only three respondents continued to have no college degree. There was one
missing response, which appears to be an individual who reported having a bachelors
degree in social work at the time of first hire. All other respondents had at least a
bachelors degree. Twenty-one more individuals had masters degrees than at the time of
first hire. One additional person reported an "other" advanced degree (law).

Major of Current Highest Level of Education

Three respondents reported having majors in anthropology. No majors in
anthropology were reported for respondents at the time of first hire. There were two
fewer responses for the current major of highest education in social work, although one

appears to be the missing response. Gains were reported in the majors of counseling and business.

Responses by Local Agency FIPS Codes

FIPS codes are the reference numbers for localities assigned by the Virginia Department of Social Services. A listing of agency names for each agency by FIPS code accompanies Table 15 in Appendix H. Respondents were from 74 of the 124 local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia. The largest number of respondents (16) from any one agency came from one of the largest agencies, Fairfax County. Twenty-three (23) of the 124 localities did not have individuals selected for the study.

Region

Local agencies are divided into five geographic areas or regions. The Southwest region had the lowest percentage of respondents (13.0%); Tidewater, the highest (30.0%).

Agency Classes I-VI

Classes I and II had responses proportionately consistent with the percentages for both available and filled positions in those classes. Class VI had the least consistent proportion of responses compared to the number of available and filled positions in that class. Classes III and V have higher proportionate numbers of responses than the number of available and filled positions in their respective classes. Therefore, where class size is a factor, under-representation might occur for the largest agencies, those in Class VI; over-representation might occur for agencies in Classes III and V.

Summary of Employee Characteristics of Social Workers in Local Departments of Social

Services or Welfare

By way of summary the profile of employee characteristics which emerged was

that those employed as social workers are most likely to be in the Social Worker job class;

have remained in the same job class; have worked at least 5 years, but less than 10 years in

a local agency; have worked as a social worker mostly in Virginia and mostly in a local

Department of Social Services or Welfare; do Child Welfare work and have the most

program experience in Child Welfare, particularly child protective services; had a

bachelors level education in social work when first hired and still do; and were more likely

to have responded to the survey if they work in the Tidewater region and in a Class III

agency. Table 4 summarizes Research Question 1.

Table 4.

Research Question 1 Summary of Employee Characteristics

What are the employee characteristics of Social Workers in local Departments of Social

Services or Welfare in Virginia?

Employee characteristics	Median results
Job Classification	Social Worker
Time in Current Job Class	5 > & < 10 years
Total Time as a Social Worker VA	5> & < 10years
Total Time Social Worker Other	None 55%
Other Agencies	Non-profits (N=41)
In Virginia N = 58; Outside N = 47	
Current Primary Practice	CWS (63.8%)
Most Experience	CWS (62.6%)
Highest Education at First Hire	Bachelors
Major at First Hire	Social Work (half of all majors)
Current Highest Education	Bachelors
Major	Social Work

Note. CWS is all Child Welfare Services including Child Protective Services (CPS), Foster

Care (FC), Child Adoption (CA), and any generic services for children.

Findings Related to Research Question Two

Research Question 2 asked: What are the Continuing Professional Development

(CPD) activities of Social Workers in local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in

Virginia?

Participation Ever in a CPD Activity

Table 5 presents the data related to respondents ever having participated in a CPD

activity. Each of the twenty CPD items had some participation reported. No additional

CPD activities were identified. Activities are reported in descending rank order.

Table 5.

Descending Rank Order of Participation Ever in CPD Activities

Rank	$\underline{N}$	Activity	Participation ever	
			$\underline{f}$	$\underline{P}$
1	206	Mandatory Training	199	96.6
2	206	Voluntary Training	192	93.2
3	206	Peer Interaction Informal	190	92.2
4	205	Professional Reading	182	88.8
5	206	Formal Education	175	85.0
6	207	Supervision	172	83.1
7	207	Work Team Member	170	82.1
8	207	Computer-Based Learning	165	79.7
9	205	Reflective Practice	159	77.6
10	206	Shadowing	151	73.3
11	205	Professional Meetings	149	72.7
12	207	Mentoring	135	65.2
13	205	Professional Memberships	113	55.1
14	205	Instructing Others	109	53.2

(table continues)

Rank	$\underline{N}$	Activity	Participation ever	
			f	$\underline{P}$
15	205	Peer Interaction Formal	106	51.7
16	205	Testing/Inventories	102	49.8
17	205	Coaching	94	45.9
18	204	Instructional Development	67	32.8
19	205	Professional Licensing	51	24.9
20	205	Professional Writing and Critique	41	20.0

Participation in the Last 3 Years in a CPD Activity

Table 6 presents the data related to respondents having participated in a CPD

activity within the last three years. Each of the twenty CPD items had some participation

reported. As in the preceding table, activities are reported in descending rank order.

Table 6.

Descending Rank Order of Participation in CPD Activities In the Last 3 Years

Rank	N	Activity	Participation last 3 years	
			f	P
1	206	Mandatory Training	194	94.2
2	206	Peer Interaction Informal	189	91.7
3	206	Voluntary Training	184	89.3
4	205	Professional Reading	166	81.0
5	206	Supervision	165	80.1
6	207	Computer-Based Learning	160	77.3
7	207	Work Team Member	159	76.8
8	204	Reflective Practice	151	74.0
9	205	Professional Meetings	125	61.0
10	207	Mentoring	111	53.6
11	205	Peer Interaction Formal	94	45.9
12	206	Shadowing	90	42.7
13	205	Instructing Others	89	43.4
14	204	Professional Memberships	80	39.2

Rank	$\underline{N}$	Activity	Participation last 3 years	
			$\underline{f}$	$\underline{P}$
15	205	Testing/Inventories	78	38.0
16	206	Formal Education	69	33.5
17	205	Coaching	63	30.7
18	204	Instructional Development	50	24.5
19	205	Professional Licensing	43	21.0
20	205	Professional Writing and Critique	27	13.2

Summary of Identification of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Activities of

Social Workers of Local Social Services or Welfare in Virginia

The twenty CPD activities identified for the survey each had participation at some point; and each had participation within the last three years. The rank orderings of CPD activities by frequency of "yes" responses for "ever" participated and participated "within the last 3 years" were different. Mandatory training was ranked first for both questions; professional writing and critique, last on both; professional licensing, next to last on both. For all twenty CPD activities, participation dropped off between "ever" having participated and participated "within the last 3 years". Formal education fell most in the rankings from "ever" participated to participated "within the last 3 years", even though 3 respondents finished a bachelors degree and 22 completed advanced degrees since they were first hired.

Two of the respondents added, as an additional CPD activity, what they characterized as "learning from media coverage by being exposed to media coverage of their own or others' work". This would be consistent with the concept of a critical incident, where an event or occurrence is critically important to an outcome, such as being able to perform a particular job or job function (Reynolds, 1993). Since only two individuals identified this as a CPD activity, the information was not treated as having identified or added an additional CPD activity for purposes of this study. However, it does suggest future exploration of critical incident as a separate CPD activity versus a component of one of the 20 CPD activities in this study. Table 7 summarizes Research Question 2.

Table 7.

Research Question 2 Summary of CPD Activities

What are the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities of Social Workers in local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia?

	11. INSTRUCTIONAL DEVELOPMENT
1. FORMAL EDUCATION	12. COMPUTER-BASED LEARNING
2. AGENCY-SPONSORED IN-SERVICE TRAINING (MANDATORY)	13. MEMBERSHIP ON WORK-RELATED COMMITTEES AND TEAMS
3. AGENCY-SPONSORED IN-SERVICE TRAINING (VOLUNTARY)	14. PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS, CONFERENCES OR SYMPOSIA
	15. PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS
4. SUPERVISION	16. PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE/CERTIFICATION
5. MENTORING	
6. COACHING	17. TESTING/INVENTORIES
7. SHADOWING	18. PROFESSIONAL READING
8. PEER INTERACTION: FORMAL	19. PROFESSIONAL WRITING AND CRITIQUE
9. PEER INTERACTION: INFORMAL	
10. INSTRUCTING OTHERS	20. REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Findings Related to Research Questions Three

Research Question 3 asked: What are the patterns of Continuing Professional

Development (CPD) activities of Social Workers in local Departments of Social Services

or Welfare in Virginia?

H_{o1} There are no statistically significant relationships among continuing

professional development activities of Social Workers in local Departments

of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia.

CPD Activities and the Impact of Practice

To test H_{o1}: there are no statistically significant relationships among continuing

professional development activities of Social Workers in local Departments of Social

Services or Welfare in Virginia, the Mann-Whitney U test was used. Comparisons were

made between means for responses to "impact" of a CPD activity on professional practice

of those who had "ever" participated in an activity and those who had participated "within

the last 3 years". Two new variables for each CPD Activity were created to run the tests.

One variable represented a response of "yes" to both questions on participation for each

activity; the other a "yes" to "ever" participated and a "no" to "within the last 3 years".

Independent samples t-tests were also run to compare results if the data were

treated as interval level data rather than ordinal level. Two activities differed in being

found statistically significant if treated as different level data. The impact of formal

education was significant ($p = .037$) on the t-test, but not on the Mann-Whitney ($p = .09$).

The impact of professional writing and critique was significant on the Mann-Whitney ($p =$

.04), but not on the t-test (p = .08). For all other CPD activities, statistical significance

was achieved or not achieved on both tests. Table 8 presents the results of the Mann-

Whitney comparison of the impact of CPD activities on professional practice between

those who had participated "ever" and those who had participated "within the last 3 years.

Table 8.

Mann-Whitney U Comparison of Impact of CPD Activities on Professional Practice

Between Participated "Ever" and "Within the Last 3 Years"

CPD Activities	$\underline{U}$	$\underline{p}$
Formal Education	2519.0	.0925
Mandatory Training	254.5	.2151
Voluntary Training	576.5	.2643
Supervision	371.0	.7072
Mentoring	817.5	.0506*
Coaching	721.5	.3564
Shadowing	1890.0	.0615
Formal Peer Interaction	286.0	.0294
Informal Peer Interaction	72.0	.6570
Instructing Others	1369.0	.6727
Instructional Development	248.5	.3290
Computer-Based Learning	3135.0	.8641
Work-Team Membership	655.5	.6599
Professional Meetings	904.0	.0165**

(table continues)

CPD Activities	U	p
Professional Membership	1242.5	.0124**
Licensing and Credentialing	157.0	.6817
Testing	469.5	.0227*
Professional Reading	785.0	.1840
Professional Writing	90.0	.0457*
Reflective Practice	248.0	.1722

Note. U = Computed value of Mann-Whitney Test.

Values of p = 2-tailed test corrected for ties.

*$p \leq .05$. **$p \leq .01$.

Summary of Mann-Whitney for Comparisons of Impact on Practice

CPD Activities having significant levels of difference between those who had participated in an activity within the last three years and those who had not included mentoring, formal peer interaction, professional meetings, professional membership, testing, and professional writing. Professional meetings and professional membership had the most statistically significant differences between the impact ratings of those who had and those who had not participated in the two activities within the past three years. The impact of mentoring, professional memberships, and testing seems to diminish over time. The impact of professional writing seems to increase for those who participate, as does the impact of attending professional meetings.

With regard to the significant findings, one must use a certain sense of scientific caution. It is always possible that a certain number of significant findings could be expected based on chance when a number of tests are run on the same data.

Summary of Mean Score Ranking of Impact on Practice

Table 9 presents the impact of CPD activities on professional development for those who "ever" participated in the activity. The rankings are of the mean impact scores listed in descending order. Table 10 presents the impact of CPD activities on professional development for those who participated in an activity "within the last 3 years". The rankings of the mean impact scores are listed in descending order.

Table 9.

Descending Rank Order of Impact of CPD Activities for Those Who Ever Participated

But Not Within the Last 3 Years

Rank	$\underline{N}$	Activity	Participation ever	
			$\underline{f}$	$\underline{X}$
1	141	Shadowing	51	4.0588
2	190	Peer Interaction Informal	1	4.0000
3	164	Computer-Based Learning	5	4.0000
4	51	Professional Licensing	8	3.7500
5	155	Formal Education	86	3.6047
6	169	Supervision	5	3.6000
7	89	Coaching	26	3.5769
8	104	Peer Interaction Formal	10	3.5000
9	178	Professional Reading	12	3.5000
10	62	Instructional Development	12	3.5000
11	108	Instructing Others	19	3.4737
12	168	Work Team Member	9	3.4444

(table continues)

Rank	$\underline{N}$	Activity	Participation ever	
			f	$\underline{X}$
13	146	Professional Meetings	21	3.3333
14	131	Mentoring	20	3.2500
15	38	Professional Writing and Critique	11	3.0909
16	198	Mandatory Training	4	3.0000
17	198	Voluntary Training	4	3.0000
18	156	Reflective Practice	5	2.8000
19	96	Testing/Inventories	18	2.7222
20	109	Professional Memberships	29	2.6897

Note. f = frequency of responses. $\underline{X}$ = Mean scores.

Table 10.

Descending Rank Order of Impact of CPD Activities for Those Who Ever Participated

And Within the Last 3 Years

Rank	$\underline{N}$	Activity	Participation ever	
			f	$\underline{X}$
1	141	Shadowing	90	4.2889
2	190	Peer Interaction Informal	189	4.1958
3	104	Peer Interaction Formal	94	4.1809
4	51	Professional Licensing	43	4.0465
5	164	Computer-Based Learning	159	4.0252
6	155	Formal Education	69	3.9710
7	146	Professional Meetings	125	3.8640
8	62	Instructional Development	50	3.8400
9	89	Coaching	63	3.8254
10	198	Mandatory Training	194	3.8196
11	198	Voluntary Training	194	3.8196
12	178	Professional Reading	166	3.8072

(table continues)

Rank	$\underline{N}$	Activity	Participation ever	
			$\underline{f}$	$\underline{X}$
13	131	Mentoring	111	3.7568
14	169	Supervision	164	3.7134
15	108	Instructing Others	89	3.7079
16	38	Professional Writing and Critique	27	3.7037
17	168	Work Team Member	159	3.5346
18	156	Reflective Practice	151	3.3642
19	96	Testing/Inventories	18	3.3590
20	109	Professional Memberships	80	3.3125

As tables 9 and 10 show, it appears that individuals are likely to have participated in an activity within the last three years if they felt that an activity would have an impact on their practice. However, shadowing, informal peer interaction, computer-based learning, professional licensing, and formal education were all highly ranked in terms of their impact on practice, whether or not there had been participation within three years.

Summary of Patterns of Continuing Professional Development Activities

Table 11 presents the top third of CPD Activities for the categories of participation ever, participation within the last three years, impact on practice of ever participating, and impact on practice of participation within the last three years.

Table 11.

Top Third Rankings of CPD Activities for Participation and Impact on Practice

Participated ever	Participated within 3 years	Impact of ever participating	Impact of participating within 3 years
Mandatory Training	Mandatory Training	Shadowing	Shadowing
Voluntary Training	Peer Interaction Informal	Peer Interaction Informal	Peer Interaction Informal
Peer Interaction Informal	Voluntary Training	Computer-Based Learning	Peer Interaction Formal
Professional Reading	Professional Reading	Professional Licensing	Professional Licensing
Formal Education	Supervision	Formal Education	Computer-Based Learning
Supervision	Computer-Based Learning	Supervision	Formal Education
Work Team Member	Work Team Member	Coaching	Professional Meetings

As the data in Table 11 show, mandatory training, voluntary training, professional reading and work team membership had high rates of participation, but they did not make the greatest impact on practice. Formal education had high impact and high participation initially, with participation slightly diminishing over time. Informal peer interaction had both high participation and high impact on practice over time. Shadowing emerged as having the highest impact on practice of any of the activities. Informal peer interaction had the next highest impact.

Table 12 summarizes Research Question 3.

Table 12.
Research Question 3 Summary of Findings
What are the patterns of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of Social Workers in local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia?
H_{01} There are no statistically significant relationships among continuing professional development activities of Social Workers in local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia.
Decision: Reject the Null Hypothesis
Significant Findings: Significant differences for "impact on practice" between those who had participated in an activity within the last three years and those who had not were found for: mentoring   formal peer interaction   professional meetings   professional membership   testing   professional writing

Findings Related to Research Questions Four

Research Question 4 asked: What, if any, relationship exists among <u>employee characteristics</u>, i.e., degree, field of study, job classification, program area, years of experience, employing agency (Virginia Department of Social Services agency classification I-VI) and <u>patterns of CPD</u> of Social Workers in local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia?

To test the research question the following null hypotheses (H_o :correlation= 0) were used:

H_{o2} There is no statistically significant relationship between <u>degree</u> and <u>continuing professional development activities</u> of Social Workers in local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia.

H_{o3} There is no statistically significant relationship between <u>field of study</u> and <u>continuing professional development activities</u> of Social Workers in local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia.

H_{o4} There is no statistically significant relationship between <u>job classification</u> and <u>continuing professional development activities</u> of Social Workers in local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia.

H_{o5} There is no statistically significant relationship between <u>program area</u> and <u>continuing professional development activities</u> of Social Workers in local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia.

H_{o6} There is no statistically significant relationship between years of experience

and continuing professional development activities of Social Workers in

local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia.

H_{o7} There is no statistically significant interaction among employee

characteristics and continuing professional development activities of Social

Workers in local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia.

<p style="text-align:center">CPD Activities and Employee Characteristics</p>

The chi-square analysis tested the null hypotheses H_{o2} through H_{o6}. First, a

bivariate analysis of each of the independent variables with each level of the dependent

variables was conducted using crosstabs. This allowed logical collapsing of categories of

several of the independent variables into new categories so that chi-square tests could be

run.

Job Class was collapsed into categories of "social worker, senior social worker,

and supervisor or other"; and eventually, into "social worker and supervisor or other".

Categories for Time in Current Classification, Total Time as a Social Worker in a Local

Department of Social Services of Welfare, and Time as a Social Worker Other Than in a

Local Department of Social Services or Welfare were collapsed into "less than 12 months;

one year, but less than 5 years; 5 years, but less than 10 years; and ten or more years".

Highest Level of Education at First Hire and Current Level of Highest Education were

collapsed into "high school or associate degree, college, and masters or professional" and

eventually, into "college and masters or professional" categories. Categories for Major of

Highest Level of Education at Time of First Hire and Current Level were both collapsed into categories of "social work, related degrees, and other degrees". Table 13 presents a matrix of chi-square tests that were significant for each of the CPD Activities and the employee characteristics used as the independent variables.

Table 13.

Matrix of Significant Chi-Square Values of CPD Activities "Ever" and "Within the Last 3 Years and Employee Characteristics

CPD Activities	Employee characteristics					
	Job	Practice	Level of education	Major	Total time	Agency
Formal Education						
Ever		(N=175)			(N=175)	
Within Last 3 Years		***			**	
Mandatory Training						
Ever						
Within Last 3 Years						
Voluntary Training						
Ever						
Within Last 3 Years						
Supervision						
Ever			(N=204)			
			*			
Within Last 3 Years			(N=169)			
			***			
Mentoring						
Ever						
Within Last 3 Years		(N=135)			(N=135)	
		**			*	

(table continues)

CPD Activities	Job	Practice	Level of education	Major	Total time	Agency
			Employee Characteristics			
Coaching						
Ever		(N=205) *				
Within Last 3 Years		(N=94) *			(N=94) **	
Shadowing						
Ever		(N=206) ***			(N=206) ***	(N=206) *
Within Last 3 Years					(N=151) ***	
Formal Peer Interaction						
Ever						
Within Last 3 Years		(N=107) *			(N=107) *	(N=107) **
Informal Peer Interaction						
Ever					(N=107) *	
Within Last 3 Years						
Instructing Others						
Ever					(N=205) *	
Within Last 3 Years					(N=109) **	
Instructional Development						
Ever						
Within Last 3 Years						
Computer-Based						
Ever						
Within Last 3 Years		(N=165) ***				

(table continues)

CPD Activities	Employee Characteristics					
	Job	Practice	Level of education	Major	Total time	Agency
Work-Related Teams						
Ever		(N=207) *				
Within Last 3 Years		(N =170) **				
Professional Meetings						
Ever			(N=202) **			
Within Last 3 Years					(N=149) *	
Professional Membership						
Ever						
Within Last 3 years						(N=113) **
Licensure						
Ever			(N=202) ***			
Within Last 3 Years						
Testing						
Ever						
Within Last 3 Years		(N=102) *				
Professional Reading						
Ever				(N=204) *		
Within Last 3 Years		(N=182) **				
Professional Writing						
Ever			(N=202) ***			
Within Last 3 Years						
Reflective Practice						
Ever						
Within Last 3 Years						(N=158) *

*$p \le .05$. **$p \le .01$. ***$p \le .001$

Summary of Chi-Square Tests of CPD Activities and Employee Characteristics

There were no statistically significant findings for CPD Activities and Job Class. The only statiscally significant finding for CPD Activities and Major of Highest Level of Education was for professional reading. Across all majors, social workers in local agencies had participated in professional reading as part of their professional development at some time, but not significantly within the last 3 years.

Highest Level of Education had significant association with CPD Activities of supervision, professional meetings, licensure and professional writing. More social workers in local agencies participated in supervision (170 of 204) and professional meetings (147 of 202) than did not. Those who did not have a masters or professional degree participated more in supervision (116 of 170) than those who did have a higher degree. They also participated at a significant level within the last 3 years. Those who had a masters or professional degree participated more in professional meetings (85% of all masters or professional degrees compared with 67% of bachelors). More social workers did not participate in licensing (153 of 202), and professional writing (162 of 202) than did participate. More of those who participated in licensing and professional writing had masters or professional degrees; respectively, 44% with, 16% without; and 34% with, 14% without. Participation was not significant within the last 3 years. Participation in professional writing was the most statistically significant finding related to Highest Level of Education and CPD Activities.

Agency Class was significantly associated with the CPD Activities of shadowing, formal peer interaction, professional membership, and reflective practice; all except shadowing within the last 3 years. More participated in each of the activities than did not; shadowing (ever) 151 of 206; formal peer interaction, 94 of 107; professional membership, 80 of 113; reflective practice, 151 of 158. Formal peer interaction and professional membership were most statistically significant. For Classes I and VI, everyone who responded participated in formal peer interaction. For Class I, everyone who responded participated in professional membership within the last 3 years. For Classes I, II, IV, and VI, all who responded participated in reflective practice within the last 3 years.

Program/Practice Area was significantly associated with CPD Activities of formal education, mentoring, coaching, shadowing, formal peer interaction, computer-based learning, work-related teams, testing, and professional reading. Across all program/practice areas more workers participated in mentoring (135 of 207), shadowing (151 of 206), formal peer interaction (106 of 205), computer-based learning (165 of 207), work-related teams (170 of 207), and professional reading (182 of 205) than did not. Most workers did not participate in formal education within the last 3 years (106 of 175); although, about as many Child Welfare workers participated in formal education as not within the last 3 years; 65 did, 88 did not.

More workers in Child Welfare participated in mentoring within the last 3 years than either of the other program/practice areas; 89 child welfare, 13 generic, 9 adult. Fewer Generic (7 of 25) and Adult Services (10 of 31) workers participated in coaching

than did not participate. Slightly more Child Welfare workers participated in coaching than did not participate. More Generic (19) and Child Welfare (117) workers participated in shadowing than Adult Service workers (15), but, across program/practice areas, fewer workers participated in shadowing within the last 3 years; 7 generic, 74 child welfare, and 9 adult.

Computer-based learning, testing, and professional reading were all significant within the last 3 years. Child Welfare reported the most participation in testing within the last 3 years; 64 of 78 participated in testing within the last three years.

Total Time as a Social Worker in a Local Department of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia was statistically significant with CPD Activities of education, mentoring, coaching, shadowing, formal peer interaction, informal peer interaction, instructing others, and professional meetings. Total Time was significant within the last 3 years with all except informal peer interaction.

Participation in formal education was lowest for those employed one year or less (12 of 175). For those employed more than one year, participation reported for each category of time remained constant. Participation was not indicated any more for those with 1 to 5 years of experience than for those with more than 10 years of experience. That is, 83.9% of those employed 1 to < 5 years had participated; 82.4%, 5 to < 10 years; 86%, 10 years or more.

Within the last 3 years, mentoring, coaching, and formal peer interaction were consistent across categories of time. Of those who responded that they participated in

shadowing, all who had one year or less total time participated and within the last 3 years. Reported participation was consistent across all other categories; including those participating within the last 3 years.

Those employed 5 or more years participated more in instructing others (80 of 109) than those with fewer than 5 years of total time (29 of 109). As total time employed increased, so did participation in instructing others; 50 of 109 for those employed 10 years or more.

Next, the Kruskal-Wallis 1-Way ANOVA was used to analyze the impact on practice responses with each of the independent variables. Tables 15 through 20 in Appendix H present the results.

Summary of 1-Way ANOVAS of "Impact on Practice" and Employee Characteristics

There were no statistically significant results for Job Classification with any of the CPD activities' impact on practice. The results fail to reject H_{o4}: There were no statistically significant relationships between job classification and continuing professional development activities of Social Workers in local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia.

There were no statistically significant results for Primary Program/Practice area of most experience and the impact on practice of the twenty CPD activities. The findings fail to reject H_{o5}: There were no statistically significant relationships between program area and continuing professional development activities of Social Workers in local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia.

The only statistically significant result obtained for Highest Level of Education (degree) is for the impact of supervision. Those with higher degrees participated significantly less in supervision. The null hypothesis was rejected, H_{o2} : There were no statistically significant relationships between degree and continuing professional development activities of Social Workers in local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia.

Statistically significant results were obtained for Major of Highest Level of Education (field of study) and formal education and instructional development. The null hypothesis was rejected, H_{o3}: There were no statistically significant relationships between field of study and continuing professional development activities of Social Workers in local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia.

Total Time as a Social Worker in a Local Department of Social Services (years of experience) was statistically significant with mandatory training, mentoring, formal peer interaction, and professional membership. The results reject the null hypothesis, H_{o6}: There were no statistically significant relationships between years of experience and continuing professional development activities of Social Workers in local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia. Agency Class I-VI was also found to be significant with testing. Table 14 summarizes Research Question 4.

Table 14.

Research Question 4 Summary of Relationships Among Employee Characteristics and
CPD Activities

What, if any, relationship exists among employee characteristics, i.e., degree, field of
study, job classification, program area, years of experience, employing agency, and
patterns of CPD of Social Workers in local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in
Virginia?

H_{o2}: There is no statistically significant relationship between degree and continuing
professional development activities of Social Workers in local Departments of Social
Services or Welfare in Virginia.

Decision: Reject the Null Hypothesis

Significant Finding: Supervision

H_{03}: There is no statistically significant relationship between field of study and continuing
professional development of Social Workers in local Departments of Social Services or
Welfare in Virginia.

Decision: Reject the Null Hypothesis

Significant Findings: Formal Education and Instructional Development

H_{04}: There is no statistically significant relationship between job classification and
continuing professional development activities of Social Workers in local Department of

Social Services or Welfare in Virginia.

Decision: Fail to reject the Null Hypothesis

H_{05}: There is no statistically significant relationship between program area and continuing professional development activities of social Workers in local Departments of social Services of Welfare in Virginia.

Decision: Fail to reject the Null Hypothesis

H_{06}: There is no statistically significant relationship between years of experience and continuing professional development of social workers in local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia.

Decision: Reject the Null Hypothesis

Significant Findings: Mandatory Training, Mentoring, Peer Interaction Formal, and Professional Membership

H_{07}: There is no statistically significant interaction among employee characteristics and continuing professional development activities of Social Workers in local Department of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia.

Decision: Reject the Null Hypothesis.

Significant Findings: Degree Held with Supervision, Professional Meetings, Licensure, and Professional Writing; Field of Study with Professional Reading; and Years of Experience with Formal Education, Mentoring, Coaching, Shadowing, Formal Peer Interaction, Informal Peer Interaction, Instructing Others, and Professional Meetings.

Summary of the Chapter

Four research questions and seven null hypotheses framed the study. The first

research question was concerned with the employee characteristics of Social Workers in

local Department of Social Services or Welfare. The profile which emerged was that those

employed as social workers are most likely to be in the Social Worker job class; have

remained in the same job class; have worked at least 5 years, but less than 10 years in a

local agency; have worked as a social worker mostly in Virginia and mostly in a local

Department of Social Services or Welfare; do Child Welfare work and have the most

program experience in Child Welfare, particularly child protective services; had a

bachelors level education in social work when first hired, and still do.

The second research question was concerned with identification of the Continuing

Professional Development (CPD) activities of public welfare social workers. Twenty

Continuing Professional Development activities were identified, defined and clarified with

practice examples. The activities were: formal education; agency-sponsored in-service

training (mandatory); agency-sponsored in-service training (voluntary); supervision;

mentoring; coaching; shadowing; peer interaction (formal); peer interaction (informal);

instructing others; instructional development; computer-based learning;

membership/participation on work-related committees and teams; professional meetings,

conferences or symposia; professional membership; professional licensure/certification;

testing/inventories; professional reading; professional writing and critique; and reflective practice.

The third research question was concerned with patterns of Continuing Professional Development activities and the significance of any relationship among activities. The rankings for ever participating in activities and participating within the last three years revealed differences in participation among the activities. Significant differences were found related to the impact on practice of mentoring, formal peer interaction, professional meetings, professional membership, testing, and professional writing when "ever" participating in an activity was compared with participating "within the last 3 years". For those who participated in professional writing and professional meetings, the impact on practice seemed to increase. Though significant, the other activities tended to be associated with a diminished impact on practice.

The fourth research question was concerned with any relationships among employee characteristics and patterns of Continuing Professional Development. While no clear patterns emerged, there is statistically significant evidence that there are some relationships between employee characteristics and CPD activities. There are statistically significant findings that associate CPD activities with degree held, field of study, and years of experience. In addition, some significant differences were found for the reported impact on practice between those who have participated within the last three years in an activity and those who have not participated within the last three years. Conclusions about the results are discussed in Chapter V.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of the study was to explore the Continuing Professional (CPD) activities of Social Workers employed in Local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia:

• To construct a profile of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of Social Workers employed in local Departments of Social Services or Welfare (public welfare agencies) in Virginia.

• To examine any emerging patterns of those CPD activities.

The goal was to discover any patterns of continuing professional development that might elucidate the nature of CPD in public welfare social work to assist adult educators, social work professionals, employing organizations, and the social workers themselves in assessing and meeting those continuing professional development needs.

Summary of the Research Design and Methodology

Survey research was employed to determine the employee characteristics of Social Workers in local Department of Social Services or Welfare and the activities that contribute to their continuing professional development. Four research questions guided

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the study. What are the employee characteristics of Social Workers in local Departments

of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia? What are the Continuing Professional

Development (CPD) activities of Social Workers in local Departments of Social Services

or Welfare in Virginia? What are the patterns of Continuing Professional Development

(CPD) activities of Social Workers in local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in

Virginia? What, if any, relationship exists among employee characteristics and patterns of

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities of Social Workers in local

Departments of Social Services in Virginia?

The study population was individuals employed in the Social Work/Social Work

Supervision job classification series of the Virginia Department of Social Services and

working in local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia. A proportionate,

random sample, stratified on Agency Class I-VI, of social work staff of local agencies was

selected to receive the researcher-constructed survey.

The instrument surveyed CPD activities and employee characteristics. The 20 CPD

activities which were surveyed were identified with the assistance of two focus groups, an

expert panel, and a pilot group, representative of the study population. The survey was

mailed to the 330 individuals selected for the study at their respective agencies.

Results were analyzed using univariate measures which included frequency counts,

percentages, medians and modes, and range; and bivariate measures which included

crosstabs with the chi-square statistic, chi-squares for independent with independent and

independent with dependent variables, the Mann-Whitney U and independent samples t-

tests to examine the "impact on practice" of CPD activities, and the Kruskal-Wallis 1-Way
ANOVA with the chi-square statistic to examine employee characteristics with CPD
activities.

Review of Results and Conclusions

What are the employee characteristics of Social Workers in local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia?

Those employed as social workers are most likely to be in the Social Worker job
class; have remained in the same job class; have worked at least 5 years, but less than 10
years in a local agency; have worked as a social worker mostly in Virginia and mostly in a
local Department of Social Services or Welfare; do Child Welfare work and have the most
program experience in Child Welfare, particularly child protective services; had a
bachelors level education in social work when first hired and still do. Although individuals
employed in Adult Services are, by far, fewer in number than those employed in Child
Welfare, they average more years of employment than those in Child Welfare. The median
time of employment for Adult Services staff is more than 10 years; for Child Welfare,
more than 5, but less than 10 years.

What are the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities of Social Workers in local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia?

The study identified twenty Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities
in which social workers in public welfare agencies participate. The activities were: formal
education; agency-sponsored in-service training (mandatory); agency-sponsored in-service

training (voluntary); supervision; mentoring; coaching; shadowing; peer interaction (formal); peer interaction (informal); instructing others; instructional development; computer-based learning; membership/participation on work-related committees and teams; professional meetings, conferences or symposia; professional membership; professional licensure/certification; testing/inventories; professional reading; professional writing and critique; and reflective practice. There was some participation for each activity.

The study confirmed what Gleeson (1992) found, that there are many ways in which social workers in public agencies approach their continuing professional development. The study also uncovered helpful information about activities which make an important positive impact on their professional practice.

What are the patterns of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities of Social Workers in local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia?

Having ever participated in CPD activities is higher than having participated within the last 3 years. It appears that individuals are likely to have participated in an activity within the last three years if they felt that an activity would have a positive impact on their practice. Not surprisingly, recent organizational and contextual changes impacted professionals' participation in some activities, particularly within the last three years. Testing and computer-based learning are among those. Mandatory testing for CPS staff and the introduction of a statewide computerized case management system, no doubt contributed.

Shadowing, informal peer interaction, computer-based learning, professional licensing, and formal education were all highly ranked in terms of their impact on practice, whether or not there had been participation within the last three years. Shadowing emerged as having the highest impact on practice of any of the activities. It may seem surprising, however, it is consistent with the fact that a significant practice for training new staff members is to have them accompany other staff members as they conduct interviews, make home visits, and interact with various service providers.

Informal peer interaction had the next highest impact. Informal peer interaction had both high participation and high impact on practice over time. This would be consistent with a result that was found when years of experience on the job are taken into consideration, participation in more structured or formal activities diminishes over time.

Significant levels of difference between those who had participated in an activity within the last three years and those who had not included mentoring, formal peer interaction, professional meetings, professional membership, testing, and professional writing.

Professional meetings and professional membership had the most statistically significant differences between the impact ratings of those who had and those who had not participated in the two activities within the past three years. The impact of mentoring, professional memberships, and testing seems to diminish over time. The impact of

professional writing seems to increase for those who participate, as does the impact of attending professional meetings.

Mandatory training, voluntary training, professional reading and work team membership had high rates of participation, but they did not make the greatest impact on practice. Formal education had high impact and high participation initially, with participation diminishing over time. Some contextual issues could contribute to these results.

Training and membership on work teams have strong institutional support. There are resources that are highly developed and financially supported for policy and skills training for social work staff. The nature of the work itself supports work teams for purposes such as case management and coverage of emergency services, and many agencies have adopted management principles which use work teams for quality improvement. The fact that these are activities which may be driven more by external forces, may explain why they have high participation, but lower impact.

Institutional support for formal education through tuition reimbursement has diminished over time. Time away from casework responsibilities to take classes, even outside of usual work hours may contribute to less participation. For many agencies, an advanced degree does not mean a differential in salary or advancement. However, for those who participate in formal education and professional licensing, the process is more requires significant investment of time and energy and yields a tangible result, a degree or

a license, which may account for the perceived positive impact of the two activities on practice. Like the Gleeson (1992) study, this study confirmed that activities which could be characterized as "life experiences", "self-directed learning", and supervision were important.

What relationship exists among employee characteristics and patterns of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities of Social Workers in local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia?

The level of degree held is significantly associated with participation in supervision. Those with a masters or professional degree participate significantly less in supervision, either being supervised or supervising others, than those with a bachelors degree. Those with higher degrees participate more and have participated more recently in professional writing and professional licensure, and highly rate the impact on practice of those activities.

The number of years of experience is significantly associated with mandatory training, mentoring, formal peer interaction, and professional membership. The results of the analysis of CPD activities seem to suggest that there is a maturation process that changes the usefulness of some CPD activities over time. Supervision and other more formal activities, such as formal education, mandatory training, formal peer interaction, and professional membership was most prevalent with those who had been employed for a year or less. Unlike the Gleeson (1992) study, the study found that the role of supervision

may diminish in importance as workers remain in employment in local social services in Virginia.

The results suggest that informal processes of learning are most important in the professional development of public welfare social workers. This becomes more significant with increased years of experience. Activities which are more reflective in nature have low participation, even though they have high significance for those who do participate.

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

A considerable strength of the study was the contribution of focus groups and an expert panel in assisting to operationalize Continuing Professional Development activities to survey. As Cervero suggested (1995), when a professional group has uniquely identifying characteristics, it is best to have the assistance of those professionals in defining their continuing professional development. The further assistance of an expert panel of adult educators added conceptual clarity to the study.

Another strength of the study was knowledge of the study population. Having a list of who is included in a population and some identifying characteristics is a rare gift in survey research. Having updates of that information over time also added understanding of how to plan for some of the effects of employee turnover in the population and to compare known employee characteristics over time. The LAPS listings obtained with permission from the Virginia Department of Social Services were invaluable.

Perceptions play a strong role in research. How a factor is perceived can contribute both positively and negatively. One such factor was the support for the study by

the Virginia Department of Social Services and the League of Social Services Executives. It is always difficult to know how organizational support for an undertaking will be viewed by individuals who will be affected by the effort.

A limitation of the study relates to the nature of survey research which is dependent on a satisfactory return rate. Generalizabilty of results is weakened by the overall response rate of 62.7%. A reminder that return rates for some of the Agency Classes was proportionately higher or lower than sampled is also appropriate. The response rate was affected by mailing the surveys during a holiday season which is a particularly busy time in service program caseloads. A confounding variable may have been individuals' willingness to participate in the study based on apprehensions about their responses remaining confidential; particularly if the study was perceived as being conducted for a "third party" such as the Virginia Department of Social Services or the League of Social Services Executives.

Generalizing to other "apparently" similar populations is also limited, not only for the usual reasons of statistical validity and reliability, but because it is important to consult professionals themselves about their professional development. This is particularly true when the profession has unique characteristics that set it apart from a well-defined profession. The study population itself has changed in the few months since the survey due to impacts of turnover, technological and social policy changes.

A final caution is that the study population is dominated by the number of staff whose program/ practice area is Child Welfare. By sheer numbers, their responses can

overwhelm responses of the other program areas. By the same token, if that is the

program area in which most public welfare social workers are working, it is important to

know their characteristics and CPD activities.

Recommendations

Recommendations to Adult Educators

1.   The use of qualitative methodologies, focus groups and an expert panel, in the

developmental stages of the study helped focus the study and develop relevant tools for

the quantitative research. Consider the similar use of qualitative methods, particularly for

studies of professional groups which are unique or not well-defined.

2.   The findings of the study identified the importance of "shadowing" for continuing

professional development of the study population. Study shadowing further to determine

how it differs from activities such as coaching and mentoring.

3.   Explore shadowing with other professional, paraprofessional and marginalized

groups to determine if it is an activity that is important to other professions.

4.   Study the continuing professional development activities of other groups which are

considered "marginalized" or paraprofessional by a professional field of practice for CPD

activities which may be uniquely important.

5.   Explore further the continuing professional development activities of experienced

professionals. Determine if there is a maturational process which predicts a shift in the

importance of certain learning activities.

6.   Operationalize self-directed and life-long learning in the context of continuing professional development; particularly in consideration of the importance of "informal" delivery systems.

Recommendations to Social Work Professionals

1.   Casework supervision is a hallmark of the professional education of social workers. Supervision in public welfare agencies is not regarded as highly as many other learning activities and diminishes in importance over time. Evaluate whether professional social workers could assist practitioners in public welfare to understand and embrace its importance.

2.   Reflective practice and critical thinking are also highly supported in professional social work preparation. Consider whether professional social work has a role in promoting them in the public welfare arena.

3.   Evaluate whether professional social work incorporates activities that are found to be important in professional development by those in public welfare practice; particularly in educating social workers who will enter public welfare practice.

Recommendations to Organizations Employing Public Welfare Social Workers

1.   Explore ways to become aware of and acknowledge the variety of CPD activities that may be undertaken by staff members. Use the findings of the study to assist in identifying activities.

2.   Many of the CPD activities identified by the study do not have any clearly identifiable organizational support and may have organizational barriers. Identify barriers

which can be removed. Determine which activities should receive organizational support and which can and will receive support.

3. Determine the organization's view of supervision in relation to continuing professional development.

4. Analyze the contribution of shadowing to professional development. Determine how it could be refined.

5. There appears t o be a change in CPD needs, over time, from more formal, required participation to more informal, personal, reflective activities. Evaluate whether the organization does or could support more experienced staff in this way.

6. Adult Services and Child Welfare differ in the longevity of workers in public welfare social work. Adult Services workers seem to participate less in CPD activities. It may be a result of their longevity, or differences in program needs, or lack of organizational attention to their CPD needs. This warrants further study.

Recommendation to the Social Workers of local Departments of Social Services or

Welfare in Virginia

1. Employee evaluations generally ask about the continuing professional development of the employee. Use the activities identified by colleagues in Virginia to assess personal development. Review personal participation to determine if there are other activities that that would enhance professional development. Be prepared to articulate those.

2. Analyze the level of personal participation in continuing professional development.

3.   Examine the kinds of activities undertaken and determine whether they are self-directed or other directed and what that means for personal professional growth.

4.   Identify barriers to participation in activities which would promote personal continuing professional development and decide what creates the barriers.

5.   Identify ways to overcome the barriers and practice or advocate appropriate strategies to do so.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Survey

SURVEY OF
CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)
ACTIVITIES

Confidential Survey of Social Workers
in
Local Departments of Social Services or Welfare
in
Virginia

Doctoral Study

VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY

Dear Colleague,

I need your help! I am requesting your assistance in my role as a Ph.D. candidate at Virginia Commonwealth University in Urban Services, Adult Education and Training.
I want to explore how you and your Social Services colleagues have developed professionally since you were hired . I want to better understand how you continue to learn what is necessary to be able to do your work and stay current in practice.

To accomplish this, I am conducting a survey research study for my dissertation, *Patterns of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Activities of Social Workers in Local Department of Social Services and Welfare in Virginia.* You can contribute to the research by completing this survey.

You were randomly chosen to receive a survey from among all individuals employed in the Social Work/Social Work Supervision classification series in Local Departments of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia. You are one of only 315 professionals selected to receive a survey. You and others surveyed will represent approximately 1750 of your colleagues across Virginia. Therefore, your responses are extremely important to fairly represent the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of Social Workers in public Social services in Virginia.

The Continuing Professional Development (CPD) section of the survey instrument (Part I) was developed with the assistance of your professional peers. Focus groups with experienced and new staff helped to determine its content and structure.

Survey responses will be analyzed to construct a profile of Continuing Professional Development (CPD), both formal and informal, of Social Work staff in Social Services in Virginia. Survey responses will also be studied for any patterns or trends in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) among staff. The results are anticipated to contribute in a relevant and practical way to the planning and offering of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities for Social Work Staff.

I hope you will choose to participate by completing and returning the survey in the self-addressed, postage-paid envelope provided by
12 NOON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12TH
Thank you for your contribution to better understanding the Continuing Professional Development of Social Workers in public Social Services in Virginia!

Anita H. Prince

ABOUT THE SURVEY:

The survey is divided into two parts, Part I the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Activities Inventory, containing 20 items; and Part II the Personal Data Form (PDF), containing 12 items

ABOUT PART I.   **CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD) ACTIVITIES INVENTORY**

Each item contained in the CPD inventory section of the survey represents a <u>type of activity</u> you might undertake to further your professional development. For each item, you are first given a definition <u>and</u> an example of that particular type of activity. Then you are asked to respond to three questions about the item (type of activity):

- Have you have EVER engaged in the particular type of activity, "YES" or "NO"

- If "YES", have you engaged in that type of activity WITHIN THE LAST 3 YEARS, "YES" or "NO"

- and IF "YES" to EITHER, your assessment of that type of activity's impact on your practice, that is, contributing in a positive or meaningful way. The response range for "impact on your practice" is from low to high:
  ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐
  HIGH   **LOW**

ABOUT PART II.   **PERSONAL DATA FORM (PDF)**

The purpose of the Personal Data Form (PDF) section of the survey is to collect important employment and education-related information about you and your Social Services colleagues. Personal and identifying information about you, individually, <u>will not</u> be reported. Please refer to the specific *ASSURANCES* regarding confidentiality on the back cover of the survey.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE SURVEY:

The instrument may be completed in pen or pencil. Black ink or #2 pencil are recommended. Please read each item carefully and respond by marking or shading the appropriate box. Please take care in marking your response.

Space is provided at the end of the survey for you to <u>add and rate</u> any other types of CPD activities which you do not believe are otherwise addressed by the survey items. If you require more space, please use available "white space" at the end of the survey.

Please write any explanations or comments related to your responses in as concise and clear a way as possible so valuable points are not "lost in translation".

For purposes of this survey, "social worker" refers to any position included in the Social Work/Social Work Supervision classification series for public social services in Virginia (VR 615-01-90, p. 1386), or any equivalent position in another state, i.e., Senior Social Work Supervisor, Social Work Supervisor, Principle Social Worker, Child Protective Services Worker II, Senior Social Worker, Child Protective Services Worker I, and Social Worker.

"Employed" means work for pay. Other work which is unpaid, such as volunteering and education-related practicums/ internships should not be included in your responses.

"Months/years" refers to a span of time not whether a job was full- or part-time. For example, 20 hours per week part-time from January, 1996-January, 1997 would be reported as 1 year.

TIME NEEDED TO COMPLETE THE SURVEY
The time needed to complete the survey will vary according to your professional history and experience and the time you wish to invest in completing it. Many are able to complete the survey in *30 minutes or less*.

PART I.   CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD) ACTIVITIES INVENTORY

For each activity you will find a definition and an example, please

- indicate whether or not you have EVER engaged in the activity for your continuing professional development (CPD), "YES" or "NO"

- if your answer is "YES", indicate whether or not you have engaged in the activity WITHIN THE LAST 3 YEARS, "YES" or "NO"

- and if you answer "YES" to EITHER of the questions, indicate your assessment of that type of activity's impact on your practice, that is contributing in a positive or meaningful way, by rating it having "low" impact to having "high" impact

"Engaged in an activity" means any participation in that type of activity within a span of time, regardless of how often or how long you engaged in the type of activity. For example, attendance at one or ten training events within the last three years would both be recorded as a "yes" response to engaged in the activity within the last three years.

Space is provided at the end of the survey for adding and rating any continuing professional development activities you feel are not otherwise included and should be included.

1. FORMAL EDUCATION

Definition: College or university sponsored coursework or programs
leading to a degree or professional certification

Example: You take a class for college or university credit

Have you EVER engaged in this type of activity? If, "NO", go to the next numbered item.

☐   ☐

YES   NO

If "YES", have you engaged in the activity WITHIN THE LAST 3 YEARS?

☐   ☐
YES   NO

If "YES" TO EITHER, your assessment of the activity's impact on your practice, ranging from low to high. (Mark one box.)

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐
LOW   HIGH

2. TRAINING: AGENCY-SPONSORED IN-SERVICE TRAINING (MANDATORY)

Definition: Instructional experiences provided by an employer and designed to develop new skills, knowledge, and attitudes which are job-specific and can be applied immediately and which YOU ARE REQUIRED TO ATTEND

Example: You attend policy training on new Foster Care policy.

Have you EVER engaged in this type of activity? If, "NO", go to the next numbered item.

☐　　　　☐
YES　　　NO

If "YES", have you engaged in the activity WITHIN THE LAST 3 YEARS?

☐　　　　☐
YES　　　NO

If "YES" TO EITHER, your assessment of the activity's impact on your practice, ranging from low to high. (Mark one box.)

☐　☐　☐　☐　☐
LOW　　　　　　HIGH

3. TRAINING: **AGENCY-SPONSORED IN-SERVICE TRAINING (VOLUNTARY)**

Definition: Instructional experiences provided by an employer and designed to develop new skills, knowledge, and attitudes which are job-specific and can be applied immediately and which YOU MAY OPT TO ATTEND

Example: You learn about a half-day workshop or seminar on fetal alcohol syndrome sponsored by your Community Services Board through a flyer/circular posted in your agency. As a result, you register for and attend the event.

Have you EVER engaged in this type of activity? If, "NO", go to the next numbered item.

☐ ☐
YES NO

If "YES", have you engaged in the activity WITHIN THE LAST 3 YEARS?

☐ ☐
YES NO

If "YES" TO EITHER, your assessment of the activity's impact on your practice, ranging from low to high. (Mark <u>one</u> box.)

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
LOW HIGH

4. SUPERVISION

Definition: Structured on-the-job training with emphasis on structure and
control and where there is an organizationally defined
relationship between a superior and a subordinate

Example: Your superior reads your case records for compliance with
policy and procedures and provides feedback and instruction
on your work.

You monitor and evaluate the casework skills of five
subordinates

Have you EVER engaged in this type of activity? If, "NO", go to the next numbered
item.

☐   ☐
YES   NO

If "YES", have you engaged in the activity WITHIN THE LAST 3 YEARS?

☐   ☐
YES   NO

If "YES" TO EITHER, your assessment of the activity's impact on your practice,
ranging from low to high. (Mark one box.)

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐
LOW   HIGH

5. MENTORING

Definition: A process to assist with career development, often informal, matching experienced with newer employees.

Example: An experienced co-worker, who is not assigned an organizational role as your superior, recommends you volunteer to serve on an important committee to gain experience and recognition.

You "adopt" a newer co-worker to help them learn the organizational culture.

Have you EVER engaged in this type of activity? If, "NO", go to the next numbered item.

☐   ☐
YES   NO

If "YES", have you engaged in the activity WITHIN THE LAST 3 YEARS?

☐   ☐
YES   NO

If "YES" TO EITHER, your assessment of the activity's impact on your practice, ranging from low to high. (Mark <u>one</u> box.)

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐
LOW   HIGH

6. COACHING

Definition: A process through which an individual supports the learning or performance improvement of another through active support-- observation, suggestions for performance improvement, feedback.

Example: You are conducting a family group session using a Structural Family Therapy approach and a peer behind a 2-way mirror "rings in" by phone with suggestions as you proceed.

Have you EVER engaged in this type of activity? If, "NO", go to the next numbered item.

☐   ☐
YES   NO

If "YES", have you engaged in the activity WITHIN THE LAST 3 YEARS?

☐   ☐
YES   NO

If "YES" TO EITHER, your assessment of the activity's impact on your practice, ranging from low to high. (Mark one box.)

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
LOW   HIGH

7. SHADOWING

Definition: Learning by accompanying/following another person and observing their work activities.

Example: You are assigned to spend 1 week with an experienced staff member during which time you observe all of their work activities.
You do a "ride along" with a police officer.

Have you EVER engaged in this type of activity? If, "NO", go to the next numbered item.

☐   ☐
YES   NO

If "YES", have you engaged in the activity WITHIN THE LAST 3 YEARS?

☐   ☐
YES   NO

If "YES" TO EITHER, your assessment of the activity's impact on your practice, ranging from low to high. (Mark one box.)

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐
LOW   HIGH

8. PEER INTERACTION: FORMAL

Definition: Formally structured written or oral feedback from organizationally defined "equals" on performance, as in case staffings.

Example: You are preparing a case for a court hearing. You ask members of your unit to staff the case by reviewing your case record and providing written feedback; you ask members of your unit to observe your mock testimony and provide feedback.

Have you EVER engaged in this type of activity? If, "NO", go to the next numbered item.

☐	☐
YES	NO

If "YES", have you engaged in the activity WITHIN THE LAST 3 YEARS?

☐	☐
YES	NO

If "YES" TO EITHER, your assessment of the activity's impact on your practice, ranging from low to high. (Mark one box.)

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
LOW				HIGH

9. PEER INTERACTION: INFORMAL

Definition: Communications with co-workers in an informal atmosphere to share feedback on topics of common interest

Example: Over lunch, several staff members from the eligibility and services staff discuss changes in workflow produced by welfare reform requirements.

Have you EVER engaged in this type of activity? If, "NO", go to the next numbered item.

☐   ☐
YES   NO

If "YES", have you engaged in the activity WITHIN THE LAST 3 YEARS?

☐   ☐
YES   NO

If "YES" TO EITHER, your assessment of the activity's impact on your practice, ranging from low to high. (Mark one box.)

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐
LOW   HIGH

10. INSTRUCTING OTHERS

Definition: Leading or facilitating instructional experiences for others which are designed to develop in them new skills, knowledge and attitudes.; instruction of a learner by another learner.

Example: You train Virginia Institute for Social Services Practitioners (VISSTA) courses.

One member of the unit is sent to regional training on the new Child Welfare data system, OASIS. That person teaches other unit members back at the work site.

Have you EVER engaged in this type of activity? If, "NO", go to the next numbered item.

☐   ☐
YES   NO

If "YES", have you engaged in the activity WITHIN THE LAST 3 YEARS?

☐   ☐
YES   NO

If "YES" TO EITHER, your assessment of the activity's impact on your practice, ranging from low to high. (Mark one box.)

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐
LOW   HIGH

11. INSTRUCTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Definition: Creating and producing learning activities and materials for others.

Example: You write activities and develop materials/handouts for a 3-hour workshop on "dealing with stress in the workplace" which someone else instructs.

Have you EVER engaged in this type of activity? If, "NO", go to the next numbered item.

☐   ☐
YES   NO

If "YES", have you engaged in the activity WITHIN THE LAST 3 YEARS?

☐   ☐
YES   NO

If "YES" TO EITHER, your assessment of the activity's impact on your practice, ranging from low to high. (Mark one box.)

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐
LOW   HIGH

12. COMPUTER-BASED LEARNING

Definition: Technology-based learning that includes all forms of use of computers in support of learning.

Example: You browse a website on-line to learn more about <u>sudden infant death syndrome</u> (SIDS).

You learn or improve keyboarding skill using a computer tutorial for typing practice.

Have you EVER engaged in this type of activity? If, "NO", go to the next numbered item.

☐   ☐
YES   NO

If "YES", have you engaged in the activity WITHIN THE LAST 3 YEARS?

☐   ☐
YES   NO

If "YES" TO EITHER, your assessment of the activity's impact on your practice, ranging from low to high. (Mark <u>one</u> box.)

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐
LOW   HIGH

13. **MEMBERSHIP/PARTICIPATION ON WORK-RELATED COMMITTEES AND TEAMS**

Definition: Membership/participation on committees and teams related to the kind of work you perform or associated with your employment, whether assigned or required by your employer or for which you volunteer

Example: You serve on the locality's child protective services multi-disciplinary team.

You are assigned to serve on a disaster response team for your community.

You volunteer as a tutor through your local Literacy Council to work with welfare recipients who want to get their GED.

Have you EVER engaged in this type of activity? If, "NO", go to the next numbered item.

☐	☐
YES	NO

If "YES", have you engaged in the activity WITHIN THE LAST 3 YEARS?

☐	☐
YES	NO

If "YES" TO EITHER, your assessment of the activity's impact on your practice, ranging from low to high. (Mark one box.)

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
LOW				HIGH

14. PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS, CONFERENCES OR SYMPOSIA

Definition: Attendance at events sponsored by and for professional organizations and associations **WHETHER OR NOT YOU ARE A MEMBER** of the sponsoring organization or association.

Example: You attend the Child Welfare League's (CWLA) annual conference.

You attend the American Public Welfare Association's (APWA) state conference.

Have you **EVER** engaged in this type of activity? If, "NO", go to the next numbered item.

☐   ☐
YES   NO

If "YES", have you engaged in the activity **WITHIN THE LAST 3 YEARS?**

☐   ☐
YES   NO

If "YES" TO EITHER, your assessment of the activity's impact on your practice, ranging from low to high. (Mark <u>one</u> box.)

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐
LOW   HIGH

15. PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

      Definition: You belong to a professional organization or association.

      Example: You belong to the Alliance of Social Work Practitioners.

Have you EVER engaged in this type of activity? If, "NO", go to the next numbered item.

☐   ☐
YES   **NO**

If "YES", have you engaged in the activity WITHIN THE LAST 3 YEARS?

☐   ☐
YES   **NO**

If "YES" TO EITHER, your assessment of the activity's impact on your practice, ranging from low to high. (Mark one box.)

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐
LOW   **HIGH**

16. PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE/CERTIFICATION

Definition: Certification--Voluntarily completing a process through a professional association or organization to establish competency in a field of practice.
Licensure--A required process administered by a governmental body or other governing group.

Example: You submit evidence of your education and experience to the American Association for Protecting Children to qualify for their certificate (certification)/

You complete all educational, experience and testing requirements to apply for and achieve licensure as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) in Virginia (licensure).

Have you EVER engaged in this type of activity? If, "NO", go to the next numbered item.

☐   ☐
YES   NO

If "YES", have you engaged in the activity WITHIN THE LAST 3 YEARS?

☐   ☐
YES   NO

If "YES" TO EITHER, your assessment of the activity's impact on your practice, ranging from low to high. (Mark one box.)

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐
LOW   HIGH

17. TESTING/INVENTORIES

Definition: Preparation for taking a qualifying test, whether or not the test is taken or passed; taking tests or completing inventories, whether third-party or self-administered, with or without prior preparation.

Example: You study for the LCSW exam; you study to take the child protective services test to be exempted from VISSTA CORE training; you complete the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory (MBTI).

Have you EVER engaged in this type of activity? If, "NO", go to the next numbered item.

☐   ☐
YES   NO

If "YES", have you engaged in the activity WITHIN THE LAST 3 YEARS?

☐   ☐
YES   NO

If "YES" TO EITHER, your assessment of the activity's impact on your practice, ranging from low to high. (Mark one box.)

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
LOW   HIGH

18. PROFESSIONAL READING

      Definition: Reading books, journals and other publications written by and for professionals.

      Example: You read <u>Child Welfare</u>.

Have you EVER engaged in this type of activity? If, "NO", go to the next numbered item.

      ☐   ☐
      YES   NO

If "YES", have you engaged in the activity WITHIN THE LAST 3 YEARS?

      ☐   ☐
      YES   NO

If "YES" TO EITHER, your assessment of the activity's impact on your practice, ranging from low to high. (Mark <u>one</u> box.)

      ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐
      LOW   HIGH

19. PROFESSIONAL WRITING AND CRITIQUE

Definition: Any writing or critique of writing, such as papers, articles, commentaries, scripts, books, whether published or not, related to the practice of social work and/or public welfare. This does not include written requirements of routine casework or case management and reporting.

Example: You write an article for the Virginia Child Protection Newsletter.

You serve on a committee to review draft policy.

You are asked to review "for accuracy" the script for a new made-for-TV movie on an adoptee's search for his biological parents.

Have you EVER engaged in this type of activity? If, "NO", go to the next numbered item.

☐   ☐
YES   NO

If "YES", have you engaged in the activity WITHIN THE LAST 3 YEARS?

☐   ☐
YES   NO

If "YES" TO EITHER, your assessment of the activity's impact on your practice, ranging from low to high. (Mark one box.)

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐
LOW   HIGH

20. REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Definition: Introspective self-analysis and awareness of how experiences have contributed to professional practice and mastery.

Example: Maintaining a professional journal.

Completing this survey.

Have you EVER engaged in this type of activity? If, "NO", go to the next numbered item.

☐   ☐
YES   NO

If "YES", have you engaged in the activity WITHIN THE LAST 3 YEARS?

☐   ☐
YES   NO

If "YES" TO EITHER, your assessment of the activity's impact on your practice, ranging from low to high. (Mark one box.)

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐
LOW   HIGH

Add and rate any Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities which you believe have not been included in the survey items.

ACTIVITY:

Definition:

Example:

Have you engaged in the activity **WITHIN THE LAST 3 YEARS?**

☐   ☐
YES   **NO**

If "YES" your assessment of the activity's impact on your practice, ranging from low to high. (Mark <u>one</u> box.)

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐
LOW   **HIGH**

ACTIVITY:

Definition:

Example:

Have you engaged in the activity WITHIN THE LAST 3 YEARS?

☐
YES

☐
NO

If "YES" your assessment of the activity's impact on your practice, ranging from low to high. (Mark <u>one</u> box.)

☐　☐　☐　☐　☐
LOW　　　　　　HIGH

PART II.   PERSONAL DATA FORM (PDF)

1. **What is your current job classification?**

☐ Social Worker
☐ Child Protective Services Worker I
☐ Senior Social Worker
☐ Child Protective Services Worker II

☐ Principle Social Worker
☐ Social Work Supervisor
☐ Senior Social Work Supervisor
☐ Other _____
    (PLEASE SPECIFY)

2. **What is the total time you have been employed <u>in your current job classification</u> ?**

☐ less than 3 months ____
☐ 3 to 6 months ____
☐ 7 months to 1 year ____

☐ 1 year or more, but less than 3 ____
☐ 3 years or more, but less than 5 ____
☐ 5 years or more, but less than 10 ____
☐ 10 years or more ____

3. **What is the total time you have been employed <u>as a social worker</u> in a local Department of Social Services or Welfare <u>in Virginia</u> ? (Include all time spent in job classifications listed in Question #1.)**

☐ less than 3 months ____
☐ 3 to 6 months ____
☐ 7 months to 1 year ____

☐ 1 year or more, but less than 3 ____
☐ 3 years or more, but less than 5 ____
☐ 5 years or more, but less than 10 ____
☐ 10 years or more ____

4. What is the total time you have been employed as a <u>social worker</u> with any agency <u>other than a local</u> Department of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia?

☐ none
☐ less than 3 months ____   ☐ more than 1 year, but less than 3 ____
☐ 3 to 6 months ____   ☐ more than 3 years, but less than 5 ____
☐ 7 months to 1 year ____   ☐ more than 5 years, but less than 10 ____
☐ 10 years or more ____

5. With what other agencies/organizations were you employed as a social worker (check all that apply)?

☐ Other Local Government ☐ in Virginia ☐ outside of Virginia
☐ State Government ☐ in Virginia ☐ outside of Virginia
☐ Other Government ☐ in Virginia ☐ outside of Virginia
☐ Non-Profit ☐ in Virginia ☐ outside of Virginia
☐ For Profit ☐ in Virginia ☐ outside of Virginia

6. What is your current primary program/practice area?

☐ Generic   ☐ Child Welfare   ☐ Adult Services
　　　　　　　☐ Child Protection   ☐ Adult Protection
　　　　　　　☐ Foster Care
　　　　　　　☐ Adoption
☐ Other Services (PLEASE SPECIFY)_____

7. What is the program/practice area where you have the most experience?

☐ Generic   ☐ Child Welfare   ☐ Adult Services
             ☐ Child Protection   ☐ Adult Protection
             ☐ Foster Care
             ☐ Adoption
☐ Other Services (PLEASE SPECIFY)_____

8. What is your highest degree?

☐ No Degree ☐ Bachelor   ☐ Doctorate
☐ Associate ☐ Master   ☐ Other _____
                                    (PLEASE SPECIFY)

9. What is the major or specialization of your highest degree?

☐ Social Work
☐ Psychology
☐ Sociology
☐ Counseling (PLEASE SPECIFY): _____

☐ Human Services Related (e.g., child development, community services)
                (PLEASE SPECIFY): _____
☐ Other (PLEASE SPECIFY):_____

10. What was your highest degree at the time of your first employment with a Department of Social Services or Welfare in Virginia?

☐ No Degree ☐ Bachelor   ☐ Doctorate
☐ Associate ☐ Master   ☐ Other _____
                              (PLEASE SPECIFY)

11. What was the major or specialization of your highest degree at the time of your first employment with a Department of Social Services of Welfare in Virginia?

☐ Social Work
☐ Psychology
☐ Sociology
☐ Counseling (PLEASE SPECIFY):_____
☐ Human Services Related (e.g., child development, community services)
            (PLEASE SPECIFY):_____
☐ Other (PLEASE SPECIFY):_____

12. What is your agency's FIPS Code/Locality Number? ☐☐☐

Thank you for your contribution to better defining the practice of social work in public social services in Virginia by completing this survey and encouraging your colleagues to do the same!

ASSURANCES

The Virginia Department of Social Services
has on file a written agreement by the
researcher "to honor basic principles of
confidentiality throughout and beyond the study".

Specific assurances to respondents by the researcher include:

- use of a PO Drawer, provided by the researcher, dedicated to collection of surveys for this study
- coding of surveys to protect identifying information, as necessary, for data processing and analysis by anyone other than the researcher
- aggregate and otherwise non-identifying reporting of results

Appendix B

Approval Request

April 10, 1995

Mr. Ray C. Goodwin
Deputy Commissioner
Virginia Department of Social Services

███████████

Dear Mr. Goodwin:

I am writing in my role as a candidate for the Ph.D. in Urban Services from Virginia
Commonwealth University. My concentration is Adult Education and Training, with a cognate in
Social Work. The title of my proposed Dissertation study is, " An Exploration of Patterns of
Continuing Professional Development Activities of Social Work Staff of Local Departments of
Social Services/Welfare in Virginia.

I am seeking **permission** from the Department to obtain an enumeration of staff in the Social
Work/Social Supervision classification series from LAPS by **region. locality, position number,
last name, first initial, date of entry in the job classification, educational level, current class,
and function codes (three fields)**. I am requesting name data with the understanding that all
information will be confidential and anonymous, and that data gathered from the study will be
reported in aggregate and otherwise non-identifying ways. The reasons that I am requesting name
data, and not merely worker identification numbers, are consistent with good survey research
methodology and include:

> 1) **personalization** of the request to participate in the survey which is known **to improve
> response rate**; response rate is a key determinant of the integrity of information gathered
> through a survey
> 2) the ability **to follow-up with non-respondents**, which helps to identify possible bias.
> poor design, or key factors not related to research bias and design but which are otherwise
> significant to the study

I am also seeking **support** by means of a signature of an appropriate representative of the State
office on a letter which explains the study, addresses confidentiality, reporting and use of results,
and encourages participation. I have enclosed a draft example for your consideration. The letter
would accompany the statewide mailing of the proposed survey instrument.

The **thrust** of the study I am proposing is to 1) construct a profile of Continuing Professional
Development (CPD) Activities, both formal and informal, of Social Work Staff of Local
Departments of Social Services/Welfare in Virginia and 2) to analyze that information for any
patterns or trends, **which may prove informative to various stakeholders**, particularly the
Department and its professional development providers.

The proposed **method** of the study is survey research, employing a stratified random sample (by agency class I-IV) of local staff in the social work series, enumerated in the Local Agency Personnel System (LAPS), whose job classification falls into the Social Work/Social Work Supervision classification series as defined by VR 615-01-90, p. 1386.

Since no appropriate instrument exists, a survey instrument specific to the study will be constructed as follows:

> seek the Department's approval to obtain a listing from the Local Agency Personnel System (LAPS) which enumerates staff in the Social Work/Social Work Supervision job classification series by region, locality, position number, last name, first initial, date of entry in the job classification, educational level, current class, and function codes (three fields);

> contact a local agency (or agencies) in the metropolitan Richmond area willing to participate in a focus group process;

> from within the agency (or agencies), construct a focus group comprised of 6-12 representative members of the study population identified through the random process and invite them to participate;

> solicit focus group members' assistance in framing questions for a draft survey by asking them to respond to broad questions relating to the "nature" of their participation in CPD activities (e.g., formal, informal, or both), the "time and timing" of participation in CPD activities (e.g., frequency, continuity , longevity), the "extent" of participation ("intensity", "commitment"), felt needs or stimuli for participation, and supports or barriers to participation;

> use input from the focus group to synthesize and refine a draft survey;

> verify the content of the survey with the same or a similar focus group;

> send a pilot survey instrument to a small sample (25-30 individuals) from the LAPS list not selected as subjects for the study;

> pending review and approval of the resulting instrument by a representative of the League of Social Services Executives and the State Department of Social Services, send a mailed, self-administered questionnaire with an accompanying letter of support to approximately 300 social work staff of local agencies in Virginia.

The **value** of such a study is the information it can provide to a variety of stakeholders. It should prove especially relevant for the State and Local Departments in support of existing and future program planning, needs assessment strategies, innovations for delivery, and outcome/evaluation designs for the training and development of a key class of employees.

It is worth noting that no such study has been undertaken with any professional group, moreover any professionally marginalized group. In addition to a very applied research outcome for Virginia, there is potential for this study to break some ground in a positive and noteworthy way in both the fields of adult education and social work.

Based on referrals from the President of the League and the State office, I have spoken with two representatives of the League of Social Services Executives, Shirley Culpepper and Mary Katherine Foster, who have expressed interest and preliminary support of the study on behalf of their colleagues.

My dissertation research, as proposed, is completely dependent on a listing of social work staff (with or without names). Let me acknowledge how busy I know you are and how much I appreciate your willingness to consider my request, in as timely a manner as is possible.

Please contact me with any questions, concerns, or instructions at ███████████ or ████████ ████

Sincerely,

Anita H. Prince

Appendix C

Letter of Authorization

COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

xx ARTHUR JACKSON
xx COMMISSIONER

Carol A. Brunty
Commissioner

May 9, 1995

Ms. Anita H. Prince
VISSTA
School of Social Work
Virginia Commonwealth University

Post-it® Fax Note	7671	Date 5/9/95	# of pages 1
To Ms. An. T.H. Prince		From Vincent Jordan	
Co./Dept. Scool of Social WK		Co. Dept Social Services	
Phone #		Phone #	
Fax # ▮▮▮▮		Fax # ▮▮▮▮	

Dear Ms. Prince:

Last week, Deputy Commissioner Goodwin asked me to respond to your
letter dated April 10, 1995.

The department is willing to provide you the data you requested to
conduct your study. Though the Department is not willing to sign a
cover letter that explains the study, addresses confidentiality,
reporting and use of results, the Department insists that such a
letter accompany the survey instruments. In addition, the
Department will need your written agreement to honor basic
principles of confidentiality throughout and beyond the study.

If you accept these conditions, you may contact Ms. Diane Carter at
▮▮▮▮▮, to conclude on arrangements to provide the personnel data
specified in your letter.

Good luck.

Sincerely,
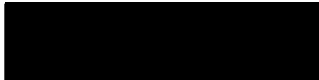
Vincent J. Jordan
Acting Director
Human Resource Management

c: Deputy Commissioner Goodwin
   Larry Mason, Division of Service Programs
   Diane Carter

Vssit
PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE

An Equal Opportunity Agency

Appendix D

Focus Group Agenda

FOCUS GROUP
CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
AGENDA

FEBRUARY 27, 1995

WELCOME AND BRIEF INTRODUCTION   5:30-5:50
    STATEMENT OF THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
    DEFINITION OF FOCUS GROUP
    INTRODUCTION OF PARTICIPANTS
    ROLES
    AGENDA

FRAMEWORK OF CPD FOR BRAINSTORMING   5:50-6:30
    WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER CPD?
    THE NATURE OF YOUR PARTICIPATION?
        Formal v. Informal
        Within what period of time?
        Over what period of time?
        Frequency?

INDIVIDUAL BRAINSTORMING OF CPD ACTIVITIES   6:30-6:40

PROCESSING OF INDIVIDUAL RESPONSES   6:40-6:50
    SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

GROUP BRAINSTORMING OF ADDITIONS   6:50-6:55

CATEGORY BUILDING AND CONSENSUS   6:55-7:25
    EMERGING CATEGORIES
    COMPARISON TO OTHER MODELS

KUDOS AND WRAP-UP   7:25-7:30

Appendix E

Letter of Request for Focus Group

May 21, 1995

Suzanne Fleming
Chief of Social Work
Chesterfield-Colonial Heights
Department of Social Services
Chesterfield, VA 23832 :

Dear Suzanne:

I appreciate your willingness to consider my request to involve service staff from your agency in conducting a focus group related to my dissertation research. I have enclosed a letter that I was asked to submit to the State Department of Social Services to explain the study and my request to them to obtain information related to the study. I believe that it will prove helpful in providing you with information about what I hope to study as well as some sense of the scope of the study. I am also enclosing a letter from the Department which grants my request for information and, I believe, gives some "blessing" to the project.

Aside from my contact with the State Department of Social Services, I want to restate that I am making a **personal request related to my dissertation study**. I am requesting the involvement of representatives of your service staff in relation to my study. Specifically, I am requesting the involvement of both supervisory and line staff, 6 to 10 individuals, in a three to four-hour focus group. The purpose of the focus group will be to help define formal and informal staff development activities to be incorporated into a survey to conduct a statewide study of the participation of service staff in continuing professional development activities. There is no advance preparation required for participants. The plan for the study does call for a review of a draft survey by either members of the same focus group or a similar focus group. I would estimate that might require an additional 30 minutes to an hour of a participant's time, but does not have to be done as a group process and could be done in a convenient way for individual participants. It is also possible to use a different group from your own or a different agency to "verify" the survey. During the statewide sample, it is likely that members of your service staff would be randomly selected to receive a survey to complete.

I would be willing to conduct the focus group at my residence, which is within five miles of the agency and would provide refreshments and a light meal. I would give credit for the agency's support in the dissertation and any subsequent publications resulting from the study. I would give individual credit to participants if given permission to do so.

In exchange for the agency's release of staff for the group, I would be pleased to conduct a seminar or workshop for your agency of an equivalent time (at least a half day) and on a topic and with a group we agree would be appropriate to your needs and my content expertise. I will also

share appropriate aggregate data with the agency where it does not compromise confidentiality and anonymity of participants and would benefit the agency and its staff.

Due to the constraints of time for my dissertation study, I would like to arrange to conduct the focus group within the next 30 days. I would also like to commit to a time no more than six weeks in the future to conduct the reciprocal training or seminar for the agency.

I appreciated your willingness to consider this request and approach for their interest and willingness to participate. I believe that if we can learn more about the efforts service staff in Virginia are making to further their professional development we can find creative ways to support them in those efforts and recognize them for what they do out of professional commitment.

I look forward to hearing from you soon!

Sincerely,

Anita Prince

Appendix F

Department Broadcast

```
    Options - Type X       Priority x,  Confidential  ,  Acknowledge  ,
                                    SPEED MEMO
    From: mxm2    /SYS1                          Date: 11.21.97  16:29
       To:     :     ,        ,        ,        ,        ,        ,        ,
        :              ,              ,              ,              ,       ,
       CC:        ,        ,        ,        ,        ,        ,        ,
        :           ,              ,        ,        ,        ,        ,
    D-List: Summary Distribution List      /
    Subject: Survey of Social workers      (MEMO)
```

On Monday, November 24, 1997, a confidential survey will be sent to randomly
selected social workers in local departments of social services in Virginia
in order to determine their continuing professional development activities.
The survey will gather this information for a doctoral study by Ms. Anita
Prince, who is attending Virginia Commonwealth University while working for
Chesterfield/Colonial Heights Dept. of Social Services. The information
will be reported in an aggregate manner, (in some instances according to
class size, if appropriate) with no names of individuals or agencies. Ms.
Prince has signed confidentiality agreement with the Virginia Dept. of
Social Services.

Local agency staff have been involved in the development of the survey
instrument through focus groups and piloting. The League personnel
committee has endorsed the study and feels that it has the potential to
capture information that is otherwise not available about the formal and
informal continuing professional development activities of our social
workers. One of the expected outcomes is that more comprehensive
information about these activities will enhance the opportunites to plan
for, manage and support continuing professional development for social
workers in local departments.

Ms. Prince has agreed to share her dissertation with the League personnel
committee. Expected date--May, 1998. Thank you for supporting Ms. Prince
in this endeavor.

Martha Moyse
Personnel Committee Chair

Appendix G

Post Card Follow-Up Reminder
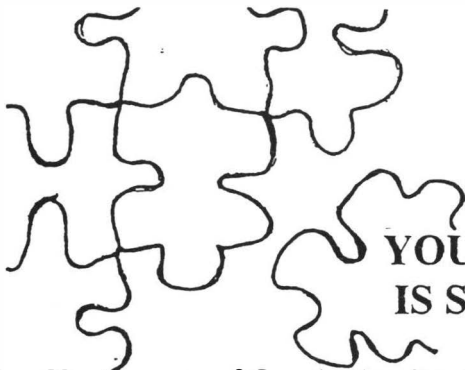
**YOUR PIECE
IS STILL MISSING!**

Your survey of **Continuing Professional Development (CPD)**
has not been received. Your time is valuable and so is your
input! Your responses can still be included if received by
DEC. 20th.

Thanks again!

Anita Prince

Appendix H

Appended Tables 1- 20

Table 1.

Job Class

Job title	f	P
Social Worker	104	50.2
CPS Worker I	22	10.6
Senior Social Worker	44	2 13
CPS Worker II	9	4.3
Social Worker II	13	6.3
Social Worker III	2	1.0
Principle Social Worker	3	1.4
Senior Social Work Supervisor	3	1.4
Other	7	3.4

Note. N = 207; "Other" includes responses for which job class of respondent could not be matched to a Department of Social Services job class category.

Table 2.

Time in Current Job Class.

Time	f	$\underline{P}$
< 3 mos.	3	1.5
3 to 6 mos.	11	5.3
7 to 12 mos.	15	7.3
1 + to < 3 yrs.	46	22.3
3 to < 5 yrs.	27	13.1
5 to < 10 yrs.	44	21.4
10 or > 10	60	29.1

Note. N = 206.

Table 3.

Total Time as a Social Worker in a Local Department of Social Services in Virginia

Total time	f	P
< 3 mos.	4	1.9
3 to 6 mos.	9	4.3
7 to 12 mos.	27	13.0
1 + to < 3 yrs.	30	14.5
3 to < 5 yrs.	51	24.6
5 to < 10 yrs.	44	21.3
10 or > 10	86	41.5

Note. N = 207.

Table 4.

Total Time as a Social Worker Other Than in a Local Social Services in Virginia

Total time not local social services	f	$\underline{P}$
NONE	109	55.9
< 3 mos.	0	-
3 to 6 mos.	3	1.5
7 to 12 mos.	10	5.1
1 + to < 3 yrs.	18	9.2
3 to < 5 yrs.	18	9.2
5 to < 10 yrs.	13	6.7
10 or > 10	22	11.3

Note. N = 195.

Table 5.

Virginia Department of Social Services LAPS Data of Program/Practice Areas of Social

Workers Employed in Local Departments of Social Services

Program	f	$\underline{P}$	Program	f	$\underline{P}$	Program	f	$\underline{P}$
$\underline{SP}$	814	44.3	$\underline{CPS}$	405	22.0	$\underline{FC}$	266	14.4
$\underline{APS}$	91	.04	$\underline{DC}$	81	.04	$\underline{ES}$	95	.05
$\underline{HUD}$	8	.00	$\underline{CA}$	38	.02	$\underline{JP}$	9	.00
$\underline{BP}$	2	.00	$\underline{MD}$	1	.00	$\underline{CSA}$	4	.00
$\underline{NFP}$	1	.00	$\underline{FE}$	15	.00	$\underline{IR}$	3	.00
$\underline{SD}$	2	.00	$\underline{REF}$	1	.00	$\underline{VOL}$	0	

Note: $N = 1837$ positions for which the program area is known in LAPS; 27 positions are listed for which LAPS does not show program assignment. Percentages are rounded to two decimal places; .00 means a percentage of less than .005. Service Programs (SP), Child Protective Services (CPS), Foster Care (FC), Adult Protective Services (APS), Child Day Care (DC), Employment services (ES), Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Child Adoption (CA), Joint Programs (JP), Benefit Programs (BP), Medicaid (MD), Comprehensive Services Act (CSA), Non-Federal Programs (NFP), Title 4-E (FE), Information and Referral (IR), Staff Development (SD), Refugees (REF), and Volunteerism (VOL).

Table 6.

Current Primary Program/Practice Area

Area	f	P
Generic, Service Programs (SP)	13	6.3
Child welfare (CW), Generic	22	10.6
Child Protective Services (CPS)	66	31.9
Foster Care (FC)	34	16.4
Child Adoption (CA)	2	1.0
Child Welfare (CW), Other	8	3.9
Adult Services (AS), Generic	17	8.2
Adult Protective Services (APS)	16	7.7
Adult Services (AS), Other	2	1.0
*Employment Services (ES)	4	1.9
Day Care (DC)	11	5.3
Family Services	6	0.5
Court Services	5	2.4
All Other Services	1	0.5

Note. N = 207.

Table 7.

Program/ Practice Area of Most Experience

Area	f	P
Generic, Service Programs (SP)	12	5.8
Child welfare (CW), Generic	24	11.6
Child Protective Services (CPS)	74	35.7
Foster Care (FC)	37	17.9
Child Adoption (CA)	2	1.0
Child Welfare (CW), Other	3	1.4
Adult Services (AS), Generic	19	9.2
Adult Protective Services (APS)	13	6.3
Adult Services (AS), Generic	-	-
*Employment Services (ES)	0	.5
Day Care (DC)	1	4.8
Family Services	10	1.9
Court Services	4	1.9
All Other Services	4	1.9

Note. N = 207.

Table 8.

Highest Level of Education at First Hire

Level	f	$\underline{P}$
High School	6	2.9
Associate	1	.5
Bachelor	163	78.7
Master	35	16.9
Doctorate	1	.5
Other	1	.5

Note. N = 207.

Table 9.

Major at First Hire

Major	f	P
No College Degree	6	2.9
Social Work	108	52.2
Psychology	27	13.0
Sociology	27	13.0
Counseling	3	1.4
Human Services-Related	6	2.9
Other, Business-Related	2	1.0
Other, Education	9	4.3
Other, Health-Related	1	.5
Other, Political Science/Law, Social Studies	9	4.3
Other, Science-Related	3	1.4
Other, All Other Bachelors	7	3.4

Note. N = 207.

Table 10.

Current Highest Level of Education

Level	f	P
High School	3	1.5
Bachelor	144	70.0
Master	56	27.1
Doctorate	1	.5
Other	2	1.0

Note. N = 206.

Table 11.

Major of Current Highest Level of Education

Major	f	P
No College Degree	3	1.4
Social Work	106	51.2
Psychology	27	13.0
Sociology	24	13.0
Counseling	8	1.4
Human Services-Related	4	2.9
Other, Anthropology	3	1.4
Other, Business-Related	5	2.4
Other, Education	9	4.3
Other, Health-Related	1	.5
Other, Political Science/Law, Social Studies	9	4.3
Other, Science-Related	3	1.4
Other, All Other Bachelors	7	3.4

Note. N = 206.

LOCALITY NAME (COUNTIES)	FIPS CODE
Accomack	001
Albemarle	003
Alleghany	005
Amelia	007
Amherst	009
Appomattox	011
Arlington	013
Augusta	015
Bath	017
Bedford	019
Bland	021
Botetourt	023
Brunswick	025
Buchanan	027
Buckingham	029
Campbell	031
Caroline	033
Carroll	035
Charles City	036
Charlotte	037
Chesterfield	041
Clarke	043
Craig	045
Culpeper	047
Cumberland	049
Dickenson	051
Dinwiddie	053
Essex	057
Fairfax	059
Fauquier	061
Floyd	063
Fluvanna	065
Franklin	067
Frederick	069
Giles	071
Gloucester	073
Goochland	075
Grayson	077
Greene	079
Greensville	081
Halifax	083
Hanover	085
Henrico	087
Henry	089
Highland	091
Isle of Wight	093
James City	095
King George	099
King and Queen	097
King William	101

LOCALITY NAME (COUNTIES)	FIPS CODE
Lancaster	103
Lee	105
Loudoun	107
Louisa	109
Lunenburg	111
Madison	113
Mathews	115
Mecklenburg	117
Middlesex	119
Montgomery	121
Nelson	125
New Kent	127
Northampton	131
Northumberland	133
Nottoway	135
Orange	137
Page	139
Patrick	141
Pittsylvania	143
Powhatan	145
Prince Edward	147
Prince George	149
Prince William	153
Pulaski	155
Rappahannock	157
Richmond	159
Roanoke	161
Rockbridge	163
Rockingham	165
Russell	167
Scott	169
Shenandoah	171
Smyth	173
Southampton	175
Spotsylvania	177
Stafford	179
Surry	181
Sussex	183
Tazewell	185
Warren	187
Washington	191
Westmoreland	193
Wise	195
Wythe	197
York	199

LOCALITY NAME (CITIES)	FIPS CODE
Alexandria	510
Bedford	515
Bristol	520
Buena Vista	530
Charlottesville	540

LOCALITY NAME (CITIES)

FIPS CODE

Chesapeake	550
Clifton Forge	560
Colonial Heights	570
Covington	580
Danville	590
Emporia	595
Fairfax	600
Falls Church	610
Franklin	620
Fredericksburg	630
Galax	640
Hampton	650
Harrisonburg	660
Hopewell	670
Lexington	678
Lynchburg	680
Manassas	683
Manassas Park	685
Martinsville	690
Newport News	700
Norfolk	710
Norton	720
Petersburg	730
Poquoson	735
Portsmouth	740
Radford	750
Richmond	760
Roanoke	770
Salem	775
South Boston	780
Staunton	790
Suffolk	800
Virginia Beach	810
Waynesboro	820
Williamsburg	830
Winchester	840

REGIONS

FIPS CODE

Richmond	992
Tidewater	993
Lynchburg	994
Northern Virginia	995
Roanoke	996
Southwest	997
Valley	998

Table 12.

Responses by Local Agency FIPS Code

FIPS	f	FIPS	f	FIPS	f	FIPS	f	FIPS	f	FIPS	f
1	4	43	1	93	3	145	1	193	1	710	11
3	1	51	2	95	3	153	3	195	3	720	1
9	1	53	1	99	1	161	2	197	1	730	3
11	1	59	16	105	3	167	2	510	4	740	5
13	4	65	1	107	1	169	1	520	2	760	8
15	4	71	1	113	1	173	3	540	3	770	7
17	1	73	3	117	1	175	4	550	6	800	1
19	2	77	1	119	1	177	1	590	1	810	12
25	1	81	2	121	1	179	1	620	1	820	5
27	1	83	2	131	1	181	2	650	7		
33	1	87	2	139	1	183	1	670	2		
35	2	89	3	141	1	187	1	680	1		
41	10	91	1	143	1	191	1	700	10		

Note. N = 207

Table 13.

Region

Region	f	P
Richmond	44	21.3
Tidewater	62	30.0
Northern Virginia (NOVA)	41	19.8
Roanoke	33	15.9
Southwest	27	13.0

Note. N = 207.

Table 14.

Agency Classes I-VI in Comparison to Total Available and Total Filled Positions

Class	Available positions		Filled positions		Respondents	
	f	P	f	P	f	P
Class I	52	2.7	46	2.7	6	2.9
Class II	156	8.3	135	8.0	18	8.7
Class III	667	35.7	607	36.2	85	41.1
Class IV	210	11.2	190	11.3	20	9.7
Class V	342	18.3	300	17.8	43	20.8
Class VI	437	23.4	398	23.7	35	16.9

Note. N = 207.

Table 15.

Nonparametric ANOVA of Job Classification and Impact of CPD Activities

	Job Classification				
CPD Activity		Mean Rank			$\underline{H}$
	Social Worker		Senior Social Worker		
			Supervisor		
	$\underline{n}$	Rank	$\underline{n}$	Rank	
Formal Education	151	78.65	4	53.38	1.34
Mandatory Training	192	100.10	6	80.17	.78
Voluntary Training	186	96.83	6	86.25	.24
Supervision	164	85.19	6	94.00	.19
Mentoring	125	67.67	6	41.67	2.81
Coaching	84	45.24	5	40.90	.14
Shadowing	138	71.23	3	60.50	.23
Formal Peer Interaction	103	53.32	3	59.83	.15
Informal Peer Interaction	185	94.83	5	- 120.40	1.23
Instructing Others	102	54.75	6	50.17	.13
Instructional					
Development	60	32.33	3	25.50	.44

Job Classification

CPD Activity	Mean Rank				$\underline{H}$
	Social Worker		Senior Social Worker		
			Supervisor		
Computer-Based	159	81.91	5	101.30	.91
Work-Related Teams	162	84.42	6	86.75	.01
Professional Meetings	140	74.10	6	59.58	.74
Professional Membership	105	55.66	5	52.10	.06
Licensure	50	25.69	1	41.5.	1.23
Testing	96	48.57	1	90.50	2.38
Professional Reading	172	89.68	6	84.58	.06
Professional Writing	37	19.68	1	13.00	.39
Reflective Practice	151	79.46	5	49.50	2.33

Note. $\underline{df} = 1$

$^*\underline{p} \leq .05. \ ^{**}\underline{p} \leq .01.$

Table 16.

Nonparametric ANOVA of Primary Practice Area and Impact of CPD Activities

	Primary Practice Most Experience						
CPD Activity		Mean Rank					$\underline{H}$
	Generic		CWS		Adult		
	$\underline{n}$	Rank	$\underline{n}$	Rank	$\underline{n}$	Rank	
Formal Education	18	76.06	114	77.38	23	82.61	.32
Mandatory Training	24	103.33	143	102.99	31	80.42	4.52
Voluntary Training	24	105.52	139	96.10	29	90.97	1.07
Supervision	20	98.28	126	84.48	24	80.23	1.80
Mentoring	16	65.03	97	66.80	18	62.56	.21
Coaching	10	48.06	69	46.01	10	34.45	2.16
Shadowing	16	70.59	111	72.82	14	57.00	2.16
Formal Peer Interaction	13	57.04	73	53.42	20	51.50	.29
Informal Peer Interaction	22	97.34	139	96.82	29	87.78	.79
Instructing Others	16	58.28	78	53.84	14-	53.86	.30
Instructional							
Development	11	31.68	41	31.26	11	35.09	.43
Computer-Based	17	69.03	123	83.85	24	85.13	1.74

Primary Practice Most Experience

CPD Activity	Mean Rank						$\underline{H}$
	Generic		CWS		Adult		
	$\underline{n}$	Rank	$\underline{n}$	Rank	$\underline{n}$	Rank	
Work-Related Teams	23	84.74	120	83.60	25	88.58	.23
Professional Meetings	18	67.31	105	74.43	23	74.11	.48
Professional Membership	10	50.10	82	55.87	18	56.81	.35
Licensure	9	23.11	36	26.04	6	30.08	.88
Testing	12	47.13	75	48.30	10	56.50	.88
Professional Reading	23	88.22	129	89.93	26	88.50	.03
Professional Writing	5	13.00	28	21.25	5	16.20	3.20
Reflective Practice	100	80.95	51	76.54	5	49.50	1.14

Note. $\underline{df}$ =2

*$\underline{p}$ ≤ .05. **$\underline{p}$ ≤ .01.

Table 17.

Nonparametric ANOVA of Highest Level of Education and Impact of CPD Activities

	Level of Education				
CPD Activity		Mean Rank			$\underline{H}$
	Bachelors		Masters or Professional		
	$\underline{n}$	Rank	$\underline{n}$	Rank	
Formal Education	104	73.19	49	85.09	.10
Mandatory Training	140	99.71	55	93.64	.50
Voluntary Training	135	94.74	54	95.65	.01
Supervision	116	77.60	52	99.89	8.11**
Mentoring	89	61.36	39	71.67	2.28
Coaching	61	42.10	27	50.13	2.07
Shadowing	97	72.41	43	66.19	.81
Formal Peer Interaction	80	53.85	26	52.42	.04
Informal Peer Interaction	132	96.54	55	87.90	1.15
Instructing Others	70	55.92	36	48.79	1.43

Level of Education

CPD Activity	Mean Rank				$\underline{H}$
	Social Worker		Senior Social Worker		
			Supervisor		
	$\underline{n}$	Rank	$\underline{n}$	Rank	
Instructional					
Development	39	30.44	23	33.30	.41
Computer-Based	115	82.50	48	80.80	.04
Work-Related Teams	115	82.30	51	86.21	.25
Professional Meetings	95	69.53	49	78.27	1.57
Professional Membership	70	54.31	39	56.23	.09
Licensure	23	22.72	26	27.02	1.23
Testing	65	45.25	31	55.32	2.97
Professional Reading	122	85.16	53	94.54	1.48
Professional Writing	18	17.08	19	20.82	1.22
Reflective Practice	111	79.88	43	71.36	1.23

Note. $\underline{df} = 1$

$^*\underline{p} \leq .05.$ $^{**}\underline{p} \leq .01.$

Table 18.

Nonparametric ANOVA of Major of Highest Level of Education and Impact of CPD

Activities

CPD Activity	Major Highest Level of Education						$\underline{H}$
	Mean Rank						
	Social Work		Related		Other		
	$\underline{n}$	Rank	$\underline{n}$	Rank	$\underline{n}$	Rank	
Formal Education	78	83.38	46	80.26	30	57.97	7.92**
Mandatory Training	101	95.82	56	108.65	40	93.51	2.54
Voluntary Training	96	93.30	56	101.98	39	93.85	1.07
Supervision	87	84.59	49	88.01	33	81.48	.40
Mentoring	61	64.85	41	65.20	28	67.36	.09
Coaching	43	45.64	25	48.94	20	36.50	3.07
Shadowing	70	70.71	42	77.11	29	62.84	2.42
Formal Peer Interaction	54	55.45	31	57.21	21	43.00	3.57
Informal Peer Interaction	95	99.79	56	92.88	38.	86.13	2.12
Instructing Others	51	55.36	30	56.77	26	48.13	1.41
Instructional							
Development	27	31.72	20	38.20	15	22.17	7.59*

(table continues)

Major Highest Level of Education

CPD Activity	Mean Rank						$\underline{H}$
	Social Work		Related		Other		
Computer-Based	80	83.47	51	81.91	33	81.05	.08
Work-Related Teams	85	81.74	49	95.22	33	73.17	4.85
Professional Meetings	73	76.93	43	72.57	29	63.74	2.27
Professional Membership	56	56.03	31	54.85	23	55.09	.03
Licensure	26	29.00	12	25.83	13	20.15	3.42
Testing	55	50.27	23	53.57	18	36.86	4.41
Professional Reading	94	90.02	52	92.57	31	79.94	1.48
Professional Writing	16	21.66	14	17.21	7	16.50	1.92
Reflective Practice	86	78.31	41	77.66	28	77.55	.01

Note. $\underline{df} = 2$

*$\underline{p} \le .05$. **$\underline{p} \le .01$.

Table 19.

Nonparametric ANOVA of Total Time as a Social Worker and Impact of CPD

Activities, < 1 Year and 1 Year to < 5 Years

	Total Time Local Agency Social Worker				
CPD Activity	Mean Rank				$\underline{H}$
	< 1 Year		1 Year < 5 Years		
	$\underline{n}$	Rank	$\underline{n}$	Rank	
Formal Education	11	89.32	42	85.05	6.91
Mandatory Training	12	146.63	56	100.12	11.34**
Voluntary Training	10	110.55	55	91.81	1.27
Supervision	12	113.29	50	81.87	6.47
Mentoring	7	103.79	40	60.50	8.53*
Coaching	5	56.20	21	51.76	3.73
Shadowing	13	89.65	47	72.29	4.65
Formal Peer Interaction	7	81.57	30	55.77	9.87**
Informal Peer Interaction	11	106.36	57	98.12	1.00
Instructing Others	3	50.67	25	50.76	.72
Instructional					
Development	2	37.50	15	26.87	2.21

Total Time Local Agency Social Worker

CPD Activity	Mean Rank				H
	< 1 Year		1 Year < 5 Years		
	n	Rank	n	Rank	
Computer-Based	11	75.86	50	79.78	1.72
Work-Related Teams	8	69.81	43	81.13	1.29
Professional Meetings	6	84.58	39	73.14	.87
Professional Membership	5	42.90	24	41.73	7.63*
Licensure	4	16.25	16	23.56	7.05
Testing	6	50.92	28	45.48	.77
Professional Reading	11	86.27	47	95.68	1.54
Professional Writing	2	19.50	7	16.50	.72
Reflective Practice	12	97.33	44	76.02	7.01

Note. $df = 3$

*$p \leq .05.$ ** $p \leq .01.$

Table 20.

Nonparametric ANOVA of Total Time as a Social Worker and Impact of CPD Activities,

5 to 10 Years and 10 or More Years

CPD Activity	Total Time Local Agency Social Worker				H
	Mean Rank				
	5 to 10 years		10 or more years		
	$\underline{n}$	Rank	$\underline{n}$	Rank	
Formal Education	40	84.61	62	66.95	6.91
Mandatory Training	50	102.02	80	90.43	11.34**
Voluntary Training	47	96.31	80	98.08	1.27
Supervision	43	91.97	65	78.88	6.47
Mentoring	31	66.53	53	64.85	8.53*
Coaching	21	43.24	42	41.17	3.73
Shadowing	36	71.13	45	64.17	4.65
Formal Peer Interaction	26	43.77	43	53.23	9.87**
Informal Peer Interaction	47	91.29	75	94.55	1.00
Instructing Others	30	57.28	50	54.93	.72
Computer-Based	39	78.65	64	88.11	1.72
Work-Related Teams	41	87.41	76	86.38	1.29

Total Time Local Agency Social Worker

CPD Activity		Mean Rank			$\underline{H}$
Professional Meetings	38	69.74	63	74.94	.87
Professional Membership	30	60.98	37	60.04	7.63*
Licensure	14	23.18	17	32.91	7.05
Testing	30	47.82	33	52.71	1.18
Professional Reading	45	91.16	75	85.11	1.54
Professional Writing	12	18.17	17	21.68	1.50
Reflective Practice	40	66.13	60	84.80	7.01

Note. $\underline{df}$ = 3

*$\underline{p}$ ≤ .05. **$\underline{p}$ ≤ .01.

Vita