

**Classroom and Blended-Media: A Case Study of
Training Delivery Methods in Ontario Child Protection**

Thesis

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2005-05-15

Dedicated to Tove.

This would never have existed if it were not for you.

You have taught me great things about
life, love and perseverance.

You are my inspiration, my friend and my love.

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*Only through experience of trial and suffering can the
soul be strengthened, vision cleared, ambition inspired,
and success achieved.*

- Helen Keller

This research thesis has been more than just an examination of training methods, the field of child protection and web-based technology. It has proven to be an examination of my life and who I am – in past, present and future. Throughout this thesis I have faced many challenges and obstacles that seemed too immense to overcome, too unbearable to achieve and too deep to believe beyond. Yet, through all of this, there were always people standing behind, next and ahead of me to ensure this journey was successful. I owe much gratitude to the many people who generously supported me, both directly and indirectly. Without your guidance and support, this would not have been possible. Your contribution has been invaluable.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The opportunity is at hand. The power and the promise are here. It is now time to move from promise to practice.... Web-based education is just beginning, with something of far greater promise emerging in the middle distance. Yet technology, even in its current stage of development, can already allow us to realistically dream of achieving age-old goals in education.

(Kerrey et al., 2000, pp. 1-2)

Within the last year, there have been 31,231 children in the care of Ontario Children's Aid Societies (OACAS, 2004). This represents a 65% increase in the number of children in care since the implementation of the Ontario Risk Assessment Model (ORAM) in 1998. Collectively, Children's Aid Societies (CAS) in Ontario spent \$1.085 billion net expenditures for the fiscal year 2003/2004. This would be a 100% increase in net expenditures since 1998-1999 (OACAS, 2004). Furthermore, CAS protection workers received 157,883 referrals in 2003-2004. Of these referrals, 73,190 were assessed but required no further investigation. The remaining 84,693 referrals resulted in investigations. There were 26,959 open protection cases as of March 30, 2004. In summary, this noticeable and dramatic increase in the number of children and families who have become involved with CAS has affected the child welfare system as a whole. In order to ensure that all children and families continue to receive quality service delivery, there is a need to investigate the most appropriate means to train child protection workers.

The government requires that Ontario Children's Aid Societies train all child protection workers in using the provincially developed Ontario Risk Assessment Model (ORAM). This risk assessment training is now included, along with other core competencies in the Ontario Child

Protection Training Program (OCPTP), which is composed of three different series. One series is focused on new child welfare workers, the second series is targeted to authorized child protection workers, and a third series is specifically for management. In addition, some of the Children's Aid Societies are also providing the New Worker Series training to university and college students who are completing a field practicum or placement with a CAS agency. For the purposes of this research, the focus is the training provided to new child welfare workers and students, contained in the first series titled the New Worker Series. This training is currently carried out from a variety of instructional methods including: classroom training (face-to-face) and blended-media training (a combination of face-to-face and web-based).

This research provides an evaluation to be carried out on OCPTP New Worker training strategies conducted in CAS agencies in the province of Ontario. The research question asks what differences emerge between the training delivery mechanisms of classroom and blended-media for the New Worker Series of the Ontario Child Protection Training Program used by Ontario Children's Aid Societies.

This study is significant as recent changes in the Children and Family Services Act (CFSA) and the implementation of the ORAM has affected both the CAS agencies and the staff they employ. For example, there are a number of factors that have increased the stress on both the agencies themselves and the child protection workers who delivery these services. First, they have raised expectations placed on child protection workers, in terms of the extensiveness of the assessments and documents they are required to use. Secondly, the CFSA encourages the public and requires by law, professionals to report suspicion of abuse and neglect. Both of these expectations have increased the workload and caseload of the child protection workers. Thus, in order to assist with this increase in demand, the most recent annual report indicates that there

were 7,161 full time equivalent staff as of March 31, 2004. This is a 59% increase in the total number of full time equivalent staff since March 31, 1998 (OACAS, 2004).

Moreover, for agencies themselves, there is an increased responsibility and accountability to both children and families served by CAS as well as to the public. Furthermore, there has been an increase in the liability and thus the potential for both civil and criminal charges to be laid against workers, CAS agencies, and the government (Regehr et al., 2001). In addition, there is an anticipated 6-7% provincial turnover rate in the child protection field, thus creating strain on the agencies regarding the considerable time and financial commitment made to constantly train new workers. And within a field of social work made responsible for protecting children, strained agencies and workers affect services to children and their families who are vulnerable having been picked up by the child protection 'radar screen'.

To date, research has provided no conclusive evidence as to whether there are differences between classroom and web-based learning. The scope of the learning variables encompassed in either instructional approach is complex. Russell (1999) examined hundreds of different research evaluation projects. His conclusion was that there was no significant difference concerning traditional and new modern forms of learning based on technology. Additionally, social work and other human service fields have been identified as being relatively slower than many other professions in making use of information technology (Schoech, 2002). Furthermore, the specific research on information technology within the human services field is limited (Hughes, Joo & Zentall, 1999). However, where investigations have been done, human service providers strongly endorse and are optimistic in the use of information technology in their work (Hughes, Joo & Zentall, 1999; Schofield et al., 1997).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review is divided into two major sections. The first section focuses on the historic development of child protection training in Ontario. The second section of the literature review focuses on pertinent information about web-based learning.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILD PROTECTION TRAINING IN ONTARIO

Public Inquests and Child Mortality Task Force

The mid-1990s brought a heightened public scrutiny of the child welfare system. One of the most well known inquiries was that of the Gove Inquiry in British Columbia, which set the precedence for the reorientation from child welfare to child protection (Bala, 1999). Collectively, these highly publicized inquiries in Canada in the late 90's reinforced this major shift from a focus on child welfare to the development of the child protection field in Canada. As a result, public media attention began to focus on child abuse deaths, often in situations where the children were known to the agencies but were not removed from parental care. The politicians and the public began focusing on the failings of the system and demanding measures be implemented to reduce child abuse and neglect (Bala, 1999).

In Ontario, the tragic deaths of several children, from families who were receiving services from an Ontario Children's Aid Society, often have been referenced as the impetus for examining child welfare policies and procedures (Swift, 2001). For example, by April 1996,

OACAS and the Office of the Chief Coroner of Ontario developed the Ontario Child Mortality Task Force (King et al., 2003; OACAS, 1996). The purpose of this Task Force was to examine the deaths of children in the province between January 1994 and December 1995. Specifically, the Task Force was to look at child deaths, which resulted from “homicide, suicide, accident, sudden or unexplained causes” (p. 11). In addition, the Task Force was to review deaths of children under the age of 18 who were receiving services from CAS during this same period. The outcome of the Task Force was to assess, analyze and make recommendations about issues such as the prevention of similar deaths, the training of service providers and investigators, and the adequacy of accountability mechanisms (OACAS, 1996).

Additionally, the deaths of these children raised the need for formal coroner inquests into their deaths and an investigation of any links between these deaths and inadequacies in the current legislation regulating Children’s Aid Societies (Swift, 2001; Bala, 1999). In the broad context, there are between 125 and 150 general inquests held annually in Ontario alone. While some of these inquests are mandatory, others are held to focus public attention on a given theme (i.e. child protection and/or child abuse). Through their recommendations, these inquests became a catalyst for change (OACAS, 1997b). For example, the eight inquest cases in Ontario resulted in 400 recommendations. These included a wide range of recommendations such as funding guidelines, increased standards in the assessment of risk, workload levels, public and professional education, increased ability for information sharing and disclosure and legislative changes to the Child and Family Services Act (CFSA) (King et al., 2003; OACAS, 1997c).

Ministerial Appointed Panel of Experts

To further explore the recommendations on the CFSA, Janet Ecker, the Minister of Community and Social Services assembled in 1998 under a conservative provincial government an eight person Panel Of Experts chaired by Judge Mary Jane Hatton (King et al., 2003; OACAS, 2001; Bala, 1998; Steinhauer & Chappel, 1998a; Steinhauer & Chappel, 1998b). This Panel of Experts released a report entitled *Protecting Vulnerable Children*, which recommended that very substantial changes were needed to the 1984 Child and Family Services Act.

This report recommended a major revision from a focus on the child and family to more emphasis on a child focus only. Related recommendations from this new perspective were couched in procedures that emphasized the “best interest of the child”. Moreover, another major revision was to place a heavy emphasis on procedures to ensure that children in families of abuse and neglect are protected adequately (Steinhauer & Chappel, 1998a). The report went so far as to target the 1984 Children and Family Services Act as inadequate in providing Children’s Aid Society workers with the authority to ensure the safety and well-being of the children. Subsequently, the Minister of Community and Social Services pledged to enact quickly new legislation in order to increase protection to children (Bala, 1998; Steinhauer & Chappel, 1998a).

Steinhauer and Chappel (1998b) expressed a concern that these recommendations constituted a "knee jerk" reaction to the public's outcry that followed from the media's coverage of the inquests that highlighted shortcomings of the child welfare system. An alternative perspective that was voiced was that it is not the legislation itself that is inadequate, but rather the way in which the judges and social workers in the field have been interpreting legislation. The alternative solution was seen as the development of a program to educate judges and social workers as to the intentions of the 1984 Children and Family Services Act.

Children and Family Services Act

While the Child and Family Services Act had not undergone any major legislative changes since 1984, the recommendations of the Panel of Experts fit very well with policy changes that had been made by the Ministry in 1996 for the implementation across the province of a risk assessment management system that laid the foundation for the transition from a family focus to a child-centred system. Following these Ministry decisions in 1996, in the summer of 1997, the Minister of Community and Social Services announced the *mandatory* use of a three-tool risk assessment system (ORAM), which was to be implemented by all Ontario CAS's by August 31, 1998 (Trocmé et al., 1999; OACAS, 1998b).

Subsequently, in October 1998, Bill 73, later named and passed as Bill 6 (The Child and Family Services Amendment Act) introduced significant legislative changes to the CFSA. Examples of these changes included: (a) change in the paramount purpose to ensure that the CFSA was promoting the 'best interests, protection and well being of the children' and the removal of the term 'least restrictive', (b) the addition of the terms 'risk of harm' and 'emotional harm', (c) expansion of terms such as 'neglect', and (d) an increased importance placed on the 'Duty to Report' by community professionals and the public (Child Welfare Resource Centre, 1998).

Bill 6 provided the framework for the province to develop a more standardized and comprehensive model for child protection that would increase the effectiveness of the child protection system (Trocmé et al., 1999). These 1999 CFSA amendments replaced the more collaborative approach to child welfare between workers and the families of concern to a worker/agency focus with centralized responsibility for child protection and thus increased liability for both agencies and its workers. Under the legislation, child protection workers are

required to make critical decisions about apprehending children, often against the parents' wishes. "When protection workers apprehend children, they can be faced with civil lawsuits from disgruntled parents, crying negligence and the violation of their parental rights", yet conversely, when children remain in the home and further abuse or fatalities occur, the workers can be blamed both civilly and criminally for the child's injuries or death (Regehr et al., 2001).

Ontario Risk Assessment Model

In summary, all of these initiatives described above - increased public and media attention, coroner's inquests, Child Mortality Task Force, Panel of Experts and the changes to the CFSA - lead to the recommendations of a more standardized and comprehensive model for Ontario child protection to increase the effectiveness of the child protection system (Trocmé et al., 1999). Therefore, in 1997 the ministry established a Risk Assessment Project Steering Committee to assist in deciding which tools were to be used in Ontario. The committee recommended that a three-tooled assessment system, including an eligibility spectrum, safety assessment and finally a risk assessment tool, should be implemented as the Ontario Risk Assessment Model (Trocmé et al., 1999).

This standardized risk assessment model was viewed and justified as providing a more structured and rational decision making approach to case practice for determining children in need of protection than the more contextual clinical judgment model (Trocmé et al., 1999). The Ontario Risk Assessment Model (ORAM) had the aim of both better protecting children and supporting workers and agencies in their decision-making processes. Thus, the ORAM enhances professional judgment by guiding the child protection worker through the process of information

gathering and analysis that examines risk factors that may affect family functioning and assess risk to children (OACAS, 2001).

Ontario Child Protection Training Program

The changes to the CFSA and the development of the ORAM led to the need for comprehensive training for all child protection workers. This training need was felt to be extremely critical because of the changes in the child welfare policies and procedures that shifted more accountability and liability to individual workers (Trocmé et al., 1999). McCullagh (1999) indicated that there were several identified issues of concern regarding the then current training for child protection workers. For example, McCullagh noted that post-secondary education lacked focus on child protection issues and that many new child protection workers started work with a heavy caseload that left little time for training and supervision. Consequently, in 2000, the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Society was granted the Ministry contract to develop and implement a new competency-based training program, called the Ontario Child Protection Training Program (OCPTP) (Leck & Nichol, 2003; OACAS, 2003a; OACAS, n.d., b). Delivering training is in keeping with the OACAS mission, which states that the "OACAS, in support of its members, is the voice of child welfare in Ontario, dedicated to providing leadership for the achievement of excellence in the protection of children and in the promotion of their well-being within their families and communities" (OACAS, n.d., d, para. 1).

The OCPTP is a key capacity building initiative in the Ministry's reform of the child welfare system to a child protection system. The mandate and mission of the OCPTP is that it is a "centrally managed approved ministry curriculum...which emphasizes best practice principles and acquisition of the competencies required to engage in successful child protection work"

(OACAS, n.d., c, *Mandate and Mission*, para. 1). OCPTP is intended to make sure that CAS agencies are able to recruit, retain and support highly skilled and knowledgeable workers to protect children who are at risk of, or who have suffered abuse and or neglect (McCullagh, 1999). While the program for training remains centrally controlled in terms of content, the delivery method is decentralized and based on adult education principles.

The OCPTP has four main operating principles. First is the belief that the "best practices" come from current evidence-based research focused on children and their safety and the need for forensic and clinical interventions (OACAS, n.d., b). The second is that effective child welfare practice is based on highly trained child protection workers. The third principal is that training alone is not as effective as training in combination with field practice. Thus, the focus of the training should be on the 'transfer of learning' from the learning environment to the professional workplace. Finally, the fourth principle is that training can best be delivered through a regional/local agency based delivery system. As mentioned previously, "this training program is a key capacity building initiative in the Ministry's reform of child protection. The organizational and service delivery structure that evolved in the first two and a half years of program operation very much reflects these principles" (OACAS, n.d., c Operating Principles, para. 6).

While not a focus of this research evaluation, it is interesting that in 1998, a Ministry audit found that the OACAS unit cost for a day of training was \$216 per participant, compared to the industry daily standard of \$300 per participant. With the introduction of the OCPTP the OACAS unit cost was further reduced to \$124, between the years of 2000-2003 (OACAS, 2003a).

Agency Based Training Programs

Although the OCPTP may appear quite rigid on paper, there is flexibility provided through the regionalized and localized delivery mechanisms referred to as the Agency Based Training Program (ABTP). These training programs are customized by each CAS agency based on their own training needs. About fifty percent of all New Worker training is delivered as ABTP, which involves approximately twenty-five Societies, either individually or in coordination with other agencies (OACAS, n.d., c). The curriculum is still the same standardized curriculum; however, it is delivered with a contextual focus on specific agency needs. This allows each agency to develop training programs that are customized with local examples and with emphasis placed on aspects of the curriculum that are particularly pertinent for their staff, agency and region. Moreover, some ABTP's opt to deliver classroom-based series only, while others participate in the blended-media delivery format for some curricula (OACAS, n.d., c).

Although the ABTP is developed and maintained by agency trainers, the OACAS continues to offer support and manuals to assist the agency trainers in the delivery of the curricula. The OCPTP also approves the ABTP trainers. These trainers are given instruction by OACAS in both the training content and presentation skills as per the guidelines that were developed by the Ontario Society for Training and Development (Leck & Nichol, 2003). Specific to the ORAM implementation, was a two-day “train the trainer” training series (OACAS, n.d., c; Trocmé et al., 1999). Between March 1998 and August 1998, twenty-five Core Risk Trainers were recruited provincially and fifteen Agency/Regional Risk Trainers instructed by the two Risk Assessment Coordinators. In turn, the Core Risk Trainers prepared thirty-eight agency only trainers to deliver locally the comprehensive ORAM training to child welfare staff locally (Trocmé et al., 1999).

The Agency-Based Training Program may use the traditional classroom delivery model or the blended-media model in which the classroom portions are delivered by local staff while the e-learning segments are delivered by OACAS staff. Within these models, agencies are able to choose based on their preferences (Leck & Nichol, 2003). An example of ABTP occurs in Thunder Bay. The Children's Aid Society of the District of Thunder Bay offers its staff an Agency Based Training Program. As a result, they have determined that at this time, they will continue to use the classroom-based training for their New Worker Training. However, they were supportive of this research to aid in future decision making. Recently, they have chosen to use the web-based training for Module #7, *CFSA and Legal Services*. Further, they have developed their training to take place over approximately six months rather than the provincially recommended three-month period for concentrated training of new workers.

New Worker Training Program

One aspect of the new OCPTP is targeted specifically to assist new workers in achieving pre-developed child protection minimum competencies (McCullagh, 1999). OACAS worked together with representatives from CAS to identify competencies, which best define the knowledge and skills necessary for competent child welfare practice (OACAS, 1999a). These competencies informed curriculum development. More than twenty field representatives assisted with this development. The curricula and the measures were pilot tested and revised as necessary (OACAS, 1999a). As mentioned previously, the New Worker training was contracted out to the OACAS (Leck & Nichol, 2003). The New Worker training program consists of eleven curriculum modules providing twenty-two days of training plus follow-up field assignments to further test the acquisition of knowledge and skills. It is anticipated that due to the turnover rate

there is a need to train approximately 400 protection workers each year (Leck & Nichol, 2003; OACAS, OACAS, 1999b; McCullagh, 1999). The New Worker training series is designed to achieve a standard level of ‘minimum competencies’ for all new workers in order for them to be certified as authorized child protection workers (Leck & Nichol, 2003; McCullagh, 1999; Scott, 1999). At the end of the training, the program delivery agent (OACAS) informs the trainee’s agency of their attendance at training and the opportunity to receive training in the required competencies. The trainee then is eligible for authorization by an agency’s executive director as a child protection worker, ideally once the trainee has been able to demonstrate the achievement of all the minimum competencies (McCullagh, 1999). As an authorized worker, a CAS staff person can then independently investigate child protection allegations, apprehend children and appear before the court on child protection matters (Leck & Nichol, 2003).

Classroom Based Delivery

In the classroom delivery method, the eleven New Worker curricula [modules] are delivered face-to-face by Ministry-approved trainers who are expected to follow Ministry guidelines (OACAS, n.d., c). Table 1 provides an overview of each module and the anticipated days to completion for the face-to-face component. This period does not include time spent by the new worker learning the recommended readings or the time spent on the field assignment component. Each module has its own, “pre-course reading”, which are to assist in developing basic and or historical knowledge before training (OACAS, n.d., c). Thus, embedded in the overall twelve week training period is time between the twenty-two days of face-to-face instruction for both pre-course readings and time for field assignments. This opportunity for participants to use the knowledge they have gained and implement it into practical skills in the

field is referred to by OCPTP as the ‘transfer of learning’ component (OACAS, n.d., c). Since July 2002, this classroom-based method is now only available through Agency Based Training Programs with all other centrally delivered training converted to the blended-media delivery method (OACAS, n.d., c).

Table 1: Classroom Modules for New Worker (NW) Series (Adopted from: OACAS, n.d., c)

Module^a #	Curriculum Title	Classroom Days Required
NW#1	<i>The Evolution and Context of Child Welfare</i>	2
NW#2*	<i>Risk Assessment Part 1 - Orientation, Eligibility and Investigation</i>	3
NW#3*	<i>The Impact of Maltreatment Upon Growth and Development</i>	2
NW#4*	<i>Identifying and Responding to Child Maltreatment</i>	2
NW#5*	<i>Risk Assessment Part 2 - Child Protection Assessment</i>	2
NW#6*	<i>Risk Assessment Part 3 - Plan of Service and Ongoing Reviews</i>	2
NW#7	<i>CFSA and Legal Services</i>	2
NW#8	<i>Interviewing Children</i>	2
NW#9*	<i>Attachment, Separation and Placement</i>	2
NW#10	<i>Children in Care</i>	1
NW#11	<i>Intervention to Increase Parental Effectiveness</i>	2
	Total Days	22

^aWhen comparing the Classroom modules to the Blended-Media modules, please note that Modules 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 9 consist of two parts each, one in the classroom and an e-learning component.

Blended-Media Delivery

The uniqueness of this New Worker training program was that in the training contract, it was specified that the development and implementation of this training program include a mix of traditional classroom and web-based learning (Leck & Nichol, 2003). MCFCS invested \$800,000 in web-based product development. Nine days of classroom training were “migrated” to the web-based format using WebCT as the application program. OACAS has delivered the “blended-media” model since July 2001 (Leck & Nichol, 2003).

The blended-media approach uses a combination of classroom based (as discussed above) and web-based learning. The blended portions combine “classroom teaching supplemented by self-study and computer-assisted learning, interspersed with field assignments in the trainee’s own agency” (McCullagh, 1999 p. 8). Table 2 demonstrates an outline of the blended-media delivery method, for each module and how many days it would take for expected completion.

Considerable thought went into determining which modules could best be delivered as either face-to-face instruction or by web-based delivery. To address vocalized concerns that the web-based method would decrease opportunities available through face-to-face instruction to respond to individual learning styles, the OCPTP developed a variety of online methods that each participant can access anytime and anywhere to achieve their learning outcomes. These include reading theoretical material, individual "online" exercises, quizzes, and e-mail exchanges. Each web-based module has been set up to cover typically the two designated days over a three to four day period. Full time trainers score the online exercises and quizzes that are completed by each web-based participant so that there is an opportunity for immediate interactive feedback. In addition, there are opportunities for completion of group exercises online. Discussions that are more informal are available to participants to interact with each other through discussion board formats (OACAS, n.d., c).

Table 2: Modules for Blended-Media in New Worker (NW) Series (Adopted from: OACAS, n.d., c)

Module ^a #	Curriculum Title	Classroom Days	E-Learning Days
NW#1	<i>The Evolution and Context of Child Welfare</i>	2	
NW#2*	<i>Risk Assessment Part 1 - Orientation, Eligibility and Investigation</i>	2	
	<i>Risk Assessment Part 2 - Orientation, Eligibility and Investigation</i>	1	
NW#3*	<i>The Impact of Maltreatment Upon Growth and Development Part 1</i>		1
	<i>The Impact of Maltreatment Upon Growth and Development Part 2</i>	1	
NW#4*	<i>Identifying and Responding to Child Maltreatment - Part 1</i>		1
	<i>Identifying and Responding to Child Maltreatment - Part 2</i>	1	
NW#5*	<i>Risk Assessment Part 3 - Child Protection Assessment</i>		1
	<i>Risk Assessment Part 4 - Child Protection Assessment 1</i>	1	
NW#6*	<i>Risk Assessment Part 5 - Plan of Service and Ongoing Reviews</i>		1
	<i>Risk Assessment Part 6 - Plan of Service and Ongoing Reviews</i>	1	
NW#7	<i>CFSA and Legal Services</i>		2
NW #8	<i>Interviewing Children</i>	2	
NW#9*	<i>Attachment, Separation and Placement - Part 1</i>		1
	<i>Attachment, Separation and Placement - Part 2</i>	1	
NW#10	<i>Children in Care</i>		1
NW#11	<i>Interventions to Increase Parental Effectiveness</i>	2	
	Total Days	13	9

^aWhen comparing the Blended-Media modules to the Classroom modules, please note that Modules 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 9 consist of two parts each, one in the classroom and one for e-learning.

Early feedback from the use of blended-media modules demonstrated a reduction in worker travel time/costs and accommodations. However, this was offset to a limited degree by agency costs for resource materials such as videos, required on-site for staff viewing and for trainer time required to monitor participant use of the materials and interaction with participants intermittently over a four day period for each e-learning segment (Leck & Nichol, 2003).

WEB-BASED LEARNING

The Internet has the ability to level the learning playing field
- Close et al., 2000, p. 10

There has been an explosion of online training over the last several years. Many are dedicated to saying that this technology has changed our lives forever (Shachar & Neumann, 2003; Lenear & Johnson, 2002; Parkinson & Hudson, 2002; Kerrey et al., 2001; Close et al., 2000; The Institute for Higher Education Policy, 2000). Information technology (IT) is widely used to enhance or provide training and education (Waight et al., 2002; Kerrey et al., 2000). There has been less use of online training within the human services fields; however, a recent and noticeable increase has been documented (Menon & Coe, 2000; Siegel & Jennings, 1998).

There are currently many terms used to describe web-based learning (Waight et al., 2002). Included in this vast discourse are distance education (The Institute for Higher Education Policy, 2000; Coe & Elliot, 1999), distance learning (American Council on Education, 1996), web-based learning (OACAS (2003b), e-learning (Merrill, 2001; Urdan & Weggen, 2000) technology-based learning (Close et al., 2000), online learning (Twigg, 2001), online instruction (Johnson et al., retr. 2004), distributed learning (Twigg et al., 2002), and asynchronous e-learning (Hall, 2004a). While there is no consensus in the terminology used within the literature, all of these terms share the commonality of using some form of technology to assist in information and knowledge sharing and education (Driscoll & Reid, 1999).

For the purposes of this research, the term that will be used is web-based learning, as this is the term used by the OCPTP. From this context, web-based learning is the integration of Internet technologies (IT) and education. Web-based learning is a subset to e-learning (Jackson,

2004; Wentling et al., 2000) which is distinguished from older forms of distance education in that web-based learning can occur with or without distance (Wentling et al., 2000). In contrast, distance education implied a type of learning over space and time. Furthermore, web-based learning, as a type of e-learning, has the inherent flexibility to allow education and training to be delivered as both synchronous and asynchronous options. Thus, web-based learning can be delivered in a wide variety of manners. The components of the OCPTP that are web-based are delivered using commercial software called WebCT. The company states that their vision is to “deliver innovative e-learning solutions to help institutions improve educational outcomes for students around the world” (WebCT, 2004b, para. 1) and as a result it has become one of the leaders in regards to web-based training and education for many educational and training settings (WebCT, 2004b; Close et al., 2000). The asynchronous feature of WebCT can be applied strictly to web-based learning or it can be used as a supplement for enhancing traditional classroom learning (Close et al., 2000).

Benefits of web-based learning

According to Consuelo et al., (2002) their research concluded that there are nine basic benefits of e-learning. Those benefits that have direct relevance to OCPTP are described in detail below. They include cost effectiveness, just in time access, anytime/anywhere access, learner centred, and interactivity.

Cost Effectiveness. From an administrative point of view, one of the primary benefits of web-based learning is its cost effectiveness (Strother, 2002; Kriger, 2001; Wentling et al., 2000) in comparison to the traditional classroom training (Kapp & McKeague, 2002; Merrill et al., 2001). This has become an increasingly attractive feature due to tight budgetary restrictions

(Urdan & Weggen, 2000; Schulman & Sims, 1999; Asynchronous Learning Networks for Knowledge Workforce Learning). There are two main ways that e-learning can provide organizations with a cost effective means to deliver training. First, by delivering training through e-learning an organization avoids the costs associated with paying for a physical environment for training delivery. Therefore, much of the information is available at a central location online, which the learner can access from anywhere (Hall, 2004b; Close et al., 2000). Secondly, e-learning avoids the costs associated with staff travel to a central physical location (Hall, 2004b; Close et al., 2000; ThinQ, 2000; Urdan & Weggen, 2000; Wentling et al., 2000). This includes the travel itself, food, accommodations and the costs for staff time traveling to and from the training site (Hall, 2004b; ThinQ, 2000; Urdan & Weggen, 2000).

'Just-In-Time' Access. A second benefit of e-learning is 'Just in Time' access which allows organizations a great deal of flexibility in when their staff can participate in training. Thus, organizations and learners alike can access information as they need it (Oakes & Green, 2003; Kapp & McKeague, 2002; Merrill et al., 2001; Close et al., 2000; Wentling et al., 2000). This benefit means that trainees do not need to receive information a long time prior to it being needed, or have to wait for long periods to receive the information they may need immediately (Close et al., 2000; Jones et al., 1995). Furthermore, the information they receive is more likely not to be irrelevant and out of date (Urdan & Weggen, 2000). To date, research demonstrates that this learning benefit appears best for those self directed and disciplined learners (Wentling et al., 2000).

Learner Centred. The use of technology in learning has appeared to change the focus of the learning from the teacher to the learner (Feist, 2003). Thus, the roles of learner and teacher

are ever changing and developing (Wentling et al., 2000; Jones et al., 1995). Furthermore, learning is offered with increased flexibility (Twigg, 2001; Brogan, 1999). For example, learners are now able to choose their delivery method, environment, and content all to match their individual preferences and learning styles (Figueira, 2003; Voss, 2003; Aragon et al., 2002; Merrill et al., 2001; Close et al., 2000; Wentling et al., 2000). Research shows that because people learn differently, students learn more when they can control the course of their learning (Aragon et al., 2002; Urdan & Weggen, 2000). Learner centred instruction is referred to frequently as personalized and individualized in both content, mechanisms of delivery, and the time and space environment in which the learner chooses to access web-based learning. The emphasis is on research that demonstrates how technology can assist learners in finding learning solutions that work best for them (Aragon et al., 2002; Urdan & Weggen, 2000).

Another value is that learners are able to access information and education at their own pace (Kapp & McKeague, 2002; Merrill, 2001; Close et al., 2000; Urdan & Weggen, 2000; Brogan, 1999). They are able to work at a pace that best suits their learning style, lifestyle and at a level which will optimize their learning and understanding of material and content.

Anytime/Anywhere Access. The phrase “anytime/anywhere” is used to describe when and where web-based learning can take place (Shachar & Neumann, 2003; Consuelo et al., 2002; Olson & Wisher, 2002; Merrill et al., 2001; Close et al., 2000; Kerrey et al., 2000; Urdan & Weggen, 2000). Teachers and trainers are able to upload information and assignments whenever they wish. Similarly, learners are able to access this information, upload their completed assignments at a space and time that is convenient for them (Benbunan-Fich et al., 2003). Asynchronous learning has now adapted a more “24-7” outlook (Benbunan-Fich et al., 2003;

Aragon et al., 2002; Lytle, 1999). This asynchronous environment includes chat lines, email formats, discussion boards and software (Bourne et al., 1999).

Interactivity. Allucquere Rosanne Stone (1991) describes cyberspace as “incontrovertibly social spaces in which people still meet face-to-face, but under new definitions of both 'meet' and 'face'” (p. 85). Stone examines our common definitions of interaction, identities, and communities. Thompson (2000) describes the need for ‘social presence’ within online-based training and education. He defines ‘social presence’ as the need for an individual to be considered a ‘real’ person. He suggests that the higher the sense of an individual’s ‘social presence’, the increased satisfaction and effectiveness of the training. This finding is supported by Fulford and Zhang (1995) who concluded in their research study that the participants “perception of interactivity is a crucial factor in determining student satisfaction” with distance education (p. 9).

Interaction allows students to learn both from one another and from the instructor. Individuals can play an active role in the learning process rather than passively listening to a teacher lecture (Kapp & McKeague, 2002; Close et al., 2000; Kerrey et al., 2000; ThinQ, 2000; Jones et al., 1995). “A clear link between critical thinking, social interaction and deep learning has emerged” (Newman et al., 1995 p. 4). Urdan and Weggen (2000) indicate that e-learning solutions can provide more collaboration and interaction with peers and experts as compared to traditional instruction. They suggest that interaction is facilitated by the fact that the instructor does not monopolize student attention in an online learning environment. Thus making it mandatory that the learners become more engaged in the material they have to learn. In addition, web-based learning enables immediate and quick communication both among learners and with the instructors (Voos, 2003; Kapp & McKeague, 2002). For example, students interact with

content, other students, instructor, participate in a discussion group, quiz questions, simulation program, conferencing, live chat, or by filling out a feedback form (Hazari & Schno, 1999). Moreover, both instructors and students can use more than one of these technologies at a time (Hazari & Schno, 1999). As Grooms (2003) explains, “More information widens learning opportunities, but without interaction, learning is not enhanced” (p. 514). Therefore, because interactivity is important in learning, technologies and software have focused on this area to ensure they provide learners with what they need. Communication and interaction among learners in an educational or training course is a vitally important component of effective instruction.

Urdu and Weggen (2000) also support that these electronic technologies for learning can both offer more collaboration and interaction with teachers and other learners and have higher success rates than traditional methods. Students do learn from each other. Furthermore, students in web-based environments take on the role of “teacher” more often than do students in traditional classrooms. As the technologies change and improve and the access to high speed Internet increases, so too will the availability for increased and improved interactivity, communication, collaboration and participation (Close et al., 2000; Kerry et al., 2000; ThinQ, 2000).

Urdu and Weggen (2000) find further research that supports the interactive nature of web-based learning. For example, “Online students had more peer contact with others in the class, enjoyed it more, spent more time on class work, understood the material better, and performed, on average, 20% better than students who were taught in the traditional classroom” (p. 7). They also presented another study, which reported that as student participation increased, and avoidance decreased, that overall performance was demonstrated to increase as a result.

Limitations

While online instruction is gaining popularity, it is not free from criticism. Negative factors include lack of bandwidth (Hall, 2004b), higher costs than anticipated, lack of human interaction (Wegner et al., 1999), computer anxiety (Choi et al., 2002) and change itself. The lack of human interaction is the most cited reservation (Kapp & McKeague, 2002). Therefore, if the training program does not provide the learners with adequate interaction, the training could virtually be unsuccessful. Nonetheless, many are reaffirming that refinements and more widely available interactive tools can adequately address these types of reservations about the degree of human interaction that is possible through web-based instruction (Close et al., 2000).

Moreover, in some cases, the development of web-based training takes more time and more money to develop than expected. Start-up costs account for the largest portion with fewer costs than traditional classroom instruction for repeated delivery of the same content (Hall, 2004b). Like any first-time challenge, learning about and implementing new technology takes more resources than expected (Kapp & McKeague, 2002; Kerrey et al., 2000; Siegel & Jennings, 1998). Choi et al., (2002) found that an individual's negative attitudes and lack of willingness to use computers could be a result of anxiety towards the technology itself. Their research examined computer anxiety with social workers. They concluded that anxiety scores were lowest for those having regular use of a computer at work or home and the highest scores were for those social workers that indicated they had no experience with computers either at home or work. In addition, they concluded that the greater the level of training on the use of computers then the lower the level of anxiety experienced by the social worker.

Schoech (2002) claims resistance to web-based learning is not aimed towards technology alone, but simply against change itself. It is proposed that people resist any form of change

unless their current situation is one of two opposites, either poor or extremely well. Thus, when people are relatively happy with current approaches to learning, they will be resistant to the introduction of new delivery mechanisms for learning. Maxwell Maltz's theory of "comfort zones" explains that humans naturally resist change that does not comply with their experiences, behaviours, and performances in terms of their self-image about who they are, what they believe can be done and where they belong (Darling, 2002).

Blended Learning

E- learning is a tool; like all tools, it has advantages and disadvantages. Instructor- led training is also a tool. It too has advantages and disadvantages. Just as organizations would not deliver their entire employee training program via e- learning, they should not deliver all training via an instructor. No single delivery method is ideal for all types of training

(Kapp & McKeague, 2002, p.10)

In a sense, blended learning has been around for a very long time (Bersin & Associates, 2003). It has just not been referred to in the sense that it is now. Specifically, blended learning could be the use of teacher instruction and the use of a video for visual presentation. Blended learning today, appears to be focused heavily on the combination of classroom (instructor-led) learning and e-learning or web-based training (Voos, 2003; Troha, 2002). Each different blend must be based on the best approach to match an organization's own needs (Bersin & Associates, 2003). Coe and Elliott (1999) compare learning outcomes for social work students in practice courses on-campus with face-to-face instruction and through a blended-media approach off-campus. They conclude that a blended approach is a viable format and recommend its inclusion in alternative delivery programs for social work education.

Most internet technology training purchasers agree that Internet-based training is best when offered in combination with other training delivery methods such as instructor-led training (Close et al., 2000) as it combines the best aspects of technology based education with the best of instructor-led training (Jackson, 2004; The Forum Corporation, 2003; Kapp & McKeague, 2002). Therefore, “blended solution” is being embraced as the future of workplace learning (The Forum Corporation, 2003). Oakes and Green (2003) suggest that blended-media should encompass a broader perspective signifying that blended learning can also be a mix of any two technologies. The feeling is that using only one delivery method is offering too limited of a choice for learners. They report that this is like a “one size fits all” approach to learning, which does not work (Oakes & Green, 2003; Kapp & McKeague, 2002)

Blended learning courses present fluidity in the technologies that they can put forward (Voos, 2003). Bersin & Associates (2003), suggest that because a blended approach allows for customization contextual to the needs of an organization it appears that blended learning is actually *replacing* e-learning. Furthermore, blended designs can enhance the quality of learning. For example, designers and instructors of blended courses have the largest set of instructional methods and learning situations to choose from to meet the specific needs of the discipline and the level of the course, the number, kind, and preferences of students, and their own styles and preferences (Voos, 2003). Therefore, the blended learning approach appears to be most flexible in its ability to adapt to different situations, people and learning styles.

Conclusions: Is There a Difference?

Overall, the most extensive research has been based on looking at the comparisons between traditional classroom and distance education delivery formats. This is because other technologies, like the computer and Internet, are much newer. Thomas Russell (1999) published an annotated bibliography called *The No Significant Difference Phenomenon* which lists hundreds of articles and research supporting the position that attitudes and satisfaction of distance learning students are positive as compared to traditional (typically classroom) approaches.

When looking at whether achievement and learning in online courses are comparable to student achievement and learning in traditional classes, most research shows no significant difference between the two course formats in measures of learning outcomes in various disciplines (Shachar & Neumann, 2003; Johnson et al., 2000; Ryan, 2000; Schoech, 2000; Coe & Elliot, 1999; Wade, 1999; Wegner et al., 1999; Fulford & Zhang, 1993, Verduin & Clark; Chu, 1991 & Schramm, 1975). Thus stating that methods, classroom and web-based (also distance and e-learning), have unequivocally no difference among them in learning outcomes and effectiveness (Voos, 2003).

Further research demonstrates that in some circumstances there is indeed a difference with online training taking the lead in many areas. Thus, developing the theory of 'The Significant Difference Phenomenon' (TeleEducation NB, 2004). More specifically, there were no considerable differences noticed between homework grades, research paper grades, pre-test scores and final course grades. However, there were significant differences between the two groups with respect to final exam scores, post-test scores and age, in which distance education students scored higher in all three categories (Tucker, 2001). Further, Wegner et al., (1999)

discovered that the students in their study reported having an overall more positive experience than the control group.

Thus, many research studies conclude that learning outcomes for distance/web-based perform just as well, and occasionally better than their traditional classroom counterparts (ALN, 2001). Further that it is an acceptable and an effective form of instruction (Shachar & Neumann, 2003).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Methodology, Design and Procedure

The research approach was quantitative. The research methodology was a custom designed survey instrument used to gather data from Ontario Child Protection Training Program New Worker training participants across Ontario.

The development of the survey took place between January and May 2003. Support and consultation came from Lori Roulston (CAS Thunder Bay and OACAS approved OCPTP New Worker trainer), who provided input into the survey construction based on issues and concerns raised by trainers and participants across the province. This information was essential to ensuring that the survey had content validity. For example, Roulston's input was critical to delineating the issue of classroom versus blended-media in terms of the effectiveness of these delivery mechanisms in child protective training. Her input also helped to define related training issues regarding the impact of travel and participant connectedness to the outcome of training.

In the spring 2003, a pre-test was completed using the new workers and students from the Agency-Based Training Programs of the Children's Aid Society of the District of Thunder Bay and Dilico-Ojibway Child and Family Services. The results of the pre-test provided substantive feedback for modifying the survey. The final version of the survey (See Appendix I) was delivered to the volunteer participating agencies in the summer of 2003.

The final version of the survey supported the primary research question: Is there any difference in the effectiveness between the training delivery mechanisms of classroom and

blended-media for the New Worker Series of the OCPTP New Worker training Program used by Ontario Children's Aid Societies? The survey included both open and closed-ended questions. Open-ended questions were used to ensure the participants had the opportunity to expand on their perspectives or elaborate on chosen answers. The closed ended questions were displayed in a variety of manners: Likert scales and multiple choice with nominal, ordinal, and interval response sets.

The data was analyzed using SPSS version 11. The analysis focused on the comparison (differences or similarities) between participants' opinions and training experiences with the two distinct training delivery methods (classroom and blended-media). Data was inputted into this software personally by this researcher. Charts and graphs were completed through Microsoft Word 2000.

Sample

While the survey was being finalized, a group of child welfare agencies across Ontario were asked to participate voluntarily in this research study through a provincial training meeting. This process was conducted both formally and informally with the assistance of Lori Roulston, who provided each potential participating agency with copies of the survey and cover letter. The final sample was five training programs carried out by the following six agencies (The Children's Aid Society of the District of Thunder Bay and Dilico-Ojibway Child and Family Services, Kenora-Patricia Child and Family Services, Family and Children's Services of the Region of Waterloo, Algoma Children's Aid Society, and Niagara Children's Aid Society). Each of these programs received a survey package with the correct number of surveys per each participant, a page for trainers to complete, caramel candies as a thank you and a self-addressed envelope. An exception was with the Children's Aid Society of the District of Thunder Bay and

Dilico-Ojibway, in which the researcher directly distributed the survey package. Surveys from all participating agencies were received, with the exception of Niagara Children's Aid Society whose returned surveys were lost in the mail. Therefore, unfortunately, these completed surveys could not be included in the final sample.

The Children's Aid Society of the District of Thunder Bay has its head office in Thunder Bay and satellite offices in the communities of Geraldton, Nipigon, and Marathon. Both the head office and the satellite offices are responsible for delivering services in additional small communities in their respective areas. Dilico-Ojibway Child and Family Services has its head office on Fort William First Nation which is located contiguously with Thunder Bay; and satellite offices in Armstrong, Longlac, Nipigon, and Mobert. Dilico-Ojibway's jurisdiction includes all the communities within the Robinson-Superior Treaty area: Fort William First Nation, Ginoogaming First Nation, Gull Bay First Nation, Lake Nipigon First Nation, Long Lake #58 First Nation, Michipicoten First Nation, Pays Plat First Nation, Pic Mobert First Nation, Pic River First Nation, Red Rock First Nation, Biinjitiwaabik Zaanging Anishinaabek First Nation, Sandpoint First Nation and Whitesand First Nation. In addition, all District of Thunder Bay families living in off-reserve communities who are status Indians or are eligible for status fall under the mandate of Dilico-Ojibway. In practice, the families who are status or status eligible who live off reserve have a choice as to whether they receive services from Dilico-Ojibway or the Thunder Bay Children's Aid Societies. However, once a family makes the choice as to which CAS serves them they are obligated for the most part to receive all future assistance from the same CAS. The Children's Aid Society of the District of Thunder Bay and Dilico-Ojibway Child and Family Services frequently come together for their training with OCPTP.

Within the region of Waterloo there is one CAS agency, which has two separate main offices located in the cities of Kitchener and Cambridge. In addition, the Family and Children's

Services of the Region of Waterloo extends service delivery to Waterloo and several other smaller communities in the surrounding rural area. The Algoma Children's Aid Society has its head office in Sault Ste. Marie and has satellite offices located in Blind River, Elliot Lake, Wawa and Hornepayne. The Kenora-Patricia Children's Aid Society is located in Kenora, with satellite offices in Dryden, Sioux Lookout, and Red Lake. This latter CAS also serves a number of smaller rural communities and thirteen First Nation communities.

University Approval

This research proposal was submitted to and approved by the Lakehead University Research Ethics Review Board (See Appendix II).

Process for informed consent. Participating agencies were asked to take a portion of the time, from the beginning of one of the training days, preferably close to the last training module, to administer the survey with their training participants. The participants who completed the surveys were both front-line workers and field practicum students. Each survey participant was given a printed copy of the survey and a copy of the cover letter, detailing the voluntary nature of their participation and the confidentiality of their responses. There was no separate informed consent form, as the completed returned surveys were used to indicate consent for participation.

Procedure for ensuring confidentiality. All completed surveys were handed in to the trainer without identifiable information. For tracking purposes and to ensure that each agency could receive an aggregate copy of their agency results, each trainer distributing the package of surveys provided the name of the agency when mailing back the completed surveys in a self-addressed, stamped envelope. However, each completed survey was anonymous and confidential

as no identifying information was collected. Furthermore, neither the specific agency nor the individual participants were identified in the final research thesis.

As these surveys were directly returned to the researcher, none of the participating agencies had access to the participants' responses. This enhanced the content validity as the participants knew that their responses would have no impact on their employment or student placement. Furthermore, survey participants made a voluntary individual decision as to whether they completed the survey or not.

Seven year data storage. In accordance with research protocols, all data gathered from this research study is securely stored at Lakehead University for the standard period of seven years.

Apparent risks and benefits. There were no apparent risks to either individuals or the agencies participating in this research, as the researcher used non-identifying information to ensure their protection. As a benefit to those agencies participating in this study, the research will provide each agency with aggregate results. As stated earlier, no participating agency will be provided with the original surveys or any identifying information about the individual responses of any participant.

Dissemination of research results. One copy of the Masters in Social Work research project is available to the public at the School of Social Work, Lakehead University and another copy is in the Patterson Library, Lakehead University.

Limitations

The survey was cross-sectional and provided a 'slice across time' in terms of new staff and student perspectives on delivery methods for OCPTP New Worker training. The survey included responses from both northern and southern Ontario and from relatively large agencies to those that are smaller in size but cover a vast geographic area. Further, the sample included training for new staff and students working in aboriginal settings. On this latter point, it might be helpful to reiterate that the focus of this research was on the impact of delivery methods with staff not on the impact of the training on client service. This exclusive focus was used because the government mandates the same training for all new staff regardless of cultural context.

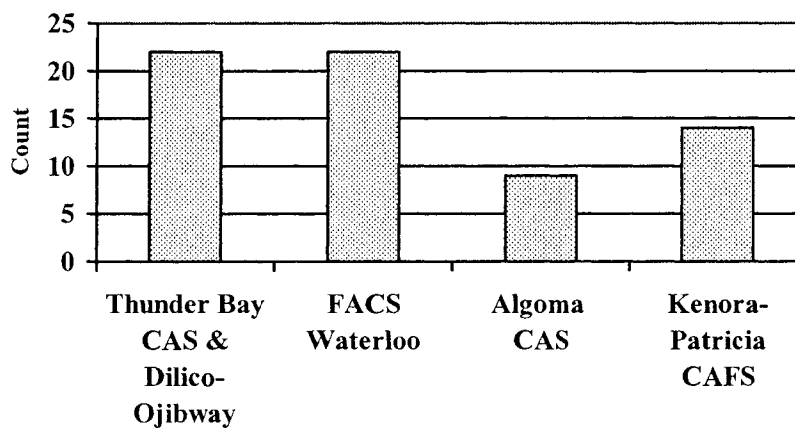
Chapter 4

RESULTS

Demographics of Participating Agencies by Geographic Region

Figure 1 shows the agency distribution of the sixty-seven survey participants from the OCPTP New Worker training program. Three of the agencies were located in northern Ontario and one in southwestern Ontario.

Figure 1: Participation in the OCPTP New Worker Survey by Agency

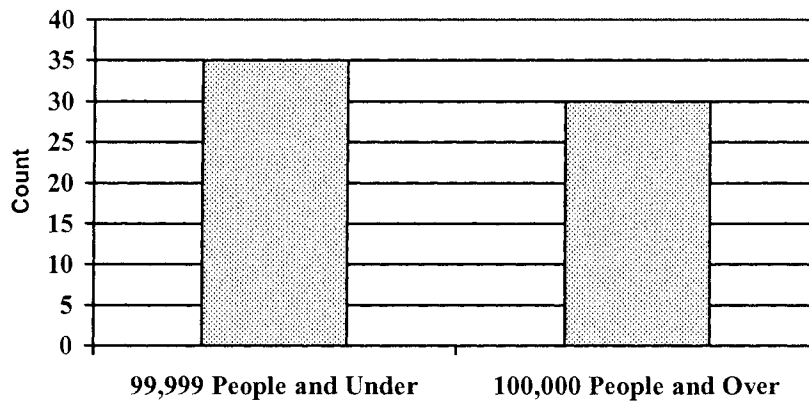


The largest numbers of participants were from Family and Children’s Services of the Region of Waterloo (FACS) and the Children’s Aid Society and Dilico-Ojibway of Thunder Bay where there were twenty-two from each of these areas. Fourteen participants represented Kenora-Patricia Children’s Aid Society and Algoma Children’s Aid Society had nine participants.

Because many Children's Aid Society's represent a number of satellite offices and service to smaller rural communities, training in all regions brings staff together who do not work from the same geographic location. Forty-one (61%) of the participants were from head offices, twenty-four (36%) respondents from district (or satellite offices) and two (3%) marked 'other'. Fifty-eight (89%) participants indicated that their training was delivered within a 'multi-CAS agency' setting comprised of head office and satellite office staff. Through an optional open-ended question on service delivery methods, the participants expressed views on this 'multi-CAS agency' setting. For the classroom delivery method, six participants indicated that what they most 'liked' was related to the learning environment created by 'multi-agency' participation. Others added that they 'liked' connecting with colleagues from other CAS agencies. Another participant specified that she liked *getting ideas from other CASs* as their most 'liked' part of the classroom delivery method. In contrast, one participant pointed out that they 'disliked' having training with 'multi-agencies', as *there were too many agencies with different policies and legislation*.

Figure 2 demonstrates that slightly more survey participants were located in a city or town with a population of 99,999 or less persons. However, the numbers were very even. Thirty-five people were from cities and towns with 99,999 people or less, thirty participants indicated they were in a city or town of 100,000 people or more and two provided no response.

Figure 2: Participation in ORAM Survey by Size of City/Town



Travel

Forty-one (61%) of the respondents had to travel in order to get to their training destination. Twenty-five (53%) reported that they had been required to travel in risky weather to get to their training location.

Figure 3: Length of Time to Travel to Training Site

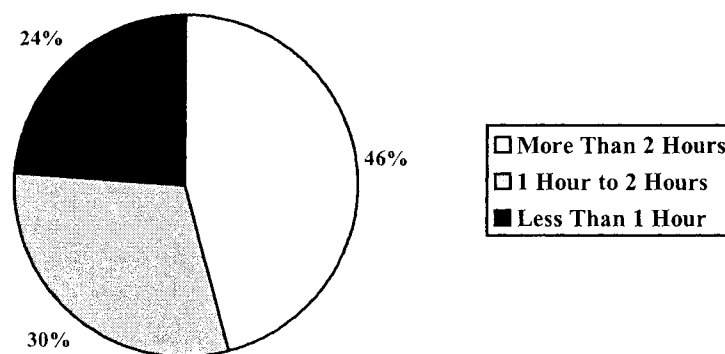
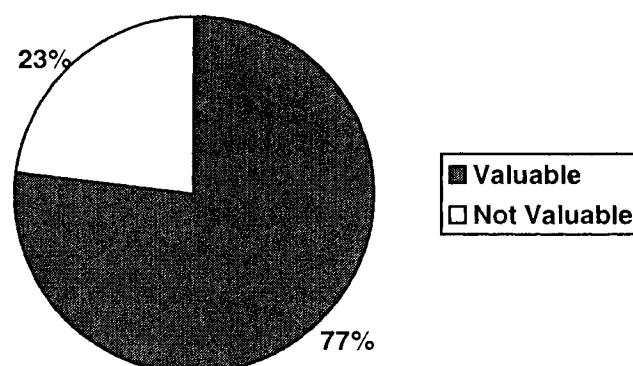


Figure 3 demonstrates that forty-six percent of the training participants spent more than two hours traveling, thirty percent needed one to two hours and twenty-four percent had to travel less than one hour. From the responses, length of travel time seemed to have no effect on learning, even when travel time was outside of regular work hours. However, of those having to travel, nine (19%) viewed their traveling as so exhausting as to decrease their ability to learn. Moreover, from the open-ended questions further insights can be gained that for some travel is stressful. For example, ten individuals explained that they most ‘disliked’ the classroom training due to the required travel and being away from family. *It was extremely exhausting to spend 3 nights in a hotel.* Additionally, one participant expressed that they most ‘liked’ the web-based portions of training because there was “no traveling”.

Participants specified that if they did have to travel, they preferred going with others. They found the collegiality a valuable portion of their training experience. In fact, as demonstrated in Figure 4, almost three times as many people who traveled with others found this experience to be beneficial and valuable to their training.

Figure 4: Value of Traveling with Others to the Training Site



Skills and Readiness

This survey provided a self-assessment by the participants of their skill level and readiness to use technology needed for web-based learning. This study looked at both computer skills as well as Internet abilities, as the web-based delivery method requires skills in both areas. Fifty (94%) participants rated their computer skills as ‘very good’ or ‘good’. Only one person (2%) thought that their computer skills were ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’. Three (4%) people reported that they were ‘undecided’. Concerning Internet skills, fifty-two (96%) rated their Internet skills ‘very good’ or ‘good’; while only two (4%) rated their Internet skills ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’. When participants were asked to rate their readiness to utilize a blended-media approach for training, 32 (63%) indicated that they were ‘ready’, 14 (28%) indicated that they were ‘undecided’, while only 5 (10%) indicated that they were ‘not ready’.

OCPTP Training

When the province of Ontario established the OCPTP Training Program, it was designed for the entire New Worker Series to be completed in three months. However, only sixteen (25%) of the participants answered that their training program would be or had, in fact, been completed within the specified three month period. Twenty-five (39%) reported that their training program would take six months to complete and another twenty-three (36%) replied “other” for length of time. Thus, training was in fact delivered with more flexibility and over a longer period than was intended in the original design for the training modules.

As mentioned in earlier chapters, the New Worker Series Training Program had been developed and implemented by the Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Society (OACAS) via a contract with the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (formerly the Ministry of

Community and Social Services and Ministry of Community, Family and Children's Services).

Again, briefly the implementation of the training could happen in two ways. A CAS agency could use OACAS trainers or they could use their own Agency Based Training Program and use internal and/or external trainers. In both training delivery structures, the trainers received instruction, as well as curriculum content on 'how to train' and were approved by OACAS. The survey participants indicated that fifty-three (79%) received their training by a provincially certified internal staff person and twelve (18%) indicated they received their training by an OACAS trainer.

Either of these training delivery structures allowed individual agencies to customize the delivery method from a range of classroom only to a blended style that included some mix of classroom and web-based instruction. The potential combinations were only limited by the number of learning modules that had to date been developed in web-based format. Typically, the amount of classroom and web-based instruction varied for each module. OACAS trainers only used the blended delivery method and an OACAS trainer delivered all web-based portions of the New Worker Series.

The survey asked participants to identify the delivery method that they had experienced in their training for each module. Those responding 'classroom' or 'web-based' completed a module only by face-to-face learning or via the Internet respectively. Participants who marked 'blended learning' received their training by a combination of classroom and web-based delivery methods.

Table 3: Participation in Training Module by Delivery Method

<i>Modules</i>	Classroom	Web-based	Blended learning
	n (%)^{ab}	n (%)^{ab}	n (%)^{ab}
#01 Evolution and Context of Child Welfare n=43	41 (95%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)
#02 ORAM Part 1 – Orientation, Eligibility and Investigation n=40	33 (83%)	1 (3%)	6 (15%)
#03 Impact and Maltreatment upon Growth and Development n=37	22 (60%)	7 (19%)	8 (22%)
#04 Identifying and Responding to Child Maltreatment n=36	26 (72%)	2 (6%)	8 (22%)
#05 ORAM Part 2 - Child Protection Assessment n=39	27 (69%)	3 (8%)	9 (23%)
#06 ORAM Part 3 – Plan of Service & Ongoing Reviews n=38	24 (63%)	6 (16%)	8 (21%)
#07 CFSA and Legal Services in Child Protection n=40	23 (58%)	11 (28%)	6 (15%)
#08 Interviewing Children n=39	36 (92%)	0 (0%)	3 (8%)
#09 Attachment, Separation and Placement n=39	29 (74%)	1 (3%)	9 (23%)
#10 Children in Care n=38	21 (55%)	9 (24%)	8 (21%)
#11 Interventions to Increase Parental Effectiveness n=40	36 (90%)	0 (0%)	4 (10%)

^a Percent written in valid percent

^b Due to rounding, some percents do not equal 100%

Table 3 demonstrates that overall classroom was the most frequently used delivery method. For classroom based training Modules #1 and #10 are the most and the least frequent modules respectively. In contrast, for web-based delivery method the most frequent participation occurred for Modules #7 and #10. In blended learning, participation rates for modules #3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10 ranged from 21% to 23%.

The survey provided open-ended questions where the participants could share their thoughts and opinions concerning type of trainer and the training delivery methods that they experienced. For classroom delivery, three participants shared that they best ‘liked’ the classroom portion because of the *excellent facilitators*, the knowledge they had, and opportunities for engaging in discussions with the trainers. For example, one participant in reflecting on the effectiveness of the training noted that they enjoyed learning from the trainers, who were *very knowledgeable, informative and easy to approach*. In contrast, four other participants pointed out that the trainers were part of what they ‘disliked’ most about the classroom instruction method. They reported that sometimes *[trainers] were not able to answer questions about [their] specific agency* and that there was *repetition when switching [trainers]*. For the web-based delivery, four participants reported they ‘disliked’ this portion of the training as *technically difficult, disorganized*, and had *computer problems or no online support*. Quite the opposite, one participant expressed that they best ‘liked’ the web-based portion of training because it *allowed training to be completed sooner rather than having it done in a classroom*.

Many participants brought up the issue of location and scheduling of the training itself. Four participants indicated that they ‘disliked’ the location most for the classroom-training portion, reporting that *it was either cold or cramped and not comfortable*. Some stated that both the lunch break and the day length sessions seemed *too long*. One participant recommended *shorter lunches and longer breaks*.

The survey also examined the frequency of utilization of the three types of field assignments: shadowing, coaching and supervisory assessment. The OCPTP New Worker Participant Manual (Ministry of Community and Social Services, 2002) explains that the purpose of field assignments is to help the participant “to build on the classroom training with practical field experience while at the same time ensuring client safety”. Furthermore, the manual states “The eleven new child protection worker curricula [modules] are competency based training providing knowledge and practice for a new protection worker to reach a minimum level of competency.... Furthermore, competency requires the integration of knowledge and skills with practice in the work setting” (Ministry of Community and Social Services, 2002 p. 2-4). Thus, the goal is to provide the training participant with experiential based field assignments rather than just the learning received during the training program itself. Field assignments are integrated into the training to the extent that each training module has its own list of field assignments that the participant is to complete in order to enhance the transfer of learning and meet the minimum competencies of each module.

Table 4 shows the frequency of utilization of type of field assignments by module. Overall, the data suggested that there was very little opportunity for training participants to follow up with any kind of field assignment. For example, for every single module, the participants indicated that there was no follow up fifty-six to seventy percent of the time. When field assignments were given, the participants most frequently specified that the supervisor provided the assessment.

Table 4: Utilization of Three Types of Field Assignments by Training Module

<i>Module</i>	Shadowing	Coaching	Supervisory Assessment	No Follow Up
	n (%) ^a	n (%) ^a	n (%) ^a	n (%) ^a
#01 Evolution and Context of Child Welfare n=53	8 (15%)	4 (8%)	9 (17%)	32 (60%)
#02 ORAM Part 1 – Orientation, Eligibility and Investigation n =48	7 (15%)	2 (4%)	8 (17%)	31 (65%)
#03 Impact and Maltreatment upon Growth and Dev. n =44	3 (7%)	3 (7%)	7 (16%)	31 (70%)
#04 Identifying and Responding to Child Maltreatment n =41	5 (12%)	4 (10%)	5 (12%)	27 (66%)
#05 ORAM Part 2 - Child Protection Assessment n =50	5 (10%)	6 (12%)	9 (18%)	30 (60%)
#06 ORAM Part 3 – Plan of Service & Ongoing Reviews n =48	5 (10%)	7 (15%)	9 (19%)	27 (56%)
#07 CFSA and Legal Services in Child Protection n =47	3 (6%)	6 (13%)	7 (15%)	31 (66%)
#08 Interviewing Children n =52	8 (15%)	6 (12%)	8 (16%)	30 (58%)
#09 Attachment, Separation and Placement n =47	5 (11%)	4 (9%)	7 (15%)	31 (66%)
#10 Children in Care n =46	5 (11%)	4 (9%)	5 (11%)	32 (70%)
#11 Interventions to Increase Parental Effectiveness n=49	5 (10%)	5 (10%)	5 (10%)	34 (69%)

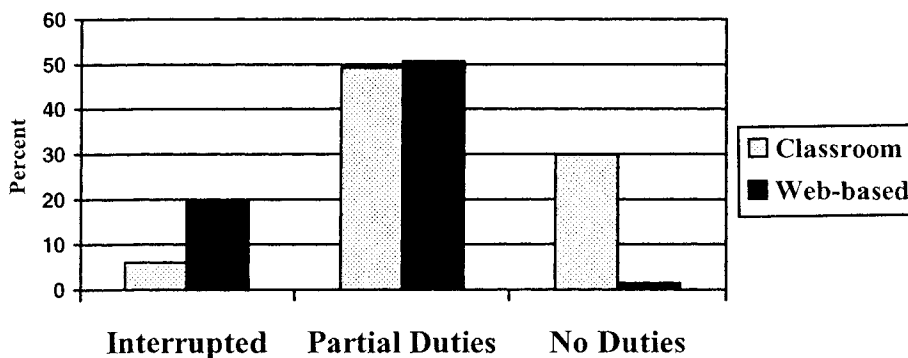
^a Due to rounding, some percents do not equal 100%

There are eleven total modules in the New Worker Training Series, each providing the opportunity for three different types of follow-up field assessments. In this case, there were 429 responses totaled amongst all the modules. This makes a potential for 1,287 opportunities for follow-up field assignments. However, there were only 189 actually completed. Therefore, overall the follow-up field assessments opportunities were only completed 15% of the time. Furthermore, for each individual module, 19% or less of the participants actually engaged in any of the three types.

Work Demands by Training Delivery Method

In Figure 5, the participants indicated that they were three times as likely to be interrupted from their training for work/caseload duties if the instruction was web-based delivered. The likelihood of being assigned partial duties at the same time as training is similar for both classroom and web-based delivery. Specifically, 49% of participants in the classroom delivery method and 51% in the blended delivery method held partial workload duties. Figure 5 also shows that while only 30% of the participants in the classroom training had no duties, 98% of those receiving web-based instruction had duties to complete while in training.

Figure 5: Level of Work Expectations during Training by Delivery Method



The opened ended questions illustrated a diversity of opinion about the influence of work demands on training. Two participants provided evidence that having caseload duties while taking the training was beneficial. For example, one participant explained: *I found that taking the training modules while carrying a partial caseload was beneficial and enhanced my learning experience.* On the other hand, five participants made clear that they found carrying work duties during the training difficult. One participant clarified, *It is difficult to be in training and manage a caseload. [It was] sometimes distracting from [the] learning experience.* Similarly for web-based delivery, one participant provided this explanation: *I found that it was difficult to engage in web learning at the office, always having to run to do other tasks;* and another participant wrote *It is hard to do e-learning and my work duties at the same time.*

Selected Demographics

Table 5 provides an environmental scan of the composition of survey participants on five selected demographics. The majority of the survey's participants were female, fifty-nine (88%) while only eight (12%) were male. Furthermore, eighteen (27%) were less than 25 years old, thirty-one (46%) were between the ages of 25 and 31, twelve (18%) were between 35 and 44 years of age, and finally six (9%) were above the age of 45. The survey found that fifty (75%) had at least a university undergraduate degree. There were thirteen (19%) who had a college diploma.

Although the training program was designed to provide new workers with the necessary skills to move into a child welfare career, as mentioned previously, some agencies have also offered the OCPTP New Worker training program to students completing their field practicum at their agencies. Within this study, forty-two (63%) of the participants indicated they were "new workers", seventeen (25%) stated they were completing their "student placements", and seven

(10%) of the participants reported they were workers upgrading their training. The student component adds to the participant mix by ensuring the viewpoints of potential new CAS workers is included in understanding the impact of classroom and blended learning on the training experience.

Table 5: Distribution on Select Demographic Characteristics

Variable	Classroom Learners (n=46)	Blended Learners (n=21)	Significance
	n (%)	n (%)	
Age			
<25	14 (78%)	4 (22%)	$\chi^2 = 0.98, df=3$ p=0.81
25-34	20 (64%)	11 (36%)	
35-44	8 (67%)	4 (33%)	
45>	4 (67%)	2 (33%)	
Type of worker			
New worker	24 (57%)	18 (43%)	$\chi^2 = 7.02, df=3$ p=0.07
Upgrading worker	6 (86%)	1 (14%)	
Student	15 (88%)	2 (12%)	
Length of time			
<1 year	33 (66%)	17 (34%)	$\chi^2 = 0.45, df=1$ p=0.50
1 year>	12 (75%)	4 (25%)	
Educational degree			
College Diploma	9 (69%)	4 (31%)	$\chi^2 = 3.48, df=4$ p=0.48
Undergraduate Degree	23 (72%)	9 (28%)	
Masters	7 (54%)	6 (46%)	
College and University	3 (60%)	2 (40%)	
Distance Traveled			
<1 hour	7 (64%)	4 (36%)	$\chi^2 = 1.33, df=2$ p=0.52
1 to 2 hours	10 (71%)	4 (29%)	
over 2 hours	11 (52%)	10 (39%)	

In order to assure that the data analysis was measuring differences between classroom experiences and blended learning experiences rather than individual traits of the participants, it was important to determine if these two groups differed on selected demographic characteristics. Through a chi-square analysis, Table 5 confirmed that the two learning groups did not significantly differ by age, type of worker, length of time working, level of educational degree and by distance traveled for training. It is important to note that the 'type of worker' was almost significant and may have some impact on the findings.

Value Indicators

The survey queried all participants' on the impact that the training had on values. The *value* variable was comprised of four indicators, as described in Table 6. Each indicator was measured on a scale of one to five, with 1 'always', 2 'often', 3 'occasionally', 4 'rarely' and 5 'never'. Each of these *value* indicators was measured by type of training delivery method. In the first column, the *value* indicators were compared through a paired *t*-test analysis on the perceptions of blended learners who experienced both classroom and web-based as part of their OCPTP training. In the second column, these same *value* variables were evaluated through an independent *t*-test analysis of the classroom experiences of those who only participated in classroom training with just classroom experiences of those who were blended learners. In the third column, an independent *t*-test analysis provided insight into the experiences of those who received classroom only training with those participants who received both classroom and web-based training as blended learners and the impact that the training had on values.

In the first column, blended learners reported that three out of four indicators proved to be significantly different between their received classroom and web-based portions of training. The results of each of these three indicators reveal that blended learners felt that the classroom

portions of their training connected them to their agency's values, challenged their values/beliefs and challenged the values/beliefs of the community in which they work significantly more often than the web-based portions of their training. By examining the mean scores of these groups, both indicated that the training 'rarely' conflicted with the values of the social work profession.

When the analysis was focused on differences between the experiences of participants in the classroom only training and the experiences of the classroom portions of the blended training, the results demonstrated that there was only one significant difference between the two groups. The classroom only training provided less of a sense of connection to the agency's values, than did the classroom portion of the blended learner training. Mean scores revealed that the training for both groups was 'occasionally' challenging the values of the communities where they work. Further, they both reported that the training they received 'rarely' conflicted with the values of the social work profession.

In terms of the differences between the classroom only training and the blended training, there was no significant difference between either group in any of the four value indicators. Mean results showed that both classroom learners and blended learners perceived that the training 'occasionally' challenged their own values/beliefs and 'occasionally' challenged the values/beliefs of the communities where they work. Additionally, both training delivery methods 'often' connected them to their agencies, and 'rarely' conflicted with the values of the social work profession.

Table 6: T-test Analyses of Participants' Values by the Type of Delivery Method

Values	Column 1							Column 2							Column 3								
	Paired <i>t</i> -test analysis of perceptions of blended learners who took both classroom and web-based							Independent <i>t</i> -test analysis of perceptions of classroom only learners by the classroom experiences of blended learners							Independent <i>t</i> -test analysis perceptions of classroom only learners by blended learners								
	Classroom Portion			Web-based Portion				Classroom Only			Classroom Portion				Classroom			Blended					
	N	M	(SD)	M	(SD)	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	N	M	(SD)	N	M	(SD)	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	N	M	(SD)	N	M	(SD)	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
VALUES																							
Connects me to the agency's values	19	1.53	0.70	2.68	1.06	-4.72	<0.01	45	2.00	0.67	21	1.57	0.68	-2.40	0.02	45	2.00	0.67	19	2.11	0.72	0.56	0.58
Challenges my values/beliefs	19	2.42	1.17	3.42	0.90	-3.94	0.01	45	2.87	0.76	21	2.48	1.12	-1.66	0.10	45	2.87	0.76	19	2.92	0.89	0.25	0.80
Challenges the values/beliefs of the communities where I work	18	2.61	1.09	3.22	0.73	-2.37	0.03	42	2.98	0.90	20	2.70	1.08	-1.06	0.29	42	2.98	0.90	18	2.92	0.75	-0.25	0.81
Conflicts with values of the social work profession	18	3.78	0.88	3.89	0.90	-0.81	0.43	43	3.95	0.72	20	3.85	0.88	-0.50	0.62	43	3.95	0.72	18	3.83	0.84	-0.57	0.57

Learning variables

The survey queried all participants' on four distinct learning variables, as described in Table 7. Each of these learning variables was comprised of two to four indicators. Each indicator was measured on a scale of one to five, with 1 'always', 2 'often', 3 'occasionally', 4 'rarely' and 5 'never'. Each of these learning variables was measured for different types of training delivery methods. In the first column, the learning variables were compared through a paired *t*-test analysis of the perceptions of blended learners who experienced both classroom and web-based delivery methods as part of their training. In the second column, these same learning variables were evaluated through an independent *t*-test analysis of the classroom experiences of those who only participated in classroom training with just classroom experiences of those who were blended learners. In the third column, an independent *t*-test analysis provided insight into the learning experiences of those who received classroom only training with those participants who received both classroom and web-based training as blended learners.

The findings for the blended learners in the first column, demonstrated significant difference in all learning variables with one exception. For the *learning milieu* variable there was no significant difference in the behaviour of the participants in reading the pre-course readings. By examining the means, blended learners only 'occasionally' did the pre-course readings ahead of their training. Further insight could be gained into the intensity of these significant differences by examining the means for each separate indicator. For example, for the learning variable *interaction* the web-based delivery method was viewed by the participants as providing 'occasionally' opportunities to network and contacting colleagues for assistance. For the *transfer of learning* variable, the mean scores pointed out that as currently designed the web-based

Table 7: T-test Analyses (paired and independent) of Selected Learning Variables by Type of Delivery Methods

Learning Variables	Column 1							Column 2							Column 3								
	Paired <i>t</i> -test analysis of perceptions of blended learners who took both classroom and web-based							Independent <i>t</i> -test analysis of perceptions of classroom only learners by the classroom portion for blended learners							Independent <i>t</i> -test analysis perceptions of classroom only learners by blended learners								
	Classroom Portion			Web-based Portion				Classroom Only			Classroom Portion				Classroom			Blended					
	N	M	(SD)	M	(SD)	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	N	M	(SD)	N	M	(SD)	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	N	M	(SD)	N	M	(SD)	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
INTERACTION																							
I felt comfortable to ask questions when needed	19	1.37	0.60	2.26	1.10	-4.46	<0.01	46	1.89	0.77	21	1.38	0.59	-2.70	0.01	46	1.89	0.77	19	1.82	0.77	-0.36	0.72
Allowed opportunities for me to network with other workers and students in my field	19	1.37	0.50	2.89	1.29	-4.66	<0.01	46	1.61	0.77	21	1.38	0.50	-1.23	0.22	46	1.61	0.77	19	2.13	0.66	2.56	0.01
I would feel comfortable contacting my colleagues for assistance	19	1.53	0.84	3.00	1.15	-4.38	<0.01	44	1.91	0.74	21	1.62	0.86	-1.40	0.17	44	1.91	0.74	19	2.26	0.69	1.78	0.08
I participated actively in group discussions	19	1.47	0.70	2.21	1.03	-2.93	0.01	46	2.04	0.76	21	1.48	0.68	-2.93	0.01	46	2.04	0.76	19	1.84	0.69	-1.00	0.32
TRANSFER OF LEARNING																							
The training integrates well with my prior (or current) education	19	1.74	0.65	2.42	1.12	-2.11	0.05	46	2.02	0.77	21	1.76	0.70	-1.31	0.19	46	2.02	0.77	19	2.08	0.58	0.29	0.08
The training appropriately prepared me to participate in the required field assignments	18	1.56	0.78	2.50	1.10	-3.31	<0.01	31	2.29	0.74	19	1.53	0.77	-3.49	<0.01	31	2.29	0.74	18	2.02	0.74	-1.20	0.24
The training provided sufficient opportunity for hands on practice	18	1.89	0.76	2.89	1.08	-5.05	<0.01	42	2.52	0.89	20	1.90	0.79	-3.46	0.01	42	2.52	0.89	18	2.39	0.83	-0.55	0.59
The training was beneficial in preparing me for professional practice	19	1.74	0.93	2.37	1.21	-2.19	0.04	44	2.11	0.81	21	1.71	0.90	-1.79	0.08	44	2.11	0.81	19	2.05	0.88	-0.03	0.79
LEARNING MILIEU																							
I was called away from training to deal with regular work duties	15	4.07	1.28	1.80	0.77	6.86	<0.01	40	4.50	0.75	17	4.18	1.23	-1.22	0.23	40	4.50	0.75	15	2.92	0.84	-6.32	<0.01
I read the pre-course readings before the day of the module	19	2.74	1.10	2.89	1.15	-0.90	0.38	43	3.05	1.23	21	2.76	1.22	-0.87	0.39	43	3.05	1.23	19	2.82	1.06	-0.71	0.48
I thought the training was too fast paced	19	4.16	0.69	3.26	0.93	4.82	<0.01	44	4.27	0.76	21	4.14	0.65	0.67	0.50	44	4.27	0.76	19	3.71	0.71	-2.79	0.01
I thought the instruction method was too difficult	19	4.68	0.48	3.68	0.89	4.36	<0.01	44	4.75	0.49	21	4.71	0.46	-0.28	0.78	44	4.75	0.49	19	4.18	0.51	4.18	<0.01
EFFECTIVENESS																							
The training method improved my understanding of the module material	19	1.47	0.51	2.32	1.16	-3.83	<0.01	44	1.98	0.70	21	1.43	0.51	-3.21	<0.01	44	1.98	0.70	19	1.89	0.76	-0.42	0.68
I thought the training method enhanced my learning	19	1.53	0.51	2.26	1.05	-3.24	<0.01	45	1.91	0.63	21	1.52	0.51	-2.45	0.02	45	1.91	0.63	19	1.89	0.66	-0.09	0.93

training only ‘occasionally’ prepared the participant for field assignments and for hands on practice. Under *learning milieu*, the respondents clearly showed that ‘often’ they were called away from web-based training to do regular work duties. On the contrary, when these same participants were receiving classroom training, they were ‘rarely’ called away for work related duties.

Quite the reverse to the examination of blended learner’s experiences, column 2 showed that there was only significance for all the indicators for the learning variable *effectiveness*. While means for both groups were closest to ‘often’ as a response category, blended learners, who had experienced both delivery methods, rated the classroom portion significantly more effective than those only exposed to classroom training only. For the *interaction* learning variable, blended participants indicated that they were significantly more comfortable asking questions, and participated significantly more actively in group discussions in the classroom portions of training than did those who only experienced classroom training. For the *transfer of learning* variable, the results demonstrated that the classroom portions of the blended training significantly prepare participants better for field assignments and provided more opportunities for hands on practice than the classroom only training. There were no significant differences between the two groups concerning any of the *learning milieu* indicators.

When the analysis was focused on differences between classroom only participants and blended learners there were opportunities to analyze whether the introduction of web-based delivery into the learning environment influenced the participants’ perspectives on each of the four learning variables. The findings revealed that on the two learning variables – *transfer of learning* and *effectiveness* – there were no significant differences. For the *interaction* learning variable, there was significant difference between the two groups, blended learners indicated they had less opportunity for networking. The learning variable *learning milieu* revealed the

largest significant difference on three indicators. Similar to the findings for column 1, the blended learners were significantly more likely to be called away from training for job related duties. Concerning the *learning milieu* variables, the blended learners pointed to the training as significantly faster paced and more difficult compared to the classroom only training. However, overall, these findings suggest that the web-based delivery method has limited and minimal negative impact on the learning experience.

The open-ended questions provided understanding to some of the findings reported in Table 7. Two participants stated that they ‘disliked’ the *classroom training because there was a lot of information to cover in such a short period of time, making the training at times [feeling] rushed*. Quite the reverse, others wrote that the thing they ‘disliked’ most about the classroom training was that *it was actually too slow paced and at times, overly repetitive*. For example, one participant revealed that they least liked the classroom portion as they felt that some of the material was *dry [and] below the education and knowledge level of participants*. Other responses gave insight into the *Interaction* learning variable that focused on networking and collegiality.

When participants were given the opportunity to respond in an open-ended manner as to what they ‘liked’ and ‘disliked’ most about each delivery method, classroom and web-based, some of these responses helped to clarify how classroom training allowed for more opportunity for networking and collegiality. In fact, of the sixty-two that responded to the open-ended question asking what they ‘liked’ most about the classroom portion of training, forty-five (72%) responded with answers that would fit into this learning variable. These responses included the group work, interacting with others, sharing experiences, engaging in discussions, meeting new people/agencies and being able to network. One participant explained that the classroom training gave a *sense of how your colleagues think and what their values are*. Although this was described as a positive aspect by some of the participants, quite the reverse, by nine participants

who explained that they specifically ‘disliked’ this aspect most in their classroom training. They stated that there was too much talking, too many small group activities, too much group work, and that frequently people would be *caught up in talking, wasting time*.

Three participants of the web-based delivery method also indicated positive aspects for networking and collegiality. They most ‘liked’ that it gave workers the ability to connect with other workers, it allowed participants to give each other feedback through web discussions and postings and that there was good communication with their instructor. Quite the opposite, other participants in the web-based delivery method did not feel they were able to *discuss issues*. For these participants, the web-based training was viewed as more impersonal at times as there was no face-to-face contact with their colleagues.

Twenty-five participants responded to the open-ended question that addressed the learning variable *effectiveness*. Nine participants reported their knowledge increased because of training. Specifically one participant explained *being new to the field, it gave me a good understanding and appreciation for our responsibilities [and] makes us aware of how important our role is in child welfare*. On the other hand, another four expressed that their learning experience was less than expected. One participant explained it this way. *Many times, I felt that if I did not know certain information from my education I should not be there. I wished training was more thorough and challenging*. Another participant stated that *the training modules did not provide information as to how to directly apply the topics to the job. With the exception of a couple of modules, the topics were broad and more of review of what was already learned in University. More information on how to work with issues (i.e. attachment, parenting) in our jobs would have been much more beneficial*.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

When legislative changes occurred for Children's Aid Societies and the Ontario Child Protection Training Program (OCPTP) was introduced, there was a demonstrated commitment to provide training to all staff. With the access to technology, there were choices as to whether training was delivered by classroom, through web-based or a combination of the two. This research provided results that can be used by government and agencies in making these choices as to how to provide new worker training. The major findings that can be incorporated into the future decision-making framework for training delivery methods are summarized below.

Travel

The literature revealed that one of the benefits to web-based learning is the increased cost effectiveness. The findings from this research indicated that almost fifty percent of the participants spent more than two hours in travel time to their training site. Although there was no indication that the traveling had a negative impact on their learning, the participants repeatedly stated that, they disliked the travel portions of training, being away from family, and living out of a hotel. However, if there was a need to travel for training, the participants preferred the collegiality in traveling together. Further, they were three times more likely to view traveling in a group as a valuable component to the training itself. This finding reinforced that when web-based training was used, it must take into consideration needs for collegiality experiences among the training participants. Nonaka & Takeuchi (1998) confirmed that networking and collegiality

were important factors in building connections, agency loyalty and understanding, and a sense of belonging.

Skills and Readiness

The participants indicated that the technology aspects of web-based training are not a barrier. Ninety-four percent of the participants rated their computer skills and ninety-six percent rated their Internet skills as 'very good' or 'good'. In contrast, only sixty-three percent of the participants rated themselves as 'ready' for a blended-media delivery approach. Furthermore, despite having the necessary skills for a blended-media approach, some participants indicated that there was not enough help or support regarding the technical aspects of using Internet technologies when problems arose. For example, participants required a high level of support, both in their use of hardware and software. These findings confirmed that agencies that include a web-based training portion must include time to assist participants in preparedness with the delivery method itself. In addition, there is a need for '24-7' access to technical support when the web-based training is delivered as an asynchronous learning opportunity.

OCPTP Training

The Ministry recommended training time of three months for new workers was found to be an unrealistic timeframe for some agencies and participants. Only twenty-five percent of the respondents reported that it either did take or will take three months to complete all OCPTP modules. The need for extended time to complete the training means that staff may have been working without the recommended minimum competencies for a longer period. Furthermore,

this flexibility in the period for completing the modules may mean that a worker is carrying a higher workload by the time the training is completed.

Field Assignments

As previously explained, there are three types of field assignments: shadowing, coaching, and supervisory assessment. These field assignments have been developed to accompany each of the eleven modules. The field assignment portion of the OCPTP training was designed to enhance the transfer of learning from both the classroom and the blended-media delivery methods to ensure minimum competencies of staff in meeting client needs. However, the extremely low numbers of participants reporting the opportunity to use field assignments suggests that there is a lack of priority placed in this area. Therefore, given the scarcity of participation in field assignments for all modules, the relationship of field assignments to both the classroom and the blended-media delivery methods may need to be re-examined. If it is confirmed that minimum competencies defined in OCPTP can only be accomplished with field experience then without these field experiences it may be hard for an agency to ensure that all their staff do meet minimum competencies. Otherwise, the New Worker Training Program cannot meet its stated goals.

Work Demands during Training

Blended learners participating in the web-based portions of their training were three times more likely to be interrupted during training for work-related demands compared to experiences during the classroom portions of training. This may indicate that time spent in front of a computer, as compared to time spent in a formal classroom setting, is more vulnerable to

interruptions. For example, when participants traveled for their training they were a lot more distant from job related duties and so were less likely to be deemed available for 'on the spot' emergencies. In other words, they were more likely to have someone who would 'cover for them'. Quite the opposite, web-based learners were located in the agency, possibly at the worker's desk. Therefore, if something were to arise, the staff person was visibly identified as being present and therefore able to deal with any matter. In other words, the web-based learner was perceived as being available to manage caseload duties because they were working from a computer, with no visible instructor.

This may be due to a lack of respect for the web-based learning process. Before perceptions on web-based learning change, participants, staff colleagues and the agency as a whole need to accept web-based learning as a legitimate activity that should not be interrupted in a similar matter as the respect given to those who are engaged in classroom learning. This research demonstrated that workers were not being treated equally when engaged in the different delivery methods. This needs to change before training can be effective. This finding was confirmed in the literature where a shift from traditional training needs to be accompanied by a change in traditional thinking (Wegner et al., 1999). Wentling et al., (2000) referred to the need for a total organizational cultural shift. This must occur from the Executive Director and downwards to the new staff entering the workplace. Thus, there is a need for an agency environment that does accept and promote the use of technology with respect for time needed for training in spite of work demands.

Value Transfers through Training

When comparing the classroom portions with the web-based portions, the findings were significant in demonstrating that the classroom portion was more effective in connecting the participants to agency values. Furthermore, the results showed that the classroom portion challenged more often their own values/beliefs and their perceptions of the values/beliefs of the community in which they work. When examining the experiences of those participants in the classroom only training with those experiences of the classroom portions of the blended training, the results demonstrated the classroom only training provided significantly less of a sense of connection to the agency's values than did the classroom portion of the blended learner training. When doing an overall comparison of the delivery methods, the results revealed that there were no significant differences between classroom and blended learning concerning values.

Learning Variables

The results revealed that there are significant differences between the blended-media's classroom and web-based portions. Participants indicated that they had more opportunity to network and to interact with others in the classroom portions of their training. They also reported that the classroom portions better prepared them for field assignments, hands on practice and professional practice. The blended learners also reported a significantly higher degree of being called away or interrupted from their training in order for them to attend caseload duties during those times in which they were receiving their training via web-based. Finally, the results showed that the classroom portion was significantly more effective in improving understanding of the module material and in enhancing their overall learning.

However, there are fewer differences when comparing the classroom only delivery method with the classroom portions of the blended training. Blended learners, who had experienced both delivery methods, significantly rated the classroom portion as significant on two of the four indicators for both the *interaction* and *transfer of learning* variables. Quite to the contrary, none of the indicators was significantly different between the classroom only and the classroom portion for the *learning milieu* variable. From the mean scores, both groups were rarely called away from training for work related duties, only occasionally read the pre-course readings and had few concerns about the pace or difficulty of the instruction. Quite the opposite, for the blended learner participants there was a significance difference in their views on the effectiveness of training. This finding is difficult to interpret, but perhaps for the blended learners the classroom portion contrasted with the web-based; and thus, more participants found the classroom portion more effective in enhancing learning. In other words, once exposed to web-based, participants appeared to optimize the classroom portions of their training to counter deficits they may see in the web-based portion like participating more often in group discussions.

There were very few significant differences when comparing classroom only training to the blended-media training. Specifically, the data between classroom only and blended learners showed only significance difference in four out of the eighteen indicators. Thus, blended learners indicated that they had less opportunity to network, felt the pace of learning was too fast and the instructional method too difficult. In addition, as discussed early, the blended learners were more likely to be pulled away from training for work related demands. Perhaps, of most importance, there was no significant difference in views on delivery method effectiveness.

Thus, these findings suggest that web-based delivery method has limited and minimal negative impact on the overall learning experience. Moreover, these findings put forward evidence that a hybrid or blended approach has limited impact on learning variables and

simultaneously may help to reduce training travel costs and lower travel stresses for staff. What is more, these findings provide concrete evidence that when designing web-based training, there needs to be more attention to the vulnerable areas pointed out in this study. Thus, web-based training must pay particular attention to the prescribed pace of training, the level of difficulty of the material and more opportunities for networking. On this latter point, it may be that the participants simply need more readiness training on how to maximize the advantages of web-based communication including messaging, chat rooms, bulletin boards, web-based linkages and threaded e-mail discussions. The participants in the study indicated this need for readiness training.

Overall, the findings support a hybrid or blended media approach to training. The findings of this study are summarized as a set of recommendations. By keeping these recommendations succinct, the hope is that they will easily be understood, remembered and thus implemented in future provincial curriculum development for child protection.

Recommendations

- Opportunities for collegiality must be provided regardless of delivery methods.
- A blended-media delivery method requires accessible technical support.
- Length of training time needs to be examined for both its impact on staff responsibilities prior to meeting minimum competencies and staff workload during training.
- The role of field assignments in the New Worker Training Program needs to be re-examined to determine the value-added contributions of these field assignments to the attainment by staff of minimum competencies.
- Training demands must be respected equally regardless of delivery method.

- With the increased presence and use of technology in human services, it is important to understand the impact this will have on the worker, the agency, and the service they deliver.
- Delivery methods must be considered when designing learning materials related to values.
- Blended approaches should be considered as a way to effectively address training needs, cut travel costs and decrease staff travel time.

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APPENDIX I

SURVEY

McLean, Michelle

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Lakehead

UNIVERSITY

Dear Participant:

The attached questionnaire seeks to gain an understanding of your perceptions, suggestions and concerns about the delivery model used for the Ontario Provincial Training Program. This questionnaire is a collaborative effort with Thunder Bay CAS, Dilico and other Child Welfare agencies in Ontario. I am doing this research in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master's Degree of Social Work program at Lakehead University.

Your participation is very important to my research so as to ensure the proper examination of the effectiveness of the provincial model training programs from your perspective. Some of these questions ask for your viewpoints on the differences between training delivered with face-to-face instruction and training delivered online through WebCT. I would very much appreciate your filling out the attached questionnaire, which should only require about 20 minutes of your time. Your responses in this questionnaire will not be identified with you in any manner and your name will not be used in my research paper. In other words, your responses will be treated in a very confidential manner. You are welcome to view the final copy of this report, which will be made available to you through the collaborative partner agencies and through the Lakehead University Library by January 2004.

If you have any questions, please contact Michelle McLean (807) 345-8577 or e-mail her at mlmclean@mail.lakeheadu.ca.

Just to let you know how grateful I am, I have sent these caramels. By the time you finish yours, you should have completed the survey. Thanks again for all your time and effort.

Michelle McLean

Section A: Demographic

01. Are you currently taking the module training as a:
- New worker
 - Student Placement
 - A worker upgrading your training
 - Other _____
02. What is the population of your city/town of employment or studies?
- Less than 9,999 people
 - 10,000 to 49,999 people
 - 50,000 to 99,999 people
 - 100,000 to 199,999 people
 - 200,000 to 499,999 people
 - 500,000 people and greater
03. What is your professional education (include any program in which you are currently enrolled)? Please check **ALL** the categories that apply and provide the name of each diploma or degree. For example, the Child and Youth Worker Diploma or Bachelor's Degree in Social Work.
- College Diploma _____
 - University Undergraduate Degree _____
 - University Graduate Degree _____
 - Other _____
04. How long have you been a student or an employee at the agency providing you with training?
- Less than 1 month
 - More than 1 month to 6 months
 - More than 6 months to 1 year
 - More than 1 year to 5 years
 - More than 5 years
05. What is your office location?
- Head office
 - Satellite / District office
 - Other _____
06. What is your sex?
- Female
 - Male
 - Other _____
07. What is your age group?
- Less than 25
 - 25 to 34
 - 35 to 44
 - 45 and above

Section B: Training Program

08. How long has it taken to complete the **FULL** training module series (New Worker Modules #1 - #11)?
- 3 months
 - 6 months
 - Other _____
09. Within your module training program are there other agencies participating or is only your agency involved?
- Other agencies are involved
 - Just our agency
 - Unsure
10. Please check the modules that you have already completed. For the modules you have completed, indicate whether they were classroom (face-to-face), web-based (online only), or blended (both web-based and classroom in the same module) and indicate whether you completed a field assignment. If you did complete a field assignment, please indicate **ALL** that apply.

<i>Module</i>	Classroom	Web-based	Blended media	<i>Field Assignments</i>
#01 Evolution and Context of Child Welfare				<input type="checkbox"/> Shadowing <input type="checkbox"/> Coaching <input type="checkbox"/> Supervision/Feedback <input type="checkbox"/> None
#02 ORAM Part 1 – Orientation, Eligibility and Investigation				<input type="checkbox"/> Shadowing <input type="checkbox"/> Coaching <input type="checkbox"/> Supervision/Feedback <input type="checkbox"/> None
#03 Impact and Maltreatment upon Growth and Dev.				<input type="checkbox"/> Shadowing <input type="checkbox"/> Coaching <input type="checkbox"/> Supervision/Feedback <input type="checkbox"/> None
#04 Identifying and Responding to Child Maltreatment				<input type="checkbox"/> Shadowing <input type="checkbox"/> Coaching <input type="checkbox"/> Supervision/Feedback <input type="checkbox"/> None
#05 ORAM Part 2 - Child Protection Assessment				<input type="checkbox"/> Shadowing <input type="checkbox"/> Coaching <input type="checkbox"/> Supervision/Feedback <input type="checkbox"/> None
#06 ORAM Part 3 – Plan of Service & Ongoing Reviews				<input type="checkbox"/> Shadowing <input type="checkbox"/> Coaching <input type="checkbox"/> Supervision/Feedback <input type="checkbox"/> None
#07 CFSA and Legal Services in Child Protection				<input type="checkbox"/> Shadowing <input type="checkbox"/> Coaching <input type="checkbox"/> Supervision/Feedback <input type="checkbox"/> None

#08 Interviewing Children			<input type="checkbox"/> Shadowing <input type="checkbox"/> Coaching <input type="checkbox"/> Supervision/Feedback <input type="checkbox"/> None
#09 Attachment, Separation and Placement			<input type="checkbox"/> Shadowing <input type="checkbox"/> Coaching <input type="checkbox"/> Supervision/Feedback <input type="checkbox"/> None
#10 Children in Care			<input type="checkbox"/> Shadowing <input type="checkbox"/> Coaching <input type="checkbox"/> Supervision/Feedback <input type="checkbox"/> None
#11 Interventions to Increase Parental Effectiveness			<input type="checkbox"/> Shadowing <input type="checkbox"/> Coaching <input type="checkbox"/> Supervision/Feedback <input type="checkbox"/> None

11. During the **classroom** portion of your training, did you also do regular work duties? Please check the **ONE BEST** answer.

- I was interrupted during my training to attend to case duties
- I was pulled away from my training to attend to case duties and missed the rest of training
- I maintained partial case duties while at training (by working during lunch or the evening)
- I had no responsibilities for work while at training as coverage was provided
- I was not assigned a caseload during my training experience
- I was assigned a partial caseload during my training experience
- Not Applicable
- Other _____

12. During the **web-based** portion of your training, did you also do regular work duties? Please check the **ONE BEST** answer.

- I was interrupted during my training to attend to case duties
- I was pulled away from my training to attend to case duties and missed the rest of training
- I maintained partial case duties while at training (by working during lunch or the evening)
- I had no responsibilities for work while at training as coverage was provided
- I was not assigned a caseload during my training experience
- I was assigned a partial caseload during my training experience
- Not Applicable
- Other _____

13. How would you rate your readiness to utilize a blended media approach (includes web-based) as a method to receive your training?

- Ready
- Undecided
- Not ready

- 14 How would you rate your general computer skills (typing, retrieving files, understand basic operations)?
- Very good
 - Good
 - Undecided
 - Poor
 - Very poor
- 15 How would you rate your Internet skills (logging on to a computer network or Internet, navigating websites, etc)?
- Very good
 - Good
 - Undecided
 - Poor
 - Very poor

Section C: Travel

- 16 As a result of your current training was it necessary to be away from home and family (aside from regular working hours)?
- Yes
 - No
- 17 Did you have to travel in order to attend training?
- Yes ** if you responded yes answer questions #18- #25
 - No ** if you responded no please skip to question #26
- 18 How long did it take for you to travel to your training location, one way?
- Less then 1 hour
 - 1 hour to 2 hours
 - More than 2 hours to 5 hours
 - More than 5 hours
19. If you traveled with others involved in the module training, please state whether you thought this was a valuable aspect to your training experience.
- Traveled alone.
 - Traveled with others involved in the module training and believe this time spent together was a valuable aspect to my training experience
 - Traveled with others involved in the module training but do not believe this time spent together was a valuable aspect to my training experience.
20. Did you have to stay overnight to attend the training program?
- Yes
 - No
21. Was the time taken to travel to your training so exhausting as to decrease your ability to learn?
- Yes
 - No
 - Undecided

22. Have you been required to travel during risky weather conditions?
 Yes
 No
23. While you are out of town to receive your training, did you “piggy back” your trip to accomplish other activities (see question #24 for examples) while in town?
 Yes ** if yes, please answer questions #24 and #25.
 No ** if no, please skip to question #26.
24. While away from home to receive training, what other activities were you able to accomplish? Please check **ALL** that apply.

Activity	Always	Often	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
Medical Appointments					
Dental Appointments					
Personal Shopping					
Grocery Shopping					
Auto Repairs					
Entertainment					
Visiting Out-of-town Friends					
Visiting Out-of-town Family					
Other _____					
Other _____					

25. If you were able to receive future training delivered only through WebCT (online) how would you handle the following? Please check **ALL** that apply.

Activity	Make Extra Trips out of your home community	Do them locally	Not do them at all	NA
Medical Appointments				
Dental Appointments				
Personal Shopping				
Grocery Shopping				
Auto Repairs				
Entertainment				
Visiting Out-of-town Friends				
Visiting Out-of-town Family				
Other _____				
Other _____				

Section D: Your Perceptions (PART 1)

26. For the following questions, please check the corresponding numbers that best represent your perceptions about the overall **CLASSROOM PORTION** of the training.

Blended-media participants, please reflect **ONLY** on the **classroom** portion of the training.

←————— 1 = Always 2 = Often 3 = Occasionally 4 = Rarely 5 = Never NA —————→

Question	1	2	3	4	5	NA
I feel the classroom portion of training allowed opportunities for me to network with other workers and students in my field.						
I feel that the classroom portion of the training connects me to the agency's values.						
As a result of the classroom portion of the training, I would feel more comfortable contacting my colleagues for assistance.						
The classroom portion of training challenges my values/beliefs.						
The classroom portion of training challenges the values/beliefs of the communities where I work.						
The classroom portion of training conflicts with my understood values of the social work profession.						
The classroom portion of training integrates well with my prior (or current) education.						
The classroom portion of training appropriately prepared me to participate in the required field assignments.						
The classroom portion of training provided sufficient opportunity for hands on practice.						
I believe the classroom portions of training were beneficial in preparing me for professional practice.						
During the classroom portions of training, I read the pre-course readings before the day of the module.						
During the classroom portions of training, I participated actively in group discussions						
During the classroom portion of the training, I was called away to deal with regular work duties.						
Overall, I thought the classroom portions of training were too fast paced.						
Overall, I thought the classroom instruction method was too difficult.						
Overall, the classroom training method improved my understanding of the module material.						
Overall, I thought the classroom training method enhanced my learning.						
During the classroom portions of training, I felt comfortable to ask questions when needed						
What did you dislike most about the classroom portions of your training program?						
What did you like most about the classroom portions of your training program?						

28. Please check what you would prefer:
- To stay in my community and receive training online.
 - To stay in my community and receive classroom training.
 - To leave my community and receive classroom training.
 - To stay in my community and receive a combination of online and classroom training.
 - Other _____
29. For those who have completed the **blended-media** method of training delivery (both web-based and classroom), please check the answer that **BEST** expresses your opinion.
- For my learning needs, the **classroom** portion of the delivery method was the best.
 - For my learning needs, the **web-based** portion of the delivery method was the best.
 - For my learning needs, the combination of the two (**blended - web-based and classroom**) delivery method was best.
 - For me, I see **no difference** between classroom and web-based delivery methods.
30. Please choose **ONE** of the following statements that **BEST** expresses your perspective.
- Overall, I feel that my module training program:
- Is a process I just want to get over with
 - Enhanced my ability to be effective in my job
 - A requirement, but a learning experience
 - Took away time that should have been used to accomplish my case duties
 - Was disappointing and not what I expected

If you wish: please take some time and explain your answer:

Please check to make sure you have answered all the appropriate questions.

Thank you very much for your time.

McLean, Michelle

Classroom and Blended-Media: A Case Study of Training Delivery Methods in Ontario Child Protection

2005-05-15

APPENDIX II

Ethics Review

ETHICS REVIEW

Researcher: Michelle McLean, School of Social Work

Supervisor: Connie H. Nelson, School of Social Work

Title of Research: Blended Media: A Case Study of Training Methods in Ontario Child Welfare

Research Question

Is there any difference in the effectiveness of classroom and blended media (combination of classroom and online) delivery methods of training for the Ontario Risk Assessment Model (ORAM) used by Ontario Children's Aid Societies?

Purpose of Research

The purpose of this research is to provide an evaluation of training methods for the Ontario Risk Assessment Model, used by Ontario Children's Aid Societies. Provincial legislative mandates require all Ontario Children's Aid Societies to train all front line staff in the use of ORAM. In addition, Children's Aid Societies are providing the training to university and college students who do a field practicum with them. This evaluation will be the first provincial wide evaluation to be carried out on ORAM training strategies.

For the purposes of this research, classroom training will be defined as all training that will take place in a face-to-face environment. Whereas, blended-media training will be defined as all training taking place both online via Internet and in combination with classroom training.

To date, research has provided no conclusive evidence as to whether classroom or online learning has any significant differences. The learning variables are complex. Russell (1999) examined hundreds of different research evaluation projects. His conclusion was that there is no significant difference with regards to traditional and new modern forms of learning based on technology (Russell, 1999).

Methodology, Design and Procedure

This research will be conducted by the use of a quantitative survey designed to gather data from ORAM training participants across Ontario. The survey includes both closed and open-ended questions. Aggregate data will be reported for both the open and closed ended questions. The open-ended questions can expand understanding of the participants' perspectives.

Agencies will be made aware of this research opportunity via the Children's Aid Society of the District of Thunder Bay, Legal and Training Supervisor, Lori Roulston. Roulston, ORAM Trainer, will be in contact with other agencies to inform them of this research opportunity. Copies of the survey and cover letter will be made available for each agency wishing to preview a copy. Once an agency identifies themselves as interested in participating in this research project, the surveys will be sent to their site in required quantities. The ORAM training participants (either employees or students) within each designated agency will complete the surveys.

At the beginning of one of the training days, the ORAM trainer will discuss the survey and will hand one copy of the survey to participants in their training program. Although each participant will be given a copy of the survey, his or her cooperation will be completely voluntary. No identifiable information regarding personal details will be on the surveys to ensure that the participants' confidentiality and anonymity are not compromised through this research project.

After the surveys have been completed and collected, they will be placed into an envelope and returned to this researcher.

Data analysis will take place once research surveys have been collected from the participating agencies. The analysis will focus on the comparison (differences or similarities) between participants' opinions and training experiences within the two distinct training delivery methods (classroom and blended).

Participants

The participants in this research study will be employees or students at an Ontario Children's Aid Society agency who are taking the ORAM (Ontario Risk Assessment Model) New Worker Training Program. There will be a minimum of three different agencies participating in this research project. Neither the specific agency nor the individual participants will be identified in the final research thesis.

Research Instrument(s)

The instrument to be used in this quantitative research study is a researcher developed survey. Please see Appendix A for a copy of the survey.

Process for Informed Consent

The researcher will work in cooperation with Lori Roulston, Legal and Training Supervisor for the Children's Aid Society of the District of Thunder Bay. Together, they will be in contact with the other ORAM trainers to request participation and inform them of an opportunity to evaluate their chosen training delivery method. Each agency interested in participating in this research opportunity will volunteer and consent to their agency's participation as part of the research. At that time, each individual participant in the agency enrolled in training will also have the individual decision to whether they complete the survey or not. There will be no consequences that will threaten job status for those who do not opt to complete the survey. The cover letter to the survey that each participant receives will reinforce that their participation is completely voluntary and confidential. (See Appendix B for a copy of the Cover Letter.) A completed survey will indicate informed consent to participate in this study.

Procedure for Ensuring Confidentiality

Confidentiality will be maintained for all agencies and participants throughout the entire research study and thesis. (See Appendix B for a copy of the Cover Letter.) Each package of surveys requests the trainer to provide the name of the agency from which the surveys are returning. (See

Appendix C for a copy of the Agency Response Sheet.) This is so each agency can receive an aggregate copy of agency results. No identifying information about any individual completing the survey will be provided to the agencies. At no point during the survey will the participants' names be requested.

Seven Year Data Storage

In accordance with research protocols, all data gathered from this research study will be securely stored at Lakehead University for a standard period of seven years.

Apparent Risks/Benefits with Participants

There are no apparent risks to either individuals or the agencies participating in this research, as the researcher will use non-identifying information in the written thesis to ensure their protection. (See Appendix B for a copy of the Cover Letter.)

As a benefit to those agencies participating in this study, the research will provide each agency with aggregate results. As stated earlier, no participating agency will be provided with the original surveys or any identifying information about the individual responses of any participant.

Dissemination of Research Results

One copy of the Masters in Social Work research project will be available for participants to read at the School of Social Work at Lakehead University. Another copy will be given to the Patterson Library at Lakehead University and made available to the public.

The intent is to publish the results with my supervisor.

References

Russell, T. L. (1999). *No Significant Difference Phenomenon*.
North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC, USA