

CHILD WELFARE TRAINING: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED  
TRANSFER OF TRAINING, RETENTION, AND EDUCATIONAL  
SUPERVISION OF NEW CASEWORKERS

By

Donna L. Blakey

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty  
of Delaware State University

in partial fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the degree of Doctor in Educational Leadership

December 2008

© 2008  
Donna L. Blakey  
All RIGHTS RESERVED

## Abstract

Donna L. Blakey: Child Welfare Training: The Relationship  
Between Perceived Transfer Of Training, Retention, And  
Educational Supervision Of New Caseworkers  
(Chair: Dr. Norma K. Clark)

In order to meet the challenges that children and families often present, public child welfare organizations need trained, competent, and confident caseworkers. This study examines new caseworker training in a public child welfare organization. New caseworkers who completed pre-service training while in a training unit, or in a function based unit, were queried about their perceptions regarding three factors identified in the literature as impacting training transfer; training design, opportunities to use training on the job, and educational supervision. In addition, supervisors who had received new caseworkers were questioned about their best educative supervisory approaches, and their perceptions of the influence of training on the retention of new caseworkers. Following an analysis of the data, it was concluded that there was no statistically significant difference in the perceptions of new caseworkers regarding the training transfer factors, based on their unit assignment while attending pre-service training. Yet, overall, the perceptual indicators were positive for the transfer of training, opportunities to use training, educational supervision, and the impact of training on the retention of new caseworkers.

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, who have been my inspiration as well as my greatest support. My father continues to pave a clear, wise, and honorable path for me to follow to achieve my goals. My mother has given me the energy to pursue my dreams. To them I am eternally grateful. I would also like to dedicate this work to my children, brother and sister, who encouraged me, endured my frustrations, and celebrated this success right along with me. And finally, I would like to dedicate this work to my very special friends, whose words of support, and shared experience helped me get through it all.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to thank Dr. Norma K. Clark, my chair and instructor, for helping make this endeavor possible. Her guidance, tenacity, and support were instrumental to my success.

I would also like to thank Dr. Patricia Carlson for her eagle eye, and Dr. Phyllis Edamatsu for staying with me through the challenges I faced along the way.

I am also grateful for the words of encouragement, much needed laughter and free therapy sessions from my cohort pals, who are now new friends. And I am also grateful to Dr. F. Odun Balogun, of the English Department, who served as a sounding board, and was a calming presence during some stressful times in the process.

To everyone involved, I am very grateful for their receptivity, words of encouragement and helping hands.

## Table of Contents

Dedication.....	iii
Acknowledgement.....	iv
Table of Contents.....	v
List of Tables/Figures.....	viii
 CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Purpose of the Study.....	4
Rationale for the Research.....	5
Research Questions.....	7
Null Hypotheses.....	7
Definition of Terms.....	8
Assumptions.....	11
Limitations.....	11
Delimitations.....	12
 CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	14
Theoretical Framework and Models.....	14
Purpose of Studies.....	19
Research Design of Studies.....	19
Samples in Studies.....	21
Data Collection of Studies.....	22
Data Analysis in Studies.....	23
Findings.....	23
Instructional Design and Transfer of Training.....	23
Training Transfer in Child Welfare.....	26
Supervision and Training Transfer.....	29
Transfer of Training and Retention.....	32
Limitations of Studies.....	33
Summary.....	34

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY.....	35
Research Design.....	35
Instructional Setting and Context.....	35
Sample.....	37
Instrumentation.....	38
Procedures.....	42
Data Analysis.....	44
Research question one.....	45
Research question two.....	45
Research question three.....	45
Research question four.....	46
Research question five.....	46
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS.....	48
Sample Characteristics.....	48
Quantitative Research Questions and Hypotheses.....	53
Research question one.....	53
Research question two.....	54
Research question three.....	55
Qualitative Research Questions.....	57
How supervisors learned their work.....	60
Research question four.....	60
Research question five.....	63
Summary of Results.....	64
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION.....	66
Discussion of Findings.....	68
Limitations of the Study.....	73
Study Strengths.....	75

Implications for Practice.....	76
Recommendations for Further Research.....	79
Conclusions.....	81
REFERENCES.....	83
APPENDIX.....	90



## LIST OF TABLES/FIGURES

Table	Page
1. Learning Transfer Systems Inventory: 16 Transfer of Training Factors.....	40
2. Telephone Interview Questions for Supervisors.....	42
3. Respondents by Unit Assignment.....	49
4. Year Respondents Began Training.....	50
5. Ages of Respondents.....	50
6. Respondents' Level of Education.....	51
7. Respondents' Prior Work Experience in Child Welfare...	51
8. Respondents' Race and Ethnicity.....	52
9. Respondents' Work Assignments.....	53
10. Chi-square Tests of Unit and Retention.....	57

Figures	Page
1. ISD Concept Map.....	17
2. Effective Training Systems in Child Welfare Agencies..	18
3. Training System Design for Child Welfare System for Organization Under Study.....	37

## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

Public child welfare organizations are mandated by law to investigate reports of child abuse and neglect. The mission of these agencies is to promote the safety and well being of children through prevention efforts, protection efforts, and efforts to find permanent homes for children that have been abused, abandoned, and neglected. In order to fulfill that mission a trained staff of investigators, treatment workers, and permanency workers must be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Newly hired caseworkers must be trained in basic child welfare knowledge, practice skills, and policies to fulfill that mission. This staff must be retained over time to avoid service gaps and to ensure continuous and consistent care for the children and families served.

To adequately develop competent caseworkers, instructional design systems, also referred to in this study as training systems, are an essential component to successful training efforts in child welfare organizations. The main goal of instructional design systems (IDS) is to construct a learning environment in order to provide the learners with the conditions that support the desired learning process (Clark, 2008).

The transfer of knowledge and skills from the training room to application on the job is essential, especially for new casework staff. The competencies (knowledge, skills and attitudes) of individuals, groups, units, and the organization as a whole, must be developed, supported, and enhanced to meet the mission of the agency.

The public child welfare work environment is unique, complex, stressful, and involves risk to caseworker personal safety and emotional safety that few other occupations and work environments share (Brittain, 2000). Historically, caseworker turnover in many public child welfare organizations has been high (General Accounting Office, 2003; Strolin, McCarthy & Caringi, 2006). To be effective caseworkers must be adequately trained and then supported to transfer that training into real and varying casework situations with families.

#### *Statement of the Problem*

Public scrutiny of child welfare organizations continues to grow, placing increasing pressure on child welfare caseworkers to conduct more accurate investigations and assessments of child maltreatment, utilize existing resources to capacity, and utilize timely, culturally sensitive, evidence based interventions. "To meet these challenges, the child welfare system is increasingly recognizing the importance of in-service training programs for staff" (Litchi, 2002, p.23).

Yet, in the workplace, employers and supervisors continue to complain that their newly hired and trained employees cannot perform tasks on the job that they should have learned to do while in training. Trainers respond by saying that the employees have been taught to accomplish the tasks. "Clearly, this is a transfer of learning problem that is owned jointly by training, employers and employees" (Oregon Technology in Education Council, 2007, Transfer of Learning section, para 6).

Large sums of money, time and talent are employed in training with the expectation of performance standards being met or surpassed. In 1994, it is reported that an estimated \$16.6 billion was spent on formal worker training (Employee Benefit Research Institute, 1997, ¶ 6). In 1997 a reported \$55 to \$60 billion was spent training employees (Training Magazine, 1997).

Yet, according to Kumail and Bahadur (2008) the impact of huge investments of money and time in training often is not reflected in terms of organizational results, improved employee performance leading to customer satisfaction, or employees' feelings of moving up the learning curve – often the second-highest reason given by employees for continuing in an organization. "Between the cost of training and the cost of not training lies the huge debate about whether training actually leads to the desired business outcomes" (Kumail & Bahadur, 2008 ¶ 5).

"There seems to be an implicit assumption that training is valuable, yet evaluations of training rarely go beyond the typical reaction/satisfaction questions that participants complete at the end of training sessions" (Curry et al., 1994, p.8).

Kunder's (1998) research indicates that respondents' perceptions of the status and effectiveness of the training and development system have a statistically significant impact on respondents' perceptions of the value of training and development.

If organizational decision makers consider employee data important input for evaluating the training and development system, they should consider focusing

attention on elevating the status of the training and development system in the organization, and assuring its effectiveness in their efforts to improve the training and development systems for greatest impact upon the value which employees place on training and development activities (Kunder, 1998, p.9).

Researchers have worked to develop a general theory of transfer of training that could help learners and organizations get better at transfer. The literature demonstrates that this has proven to be a difficult research challenge. A clear definition of training transfer, or one overall, effective measure for determining if and how the transfer of training has occurred has not been identified. Nor does the literature identify a training system design or instructional delivery method that ensures training transfer. The issue of training transfer is complex, with several variables at play.

"The retention of child welfare workers continues to be reported as problematic for social service agencies nation wide. Overwhelming caseloads, job related stress, insufficient salaries, lack of promotional opportunities, inadequate agency support, lack of training, and changes in job responsibilities are cited as major reasons for the turnover" (Dombrowski, 2003, p.63).

The relationship between training systems design, training transfer, and retention requires further investigation, especially in the realm of the child welfare service delivery system.

#### *Purpose of the Study*

This paper focuses on a specific training design and delivery component of an instructional design system

utilized by a statewide public child welfare agency in the Mid-Atlantic area of the United States with regard to training new caseworkers.

Of particular interest to the researcher is the relationship between the assignment to dedicated training units, i.e. *coaching units*, educational supervision employed by unit supervisors, and the perception of caseworkers regarding their training transfer once they have completed competency-based pre-service training.

In addition, as retaining adequately trained caseworkers is of great importance in child welfare, the relationship between the focus on educational supervision and retention of caseworkers during the first 12 months following pre-service training was investigated.

#### *Rationale for the Research*

In the last ten years several training models and frameworks for excellent practice have evolved, based on research of best practice organizations, study of the training and development literature, and practice in the training and development field. However, a search of the literature reveals few if any of these models have been evaluated to determine if the elements of effective practice they describe do in fact make a difference in the quality of a training and development system and the desired organizational outcomes (Kunder, 1998).

Training is an investment and organizations need to be concerned that the costs spent training caseworkers are appropriate to their level of productivity and output (Collins, Amodeo & Clay, 2007). Graef & Hill, (2000)

concluded that employees leaving too soon after training results in organizational inefficiency. According to Mor Barak, Levin, Nissly & Lane (2006) although numerous factors affect retention, training is thought to be one factor that may facilitate greater retention of qualified and effective child welfare caseworkers' output.

"Training intervention effectiveness research is needed to (1) identify major variables that influence the learning process and (2) optimize resources available for training interventions" (Loos & Fowler, 1999, p.6).

In the context of child welfare, the desired outcome is the safety and well-being of children. Skilled, competent, and confident workers are the intervention tool through which children and families are reached and served. "The transfer of training literature is extensive and much is based in fields that are substantially distant from child welfare training" (Litchi, 2001, p. 101).

Empirical research that can add to the body of knowledge regarding variables that influence the learning process, and effective transfer of training in a child welfare setting may assist child welfare agencies in developing, implementing, and updating instructional design systems that maximize the transfer of training from the classroom to the job, as well as optimize resources available for training interventions, and positively impact retention of new staff. Such efforts will not only benefit the agency, and its employees but most importantly benefits the children and families being served.

### *Research Questions*

Specifically, this research is designed to explore the following questions:

1. Is there a difference in the perceptions of new caseworkers assigned to a coaching unit, or assigned to a functional unit, regarding the extent to which training design and opportunities to transfer training to on the job were experienced up to 24 months after attending training?
2. Is there a difference in perceptions of new caseworkers regarding the extent to which they received educational supervision related to the transfer of training to on the job up to 24 months after attending training?
3. Are new caseworkers who completed training while assigned to coaching units more likely to be retained than new caseworkers who completed training while assigned to regular units, during the first 12 months of employment?
4. What approaches do supervisors report most effective in facilitating the transfer of training of the new caseworkers they supervise?
5. How do supervisors think training may improve retention of new case workers?

### *Null Hypotheses*

1. There is no significant relationship between assignment to a coaching unit, or assignment to a functional unit, and the perceived transfer of training of new caseworkers following the completion



of training, and up to their first 24 months of employment.

2. There is no significant relationship between the perception of educational supervision, and initial unit assignment of new caseworkers while in training.
3. New caseworkers who completed their training in coaching units are no more likely to be retained than those who completed their training in regular units.

#### *Definition of Terms*

For the purpose of this paper, definitions of relevant terms are as follows:

*Agency training system.* An agency training system does not include a lead university partner, but rather retains management responsibility and control in the state agency's training unit. It may contract with several universities and colleges for specific components of the training system. "In some states, the county agencies' training units are critical partners to the state agency's training unit" (Kanak, et. al, 2008, p.9).

*Child welfare caseworker.* Caseworkers are field workers who perform a variety of functions and activities with children, families and others designed to improve the safety of children, protect them from maltreatment and neglect, find safe and permanent living arrangements for children, and support families.

*Coaching.* While loosely tied to training, coaching is of a more personal and relationship based nature. The purpose of coaching in this study is to assist new caseworkers in gaining knowledge, self-awareness, building skills, and

adjusting behavior to ultimately achieve organizational objectives (Thomas & Saslow, 2007).

*Coaching supervisor.* Within the organization in question, a coaching supervisor is a supervisor of a unit comprised of newly hired caseworkers in training, whose task, using educational supervisory and coaching techniques, is to assure that these new workers complete training, demonstrate emerging competence on the job, and move into a regular practice unit.

*Coaching unit.* In the organization studied, a coaching unit is comprised solely of newly hired caseworkers, placed in these units for several months while attending pre-service training, prior to being assigned to their permanent jobs. Under the direction of skilled supervisors, these new workers receive concentrated individual supervision combined with formal on the job training that promotes learning essential skills (Institute for Human Services, 1996).

*Competency-based training.* Competency-based training is based upon the participants' ability to demonstrate attainment or mastery of knowledge and skills (competencies) performed under certain conditions to specific standards (Rycus & Hughes, 2000; Sullivan, 1995).

*Educational supervision.* The activities of the supervisor which are directed toward helping staff learn what they need to know to carry out their jobs are educative. These activities include: helping workers to understand and develop emerging competence; maintaining an ongoing emphasis on developing staff competence to complete the

critical casework functions; and assisting senior level staff in their career planning and continuing professional education and growth (Bernotavicz & Bartley, 1996; Child Welfare Training Institute, 2008).

*Instructional design/ instructional system design.*

Instructional design is the systematic, methodical process of translating general principles of learning and instruction into designing education and training system from concept, delivery to evaluation (Clark, 2008).

*Learning Transfer Systems Inventory (LSTI).* The LTSI is a validated instrument used in diagnosing strengths and weaknesses of organizational transfer systems. It contains 89 items assessing 16 factors in two construct domains: Training in Specific, and Learning in General. The first construct domain measures factors affecting a specific training program attended. The second construct domain measures general factors that may influence any training in an organization (Holton, 2008).

*Training.* In the organization under study, training is defined as instruction delivered in the classroom that has the specific goals of developing and improving knowledge, capability, capacity and performance of specific tasks in a child welfare workplace setting.

*Training system.* A training system is comprised of the people (trainers, managers, supervisors and universities), resources (financial, material, technical), policies and procedures combined into a coherent whole. "The purpose of the training system is to plan, provide, support, and evaluate formal and informal instruction learning

opportunities and professional development aimed at improving agency outcomes" (Kanak et. al, 2008, p.10). *Transfer of training*. "Transfer of training is the degree to which trainees effectively apply the learning from a training context to the job" (Subedi, 2004, p.591). For the purpose of this study the perceptions of transfer of training was measured by scores on a transfer of learning survey given to new caseworkers and supervisors' perceptions of training transfer were obtained during interviews with them.

#### *Assumptions*

The following assumptions support this study.

1. Training is necessary to develop effective casework practices and that caseworkers perceive their pre-service training as essential in developing that required knowledge and skills.
2. Transfer of learning is occurring during the induction and pre-service training process of new caseworkers.
3. Indicators derived from empirically based training and development systems provide keys to successful transfer.
4. Employees' perceptions of the child welfare training system are valid and valuable measures of how well training is functioning and being transferred.

#### *Limitations*

There are limitations regarding this research. The organization studied was chosen as a convenience population as the researcher has a relationship with the agency and is allowed access to the data; therefore the sample is not

random. As the sample is limited to newly hired caseworkers during the calendar years of 2006 to 2008, the sample size is relatively small. In addition participants have different educational backgrounds, varying levels of prior work experience related to child welfare issues, and some have prior training in child welfare topics.

Survey research methods allow for the study of many variables, and with relative ease. This method was employed to investigate new caseworkers' perceptions of training transfer. Surveys have limitations, such as sampling and selection bias (Trochim, 2006). Surveys provide only verbal descriptions of what participants say they do or how they feel about something which may differ from what the participants actually do or really feel about something.

Other limitations involve the limited generalizability of the results to other populations, especially those outside of the public child welfare sector.

Interviewer bias may be a limitation, therefore regarding telephone interviews, efforts were taken to eliminate interviewer bias in the questioning by the interviewer through interviewer training and instruction.

#### *Delimitations*

The research literature specific to instructional design, transfer of training and transfer of learning, and staff retention is substantial. The literature identifies a number of factors related to transfer of learning alone. The research relevant to child welfare is less prevalent but none-the-less important. The scope of this study delimits the following factors: (a) research conducted in

the last 10 years that explores transfer of training in child welfare organizations, (b) transfer of training and instructional design delivery, (c) educational supervision and transfer of learning in child welfare, and (d) retention of the child welfare workers and training.

It is essential for public child welfare agencies to effectively train caseworkers and support the transfer of that training to on the job. Efforts to understand and facilitate that process are sorely needed. Training systems, training agencies, along with other child welfare system partners in supervision and management must work together to not only train caseworkers to be effective when working with children and families, but to retain these caseworkers so as to reduce or eliminate service gaps.

The following chapters examine the key focus of this study, the relationship between perceptions of training transfer, educational supervision, and the retention of new caseworkers. Chapter two discusses relevant theory and conceptual frameworks that underlie this study, and provides a methodological overview of current research in those variables of interest. Chapter three discusses the research design and methods for this study. Chapter four presents the results and chapter five discusses the overall findings of the study, offering recommendations for practice and future research.

## Chapter 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review compares research specific to the purpose of this study and the research questions posed. The first section of the literature review addresses the theoretical and conceptual framework relevant to the studies reviewed and from which this study draws. Additionally, comparisons of the similarities and differences in methodology, key findings, and limitations of research studies are made.

A survey of the research literature utilizing the findings obtained by searching the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost, Digital Dissertations and Google Scholar search engines produced 12 studies that met the following inclusion criteria: (a) peer-reviewed, (b) empirical investigation, (c) research conducted after 1997, (d) research implemented in a child welfare, social work, or human service setting, and (e) variables investigated are germane to this study.

The variables of interest in this study are: (a) perception of training transfer, (b) instructional systems design and delivery (c) educational supervision as a training transfer strategy, and (d) the relationship of training transfer and retention of recently trained direct service staff.

#### *Theoretical Framework and Models*

Theories for training transfer design and instructional systems design are the framework underpinning

this research. In their review of theories supporting training transfer Yamnill and McLean (2001) identify the two primary viewpoints that describe the conditions necessary for transfer in the literature, the identical elements theory and the principles theory.

According to the theory of identical elements developed by Thorndike and Woodworth (1901), transfer is most likely to occur when the conditions and learning environment are similar to the transfer environment (Foxon, 1995; Lobato, 2006).

The principles theory suggests that training should focus on the general principles necessary to learn a task so that the learner can apply them to solve problems without concern to the similarity of the transfer situation (Yamnill & McClean, 2001).

Transfer of training can be near or far (Barnett & Ceci, 2002; Cromwell & Kolb, 2002; Perkins, 1992; Sebedi, 2004). Near transfer is the application of learning to situations similar to those in which the learning has taken place, while far transfer is the application of learning to situations dissimilar from the original learning event. The achievement of near or far transfer appears to be dependent on which theory of transfer was used to guide the development and delivery of training programs (Yamnil & McClean, 2001).

Holton (1996) developed a conceptual evaluation model of training that suggests that transfer of training is affected by three crucial factors: motivations to transfer, transfer climate and transfer design. Holton indicates one



cause of failure to transfer is that training design seldom provides for transfer of training.

Training systems design, also referred to as instructional systems design (ISD) is the systematic development of instruction using adult learning theory, transfer design theories and techniques (Clark, 2008; JHPIEGO, 2002). The goal of instructional design is to construct experiences for adults that match learner needs and learning objectives with appropriate content and teaching and training methods (Collins, Amodeo & Clay, 2007). Systematic designs for training ensure that:

1. There is a need for training.
2. The learning events are well-designed, competency-based, and sequential.
3. Learning events are implemented using appropriate and effective strategies or approaches.
4. Learning events are evaluated to ensure that learning has taken place (JHPIEGO, 2002).

Most instructional design models used in pre-service training following ISD principles contain four essential

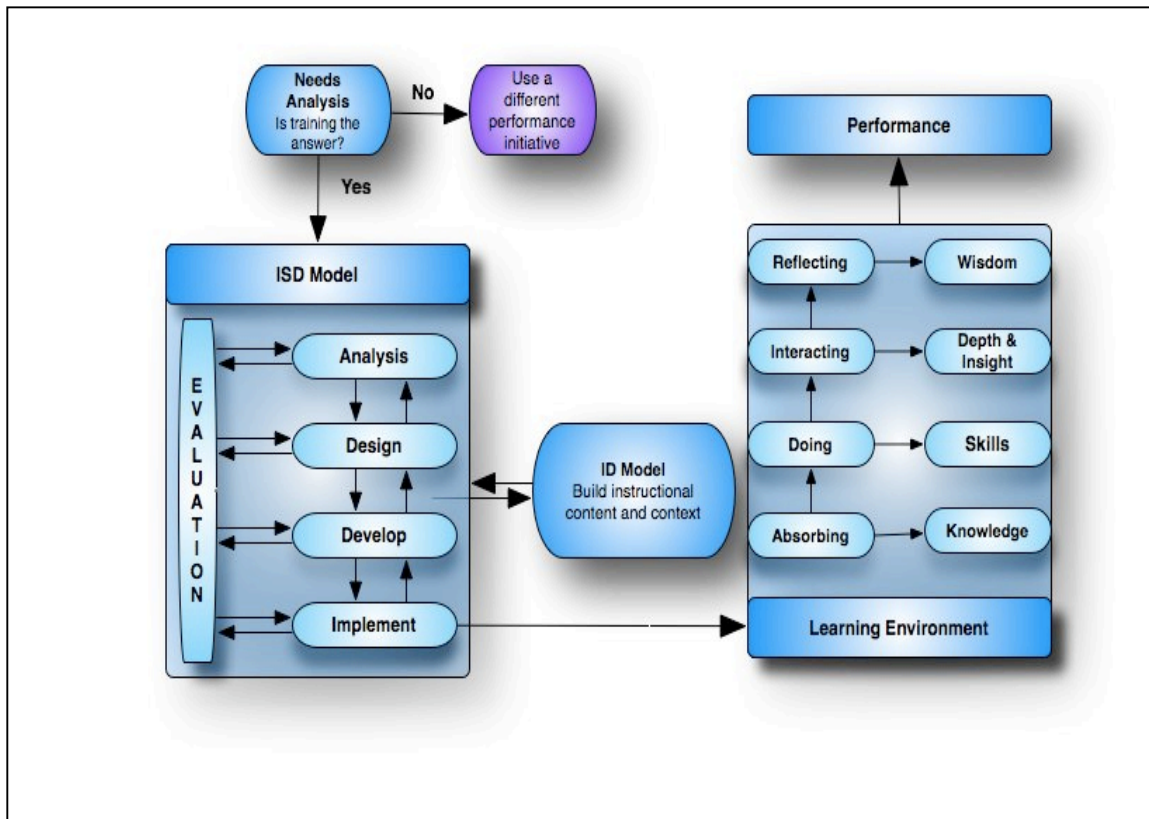
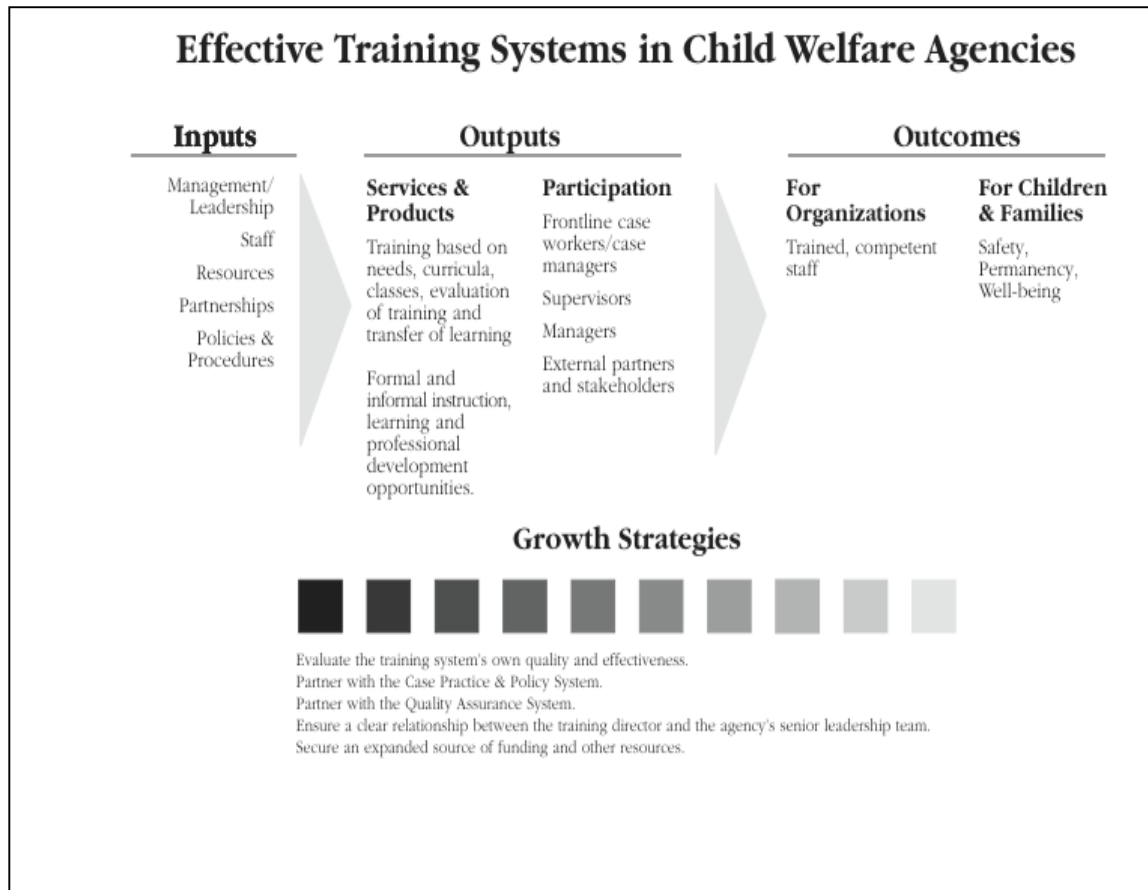


Figure 1. Clark, D. R. (2004), ISD Concept Map. Reprinted with permission.

phases: analysis, design, implementation, and evaluation as represented in Figure 1. The development phase of ISD is pertinent to this study. It is during this phase that training designers define learning, and choose a delivery system. Educational supervision and transfer strategies provided by supervisors is part of the pre-service delivery design employed at the child welfare organization in question, and is a focus of this research.

Baldwin and Ford's transfer model (1988), consists of training-inputs, training outcomes, and conditions of



*Figure 2.* Training systems model for child welfare agencies. From "Building effective training systems for child welfare agencies", by Kanack et al, 2008, p. 4. Reprinted with permission.

training transfer. Baldwin and Ford contend that transfer is contingent on trainee characteristics, training design and work environment factors. This model is an antecedent to the child welfare training system advocated by the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement (NCRIO). In Figure 2, Kanak et al. (2008) provide an analytic framework from which child welfare organizations can develop a mature training system that is responsive to the complex, rapidly changing child welfare work environment.

With these theoretical and conceptual considerations, 12 research studies were reviewed and will be discussed in the following sections.

#### *Purpose of Studies*

While the studies reviewed varied somewhat, 12 studies investigated constructs established in the literature involving the transfer of training of participants once they completed training and returned to their job setting (Antle, 2002; Brittain, 2000; Clarke, 2002; Kunder, 1998; Lindsay & Qaqish, 2004; Litchi, 2001; Love, 2007; Telles-Rogers, 2003; Wehrmann, 1999). Three studies (Curry, McCarraher, & Dellman-Jenkins, 2005; Dombroski, 2003; Edwards, 1997) examined the factors of supervisory support, training, and retention of caseworkers.

The effect of work environment factors (e.g., supervisor support, co-worker support, opportunities to practice) was investigated in four studies (Antle, 2002, Brittain, 2000; Litchi, 2001; Love, 2007), and training systems design was focused on in two studies (Kunder, 1998; Lindsay & Qaqish, 2004).

#### *Research Design of Studies*

Research design is derived from the research questions and available resources. Quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods approaches were utilized in the studies. Six studies were quantitative in design (Antle, 2002; Curry et al., 2005; Edwards, 1997; Kunder, 1998; Lindsay & Qaqish, 2004; Telle-Rogers, 2003). Two were qualitative in design (Dombroski, 2003; Wehrman, 1999) and four (Brittain, 2000; Clarke, 2002; Litchi, 2001; Love, 2007) used mixed methods,

incorporating qualitative and quantitative research approaches.

The literature on training transfer states that transfer is complex, and dependent upon multiple factors therefore difficult to measure (Brittain, 2000). Recommended data collection instruments for training transfer investigations in the literature included surveys, work logs, observation, interviews, focus groups, supervisor reports, and performance reviews (Brittain, 2000).

All of the studies utilized survey research methods to collect data from participants after attending training. Researchers either pilot tested the surveys and interview questions they developed specific to their research questions, or utilized surveys that had been established to be valid and reliable in the research literature.

Studies varied in their design features. Two studies conducted open-end interviews (Dombroski, 2003; Wehrman, 1999). Three studies administered surveys (Edwards, 1997; Lindsay & Qaqish, 2004; Telles-Rodgers, 2003). Two studies (Brittain, 2000; Clarke, 2002) used pre-post designs to collect quantitative data and also conducted interviews and/or focus groups to obtain qualitative data. Antle (2002) who utilized an experimental-control group pre-post test design, administered surveys to measure predictor variables and conducted interviews.

Kunder (1998) conducted a post training evaluation and a survey. Litchi (2001) employed a post-training evaluation, a follow-up survey, and a focus group. Love

(2007) conducted a survey and an interview. Curry et al. (2005) used a longitudinal survey design that involved a post training survey, a follow-up survey, and determined the retention of the training participants seven years post training. Quantitative survey research was the dominant design among the studies, with mixed method the next design choice of researchers.

### *Samples in Studies*

Sampling is a very important aspect of survey research. There is variation in sampling procedures employed in the studies reviewed. The majority of the studies used samples of convenience. The exception was Lindsay and Qaqish (2004) who used stratified random samples for their worker and supervisory surveys.

Sample size and the demographic characteristics of the participants in the studies reviewed also varied. Kunder (1998) had a sample size of 3,800 employees in a large government agency. The majority of the studies had small sample sizes ranging from 416 participants (Curry et al., 2005) to 12 participants (Dombroski, 2003).

While not all studies reported specific demographic characteristics (Dombroski, 2003; Edwards, 1997; Linsey & Qaqish, 2004), the remaining studies provided demographic data (e.g. educational degree, gender, race or ethnicity, locale, prior training, years of experience in current position) that may have an effect on the dependent variables of training transfer and staff retention.

With the exception of two studies (Clark, 2002; Kunder, 1998) whose subjects were in human services and/or

included several levels of staff, the participants in the studies were identified as child welfare caseworkers or supervisors of child welfare caseworkers. Length of employment in their current position with the agency ranged from less than a year (Lindsey & Qaqish, 2004) to several years (Wehrmann, 1999). Whereas length of employment was not included as a variable of interest in any of the studies reviewed, it is discussed (Brittain, 2000; Clarke, 2002, Curry et al., 2005; Love, 2007). Demographic information, like length of employment, level of education, and prior training effect should be considered in training and transfer design.

#### *Data Collection of Studies*

Data collection occurred at differing points in time in the studies reviewed. Several studies collected data at one point in time (Dombroski, 2003; Edwards, 1997; Telles-Rodgers, 2003; Wehrman, 1999). Approximately three months after training Love (2007) and Lindsey and Qaqish (2004) collected data. Litchi (2001) collected data immediately following training, at nine months, and at one year post-training. Antle (2002) collected data before, and immediately after training and at one month. Clarke (2002) collected data before, immediately after training, at five and six months post-training, while Brittain (2000) collected data before, during, immediately after training, and at three to five months post-training and then five to fifteen months beyond the training event. Data collected with the farthest reach was by Curry et al. (2005) who collected data immediately after training, and three months

post-training and then at seven years after training.

#### *Data Analysis in Studies*

Studies reviewed employed both descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. The choice of which statistical procedure to use is based on the research questions, measurements of levels of data and the sample size/ effect size.

Four studies conducted an analysis of variance (ANOVA) to compare the mean survey, pre-post test scores of more than two groups (Antle, 2002,; Curry et. al., 2005; Kunder, 1998; Love, 2007). Lindsay & Qaqish (2004) conducted *t*-tests to compare the scores of two different groups or conditions. Curry conducted a chi-square to explore the relationships between categorical variables.

Three studies conducted multiple regression analysis (Brittain, 2000; Kunder, 1998; Love, 2007) to evaluate the effects of one or more independent variable on a dependent variable, controlling one or more co-variation control variables.

Five studies conducted content analysis and coded interview responses that resulted from interviews or open-ended survey questions (Clarke, 2002; Dombroski, Litchi, 2001; Telles-Rogers, 2003; 2003 Wehrmann, 1998).

#### Findings

##### *Instructional Design and Transfer of Training*

Instructional or training design and delivery elements relevant to the research in training transfer primarily focuses on the learning needs assessment, learning goal identification, content relevance, prominent instructional



strategies and methods, and instructional media (Burke & Hutchins, 2007).

Lichti (2002) conducted an evaluation of the competency-based training (CBT) developed by the Institute for Human Services and implemented at Winnipeg Child and Family Services. Lichti was interested in the overall evaluation of the usefulness of competency-based training by front line workers, who ranged from experienced workers to new workers, and whether they transferred information and skills from the CBT to their daily work with children and families.

Lichti was also interested in determining how the work environment supported or hindered the transfer process. Work environment characteristics include factors such as supervisory support and opportunities to perform learned behaviors on the job, as well as policy and practice regarding training (Lichti, 2001).

Using three data collection tools (a post training evaluation, a survey instrument, and focus group responses) Lichti found that participants thought the content of CBT was more of a review but none-the-less valuable. Lichti's results suggest that participants perceived little support for and planning of transfer of training from all levels in the organization. Participants were concerned about a perceived lack of fit between the work environment needed to carry out best practice as taught in CBT and the work environment they experience at their agency (Litchti, 2001).

Kunder (1998) evaluates the relationship between workers' perceptions of the overall training system, and the professional development system in a large governmental agency. Kunder examines three constructs identified in the research as reflective of a mature training and development system. "The constructs are: the status of the training and development system, the effectiveness of the training and development system, and the value of training and development" (Kunder, 1998, p.70).

Kunder also investigates the workers' perceptions of the value of instructional design and the development offered by the organization of 3,800 employees in executive, management and supervisor positions, professional staff and support staff.

Kunder's findings indicate that staff did not place a high value on the training and development within their organization. The training and development system was not viewed as being effective in helping them on the job. The training and development system was not seen to hold a very high status within the organization. Kunder found that the perceptions of the status of the training and development system, and the effectiveness of the training and professional development system had an impact on the perceived value of training and development by respondents.

Employee groups differed in their perceptions of the status, value, and effectiveness of the training and development system within the organization. Management staff (e. g., administrators, managers, and supervisors)

viewed the system more favorably than did professional, and support staff (Kunder, 1998).

An effective training and development system has an impact on employees' behavior on the job. Many factors contribute to whether what is learned in training and development activities leads to improved work performance: employee accountability for applying new learning and manager accountability for making the work place conducive to using new skills and knowledge. Employee perceptions that mechanisms are not in place to help them use what they have learned puts the worth of training and development in question (Kunder, 1998, p. 77).

While the design elements so often investigated in the literature (training needs assessments, curriculum content and training methods) are relevant to transfer, Kunder's study supports the assertion that a critical factor of a successful training system, which includes effective training transfer, is that it be elevated and integrated within an organization, allowing the training systems to make significant contributions to the organization in achieving its strategic goals and fulfilling the agency mission (General Accounting Office, 2004; Kanak et al., 2008; Kunder, 1998).

#### *Training Transfer in Child Welfare*

Using a mixed method design, Love (2007) studied the factors that impact the transfer of training to the job among social service workers in Maryland. Specifically Love's objectives were to examine the extent to which training is transferred to the work settings. Love also explored three factors that may predict transfer of training: (a) having a Master's degree in Social Work

(MSW), (b) months of employment with the agency and, (c) prior training related to course subject matter.

Love (2007) also examined whether employees' perception of supervisor support impacts transfer of training on the job. The study used a convenience sample of 64 new and experienced social workers who participated in one of three training courses during an eighth month time frame. The perception of supervisor support did not impact transfer of training.

Love's findings suggest that the overall transfer rate by workers was low, especially for employees who had a MSW and higher months of employment with the organization. The results indicate that prior knowledge of the subject matter affected the perception of a need for training and training transfer.

Antle (2002) employed a quantitative pre-post experimental control group design with surveys to explore the relationship between predictor variables (learning readiness, learning, transfer, team support, organizational climate, reactions, training outcomes and organizational outcomes) from a supervisory training. Her results indicated that learning predictive of transfer occurred in conjunction with learner readiness and management support.

Using a mixed methods design, Brittain (2000) explored the impact of the following variables: (a) trainee characteristics, (b) environmental support, (c) opportunities to use learning, (d) supervisor support, (e) organizational support of training transfer at three points with 61 caseworkers. Quantitative results indicate no

significant difference using retention of training material as the dependent variable and the independent variables. Qualitatively, the opinions of subjects were that they benefited from training and employ skills learned in training in other situations.

Clarke (2002) wanted to know what factors influenced the transfer of training of 14 trainees who attended a two day core in-service training in the United Kingdom. Clarke used a pretest-posttest design, and five months following training administered another post test, and conducted a structured interview. The findings indicated minimal training transfer. Work and job factors were identified by participants as impeding transfer.

While the aforementioned studies did not find any significant transfer based on the populations, variables and procedures utilized, Telles-Rogers' (2003) findings were contrary. Telles-Rogers conducted a quantitative study using 130 supervisors, to determine their perception of training topics that contribute to performance and retention of casework staff; their perception of training variables that affect performance; and their perception of training outcomes.

Reporting descriptive statistics and content analysis on open ended survey questions, 64% percent of supervisors reported that training significantly to greatly impacted their caseworkers' performance. When considering the overall positive impact of training on performance and retention, 70% agreed that training positively impacted performance and 68% agreed that training positively

impacted retention (Telles-Rogers, 2003).

Interestingly, half of the supervisors indicated that they had no expectation for workers to share what they learned in training. Only 36% expected that workers integrate information learned in training to their casework practice.

In contrast to querying supervisors and caseworkers with a range of work experience, Lindsey and Qaqish (2004) focused their investigation on new caseworkers who recently completed pre-service training (PST), and their supervisors. Using a cross sectional design with a stratified random sample, the researchers explored the perceptions of 76 new caseworkers and their supervisors regarding the relevance and effectiveness of the training, and accompanying transfer of training component in a pre-service training program. Data were collected three months after PST. *T*-tests were employed as well as a comparative analysis of worker and supervisor responses.

PST participants and their supervisors reported that PST and the transfer of learning (TOL) process prepared caseworkers for the performance of their jobs. TOL activities were seen as relevant to the job with only those most applicable as most valued. That being said, caseworkers with social work or related degrees were most likely to believe that they already know the material. There was also a moderately high perception of supervisor follow-up during the PST (Lindsey & Qaqish, 2004).

#### *Supervision and training transfer*

It is vital for transfer to have occurred and learned

behavior generalized to the job context and maintained on the job (Subedi, 2004). Competent child welfare supervision grasps the importance of pre-service and in-service competency based training in assuring that staff acquires the knowledge and skills to perform their jobs.

Effective supervision assists in the transfer of knowledge and skills learned through training on the job. Competent supervisors can effectively support the training transfer through coaching and conduct on-the-job training (Cromwell & Kolb, 2002). Quality supervision influences trained workers to continue their employment (Alexander, 2008; General Accounting Office, 2004; Landsman, 2001.)

Supervision is comprised of three separate yet interdependent functions: administrative, educational and supportive (Kadushin, 1992; Smith, 2008). While the transfer literature is replete with studies that explore supervision as a factor under the construct of environment or organizational support, the research is limited in approaching educational supervision as a separate phenomenon.

Edwards (1997) investigated the extent to which direct services workers perceived educational supervision was employed, in comparison to administrative or supportive supervision. Using a cross-sectional quantitative survey design with 52 workers and 8 supervisors, the findings indicate that administrative supervision and supportive supervision occurred more than educational supervision (Edwards, 1997). Supervisors were recognized as being instrumental in staff development but this educative role

is only successful to the extent to which they fulfill it.

Wehrmann (1999) conducted a qualitative study addressing how child welfare supervisors learn how to do their work, how child welfare supervisors characterize risk in their work, and how they facilitate the learning of the caseworkers they supervise. Fifteen supervisors were interviewed in this study. Supervisors were identified as being in a position to play the role of educator within the agency setting. Virtually all of the supervisors' responses as to how they facilitate the learning of caseworkers they supervised were approaches that are associated with cognitive apprenticeship.

Wehrmann discusses the use of cognitive apprenticeship as a way of socializing caseworkers to the field of child welfare practice in a way that is responsive to the kind of work and training environment in which caseworkers operate. Child welfare work, relating to handling cases of abuse and neglect, is relatively risky and, as such, qualifies as a field in which autonomous learning and guided inquiry are contraindicated in the training of novice workers (Wehrmann, 1999).

Wehrman recommends that in the application of cognitive apprenticeship, supervisors provide the necessary coaching and backup to help caseworkers learn a particular process or procedure early on to avoid a long and risky learning curve, which could lessen risks to the clients and workers while procedures are being learned. Wehrmann also identifies supervisors as a link in connecting new workers



with proficient practitioners who could serve as mentors and model behaviors.

### *Transfer of Training and Retention*

Training is often cited as an intervention used to combat the turnover problem in child welfare (General Accounting Office, 2003; Landsman, 2001; Landsman, 2004; Mor Barak, Levin, Nissly & Lane, 2006,). Two studies reviewed explored the relationship between training and retention.

Dombroski (2003) utilized a phenomenological design method to explore how education and training needs affect high turnover in Milwaukee. Interviewing a convenience sample of 12 workers with between one and five years of experience, this qualitative study found that with regards to training, more *hands on* training was needed to improve workers' abilities to practice effectively and decrease turnover. Shadowing experienced workers was also another recommendation (Dombroski, 2003).

In contrast to the aforementioned qualitative study, Curry et al. (2005) studied the relationships among training, transfer of learning factors and staff retention in child welfare quantitatively, using a sample of 416 caseworkers with varying education and experience. The researchers used a prior study by Curry (1996) that identified factors affecting transfer of learning in child protective social workers and extended it to explore these factors in predicting staff retention. Using a longitudinal research design, during the initial phase the participants were administered the Transfer Potential Questionnaire

survey following training. Eleven factors were significantly correlated with transfer of learning.

The second phase of the study involving a brief mailed questionnaire assessing transfer of learning was implemented three months after training. The final phase of the study involved contacting the participants and categorizing them according to employment status: still employed, left agency or retired.

In this study several questionnaire items pertaining to supervisory support for training and transfer were significantly related to staff retention (Curry et al., 2005). The findings indicated that transfer support positively affected retention. Lower supervisor support was associated with those who left their agencies before the seven year time frame of the study.

#### *Limitations of Studies*

There are limitations to both quantitative and qualitative research designs. Limitations germane to the transfer research reviewed include:

1. Small sample size.
2. Convenience sampling as opposed to random samples, Measurements and data collection points in time following training.
3. Participant attrition.
4. Lack of a comparison group for staff who chose not to attend training, or were non-voluntary participants.
5. Different instructors.
6. Different job levels with no controls for this.
7. Prior training on the topic.

Given these limitations, it is difficult to generalize the results.

### *Summary*

This review focused on the theoretical and conceptual framework of training transfer and twelve studies that were determined to fit the inclusion criteria as it pertains to the research at hand. Training transfer, training system design, educational supervision, and training transfer and retention are the factors to be explored in the proposed research.

It is apparent that a number of research designs have been employed, and that results vary. This highlights the importance of conducting further research to increase the understanding of transfer of training in child welfare.

## Chapter 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### *Research Design*

This study explores the relationship among transfer of learning, educational supervision, and staff retention among new caseworkers who have recently completed a competency based pre-service program in a public child welfare setting. Subjects in this study are not randomly assigned. For this research a post-hoc, quasi-experimental research design with nonequivalent comparison groups was utilized.

The independent variables are (a) the educational supervision employed by supervisors of new caseworkers, and (b) the type of unit new case workers are assigned to while in training, a coaching unit or a functional unit. The dependent variables are (a) the workers' perceived transfer of training and (b) retention of new caseworkers over a designated time frame.

#### *Institutional Setting and Context*

The public child welfare organization that is the backdrop for this study operates in the mid-Atlantic area of the United States. In 1999, in order to meet the requirements of federal legislation intended to improve the safety and well being of children, the child welfare organization underwent a significant redesign. Changes instituted of relevance to this study are those changes affecting pre-service training of new caseworkers, and its relationship to new caseworker retention.

Once hired, all new caseworkers must attend new worker

training, taught by five experienced trainers with similar educational backgrounds and field experience, and supervisory experience.

In addition to competency based classroom training, experienced senior casework staff trained as mentors are assigned to new caseworkers at the initiation of their pre-service training. Mentoring is defined as a relationship between two people in which a more experienced person agrees to support the development of a less experienced person, traditionally viewed as a protégé, and today often referred to as a mentee (Thomas & Saslaw, 2007). In this organization mentors help orient new workers to the working conditions; guide them through basic practice experiences and model behavior when out in the field. Mentors are responsible for working with supervisors to be the bridge in applying what is taught in classroom training to on-the-job.

Specific to training transfer, supervisors' responsibilities in this organization are to oversee new caseworkers while training, guiding and coaching them in developing and applying the knowledge, and caseworker skills necessary to be effective as new caseworkers. All new caseworker supervisors in the agency attend a competency based supervisor training. This training focuses on the three areas of supervision: administrative, educative and supportive. Figure 3 depicts the training system design employed at this organization.

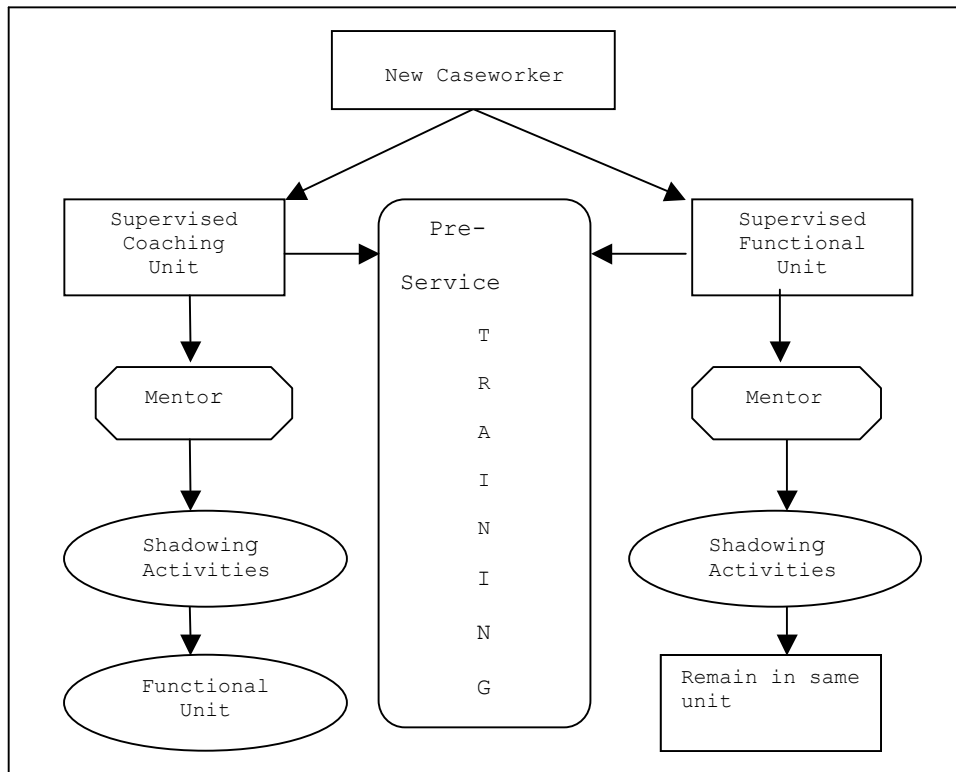


Figure 3. Training system design for child welfare system for organization under study.

### Sample

Two populations were targeted for this study. The first population was new caseworkers. Eligible caseworkers were subject to the following characteristics: (a) maintained continuous full-time employment at the Division of Family Services (DFS) in the Family Service Specialist (FSS) job classification from calendar years 2006 to 2008, (b) completed the first two months of core training (five courses), and (c) had no prior employment with DFS as a caseworker. Potential participants were identified from training records.

New hires are assigned to one of two types of units

when they begin their employment; a specialized training unit known a *coaching unit* comprised of a supervisor and new caseworkers in training, or a unit comprised of a supervisor and a mix of caseworkers of varying levels of experience and training, carrying cases in a regular functional unit. This assignment is based on the location at which new hires originally applied.

Therefore the first population in this study consisted of new caseworkers, representing both types of units, who completed two months of training during the calendar years of 2006 through 2008. DFS training records indicated that that number totals 57 individuals; 37 new caseworkers from coaching units and 20 new caseworkers from regular units.

The second population consisted of supervisors who met the following criteria: a) are current casework supervisors, b) were working in a supervisory position over caseworkers during calendar years of 2006 through 2008, completed DFS required supervisory training before January 2006, and c) received at least one new caseworker in their unit during 2006 through 2008. The list of eligible supervisors was obtained from training records and supervisors' reports.

#### *Instrumentation*

The survey instrument administered to new caseworkers in this study was the Learning Transfer System Inventory (LTSI), developed by Holton and Bates, (Holton & Bates, 1998). The LTSI is the only validated instrument of learning transfer in the U.S.A., and is being used globally (Holton, 2008). The primary purpose of the LTSI is to be

used in diagnosing strengths and weaknesses of organizational transfer systems. The LTSI employed in this study was a fourth generation instrument. The LTSI measures factors that the research literature shows influence learning transfer in organizations.

The fourth edition of the LTSI examines two construct domains: Training in Specific and Training in General. It provides four scales consisting of 16 factors. The LTSI is scored using a Likert scale of 1 to 5, with one indicating strongly agree to five indicating strongly disagree. The factor definitions have demonstrated construct validity based on factor analysis with a data base of over 2,500 respondents representing a variety of industries, jobs, types of companies and employee levels (Holton, 2005). Table 1 defines the 16 factors. Of specific interest to this researcher are the factors dealing with transfer design, supervision and opportunities to use training on the job.

A copy of the LTSI can be viewed in the appendix. The following demographic information was collected on all participants and was descriptively analyzed; age, gender, ethnicity, educational background, workplace location, and current job function.



Table 1

*Learning Transfer Systems Inventory: 16 Transfer of Training Factors*

Factor Name	Factor Definition
Learning Readiness	The extent to which individuals are prepared to enter and participate in a training program.
Performance Self-Efficacy	An individual's general belief that they are able to change their performance when they want to.
Motivation to Transfer Learning	The direction, intensity and persistence of effort toward utilizing in a work setting skills and knowledge learning in training.
Transfer Effort-Performance Expectations	The expectations that effort devoted to transferring learning will lead to changes in job performance.
Performance-Outcomes Expectations	The expectation that changes in job performance will lead to outcomes valued by the individual.
Feedback/Performance Coaching	Formal and informal indicators from an organization about an individual's job performance.
Supervisor/Manager Support	The extent to which managers support and reinforce the use of learning on-the-job.
Supervisor/Manager Sanctions	The extent to which individuals perceive negative responses from managers when applying skills learned in training.
Peer Support	The extent to which peers reinforce and support use of learning on-the-job.
Resistance/openness to Change	The extent to which prevailing group norms are perceived by individuals to resist or discourage the use of skills and knowledge acquired in training.
Personal Outcomes-Positive	The degree to which applying training on the job leads to outcomes that are positive for the individual.
Personal Outcomes-Negative	The extent to which individuals believe that if they do not apply new skills and knowledge learning in training that it will lead to outcomes that are negative.
Opportunity to Use Learning	The extent to which trainees are provided with or obtain resources and tasks on the job enabling them to use the skills taught in training.
Personal Capacity for Transfer	The extent to which individuals have the time, energy and mental space in their work lives to make changes required to transfer learning to the job.
Perceived Content Validity	The extent to which the trainees judge the training content to accurately reflect job requirements.
Transfer Design	The extent to which training has been designed to give trainees the ability to transfer learning to job application and the training instructions match the job requirements

Note. From LTSI Administrators Guide. Holton and Bates, 2005. Reprinted with permission.

To obtain qualitative data, a detailed questionnaire focusing on transfer of learning, educational supervision,

and retention was utilized in individual telephone interviews with supervisors. This researcher was interested in gathering perspectives from supervisors regarding what is working within their organization regarding the areas of interest.

Open ended questions were developed utilizing an Appreciative Inquiry approach to obtain supervisors perceptions from their experiences. Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is both a specific methodology and a perspective, finding its root in fields such as Positive Psychology (Ditkoff, 2008).

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) was developed by Cooperrider in the 1980s during which time he was interviewing leading clinicians at the Cleveland Clinic about their greatest successes and failures while working towards his Ph.D. (Seel, 2008). Appreciative Inquiry is based on the premise that organizations change in the direction in which they inquire. So an organization which inquires into problems will keep finding problems but an organization which attempts to appreciate what is best in itself will discover more and more that is good. It can then use these discoveries to build a new future (Seel, 2008). Table 2 lists the interview questions. Questions (a) through (g) request demographic information. Questions (h) through (l) utilized an AI approach.

Table 2

*Telephone Interview Question for Supervisors*

- 
- a) How long have you been a DFS caseworker supervisor?
  - b) Have you supervised in a human service field before coming to DFS? If yes, how long?
  - c) What degrees do you have?
  - d) In what region do you work?
  - e) What program (functional) area do you supervise?
  - f) Please describe your job responsibilities as a case worker supervisor.
  - g) Approximately how many new workers have you supervised between calendar years 2006 – 2008?
  - h) How did you best learn to do your work in child welfare?
  - i) What is the most effective way to assess whether new workers are transferring the content of training curriculum into practice on the job?
  - j) Describe approaches that you use that best help new case workers apply what they learn in training on the job?
  - k) How do you think training may help improve retention of new caseworkers?
- 

*Procedures*

The initial procedural step was to identify those new caseworkers who are eligible to participate in the study based on set criteria: (a) a hire date within calendar years of 2006 to 2008, (b) location of unit assignment while in training, and (c) completion of new caseworker training cores. Workers who met these criteria were gleaned from the organization's training data base.

New caseworkers were contacted by email, and asked to complete the survey using the organization's email system. The survey was made available to volunteer participants electronically, using SurveyMonkey.com, an online survey tool. This made the survey available online and accessible from any computer with the internet. The survey takes

approximately 20 minutes to complete. A response date of two weeks following receipt of the survey invitation was requested of participants. After two weeks, a reminder email was sent to caseworkers thanking those who completed the survey and informing those yet to respond that they had an additional week to complete the survey. Responses were accepted up to three weeks following the initial invitation to participate.

Supervisors who have supervised at least one new caseworker in their unit during 2006 to 2008 were identified from training records and by supervisors. These supervisors received an email invitation asking them to participate in a one-on-one telephone interview that took approximately 10 minutes. The potential participants were asked to respond to the invitation within two weeks. Once they confirmed their desire to participate, supervisors were contacted by email to schedule a time to conduct the telephone interview within three weeks time.

To maintain consistency and assure accuracy, the interviewer was trained to conduct a structured interview following a script that utilizes Appreciative Inquiry interview protocol. The generic AI interview protocol involves the following steps:

1. Training the interviewer in the principles of AI and the practicalities of conducting the interviews before interviews are implemented.
2. Explaining to the interviewee about AI and that they will be asked questions which focus on the experiences of times when things worked really well.

3. Telling the interviewee that their responses will be kept confidential.
4. Asking questions with the aim of helping the interviewee open up.
5. Redirecting their focus in a positive direction if interviewees veer toward the negative.
6. Treating the interview more like a conversation (Seel, 2008).

The interviewer recorded interviewee responses using a digital recorder, and in notes taken during the telephone call. Upon request, an electronic audio file of an individual's responses to the interview questions was made available through email to participants for their review and verification of accuracy within two weeks of the interview, before the analysis process began.

Prior to the main telephone interview, the instrument was tested on a small sample of volunteer subjects. The aim was to detect any flaws in the questions and correct these in advance of the interview with supervisors. The piloting also enabled amendments to be made to maximize response rates and minimize error rates (Trochim, 2008). A trial analysis on a small sample was performed to test out analysis procedures.

The third step involved analyzing the data from the online survey and telephone interviews, and drawing conclusions related to the research questions and other observations.

#### *Data Analysis*

Holton and Bates from Louisiana State University are

currently controlling the use of the LSTI. A condition of the free use of the instrument is the sharing of data with these two researchers. In exchange for the data they agree to the use of their instrument and provide a factor analysis of the data. The following statistical analyses were conducted for each research question.

*Research question one.* Is there a difference in the perceptions of new caseworkers assigned to a coaching unit, or assigned to a functional unit, regarding the extent to which training design and opportunities to transfer training to on the job were experienced up to 24 months after attending training?

An independent samples *t*-test was used to compare the scores on the LTSI training design and opportunities to use subscales of new caseworkers who were in the coaching unit and those who were in a function based unit.

*Research question two.* Is there a difference in perceptions of new caseworkers regarding the extent to which they received educational supervision related the transfer of training to on the job up to 24 months after attending training?

An independent samples *t*-test was used to compare the scores on the LTSI supervision subscales of those new caseworkers who were in the coaching unit, and those new caseworkers who were in a functional unit while attending new caseworker training.

*Research question three.* Are new caseworkers who completed training while assigned to coaching units more likely to be retained than new caseworkers who completed

training while assigned to functional units, during the first 24 months of employment?

A chi-square analysis was used to compare caseworker unit assignment and number of caseworkers retained. Retention numbers for new caseworkers hired during 2006-2008 were obtained from Human Resources and training records. Unit assignments during training were obtained from the training data base. Retention numbers were compared by unit assignment.

The demographic information such as gender, education and prior training was descriptively analyzed and reported.

*Research question four.* What approaches do supervisors report as most effective in facilitating the transfer of training of the new caseworkers they supervise? These data were obtained through a structured AI focused telephone interview. A content analysis was performed to analyze the interview data.

*Research question five.* How do you (the supervisor) think training may improve retention of new case workers? These data were obtained through a structured AI focused telephone interview.

A content analysis was performed to analyze the interview data for research questions four and five. This analysis reduced the transcribed interview from its text into summarized expressions that were coded and categorized (Trochim, 2006). Following tasks were implemented using content analysis methodology.

Interview coding and analysis tasks:

1. Identify sources of contamination for individual

interviews (e.g. respondent motives, possibilities for censored responses, interviewer effects, and interruptions)

2. Define keywords and phrases and establish how they reflect a respondent's position relative to the constructs of interests.
3. Code interviews and measure the frequency of keywords and phrases. Note individual deviations from the general coding and measurement scheme.
4. Aggregate interview data for use in an empirical analysis (Bozoski, 2008).

The purpose of this study was to empirically investigate the transfer of training and its relationship to educational supervisory practices as part of instructional system design, and retention of casework staff. This chapter discussed the mixed methods research design, sample, data collection procedures, and data analysis to be utilized in addressing the study research questions. These elements are consistent with practices found in the methodological literature review.

While the literature review found many researchers designed surveys for the purpose of their specific study, the instrument in this study, the Learning Transfer Systems Inventory, has the advantage of being tested across the U.S. and abroad, in several types of settings, confirming its reliability and validity.



## CHAPTER 4

### Results

This chapter presents the results of the data analysis regarding variables that influence the effective transfer of training in a public child welfare setting. Child welfare organizations need valid and reliable data to assist them in developing, implementing, and updating instructional design systems that maximize the transfer of training factors, optimize available resources for training interventions, and positively impact retention of new caseworkers.

In this chapter the demographic profile of respondents is presented first, followed by the results of each research question beginning with three quantitatively based research questions, and then the results of the two qualitative research questions.

#### *Sample Characteristics*

Training records indicated that 57 caseworkers met the established selection criteria. Each received an email invitation to complete the survey online. Seven emails were returned as invalid email addresses. Fifty emails were confirmed delivered and were confirmed as having been read. A second invitation to participate was issued 12 days later in an attempt to generate more responses. The online survey provider, SurveyMonkey.com, reported that 27 respondents of the 57 caseworkers invited started the survey. Twenty-two answered every question. Four respondents skipped questions, and one survey was opened but contained no answers. Ultimately the sample consisted of 26

participants. This represents a response rate of 46%.

The demographic data collected on this response set were composed of the following: (a) type of unit, (b) age(c) level of education, (d) degree information, (e) race and ethnicity, (f) functional area, and (g) prior work experience in child welfare or human services.

The majority of respondents (n = 19 or 73.1%) were those caseworkers who had been assigned to the coaching units while attending new caseworker training (see Table 3). The disproportionate number of responses is reflective of the population as a whole. In the organization, the regions that house coaching units are densely populated, thereby having more caseworker positions to fill.

Table 3

*Respondents' by Unit Assignment*

Unit Assignment	N	Percent
Coaching	19	73.1
Functional Unit	7	26.9
Total	26	100.0

Table 4 presents the distribution of respondents by the year they began training. The greatest number of respondents (n = 11 or 42%) were those who began training in 2006, with remaining respondents who began training in 2007 and 2008 each at nearly 25% of the total number.

Table 4  
*Year Respondents Began Training*

Start Year	N	Percent
2006	11	42.3
2007	6	23.1
2008	7	26.9
Missing	2	7.7
Total	26	100.0

The respondents were asked to signify their age by indicating one of five categories. The most prevalent age group in this sample was 31-40 years old (n = 9 or 35%). One respondent did not answer this question. Table 5 depicts a summary of the age distribution for this sample.

Table 5  
*Ages of Respondents*

Age Group	N	Percent
21-25	5	19.2
26-30	6	23.1
31-40	9	34.6
41-50	3	11.5
> 50	2	7.7
Missing	1	3.8
Total	26	100.0

Regarding educational level, the majority of respondents (n = 19 or 73.1%) had completed a bachelor's

degree in a related subject area (social work, sociology, or behavioral sciences). Four respondents had master's degrees. Of the four with advanced degrees, two were in social work or related subject area and two were in unrelated subject areas (see Table 6).

Table 6

*Respondents' Level of Education*

Level of Education	N	Percent
Related Bachelor's	19	73.1
Unrelated Bachelor's	2	7.7
Related Master's	3	11.5
Unrelated Master's	2	7.7
Total	26	100.0

Table 7 represents the distribution of the respondents by prior experience working in child welfare before attending the new caseworker training provided by the organization under study. Approximately half (n = 13 or 50%) had no prior work experience in child welfare.

Table 7

*Respondents' Prior Work Experience in Child Welfare*

Prior Child Welfare Work Experience	N	Percent
Yes	12	46.2
No	13	50.0
Missing	1	3.8
Total	26	100.0

Table 8 depicts the racial and ethnic make-up of the

respondents. Respondents were asked to select a racial or ethnic identity from six categories: (a) African American, (b) Hispanic/Latino, (c) Native American, (d) Caucasian, (e) Asian/Pacific Islander, and (f) Other.

One respondent did not reply to the question. No respondents identified themselves as Asian/Pacific Islander or Native American. Two respondents identified themselves as other. Three respondents identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino.

The majority of respondents identified themselves as African American (n = 11 or 42.3%). The second largest racial group was Caucasian (n = 9 or 34.6%).

Table 8

*Respondents' Race and Ethnicity*

Race and Ethnicity	N	Percentage
African American	11	42.3
Hispanic/Latino	3	11.5
Caucasian	9	34.6
Other	2	7.7
Missing	1	3.8
Total	26	100.0

In terms of functional area, the majority of respondents currently worked in treatment (n = 14 or 53.8%). The remaining numbers of respondents were distributed among investigation, permanency, foster care and other (see Table 9).

Table 9

*Respondents' Work Assignments*

Functional Area	N	Percent
Investigation	5	19.2
Treatment	14	53.8
Permanency	3	11.5
Foster Care	1	3.8
Other	3	11.5
Total	26	100.0

*Quantitative Research Questions and Hypotheses*

*Research question one.* Is there a difference in the perceptions of new caseworkers assigned to a coaching unit, or assigned to a functional unit, regarding the extent to which training design and opportunities to transfer training to on the job were experienced up to 24 months after attending training?

The null hypothesis states there is no significant difference in the perceptions of new caseworkers assigned to either a coaching unit, or assigned to a functional unit, regarding the extent to which training design and opportunities to transfer training to on the job were experienced up to 24 months after attending training. An alternative hypothesis is that there is a difference between the perceptions of the two groups.

To address this question, the scores on two subscales from the Learning Transfer Systems Inventory (LTSI) were utilized. The LTSI focuses on the training transfer factors of a specified training, and training transfer factors of

training in general. A copy of the LTSI can be found in the appendix. The range of potential values associated with a question was from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). The mean provides a measurement of the responses to that variable. The wording on some questions resulted in the desired response to be strongly disagree (1) or disagree (2). For example, one question reads, my supervisor will probably criticize this training when I get back to the job.

The Training Design and Opportunities to Use subscales used to explore this research question consisted of a total of 12 questions, with a range of possible values from 12 to 60. The Training Design subscale is composed of the four questions (items 52, 53, 54, and 55). The subscale entitled Opportunities to Use, consisted of eight questions (items 50, 51, 56, 57, 60, 61, 62, and 63).

An independent samples  $t$  test was performed to compare the mean subscales scores for new caseworkers in coaching units, and new caseworkers in functional units. There was no significant difference in the means scores ( $t_{(24)} = .259$ ,  $p = .798$ ) of those in coaching units ( $M = 35.11$ ,  $SD = 16.573$ ,  $N = 19$ ) and those in functional units ( $M = 33.14$ ,  $SD = 18.847$ ,  $N = 7$ ). The null hypothesis is accepted.

*Research question two.* Is there a difference in perceptions of new caseworkers regarding the extent to which they received educational supervision related the transfer of training to on the job up to 24 months after attending training? The null hypothesis states that there is no significant difference in the perceptions of new

caseworkers regarding the extent to which they received educational supervision supporting the transfer of training to on the job? The alternative hypothesis is that a difference in perceptions does exist between the two groups.

For the purpose of determining any significant difference in new caseworkers' perception of educational supervision following training, two LTSI supervisory subscales were compared. These subscales, entitled Supervisor Support and Supervisor Sanctions, consisted of a total of 15 questions, with a possible value range of 15 to 75.

An independent samples *t* test was performed to compare the mean scores on the supervisory subscales. The results revealed no significant difference, ( $t_{(24)} = -.571$ ,  $p = .574$ ) in perceptions of new caseworkers in coaching units ( $M = 32.79$ ,  $SD = 13.847$ ,  $N = 19$ ) from the new caseworkers in functional units ( $M = 36.14$ ,  $SD = 11.466$ ,  $N = 7$ ). The null hypothesis was once again accepted.

*Research question three.* Are new caseworkers who completed training while assigned to coaching units more likely to be retained than new caseworkers who completed training while assigned to functional units, during the first 24 months of employment?

The null hypothesis regarding this research question states that new caseworkers who completed their training in coaching units are no more likely to be retained than those who complete their training in regular functional units. The alternative hypothesis is that coaching units are less



likely to have turnover than functional units.

Training records indicate that 57 new caseworkers attended training from January, 2006 through June, 2008. Thirty-seven of those new caseworkers were assigned to coaching units during training. Twenty were assigned to functional units during training. Records show that 50 of the 57 new caseworkers trained were still employed as of the completion of this study. Of the seven who left the organization, two caseworkers were from the coaching units, while five caseworkers were from the functional units.

A cross tabulation of these figures indicates that overall, 12.3% of the total number of new caseworkers who attended new worker training from January 2006 through June, 2008 left the organization, with 87.7% still employed. The results by caseworker group show that 5.4% of caseworkers assigned to coaching units left, while 94.6 % were retained. In the functional units, 25% of caseworkers left the organization, while 75% remained employed.

A chi-square was computed, using the variables of unit assignment, and retention. Because all cells failed to have the expected count of 5, the values of Yates's continuity correction and Fisher's exact test were used. As shown in Table 10,  $X^2(1) = 2.987$ ,  $p = .084$ , indicating that, proportionately, the number of new caseworkers retained who were assigned to coaching units is not significantly different from the number of new caseworkers assigned to functional units that were retained. The null hypothesis was accepted.

Table 10

*Chi-Square Tests of Unit and Retention*

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.627 <sup>b</sup>	1	.031	.084
Continuity Correction <sup>a</sup>	2.987	1	.084	
Fisher's Exact Test				
N of valid cases	57			

a. Computed only for a 2x2 table

b. 2 cells (50%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected is 2.46.

*Qualitative Research Questions*

Qualitative research has special value for investigating complex and sensitive issues (Trochim, 2006). This study included a qualitative research component focusing on understanding the perspectives of supervisors of new caseworkers who have joined their unit after attending new caseworker training.

Supervisors have been identified in the literature as central to the effective implementation of training (Collins, Amodeo & Clay, 2007). Supervisors in Telles-Rogers' (2003) study predominantly concurred that the type of supervision and the type of support a worker receives can significantly impact performance and retention. Drawing from the qualitative research of Wehrman (1999), this researcher interviewed casework supervisors in the present study. Beginning with questions about their professional background and job responsibilities, supervisors were then asked to share their experiences both as learners, and then

as teachers. This information provides a context in which to understand supervisor responses in relation to the focus of this study. A conceptual analysis was undertaken to determine the occurrence of key words or concepts within supervisor responses.

Personnel records indicated that 24 supervisors met the selection criteria established for this study. These supervisors received an email invitation to participate in a telephone interview. The interview questions had previously been piloted with five individuals, in and outside of the organization. Recommended changes were implemented to ensure clarity and appropriateness of the questions. All emails were confirmed delivered, and were confirmed as having been read by the email system utilized. A second invitation to participate was issued 10 days later in an attempt to generate more responses. Eleven supervisors responded by the deadline.

The following demographic background was obtained on the respondents: (a) highest level of education, (b) degree area, (c) length of service (LOS), (d) prior supervisory experience (e) regional assignment, (f) functional area, and (g) number of caseworkers supervised. To protect the confidentiality of respondents, summary statements follow.

Five supervisors had Master's degrees while the remainder had Bachelor's degrees, mostly in social work, followed by psychology, and sociology. Most supervisors had been in their supervisory position for more than five years. Three had been supervisors for 11 - 15 years. The most senior supervisor had served in that capacity for over

20 years, while the most junior supervisor had been in that position one year. The average number of new caseworkers in a supervisor's unit was five.

The composition of each supervisor's unit was relatively stable. While some supervisors received a single new worker, most supervisors had received about three new caseworkers in their unit between 2006 and June 2008. The exceptions to that were the coaching supervisors, who, by virtue of the training system design, had over twenty new workers during that same time frame filter through their units while attending new worker training, and awaiting assignment to a permanent position in a functional unit.

Supervisors who participated in this study were equally distributed across the state. Regarding functional area, three supervisors managed investigation units which investigate allegations of child abuse. Two supervisors handle treatment units which manage treatment services for families founded for child abuse, or at high risk of abuse. And three supervisors managed permanency units which find safe placements for children with kinship care, foster care or other out of home care. Moreover, three supervisors managed multifunctional units, which typically perform a combination of functions.

In addition to basic demographics, supervisors were asked to list their major responsibilities. While supervisors managed different functional units, collectively, many of the major job responsibilities reported were similar; making sure children were safe, talking to and case conferencing with their staff, assuring

workers performance met policy standards.

*How supervisors learned their work.* In describing how they learned to do their work as caseworkers in child welfare, all of the supervisors discussed the importance of learning on the job. In two cases, supervisors played a critical role in this learning, while in the eight cases supervisors were not specifically mentioned as a factor in acquiring the knowledge and skills needed to perform effectively on the job. Learning through experience was the overriding theme.

Beyond this background information, two specific research questions were posed to explore the perceptions of supervisors. Presentation of the findings relevant to these questions follows a format of statement of the question, and examples of responses from the participants.

*Research question four.* What approaches do supervisors report most effective in facilitating the transfer of training of the new caseworkers they supervise?

In order to achieve an understanding of what supervisors consider to be most effective approaches to facilitating transfer of training supervisors were asked to identify the most effective ways to assess if new workers were transferring the content of training into practice on the job, and what approaches they use to best help new caseworkers apply what they learn in training on the job.

Most responses regarding assessing training transfer in new caseworkers centered on receiving feedback from mentors as to caseworkers' practices, having regular conversations asking practice related questions and case

conferencing with their workers.

The following responses are representative of what supervisors disclosed.

Interviewee stated:

Well I guess it comes from how they answer the questions about their cases and families. Really the feedback that they can give me about what they are doing out there, as well as their FACTS work; feedback from others outside of the unit or clients themselves about what they are doing.

Another Interviewee reported:

Really, to see how they handle their cases, and as their cases grow, are they retaining their new worker training knowledge or are they picking up the habits of their co-workers.

Three interviewees discussed observations of caseworkers in the field. This interviewee sums up that approach:

They have mentors but many times I am out there in the field with them, so I am actually seeing them myself on home visits and court hearing and things like that. So that's how I evaluate them. I make sure I go out with them numerous times to make sure that they've got it. I also talk to the mentors. The mentors give me a lot of feedback on whether they think they are getting it or not. I know the mentors give them work to do on their cases so I will go in and look at the mentors' cases to see what my workers are doing on them; and constant case conferences.

One supervisor took a systems approach to assessing training transfer:

I think the best way is for the trainer and the supervisor to have a relationship such that the supervisor understands what's being trained but needs

to be practiced. And have the feedback loop such that the supervisor and the trainer can talk about the progress that the worker is making. The supervisor would be meeting with workers on a regular basis aside from case conferencing. They would have some briefing and debriefing with the worker so they can decide what's being assimilated. The trainer definitely needs to know how the worker is doing when they are not in training so they can have that feedback loop going.

Supervisors often reported mentoring, holding regular case conferences, and having informal conversations with caseworkers as the best approaches used to facilitate the transfer of training of new caseworkers to on the job

One interviewee said:

I think definitely, depending upon the experiences that they come in with, but if they are brand new, I think mentoring is great. For workers that are experienced I think that is definitely a key thing. Having them observe and slowly grab the reins over a period of time.

Another interviewee stated:

Well to be honest, I don't know that I link it back to what they learn in training. I think our conferences. I think the most effective thing for me to get a sense for how they are doing is frequent conversations, not limited to formal conferences but frequent ongoing conversations on a very regular informal basis about what they are doing, who they are seeing, what they think the next best steps are.

This interviewee said:

Number one, I have an open door policy... I'd much rather a worker come to me and ask me questions to make certain that they are on the right path as opposed to just going ahead with it and not being sure that they are doing it correct... I make certain that they continually refer to the work that they've done in new worker training and the notes they've done in

new worker training....that will ensure that you are doing things according to policy and according to what you learned in new worker training. I use that as a reference, and I encourage my workers to use that as a reference.

Consequently, regarding this research question, the comments of supervisors revealed a strong reliance on mentors and experienced caseworkers to facilitate training transfer into practice on the job. Supervisors appeared to focus their time guiding new caseworkers through conferencing and through informal conversations as issues arise in the cases of new caseworkers.

*Research question five.* How do you think training may improve the retention of new case workers?

The most common thoughts from supervisors regarding the impact of training on improving retention was regarding preparation to do the job as a key to retaining staff. Second to that, building confidence was most often mentioned. In the following statement from an interviewee, a connection is made in their description of learning how to do their work in child welfare, and training in the preparation of and retention of new caseworkers.

Interviewee stated:

Training definitely better prepares you for what you are doing in the field...teaching the tools, the safety assessment tools and risk assessment tools... I think training is a necessary component. ...I really had no idea what I was doing. I just knew I went out and talked to families about what the allegations were, but I really did not know what I was looking for until after worker training happened. Isn't that kind of scary! I think it definitely opens up your eyes as to what's out there, how to assess risk to children.



By doing that, I think workers would be more confident going into the field and making sound decisions on their own.

In contrast, another interviewee said the following:

I don't really know. I don't really know if it (training) would have an impact.

A third interviewee reports a unique perspective on the relationship between new caseworker training and retention of staff.

Interviewee said:

I think it's helpful for them to not feel alone. Most times I think of people going to training in groups of at least a couple people. And I think that's helpful to let them make a connection with each other, as they then go off to specific assignments, they have a connection back. I think obviously it gives them the tools to at least have half a clue what to do when they go out. It's a pretty scary and overwhelming thing.

Thus, the supervisors did see a connection between new caseworker training and retention of caseworkers during their first two years of employment. Supervisors' perceptions focused on the preparatory aspects of training, which supervisors thought armed new workers with an adequate understanding of what the work encompassed. This, in turn, boosted new caseworkers' confidence in their ability to perform, especially with support from supervisors and mentors, which supervisors perceived as a critical addition to training.

#### *Summary of Results*

In this chapter the demographic profiles of respondents were presented, followed by a presentation of

the statistical tests and analyses of the test results of five research questions; three quantitative research questions, followed by the results of the two qualitative research questions.

Results of the first quantitative research question yielded no significant difference in the perceptions of new caseworkers in coaching units and new caseworkers in functional units, regarding the extent to which training design and opportunities to transfer training to on the job were experienced following the attendance of new worker training. Similarly the results of research question two revealed that these two new caseworker groups did not significantly differ in their perceptions of educational supervision and training transfer.

With regard to research question three, although very close, it appears the retention rates of new caseworkers from these two groups were just short of being significantly different.

The results of the qualitative research indicated that supervisors' first learning experiences in their child welfare careers were acquired through experience on the job. Much of their approaches to help their new caseworkers transfer training from the classroom to on the job relied upon the modeling and coaching of mentors and supervisory case conferencing.

## CHAPTER 5

### Discussion

This chapter begins with a summary of the purpose and structure of the study, followed by a review of the major findings of the study. Conclusions from the findings are discussed, and finally, implications for practice, policy, and further research are presented and discussed.

Developing competent staff in order to facilitate effective performance on the job is essential to the bottom line of organizations. For private corporations, the bottom line could be a profit for shareholders. In public child welfare, the bottom line is the safety and well being of children, and strengthening the families who care for them. The Child and Family Services Reviews have stated the importance of training in achieving better outcomes for children and their families (Kanak et al., 2008). Given the impact a caseworker can have on the life of a child, the value of training and professional development in child welfare organizations cannot be overstated. Therefore it is critically important that child welfare training systems be well developed, continually monitored, and improved.

In the last ten years several training models and frameworks for excellent practice have evolved based on training theory, and research of best practice organizations, most of which are outside of the realm of child welfare. The purpose of this study was to add to the body of empirical research regarding variables that influence effective transfer of training in a child welfare setting. Specifically, this study explored the elements of

an instructional design system utilized by a public child welfare organization developed to maximize the transfer of training from the classroom to the job; optimize resources available for training interventions; and positively impact retention of new staff.

The Learning Transfer Systems Inventory (LTSI) (Holton & Bates, 2005), a valid and reliable self-report inventory, was utilized to query new caseworkers. This instrument focuses on the transfer of training factors of Baldwin and Ford's transfer model (1988), and the training evaluation model of Holton (1996). The LTSI is designed to provide information about the factors that influence transfer of training in the classroom to application on the job. In this case, it was employed to measure the perceptions of new caseworkers regarding the extent to which they experienced transfer of training through training design and educational supervisory factors, during and following their pre-service training. Four LTSI subscales were utilized as effective measures in this study: training design, opportunities to use, and supervisor support and supervisor sanctions. The subscale scores served as the dependent variables. Using a Likert scale, the range of values for questions was from 1 to 5, with one being strongly disagree, and five being strongly agree.

In the organization under study, new caseworkers are assigned to a training unit, referred to here as a coaching unit, or assigned to a regular functional unit, while attending new caseworker pre-service training. Therefore, unit assignment is the independent variable in this study.

In addition to new caseworkers, casework supervisors were interviewed via telephone. The line of inquiry with supervisors focused on their training experience as new caseworkers, transfer of training as supervisors, and retention of new staff. The information from the telephone interviews proved to be useful in providing context for supervisory practices, and useful in validating the perception of caseworkers with regard to their supervision.

Twenty six new caseworkers completed the online survey, and 11 supervisors participated in the telephone interview. Not every question was answered. Representatives of the four geographic regions in the organization were contained in both respondent groups. A demographic breakdown of participants was provided for age, length of service, region, education, prior experience, ethnicity, and functional area.

#### *Discussion of Findings*

The organization in this study utilizes training units in addition to functional units as the initial unit assignment for new caseworkers in training. Those in training units are moved into functional units to fill vacancies as they complete training requirements. Training design has been identified as an essential factor in the transfer of training (Baldwin & Ford, 1995; Holton, 1996, Kanak et al, 2008). This is a training system design feature, along with required shadowing experiences (observations of experienced caseworkers or mentors in the field), and field practice activities that all new caseworkers must complete. It was implemented by the

organization to support transfer of training, and improve retention. The intent of research question one was to identify any difference in the perceptions of new caseworkers related to training design, and opportunities to use training on the job, utilizing subscales on the LTST as measures. Any significant difference would be cause for further investigation to determine the source of the difference. The results of the analysis yielded no significant difference in the perceptions between the two groups.

Lindsey and Qaqish (2004) queried new caseworkers who had recently completed training. Their results indicated new caseworkers perceived that pre-service training and training transfer approaches prepared caseworkers to do their jobs. Based on the examination of the Likert scale responses to individual questions, which were consistently above midpoint (3.0), there is clear evidence that the training design, and opportunities to use the training were positive indicators of training transfer in this study.

While Kinder (1998) found differing perceptions of training system effectiveness among varied levels of employees (line staff, support staff, manager), this study found that caseworkers, who very recently completed new worker training, had a similar perception of training transfer factors, regardless of when new caseworkers completed training.

Also examined were differences among new caseworkers regarding the perception of supervisors' attitudes and behaviors as supportive of training transfer or not

supportive of training transfer. The results of the analysis also yielded no significant difference in the perceptions of new caseworkers suggesting that supervisors in coaching units and supervisors in functional units were perceived as virtually the same with regard to their attitudes and behaviors affecting transfer of training.

Again, based on the examination of individual questions the responses consistently indicated that supervisory support was positive, above the midpoint (3.0) on the five point Likert scale. Supervisor sanctions were low, below the midpoint, which in this case indicates little perception of negative supervisor responses. Again there is clear evidence that supervision was a positive indicator of training transfer.

Results related to the retention of new caseworkers who complete training based on unit assignment are less definitive. There was some difficulty in interpreting the results of analysis. A chi-square test of goodness of fit produced a significant result while the Yate's continuity correction and Fisher's values produced were not significant. Based solely on frequencies, coaching units were more likely to retain new caseworkers than functional units during the first 24 months of employment. This deserves further exploration with a larger sample size.

The literature recognizes supervisors as being instrumental in staff development but this educative role is only successful to the extent to which they fulfill it (Edwards, 1997; Kadushin, 1992; Smith, 2008; Wehrmann, 1999). In this study supervisors were asked what approaches

they use that most effectively facilitate the transfer of training in the new caseworkers they supervise. Findings suggest hands-on experiences contributed the most in the development of the skill sets used by child welfare caseworkers before becoming supervisors.

In turn, as supervisors, it appears that case conferencing along with informal conversations were the most often utilized educational supervisory practice. Shadowing mentors appeared to be the instrument through which hands-on experiences was occurring for new caseworkers. Four of the 11 supervisors made direct reference to using mentors and/ or explicit examples of how mentors reinforced the content of training in the educational supervision of caseworkers. Many of the responses by supervisors in this study approximated those in the Wehrmann's (1999) study.

Indeed, caseworker responses on the LTSI agree that supervisors meet regularly with caseworkers to work on problems workers may have in trying to use their training. On the other hand, new caseworkers were less likely to perceive that their supervisors meet with them to discuss ways to apply training on the job. Similarly, new caseworkers perceived supervisors as less likely to let them know they are doing a good job when they use their training.

Supervisors were asked how they think training may improve the retention of new case workers. While the literature widely documents studies related to training, performance and retention, less attention has been given to



the importance of perceptions of transfer of training and retention of caseworkers. Supervisors' responses centered on the perception that training prepared new workers to accomplish basic tasks, and increased their level of confidence in their ability to work in child welfare. The LTSI subscale entitled Performance Self-Efficacy, under the section focused on training in general, while not a planned part of the data analysis, yielded responses from caseworkers that support the perceptions of supervisors. Sixty-eight percent of new caseworkers who responded agreed with the statement; I am confident in my ability to use new skills at work.

In the study of Lindsey and Qaqish (2004) supervisors indicated that pre-service training and transfer of training activities prepared caseworkers for the performance of their jobs.

The aforementioned results of the quantitative research analysis were not found to be statistically significant. The null hypotheses were therefore accepted. The alternative hypotheses, that indeed there is a difference between perceptions of caseworker groups and a difference in retention of caseworkers were not founded. A discussion of mitigating factors that may explain the results follows.

LTSI results can be challenging to interpret. It is possible that the tool is not sensitive enough to accurately detect perceptions of caseworkers with regard to training system design. Survey questions were focused on the delivery of trainer approaches as opposed to the

perception of how effectively the training system, collectively, delivers training and facilitates transfer. Perhaps this was not the most effective tool. Perhaps different subscales could have been employed. Perhaps they were the wrong questions to ask. Instead of asking opinion questions, perhaps questions that are behaviorally oriented, like how often, to what extent, may have been more appropriate. It is possible that respondents interpreted questions differently; for instance a question could have taken on different meanings for different participants, as language is subjective.

Self-selection offers an alternative explanation for the results. Perhaps only those caseworkers who had a good experience with training and training transfer were inclined to respond to the survey. In addition, even though participants' background information was obtained, other variables not measured may have accounted for the results.

#### *Limitations of the Study*

This study has limitations. The sample size, while adequate, was small thus limiting the generalization of findings to child welfare organizations across the board. The sample size may have been insufficient to detect any subtle yet significant differences among the variables investigated. In addition, the participants volunteered to participate. Results may not be representative of the entire population as the perception of those in the population who did not participate is unknown. In this case that was approximately 50% of those eligible to participate did not respond.

Another limitation encountered in this study was limited access to all the relevant records. Requests for specific information regarding caseworkers' status went unanswered. Training records were sometimes found incomplete. This may impact data analysis and results to some degree. It is possible that all eligible caseworkers were not able to be identified, or were inadvertently deemed eligible when they were not. Every attempt was made to check the accuracy of records to prevent such from occurring during the data collection process.

Protection of participants' confidentiality of interview participants limited the amount of reportable data, as it would be possible to determine their identities. With regard to the interview, interviewer bias in questioning is impossible to entirely eliminate but was controlled for by following a specific interview protocol and rehearsing that protocol prior to interviews with participants. Regardless, subjectivity of the telephone interview method of data collection is influenced by the interpretation of the data.

The relationship the interviewer/researcher has to the supervisors may have also limited the results. While not likely, based on the comments of supervisors during the interview, it is possible that supervisors may be saying what they think is politically correct, and what the interviewer wants to hear. Also, supervisors were self-selected. The perceptions and experiences of supervisors, who did not respond, in this case approximately 50%, remain unknown.

There are limitations inherent in the research design. Being a causal comparative study, the participants were not randomly assigned. The study is limited to a few factors. Other factors may be impacting the perception of transfer of training. The study is based on perceptions, not tangible observable behaviors. Not all questions were answered on the survey. Out of 27 recorded attempts, 22 surveys were completed.

#### *Study Strengths*

This study employed a mixed methods research design, involving both quantitative and qualitative research components. According to current literature on research methodology, integrating these two approaches is likely to produce better results in terms of quality and scope (Trochim, 2006). Additionally, mixed methods approaches encourage probing of the underlying issues assumed by mixing methods. Adding qualitative inquiry to quantitative data is also a good strategy for overcoming validity threats and difficulty interpreting results of statistical analyses (Sydenstricker-Neto, 1997).

In the organization under study, the same trainers trained the same curriculum over the designated time frame. This increases the likelihood that new caseworkers had nearly the same training experience. Also the same supervisors managed functional units with the exception of one new supervisor, which also increases the likelihood of consistency in supervisory practices. Additionally, the administration of the organization remained unchanged, and no major initiatives or pieces of legislation were enacted

which could have impacted training content and procedures.

The instrument selected to query caseworkers is recognized in the research literature as a highly valid and reliable measure regarding factors that impact the transfer of training. It has been employed by organizations across the United States and other parts of the world, in a variety of settings; therefore it is generalizable to other occupations.

The survey was administered using an independent, secured, internet survey provider, reducing concerns of participants about confidentiality. Online access ensured confidentiality and convenience.

Telephone interviewing proved to be very efficient in terms of time and availability for both supervisors, and this investigator/interviewer. It also provided uninterrupted time with supervisors, was easier to reschedule, and cost efficient. Open ended questions in the telephone interview allowed respondents to disclose more information, and more broadly. As opposed to a self administered survey, the interviewer was able to clarify questions for participants, and probe responses to gain better understanding. Digital voice recording allowed the investigator to have an accurate interview transcript, promoting higher accuracy in concept analysis. The sample of both supervisors and new caseworkers was representative of regions in the state.

#### *Implications for Practice*

Supervisors, and possibly others, provide the

necessary supervision and backup to minimize risks to both clients and workers while procedures are being learned (Wehrmann, 1999). In this study and in others noted in the literature, mentoring and hands-on training with experienced staff were relied upon by supervisors as a means to transfer training. It is important to continue to educate supervisors about the importance of being involved with, and accessible to new workers, as well as providing mentors for them, prior to and after pre-service training (Lindsey & Qaqish, 2004).

Organizations need to ensure supervisors are providing coaching in order to help caseworkers to do procedures well early on, and to avoid a long and often risky learning curve; risky for both caseworkers, and the children and families in their care (Wehrmann, 1999). Coaching, in this case, specifically refers to assisting a new caseworker in learning a particular procedure and possibly its adaptations. Many of the comments of supervisors in this study referred to having conferences and informal conversations with new caseworkers, especially as problems arise in specific cases. "In child welfare guidance may be used by a supervisor who takes a case specific approach to training new workers by providing recommendations for accomplishing particular goals. Use of guidance, in general, promotes trial-and-error learning" (Wehrmann, 1999, p. 19, ¶ 3).

Lindsey and Qaqish (2004) found that supervisors do not always provide their caseworkers with much information about the transfer of learning process prior to training.

In this study the caseworker responses on the LTSI also produced a similar finding. The caseworkers in the Lindsey and Qaqish study indicated they spent less than half of the time supervisors reported, discussing transfer of learning objectives with their supervisors. Preparation for training and preparation for application after training are factors affecting the transfer of training (Curry, 2005).

Many of the supervisors in this study received as little as one new caseworker over a thirty month time frame. While that is good news in terms of unit turnover, those supervisors with few new workers may rely more on their supervisory experiences of caseworkers with a lot of experience, who are generally more autonomous and less likely to be reliant on supervisors' guidance (Curry et al., 1994). Child welfare organizations should consider ways to refresh and support casework supervisors in their role in the transfer of training with new caseworkers as well as with seasoned caseworkers.

Practices that bring the training system partners, that is trainers, supervisors, mentors, and program manager, to the table to regularly discuss how well the training system is working, how to improve it, what system changes and up-dates are occurring that impact training should be identified and instituted. Additionally, it may be advisable to have supervisors go through a refresher on contents and learning experiences in pre-service training, especially as training is updated and modified to address federal and state legislation, organizational mandates, and changes in best practice.

In consideration of caseloads, staffing, and other management variables in may also be advisable to involve supervisors in the development and implementation of transfer of training strategies. And finally, it may be beneficial to develop and implement supervisory practice standards, along with systems of accountability for outcomes of specified activities post training.

#### *Recommendations for Further Research*

Measuring the perceptions of an organizations' training system is a complicated undertaking. Surveys on the amount, frequency of training and training satisfaction do not provide a complete picture of the system involved in training. This study dealt with factors associated with transfer of training: the degree to which what is learned in training is transferred to the job. Specific training system indicators were explored focusing on training system design and within that planned opportunities to practice.

Within the realm of child welfare training, a number of training system models describing the elements of excellence in training systems were referenced in chapter two (Curry, 1997; Kanak et al., 2008; Rycus & Hughes, 2000). Such conceptual models of training systems are invaluable in considering and encouraging a systems approach to training, and evaluating the entire training systems within organizations, in addition to assessing discrete training functions.

Little child welfare training research has focused on empirically determining whether the elements in the training systems models prescribed to by child welfare



organizations have impacted on worker performance. More research is encouraged to determine if, in fact, the organization is utilizing an excellent systems model. Child welfare training systems must examine how the elements of their training systems impact each other and how change in one part of the system affects the other parts.

More research on training system models should be implemented to determine the effectiveness of underlying constructs, perceptions, and evidence of being an effective training system as measured by transfer of training factors.

It is recommended that research efforts focus on pre-service training. The majority of the studies reviewed in chapter two of this study were either a mixture of new and experienced caseworkers or supervisors. Research that determines how to design new worker pre-service training programs, with consideration of training transfer factors, is sorely needed to help guide child welfare organizations into achieving the greatest transfer within their training systems. Establishing an effective training transfer system at the beginning of caseworkers' employment, when knowledge and experience may be limited, helps improve retention of caseworkers at the completion of training, and once they are functioning in a regular unit. This, in turn, helps improve the outcomes for the children and families being served. Performance and retention studies should be done regularly to empirically identify any connection.

While challenging to do, the use of competency-based criterion measures of transfer of training as outcomes in

research instead of, or along with self-reported perceptions and opinions should be explored in research designs.

### Conclusions

Transfer of training is critically important in the realm of child welfare, as the application of training on the job may be the difference between life and death in the life of a child. Too often the impetus for change in the child welfare system is the result of a child death. Therefore more research is needed on training, training transfer and the development of effective training systems in child welfare. This study investigated training design and educational supervision in a public, state-wide child welfare organization, factors identified in training theory as impacting transfer of training. This study also examined training and retention of casework staff, also of critical importance in child welfare.

This investigation revealed that the perceptions of the facilitation of transfer of training were generally high, regardless of whether new caseworkers were assigned to a coaching unit, or a regular functional unit, while attending new caseworker training. This is an indication that training transfer can occur in a variety of training systems designs, as long as the training transfer factors as described in the literature are identified, are effectively working, and are effectively working together in a systematic way. Training theory and models of effective training systems should be utilized to inform, and improve child welfare training, thus improving the

outcomes for children and families.

Regular monitoring, assessing and updating of child welfare training systems is encouraged as well as continuing research on training transfer, and training systems design, especially as related to new caseworker training.

## References

- Alexander, J. B. (2008). *Development and validation of supervisory and organizational measures*. Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertations.
- Antle, B. F. (2002). *Training evaluations for supervisor best practice in child welfare*. Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertations.
- Baldwin, T. T., & Ford, J. K. (1988). Transfer of training: A review and directions for future research. *Personnel Psychology*, 41, 63-105.
- Barnet, S. M., & Ceci, S. (2002). When and where do we apply what we learn? A taxonomy of far transfer. *Psychological Bulletin*, 128(4), 612-637.
- Bernotavicz, F., & Bartley, D. (1996). *A competency model for child welfare supervisors*. Center for Public Innovation, University of Maine: Child Welfare Training Institute.
- Bozoki, A. *Elite Interviews*. Retrieved July 12, 2008, from [http://eurosphere.uib.no/events/WP8/Coursel\\_Paris2008/docs/10\\_Bozoki\\_Elite%20interviews.pdf](http://eurosphere.uib.no/events/WP8/Coursel_Paris2008/docs/10_Bozoki_Elite%20interviews.pdf)
- Brittain, C. R. (2000). *The effect of a supportive organizational environment on transfer of training in child welfare organizations*. Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertations.
- Burke, L. A., & Hutchins, H. M. (2007, September). Training transfer: An integrative literature review. *Human Resource Development Review*, 6(3), 263-296.
- Child Welfare Training Institute. *Supervisor Competencies*. Retrieved July 15, 2008, from <http://www.cwti.org/>.
- Clark, D. R. (2004). *Instructional System Design Concept Map*. Retrieved April 30, 2008, from <http://nwlink.com/~donclark/hrd/ahold/isd.html>

- Clark, D. R. *Big Dog's Performance Coaching Page*. Retrieved April 8, 2008, from <http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/perform/caoch.html>
- Clarke, N. (2002). Job/work environment factors influencing training effectiveness within a human service agency: Some indicative support for Baldwin and Fords' transfer climate construct. *International Journal of Training and Development*, 6(3), 142-162.
- Collins, M. E., Amodeo, M., & Clay, C. (2007). *Review of the literature on child welfare training: Theory, practice, and research*. Boston, MA: Boston University, School of Social Work.
- Cromwell, S. E., & Kolb, J. (2002). The effects of organizational support, management support and peer support on transfer of training. *Academy of Human Resources Development, Conference Proceedings Symposium*. Honolulu, HA.
- Curry, D. H. (1997). *Factors affecting the perceived transfer of learning of child protection social workers*. Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertations.
- Curry, D. H., Caplan, P., & Knuppel, J. (1994). Transfer of training and adult learning. *Journal of Continuing Social Work Education*, 6(1), 8-14.
- Curry, D., McCarragher, T., & Dellman-Jenkins, M. (2005). Training, transfer, and turnover: Exploring the relationship among transfer of learning factors and staff retention in child welfare. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 27, 931-948.
- Ditkoff, H. (2007). *Appreciate Inquiry*. Retrieved March 6, 2008, from <http://www.systemsthinker.com/interests/appreciativeinquiry>

- Dombroski, M. M. (2003). *Milwaukee Child Welfare Workers Perceptions on Education, Training and Retention*. Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertations.
- Edwards, G. R. (1997). *An internal formative evaluation of the child protection supervision program at Winnipeg Child and Family Services-Central Area*. Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertations.
- Employee Benefits Research Institute. (1997). *Employee-Provided Worker Training* [Fact sheet] Retrieved April 4, 2008 from <http://www.ebri.org/publications/facts/index.cfm?fa=0497fact>
- Foxon, M. (1993). A process approach to the transfer of training. *Australian Journal of Educational Technology*, 9(2), 130-143.
- Foxon, M. (1997). The influence of motivation to transfer, action planning, and manager support on the transfer process. *Performance Improvement Quarterly*, 10(2), 42-63.
- General Accounting Office. (2004). *Human Capital: A guide for assessing strategic training and development efforts in the federal government* (GAO-04-546G).
- Graef, M., & Hill, E. (2000). Costing child protective services staff turnover. *Child Welfare*, 79(5), 517-533.
- Holton, E. F. III. (2008). *Learning Transfer System Inventory (LTSI)*. Retrieved February 22, 2008, from <http://edholton.com/-private/New%20EdHolton/LTSI.htm>
- Holton, E. F. III, Bates, R. A., & Ruona, W. E. (2000). Development of a generalized learning transfer system inventory. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 11(4), 333-360.
- Holton, E. F. III, & Bates, R. (2005). LTSI Administrative Guide. (personal communication, June 24, 2008).

- Holton, E. F. III. (1996). The flawed four-level evaluation model. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 7(1), 5-25.
- Hughes, R. C., & Rycus, J. S. (1989). *Target: Competent staff, competency-based in-service training for child welfare*. Washington, D.C.: Child Welfare League of America.
- Institute for Human Services. (1996). *Core curriculum for child welfare caseworkers: TOL-Transfer of Learning Manual* (Child Welfare League of America, Ed.).
- Kadushin, A. (1992). *Supervision in social work* (3rd edn.). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Kanak, S., Baker, M., Herx, L., & Maciolek, S. (2008). *Building Effective Training Systems for Child Welfare Agencies* (National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement, Ed.).
- Kumail, N., & Bahadur, B. (2008, June). Defining and achieving training value. *Chief Learning Officer*. Retrieved June 9, 2008, from <http://www.clomedia.com/guest-ditorial/2008/June/2227/index.php>
- JHPIEGO, (2002). *Transfer of learning. A guide for strengthening performance of health care workers*. Retrieved December 5, 2007, from <http://www.reproline.jhu.edu/english/6read/6training/tol/pdf/tol.pdf>
- Kunder, L. (1998). *Employees' perceptions of the status and effectiveness of the training and development system and of the value of training and development*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Retrieved February 6, 2008 from ProQuest Digital Dissertations.
- Landsman, M. J. (2001). Commitment in public child welfare. *Social Service Review*, 75(3), 386-419.

- Landsman, M. J. (2004). Evaluating the impact of training on staff retention. *Proceedings of the Seventh Annual National Human Services Training Evaluation Symposium*. Berkeley, CA: California, Social Work Education Center, University of California, Berkeley.
- Litchi, C. (2001). *Impact of work environment on training transfer: Child welfare workers' experiences*. Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertations.
- Lichti, C. (2002, April). Impact on work environment on training transfer: Child welfare workers' experiences. *The Manitoba Journal of Child Welfare*, 1(1).
- Lindsey, E., & Qaqish, B. (2005). Supervisors' and employee's perceptions of transfer of learning in a child welfare pre-service training course. *Proceedings of the Seventh Annual National Human Services Training Evaluation Symposium*. Berkeley, CA: California Social Work Education Center, University of California, Berkeley.
- Lobato, J. (2006). Alternative perspectives on the transfer of learning: History, issues, and challenges for future research. *Journal of the Learning Sciences*, 15(4), 433-449.
- Loos, G., & Fowler, T. (1999). *A Model for Research on Training Effectiveness*. Retrieved December 14, 2007, from <http://www.cdc.gov/NIOSH/99-142.html>
- Love, P. (2007). *Examining factors that impact transfer of training by Department of Social Services workers*. Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertations.
- Mor Barak, M., Levin, A., Nissly, J., & Lane, C. (2006). Why do they leave? Modeling child welfare workers' turnover intentions. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 28(5), 548-577.



- Oregon Technology in Education Council. (2007). *Learning Theories and Transfer of Learning*. Retrieved May 5, 2008, from [http://otec.uoregon.edu/learning\\_theory.htm](http://otec.uoregon.edu/learning_theory.htm)
- Perkins, D., & Gavreil, S. (1992). Transfer of Learning. In *International Encyclopedia of Education, Second Edition*. Retrieved January 18, 2008, from <http://learnweb.harvard.edu/alps/thinking/docs/traency n.pdf>
- Rycus, J., S., & Hughes, R. (2000). *What is competency-based in-service training*. Columbus, Ohio: Institute for Human Services.
- Subedi, B. S. (2004). Emerging trends on research on transfer of learning. *International Education Journal*, 5(4).
- Seel, R. (2008). *Introduction to Appreciative Inquiry*. Retrieved July 12, 2008, from <http://www.new-paradigm.co.uk>
- Smith, M. K. (2005). The functions of supervision. In *the encyclopedia of informal education*. Retrieved July 12, 2008, from <http://infed.org/biblio/functions-of-supervison.htm>
- Strolin, J., McCarthy, M., & Caringi, J. (2006). Causes and effects of child welfare workforce turnover: Current stat of knowledge and future directions. *Journal of Public Child Welfare*1, 1(2), 29-52.
- Sullivan, R. (1995). The Competency-based approach to training. JHPIEGO Corporation, Ed., *JHPIEGO Strategy Papers* (#1).
- Sydenstricker-Neto, J. (1997). Research design and mixed-method approach. A hands-on experience. Retrieved October 7, 2008, from <http://www.socialreasearchmethods.net/tutorial/Sydenstricker/bolsa.htm>

- Telles-Rogers, T. (2003). *The impact of training on worker performance and retention: Perceptions of child welfare supervisors*. Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertation database.
- Thomas, N., & Saslow, S. (2007, May). Improving productivity through coaching and mentoring. *Chief Learning Officer*, 22-26, 55-56.
- Thorndike, E. L., & Woodworth, R. (1901). The influence of improvement in one mental function upon the efficiency of other functions. *Psychological Review*, 8, 247-261.
- Tracey, B., Tannenbaum, S., & Kavanagh, M. (1995). Applying trained skills on the job: The importance of the work environment. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 80(2), 239-252.
- Training Magazine, (1997). 1997 Industry Report. 34, 45-67.
- Trochim, W. (2006). Survey research. In *Research Methods Knowledge Base*. Retrieved January 23, 2008, from <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/survey.php>
- Wehrmann, K. C. (1999). *Child Welfare supervisors as learners and teachers in the field*. Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertations.
- Yamnill, S., & McLean, G. (2005). Theories supporting transfer of training. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 12(2), 195-208.