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The Evolution of Professional Training in Accord with Pedagogical Change to Meet Growing Child and Family Needs

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Beginning in the 1960s and increasingly from the 1970s to the present, child welfare has been a social issue of growing concern. Government and public agencies have struggled to meet the sharply escalating needs of children and families relying upon staff whose knowledge and skills to meet these needs are often questioned. In response to this problem, under the leadership of the federal government, schools of social work have forged partnerships with public agencies to provide ongoing training to child welfare professionals. This article addresses how such training has evolved at The Center for Child and Family Studies, a division of the College of Social Work, University of South Carolina, to meet the changing needs of families and children within a changing conceptual and service provision environment.

Background

Meeting the training needs of human service personnel is an ongoing challenge, and nowhere is this more strongly felt than in the field of child welfare. Several factors contribute to this situation. First, the job of the child welfare worker has become increasingly complex. Rapidly changing social problems have provided a context for service provision that broadens concerns of child welfare to include such phenomena as alcohol and other drug abuse, AIDS, spousal abuse, poverty, and physical disabilities and serious emotional disturbances in children. Though the relationships among these and other factors that may contribute to child maltreatment and out-of-home placement are poorly understood, workers are continually called upon to make important decisions that affect the lives of children and families. Expectations of workers are high because the stakes—child safety and development—are high.

Second, despite the complexity of the job and the high expectations surrounding it, staff of public child welfare agencies often lack formal professional education specific to their duties and responsibilities. The most recent study of these workers' educational levels found that only 13 percent held the bachelor of social work degree and 15 percent the master of social work degree (Lieberman, Hornby, & Russell, 1988), and far fewer had had the opportunity for a special child welfare focus in their educational experiences. Third, because of the difficulty of the work, heavy responsibility for complex decision making, and low pay, turnover in the field is great (Reagh, 1994; Everett, 1995). Thus agency training divisions are often playing catch-up as trained workers are quickly replaced by new, untrained staff.

Last, the structures and service delivery mechanisms for child welfare and related services are changing rapidly. Some of these changes, such as work teams and managed care, call for workers who can operate semi-independently from supervision and can represent their professions and clients well in collaborative multidisciplinary arrangements.

Efforts to address the challenges in child welfare training have arisen. Federal leadership has been evident in at least two initiatives. Beginning with the passage of the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980, Title IV-E provided uncapped funding to states for certain activities related to out-of-home placement, including training (Everett, 1995). While some states were slow to take advantage of this funding source, currently it is the primary support for both pre-service and in-service training in the child welfare field. Second, although the federal government had been making child welfare pre-service training grants to colleges and universities for several years through small "426" grants (provided by Section 426, Title IV-E),

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in 1991 it forthrightly addressed the problem of "deprofessionalization" of child welfare through a grant program providing greater funds to college and university social work programs for the specific purposes of re-professionalizing the field and forging closer partnerships between the public child welfare agencies and social work education programs.

South Carolina was one of the first states to take advantage of these federal supports for child welfare training. The working relationship between the state child welfare agency, Department of Social Services (DSS), and the University of South Carolina's College of Social Work began in 1981, when, after experiencing a reduction in workforce, DSS approached the College about assisting with training. In the mid-1980s the bond was strengthened through the use of IV-E funding to provide in-service training. It was at that time that The Center for Child and Family Studies (The Center) was formally established within the College to relate specifically to public agencies and address their training and evaluation needs. After a decade of growth, the DSS-Center alliance became a full-blown partnership in 1991 when the College of Social Work, through The Center, was among the first schools to receive funding to re-professionalize child welfare. At that time, in-service training was added to The Center's initiative with DSS in the form of a collaborative program that funded and oversaw stipends for DSS workers to return to college to earn the Master of Social Work degree with a child welfare emphasis.

Through the years of the DSS-College partnership, the field of child welfare has become increasingly complex, and accountability has become a more prominent issue. Thus, not only training content but training methodology has evolved as The Center has struggled to discover and test methodologies that more effectively promote worker competence in a continually changing environment. The evolution of training methodology at The Center is the focus of this article. An exploration of the emerging conceptual and theoretical context is followed by a four-stage description of The Center's evolving models. Finally, the article addresses the ongoing challenge in training methodology and provides a look toward the future.

Conceptual Challenges to Traditional "Reality": Postmodernism and Related New Thinking

The past thirty-plus years have seen increasing questioning of old ways of understanding reality, which were based upon logical positivism, and acceptance of new ways that fall under the umbrella term postmodernism. This postmodernist challenge to basic long held assumptions about truth and reality cuts across many academic disciplines, affecting the hard sciences as well as the social sciences, and has helped to reshape professional training. Postmodernism is posited on the belief that there is no essential truth—that is, no body of knowledge that reflects reality for everyone at every time. This is a radical departure from the "modernism" imposed by the industrial revolution, which"stressed standardization and mass produtión" (Queralt, 1966, p. 7).

Postmodernism acknowledges fluidity, recognizes the limitations of traditional theory, celebrates diversity of culture and experience, and views the individual as the interpreter of his or her experience. It emphasizes language as the repository and expression of "truth," thus validating the idea of individual truths and community or regional truths rather than accepting the traditional idea of universal truth as determined through long accepted theorems and laws.

The new thinking comes from many sources and is played out in many arenas. While no attempt will be made to discuss all of the contributors to postmodernism, a review of some of the important contributing bodies of thought demonstrates the range of influence.

In 1955, George Kelly presented his personal construct theory, which set forth his thinking about a new form of psychological counseling and offered techniques for eliciting, challenging, and modifying clients' worldviews (constructs). Kelly maintained that events must be construed by the persons who experience and witness them, not

through "scientific" rules set forth by professionals. Berger and Luckmann (1966) added a contextual element through their presentation of social construct theory, saying that "reality is socially constructed and....the sociology of knowledge must analyze the processes in which this occurs" (p. 1). As it has now come to be widely understood, constructivism encourages interpretation of individual experience from personal reality, which is developed in a social and cultural context. Queralt (1996) explains: "This means that each person or system has a different assumptive world and the 'truth' must be considered relative to context and to historical time" (p. 42). Truth is also seen as evolving (or fluid, as explained above), taking expression and shape through the telling and retelling of individual stories, as in narrative therapy.

Construct theory was compatible with the social changes of the 1960s, such as cultural awareness and feminism, with their emphasis on not only understanding differences but also respecting the different "truths" of various groups. Feminists, rallying against the oppression of women throughout the modern era, studied and publicized the distinctions between women's developmental paths and life experiences and those of men. Furthermore, they held that dominant truth—that is, truth as defined by a dominant (male) group—discounted and subjugated other (e.g., feminine) truths. A major theme of leading feminist writers of the 1970s and early 1980s was that the differences between women and men, although real, were perceived through a patriarchal lens, "rooted in the sociopolitical construction of gender rather than in biologically based sex differences" (Bricker-Jenkins & Lockett, 1995, citing Chesler, 1972; Chodorow, 1978; Gilligan, 1982; & Miller, 1976). These and other researchers decried male privilege and challenged patriarchal standards as the basis of knowledge, privilege, and social structure and functioning. Feminists sought to elevate what was largely classified as nonrational in the patriarchal schema: spirituality, subjectivity, "process as product," and the personal and cultural construction of truth. (See Bricker-Jenkins & Lockett, 1995, Table 1.)

Last, the popularization of ethnography and other qualitative techniques as broadly useful and acceptable research methods was a departure from reliance upon quantification as the preferred way to understand reality. The validity of research that fails to account for context and participants' worldviews came into question. Banister (1996) remarks, drawing on the work of other writers, "It is within the context of the cultural world that individuals construct, negotiate, and distribute their social realities. . . . Culture provides direction for discovering a sense of coherence between stability and change" (Bruner, 1990, cited in Banister, p. 214).

Parallels in Pedagogy

Over the past three decades, these changes in thinking that comprise postmodernism have been reflected in teaching philosophy, have spawned new teaching methodologies, and have added to the evolution of adult education.

Table 1: Train and Hope

Content	Process	Outcomes
Broadly identified by DSS, specifics added by trainers (college faculty)	Determined by trainers	Determined by trainers
Training content loose, inconsistent, and not individualistic	Training process loose, inconsistent, and not individualistic	Imprecise vision of outcomes; outcomes loose, inconsistent, and not individualistic

Philosophy of Teaching

Cramer (1995) and Vella (1995) cite the work of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire as a moving force in reshaping teaching philosophy, in part because, as Cramer notes, Freire "critiqued the banking method of education whereby instructors are perceived as experts who deposit knowledge into the empty vaults of students" (p. 194). Referencing other writers from her review of the literature, Cramer compares the banking method of teaching to feminist pedagogy, in which "the role of instructor is one of midwife, not banker" (p.194).

Belenky and Clinchy (1986) also begin with Freire, elaborating on the midwife-teacher role: "Midwife-teachers focus not on their own knowledge (as the lecturer does) but on the students' knowledge....Midwife-teachers help students deliver their words to the world, and they use their own knowledge to put the students into conversation with other voices....Midwife teachers encourage students to use their knowledge in everyday life" (pp. 218-219). Describing what emerges from a learning situation in which everyone brings his or her experience and evolving knowledge to the table to share in an equal exchange, Belenky and Clinchy conclude, "We believe that connected knowing comes more easily to many women than does separate knowing" (p. 229).

Shapiro (1991), in an examination of the male dominance ingrained in our culture and how it has traditionally affected the microcosm of the learning environment, presents two opposite models of classroom learning: traditional and feminist. "The starting point of traditional teaching methods," she asserts, "lies in the discipline and, therefore, in the texts of the discipline" (p. 72), the choice of which is "largely determined by the culture of the discipline that is rooted in the greater culture" (p. 72). "The teacher becomes a knowledge-giver and the enforcer of dominant culture....The text becomes the authority because. . . the teacher, as an authority, has chosen it. This embeds the student in learning the 'other'" (p. 73). In the nontraditional experience, on the other hand, "the student becomes the text" (p. 74), and "the experiences of each student serve as a context for exploration" (p. 75). The greater implication of this difference is clear in Shapiro's summary: "Without attempts to reduce the authority of the teacher and the text, we will continue to debate the value of the canon, further entrenching ourselves in the notion of knowing as power and pursuing debate as the dominant learning technique" (p. 80).

New Methodologies

Specific pedagogical practices arising from postmodern constructivist theory have been the focus of other authors. Marland and Osborne (1990) relate instances of the intersection of theory and practice in the classroom that are exemplified by teachers' taking individual differences and situations into account in interacting with their students. Kelley (1995) suggests the integration of narrative approaches into clinical curricula alongside existing systemic theories.

Cramer (1995) cites Chrisler (1990) in stressing the importance of shared classroom leadership and the concept that every person in a classroom can be both teacher and learner. Self-directed learning is used in many forms in classrooms today, even in medical schools. A form of this is cooperative learning, a method that has small groups of students work together toward common goals, endeavors to promote cultural mixes in these groups, and relies on social and teamwork skills for its efficacy (Tiberius & Billson, 1991).

Billson and Tiberius (1991) favor not only moving students from competition to cooperation, establishing in the process "a climate of egalitarianism and tolerance" (p. 90), but also the use of student summation and evaluation (including early and ongoing assessment). To further self-assessment and student-teacher partnership, Freeman and Valentine (in press) have designed and implemented an instrument for students to use in evaluating their experience in each class session; the resulting evaluations help the teacher shape upcoming ses-

sions. Kiresuk, Smith, and Cardillo (1994) treat goal attainment scaling, an individualized approach to learning measurement, as applicable to both services and education in several disciplines.

Evolving Adult Education

Postmodernist thinking is more consistent with adult education and training than with traditional classroom teaching. Knowles (1972), one of the early theoreticians in adult education, made the observation that all the great teachers of antiquity were "chiefly teachers of adults, not children" (p. 33). Such instructors as Socrates, Lao Tse, and Jesus "made assumptions about learning (such as that learning is a process of discovery by the learner) and used procedures (dialogue and 'learning by doing') that came to be labeled 'pagan'" and gave way to pedagogy ("a millstone around education's neck") as "the education of children became organized in the Middle Ages" (p. 33).

As adult education has come to play an increasing role in continuing professional development and certification, it has gained more attention and sometimes served unofficially as a laboratory for pedagogical experimentation. Many resulting improvements in method have filtered down to other learning situations. These include some of the components named above, such as self-direction and self-evaluation on the part of learners, a climate that fosters cooperation rather than competition, an atmosphere of tolerance, and the honoring of diversity. Darkenwald (1989), in his study of the adult classroom environment, observed that the factor most important in ensuring its effectiveness is "awareness by teachers that they and their adult students are mutually obligated to create optimal conditions for learning" (p. 68).

Vella (1995) writes about an approach to adult education called popular education, which she describes as "based on a particular conception of what it means to be human, a sense of what the world is and can be, a view of the potential of community and society, and finally, a clear epistemology, that is, an understanding of how human beings learn" (p.1). This is an approach, also based on the work of Freire, that "invites people to learn as active subjects, as decision makers" (p. 4). This kind of education, which Vella often uses in such field situations as a Chilean community health initiative, is developed through group decisions of those who will be the learners. Vella carefully points out, however, that this does not connote "a broad invitation to the dance without any set music. ....On the contrary, form is not sacrificed when democracy emerges. In the microsetting of popular adult education, a structure does exist" (p. 7). That structure and the process that takes place within it honor diversity, move toward achievement-based objectives, include small group work, depend on a flow between action and reflection, and facilitate mutual teaching and learning among participants.

The Evolution of the Training Model at The Center for Child and Family Studies

Since the early 1980s, in response to changing need and self-imposed accountability, The Center has struggled to find appropriate and effective training models and has been increasingly (beginning with the third of the models presented below) influenced by postmodern thinking. This struggle is described here in four stages, which, while perhaps oversimplified, provide a structure for thinking about training models and thus for examining and changing them as our understanding of adult professional learning evolves. The structure is built around examination of three elements of training—content, process, and outcomes. Each of these elements is viewed in terms of who participates in determining each and the extent to which each is prescriptive versus loose and to which each is individualistic.

Train and Hope

In the early 1980s, DSS first contracted with The Center for child welfare training, which was presented by College faculty to DSS workers. The presenters used primarily traditional classroom teaching techniques. Broad training topics (e.g., child neglect) were identified by the agency, but the

specific content (e.g., attachment theory, poverty and neglect) and the design of training (arrangement and types of training activities) were largely left to the faculty members who contracted to deliver training modules. Individually, they put together packets of material of their own choosing, which often consisted largely of articles from academic journals, to present to participants. While faculty certainly made efforts to relate training to trainees' jobs and to involve them in discussion, overall the methodology was fairly consistent with the banking concept of teaching, with faculty training as though trainees were empty vaults to be filled with the same general kind of information. Outcomes, expressed as objectives, were not clearly envisioned, not tightly tied to training content and methods, and sometimes not specific to workers' jobs. Overall, this model can be characterized as loose in all elements, devoid of standardization. It was dubbed "train and hope" to indicate that one could hope for effectiveness, but the elements were not designed to produce specific results. (See Table 1.)

The primary advantage of this model was that it capitalized on instructors' personal experience and knowledge base, which were considerable. On the other hand, training was inconsistent across trainers and from session to session, and it lacked adequate connection to individual trainees' perspectives and to on-the-job behaviors. In addition, there was little accountability for outcomes.

Prescriptive Curricula and Competencies

In the mid-1980s, with increasing national concern about poor outcomes in child welfare and about worker competence, The Center was one of the early training entities to move toward competency-based training. Competency-based training was a response to the reality that public child welfare staff were not professionally trained (that is, given pre-service education/training). The belief was that if we could be specific enough about what workers needed to be able to do and could train to that, we could produce competent child welfare workers.

Thus, The Center, in collaboration with DSS, began to identify competencies—behaviors that comprised child welfare practice. Competencies comprised values, attitudes, knowledge, and skills that professionals should exhibit to be effective child welfare workers. These competencies became the objectives (target outcomes) of training and the standards by which training effectiveness would be measured. To meet these objectives and ensure accountability to the agency as well as to the families impacted by the system and to the greater community, it was believed the competency-based curriculum delivery must be consistent, prescribed, invariable. The exemplar of this model was the Caseworker Competency-Based Training for Child Welfare Workers (CCBT), which The Center designed for DSS and delivered to its incoming caseworkers from 1989 until 1992. The intent was for the competencies to drive training, with lockstep connections between competencies, content, and process. (See Table 2.)

The primary advantages of competency-based training were that it closely tied training to on-the-job behaviors, was highly experiential as it attempted to ensure skill attainment, involved a high level of accountability for outcomes, and was highly consistent across elements—content, process, and outcomes. In these respects, it was a radical departure from the previous training, addressing all of its disadvantages except one—lack of individuality. Thus, while the training certainly transferred to on-the-job behaviors, it was unclear that learning had the depth of individual meaning that would ensure retention and professional growth. In addition, this "cookie-cutter" approach was increasingly viewed by Center staff as overly simplistic for the complex problems child welfare families experienced.

Meeting Growing Complexity Through Training Variability

The Center then was faced with addressing (a) the need for more individuality to add personal meaning to training so learning might occur at a deeper level, and (b) the need for methods that addressed the complexity of child welfare

Table 2: Competency-Based Training

Content	Process	Outcomes
Determined by Center Staff	Broadly identified by DSS, specifics determined by Center staff to directly address competencies	Determined by Center Staff
Training process prescriptive, consistent, and not individualistic	Training content prescriptive, consistent, and not individualistic	Precise vision of outcomes, defined as competencies; outcomes, consistent and not individualistic

problems. In the service sector, the response to complexity was increasing calls for such things as collaboration and service integration, schemes to bring more knowledge and skills to bear on services without services' fragmentation. It is ironic that the increase of specialization and specialized training, meant as a solution to inadequate service delivery, brought its own problem of over-specialization and lack of integration. As Woodard (1994) noted in her study of community service delivery, "The problem is complicated by the specialization, and corresponding fragmentation, of the technologies that address the more complicated needs of a diverse citizenry having multiple problems" (p. 17). Thus, an expert in one field important to child and family welfare, such as the indicators of maltreatment, might have little or no knowledge of another related field, such as alcohol and other drug addiction and the family dynamics surrounding it.

In 1991, The Center for Child and Family Studies received an NCCAN grant to create a training program that would address these issues. The resulting curriculum was Networking for Wholeness (NFW). To a significantly greater extent than CCBT before it, NFW paralleled positive changes in pedagogy. For the first time, we intentionally assembled trainees from a variety of agencies and designed activities that required interagency collaboration, giving training process a status that was equal to if not greater than the status of content.

A second advancement was our acknowledgment that the trainers themselves did not have all the expertise that was needed by the group. Rather, expertise was seen as residing in the entire community as well as in all trainees. Thus, while the grant proposal had identified topics that should be addressed in this training, we invited community participation by calling in representatives from a range of agencies across the community to identify areas that their agencies particularly needed training in and to share their ideas of how these should be presented. The role of the trainer then was to organize training and act as consultant, finding resources to meet needs that the trainees had identified and that they could themselves meet in part through interpersonal sharing, thus becoming cotrainers. Opportunities for such sharing were built into the curriculum with careful notes to assure that objectives would be met. In this way, we strove to balance trainee input with accountability and consistency in outcomes.

This model for the first time brought others besides DSS and The Center into decisions about content and process. It involved broad information gathering and collaboration before training began as well as during delivery. The trainer's role shifted from expert to consultant. In addition, it taught service integration through training process rather than relying upon content, thus making learning more real and personal. The model involved a loosening of content and process, but outcomes

remained Center-determined competencies. (See Table 3.)

This model has distinct advantages over previous ones. Training is still closely tied to on-the-job behaviors, but these are viewed in a more personal way. It sacrifices some consistency, but this is seen as a positive, since it honors more the variability among trainees. It retains the competency-based level of accountability for outcomes. The primary disadvantage is that it still does not fully honor learner uniqueness. Although we called this a constructivist model, this was more an intent than a reality; we realized we still had far to go.

Further Along the Constructivist Continuum

As we struggled with how to increase meaning through individualization of training, we had the opportunity to experiment further with ProNet, a curriculum-development project funded in late 1994 to address the maltreatment of children and families affected by disabilities. Like NFW, it involved interagency trainees to support services integration. Again like NFW, it began with a community needs assessment. However, this process was much more in-depth than that of NFW, involving extensive group interviews with both families and service providers. In addition, through ProNet The Center moved further into self-directed, self-evaluated training, as participants were asked to identify their own training goals and monitor themselves on their progress toward meeting them.

At the project's inception, ProNet's designers worked from the Ecuadorean village construct of colectiva and palanca. The first term refers to collectivity, the belief that the community has within it or knows where to get the resources it needs to keep itself functioning well. The second, which actually means "leverage" in Spanish, may be compared to having "friends in high places": In vernacular usage it means being able to tap the needed resources, to get things done for the common good. This construct by its nature connotes a partnership and is thus apt for training in which facilitators (we discarded the word trainers in this context) and participants work in partnership. Participants not only identify personal goals and assess their progress but also take responsibility for contributing their knowledge and skills to training. In this model, much as in the previous one, facilitators are resource gatherers and moderators of a sort rather than teachers in the old classroom sense. They can be seen as the midwives, helping participants "birth" learning through their sharing of expertise and knowledge toward individual goals that address the curriculum's overall objective of protecting children and families affected by disabilities. (See Table 4.)

Table 3: Constuctivist Training

Content	Process	Outcomes
Broadly identified by DSS, and The Center through preparation of the grant proposal; input from trainees and other community personnel	Determined by Center staff in consultation with trainees, who are assumed to know how they best learn	Determined by Center staff
Training content loose, somewhat inconsistent, and somewhat individualistic	Training process somewhat-loose, somewhat inconsistent, and somewhat individualistic	Precise vision of outcomes; articulated through competencies; consistent, but not individualistic

This model has four primary advantages. First, meaningfulness is enhanced through individualizing training. Second, while content is broadly identified by DSS and The Center, specific content components are brought to training at the request of trainees and are therefore directly applicable to their needs. Third, process is more appropriate to a given training group since trainees examine how they best learn and convey this to facilitators. Last, accountability for outcomes is high because participants are able to set individual objectives within the framework of curriculum objectives, thus voicing their learning needs and focusing on them specifically. Throughout the elements of training—content, process, and outcomes—there is a blend of facilitator input and participant input designed to support the necessary degree of consistency and the desired degree of individuality.

The primary disadvantages remain uncertain; we are just beginning to experiment with the model. We do know that the curriculum is more difficult to conceptualize and requires a higher degree of facilitator expertise (a paradox, since expertise is shared; yet the facilitator, rather than following a prescribed text, must be able to gather and assimilate materials, listen to group needs, and respond with the appropriate resources). In addition, the model requires enormous learner self-responsibility, which is also one of the desired outcomes of the training.

The Ongoing Challenge: Reconciling Individuality and Consistency

As we have moved into more flexible, learner-driven training, we have found it increasingly challenging to facilitate individuality and at the same time ensure consistent outcomes—to avoid issuing, in Vella's words, "a broad invitation to the dance without any set music," sacrificing form to democracy (Vella, 1995, p. 7). As a training agency, we are ever aware of our accountability to our funders and our communities, who rightly expect training to produce more competent workers, professionals with a fairly well-defined set of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values.

Postmodern thinking has supported and furthered our conviction that overly prescribed training is inappropriate for training on very complex topics such as child welfare work (although we do believe that for some specific topics or for beginning levels of training, competency-based training is still appropriate). We have rejected the belief that we can produce competent child welfare workers by imposing prescribed material upon workers

Table 4: Toward Postmodern Training

Content	Process	Outcomes
Broadly identified by DSS and The Center through preparation of the grant proposal; input from trainees and other community personnel. Facilitator's role is resource gatherer rather than expert on all topics	Determined by Center staff in consultation with trainees, who are assumed to know how they best learn; trainees are asked to identify before and/or within training	General outcomes predetermined by Center, but each trainee can self-define what that will look like for him/her
Training content loose; topics generally consistent but brought to training at the felt need and request of trainees, thus individualistic	Training process somewhat loose, somewhat inconsistent, and somewhat individualistic	Outcomes broadly consistent but individualistically articulated

without connecting with—even beginning with—who they are and how they view themselves, their clients, and the world.

We have moved easily into shared responsibility for content and process and have only later addressed shared responsibility for defining outcomes. We have come to realize that what are clear and precise outcomes in the head of the facilitator can be viewed very differently by various trainees, so prescribed outcomes are partially an illusion. Thus, the process of converting facilitator-determined outcomes to trainees' own idioms gives them validity. Trainees' words, meanings, and sense of importance are what make the outcomes real, and the facilitator cannot force outcomes that go beyond that. Moreover, the process of conversion itself enables trainees to grapple with meaning, increasing the chances that new material will be integrated into their behavioral repertories. We are now experimenting with a modified goal attainment scaling process as the structure for this conversion.

Into the Future: What Will Training Look Like?

As long as there is a reason for ongoing professional training, there will be design, delivery, and evaluation challenges. Needs and goals always vary not only from individual to individual, group to group, and community to community at any given time but also within individuals, groups, and communities with the passage of time. We know from our own professional and personal experience that as we meet our goals, others take their place. This is growth; this is what learning is about. We know, too, that while we may get better at gauging community and professional educational needs and adapting methods to meet them, the philosophy we have described in this paper tells us that in training, as in other areas of life, there is no essential, unchanging truth. We recognize, therefore, that no curriculum or method is static. What is "best" today, if such a thing can be determined, may be inadequate next month; what works for one training participant may be a waste of time for another in the same training group.

In continuing to train workers for intervening in complex situations, we see ourselves ultimately as resource gatherers and consultants, with a sharp eye and a discerning ear for the needs of individual communities and the ability to design and deliver training individually tailored to community professionals to meet those needs. The concept of a curriculum that seems most nearly ideal to us at this moment in such situations is a packet of resource materials on related topics with several variable suggested outlines and a range of teaching-learning activities that can be chosen for a group of experienced professionals, beginning professionals, or a mix of expertise levels. Even this would not serve in every instance. A short time before this writing, ProNet opened a potential new opportunity to us that would require a radical revision of what we have done so far with this curriculum, yet its aim would be the same: professional collaboration to serve children and families affected by disabilities.

In postmodern professional training, in a world in which rapid change and variety of need and perspective are the rule, there can be no single fixed method, no one right curriculum design, no definitive best way. In such times the design and delivery of professional training must be fluid, evolutionary, and yet accountable. Working in close partnership with our participants, we can continue to enrich their partnership with clients and, in doing so, remain a positive force in strengthening children, families, and communities.

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