



MCWEP

MASTERS CHILD WELFARE EDUCATION PROGRAM 2014 ANNUAL REPORT

LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROGRAM ENHANCEMENT



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INTRODUCTION

The Masters Child Welfare Education Program (MCWEP) is a partnership among the New Jersey Department of Children and Families (DCF), The New Jersey Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW-NJ), and a consortium of three graduate social work programs – The Monmouth University School of Social Work MSW Program, the Rutgers University School of Social Work MSW Program, and the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey MSW Program. The partnership was formally initiated in June 2012, when the project was funded by the New Jersey Department of Children and Families.

The intent of MCWEP is to enhance the knowledge and skills of supervisors who are currently employed at the Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P), through completion of a Master's Degree in Social Work (MSW). Through participation in MCWEP, DCP&P supervisors broaden their perspectives on social work and child welfare (including evidence-based public child welfare practice), develop advanced clinical skills, and deepen their supervisory skills so that they become more confident supervisors and mentors in the work with at-risk children and families and more effective leaders in promoting exemplary practice within New Jersey's public child welfare system.

This program evaluation covers the months of August 2013 – August 2014. In evaluating the project, the perspectives of the students were sought to capture the academic and experiential components of the program. This report includes data from respondents in the first and second cohort of MCWEP, which includes 36 DCP&P supervisors and casework supervisors, as well as one local area manager. The majority of students are women (90%), and as a group they have an average of 8.5 years of supervisory experience with DCP&P. Approximately 40% are African American, 30% are Latino, and 30% are Caucasian. The MCWEP students are divided almost equally between the three consortium schools and represent about 38% of the local offices of DCP&P.



Descriptive Data - A total of thirty-eight students were funded during the second year of the program. The following tables provide some descriptive data about the students in both cohort 1 and cohort 2

SUMMARY DATA ON MCWEP STUDENTS

AGE GROUP	# of Students		
	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	TOTAL
30-35	7	3	10
36-40	6	5	11
41-45	4	4	8
46-51	2	3	4
>50	1	3	4
TOTAL	20	18	38
GENDER	# Students		
	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	TOTAL
FEMALE	18	16	34
MALE	2	2	4
TOTAL	20	18	38
ETHNICITY	# of Students		
	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	TOTAL
African American	8	7	15
Caucasian	6	8	14
Latino	6	3	9
TOTAL	20	18	38
DCP&P TITLE	# of Students		
	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	TOTAL
SFSS1/CWS	5	7	12
SFSS2	14	11	25
LOM	1	0	1
TOTAL	20	18	38
YEARS In Current Position	# of Students		
	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	TOTAL
1-5 years	8	5	13
6-10 Years	8	8	16
11-15 years	4	4	7
16-20 years	0	1	1
>20 years	0	0	0
TOTAL	20	18	38



SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM	# of Students		
	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	TOTAL
Monmouth University	6	6	12
Rutgers University	8	7	15
Richard Stockton College	6	5	11
TOTAL	20	18	38

DCP&P Local Office representation:

Atlantic West: 2	Essex Central: 2	Morris/Sussex/Passaic Area: 1	Passaic North: 2
Bergen Central: 2	Essex South: 3	Monmouth North: 1	Salem: 1
Bergen South: 2	Mercer North: 1	Newark Center City: 1	Somerset: 1
Cape May: 2	Mercer South: 1	Newark Northeast: 2	Sussex: 1
Camden Central: 2	Middlesex West: 2	Ocean North: 1	Union Central: 1
Camden North: 1	Morris West: 2	Passaic Central: 3	Union West: 1

MCWEP Anticipated Graduation Dates – 1st Cohort

Anticipated Graduation Date	# of Students Graduating	% of Students Graduating
May 2014*	2	10% (10%)
September 2014*	1	5% (15%)
December 2014	2	10% (25%)
July 2015	6	30% (55%)
December 2015	4	20% (75%)
May 2016	5	25% (100%)
TOTAL	20	100%

MCWEP Anticipated Graduation Dates – 2nd Cohort

Anticipated Graduation Date	# of Students Graduating	% of Students Graduating
May 2015	1	6% (6%)
December 2016	4	22% (28%)
May 2017	6	33% (61%)
July 2017	7	39% (100%)
TOTAL	18	100%

*Represents students who have already graduated



PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

Competency-Based Assessment

Each participating MSW program has its own direct practice/clinical concentration and has developed a set of advanced MSW competencies to guide learning in the classroom and field. Since these advanced competencies will not be the same across the three MSW programs comprising MCWEP, MCWEP uses the specialized advanced practice behaviors that students develop through their participation in MCWEP. These practice behaviors specifically address the Division of Child Protection and Permanency requirements that child welfare supervisors have an exceptionally well developed perspective on the knowledge base in social work and child welfare practice, are able to effectively teach clinical skills and theories, and the ability to supervise effectively in an organization where workers regularly make difficult decisions that affect the lives of vulnerable children and families. These two sets of practice behaviors, trauma-informed child welfare practice behaviors and leadership and supervision in child welfare practice behaviors, are developed in two elective courses all MCWEP participants are required to take prior to graduation. These two sets of practice behaviors are also rehearsed and reinforced during meetings of the Learning Community.

MCWEP students completing one of both courses during the 2013-2014 academic year rated their own mastery of these advanced practice behaviors. The following summarizes the results of those self-assessments.





Assessment of Student Learning – Trauma-Informed Child Welfare Practice

Students were asked to rate the degree to which they agree with the listed statements regarding Trauma-Informed Child Welfare Practice Behaviors. Mean scores are reported below:

Trauma in Child Welfare Competencies	Mean Score	
	2012-2013 (N=7)	2013-2014 (N=17)
1. I am able to integrate the concept of “child traumatic stress” in case practice and supervision by knowing what types of experiences constitute childhood trauma and utilize a trauma informed lens to manage child welfare cases.	4.71	4.71
2. I am able to apply knowledge of how traumatic experiences affect brain development and memory and understand the relationship between a child’s lifetime trauma history and his or her responses through comprehensive case planning.	4.29	4.47
3. I can articulate how trauma has an impact on the behavior of children over the course of childhood and how child traumatic stress is exacerbated over time by ongoing stressors (including separation from/loss of caregivers, and/or foster placement) in a child’s environment and within the child welfare system.	4.43	4.65
4. I am able to identify and promote the utilization of trauma-sensitive interventions such as strategic referrals to timely, quality, and effective trauma-focused interventions and trauma informed case planning with multi-disciplinary teams.	4.29	4.41
5. I can articulate how the impact of traumatic stress can be prevented and/or mitigated by trauma-informed responses of child welfare workers and child welfare systems.	4.43	4.35
6. I am able to consider how cultural factors influence the manner by which children may identify, interpret, and respond to traumatic events during the case practice process.	4.43	4.35
7. I am able to identify the impact of secondary traumatic stress (STS) on child welfare workers and employ appropriate interventions.	4.43	4.41
8. I support Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) goals of safety, permanency, and well-being by increasing skills to effectively serve children and families (biological and resource) in the child welfare system that have experienced traumatic stress.	4.57	4.71



Assessment of Student Learning – Leadership and Supervision in Child Welfare

Students were asked to rate the degree to which they agree with the listed statements regarding Child Welfare Leadership and Supervision Practice Behaviors. Mean scores are reported below:

Child Welfare Leadership and Supervision	Mean Score	
	2012-2013 (N=3)	2013-2014 (N=12)
1. I am able to assess my own strengths and challenges as a leader.	5.00	4.83
2. I am able to describe key qualities of leaders and the impact on child welfare systems and staff.	4.33	4.75
3. I can demonstrate an understanding of the role of ethics and the systems perspective in leadership behavior as a supervisor.	5.00	4.83
4. I am able to describe key child welfare workforce issues, trends, and challenges from a national perspective.	4.00	4.66
5. I can demonstrate the ability to identify evidence-based practice in child welfare supervision.	4.00	4.83
6. I am able to demonstrate an understanding of the stages and key issues in the implementation of change initiatives.	4.67	4.92
7. I am able to understand the relationship of creating a learning culture to staff retention and performance.	5.00	4.83
8. I am able to describe interactional clinical supervision and discuss how it would be implemented in a public child welfare setting.	5.00	5.00
9. I can describe and apply strategies to foster an inclusive workplace where diversity and individual differences are valued.	4.33	4.58
10. I am able to describe the impact of trauma on worker retention and list strategies to mitigate the stress of secondary trauma.	3.67	4.58



Learning Community Assessment

The Learning Community is an integral component of MCWEP designed to enhance students' MSW classroom and field learning experiences and meaningfully connect these experiences to child welfare practice and supervision. The purpose of the MCWEP Learning Community is to foster a state-wide network of MCWEP participants to disseminate educational information related to child welfare and encourage dialogue among participants regarding MSW education and translation of educational outcomes to workforce experiences. The Learning Community also provides an avenue for process evaluation of the needs of student participants in MCWEP.

The Learning Community has two components in which MCWEP participants are expected to be involved. In the bi-weekly online discussion board, students respond to discussion threads posted by Learning Community Faculty facilitators. The second component involves quarterly in-person meetings where students have opportunities to gain further education, disseminate information in group presentation format, and engage in process evaluation.

After each Learning Community Meeting, an evaluation was administered to capture how effective the meeting was. Students typically expressed satisfaction with their experiences in the Learning Community.





The following data represents information gathered from each of the four (4) Learning Community Meetings that took place during the 2013-2014 academic year:

Quantitative Results

Learning Community	Activities	Evaluation	Mean Score 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree Nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree
August 21, 2013 9:00am – 4:00pm DCF Professional Center New Brunswick, NJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation to MCWEP mission/purpose/structure • Success in graduate school – “Road Map to an MSW” • “Self-Care for Overall Success” • “Navigating Field Placements” 	1. The speakers demonstrated expertise on the subject matter presented.	4.64
		2. The speakers communicated in a clear and organized manner.	4.73
		3. The speakers were able to hold my interest.	4.72
		4. The methods of the presentation were effective.	4.66
		5. The content was directly related to MCWEP.	4.78
		6. Handouts supplemented presented material.	4.66
		7. I will use content from this learning community meeting in my work as a DCP&P Supervisor	4.50
		8. The content of this learning community was helpful to me as an MSW student	4.70
October 11, 2013 9:00am – 4:00pm Monmouth University West Long Branch, NJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guided discussion • Group/Student Presentations “MSW Curriculum Basics” • “The Social Construction of Difference, Cultural Competency, and Child Welfare” • “Supervisors as Leaders” Lecture and Group Presentation 	1. The speakers demonstrated expertise on the subject matter presented.	4.46
		2. The speakers communicated in a clear and organized manner.	4.53
		3. The speakers were able to hold my interest.	4.53
		4. The methods of the presentation were effective.	4.45
		5. The content was directly related to MCWEP.	4.45
		6. Handouts supplemented presented material.	4.34
		7. I will use content from this learning community meeting in my work as a DCP&P Supervisor.	4.48
		8. The content of this learning community will be helpful to me as an MSW student.	4.48

continued on the next page



Quantitative Results...continued

Learning Community	Activities	Evaluation	Mean Score 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree Nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree
March 14, 2014 9:00am – 4:00pm The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey Galloway, NJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guided Discussion – “Lessons Learned from 1st MSW semester” Student Panel Presentation “Best Practices in Field Placement” “Leadership/Personality Traits and Supervisory Best Practices” 	1. The speakers demonstrated expertise on the subject matter presented.	4.60
		2. The speakers communicated in a clear and organized manner.	4.60
		3. The speakers were able to hold my interest.	4.49
		4. The methods of the presentation were effective.	4.54
		5. The content was directly related to MCWEP.	4.57
		6. Handouts supplemented presented material.	4.63
		7. I will use content from this learning community meeting in my work as a DCP&P Supervisor.	4.66
		8. The content of this learning community will be helpful to me as an MSW student.	4.46
May 30, 2014 9:00am – 4:00pm School of Social Work Rutgers University New Brunswick, NJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guided Discussion – “Transfer of Learning from MSW to DCP&P” “Creating a Learning Culture in your Agency/Working in Changing Environments” 	1. The speakers demonstrated expertise on the subject matter presented.	4.49
		2. The speakers communicated in a clear and organized manner.	4.51
		3. The speakers were able to hold my interest.	4.31
		4. The methods of the presentation were effective	4.46
		5. The content was directly related to MCWEP.	4.54
		6. Handouts supplemented presented material.	4.49
		7. I will use content from this learning community meeting in my work as a DCP&P Supervisor.	4.40
		8. The content of this learning community will be helpful to me as an MSW student.	4.31

The Learning Community evaluations also included open-ended questions. These questions were:

1. In your opinion, what were the strengths of this Learning Community?
2. What suggestions would you offer to improve this Learning Community
3. What will you do differently in your practice/employment as a result of this Learning Community?



Students overall indicated that they were pleased with the Learning Community meetings. They listed several strengths:

- Students felt as though they enjoyed the support of fellow MCWEP colleagues during the Learning Communities. A sense of camaraderie has been fostered among the cohort and students indicated that this aspect of the program appears to be very instrumental in reducing stress and maintaining motivation.
- Students from the second MCWEP cohort overwhelmingly appreciated the support and advice garnered from the first MCWEP cohort. They indicated that combining the two cohorts for at least a portion of the learning community fostered a sense of hope and encouragement that was motivating and uplifting.
- Students indicated that they enjoyed the subject matter of the Learning Communities and the guest speakers that came throughout the year.

The students also thoughtfully listed suggestions for improvements:

- Students indicated that they would like more information on self-care/work/life balance and how to incorporate this into DCP&P.
- Students would like information and suggestions for navigating DCP&P procedures and gaining support in their local offices for their educational pursuits.
- Students also suggested that they would like to see more topics that inform Social Work practice in general as a supplement to their MSW educational material. Examples include information on clinical interventions and policy formulation and adoption.

The following tables report the themes identified in a content analysis of the open-ended questions and the frequency with which the themes were mentioned. Following the table are examples of the students comments in their own words.

Strengths Identified by MCWEP Students (cohorts 1 & 2 combined)

Strengths	Frequency Mentioned
Support/Camaraderie from fellow colleagues	33
Professor/Guest Lecturer/Student Presentations	20
Timely and Relevant Topics	18

Support/Camaraderie from fellow colleagues

- Being encouraged by hearing that others are going through the same things that I am
- Bringing out our experiences made me understand that my struggles are shared across the board.
- Checking in with everyone feels so supportive-love hearing everyone's progress.
- The supportive networks just continue...I find this so helpful.
- Getting to share our happy and sad moments. Re-assuring that we are in it as a group and will make it!
- There are too many strengths to count but I will try: Community, support, team of professionals, time for self-reflections!

Professor/Guest Lecturer Presentations

- Informative educators!
- Professor exudes confidence and enthusiasm, which is infectious.
- The panel was excellent! I took away a lot of advice and information on how to be more effective with my studying.



Timely and Relevant Topics

- The articles and presentations about supervisory behaviors will really raise retention and morale
- The topic was excellent and can be immediately implemented
- Great topics! Very relevant and interesting
- The strengths are the lectures that related to job functions and how we can transfer information to our staff.

More Suggestions for work/life balance and self-care

- I would like to know how DCP&P will promote self-care through actual activities rolled out by them.
- More tips for processing workload
- I think one of the learning communities should be just about relieving stress
- Information on self-care and mindfulness can be increased and continuous.

Suggestions for Improvement Identified by MCWEP Students

Suggestions for Improvement	Frequency Mentioned
More suggestions for work/life balance and self-care	9
More support from local offices	8
Further information on Social Work practice in general, i.e. clinical interventions, policy formulation	7

More support from local offices

- It would be nice to have a representative of DCP&P at some of our Learning communities for Q&A.
- More recognition from administration about our problem we are facing in our local units.
- I would like suggestions on how we can improve support at the local office level.
- Feedback from administrators on our suggestions

Further information on general Social Work practice, i.e. clinical interventions, policy formulation

- I would like to learn more about clinical skills and how they are used in public child welfare
- More discussion about trauma involving workers/supervisors
- I would really like to hear more about CBT and other clinical interventions



Practice Changes as a Result of Learning Communities Identified by MCWEP Students

Practice Changes	Frequency of Responses
Reflection on own practice	13
Translation of coursework to role at DCP&P	18

Reflection on Own Practice

- I will be making sure to address my own assumptions about employees and families
- I will be trying to approach change differently. From a more open mind.
- One must take it slower, take time to breathe before reacting.
- I need to make sure to reach out to other MCWEP students for support.
- I will be thinking more deliberately about leadership and how I translate these skills.
- I will be more aware of the decision-making process and how I engage it with employees and clients.

Translation of Coursework to Role at DCP&P

- I will be incorporating textbook knowledge and use it with everyday experiences and practices
- I will continue to utilize the knowledge gained and implement it in my day to day practice.
- I will continue to implement all that I learn and apply it at work.
- Focus on developing workers through a multi-lens approach in order to help them to grow and develop.
- I will be using the information from the learning community to try to change the work climate in my office.

Overall Program Assessment

To elicit information about current students' perceptions of the MCWEP program as a whole – MSW programs' curriculum, MCWEP elective courses, field placement experiences, and the Learning Community meetings, students were asked to respond to several open-ended questions, as follows:

1. What are the strengths of MCWEP?
2. How well do you think MCWEP is preparing you to be a more impactful supervisor at DCP&P (consider your MSW coursework, The Learning Community Meetings, and the MCWEP electives, if taken [Trauma in Child Welfare, and Child Welfare Leadership & Supervision] all as a part of MCWEP)?
3. Is there anything about MCWEP that you think should be changed? If so, what and why?
4. Do you feel you are being prepared to play a role in the transformation of New Jersey's public child welfare system? If so, in what ways? If not, why not?
5. Is there anything else you would like to share with us about MCWEP?



In reviewing students' responses to the open-ended questions, it is clear that the program strengths more than balance the challenges.

Most frequently mentioned were:

- Students perceived the program as being very supportive, especially the support of their MCWEP colleagues, the MCWEP staff, and the DCF upper level administration's belief and consistent support in their abilities.
- Students were very grateful for the educational information and skill attainment they are gaining through MCWEP and hope to transfer that knowledge to their local offices.
- Students appear to perceive the Learning Community in particular as a strong asset of MCWEP. They mention they gain a lot of confidence, information, support, and camaraderie through the Learning Community quarterly meetings.
- Students also indicated that the MCWEP structure was a strength in itself. Students indicated that the way MCWEP was designed took into consideration their work responsibilities. They also indicated that being able to use educational leave was very helpful. In addition, the field placement options (in particular, the block placement offered at Stockton College) was very helpful in their attainment of their MSWs.
- Students indicated that MCWEP is preparing them to be more impactful supervisors through the knowledge that they are obtaining through their core courses, the specialized information in the MCWEP electives, the information relayed in the Learning Communities, and through their field placements in agencies outside of their normal work environments.
- Students also mentioned how they are already sharing the information they are learning with their workers in their local offices and also with the families they work with, either directly or indirectly. They discussed envisioning the transformation goal for New Jersey's public child welfare system and were eager to be a part of that.

Despite their overall enthusiasm for the program, students identified several areas where the program could be strengthened:

- Students really discussed the difficulty they were having from local office managers and other local area administrators not supporting their MCWEP involvement despite the endorsement and support of the commissioner.
- Students also discussed the need to have the MCWEP elective courses structured differently as the quick pace of the summer course felt stressful to students and precluded them from retaining some of the material.
- Finally, students identified a need for less work assigned by MCWEP and the Learning Community citing the large volume of work they are already responsible for from their MSW programs as well as from their offices.

Students were candid in their responses to the questionnaires administered at the conclusion of their first year in MCWEP. Their voices will receive full consideration as MCWEP moves ahead to another year of operation and develops a plan for strengthening its components.

Out of 38 possible participants, 36 students responded to the assessment. The following tables describe themes discovered through the open-ended answers to the questions and then specific examples of students' responses are detailed.



Support Received

- The major strength is the collaborative, supportive atmosphere that is created. The level of support that I have as compared to students going through the MSW program alone is an asset to my success.
- One of the greatest strengths of the MCWEP program is the continuous support the participants have received throughout the program. No matter how big or small the issue, or what time of day or night, someone is always available to help or answer a question. Coming together with other supervisors and casework supervisors also tremendously helped in building a sense of community as we support each other with struggles in the office and share our successes.
- MCWEP continues to be supportive to the participants (students). The support includes a supportive staff and professors; learning community quarterly meetings with relevant assignments and overall encouragement toward the participants success.
- The strength of MCWEP is the support that it provides to the participants. The program is well run and the leadership seems to have total control of the program.
- It is a great support network. It is nice to have someone going through the same experience.
- In addition to a level of support with regards to the MSW program, this professional network also has positive outcomes for my work at DCP&P, as I can reach out to fellow colleagues in different areas to ask for help or to collaborate.





Strengths Identified by Students

Strengths	Frequency Mentioned
Received support – students, staff, administrators	17
MCWEP Structure	10
Information/education/skills/knowledge	8
Learning Community	5

MCWEP Structure

- MCWEP allows you to obtain a Master’s degree as a full time employee without the stress of finding the time within your work schedule.
- Empowerment through; education, field placement, and quarterly learning communities.
- The primary strength of MCWEP is that it offers DCPD supervisors and case work supervisors the opportunity to have paid educational leave to obtain their MSW. Without the paid educational leave I would not have enough time to be away from the office to complete the required field work to obtain the MSW degree. The educational leave that is paid to leave early or have a day off to attend class, depending on what school one attends is also a huge benefit.
- Free educational opportunity to enhance and improve in the career of Child Welfare
- Improving one’s knowledge of child welfare to help improve the Child Welfare Needs of families and children.

Information/education/skills/knowledge

- It’s a great learning experience. The program allows for growth and provides an excellent learning experience.
- The strengths of MCWEP are that the program continuously provides knowledge about the child welfare system. As leadership in the local office, it allows us the opportunity of sharing this information with our teams from a learning perspective to help enhance our case practice within the organization. This information is shared via emails, handouts and trainings. It is about having the ability to implement and strategize new ideas in working with our children, families and within the organization and community.
- MCWEP not only teaches you how to become a more effective social worker, it helps you with time management as well as keeping up with job responsibilities in a more responsible way.
- The courses are relevant to our day to day operations within the DCPD local offices. Professors are able to incorporate and provide descriptions of the relevance to DCPD work when it comes to the content of the courses.
- The primary strength of the MCWEP program is the program is related to our work. We are able to apply what we learn in the classroom to our work at DCPD. The program has allowed me to look at the work I do from a different perspective, as well as recognize and understand the change our agency is going through and feel as though I am and can be a significant part of that change.



The Learning Community

- I love the learning community and all the support we provide each other.
- The Learning Community is extremely supportive and provides the strength and enthusiasm needed to keep us moving forward. MCWEP is a positive educational step for those seeking to enhance their knowledge and skills in the Child Welfare System.
- A supportive learning community is the key to the success of the students.
- The one that stands out most to me is the support group that is created by participating in the quarterly meetings.
- The strength of the learning communities is great. The support and peer consultation found in these communities are excellent. It is wonderful to be part of a cohort and sharing in the learning experience, learning both in the classroom and with my colleagues has been a strength.

The Learning Community Meetings

- The MSW coursework is reinforced in the learning communities. Hearing about how others are impacting change gives me ideas as to how I can impact change.
- The learning community meetings are great because they give us MCWEP students the opportunity to compare notes, discuss the nuances in our different offices and counties and get and give feedback on challenges and strengths that we all experience.
- The Learning Communities seem to enhance our practices especially during activities and demonstrations.
- The learning communities are thought provoking and do seem to have some level of impact on the day to day operation in the office.
- The learning communities are great to catch up with one another. I truly enjoy discussing and the “catching up” part. Again, re-connecting with everyone and seeing everyone going through what you are is motivating.

Themes Identified by MCWEP Students

How is MCWEP Preparing You to be a More Impactful Supervisor?	Frequency Mentioned
The Learning Community Meetings	11
The Trauma and Leadership Elective Courses	8
MSW and Field Placement Experiences	7



The Trauma and Leadership Elective Courses

- MCWEP has certainly prepared me to be a more impactful supervisor. I think every DCP&P employee should receive some form of the trauma course, whether it's in pre-service training or a special certificate type program. It is so important to be educated about trauma and the symptoms and the impact trauma has on our children, schools, resource parents, etc. Also- pretty much equally as important is the impact of secondary traumatic stress. Both of these elements have been incorporated into my practice.
- I am currently taking the leadership in child welfare elective, this course is definitely impactful in my role as a supervisor. I wish all of the leadership in my office could benefit from this course. The Trauma in Child Welfare was a great course as well, it enabled me to look at my families from a different perspective and allowed for the opportunity to provide better direction and guidance to staff in planning and provision of services
- Both courses are relevant to what we do on a daily basis. The material in the leadership class gives us more strategies to use in supervising our units. It helps us encourage growth with our workers. The Trauma class gives us the tools to help us assess for trauma and provide appropriate treatment.
- I am amazed at the change I've seen in my supervision. I really try to incorporate the classes here at work. I ask about trauma the parents went through. I change up my supervision style to meet the needs of my workers.
- The Trauma class readings are an important and much needed course for DCP&P. I have copied chapters of my books and provided it to my staff. The Division is now providing trainings to staff on Trauma, the information should be required for all staff in DCP&P and all professionals in child welfare.
- Both the trauma in child welfare and the leadership course have been very educational and informative. The leadership course has provided me skills which I could incorporate in my everyday supervision.

Overall MCWEP Program Effects

- MCWEP is preparing me to be a more impactful supervisor with DCP&P. I am being prepared to look through a different lens and identify issues earlier than before that can be better addressed when a child and family has an open case with the DCP&P.
- The MCWEP program has taught me that to effect change you have to start with the roots. The knowledge I have gain while in the program will make a lasting impact on those I supervise because my intent is to pass on the knowledge I have been given.
- I am better able to see the cases I am reviewing in a different light. I can incorporate theories and apply them to what I am reading and seeing and I have gained a different perspective in the root problems, and solutions. I feel I am better able to guide my workers in a direction that is more beneficial to the client and achieve better outcomes by having a stronger social work foundation.
- The entire program has prepared me to be a better Supervisor. I believe that I have the passion but I needed the guidance and education. I find myself using the language from class, books and learning community.
- MCWEP is definitely preparing me to make a positive impact at DCP&P. Through courses being offered and attending field I have gained valuable knowledge and have the insight to look at cases differently to better help not only staff but the children and families we serve.
- This is my first year attending the MCWEP program. As a supervisor, MCWEP has broadened my knowledge and way of thinking during staff engagements. I incorporate literature, handouts and mention evidenced based information during conferences that I notice promotes more meaningful discussions. Trauma in Child Welfare has truly impacted and adjusted my way of approaching conferences with my team.



Themes Identified by MCWEP Students

Is there anything about MCWEP you Would Like to Change?	Frequency Mentioned
More Local Office Support for MCWEP	10
MCWEP Electives	9
Suggestions for Learning Community	4

More Local Office Support for MCWEP

- MCWEP participation should be supported at the workplace; it often feels that participation is punishing. Leaders tell us that our supervisors need to be supportive; don't tell us - tell the managers and supervisors
- MCWEP should include the DCP&P leadership more often. The state is spending a lot of money to educate us and they should see some return on the investment.
- I think the overall consensus for field experiences were great, however there were some hang-ups along the way as it pertained to added stress from the Local Offices missing some of their supervisory staff. Some offices were able to work things out but still complained and made some students feel like quitting the program. I am not sure what can be done about that other than trying to get the Local Offices on board with the vision and mission of MCWEP.
- All LOM's & supervisors of MCWEP students should be made to sign a statement of agreement that students will be fully supported & hear 'NO' negativity from other agency personnel because they are a MCWEP student. If it occurs it should be reported directly to Allison Blake. This continues to be a problem.

MCWEP Electives

- Like stated above, the MCWEP courses should be structured differently. There is an intense amount of work to complete for Trauma on its own. To really grasp and process the information it would be great to figure out a way to be offered on its own, or for some students just paced differently.
- I think that the summer Trauma in Child Welfare and the Social Policy course I took in the summer should be offered during the regular semester as they were very intense and overwhelming.
- I would change having MCWEP student complete two electives through the summer. Both were extremely overwhelming. There was a large amount of information received with many assignments and tests, but it was unclear if I was able to retain the wealth of information received in both classes in such a short period.

Suggestions for Learning Community

- The learning communities should be more activity based throughout the day. It should also be geared towards applying course work to work at DCP.
- The only thing about MCWEP that I would change are the assignments that are sometimes assigned before the learning communities. Being in school, in the field and being expected to do our full time jobs at the office only being there 4 days a week it is extremely stressful in itself. When preparation is needed ahead of time for the learning communities it puts more stress on our plates.
- I think the additional assignments for MCWEP (the ones completed outside of the learning community) can be a little overwhelming. The learning community days are great and everyone participates well so I do not think it is necessary to have additional work.



All students responding to this questions answered “yes” they did feel they were being prepared to play a role in transforming New Jersey’s Public Child Welfare System. The reasons why and descriptions as to how they were being prepared differed. A sample of their responses are given below:

Themes Identified by MCWEP Students

Do You Feel You Are Being Prepared to Play a Role in the Transformation of New Jersey’s Public Child Welfare System?	Frequency Mentioned
YES	36
NO	0

- I absolutely believe that I can play a crucial role in the transformation of our agency. By implementing clinical supervision and passing on knowledge obtained in my MSW classes, I have been able to guide my workers to a more gentle and family focused way of “doing business.” I feel that I have grown tremendously as a result of the MCWEP program not only as a supervisor, but as a person overall. The program has renewed my passion for social work and given me the skills I needed to lead a unit and empower my workers to effect change.
- I do feel like I am playing a role however I don’t believe that my office appreciates that about what I am doing and sometimes the pushback is disheartening. I feel like I am responsible to share my learning experience with those I supervise, so not only am I getting better at what I do but they are.
- I strongly feel I am being prepared to play a role in the transformation of New Jersey’s public welfare system. I can now recognize certain concerns sooner than before such as possible trauma in children, etc. I am more aware of Children’s Rights and understand the NASW ethical principles that are important to abide. I believe that I can provide information to higher levels of management on what is needed to continue to move New Jersey’s Child Welfare System in the right direction.
- Yes, I am a transformer already. I find myself correcting people in a strength based approach when talking about families. I believe that we are the role models for our workers and must be open to change so the workers can move forward and use that same approach with their families.
- I feel that I am being prepared to play a role in the transformation of New Jersey’s public child welfare system. I think that what we are learning in class is reinforced by MCWEP and the learning communities, so it encourages us to constantly think about how what we are learning will help us be part of the continued transformation currently and in the future.
- I am moving in the right direction. Yet, I am aware that it will take more than I to move the transformation in New Jersey’s public child welfare system. MCWEP strength is the number of “committed survivors” and the program design by cohorts and is viewed as excellent way to start the transformation.
- Yes, I feel that I am being prepared to play an active role in the transformation on the child welfare system. This program has provided me with the confidence to take the next steps within the organization. I feel that my years of experience in conjunction with the educational components from MCWEP is an added bonus.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROGRAM ENHANCEMENTS IN THE 2014-2015 ACADEMIC YEAR

MCWEP has many strengths which will continue to form the foundation of the program in the future. The program has been successful in providing an avenue for transfer of knowledge from social work programs to the DCP&P workforce for these supervisors. The structure of the program allows students flexibility to be able to concentrate on school while still being able to have consideration of their work responsibilities. MCWEP also reinforces the need for impactful supervision through specialized electives and consistent connection between core social work courses and the future vision of DCP&P. The implementation of the Learning Community component encourages students to gain confidence as social work professionals, exposes them to new research and literature in Child Welfare, and provides support and camaraderie among their fellow peers. Finally, the program consistently encourages students to engage actively in the transformation goals for New Jersey's public child welfare system.

To address the most central challenges that MCWEP faces, the following recommendations are put forth based on student feedback and MCWEP staff deliberation:

- The students indicated that in their evaluations that they felt very supported by upper level administrators from DCP&P. However, they indicated that on the local level, several administrators and managers were not supportive of their involvement in MCWEP. The evaluations showed that students would like to see more involvement from DCP&P area and local managers and directors, particularly from those who have staff involved in MCWEP. They would like for these individuals to be exposed to the mission and goals of MCWEP in a forum where the managers and directors would be able to ask questions and gain full understanding of the program. The students would also like to see support from DCP&P local and area managers and directors as they continue to move through the program particularly with the field component of the program. After further discussion it is being suggested that information sessions occur for local and area DCP&P managers and directors to be held by MCWEP staff in order to provide further information and answer questions about MCWEP. It is also suggested that local and area managers be invited to participate in portions of the Learning Community meetings to gain a better understanding of the students' involvement and overall vision of MCWEP.
- The students completing the program evaluation indicated that they gained helpful and important information in the two electives offered by MCWEP (*Trauma Informed Child Welfare Practice* and *Leadership and Supervision in Child Welfare*). In the past, students did report that the large amount of important information they received would be better absorbed in a course formatted longer than six weeks. Therefore, MCWEP professors extended the length of the class to 10 weeks. In this year's evaluation, students still indicated difficulty absorbing the large amount of important material. The students indicated this year that the problem seemed to be due to taking the courses in combination with other MSW program courses. MCWEP staff have connected with the various MSW programs to help future students schedule the MCWEP electives at a time when they would not be enrolled in additional courses.

Since its inception 2 years ago, MCWEP has accomplished a great deal, including the graduation of three DCP&P supervisors with their MSW degrees. Among MCWEP's greatest strengths however is the persistent partnership between New Jersey's public child welfare system and the academic community, with the consistent support from professional organizations like NASW. As the recommendations for enhancement are implemented, MCWEP will carry on its improvement and enhance its goals. Bringing DCP&P supervisors back to school to pursue social work education continues to fan the flame of passion for child welfare among this great workforce. MCWEP hopes to maintain this important partnership with DCF as we all work toward improving and enhancing the lives of New Jersey's children and families.



MCWEP

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EDUCATION PROGRAM**

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