



Umbrella Summary

Training and Experience Evaluations

A Summary of Workforce Research Evidence Relevant to the Child Welfare Field

What are training and experience evaluations?

Training and experience (T&E) include previous work and volunteer experience, education or other training, and credentials (Schneider, 1994). Evaluations of T&E are often included in employee selection procedures to screen and rate applicants based on information provided on resumes, applications, or other documents. These evaluations attempt to identify future successful employees by examining and applying systematic, judgment-based ratings to this information (McDaniel, Schmidt, & Hunter, 1988). The idea behind T&E evaluations is that past behavior is a good predictor of future behavior, and people with experience are more committed and motivated to perform well (Arvey, McGowen, & Horgan, 1981 and Porter, Levine, & Flory, 1976, as cited in Schneider, 1994).

Why are training and experience evaluations valuable?

T&E evaluations are valuable for several reasons. Generally speaking, education (defined as the level of academic credentials or degrees) is positively associated with job performance (Ng & Feldman, 2009), as is work experience, especially when defined as the amount of actual task experience, versus the amount of time in a job (Quiñones, Ford, & Teachout, 1995). T&E evaluations, which include different means of assessing training, education, and experience, can be positively associated with subsequent job performance (McDaniel et al., 1988). T&E evaluations are maximally effective when they are developed on the basis of a job analysis and when there is a clear link between the measures and the job behaviors that are most important for success (Schneider, 1994). Further details about the relative value of different types of T&E evaluations are provided in the next section.

How are training and experience typically measured?

Common T&E methods include 1) Point; 2) Task; 3) Knowledge, Skill, and Ability (KSA); and 4) Behavioral Consistency (Ash, 1981, as cited in McDaniel et al., 1988). These methods may be used alone or to rank or group candidates.

► Point Method

- ▷ For this method applicants are assigned points based on the perceived value of particular credentials, which is usually measured by years of job-specific training or experience. Typically, there is little or no attempt to quantify past

achievements or job performance (Schneider, 1994). This method is widespread, but has little support for predicting future performance (McDaniel et al., 1988).

▶ Task Method

- ▷ This method asks applicants to self-rate their level of experience (or sometimes proficiency) with critical job tasks derived by a job analysis (Schneider, 1994). This method is slightly more predictive than the Point Method and therefore only weakly predictive of job performance (McDaniel et al., 1988).

▶ KSA Method

- ▷ The KSA Method is basically a variant of the Point Method. However, instead of focusing on years of experience, the focus is on relevant job knowledge, skills, and abilities. Additionally, the KSA Method awards points regardless of when or where KSAs are acquired (Schneider, 1994). This method is somewhat more predictive than the Point Method (McDaniel et al., 1988).

▶ Behavioral Consistency Method

- ▷ The Behavioral Consistency Method also employs critical job tasks derived through a job analysis. However, for this method, applicants are asked to describe their major achievements and are evaluated using behaviorally anchored rating scales. This emphasis on demonstrated past experience makes this method unique compared to other T&E methods (Schneider, 1994). This method takes more effort to develop and administer, but is a much stronger predictor of future job performance (McDaniel et al., 1988).

QIC-WD Takeaways

- ▶ Education (defined as the level of academic credentials or degrees) is positively associated with job performance, as is work experience, especially when defined as the amount of actual task experience, versus the amount of time in a job.
- ▶ There are multiple T&E evaluation methods. The most valuable method is the Behavioral Consistency Method, followed by the KSA Method, and then the Task Method. The Point Method, which is the most common, is not recommended.
- ▶ T&E evaluations are not intended to improve turnover, and there are no meta-analyses assessing that connection. Because they are associated with better performance, it is possible that T&E evaluations may reduce involuntary turnover caused by poor performance, but research is needed to test that question.
- ▶ More research is needed to determine the value of education, experience, and T&E evaluations specifically for child welfare professionals.
- ▶ As with all strategies used to make hiring decisions, T&E methods are considered tests and are therefore subject to certain professional and legal guidelines. Due to the technical requirements involved in developing and validating T&E methods, it is recommended that agencies consult with an expert for assistance.

References

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Suggested Citation

Stephenson, K., and Paul, M. (2020, March 4). *Umbrella summary: Training and experience evaluations*. Quality Improvement Center for Workforce Development. <https://www.qic-wd.org/umbrella/training-and-experience-evaluations>

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This Summary was developed with funding from the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau, Grant #HHS-2016- ACF-ACYF-CT-1178. The content of this publication does not necessarily reflect the view or policies of the funder, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products or organizations imply endorsement by the US Department of Health and Human Services.