

Trainee Evaluation

July 2004

This survey was created by members of the National Training Directors Council Trainee Linkage Workgroup, AUCD staff and AUCD Virtual Trainee to evaluate trainee involvement in the national network of AUCD affiliated programs. Training Directors encouraged trainees to participate in the final weeks of their traineeship. The survey was accessed through AUCD's website and 124 trainees responded in May and June of 2004.

If you would like to discuss the format of the survey or questions, contact NTDC member David Deere at deereglend@uams.edu; if you would like to discuss other aspects of this report, contact AUCD Project Specialist Crystal Clement at cclement@aucd.org.



National Training Directors Council

NTDC Trainee Linkage Workgroup

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Summary

The following survey summary was compiled from the responses of 124 people who were trainees in LEND or UCEDD programs during the 2003-2004 school year. This represents approximately 4% of the total number of LEND and UCEDD trainees in this school year. The goal of this survey, the first of its kind, was to determine the effectiveness of network linkage activities for trainees. Network linkage activities are designed to increase the awareness of trainees about the potential for cross program collaboration, knowledge of activities taking place at other LEND and UCEDD programs and to foster a sense of community among trainees nationwide. Network linkage activities include the AUCD-sponsored listserv, message board, webpage and newsletter, national meetings of LEND and UCEDD trainees and/or faculty, webcasts and cross-program collaboration opportunities¹. Additionally, trainees were asked to comment on their overall training experience, to cite favorite leadership activities during the year, and to make suggestions for future network linkage activities.

Responses indicate that a majority of trainees surveyed did not participate in network activities available. Two main barriers were cited as the reasons for not participating: (1) a lack of time, attributed to both general coursework and other training requirements, and (2) a lack of awareness of the opportunities and tools. Other reasons for lack of participation included a lack of interest, technical difficulties, and the activity being voluntary rather than a required part of the traineeship.

Of the responding trainees who took advantage of the activities, a slight majority felt they were helpful in linking the trainee to the larger network. The activities cited by survey respondents as most helpful in connecting the trainee to the larger network were (1) AUCD's webpage (36.5%) and (2) LEND Links newsletter (36.1%). The activities cited as least helpful were (1) the Trainee Listserv (9.1%) and (2) the Trainee Message Board (7.5%).

Over 80 trainees provided insight as to what they felt they gained from the network and trainee experience; a majority of the responses fell into the following three categories: (1) gained new interdisciplinary skills (2) increased disabilities knowledge (3) enhanced research and clinical skills. When citing the activities that contributed to trainees' concept of leadership for people with disabilities, designated leadership activities and interdisciplinary teaming activities were the two areas most often cited.

In addition, nearly half of survey respondents provided suggestions on how to link trainees across the network. Suggestions included better advertisement of opportunities and tools available, greater electronic communication, and a stronger effort on behalf of program faculty to encourage or require participation in linkage activities.

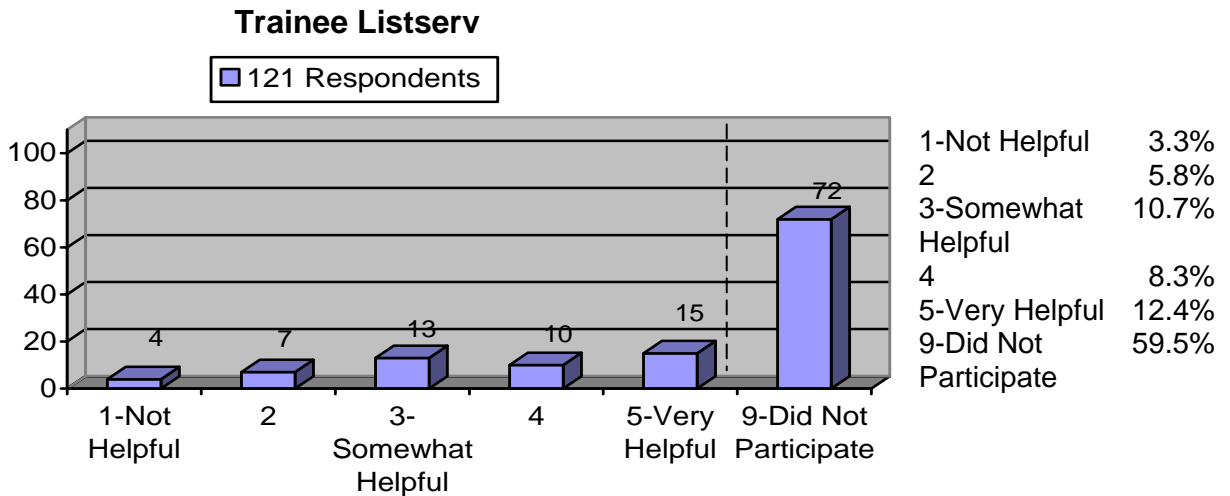
From responses in this survey, we are able to determine areas of improvement necessary to increase communication and training opportunities not only among trainees but also among network groups and trainees. The results of this survey may be of interest to many areas in the AUCD network and are being shared with members of multiple councils as well as the AUCD Board of Directors.

¹Trainees were also surveyed on their participation in regional meetings, site visits and use of non-AUCD training related message boards. Due to an extremely low response rate, these results were not included in this document. To obtain information on these items, please contact Crystal Clement at clement@aucd.org.

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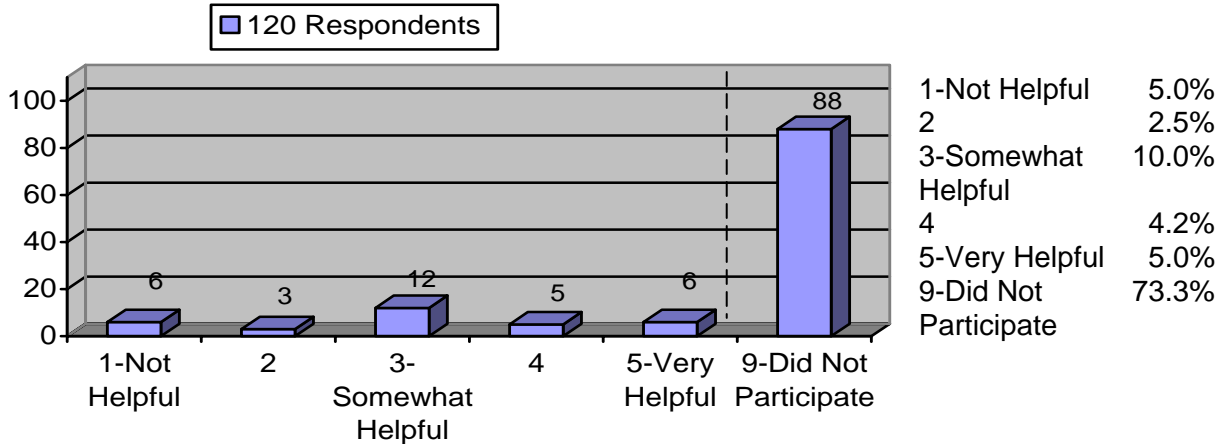
- #1 – Page 1: Trainee Listserv**
- #2 – Page 2: Message Board**
- #3 – Page 3: AUCD Webpage**
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- #6 – Page 5: Webcast, Teleconference or Class**
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Please rate the following activity for its value in connecting you to the larger AUCD network:



Please rate the following activity for its value in connecting you to the larger AUCD network:

Message Board



If you didn't participate, what kept you from participating?

DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT IT (x27)

- I wasn't aware that there was one. (x26)
- Forgot about the available services mentioned.

TIME (x19)

- I don't have time in my busy school schedule. (x18)
- I recently joined and haven't had the chance to participate

NOT INTERESTED (x11)

- Lack of time, interest, and need. (x8)
- Didn't see the benefit. (x2)
- The issues were interesting to read about, but my focus was much different from many of the discussion topics.
- Never used message board because didn't feel I had anything to add.

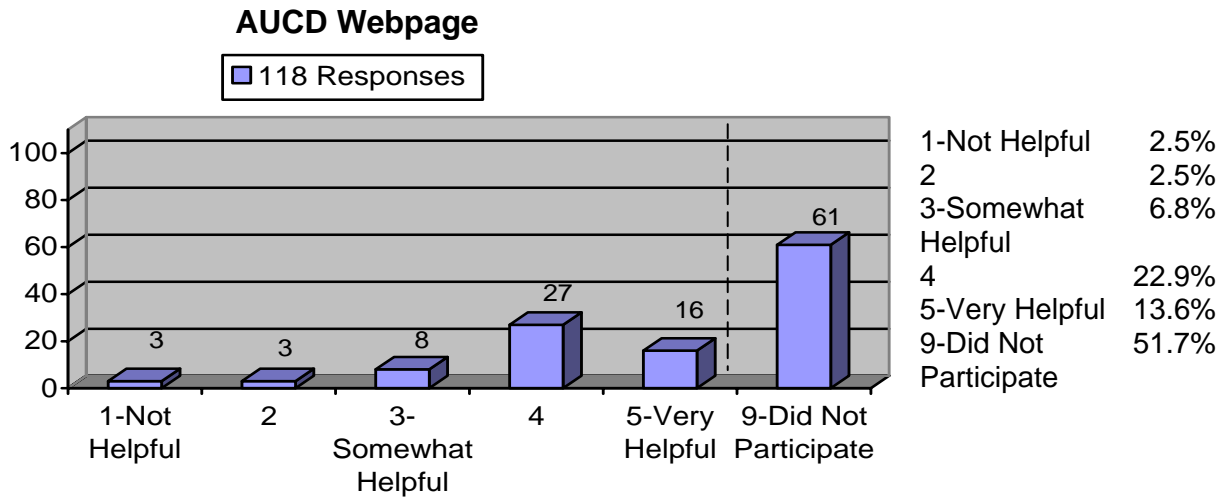
TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES (x5)

- I had a difficult time logging in or finding it. (x3)
- I'm not usually one to use listservs and message boards.
- Didn't figure out how to access until end of semester.

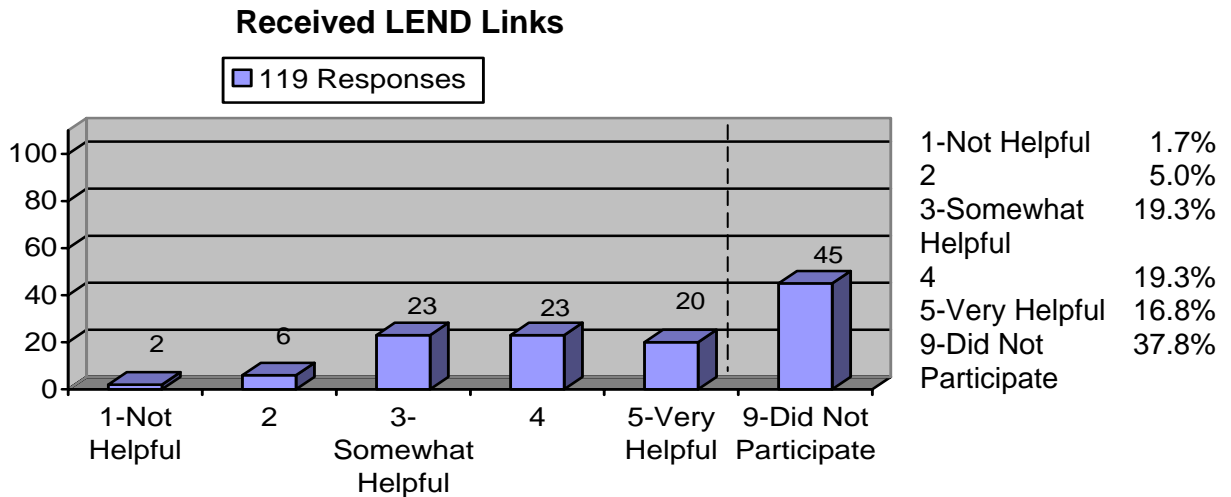
NOT REQUIRED (x 4)

- Did not need to. (x2)
- It was not part of our orientation or promoted.
- Not needed (dental trainee).

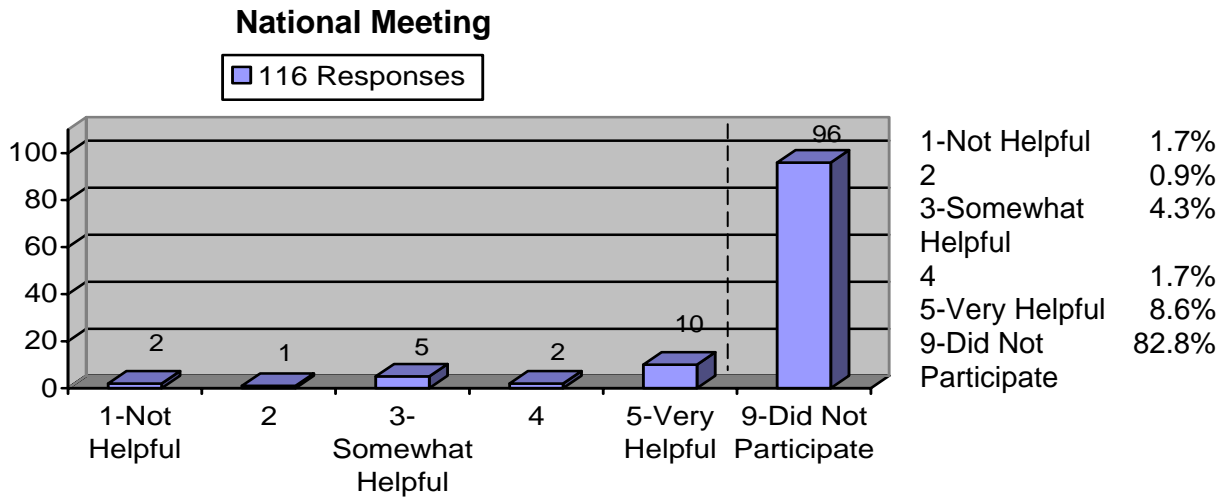
Please rate the following activity for its value in connecting you to the larger AUCD network:



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Please rate the following activity for its value in connecting you to the larger AUCD network:



Please indicate which meeting(s)

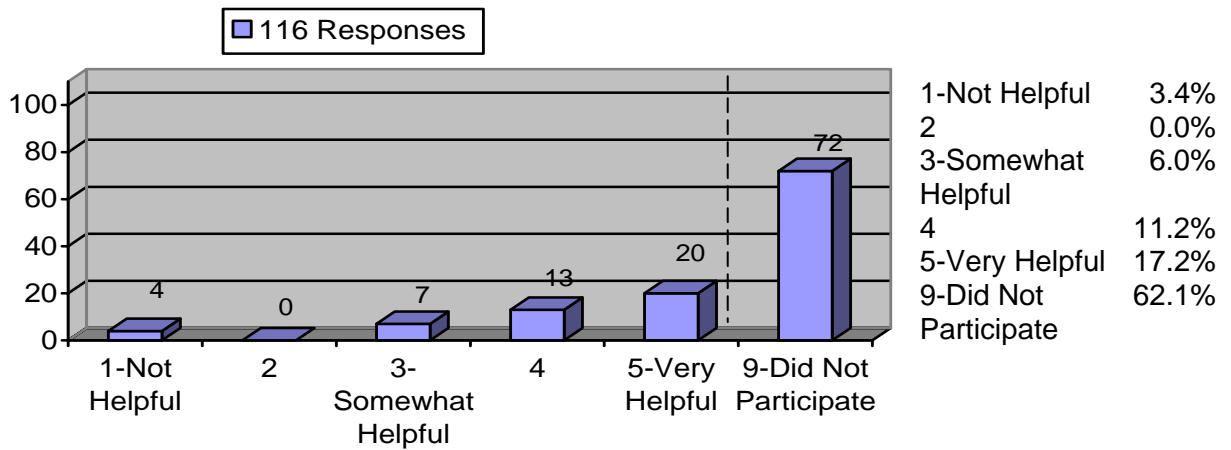
- Governmental Affairs Conference, March 2003 (x8)
 - The GA Seminar solidified the reasoning behind my dream, which is my LEND leadership project as well.
- U of Washington MCH Leadership Seminar (x3)
- AUCD Conference (x2)
- Health Administration in D.C. (x1)

(WHY NOT)

- I did visit these websites when our LEND coordinator e-mailed us with the link.
- Time commitment, not in our curriculum. (x 4)

Please rate the following activity for its value in connecting you to the larger AUCD network:

Webcast, Teleconference or Class

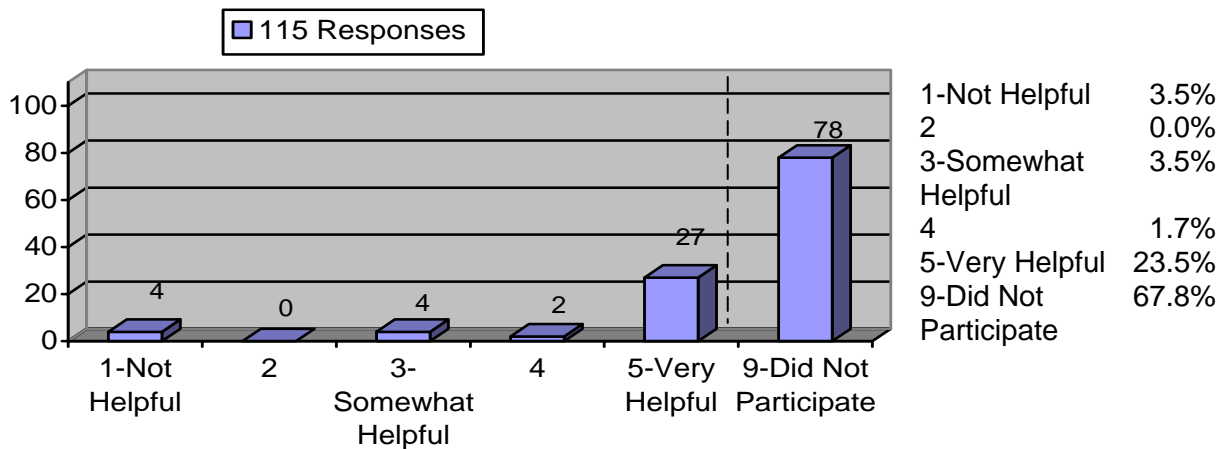


Please indicate which meeting(s)

- Webcast: Dr. Lewis Leavitt's Children and Violence (x4)
- With VT, Rochester NY and NH (x2)
- Webcast with 2 programs our research
- The one in Kansas City, KS
- Health Disparities in Fall
- Cultural Competence
- The one in March
- FAMP 540- University of SD
- LEND leadership seminars from Vermillion
- Neurodevelopmental disabilities: definition and assessment 9/26/03; Childhood obesity 4/23/04
- All LEND Links classes
- Dr. Shultz's
- LEND classes
- SFL
- Dr. Blasco's teleconference on cerebral palsy
- Regional teleconference
- Teleconference on disruptive behavior disorders

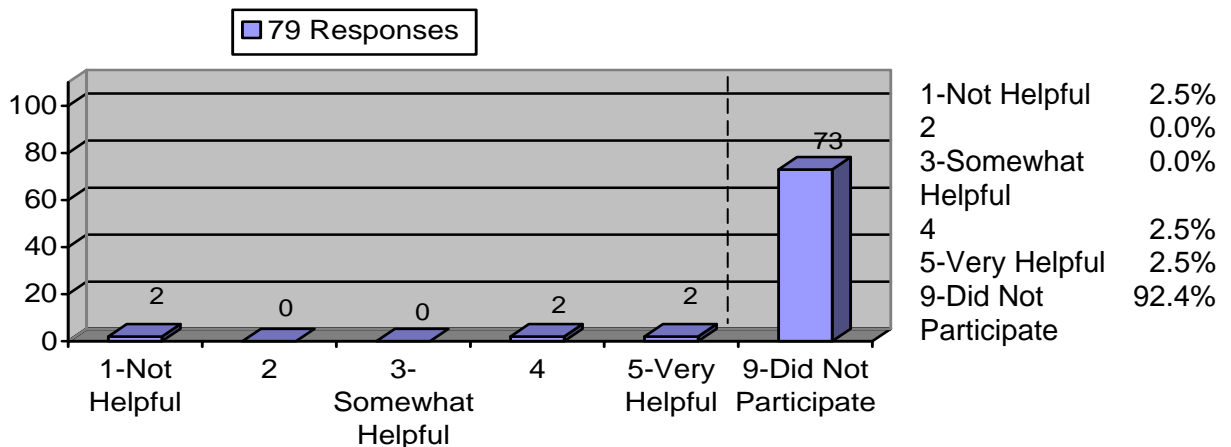
Please rate the following activity for its value in connecting you to the larger AUCD network:

Collaborated on a project or study with a trainee or faculty member from another program



Please rate the following activity for its value in connecting you to the larger AUCD network:

Other



Please describe:

- Clinics
- LEND Blackboard Topical Discussions
- Noon Conference at MCCD
- HFMA website
- Conference announcements
- Psychology listservs
- Visit to another LEND program for a day
- Tawara Goode, from Georgetown, gave excellent lecture to KKI staff and trainees on cultural competence.

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#10 – Page 6: What experiences did you have this year that added to your concept of leadership, and being a leader in your profession for persons with disabilities and/or special health care needs and their families?

#11 – Page 11: What are your suggestions for improving the linkage of trainees across the entire network next year? (Please include ideas for new activities, as well as ways to improve current activities.)

Considering all the activities together, what did you gain from the experiences?

(81 responses)

INTERDISCIPLINARY SKILLS (x24)

- Chance to work with other disciplines. (x3)
- Greater knowledge of other disciplines. (x2)
- A deeper appreciation for other disciplines.
- A knowledge of other disciplines and an increased hands-on knowledge of my own.
- Learned to understand and appreciate other disciplines' focus/concerns regarding children with disabilities
- Valuable information regarding other disciplines. Very helpful team collaboration occurred both in LEND classes and in clinic.
- I learned more about collaborating with other professionals and viewing patients from their point of view.
- I really enjoyed learning about the other disciplines and what they look for when they are accessing a client. It gave me a better understanding of the overall treatment plan for a client, plus I learned a lot about what other disciplines can do.
- The wealth of knowledge from other disciplines is always helpful, but more from a chatting verses a really professional perspective. People give their 2 cents on patients and it is helpful.
- I gained a firm knowledge of interdisciplinary teams through participating in Interdisciplinary Clinics and Leadership Seminars.
- A well-rounded experience with many disciplines and the variety of treatment, children, etc.
- I've gained a great perspective on issues of diagnosis from a multidisciplinary view.
- The interdisciplinary part was most enlightening; looking at disabilities as "natural" was a new concept to me.
- How important it is to work as a team and to be able to pass resources into our clients.
- I have enjoyed the multi-disciplinary approach most of all. I really gained a lot of knowledge from other disciplines as well as valuable knowledge in my own.
- I loved the LEND program, but I did not know about any of this stuff. I loved the interdisc. teams. That is an amazing experience...
- The collaboration with other professionals from a wide range of disciplines. The interaction with the kids and their families.
- I felt the program was excellent. I gained a better understanding for other disciplines as well as an incredible gain in knowledge of the issues surrounding disabilities. Because of this program, I have changed my concentration in Social Work to include issues concerning children who are affected by disabilities.

- The variety of topics covered; the usefulness in everyday living and professional job that was covered under every topic; working with a new group of professionals that were not in my discipline; a new motivation to enhance the multi-disciplinary approach and be able to share and provide more in depth information in my profession.
- I gained a lot of knowledge from the entire LEND experience. I learned so much about many different disciplines that I did not know before. I learned a lot about working on multidisciplinary teams and how together the different disciplines can function to do the best for individuals and families.
- A great foundation in interdisciplinary clinical practice, practice writing grants, knowledge about diagnosis of autism and other developmental disabilities.

DISABILITIES KNOWLEDGE (x17)

- More in depth info about caring for children with SHCN.
- More knowledge of neurodevelopmental disabilities.
- I was able to have a better understanding about people with disabilities and their families.
- I learned a great deal about the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities in rural settings. I gained insight and greater appreciation for other health care professionals. I think I will be a better clinician and advocate for my clients as a result of my learning experiences.
- I learned about the old paradigm, new paradigm, the important legislation, issues that people with disabilities deal with, transition-age challenges...it was a very enlightening experience all the way around.
- A deeper appreciation for family centered care.
- I have a better understanding of challenges associated with people with disabilities and am more familiar with emerging philosophies and practices.
- Far richer understanding of DD as well as well as the complex and varied modes of intervention, community participation and support.
- Increased my minimal knowledge of developmental disabilities to a much greater perspective.
- I gained a deeper understanding of numerous disabilities, and of the challenges families face on a daily basis. I also learned the various systems and the services that they provide to these families.
- I was exposed to the variety of services available to families with special needs children; the challenges of coordinating, accessing, or simply discovering the services available. Had I not participated in LEND I would not have learned the importance of advocating, empowering families to advocate, and the awareness of the need for continuum of care for these families in all the systems that they are involved in.
- In-depth knowledge of neurodevelopmental disabilities and the impact on family and their care, and where we can improve as health care professionals.
- I learned a lot about developmental disabilities and how individuals and their families deal with them. It was also interesting to learn more about the different disciplines who interact with people with disabilities.
- Substantial knowledge of working with individuals with disabilities and the various programs available.
- Richer knowledge of caregiver challenges for those caring for the disabled
- How to think critically, conceptualize cases considering multiple areas affecting child development, resources for kids with disabilities.

- Increased knowledge about California-specific services for persons with disabilities, about new diagnostic and treatment-related resources, about community out-reach. Also made contact with many individuals who work in specific areas of Disability research, assessment, and intervention.

RESEARCH & CLINICAL SKILLS (x10)

- Skills in leadership, research and clinical skills.
- Very good clinical and assessment training experience.
- Invaluable knowledge to further my career in Physical Therapy.
- A good sense of what to expect in the future.
- Although I did not participate in the listserv I gained a lot from LEND at my own university. Through video conferencing I participated in classes and discussions with LEND trainees at another university program. The clinics that I participated in through LEND allowed me to develop my diagnostic skills and knowledge base when dealing with children with developmental disabilities, especially autism.
- From the training program I gained clinical experience.
- Better knowledge of clinical team work.
- I gained insight from patient contact, observing and helping the ARNP, and observing case managers/social workers interviews.
- Increased insight into my skill base and areas in need of improvement.
- I found the didactic sessions to always be informative. I learned a lot from the various presentations. However, my most rewarding experience was doing the clinics with the multidisciplinary team. Given that I'm still a graduate student, it provided me practical experience that I have not had a chance to experience very readily.

VERY LITTLE (x6)

- It's a pity that I didn't know much about this site. I didn't have chance to explore it.
- Unfortunately, I did not participate in any of the activities that connected us to trainees from different LEND programs. It was just one more thing to fit into a busy day, but I do wish I had gotten involved.
- Really nothing; I didn't seek out the AUCD network, as we were so focused on our own agenda and it was barely even mentioned. Our faculty went to the conference, but it was a very separate entity and we never heard anything about it.
- On-site experience in my LEND program was very valuable. However, with the (extreme) time constraint I am living with right now I could not reach out for the AUCD network to participate in hardly any opportunity that is listed above.
- Thank you for whatever effort was put into this project. Truthfully, though, I gained very little from the AUCD network this year. Perhaps I should have participated more but I really didn't see the value in it.
- Not much -- the most substantive benefits were the digests, which I cut, pasted, and forwarded to parents and organizers in Virginia who I thought could use them, and the AUCD conference, which showed me that unless we starve the military and homeland security monsters in the federal budget, we will never have the education and services for people with disabilities that they deserve to live full lives, let alone anything else that is essential to a functioning democracy like clean air and water, health care, or a variety of transportation and housing options.

NETWORK-WIDE KNOWLEDGE (x5)

- From receiving emails about legislative issues, I had a greater understanding of what was going on in the nation in terms of programs, funding and legislation.
- 1) A good overview of many disability issues I was previously unaware of. 2) A good idea of what UCEDDs are and the various services they can provide. 3) Good contacts within the field
- It was interesting to interact with other regions on the program, but it was not mostly trainees.
- A broader understanding of healthcare, the disciplines within it, and the regional differences across the country.
- I learned what other programs are doing around the country-which allowed me to compare our program to their program. I gained perspective into how we are all trying to be family-centered, yet we are stuck in a medical model--and this is happening not just to our clinics.

LEADERSHIP SKILLS (x5)

- I gained an understanding of myself, and how to take my qualities and utilize them in a leadership position. I also learned that there are many different ways of being a leader. Not having a set idea of what a leader is will help you to stand out in all settings. To me, true leadership is always remembering to stand up for the child and family you are working with, and get them the services they need.
- Theoretical and practical knowledge of how to become a leader in the community, even if the task seems a small one.
- Leadership skills, how to make connections with other future professionals.
- I was able to increase my leadership skills and my knowledge of disabilities.
- I learned about the qualities of a leader, cultural competency, and about grant writing. I feel better equipped to apply what I've learned in my position of leadership.

ADVOCACY SKILLS (x4)

- The opportunity to broaden my understanding in relation to policy making, legislation, and working with state and federal representatives.
- Since all the programs are different, the Boston Children's program enabled me to get a larger understanding of laws and policies directly impacting children's health care.
- The LEND program has taught me to be more of an advocate for children with special needs and their family members.
- I gained a sense of responsibility for my role in society as an advocate for children (and people in general) with disabilities.

OTHER (x10)

- Through my LEND program I was able to participate in rich experiences that I wouldn't get through my average curriculum (advocacy, cultural, grant-writing, etc.). This will truly help me with my future as a professional.
- I feel that being involved with the LEND program has benefited me tremendously, both professionally as well as personally. It was a wonderful opportunity to see all aspects of healthcare when working with children with disabilities. It has been a priceless experience, one in which I appreciate very much having had the opportunity participate.
- 1. The service I provide is a very small piece of the huge picture. 2. Parents and families are involved at levels which are unimaginable. 3. There are an enormous number of resources available through the community locally and nationally of which I was completely unaware.

- Contacts were made & I was able to gain practical field experience.
- I learned so much about interdisciplinary intervention, cultural competence and family centered care.
- I gained a great deal from my LEND experience. The forum for communication/ discussion of so many issues with so many perspectives offered was tremendous. Greater exposure to family issues and what family centered care means was very insightful.
- I gained the most benefit from the classtime interaction and my personal writing time. I enjoyed forming relationships with classmates, impressed by the collective dedication and knowledge of the class!
- A better understanding of other skills needed for my future profession such as communication and conflict resolution.
- Confidence, networking, policy understanding, collaboration
- The LEND experience was wonderful!

What experiences did you have this year that added to your concept of leadership, and being a leader in your profession for persons with disabilities and/or special health care needs and their families?

(80 responses)

MULTIPLE THINGS (x18)

- The entire class as a whole added to my leadership, as well as promoted and supported my confidence in being able to provide leadership through an increase in my knowledge. I appreciate the chance to have an opportunity at a higher level of knowledge and education that is very appropriate for my professional as well as personal life, and also for my life as a community member.
- Training experiences were superior to previous training! Seminars and high level of supervision, exposure to wide variety of cases.
- Things that I had never been involved in, such as grant writing and legislative visits that were prompted by the LEND program. I feel that these (and other things that I have never done) are part of my repertoire now when they may help persons with disabilities, and they are often helpful!
- Pretty much all our experiences. All our services are multidisciplinary - so I feel very comfortable working with PT, OT, Speech, Psychology, nutrition and social work. High Risk Infant Screening - as I have advanced in my fellowship, feel better able to be able to introduce a high risk clinic to Eastern Montana (where I will be working in a couple of months). Same in evaluation clinics - understanding especially autism, CP and Neural Tube Defects to lead some programs in Montana regarding those groups of patients. My research is on Cerebral Palsy and utilization issues - have a much better understanding about how to track and service our rural patients in Montana.
- I had many experiences that added to my concept of leadership in disability. All of my on-site LEND experiences were excellent and provided me with increased knowledge and perspective in working with clients with disabilities.
- The experiences that were most beneficial in the area of leadership were clinics, Problem Based Learning, and family observation.
- I gained a better understanding of what families who have children with disabilities experience as well as how to be a leader in interdisciplinary teams to provide those families with the care that they deserve.
- The teachings from Larry Edelman and the readings were very powerful in furthering my understanding of leadership. In working with families and "the system" as whole, it's been helpful to assess leadership practices within the circles I'm working with.
- LEND related activities: research, community project, grantsmanship, family project.
- I think all of the experiences I've had will help me be a leader. Above all, it's taking the initiative to be a leader. LEND has provided me with a good foundation in cultural competency, advocacy, community experiences, public health, and team building to become a successful leader.
- Continuing to hone presentation & analytical skills, learning more about advocacy work.
- The lectures regarding leadership as well as the opportunity to do research added to my concept of leadership.
- Core seminars, leadership seminars, working closely with my mentors.
- Working on research projects, creating the poster and completing TA project.
- Expanded my definition of leadership to include more types, had my first experience with advocating for children and families through a legislative visit, learned about administrative roles through direct contact with administrators.

- I learned to lead the evaluation, discussion and assessment of children with special health care needs in a clinic environment with many different disciplines involved. In following up those cases, I learned to be an advocate for those children.
- I think the leadership project caused me to re-evaluate ways to be a leader in my profession. Knowing more about funding and legislation will enable me to be a better advocate and take on greater roles as an advocate. I also learned from interacting with the faculty as peers in solution focused learning.
- Family mentoring project, health teaching project in the community, conducting a research project that investigated family characteristics in collaboration with other disciplines, and weekly interdisciplinary participation in clinical activities.

LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES (x10)

- I have a greater understanding of how to be an effective leader in my profession.
- Leadership class particularly teaming and consultation.
- The Leadership Seminar Series at VCU was tremendous. I was able to identify and personally reflect on the qualities that I possess that make me a strong leader. I learned to analyze situations to determine the best mode for decision making and group action. I was very impressed by the parents who shared their advocacy/leadership roles. I am more aware of my need and ability to act as a conduit and help families identify/access resources out of my area of expertise.
- Hands-on leadership training was great.
- I would have to say the Leadership Seminars contributed a lot to the concept of leadership. I came away from each seminar feeling excited about the aspect of leadership. I use the concepts now in my daily clinicals as well as my part-time job. The leadership seminars have been very helpful.
- Leadership requires a broadening of experience, a better bird's-eye view, a more thorough understanding of all aspects of care. I feel that my perspective has improved dramatically in this regard.
- The leadership seminar was extremely helpful in developing my leadership skills in this field.
- I participated in a leadership seminar which provided many introspective opportunities.
- Being forced to speak up gave me more confidence to be a leader and experience dealing with persons with disabilities made me more comfortable in that situation.
- Class assignments that focused on leadership style and our leadership skill goals; observing leadership in action in the faculty and in the community through speakers brought in and family contacts and seminars, to list a few.

INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAMING (x9)

- The interdisciplinary team work has changed how I will practice and participate in my community.
- Exposure to interdisciplinary teams.
- Within my local training program I felt connected to other trainees and I learned by working with them what type of leaderships style works best for me.
- I attended a terrific Leadership/Team Building Seminar developed by my program manager.
- The general concept that it will take the entire health care team to advocate for the client with special needs and that this responsibility should be shared with the parents or care givers.
- The VT-ILEHP Assessment Coordination process allowed me to grow as a leader within an interdisciplinary team serving children, families, and school (community) teams.

- Communication skills are indeed vital. It is important to know what other professions do and clearly understand the role of every profession.
- I gained insight into issues that will help prepare me for my next job working in a multidisciplinary environment.
- I gained a lot of confidence in my ability to be an effective leader through the team activities.

RESEARCH/PRESENTATIONS (x9)

- Presentations to other LEND trainees & families.
- The oral presentation at the noon conferences and the family visit.
- Presenting at a UCE sponsored conference
- Presenting information to others in the solution focused learning groups.
- I got to give many conferences this year.
- I had the ability to develop my own idea for a project and work on it independently. Self-directedness and the ability to work alone is a crucial skill in the marketplace.
- The program has taught me how I can write a grant proposal for the implementation of a project, such as starting a community program, a research project, etc.
- Presenting at a conference, facilitating discussions, presenting PowerPoint presentations, being group leader, meeting leaders in the community all helped to inspire and train me to be a leader.
- During the fellowship, I was required to plan weekly meetings for the OTs and PTs, helped mentor the PT interns who came in for 8 week affiliations, and gave two presentations.

ADVOCACY/LEGISLATIVE ISSUES (x7)

- An increased knowledge of the legislative process.
- Policy class
- I think learning about People First and understanding the many diverse experiences that individuals with disabilities have throughout their lives was extremely helpful. I feel I am more aware and better capable of becoming a strong advocate because of this information.
- The Advocacy Conference was wonderful. I think all LEND trainees should be encouraged to attend. It was very helpful in terms of empowering me with the info I need to be a better/more successful advocate.
- I learned that I could contact my legislators and speak up and that my voice is heard. I can also make others aware of the challenges that people with disabilities face. Many times people have good hearts and mean well, they just haven't been educated.
- My increased understanding and awareness of many of the laws, policy issues, and family concerns in the field of developmental disabilities and disabilities studies made me aware of the importance of being an advocate, instead of simply a practitioner, within my field. Many of the classes I took focused on family perspective and how to be an advocate for families. Realizing the direct impact health care professionals can have on families is a strong motivator to make change and seek out leadership roles.
- The experience that sticks out most in my mind was the trip we took to the state capital. There we talked with legislators, sat in on committee meetings, and watched sessions. This made me realize how accessible the legislature in our state really is and made me less intimidated of the entire process.

CLINICAL EXPERIENCE (x7)

- I felt that our clinic experiences were most helpful.
- The experiences that I value the most are the opportunities to witness clinical leaders through participating in interdisciplinary clinics.
- Working collaboratively on an interdisciplinary clinical team.
- The six-week clinical rotation at MCCD
- Working with individuals at the feeding and swallowing clinic.
- I loved all of the clinical experiences. I learned what true leadership was, how different settings run, and hopefully an advantage of knowing how things work in the real world when I get a job.
- Clinic work, visiting with families with children with SHCN.

FAMILY EXPERIENCE (x6)

- Parent to parent.
- Interviewing families and giving them direct feedback.
- I can be more family centered in my current job.
- Working with children of varying disabilities gave me the hands-on experience I needed to become more of a leader within my profession.
- I learned how to be more understanding for the families in what they are going through and now how to better help them when the help is needed.
- The exposure and working with families with disabled family members and their unique circumstances enhanced my knowledge of how to work, how to access them for services and what to look for, what questions to ask. I liked the family centered approach that the multi-disciplinary team took to help these families. I think that learning about the legal educational issues that families face and the power that the attorney in the LEND program offered, empowered families and made me realize that as a practitioner, I have to advocate for my clients!

MEETING ATTENDANCE (x6)

- Attending the National Conference.
- National conferences.
- The AUCD conference pointed out the need to think holistically across a wide variety of issue areas, whether or not that was the intent of the presenters.
- LACMA Disabilities and the Arts Conference was particularly helpful in terms of making connections with people already working in the field, setting up access to resources, and providing information for individuals with disabilities interested in the available programs and services.
- I have attended most conferences available to our LEND students here at OHSU and CDRC. I feel through knowledge, leaders can change viewpoints of others.
- I was able to participate in community meetings in which my discipline and specific topics related to my discipline were discussed with community members.

OTHER (x8)

- Working with project coordinators from various projects.
- I think all the classes given by the trainers added to my experience through the different aspects of services and fields.
- Most of them. The CHBoston Program really opened my eyes to many different disciplines and organizations that care for people with disabilities.

- Focus on developing understanding of developmental disabilities and education of community (psychology and lay persons) about a variety of developmental disabilities.
- Talking with leaders in the field and hearing their experiences.
- Watching the work of Truman Coggins, Susan Astley and others in their roles as team leaders... and the importance they place on validation of everyone's point of view without giving up on the guiding role of a leader.
- Listening. I think that if you listened to all that was discussed this year, participated in activities, and challenged yourself, then you are leaving as a more developed clinician and leader.
- Learning to negotiate with insurance companies to gain coverage for services needed by children with disabilities.

What are your suggestions for improving the linkage of trainees across the entire network next year? (Please include ideas for new activities, as well as ways to improve current activities.)

(57 responses)

ADVERTISE (x22)

- Raise more awareness about what the AUCD network is, what it does, how it can benefit our careers and the consumers with whom we work. What are the benefits of linking to other trainees across LEND programs? I hardly even know the trainees in my own program let alone those at other programs.
- Get the word out there! Send more info to the trainees about how and when to participate.
- I didn't really know what the listserv was all about, what the benefits of joining would be and the type of information that would be exchanged. I don't think it was ever mentioned in person to us by any of the LEND faculty. Maybe if the benefits were stated more clearly...
- For me, just better advertisement and knowledge of the LEND message board would have been enough.
- Tell us about these programs listed above.
- There is so much information given at orientation that I think I missed some of the information that would have enabled me to make better use of the list serve and web sites. It may help to go over the web site and message board at a later time.
- Encourage site visits. It would be great to see other trainees and their projects.
- Have a 15 minute formal introduction of the LEND linkage in class with demonstration on a screen.
- Maybe it would be a good idea to periodically remind trainees at the beginning or the end of ID Forum about some of these links and opportunities. It is very overwhelming at orientation and some of these opportunities may have been lost in the mix.
- I know that we received the email discussing the AUCD online program at the beginning of the year, and I know that it was our responsibility to pursue connecting to others through that website, but if we could get one or two other reminder emails of it's availability that would help.
- Please provide more information on national resources and how to access them.
- Make sure all students know how to link with trainees from other programs.
- A more comprehensive understanding of how the programs are connected and why/how the benefits of such networking can directly impact our own leadership opportunities.
- Greater knowledge among trainees of available services.
- Improve information dissemination regarding available opportunities.
- More information at the very beginning of the traineeship would be helpful.
- Increased awareness of national organization.
- Enable each UCEDD to note the relationship with AUCD as well as explore the website to become familiar with the organization.
- I did not know about any activities or links for all LEND trainees. More information to the programs/trainees on how to access this information and links.
- More knowledge of meetings where other LEND programs would be attending. A speaker for the entire region of LEND trainees where trainees could meet one another would be beneficial. This would begin to create a network for LEND trainees with a broader group.
- Better ways to inform trainees of the activities available, because I did not know about or participate in anything.

- I was not aware of many of the on line activities and resources. Perhaps encouragement of faculty and providing of information about such activities would help.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION (x14)

- A much better and more extensive website.
- Post more info on the website and encourage its use as a reference source.
- More information about the listserv and other links available for trainees.
- Fix that message board! Make it so that if a password is forgotten, it can be emailed to you. I am no stranger to bulletin boards, that format was very clunky!
- Establish the list serve as soon as the class starts. Continue with the visit to each area's LEND program building to network with the various staff. Have a more structured orientation to the program and its impact on our community.
- I think it is difficult for trainees across programs to connect because we are all doing different types of training. It might be nice to have a newsletter (online is great) where one trainee from each program provides a brief synopsis about what is going on.
- It would be nice to know what other states are doing with their LEND programs. Our class was not really privy to other programs' activities. Maybe have a LEND newsletter or some sort of website that educates everyone about each site's activities?
- Make the listserv more user-friendly, easier to find (or if it is already easy to find, more or better publicity about where it is), easier to log on to.
- Our program posted info on through a web ct program. I also have taken a class via web ct.
- The beginning orientation is helpful. However, if there are more links between trainees, such as email list or small interests groups, they will improve the linkage.
- Prioritize emails; there was almost too much information to digest!
- Perhaps this already exists, but it would be helpful to have a list of past leadership projects and contacts so resources for future projects could be shared.
- Perhaps a hard-copy/paper newsletter with the names and pictures of all trainees, so that people on the listserv and message boards feel more connected.
- I would have liked to connect with more trainees. I would suggest "profiling" trainees in some sort of data base which could be accessed by others with similar interests.

LINK US! (x15)

- Scheduled times to perform activities together via webcast or teleconference or on-site visits.
- Mandate participation in listserv/message board discussions.
- Allow them to network in person earlier. March was too late.
- Having shared projects as a part of each program.
- I would suggest that both UAP programs in California could somehow meet in person at least once to discuss their experience in the program.
- An assignment involving collaboration with LEND trainees from other programs. It seems that the value of such contact may not be obvious to trainees without actually experiencing it.
- It might be useful to have directors incorporate activities that link trainees into the program objectives. For example, more webcasts or teleconferences within the set activities for the program.
- It might make it more inclusive if somehow trainees were encouraged/required to communicate with other trainees across the country in some way or another.
- Conduct parallel discussions.

- Being able to share some of the experiences that each person has on different fields.
- Webcast monthly meetings. Road trip to other near by programs, University of Washington etc., weekend workshop.
- Block out time (and enforce within training programs) for this to happen.
- Streamlining some of the activities between programs.
- Maybe an exchange of trainees for a week at a time where other trainees from other sites or universities visit other sites and share their experiences and ongoing projects. Also, a posting on the web of research projects from different sites.
- Everything was wonderful. It might be nice to have more meetings with other trainees and advisors from different campuses.

OTHER (x6)

- Since the dental traineeship is so much different than the others, I did not have the need to participate in these programs.
- Better coordination of program across sights at the beginning of the year, spreading out the LEND activities throughout the calendar year rather than the 2nd half of the year is easier in intern schedules.
- Schedules need to be more flexible--maybe switching days for training sessions so more can attend.
- More hands on the job. Practical experiences, problem solving exercises.
- I would have been very interested in participating in the leadership conference that was held in Seattle in April if that had been scheduled for a weekend. Timing was crucial.
- I do not have any suggestions. Those of us in VCU's program had our hands full with their program requirements. I can't imagine any of us having the time to network with other programs.