

# What the Lawyers Say About Implementing the Six Core Skills

## **Abstract**

These comments from coaching reports and interviews reflect attorneys' experiences with the QIC model and highlight challenges and successes of the approach. Attorneys found the Six Core Skills familiar and intuitive while advancing the level of practice.

## **6.1. Introduction**

Pod meetings and coaching sessions were an essential element of the QIC research intervention. Both pods and coaching reinforced the major elements of the two-day training and helped QIC attorneys apply the Six Core Skills elements to specific cases. The first objective of the QIC field experiment was to improve legal representation of children. Empirical data reported in subsequent chapters demonstrate that this objective was achieved.

But how did the lawyers do this? What were their challenges and successes? What were the lawyer attitudes as they struggled with an approach that was new to many of them?

Although the on-going coaching of the lawyers was primarily meant to help improve their child representation, it also provides a window into their day-to-day involvement as they implemented the QIC approach. Any global, generalizable change in practice builds on the case by case efforts of these individual lawyers.

What was their experience? The coaching notes not only document that the coaching sessions occurred, but also provide anecdotal stories of lawyers trying to implement

the QIC approach. Their personal successes and challenges and the effect of their advocacy on specific cases make for instructive reading and insight into implementing the Six Core Skills Model.

## 6.2 Method

In the quarterly coaching phone calls the QIC coaches were instructed to ask open ended questions of the lawyers, get them talking about their experiences, and document their responses. “How is it going?” “What are your challenges or successes?” As part of the intervention, coaches were expected to write and keep a report for each coaching session for each attorney. Notes were to have three sections: *Report*, where the coach summarized the issues the attorney brought up for discussion; *Advice*, where the coach documented what the coach said; and *Follow up/Concerns*, where the coach noted any issues that need to be addressed between coaching sessions.

The coaches sent their reports to Chapin Hall each quarter and each quarter 10 coaching reports from each state were randomly selected for analysis. The number of coaching sessions and the frequency with which the various Six Core Skills were discussed was a way of measuring the implementation of the QIC Model.<sup>1</sup>

All coaching notes were analyzed and organized into the subtopics below. Coaches sometimes quoted the lawyer directly and sometime summarized statements in third person. The initial variation in voice and tense and the summary nature of some of the notes requires some paraphrasing of the attorney comments. Nevertheless, every effort has been made to be faithful to the views and experiences expressed by the reporting attorneys.

## 6.3 Overall Value of QIC Skills

Overall the lawyers in both states appreciated the six core skill approach. Some found the approach new, even revolutionary, with significant consequences to their approach to cases. Others thought that the QIC approach was pretty “oh hum”—believing the Six Core Skills are essentially what they have been doing right along or are just plain common sense.

A few lawyers noted, even complained, that the model required more time and effort than they were being paid for. While some found their local court and agency receptive and engaged with the QIC ideas, even changing court practices to be more focused on

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1. The numerical analysis is at **Chapin Hall Evaluation of the QIC-ChildRep Best Practices Model Training for Attorneys Representing Children in the Child Welfare System Final Evaluation Report**, Britany Orlebeke, Xiaomeng Zhou, Ada Skyles, Andrew Zinn (2016) [www.ChapinHall.org](http://www.ChapinHall.org); pp 54-66. In addition to coaches' notes this compilation includes comments made in follow-up interviews with a small sample of the lawyers in both states conducted by the University of Michigan researchers.

the child and the perspective of the child, others were met with great resistance in their local court to an approach different from “how we do things around here.”

QIC lawyers said:

- The QIC Model has really helped me to summarize exactly what it is I do when I represent kids, or what I should do, and I think all of those skills are very important.
- My partner and I worked carefully on implementation. When we open cases initially we consciously work on entering the child’s world and developing case theory. We meet with the youth differently than before and put an outline of the model on each file and use it as a checklist
- Model is quite easy to implement. The six skills seem to bleed into one another; they are all related, not distinct. Together they have helped me see the case from the youth perspective. Seeing the case from the youth perspective brings an urgency to the work.
- I love the model. I put the outline in every one of my files. I appreciate the rigor; things are too informal in my jurisdiction, this gives a structure.
- I am using the model and having it in mind at almost all meetings with youth, and often when doing other things in my practice.
- I am more intentional in early meetings with youth and trying to develop a relationship with the child. I like getting to know the youth; I feel like I am being a lawyer not just a mouthpiece.

Not everyone was a fan:

- This is nothing new. And I can’t be chasing kids around to visit them when there are no pressing issues.
- I have not used any of the model. It is not useful. I just don’t have the time, either. Doesn’t fit into the way things are done in my jurisdiction.
- Model is not that much different. I was not asked to participate and I am frustrated about the demands. I am not paid to do more.

Some found applicability beyond lawyer representation of children in dependency cases:

- I really like the model, and use it in GAL cases and juvenile justice cases too.
- The overall approach is quite relevant to representing parents too.

Lawyers remarked on the benefit of sharing experiences with other ChildRep lawyers:

- The initial two-day training fades and these pod meetings are the next best thing to keep the learning alive.
- I really appreciate contact with other ChildRep lawyers. It really helps.
- I prefer in-person meetings for a more effective method of engagement.
- It was good to have the pod meetings and then be able to go out and apply the ideas to my cases.
- The pod meetings actually helped to refine some of the skills and practice that come out of the model and the QIC training. Pods talked specifically about how to enter the world of the child and I've gotten ideas how to really do that. I find it very helpful.
- Except for "entering the child's world" I didn't find the model helpful at first. But the pod meetings and discussions with the local lawyers helped me see that the approach is really foundational and applies to our daily work."

#### **6.4 Entering the Child's World**

The QIC Six Core Skills training presented information about child development, the effect of trauma on a child, and methods of engaging the child and building trust. The training encouraged lawyers to engage with the child, learn their needs, guide them, counsel them and advocate for their needs while learning and accommodating their stated wishes as much as possible, consistent with state law.

Entering the Child's World (ECW) was generally considered the most helpful and most foundational of the Six Core Skills.

- Entering the Child's World is the most often used skill. That is what is most often in my mind when working with kids. I've been thinking more about the other skills as well and see they flow from ECW. Assessing the client's needs and advocating for those needs in court and in negotiations with other parties has worked well. I am thinking more about those skills and more consciously using them
- I am focusing most particularly on meeting with client in some kind of natural environment and as frequently as possible. Meeting in better settings and more frequently has led to deeper relationship with my clients and I am able to have better conversations.
- I am working on meeting with clients other than just before court, but time constraints make that difficult.
- ECW reminds me to step back and see the case from the child's perspective—home stability, family connections, school, familiar routine—and then fashion solutions around that.
- I am meeting with a client again after the first meeting to develop better relationship. In a recent case I learned about some needs for clothes and such. I got those for the client, which really was a big benefit to the relationship.

- I am trying to stay in the ECW place when working with youth. The temptation is to go back to what is comfortable—being more directive, as with adults. I want youth clients to open up and trust more. The message to the child is “we’re on the same team.” That is harder to accomplish with youth clients than with adults. Also other relationships have a greater affect on the youth’s relationship with his or her attorney than what happens with adult clients
- I am using cell phone, texting and email more to stay in touch with my youth clients.
- I use the model in tribal court too.
- It’s hard to get a good relationship with youth but I realize that an earlier relationship can help learn the needs of a youth, assess the situation better, and prevent running.
- (A number of attorneys discussed youth on the run.) It’s hard to develop a relationship with a youth on the run. An earlier relationship might help prevent running or at least get youth to look at the child welfare system to address their needs and concerns, rather than running to friends etc.
- Getting past the relationship with the client and then getting into case planning with difficult children is a particular challenge for me. Kids on the run are hard to develop enough relationship with to do concrete planning. Then when I do get some idea of what the client wants, the client does not follow through with plans I’ve advocated for in court. How do I do real case planning with a client who constantly runs and burns the few bridges available?
- (Several attorneys discussed the use of a “safe run” with the coach in which the youth might flee but maintain contact with someone—including the lawyer or foster parent or other trusted person.)
- I’ve been trying to schedule visits (or at least contact) with clients regularly, even when there are no hot issues to discuss. I put it on the calendar and protect the time. I find it useful to get to know the person and what their priorities, goals and wishes are. I think this approach is a time saver overall.
- I do not have time to go scheduling meetings with youth when there are no critical issues pending.
- I am trying to see kids more and find it beneficial but I don’t know how long this will be sustainable because of my court’s compensation structure.
- I used to seek information only for issues raised by the youth. But now I see the need for a broader approach, to understand the youth, inform the youth about what the issues exist and may be important. With a broader approach I am better able to advocate for needs.
- I try not to speak with children directly but to listen to other sources, particularly the CASA. I feel it confuses the child and that children do not understand the difference between attorney role and CASA. I get my best information from others who know the child well.

- After the training I see the kids differently. I used to typically see kids in court on the day of the hearing or in my office. Encouraged by the QIC Model to find more informal settings, I visited an 8 year old client at day camp. The girl very relaxed and we had a great time together. The child opened up to me and talked about her wishes and needs in a way I would not expect in the more formal settings I was used to. It allowed me to understand this child, better, assess her needs, and advocate more effectively and forcefully. The model is a huge enhancement to my work.
- I am more aware of evaluating the case from the kid's perspective.
- Only ECW connected with me at first, but now I am feeling other parts of the model better. They seem to flow from ECW, such as identifying child's needs and coming to a "big picture," a theory of the case.
- I am aware of needing to be a listening ear for clients. Doing better with teens; better connected; this new approach opens doors in ways I did not anticipate. Understanding the kid opens up a new perspective on safety, assessing needs, theory of the case, and advocacy. And my advocacy is stronger and more effective when acting from deep conviction, not just as mouthpiece.
- I am reluctant to visit youth in the community instead of in office or at court because I am concerned about my own safety.
- I am concerned about meeting children in community. There are privacy and attorney-client privilege issues but I also feel personally at risk. But I am experimenting with texting and giving cell phone number. Youth are abusing this less than adults would.

Even though the Entering the Child's World was widely and deeply accepted, it was not universally popular. Several attorneys said they were frustrated. They are paid poorly and not reimbursed for these extra efforts. (Remember, they received encouragement from QIC, but no additional compensation for casework.)

## 6.5 Safety Assessment

The QIC Safety Assessment encouraged attorneys to evaluate the safety of a child using the risk/vulnerability/protective factors framework of the ABA Renne and Lund model and to use that assessment in decision-making for initial removal and for return home. Some attorneys said they thought the safety assessment framework the most useful part of the training.

- I find the safety assessment framework the most useful part of the QIC training. It has changed my approach.
- I not only use safety framework in court, but also in talks with kids and with social workers. It is a simple, easy to understand framework.
- Safety and risk framework helps with counseling clients.

- “Why is this child not at home?” I love this question. It keeps the focus on permanency.
- I love safety assessment above all. I took the Red Book to a state safety training and told the group about it and read portions of the Red Book to them. Fostering Connections legislation is a key permanency element for my older clients. The safety framework helps planning for these youth.
- I shared the safety assessment framework with CASA to get them on same page. I also shared it with department workers.
- Used safety assessment framework in an argument. Didn’t win but it strengthened my argument to the court and in front of the child.
- I constantly push for permanency and used safety assessment framework quite effectively. Got a dismissal of a case at the shelter care hearing using the framework.
- Safety assessment helps; it’s more analytical. I used it in a case and the judge left the child with the parent with in-home services, which is a first for this judge.
- Safety assessment is a helpful frame both when I think child should go home and should not go home. Judge is beginning to adopt this approach.
- It is easy to react to a bad set of facts without analyzing the safety threat to the child.
- I tried to use the safety assessment in court, and it didn’t work well. No one recognized it.
- Using the safety framework is not coming easily. Hard to understand the conclusion that the tool is designed to reach. (The Coach then talked about the framework being a *structure* for the conversation not a conclusion in itself. Coach discussed how it tracks the statute fairly well, so can provide framework for the conversation with the client as well as for the argument to the Court.)
- There is no safety assessment conversation going on in my county.
- I do not want to be the first in the county to argue the safety assessment structure, but I have used it counseling clients.
- Safety assessment is hard to implement; not consistent with statutory language and not the way people talk about risk in this county.
- (Same state as above.) I love the safety framework above all. It fits the statutory framework really well. The caseworkers are being trained in it. The words used are somewhat different but the concepts are the same. Safety framework is very useful in advocating for permanency.
- As to safety plan, the actual words are not used but the concept is. It is well suited to the state statutory framework.
- I am using the safety assessment to advocate for reunification, and a couple of times recently I argued at shelter care hearing that kid should stay in home and that resulted in dismissals.

- I find Safety Assessment useful and use it to analyze and advocate *for* removal and *against* removal—for return and against return. It helps in counseling clients too.
- Safety assessment helps push return home. Our court won't return the child until the parents have “knocked the ball out of the park.”
- I really like the safety plan idea. People in this jurisdiction get caught up in completing the complete case plan, rather than evaluating safety (and allowing child to go home while case plan is being completed.)
- The court does not get the safety framework. It is just not helpful for me.

## 6.6 Actively Evaluate Needs

The QIC training encouraged lawyers to facilitate an appropriate assessment of the needs of the child and the family. A careful diagnosis of the presenting problem is essential to framing the appropriate legal response. Attorneys commonly thought that entering the child's world skills set up a stronger assessment of the child's needs.

- Seeing the needs assessment, “what's the real problem here?” as a responsibility of the child's lawyer was one of the most significant take-aways from the QIC training.
- I believe that Entering the Child's World helps fashion better understanding of the child and consequently leads to better needs assessment and better dispositions.
- The totality of the model, the energy, and attention paid to child helps me understand the case better.
- The relationship with the child helps the case assessment.
- It's a challenge to assess the child's needs. It doesn't fall into neat boxes.
- I feel more aware of evaluating the case and needs from the child's perspective
- I realize more than before the QIC training, how important it is to get information from the agency promptly. But there are many barriers. Caseworkers are often inexperienced and overworked.
- I am finding this really difficult because it is really hard to get information I need out of the department.
- I have a developmentally disabled client and was frustrated by the agency inertia. I did a lot of work, did my own investigation and assessment of the case, but had to resolve a professional boundary issue. I finally determined that although it was clearly my responsibility to make sure the department made the proper referrals, it was the department job to get it done. They have the resources and the responsibility to adequately assess the case.

## 6.7 Advance Case Planning

The QIC training encouraged the lawyers to facilitate the development of an appropriate case plan. They were encouraged to engage with that process and not to defer completely to the agency. Attorneys said that the QIC model in its entirety strengthened

their influence over developing and monitoring the case plan, in part because they paid close attention to it and in part because of a better understanding of their clients' situations.

- I became more aware of the importance of being critical of the case plan.
- Knowing the child, “entering the child’s world” really helps me figure out what the dispositional order should include. QIC training gave me confidence to question the agency on the case plan.
- I’ve been successful advancing case planning for my child clients. This comes naturally because I do a lot of civil work and clients are always concerned about how slowly their cases are proceeding. I am used to pressing those cases forward.
- Knowing what resources are available is a challenge.
- Case managers may not know what services are available.
- Careful approach to case planning helps with older youth who are aging out. Learning the Fostering Connections law and services available strengthens the advocacy for those youth.
- I’m looking more critically at the case plan, not deferring to the department. I am thinking like a lawyer.
- I realize that I could do more, be more active, in case planning. But I am not there yet.

## 6.8 Theory of Case

The QIC training asked the lawyers to develop an active and forward looking “theory of the case.” They were encouraged to figure out what is really going on in a case and maybe even develop alternative theories that might explain what is going on that would in turn guide their advocacy as the case unfolds. Attorneys were also encouraged to “drive the bus,” a slogan that stuck with many and seemed to resonate with them.

The theory of the case was the most difficult of the Six Core Skills to communicate and understand. Nevertheless, several lawyers said theory of the case, seeing the “big picture” and where you want the case to go eventually, is the most valuable of the skills.

- I didn’t get the theory of case idea at first. It was only after some discussions in pod meetings and coaching that I saw its value. Now I use it regularly.
- Theory of case, the “end game” planning, really helps on my cases.
- It helps to have the theory written down in file and to refer to it as case progresses.
- Theory of the case has been a success for me. I’m taking time to think about it and write it down. I keep referring back to it with the actions later.
- It helps to repeat the case theory (this is what this case is about) and the goals of the client. It helps to repeat this to the court, but also to the caseworker and others in the case.

- Theory of the case is the most effective. Having a sense of “where are we going with this” helps me—and the court—focus.
- Because of my own theory of the case (what is going on here and where is this case going?) I did own investigation and turned up a grandmother who had been cut off by the parent. Grandmother was willing and suitable to be placement for the child.
- I am using this approach more in my juvenile justice defense cases too.
- ECW was the most intuitive and easiest to accept. Theory of the case isn't so clear and is the hardest to implement.
- I am very resistant to the whole QIC project. But theory of case might have some value. Right now the case is completely driven by the agency. Everyone else reacts. The theory idea asks others to be proactive.
- Case facts are so unclear and change constantly so that it is hard to develop a solid theory of the case. (Coach reminded attorney of training advice to come to a theory but hold it lightly or even develop alternative theories. Facts do change, but better to have a tentative direction than to simply drift in the wind.)

## 6.9 Advocate Effectively

The QIC model encourages lawyers to use various approaches to advocacy—with a preference for mediation and problem-solving but using traditional motions and litigation as appropriate. A common reaction among the QIC lawyers is that the other skills provide the supportive facts, perspective and foundation for more effective advocacy.

- The other parts of the model really help me be more effective in inserting the child's perspective into the decision-making of the agency and court
- The QIC Model helps set priorities and goals and therefore sets me up to “drive the bus,” that is, advocate for the outcomes my client wants or needs.
- Model has resulted in me organizing myself more. And I actually get advocacy advice from my clients.
- The totality of the model (ECW and needs assessment etc.) helps me “drive the bus.” I am more involved in the case planning and advocacy for client needs and have more influence because of that QIC foundation.
- The QIC model expects more organization and structure to my advocacy. It is a bit like the organization and structure that comes from having a trial notebook at trial. The QIC model expects more and delivers more.
- I had an experience where I used the QIC safety assessment approach as a counseling tool with a youth. It is simply and easy to explain and understand. The dialogue we had really helped clarify and refine the youth's position and helped me better understand the youth's views. In turn, I became more comfortable with the client's position. This really paid off in the courtroom advocacy where the better

congruence between me and the client moved me beyond being a mouthpiece to being a zealous advocate.

- I am more engaged and advocate more for case assessment and disposition. Case planning and reviews of those plans now have more of my attorney influence.
- Clients a long distance away are a challenge. Taking a broader and longer view of case helped me advocate for permanence for some older youth out of state.
- Because of my relationship with youth and his foster parents, I have been successful in helping him engage in a “safe run” and then advocating giving the youth more chances.
- Meetings that are poor or happen right before court result in less effective advocacy because I am just “mouthing what the client wants” But the QIC approach results in advocating for a more deeply understood position. But, it can be hard to advocate well if I am not getting good interaction with client in meetings and other conversations.
- My court just rubber-stamps the agency position and it is hard to break into that.
- The department runs our cases. It is hard to implement the theory of case idea or to push the agency as “drive the bus” would imply.
- I am motivated and working to advocate hard, to drive the bus. The challenge is that the department seems unwilling to see the case from the youth’s perspective. In one of my cases the department is dead-set on TPR even though it is not what the kid wants.

## **6.10 Local Systemic Challenges**

Sometimes the policies and practices of the local court present a challenge to implementing the Six Core Skills.

- There is a challenge getting the court to value the attorney. CASA is free. But the caseworkers are often inexperienced and overworked.
- Delay in initial appointment presents a serious barrier to my effectiveness.
- The court often makes appointments later in the case when the youth seems to be distressed or presenting challenges. Sometimes these are the kids who run, or are at risk of running. An earlier appointment would allow me to develop some trust with the kid and help address some of the issues and maybe prevent a runner. Court misses a preventive opportunity by appointing so late in the case.
- Being appointed after the shelter care hearing means that I am coming in half-blind. So much has happened and the case is already taking a direction.
- It is frustrating to be appointed in the middle of a case.
- Getting information from the department is very hard and makes it difficult to do my job.

- I am not sure what I am supposed to do individually to implement the model. Our court likes some of these ideas and has itself implemented some changes. For instance the court now wants all kids over 12 to come to the hearings.
- I am using what I learned in the Six Core Skills training to convince the court to change some practices.
- The court only expects the lawyers to see the kids right at the courthouse and just before the hearing. Seeing the kid only just before the hearing leaves us playing catch-up. It means that the lawyer will certainly not be “driving the bus.”
- Attorneys who do this for most of their practice are better than those who only take a few cases
- I have a huge caseload, over 100, and I find it nearly impossible to do what the QIC model envisions—which I think would be the right way to represent the child.
- I appreciate the model and use it as much as I can. However, caseloads and busy court schedules are the biggest impediments to doing everything I would like.
- The overloaded docket requires much business to be done out of court. The court hearings themselves are very perfunctory.
- I am frustrated with the jurisdiction because court dockets are too heavy. A huge barrier is presented because the department does not share information. It is way too hard to get information from them.
- I am trying to see the kids more and reading the case reports much more carefully, looking for gaps. But it is frustrating. I love the work but may quit because of low pay and limits on pay.
- I drive long distances to see the kids but then only get partial pay.
- The QIC model is the preferred way but the court effectively discourages using the model because of the logistics. I am often appointed after the 72 hour hearing so it is hard to catch up. So much has happened by then. It is really hard to do the job. And the court does not keep the lawyer throughout the case. You might represent a child early on, get released, and then get re-appointed at a later stage of the case.
- The pay structure really discourages doing a good job. I billed for \$3000 in a very hard case in which I did really good work for a child. The court reduced my bill to \$2000. Also, if attorneys are too vigorous they get taken off the appointment list.
- There were some really good ideas coming from the QIC but our [judicial officer] is set in her ways and does not want to hear different language or a different way to approach a case.
- The QIC encourages advocacy but our judge does not want to hear from the child's lawyer. The judge's mind is made up. If too aggressive lawyers lose appointments.
- I am shocked at how little training other lawyers in the state have had. I am thankful to be in this county. Our judge has high expectations and lets the attorneys do their job.

- Attorney excited about the training but asks “now what”? The hammer is in; there is a new way of thinking, but we need more. It used to be that keeping the chair warm was enough. Clearly it isn’t, but we need more.

Most expressed gratitude that their state is doing this. - Sample comment: “I have enjoyed participating in the study and think it’s good we’re doing this kind of study. Hopefully we can move forward with child representation and finding people who are really interested in working in this area of the law so that these children and families won’t be as screwed up as they are with having no resources and no people advocating for their success.”

## 6.11 Conclusion

These anecdotal comments selected from random coaching reports and other interviews with the QIC lawyers reflect the attorneys’ experiences with the model. The comments help us understand the challenges and successes in adopting an approach that is common sense and reflects a national consensus and, yet, may be new and novel in some jurisdictions and to some lawyers. It is not surprising that attorneys found the Six Core Skills familiar. The skills are, of course, based on a review of state laws, practice models, and recommendations from leading authorities, most particularly the 1996 ABA standards. The QIC effort synthesized the national conversation into an approach that hopefully would find a sweet spot between being comfortable and maybe even intuitive, yet still advancing the level of practice.

We did not want to propose an approach that deviated too far from the currently accepted views of good practice or that demanded significantly more attorney time for fear that anything too radical would be resisted.

We were also looking for an approach that focused on clinical skills of the lawyer. Good child representation is a three-legged stool of 1) sound state law; 2) attorneys who know the law and how to operate in a court room; and 3) attorneys with the clinical skills to engage with children, assess their problems and advocate effectively. The good news is that so many lawyers embraced the approach and seemed to benefit from it.

The cognoscenti of child welfare law may well react to the Six Core Skills with a collective “oh hum.” After all the QIC Best Practice Model is quite consistent with what the leaders in the field have been advocating for some years. But nonetheless it is fascinating—and perhaps even surprising—that so many QIC lawyers saw the approach as new and innovative, a better practice *model*. Some said that it has a freshness and a rigor that they appreciated.

Another pleasant surprise is that so few attorneys complained that we were asking them to do social work. Over the years some lawyers have complained that many of the functions being asked of a child’s lawyer were really social work and not “real

law.” These critics complained that expecting them to be able to speak to children, taking time to develop a trusting relationship, knowing about child development and trauma, understanding the dynamics of dysfunctional families etc., was not what real lawyers do.

It appears, at least for our sample, that that overly narrow and wrongheaded view of lawyering has not taken root. The QIC lawyers seem to understand that lawyers in all specialties need to understand the context in which they practice law. Labor lawyers need to understand labor history and the politics past and present, not just the statutes and court opinions. Construction lawyers need to understand the business and economics of building, not just the law of contracts and remedies. Lawyers representing banks need to understand banking as an industry. Lawyers handling medical malpractice cases learn vast amounts of anatomy and physiology and other medicine in the defense or prosecution of such cases.

Likewise the most effective lawyers in child welfare understand the need for reliable information and skills regarding children and families. Their comments suggest that most QIC lawyers understood that.

The coaching notes reveal the importance of a collaborative community of lawyers committed to the field. Many lawyers talked about how much they learned from one another in pod meetings or other exchanges. The coaching helped lawyers process the Six Core Skills content and apply the model to their specific cases in the practical context of their courts and agency attitude and resources. We thought this on-going follow-up would be an important element of our research intervention and it proved to be so.

We turn now to Chapin Hall's three empirical studies of the Georgia and Washington State lawyers. The effect of the QIC Six Core Skills training on lawyer representation of children (Chapter 10) is at the highest level of research integrity—random assignment—that allows us to draw causal conclusions between the training, lawyer behavior and case outcomes.