

The Kansas Commission for Continuing Legal Education



EXPLORING PROGRAMMATIC ISSUES WHICH EFFECT CONTINUING EDUCATION PRACTICE IN KANSAS

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Purpose Statement



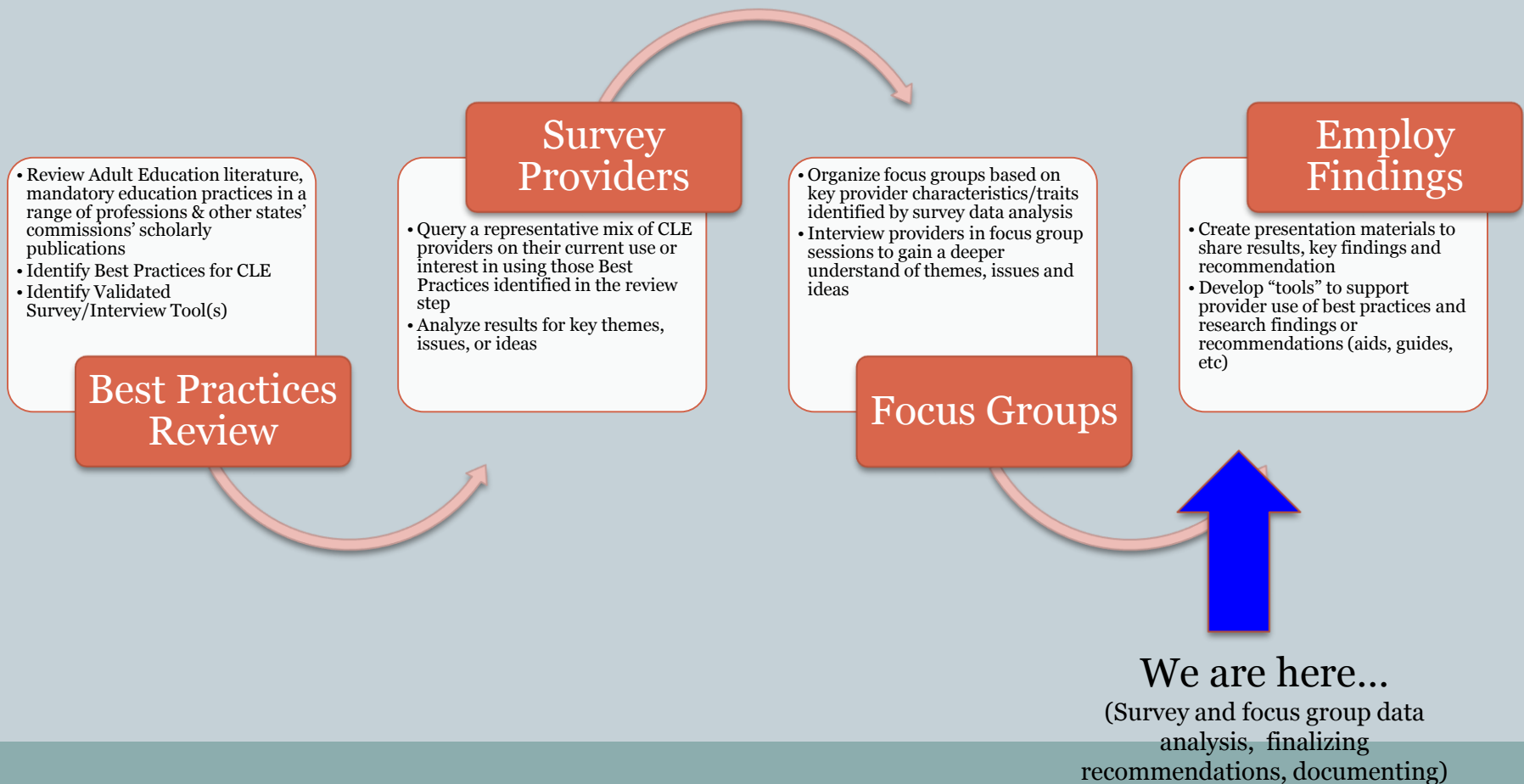
- The PURPOSE of this initiative is to develop an evidence-based understanding of best practices, expert opinion, existing research and program evaluation data to investigate 3 questions...
 - How can the Commission help providers offering CLE programs to attorneys in Kansas do a better job?
 - How can we know if what providers teach attorneys helps them practice law better?
 - How can the CLE experience for the majority of Kansas attorneys, who regularly and in a timely fashion complete their requirements and find value in the process, be improved?
- As a result of this research, the Commission further desires to provide concrete outputs (best practices, tools, techniques) that inform providers, presenters, attorneys and commission members for use in advancing the practice of continuing legal education in Kansas.

Research Questions



1. What are the current program development, execution, and evaluation practices of CLE providers in Kansas? Which are considered as being best practices? Which of these can/should be leveraged across the state?
2. Which program development, execution or evaluation practices/continued learning programs in other states, legal organizations or non-legal disciplines could be leveraged or used as input in improving CLE offerings in Kansas?
3. What best practices or proven theories/methods for any learning effort, as established by adult and continuing education research and theory, could be incorporated into the KSCLE providers way of doing business?
4. What gaps exist in either the provider course offerings and/or evaluation processes and/or delivery methods that need to be filled so that attorneys can respond to current challenges, new legal trends, or opportunities in their areas of practice?

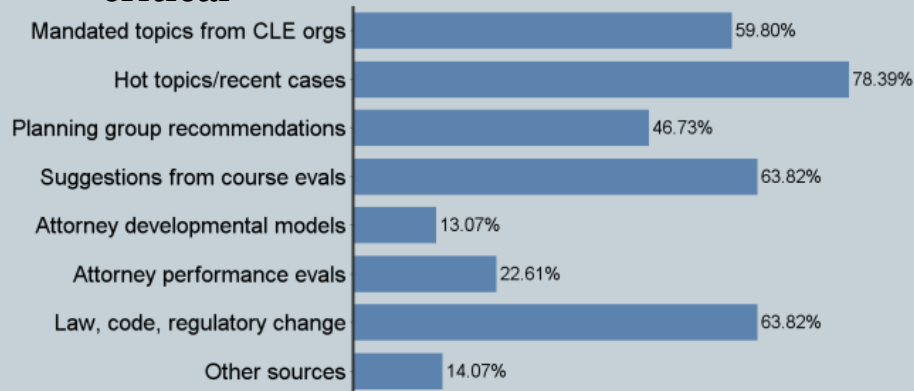
Research Methodology – Mixed Methods



CLE area: Program Planning/Needs Analysis

Findings (survey + focus groups)

- Most providers use law/code changes, recent court cases, suggestions from previous course evaluations, and mandates as sources for CLE course topics.
- Many providers seek input from a variety of players (attorneys, employers, section leadership) in CLE planning processes and view them as critical



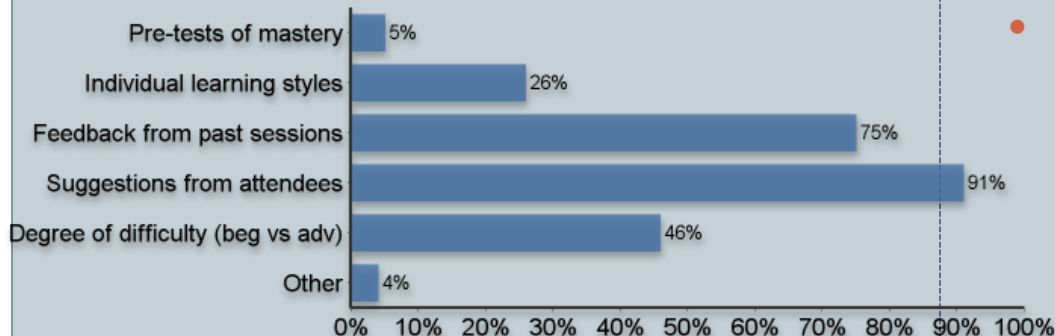
Recommendations

- Encourage involvement of all CLE players (attorneys (new and seasoned), providers, employers) in planning process
- Determine CLE needs/priorities from key issues in practice, area of law, past course results, necessary topics, and who should/could present it
- Commission Resource Library - resources for/examples of “best practice” course objectives oriented to practice change and future assessment efforts
- Continue requiring objectives for accreditation

CLE Area: Instructor Prep

Findings

- Many providers use past session feedback to refine course delivery, but said must share this information more consistently
- Pre-tests or assessment of current attendee skills level is rarely done, but they do try and tailor courses for beginners vs advanced



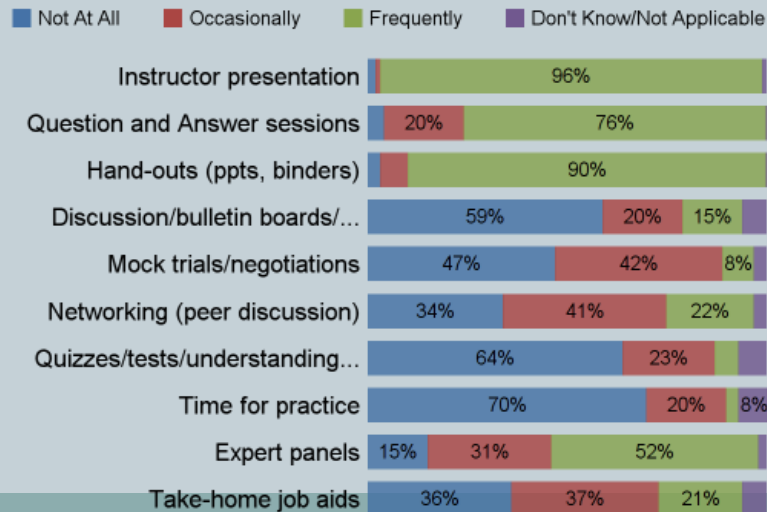
Recommendations

- Share past program evaluations with instructors to improve next performance
- Provide instructors lists of attendees in advance (email, geographic locale, practice area, years of practice) to help them better tailor to their audience
- Look into use of pre-course, self-assessments that can help guide course delivery
- Commission Resource Library – instructor prep/education materials (e.g. making it interactive, understanding generational preferences, etc.)

CLE Area: Content Delivery Methods

Findings

- Most providers and focus group members report a reliance on on speaker presentations, Q&A sessions, hands-outs and expert panels to deliver content
- Discussions stress the importance of quality handouts/materials and instructor skill/prep



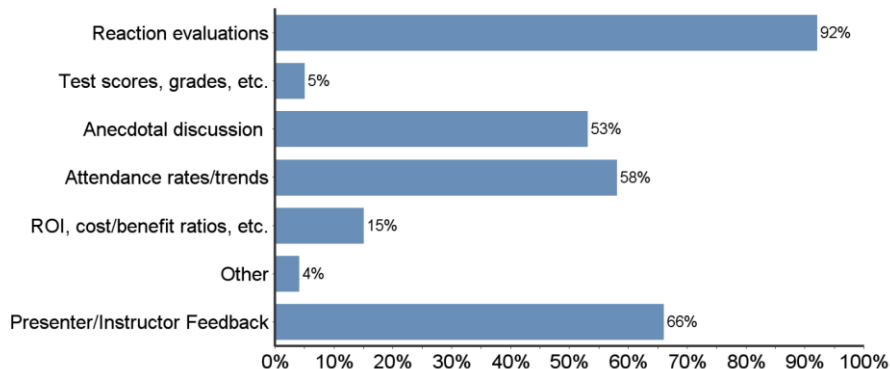
Recommendations

- Incorporate structured networking/mentoring within a CLE setting (group setting)
- Use modules in courses (20 - 25 minutes) to keep the course moving and interest high
- Panels best practices: use moderators, do practice run through, use to break up lecture, balance power of members
- Encourage use of more interactive learning methods (dialog, break-outs on topic, mock trials, trial reenactments, case studies)
- Materials/Handouts – balance what is provided electronically versus in paper form to encourage attendee attention in class and use after the course

CLE area: Program Evaluation

Findings

- Evaluation of MCLE is done mostly with program evaluations forms or discussions with instructors or participants
- There is high resistance to “testing” among attorney participants
- Metrics/ROI analysis is focused on the “business” of training delivery (e.g. attendance rates/profitability)



Recommendations

- Stretch current course evaluations to query expected use in practice, expected level of support back on the job, suggested future topics, objectives fulfillment
- Experiment with online vs paper surveys to see which generate the most/best feedback
- Expand use of “delayed” course evaluation surveys or interviews focused on practice impact (e.g. 30 days after)
- Assess/test learning with non-threatening methods (e.g. group discussion of questions on a slide) and online module quizzes
- Commission Resource Library – samples/guidelines for best practice assessment tools at all levels, state-wide metrics (disciplinary cases, disbarments) that providers and employer can use in practice impact assessment

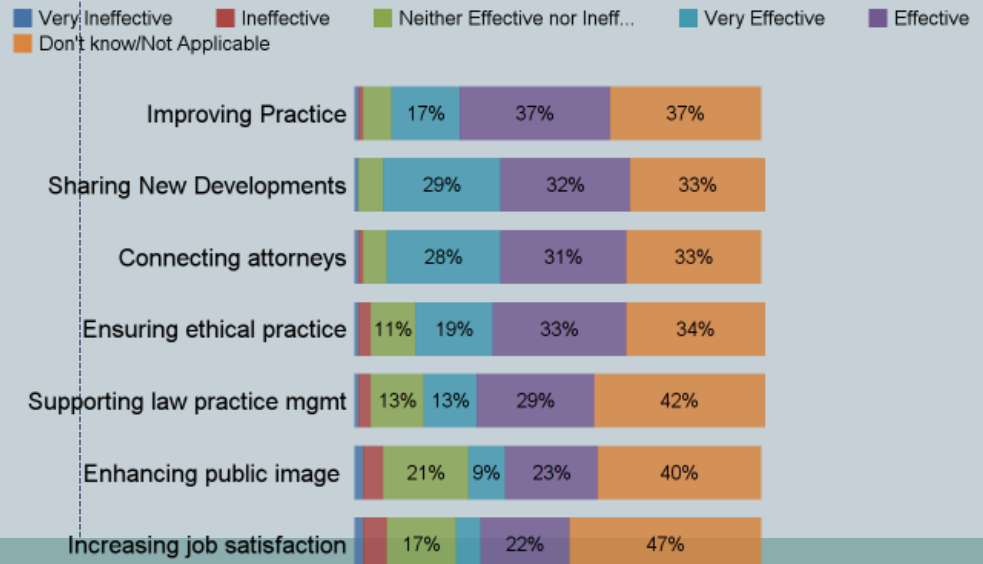
Overall Effectiveness of MCLE in KS

Findings

- A majority of providers said that KS CLE is effective at improving the practice of law, sharing new developments, ensuring ethical practice, and connecting attorneys with their peers.
- BUT, many answered “don’t know” to these questions and discussions/open-ended answers describe a struggle in assessing practice impact.
- High value seen from practice management and ethics courses
- View as critical concerns the high number of solo practices and attorney substance abuse/depression rates

Recommendations

- Support connecting attorneys within and outside of CLE (Listserv, section discussion boards, local bar assoc.)
- Implement other recommendations to support practice improvement



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About the authors...

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