

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2005 Role Delineation Study

The 2005 ALPP CLC Examination Committee thanks all of the CLCs and volunteers who helped with the 2005 Role Delineation Study, which was designed to identify and analyze current role and task composition for practicing CLCs. The blueprint matrix on which the CLC exam is based must be reconsidered and reanalyzed every five years to be sure it reflects current practice, to comply with the requirements of the National Commission for Certifying Agencies standards and to provide defensibility for examination content.

Volunteers who were working as lactation counselors (job incumbents) were solicited who would be willing to complete journals detailing their work tasks and activities. The potential volunteers were briefed regarding the expectations of journal keeping, the purpose for keeping the journal and the expected features of the journal. The volunteer selection criteria (besides willingness to complete journals) included

Work that only involved lactation counseling

Work at an entry-level position

Geographic diversity

Work site diversity

Eight volunteers who worked only as entry-level lactation counselors in diverse work sites were selected. They were from Connecticut, Maine, New Jersey, California, Oregon, Texas, Illinois and Puerto Rico. Urban and rural areas were represented in the sample.

Results of the Job Analysis

Journals for four hundred and twenty-five (425) days were submitted for analysis, representing seven hundred and eighty (780) counseling sessions with seven-hundred and sixty-three (763) different mothers. All of the submitted journals were analyzed using methodology described by Grbich (1999) including thematic analysis, coding, sorting and sifting, isolating patterns, developing and small set of generalizations and confronting generalizations.

Thirty-seven (37) different work sites were represented in the journals of the eight volunteers.

11 different Hospitals

- 2 WIC Programs (WIC is the USDA Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children.
- 3 Obstetric care
- 2 Special Care Nurseries or Neonatal Intensive Care Units (NICU)
- 10 Post Partum units in hospitals
- 2 Physicians' offices (1 Ob/Gyn, 1 Pediatrician)
- 2 Home visiting agencies
- 1 Community prenatal class
- 4 Nursing mothers' support groups in the community.

Each of the lactation counselors worked in more than one setting with 4 settings as the average number.

The journals were examined to determine the chronological periods covered and then to determine the percentage of time that was spent in lactation counseling for each chronological period. The journals revealed 700 topic contacts. General principles were also examined and the percentage of time the lactation counselors spent within each principle was calculated.

As a result of the analysis the following parameters of practice were delineated

Topic Areas

- A. long term breastfeeding
- B. maternal and infant nutrition
- C. nipple and breast problems
- D. latch-on and positioning for breastfeeding
- E. milk supply, formula supplementation
- F. Managements techniques including commercial products (pumps, feeders etc.) and their use
- G. promotion of breastfeeding
- H. weaning
- I. special circumstances, maternal and infant

General principles, larger content areas of knowledge, that could not be considered as specifically as the topic areas, yet encompass the field. These five general principles were listed as

General Principles

- I Human Anatomy, Physiology and Development
- II Successful Breastfeeding Management Programs
- III Counseling Techniques, History Taking and Documentation
- IV Protection for Breastfeeding: Public Health Strategies
- V Professional Ethics and Behavior

Lactation counseling was most likely to take place in nine discrete chronological periods.

Chronological Periods

- 1 Prenatal
- 2 Labor/birth/1-2 days
- 3 Prematurity
- 4 3-14 days
- 5 15-28 days
- 6 1-3 months
- 7 4-6 months
- 8 7-12 months
- 9 Beyond 12 months.

These are the three parameters of lactation counseling and the blueprint matrix for the examination which has been constructed using the parameters.

Parameter 1	<i>Topic Areas</i>	(A - I)
Parameter 2	<i>General Principles</i>	(I - V)
Parameter 3	<i>Chronological Periods</i>	(1 - 9)

Frequency surveys of what lactation counselors actually do, as described above, ranged from a low of 2% to a high of 37%. Criticality and importance surveys provide the opinions of experts on the importance of each topic area. A panel of Subject Matter Experts was asked to score the parameters of “importance” (How important is each performance domain to the performance of an entry-level certified lactation counselor?) and “criticality.” (If the entry-level lactation counselor were unable to perform the task in each performance domain what level of harm (physical, emotional, financial) would be incurred?)

Because criticality ranged between moderate harm and extreme harm and importance ranged between important and very important for each aspect of the parameters, the CLC Committee determined that the significance of frequency would more likely be used to determine the number of questions on the examination.