REPORT TITLE: Summary Report on Developmental Science ECLS-B Workshop

TO: Graduate Field Committee in Developmental Science:

DATE: August 24, 2012

The workshop entitled, “Using the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study – Birth Cohort (ECLS-B) Database”, was held on July 30, 2012 and generously supported by the Graduate Field Committee in Developmental Science. The purpose of this report is to explain the lessons learned from organizing and implementing the ECLS-B workshop. The report is organized as follows: (1) Selecting a date, (2) Crafting an agenda, (3) Recruiting participants, (4) Workshop Content, (5) Evaluation (6) Unanticipated problems, and (7) Summary.

**Selecting a date:**

We had approximately five months to plan the workshop from the time we were awarded the grant. Finding a date was difficult. We relentlessly emailed and called our speakers. Once they confirmed,we set the date for the workshop, and we immediately reserved a room and began advertisement.

**Crafting an agenda**:

Together with our advisor Dr. Natasha Cabrera we conceptualized the workshop, identified goals for the workshop and discussed appropriate speakers. The goal of the workshop was (1) to provide an overview of the ECLS-B theory, design, methods, data, and appropriate research questions; (2) provide examples of applied research to support the theoretical and methodological overviews from goal 1; and (3) allow participants to gain hand-on experience with the data. To this end, in consultation with Dr. Cabrera, we invited two sets of presenters. Experts from (AIR) presented the theory, method, and technical aspects of the data; experts from University of Maryland schools presented on their research and personal experience with the ECLS-B.

We decided to have two sessions in the morning and two sessions in the afternoon. To welcome our participants and speakers we provided a nice breakfast, and to break up the day we provided lunch at the half-way point between the four morning and afternoon sessions.

The morning sessions were presented by Drs. Jodi Jacobson Chernoff and Kristin Denton Flanagan from AIR who have been intimately involved in the design and analysis of the ECLS-B.

In the afternoon sessions, we planned to provide examples of how to access data along with hands-on practice and presentations from the UMD experts about their experiences with the data.

**Recruiting participants:**

We were concerned that we would not have enough participants because of the timing of the workshop. To make sure we had enough participants we advertised heavily and frequently. We began with a brief survey using department listserves across campus to assess interest and availability from the students and faculty. Once we knew July 30th would work for enough people, we emailed a save the date flyer to the same department listserves and posted flyers in buildings around campus. We emailed reminders every 2 weeks and reposted flyers as needed.

Registration opened on May 30th, and a reminder email with registration information was sent out again on June 29th. Sixty-five people registered and approximately 40 came to the workshop. Participants were primarily graduate students and came from 9 different departments across campus representing the College of Education, the School of Public Health, [College of Behavioral and Social Sciences](http://www.bsos.umd.edu/), and the School of Public Policy.

**Workshop Content**:

The morning sessions provided a technical overview of the ECLS-B and were conducted by the AIR experts. Dr. Jacobson Chernoff’s talk provided an overview of the theoretical framework for the ECLS-B, the measures, and the periodicity of data collection. She also discussed data collection difficulties and the sampling design. In the second morning session, Dr. Denton Flanagan provided an overview of the purpose of weights in large-scale datasets.

The afternoon session began with a talk from Dr. Denton Flanagan on variance estimation. Then she provided a demonstration of the ECLS-B electronic codebook and the steps to set up an actual data file. She discussed how to obtain the ECLS-B data DVD and how to garner a license because the data is restricted access.

The final session of the day included presentations from Dr. Robert Croninger, Dr. Natasha Cabrera, and Dr. Claudia Galindo. Dr. Claudia Galindo presented the results of a forthcoming Child Development article she had recently completed using the ECLS-B. Dr. Natasha Cabrera focused on the “triumphs and pitfalls” of using the data and provided insight into the study design process in which she was involved. Dr. Robert Croninger emphasized statistical approaches to the dataset.

**Evaluation**:

One positive message that came from all of the speakers was the importance of the ECLS-B and other large-scale datasets for graduate students who do not always have the resources or connections to conduct their own data. The presenters all discussed the types of research questions that they have addressed with the ECLS-B and spoke about studies they had published in top journals using the data. All had similar stories about the challenges of finding measures that accurately represented the construct they desired or the struggle of dealing with missing data. Overall, the speakers provided a very cohesive and positive message about the benefits of secondary data analysis in general, and the specific benefits and potentials of the ECLS-B data.

The presentations were appropriate for all levels of experience represented by the participants. The excellent questions asked by faculty and students alike indicate that the participants enjoyed the workshop and learned a lot. Following the workshop, we asked participants to complete anonymous online evaluation forms. Most found the workshop to be immensely informative and helpful. Ninety-five percent of the participants said they found the workshop helpful and would participate in a future workshop.

**Unanticipated problems**:

The post-workshop surveys indicated that **almost every participant wanted more hands-on experience with the data.** We learned that this was not possible because the data are restricted.

Setting a date was by far the most difficult part of the planning process. Our advisor was indispensible during this process. Once the date was set for the end of July, finding experts from the University of Maryland schools who were available during the summer was another challenge.

One last limitation of the workshop was the presentations of our professors. If we could repeat the workshop we would provide more guidance (perhaps a set of questions to address) to our three presenting professors about what specifically we wanted them to talk about. While the professors gave insightful advice we would have liked them to use more examples from their own research rather than provide vague descriptions of how they used the data.

**Summary**:

The workshop went as well as we expected. While some presenters were more engaging than others the necessary information to conduct research using the ECLS-B was well articulated. Overall, we are pleased with the result of the workshop and had a true learning experience as we brought all our planning to fruition. We are grateful for both the mentoring and financial support of the Field Committee in Developmental Science.

Sincerely,

Jenessa Malin and Elizabeth Karberg