Additional Funds for Interdisciplinary Law School and Psychology Graduate Training: Incorporating the Children's Perspective into Divorce Mediation and Conducting Program Evaluation Research

Summary of Original Proposal

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Divorce significantly disrupts children’s lives in multiple ways and affects over 1 million children nationwide in the U.S. each year. Divorce mediation is believed to lead to better outcomes for children, though there is little empirical support for this belief. Training for law students as well as future clinical psychologists is crucial to better outcomes for children of divorced parents. To that end, this project will allow for completion of an earlier-funded interdisciplinary SOTL project investigating types of mediation, of which only one goal was not met. The current award will allow for the investigators to better understand the impact of training graduate law and psychology students in innovative methods of mediation. It will provide funding to develop an innovative micro-analytic coding system and associated database that can be used by coders observing live mediations.
Cover Sheet

Project Title:
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Phase III (continuation funds)

Duration of funding period:
1 year
Additional Funds for Interdisciplinary Law School and Psychology Graduate Training: 
Incorporating the Children’s Perspective into Divorce Mediation and Conducting Program Evaluation Research

In 2009, we were fortunate to be awarded an IU SOTL grant for this project. As outlined below, we have successfully completed most phases of the proposed study. However, there is one goal that has not been fully completed because of unforeseen problems. Given that it is a crucial part of the study, we are seeking funds to finish this one part of the study.

Overview of the Original Project: The original proposal sought funding for an interdisciplinary law and psychology graduate level teaching project. The broad goals of the project were: 1) to foster interdisciplinary training of law and psychology graduate students in the area of divorce mediation, improving the training for both groups of students; 2) to train the students in new interdisciplinary methods of divorce mediation that incorporate the children’s perspective; 3) to train students in program evaluation research methods by conducting a program evaluation of the new divorce mediation methods; 4) to conduct research to examine the impact of our new interdisciplinary training; and 5) to disseminate what we learn about training and education to others across the country.

Nationally, there is increasing interest in the overlap between psychology and law. These two disciplines often intersect in the real world, and family law is an area of extensive overlap. For example, psychologists are often asked to conduct child custody evaluations and divorce mediators may be lawyers or psychologists. Indeed, the Association for Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC) has issued calls for interdisciplinary training in family law (entire Oct. 2006 issue of Family Court Review). At Indiana University (IU), law and psychology faculty interested in the impact of divorce on children have been collaborating to conduct interdisciplinary training of law students and psychology graduate students. Our collaboration presented a unique opportunity to develop interdisciplinary graduate level education that builds on the strengths of both the psychology and law programs at IU.

The IU Department of Psychological and Brain Science’s (PBS) clinical science graduate program is one of the top ten clinical psychology doctoral programs in the nation. The prominence of this program derives from its focus on empirical research as the basis for understanding and treating psychological problems. The role of doctorate level psychologists no longer involves as much direct therapy work, but rather is evolving to include the development and evaluation of interventions. Preparation for this role, which capitalizes on psychologists’ expertise in research methodology, is one goal of the clinical science psychology program at IU. Traditionally, however, IU psychology graduate students have not received training in legal issues. Thus, psychology graduate training can be enhanced by education in relevant legal issues and real-life exposure to legal clients and procedures. Our clinical science faculty members are nationally recognized researchers. On this project, Amy Holtzworth-Munroe is an expert on divorce mediation, marriage, intimate partner violence, and couples therapy. Brian D’Onofrio is an expert on child development, child psychopathology, child therapy, and the impact of divorce on children. Jack Bates is an expert in child development and psychopathology.

IU’s Maurer School of Law is ranked 7th of all public law schools nationally and 23rd of all law schools nationally. A unique training opportunity at the IU law school is the Family and Children Mediation Clinic, which trains law students to integrate theoretical and classroom learning with the real-life experience of conducting divorce mediation. Amy Applegate is an expert on family law, with a focus on family mediation. Applegate teaches and directs the clinical mediation program, training law students to become state-approved family law mediators and provide mediation services to the community. Law students generally do not receive training in program evaluation or read the social science literature to identify interventions empirically demonstrated to be effective. Yet, legal experts and judges frequently request such information, asking which interventions might be useful for their clients, as the legal field is beginning to embrace the notion of “evidence based practice”. Accordingly, law student mediators can benefit from better understanding psychological research on divorce and its effects and from learning program evaluation methodology.

Therefore, our original proposal was designed to systematically implement and evaluate the effectiveness of a new interdisciplinary program for law and psychology graduate students. Since receiving SOTL funding, we have met most of the original SOTL project goals, as outlined here:

Aim 1: Fostering Interdisciplinary Training in Family Law for Law Students and Psychology Students: Through the SOTL grant, we have been providing interdisciplinary training to law students and psychology graduate students and have been conducting research together for 3 years. Please see our CVs for examples of our joint presentations and publications in the area of divorce mediation research and interdisciplinary training.

Aims 2 and 3: Training Students in New Interdisciplinary Divorce Mediation Approaches that Bring the Children’s Perspective into Mediation, and Training Students to use Program Evaluation Research Methods to Test the Efficacy of these New Interventions: Our interdisciplinary training was placed within the context of testing new divorce mediation interventions. To explain, we present a brief research review.
Divorce or parental separation of never married parents (we refer to both as “divorce”) affects over 1 million children per year in the US. Divorce inflicts multiple disruptions (e.g., financial, residential, emotional) upon parents and children. As a result, divorce is a risk factor for the development of psychological problems among children. Relative to children from intact families, children from divorced homes have double the risk of psychological and behavioral problems (e.g., depression, delinquent behavior) and an increased risk of academic and social problems, including relationship problems in adulthood. Certain factors lessen the potential negative effects of divorce on children. Specifically, children do better when there is less parental conflict, when the child can maintain a positive relationship with the nonresidential parent, and when both parents can continue to provide appropriate parenting.

The family legal system has been moving from traditional, adversarial litigation approaches to increasingly use divorce mediation, which is believed to help decrease inter-parental conflict, ideally leading to better outcomes for children. Unfortunately, few methodologically strong studies have examined the effects of mediation. In the one methodologically rigorous study conducted to date, divorce mediation had beneficial outcomes compared to the normal litigation process, including increased likelihood of parents reaching an agreement, decreased litigation following divorce, more father satisfaction with the agreement, and more father involvement with their children (Emery et al., 2005). Mediation, however, is not a panacea and has not been consistently demonstrated to produce positive effects (Beck et al., 2004). Therefore, it is crucial that the field develop new methods to improve its impact.

One suggested improvement is to increase parents’ focus on their children’s best interests—to help parents to understand the potential negative effects of divorce on children and to motivate parents to minimize those impacts by decreasing their conflict and reaching parenting agreements that are good for their children. Based on this notion, McIntosh (2007) developed an innovative program— Child Inclusive Divorce Mediation (CI). As in standard divorce mediation, both parents meet with a mediator, whose role is to formally negotiate parental disputes while maintaining neutrality. In addition, in the CI program, a second professional, called the child consultant (a specially trained mental health professional), meets with the children of the couple. This consultant assesses the children to gain an understanding of the needs and concerns of each child and how the parents’ separation is affecting him/her. Using this information, the child consultant then meets with the mediator and parents, representing the child’s perspective in the mediation process. The child consultant gives individualized feedback to the parents about their child’s concerns and reactions to the separation, providing guidance regarding issues the parents should consider in mediation. CI includes both mediators and child consultants. As such, it is a uniquely interdisciplinary approach to mediation, allowing lawyers and psychologists to work together for the best interests of children.

CI is an intensive and potentially expensive intervention that requires meeting with the child to provide parents with individualized feedback about their child. Possibly, such personalized feedback is not necessary. Instead, perhaps informing parents about the impact of divorce on children in general would be enough to motivate them to consider the best interests of their children during mediation. Given such issues, McIntosh (2007) also developed Child Focused Divorce Mediation (CF), which aims to help parents reach an agreement that reflects the children’s needs, but does not directly involve the child (i.e., the consultant does not meet with the child). Instead, parents are educated about common concerns of children in divorcing families and the impact of parental conflict on children, and are encouraged to consider their child’s developmental stage when making parenting agreements. Both mediators and child consultants are involved in this interdisciplinary approach.

In our original SOTL-funded project, we conducted a program evaluation comparing the effectiveness of CI and CF, relative to each other and relative to mediation as usual (MAU: no psychology child consultant; law student mediator works with parents). Conducting this study introduced interdisciplinary training of both law and psychology students. Law students continued to serve as the divorce mediators; however, the SOTL project expanded their training, teaching them how to conduct their mediation sessions in collaboration with a child consultant specialist (in both CI and CF conditions) and, in the process, teaching them about research on divorce and children. Psychology graduate students were trained to work as child consultant specialists, in collaboration with law student mediators. In addition, by conducting a study comparing the three interventions, we have been training law and psychology students to conduct program evaluation research.

**Aim 4: To Conduct Research to Examine the Impact of Our New Interdisciplinary Training:** An overarching goal of our project was to conduct research examining the impact of our interdisciplinary training on students. We have done so in multiple ways.

First, using a quasi-experimental study design, we assessed both knowledge of relevant issues acquired by law and psychology students and the students’ reported experiences and attitudes, comparing this information across semesters before and after they were trained in the new CI/CF divorce mediation interdisciplinary program. The first semester of the project (i.e., Spring 2009) was a pre-interdisciplinary (pre CI/CF) training baseline semester. That semester, we continued training as usual (i.e., did not begin our new CI/CF training) and gathered two sets of data. First, students were given a written test of their knowledge regarding three areas—relevant laws and legal statutes, social science research findings on relevant issues (e.g., psychological consequences of divorce for children, effectiveness of interventions for divorcing families), and program
evaluation methodology. Second, students participated in a focus group regarding their experiences with, knowledge of, and attitudes towards divorce, mediation, research, and interdisciplinary training. Eight law students completed both measures (i.e., knowledge test and focus group) at both the start and then end of the baseline semester. Psychology students completed the measures at the start of the semester, but not at the end, as they received no relevant training that semester (they did not participate in any courses about divorce or mediation).

Then, in each of the following three semesters of this project (i.e., Fall 2009, Spring 2010, and Fall 2010), we implemented our new interdisciplinary CI/CF training program and program evaluation study comparing the three types of mediation (CI, CF, and MAU). Each semester, approximately eight new law students participated. Each semester, the law students completed the knowledge test at the beginning of the semester (pre-test) and at the end of the semester (post-test) and participated in focus groups at the beginning and end of each semester. The same eight psychology students were involved in all three semesters of training. Accordingly, to make their data comparable to that of law students (one semester of interdisciplinary training), we concentrated our data analyses on the psychology students' knowledge tests and focus group discussions at the beginning and end of the first semester of training (Fall 2009).

Here, we provide a brief summary of data examining the impact of our new training program:

**Knowledge tests:** As would be expected, at the beginning of the semesters, and relative to students from the other discipline, law students knew more about law and psychology students knew more about program evaluation research methods (but not more about psychology research findings on divorce and children). In the semester before we began interdisciplinary training, law students completed knowledge tests at both the beginning and end of the semester. Across that semester, their knowledge of law increased significantly, but there was no change in their knowledge on either psychology section of the knowledge test. In the three semesters of interdisciplinary training and the CIMS study, across each semester, law students continued to know significantly more family law at the end of the semester than they did at the beginning of the semester; but now, in addition, they knew significantly more about relevant social science research on divorce and about program evaluation research methods (the research methods findings were at the level of a statistical trend). The interdisciplinary training clearly led law students to increase their knowledge of relevant psychology issues. Across a semester with interdisciplinary CI/CF training, comparing knowledge test scores at the start and end of each semester, psychology students tended to know more about relevant family law at the end of the semester than at the beginning of the semester, but their knowledge of psychology related issues did not change significantly, perhaps due to a ceiling effect (e.g., most of the psychology students were active researchers and thus knew a lot about research methods) and/or lack of statistical power (there were only seven psychology students at post-training).

**Focus groups:** By observing the video recordings of the focus group discussions, we developed a coding system to quantitatively extract information regarding what students were discussing during the focus groups. Each code captured how much a behavior occurred across the course of the entire focus group discussion being coded. Most codes were rated on a scale from "0" ("students did not engage in this behavior") to "3" ("students engaged in this behavior a lot or extensively"). Some codes were designed to capture general learning that may have occurred in the semesters both before and after our interdisciplinary training. For example, in all semesters, we would expect law students to increase, from the beginning to the end of the semester on the item "appeared to have confidence in their understanding of mediation". Other codes were designed to detect changes that should occur in the semesters that involved interdisciplinary training (e.g., "discussed the current class as a source of their knowledge about research on divorce and divorced mediation" and "enjoyed the interdisciplinary training").

Undergraduate coders were trained to code to an acceptable level of inter-rater reliability. They then coded each of the focus group discussions. Our preliminary analyses of the focus group data demonstrated anticipated changes. For example, across three semesters of new law students receiving interdisciplinary training, relative to their focus group discussion at the beginning of the semester, at the end of the semester, the law students expressed fewer negative attitudes towards research, more confidence in their knowledge of relevant social science research on divorce and mediation, and having learned a lot from and having enjoyed the interdisciplinary training; they also discussed ideas for more interdisciplinary training in the future. Similarly, across a semester of interdisciplinary training, psychology students reported increased knowledge of relevant research, enjoying the interdisciplinary training, having more confidence in their understanding of mediation, and more positive attitudes towards mediation. Thus, comparing beginning and end of semester focus group discussions, students in both disciplines conveyed that they have enjoyed the interdisciplinary training and learned from it. In particular, law students are learning about psychological research and psychology students are learning about legal procedures (e.g., mediation).

It is in the final method we had proposed to evaluate our training where we have been unable to make sufficient progress and are seeking additional funding to finish this final goal. But before explaining that project goal, allow us to explain the progress we made in the final aim of our original SOTL study.
Aim 5: Disseminating our Interdisciplinary Training Experiences to Others: Our project has put IU law and psychology students at the cutting edge of innovations in divorce mediation training and allowed us to promote increased excellence in interdisciplinary training at the national level. Our collaboration has already begun to improve professional education. An important goal for our research project is to produce research that will be widely disseminated for use in professional training. Thus, we have been presenting and publishing findings directly related to the SOTL funded study and indirectly related to our SOTL funding (e.g., interdisciplinary projects fostered by the interdisciplinary interaction the SOTL grant funded). A list of such papers and presentations is provided below, after the body of this proposal, in an Appendix.

Aim for Requested Additional Funding: A comparison of the report of our study, just provided, and our original study proposal will show that just one of our original goals has not been met. That goal fell under Aim 4: to gather evidence that we are able to train students to conduct the new mediation methods (CF and CI). Specifically, we had proposed employing research methods widely utilized in the psychology therapy outcome research field to measure two issues relevant to the training of the law and psychology students—issues of “therapist” (i.e., law student mediators and psychology student child consultants) adherence to an intervention (or treatment) protocol and “therapist” competence. The first issue (adherence) is important to ensure that the tested treatments were conducted as intended (i.e., that we were able to train the therapists to conduct the three different forms of mediation—CI, CF, and MAU). The second issue involves determining if therapists conducted the interventions competently. To measure therapist adherence and competence, in psychological treatment outcome research, direct ratings of what occurs in therapy sessions are made. In our cases, such a measure not only assures that CI, CF, and MAU are different interventions (important for our program evaluation study), but also help us to document that law and psychology students have learned different skills in their interdisciplinary training and are actually implementing the new, interdisciplinary forms of mediation correctly. Therefore, these observations are an important measure of our interdisciplinary training. However, please note that no observational coding systems of any forms of divorce mediation have been developed or used previous to our attempts.

As originally proposed, adopting methods from the psychological treatment outcome research field, we worked to design a coding system to measure student adherence to each of the three tested methods of mediation (i.e., MAU versus CF versus CI) and student competence in each approach. We initially developed a coding system that rated law student mediators and psychology student child consultants on a wide variety of behaviors. Some of the codes reflected general skills that we hoped would be present in all forms of mediation and both before and after our interdisciplinary training (e.g., “asked appropriate questions”; “listened non-judgmentally”). Other codes were designed to capture behaviors that might help to discriminate both CF and CI from MAU. For example, we assume that the students in CF and CI would be more likely than the students in MAU to have “encouraged parties to think like parents”). Finally, other codes were designed to discriminate between CF and CI mediation approaches. For example, a competent child consultant in CI mediation should bring in quotes or materials (e.g., drawings) made by the child, in order to personalize the feedback to the parents (e.g., “Used child’s own words”), while a competent CF consultant, who has not directly met the child, finds out the ages of the couple’s children and provides information to the parents about the specific developmental issues for children of those ages. (e.g., “Discussed research” and “Used flipcharts or other educational materials”).

In most psychotherapy research, coding measures of therapist adherence and competence are applied to recordings (audio or video) of the therapy session. This allows careful review (e.g., re-watching difficult or confusing sections) of complex human interactions. Unfortunately, however, we are unable to tape the mediation sessions that we are trying to code. This is because, in Indiana, mediation is a completely confidential process, to encourage parties to make suggestions for mediation negotiations; then, if an agreement is not reached in mediation, those offers made in mediation are not discussed with the court. Accordingly, to help ensure the confidentiality of mediation, we do not tape the mediation sessions.

Instead, our coders attempted to code mediation sessions “live” (i.e., watching from an observation room in the clinic and coding mediation sessions as they were occurring). As might be expected, given the complexity of our initial coding system, which had dozens of codes, we were unable to reach an acceptably high level of inter-rater reliability with our initial coding system. Even though the original coding system was unreliable, some exploratory analyses suggested interesting findings. For example, as had been predicted, the first hour of CI and CF mediations, relative to the first hour of the MAU intervention, included more discussion of “impact of divorce on children”, “developmental information about children”, “need to minimize parental conflict”, and “importance of stability and consistency for children”. As another example, as would be expected, child consultants in CI were more likely than child consultants in CF to “incorporate the children’s own words and emotions into the discussion”. As a final example, following child consultant feedback to parents in CI and CF, mediators were more likely than mediators in MAU to be engaged and listening to parties and to praise parties, but they were less likely to discuss financial issues (probably due to being more focused on child issues). Thus, even though our initial coding system was too unreliable to be validly used, the findings produced on a few coded behaviors do suggest that a more reliable coding system could work to detect hypothesized differences between the three forms of mediation.
As noted, due to low inter-rater reliability, we cannot obtain publishable data from our initial coding system. Yet, a reliable and valid coding system is important for several reasons. First, from a SOTL perspective, the coding of what is occurring in mediation sessions is the only way to observationally document what is actually occurring in mediation and thus to describe the impact of our interdisciplinary training. How do student behaviors differ in MAU, CF, and CI? How do law and psychology students interact together when conducting mediation together? How does having a student from the other discipline affect the behavior of a student from one discipline (e.g., how is the behavior of the law student mediator affected by having, or not having, a psychology student child consultant working with them in the mediation?) Second, measures of therapist adherence and competence are considered crucial to any good program evaluation study. Such measures essentially function as a manipulation check, to demonstrate that the interventions were implemented as they were designed to be implemented. Therefore, developing such a measure is an important lesson, for the law and psychology students, in how to conduct program evaluation research.

The main change we need to make is to develop a coding system that can be used to capture what is happening in mediation sessions with live, online coding. While no observational coding systems for mediation exist, such coding systems exist in other areas (e.g., coding marital interaction or parent-child interaction). Such coding systems usually differ from our original coding system in multiple ways. Basically, our original coding system was called a macro-analytic coding system. As such, it provided one rating, per behavior coded, summarizing the coded behavior across the entire mediation session. Coders were to watch the session, making notes as they watched, and then provide an overall judgment of whether a behavior occurred and its frequency (e.g., an adherence measure—did the mediator or child consultant engage in the behavior and, if so, how often) and how competently the student engaged in the coded behavior (e.g., how well did the mediator or child consultant do the listed behavior). In contrast, online, live coding systems generally use micro-analytic coding methods. They code many fewer behaviors than we had in our original coding system. But they code each of the very limited number of codes regularly—either on a small time scale (e.g., each behavior is coded every 1 minute or every 5 minutes) or on other defined units (e.g., every speech turn is coded). Micro-analytic coding does not allow coders to rate their overall impressions of the session. This is both good and bad. For example, such coding avoids a bias to see the session, and everything in it, as good or bad but also doesn’t allow coders to know the eventual consequences of behaviors when making their ratings. Micro-analytic coding systems have other advantages relative to macro-analytic systems. For example, by coding the same behaviors multiple times in a session (in real time), such coding systems allow counts of behavior rather than just coders’ impressions. In addition, given multiple ratings over time, patterns of behavior across a mediation session can be observed using more sophisticated data analytic methods (e.g., growth curve modeling or time series analyses to observe whether certain categories of behavior increase in frequency over the course of a session). If one wants more global impressions of the observed session, the micro-analytic codes can be summed across the session, to reflect overall differences across different observed session, or coders can be asked to make global, summary judgments of the session at the end of their viewing; we will consider both options.

In general, it is difficult to apply macro-analytic coding systems to live and complex interactions, unless the observed interactions are recorded, as recording allows sessions to be viewed multiple times. Thus, given that we must do live coding of sessions, we are requesting funds to develop a micro-analytic coding system. In the first summer of funding, we will hire, part-time, a psychology graduate student and a law student to work together to help us modify our existing coding system into a much shorter (fewer codes) micro-analytic coding system. They will help us select a limited number of the most important behaviors to be coded, and they will help to pilot how often the codes should be rated (e.g., every 2 minutes or every 5 minutes). We had students help us develop our past coding system and view student involvement in developing the coding system as part of our inter-disciplinary training program. The law student will be a trained and experienced mediator, and the psychology student will be a trained and experienced child consultant. As a result, both will be familiar with MAU, CF, and CI mediations and able to help develop the coding system. We also will purchase equipment that will allow us to set up a closed circuit system to observe (and thus code) the mediation sessions in two rooms at the law school clinic; for coding, it is important to be able to adequately observe what is occurring in mediation sessions.

Once the coding system is developed, we will hire a computer programmer to develop a program that will allow coders to code directly into a computer database. For example, the coder will sit with a laptop computer, watching the mediation session. The coder might rate five codes every five minutes. These codes are directly entered into the computer data base program, allowing for easy access, storage, and later analyses of the coding data. Such recording of data will allow us to then use the new coding system for our SOTL goals. We will be able to compare the behavior of students in MAU (which does not use the interdisciplinary training and only involves law student mediators) with that of students in CF and CI (which involves our interdisciplinary training and both law and psychology students working together). In other words, we will have a direct measure of student behaviors and can study the impact of interdisciplinary training on students using research methodologies common in psychological research.
References


**Budget**

**Personnel:**

Psychology graduate student:
- Summer 2012, 8 hours per week X 10 weeks = 80 hours X $10/ hour = $ 800
- FICA at 7.05% = $ 56

Law student:
- Summer 2012, 8 hours per week X 10 weeks = 80 hours X $10/ hour = $ 800
- FICA at 7.05% = $ 56

Computer programmer:
- Fall 2012, 30 hours X $75 per hour = $2,250
- FICA at 7.05% = 159

**Total Personnel:** $4,121

**Equipment/Supplies:**

Equipment to set up closed circuit system that will allow coders to watch mediation sessions in either of two rooms at the law school clinic. Each clinic mediation room requires the purchase of the following equipment (estimates obtained from law school audiovisual personnel): Color camera for $260; video splitter for $220; hanging microphone for $158; DVD machine for $80; and various cables, camera bracket, and connectors for $235 (list of each necessary cable available, upon request); total per room = $953 X 2 rooms = $1,906

Two laptop computers, for recording codes during live coding @ $700 per computer = $1,400

**Total Equipment/Supplies:** $3,306

**Total:** $7,427

**Budget Narrative:**

In the first summer, we will hire, part-time, a psychology graduate student and a law student to help us take our initial coding system and develop it into a new, micro-analytic coding system. This will provide these two students with additional interdisciplinary training, while providing us with input from students who have served as a mediator (law student) or child consultant (psychology graduate student).

In order to code the mediation sessions, we must observe the sessions. At the law school mediation clinic, coders will sit in an observation room and watch (via computer monitors) and listen to (via headphones) what is occurring in a mediation room, via live transmission from a webcam and microphone in the mediation room. Thus, we need webcams, microphones, and headphones to observe mediation sessions. It is important that the microphones be good quality, as hearing the content of the mediation sessions, while preserving confidentiality, is crucial for accurately coding what occurs. We need this equipment for two mediation rooms, as the parents in mediation are sometimes separated into two different rooms. This equipment will also indirectly continue to benefit graduate and law student training after the proposed project is completed, as faculty supervisors will be able to observe students’ mediation sessions and provide students with detailed supervisory feedback.
The current, best way to code with a micro-analytic live coding system is to have coders watch a session with a computer at hand. At set intervals (e.g., every 5 minutes), a sound reminds the coders to quickly record their codes. The codes and coding scale appear on screen. Coders quickly record their codes and then keep watching, until the next reminder. These data, having been directly entered into a computer, are then automatically transferred to a computer data file for storage for later analyses. To accomplish this, we need to hire a computer programmer. We received estimates, from the computer experts in the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences regarding how long this programming job might take and what hourly rate we might have to pay someone to do this job. In addition, to ease the online coding of live mediation sessions, coders need to enter data directly into a computer. Thus, we plan to purchase two laptop computers.

**Research Plan and Timeline:**

Our project timeline is 12 months, beginning in Summer 2012. In Summer 2012, we will hire, part-time, a psychology graduate student and a law student to help us take our initial coding system and develop it into a micro-analytic coding system that can be used, reliably, to code sessions live. We also will purchase and install the equipment necessary to observe mediation sessions from two law clinic rooms. Once the new coding system is developed, in late Summer 2012, we will hire a computer programmer to write a program for recording coding data as sessions are being coded live. In consultation with our department computer experts, we believe that this programming job will only take approximately 40 hours. Thus, the coding system should be ready at the start of the Fall 2012 semester.

In the Fall 2012 semester (and perhaps into the start of the Spring 2013 semester), we will code mediation sessions using the new coding system, studying inter-coder reliability and producing data on what behaviors students engage in during MAU, CF, and CI sessions.

Then, during Spring 2013, we will analyze the data, to examine the impact of our interdisciplinary training on law and psychology student behavior in mediation. We will write papers to be submitted to a national conference and a peer-edited journal about our training program and our suggestions for future interdisciplinary education in family law. We will report our findings at a SOTL conference and at an interdisciplinary law and psychology conference, such as the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts.