A FRAMEWORK FOR COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP IN PROVIDING INTENSIVE TECHNCIAL ASSISTANCE

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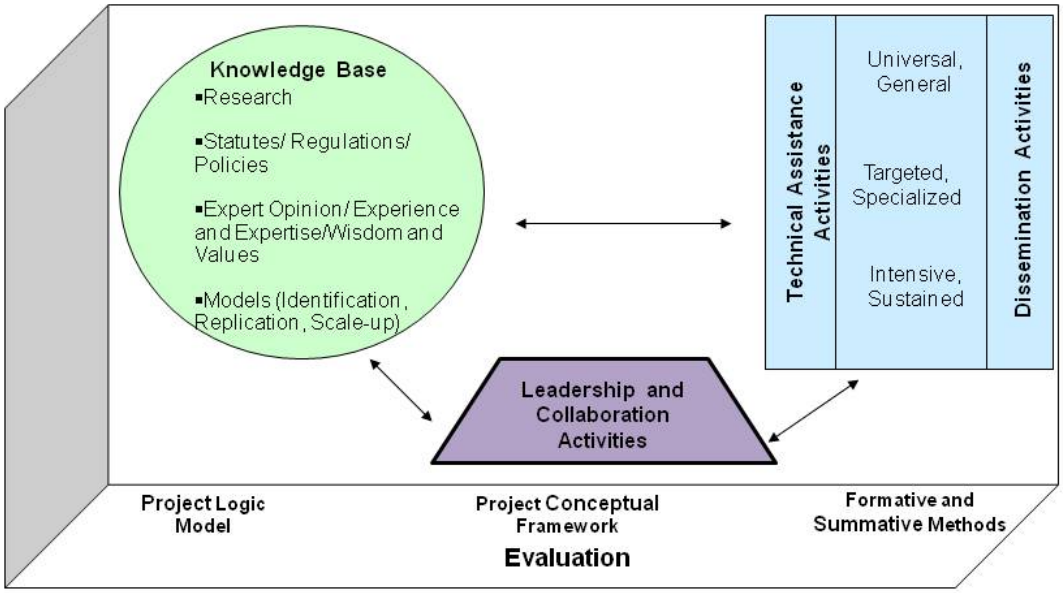
Purpose

The OSEP Conceptual Framework Model, as represented in Figure 1, has been drafted by OSEP to provide a conceptual model for technical assistance by funded projects. In order to provide practical applications for use in the design of specific TA activities, this paper builds upon and adapts the three levels of technical assistance (TA) in the OSEP Conceptual Framework: (1) universal, general, (2) targeted, specialized, and (3) intensive, sustained.

Figure 1: OSEP Conceptual Framework Project Example (11-08)



The document is based on the principles and strategies of effective TA: coordinated and collaborative service delivery that results in long term, sustained systems change, while incorporating standards of professional development for adult learners. The service delivery process and contextual factors discussed are designed to

improve the efficiency and effectiveness of technical assistance, especially to those entities needing intensive and sustained technical assistance.

The levels of technical assistance activities in OSEP's Conceptual Model are described as follows (http://www.rrfcnetwork.org/content/view/459/47, downloaded August 11, 2008):

> *Universal, General: Passive technical assistance and information provided to independent users through their own initiative resulting in minimal interaction with TA Center staff. This includes one-time invited or offered conference presentations by TA Center staff. It also includes information and products such as newsletters, guidebooks, research syntheses, downloaded from the Center's website by independent users. Brief communications by TA Center Staff with recipients, either by telephone or email, are also considered General/Universal. Evaluation and continuous feedback are a requisite of General/Universal TA.*
>
> *Targeted/Specific TA: Technical assistance service is developed based on needs common to multiple recipients and is not extensively individualized. A relationship is established between the technical assistance recipients and one or more TA Center staff. This category of TA can be one-time, labor-intensive events, such as facilitating strategic planning or hosting regional or national conferences. They can also be episodic, less labor-intensive events that extend over a period of time, such as facilitating a series of conference calls on a single or multiple topics that are designed around the needs of the recipients. Facilitating Communities of Practice (CoPs) can also be considered*

Targeted/Specific TA. Evaluation and continuous feedback are a requisite of Targeted/Specific TA.

Intensive/Sustained TA: Technical assistance services that require a stable, on-going negotiated relationship between the TA Center staff and the TA recipient, and should include a purposeful, planned series of activities designed to reach an outcome that is valued by the individual recipient. This category of TA should result in changes to policy, program, practice, or operations that support increased recipient capacity and/or improved outcomes at one or more systems levels. Evaluation and continuous feedback are a requisite of Intensive/Sustained TA.

This paper is composed of two sections. The first provides the literature and research base relevant to defining and identifying effective practices in the following areas: technical assistance, coordinated and collaborative service delivery, professional development, change/systems change, and coaching/mentoring. This section also introduces the conceptual framework for building collaborative, effective technical assistance. It is not intended as an exhaustive review of the literature; rather, it serves as the foundation and basis for the model of TA presented. The second section is a case example demonstrating the application of these practices.

Section 1: Literature and Research

Technical Assistance

Defined: Technical assistance (TA) is defined by Trohanis (1982) as "an innovative, responsive, and systemic approach" that "builds links between knowledge and actions" (p. 119). He further clarified that technical assistance "involves the

provision of quality content and/or process expertise via a responsive, continuous, and external system to assist clients and their organization to change or improve for the better" (p. 120). In 1983, Trohanis wrote that "technical assistance is a planned endeavor that uses a variety of strategies consisting of carefully designed activities directed toward positive results over time. To be successful, TA draws on persistent energy, trust, collaboration, and goodwill" (p. 42). Effective technical assistance includes *intervention* of practices that are scientifically based, as well as effective *implementation* of practices (Fixsen & Blasé, 2008).

Principles: The identification of principles to guide the delivery of technical assistance needs to be identified prior to any agreement to provide TA. *A*n "overlooked, yet critical aspect in the development and delivery of technical assistance is the identification of the principles that guide services and assist in decision-making" (Sharpton 2000.p. 1). In this way the technical assistance provider and/or agency is able to specifically identify the principles that guide the technical assistance and then compare requests for TA to these principles. Principles of effective technical assistance noted by Sharpton (2000), the Southwest Educational Development Lab (1998), and Trohanis (1982, 1983, 2001) emphasize expert knowledge of the service providers, joint problem identification/assessment, capacity building in the receiving organization, target setting for both the technical assistance agency and the receiving organization, as well as multiple strategies for provision that address adult learning styles.

Philosophical Perspective: Two distinct types of TA emerge based on differing philosophical perspectives of technical assistance agencies or organizations (Trohanis, 1982). One type of TA emerges as "a responsive approach tailored to meet individual

client-identified needs" and "may provide only supportive assistance from a non-evaluative perspective" (p. 121). This approach is built on a client-centered, facilitative relationship. The other type of TA is a more directive approach that "may assume, in part, a regulatory or monitoring role" (p. 121). This more directive approach is premised on a diagnostic and corrective approach to address client needs. For example, provision of a directive approach may be based on OSEP Letters of Determination, Compliance Agreements, and court orders. Regarding providing technical assistance, Trohanis (1982) states, "it is imperative that each TA program clearly define its philosophy, clientele, authorization to operate, purposes, delivery strategies, allocatable resources, use of consultants, and so forth before operations get under way" (p. 121).

Systems Change/Building Capacity

"*A system is a perceived whole whose elements "hang together" because they continually affect each other over time and operate toward a common purpose* (Senge, Kliner, Roberts, Ross, Roth, Smith, 1994 p.90). Today our worldview is in the midst of change (Ackoff, 1996). Our global society demands a new paradigm, shifting from a worldview developed during the Renaissance Age and moving through the Industrial Age, into the present age of systems thinking. Systems thinking is defined as understanding the relationships of people and organizations (Winer & Ray, 1994). The old worldview was based on reductionism, or analytic thinking, which is the process of breaking the whole into its various parts. In order to understand a system, analytic thinking says that the various parts must be disaggregated and analyzed separately.

In contrast to analytic thinking, systems thinking says that in order to understand any part of the whole, we must first understand the larger system of which it is a part.

Systems' thinking is a view of a system made of two or more parts, with each part's behavior affecting and interacting with the whole. These interrelationships comprise a system. A system is defined as *a group of key individuals and organizations that interact to produce a benefit or to maintain ways of living, working, and relating. A system is a perceived whole whose elements "hang together" because they continually affect each other over time and operate toward a common purpose* (Senge, Kliner, Roberts, Ross, Roth, and Smith, 1994 p.90). According to Winer & Ray (1994), s*ystems thinking synthesizes the various parts and reveals why a system works* (p.129).

TA providers working to facilitate change must be able to incorporate systems thinking into the provision of technical assistance. If the TA is focused solely on one part of the organization, the interacting elements will begin to pull apart the work that has begun while competing priorities, philosophies, and policies will undermine progress toward the desired outcome. For this reason, key individuals from each of the interacting parts must be involved in the initiation, be informed throughout the process, and, ideally, be involved in the implementation. Much like the wheels of interlocking gears, all systems must work in concert in order for the machine to run smoothly.

Systems' thinking in the complicated world of today requires that practitioners and TA providers change the way in which they think, learn, and act in order to bring about results (Easton, 2008). Change requires thinking differently. Fullen (2008) addresses the complexity of change in his *6 Secrets of Change* that recommends a holistic technical approach, involving employees, peers, capacity building, and learning in work, transparency, and systems learning. Senge et al. (1994) applied systems thinking to develop a framework for understanding the interconnected nature of systems

and how they interact with one another. When applying systems thinking to technical assistance, the following laws outlined by Senge et al. apply: *the harder you push, the harder the system pushes back; the easy way out usually leads back in; faster is slower; small changes can produce big results—but the areas of highest leverage are often the least obvious (p.*92). Technical assistance must provide a pathway leading to change that includes new materials, new behavior/practices, and new beliefs/understanding.

Framework for Systems Change Technical Assistance

A systems approach to technical assistance that results in change must build capacity and focus upon improved performance. In order for change to occur, an emphasis upon all elements of the system is necessary.

Systems thinking, as applied to technical assistance, must first be approached by understanding all of the complex parts. This includes the wider educational system, (including health and human welfare), political systems, cultural aspects, social forces, and departmental interactions. Synthesis of the various parts leads to understanding of why a system works the way it does. Technical assistance which fails to focus on the interconnected nature of the systems and how they interact will result not only in resistance to change, but also may exacerbate the problems we intended to solve. *An unintended consequence of applying TA from an analytic approach is that it undermines an individual's ability to help him or herself. Applying linear thinking and static tools to nonlinear and dynamic problems often lead to solutions that produce tomorrow's problems* (Ackoff, 1996, p. 9).

A systems approach is outlined by Fixsen, Naoom, Blasé, Friedman, and Wallace (2005) in which the core components for effective implementation of evidence based programs include: program evaluation, facilitative administrative supports (systems intervention), selection of activities, preservice and inservice training, ongoing consultation and coaching, and staff evaluation. TA providers need to determine when, where, how, and with whom the new approaches can be implemented. All of these "implementation drivers" (p.29) are integrated and compensate for weakness in one area or another. The process is interactive and dependent upon all elements of the system. Feedback loops allow the TA provider to adjust the initiative as needed in order to improve and keep the initiative "on track". Fixsen also cautions that the process is not linear. Each stage includes activities that are designed to create sustainability and that the process takes place over time.

Professional Development

Technical assistance that focuses on professional learning is about organizational change. A systems thinking approach to organizational change recognizes the need for individuals to develop skills in order to help him/herself (Senge, Kliner, Roberts, Ross, Roth, Smith, 1999). Historically, skill development has occurred through training experiences. The term professional development has been in use for a number of years, replacing the earlier term "training". While professional development activities are important to professional growth, they are not enough (Easton, 2008, June). While the term professional development is an improvement over the term "training", the term "development" connotes "improve or expand" what educators know and do. Educators more often need to change their behavior and practices rather than

merely increasing their skills. *Professional learning* (p.756) is a term that emphasizes "learning" and requires change involving whole systems in improvement activities. Professional learning is about *where learning takes place*, *about leadership and governance, data collection and use, appropriate learning activities, evaluation of professional learning, and role changes (p.756)*.

The North Central Regional Educational Lab analyzed effective technical assistance strategies. Recommendations for professional development (or to use the new terminology, *professional learning*) support the theory of change through systems thinking. This holistic approach builds capacity rather than simply building programmatic expertise (Bhanpuri, 2005). In order to be effective, continuous and intensive professional learning needs to cover a broad range of activities. Bhanpuri recommends using data to determine improvement strategies, recognizing potential barriers, providing staff with support and staff development, addressing needs of a diverse group, implementing standards for quality, implementing guidelines, providing appropriate resources and advice on both positive and negative expectations for implementation.

Sustainability of Systemic Change

Too often innovations, new practices, and programs end once the project or direct assistance has been withdrawn. Political climates, budget constraints, personnel changes all impact the sustainability of a new approach. *Successful and sustainable implementation of evidence-based practices and programs always requires organizational change (*Fixsen & Blasé, 2008. p.18 ppt). Sustainability of a new approach must be institutionalized into the fabric of existing structures (Adeleman &

Taylor, 2003). Adeleman and Taylor formulated four stages with steps in each stage that are designed for sustainability and systems change. These include (1) preparing a strong argument for sustainability, (2) mobilizing interest, (3)consensus, and (4) support among key stakeholders, clarifying feasibility, and initiating the implementation process necessary for systemic change.

While no single model has been identified that predicts sustainability of innovative practices, several themes appear to be consistent in ensuring the sustainability of a technical assistance activity. Nine school districts reviewed by Century and Levy (2002) were successful in sustainability of initiation and implementation of innovative practices. From their analysis, the following themes emerged:

1. Adaptability is critical to sustainability of a program. Unless a program is able to adapt, there is a likelihood of it being perceived as too expensive, politically challenging, or too difficult to continue.
2. Each new program that was implemented moved through three stages: establishment, maturation, evolution. In each of the stages, different goals and strategies were needed and each stage evolved.
3. Contextual influences impact the success or failure of reforms. Sustainability of new programs *must be compatible with the culture or they may likely fail, even if well-intentioned* (p.3). Success of a reform must be embedded into the daily work of the project.
4. Factors such as accountability, instructional materials, leadership, and funding affect sustainability in unexpected ways. For example, successful

5. Intangible factors affect sustainability. These include critical mass (breadth and depth of the program), program history, implementation and adaptation, perception, philosophy, and quality.

Coordinated and Collaborative Service Delivery

A distinction must be drawn between “coordinated” and “collaborative”. In the *Collaboration Communiqué* (2001), the distinction between coordination and collaboration is made based on “intensity.” The first relationship level is cooperation requiring the least intensity; the second level is coordination, and third collaboration. As it relates to coordination, the “relationships are more formalized; each partner’s roles are more clearly defined and divided. This also involves a clearer understanding of the project’s mission. Though each partner retains authority, risk increases because resources are made available and rewards are shared” (p. 1). “Collaboration entails the *highest level of intensity.* A common mission is essential, as each partner contributes to the creation of a *separate collaborative organization*. *Risk is much greater*, because power is held by the collaborative structure rather than by each participant. In ‘collaboration,’ both resources and rewards are shared” (emphasis in original, p. 1).

“Coordination” implies such activities as coordinating calendars, phone calls and meetings, while collaboration is the working together for a common purpose. Friend and Cook (1990) examined collaboration as a predictor of success in school reform and contend that the extensive knowledge base on collaboration in school reform can be drawn upon to address effective technical assistance to state systems and districts.

More recently they defined collaboration as "a style for direct interaction between at least two co-equal parties voluntarily engaged in shared decision making as they work toward a common goal" (Friend and Cook, 2007, p. 7). Collaboration is characterized as including:

- equal contributions and decision-making power,
- a shared goal or problem,
- shared responsibility for the problem-solving process,
- shared accountability for the outcome, and
- shared resources.

Technical assistance that is approached by imposing external standards increases the risk that reform will merely be superficial compliance without leading to change. Establishing the conditions for collaboration can lead to the empowerment of staff responsible for implementation change. TA providers who have worked in a collaborative relationship with the states/districts empower them to play a critical role in setting and operationalizing new standards and adapting them to meet the unique needs of the particular state/district.

Intensive Sustained Technical Assistance

Effective technical assistance includes *intervention* of practices that are scientifically based, as well as effective *implementation* of practices (Fixsen, Blasé, 2008). Implementation involves a technical assistance process that begins with planning, starting with the end in mind, or “backward mapping”. The question to be asked is “what is the desired outcome?” Adelman and Taylor (2003) identified four stages of technical assistance (1) planning, (2) implementing, (3) sustaining, and (4)

going to scale. Based on the work of Fullen (2001), Senge (1990), Christakis (2006), and NCRtI (2008), these authors incorporated their experiences into an expansion of the four stages suggested by Adelman and Taylor into five stages for intensive, sustained technical assistance: 1) discovery, 2) planning, 3) initial implementation, 4) transformation, and 5) sustainability.

Discovery: Technical assistance begins with the discovery process. Discovery is an inquiry process designed to define what the task is to be accomplished, examine relevant documents, conduct data assessment, and develop rapport with the partners. The goal of the discovery process is to reach a better understanding of the organization, the context in which it operates, what needs to be accomplished in order to achieve the outcomes, along with an understanding of the barriers to implementation.

During discovery, the TA providers engage the partners in a process of dialogue by framing a triggering question that targets the overarching concern and focuses on the desired outcome(s). Christakis, (2006) identifies four stages of the dialogue process: (1) design of the intent: “What should we do?” (2) development of alternatives for the action: “How can we implement?” (3) selection of the preferred action: “Which action is best for the situation?”, and (4) planning for action or “When will we do it?” (p. 48). Although discovery is a preliminary step, consideration needs to be given to designing the TA evaluation to determine the effectiveness of the TA and whether the expected results have been achieved.

Planning: The planning process is a collaborative approach by the partners. During the planning process, a work plan is designed, including mutually agreed upon tasks, delineated roles, and an action plan. Critical to the collaborative approach is that

TA providers share goals, exhibit parity, share accountability as well as resources, and that all partners enter into the situation voluntarily (Friend & Cook, 1990; 1998; 2007).

During the planning stage, the TA providers develop a design for implementation, select actions, and develop specific timelines for the assistance to occur, recognizing that timelines may be adjusted as the plan is implemented. As the plan is formalized, there must be discussion of the methods and the points at which progress of implementation are to be reviewed or evaluated.

Throughout the planning process, clarifying questions are asked of the partners that shape the overall context and design of the process. Careful consideration must be given to existing practices and the linkage between those practices and the desired new practices and behaviors.

Initial Implementation: The initial implementation seeks to establish the overall approach and “buy in” of the participants. This stage focuses on building capacity within both individuals and the group. The development of a shared sense of vision and purpose between the TA providers and their partners is integral to initial implementation. Creating a shared vision allows people to develop a sense of commitment, envision the outcome they would like to see, and create a focus for the stated purpose of the technical assistance (Senge et al., 1999).

During the creation of a shared vision, recipients of TA are also engaged in new learning. The process of professional learning enables staff to link the actual work being done into the new learning taking place. Working to develop personal mastery of new skills begins during the initial implementation and is reinforced throughout the TA process. Senge et al (1999) emphasizes the importance of development of personal

mastery and the need for TA providers to work with the participants toward their own development. When people can begin to link an issue into what is personally motivating to the overall mission or outcome, a “pull” for change occurs rather than a “push” against the traditional style of top down, mandated management. Coaching throughout the process by experienced leaders provides people with an overall design and management of the process.

The stronger the change initiative, the stronger the resistance will be (Senge et al., 1999). The barriers to initiating change are articulated by participants during the initial implementation. Reactions such as “We’re under staffed”, “We don’t have enough money to do this”, or “There isn’t enough time” are often presented as barriers to full implementation. By anticipating these barriers, it becomes easier to deal with them. It requires time and energy to prepare for these anticipated challenges before they are confronted directly.

Reviewing the work plan is the first evaluative step during the implementation of the plan of work and as transformation is anticipated. This step requires determining the extent to which the action steps have been or are expected to be implemented, whether the timelines continue to seem reasonable, and whether the plan will lead to the expected outcomes. These formative evaluation steps are critical to the progression toward systems change.

Transformation: Systems change means that the *organization must change* in order to support the work of the practitioners, and, finally, the system must be transformed to sustain the innovations statewide. Transformation begins as the staff builds upon existing knowledge and acquires new learning. Team learning, or staff

learning, begins through the interaction of the group and encompasses skillful discussion, utilizing the experience and expertise of participants, and mobilizing their energy in order to achieve the common goals (Senge et al., 2000). “The whole is greater than the parts” is the underlying principle of team learning, or the philosophy that each individual’s skills contribute to the learning organization. Group discussion is guided though a review of best practices, relevant documents, and current practice. All participants create and agree upon initial timelines for implementation.

Learning becomes a part of work as people are engaged in the process of new learning. During this process, people need experienced and compassionate guidance from those who have experienced the same thing and know how to manage and guide the process (Senge et al., 1999). These experienced leaders are called “coaches” or “mentors”. Technical assistance that is focused on systemic change must provide ongoing intensive help and support throughout the development and implementation stage and is critical to successful outcomes. Fixsen et al. (2005) suggests that the role of the TA provider is one of “purveyor”. The purveyor must focus on multiple levels of interventions that include the practitioners and the organization, as well as county and local contexts. Thus, the TA provider or, to use Fixsen’s term, “purveyor”, who is engaged in intensive TA becomes a coach and mentor. The role of coach and mentor is to enable staff learning to take place.

“The stronger the profound change growth process, the greater the requirement for coaching, guidance, and support” (Senge et al., 1999, p104). Coaching does not provide solutions but facilitates learning; it must exist within an atmosphere of integrity

and is voluntary on both sides, recognizing that this relationship must be built over time. It is not a permanent relationship and is a high leverage strategy to bring about change.

The role of coaches is to provide experienced and compassionate guidance to people who are engaged in learning new skills and strategies. Coaches provide both communication and teamwork along with technical knowledge. “The essence of coaching is listening” (p. 106). The coach facilitates “personal mastery” of staff (Senge et al., 1999). By developing personal mastery, staff increase their knowledge, skills and abilities as well as change in attitude, behavior and beliefs. Subsequent learning enables the organization to work toward common goals leading to change.

Sustainability: The likelihood of sustaining new approaches will be increased when it becomes part of the basic work of the organization. In order for this to occur, technical assistance must be approached through a systemic change perspective (Adelman & Taylor, 2003; Fullen, 2001; Fixsen, et. al, 2005; Senge et. al 1999). Senge et al. (1999) uses the term “profound change” to describe organizational change. He describes organizational change as a change in not just learning new things but in building capacity for doing things in a new way. Change can only be sustained if the emphasis is on both inner and outer changes that get to the heart of issues. A change in strategies, structure, and systems will not occur until the thinking changes.

Florian’s (2001) analysis of variables that affect sustainability was corroborated by the intensive TA case example presented in Section Two. These variables are: *(1) ongoing engagement and development of human capacities, (2) school and district culture/climate, (3) structures of education system, (4) school and district leadership, and (5) political context.*

Returning our attention to Century and Levy (2002) who identified five themes from the research on sustainability, it is important to remember:

1. "…We came to understand that a 'maintained' program had well-established core elements (e.g., instructional materials, professional development program, leadership plan) that were commonly accepted as standard practice. Programs that had become "sustainable," however, had moved beyond maintenance and had developed the ability to *evolve*" (p.2)
2. "Each sustained program … moved through three stages of development that we named *establishment, maturation,* and *evolution*" (p. 3).
3. "Contextual conditions influence the sustainability of programs" (p. 3).
4. "Factors expected to affect sustainability do so in unexpected ways" (p. 4)
5. "Intangible and sometimes invisible factors affect sustainability in pivotal, dramatic ways" (p. 5).

The goal of any technical assistance activity is to provide the organization with tools that enable them to become self-sufficient in implementing and sustaining change, no longer needing outside assistance. Behavior management theory recognizes the need for gradual reduction of reinforcements, or fading, to maintain change in behavior. The same process is needed in providing an exit strategy for technical assistance. Fading technical assistance is the gradual withdrawal of assistance. Face to face meetings are reduced until there is no longer a need. Contact by teleconference and email remain as long as needed, usually becoming less and less frequent until the need for direct assistance no longer exists. The timeline for exiting depends on a number of variables,

including changes in the political structure as new appointments of key positions are made. While the TA plan should provide an estimate of projected dates for withdrawal, it is important that these key variables are addressed and that some level of support may be maintained in order to ensure sustainability.

Conclusions and Concluding Comments

Successful collaborative partnerships are built upon shared ownership of successful outcomes for the TA activity. All are equal partners, with each member bringing to the table a distinct set of skills, experience and expertise. The following elements are essential to establishing a collaborative partnership between TA providers and the receiving agency (adapted from Hord, 2002):

- Share expertise and leadership.
- Maintain communication, with frequent interaction throughout the process.
- Commit time and energy.
- Allocate resources.
- Consider organizational factors.
- Relinquish personal control.
- Engage strong, enthusiastic leadership.
- Create an atmosphere that displays personal characteristics of willingness to share, patience, and persistence.

Successful collaborative partnerships build upon work that each TA provider has conducted, and upon the relationship and readiness of the state/district. These partnerships involve agreement and commitment to common outcomes and procedures

to achieve the intended outcomes. The development of a common work plan identifies the activities each will conduct and specifies the resources that each will provide. Honoring established timelines and showing respect for each partner's working style and expertise are behaviors critical to building collaborative partnerships.

Lessons Learned

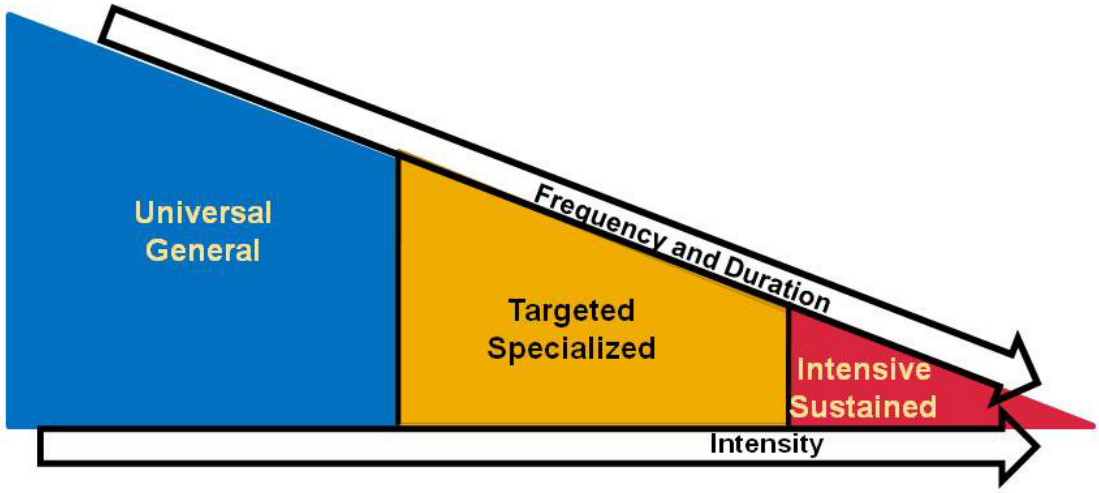
- Thoughtfully decide upon the needed TA relationship – coordinated or collaborative.
- Gently push, don't shove.
- Use the Socratic teaching method to explore reasoning/meaning behind actions (ex. "Tell us where you would find…").
- Use successive approximations
- Present new materials/methods in stages – too much information can be overwhelming.
- Be prepared to be happily surprised, as well as dismayed.
- Learn together as a team, e.g. the "systems change" process.
- From the beginning involve personnel from all levels of the organization – policy makers, program and monitoring personnel, and data managers – and maintain routine contact.
- Celebrate success.
- A small gesture affirms and goes a long way (cake or cookies after a successful milestone).
- Make sure that all team members fully understand before moving on.
- Enter into dialogue and ask questions.
- Practice the new learning.

- Conduct a pilot before full implementation; review, evaluate, and make changes as needed.
- NEVER preach.
- TA providers cannot control final decisions; they can guide, suggest, and point out possible outcomes, yet the final decisions are those of the recipients

Section 2: A Case Example: Intense, Frequent, and Sustained TA

This case example describes steps and activities in providing TA to a state with multiple and significant areas of concern, using an adaptation to the technical assistance levels in OSEP's Conceptual Model of TA (see Figure 1). It is considered, however, that much of the conceptual framework described through the case example can be adapted to states with less significant areas of concern. Also, this case example relies on work with state staff related to IDEA Part B; yet, as noted in the previous sentence the expectation is that the conceptual framework would be applicable for state TA related to IDEA Part C.

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework for Intensive Technical Assistance*

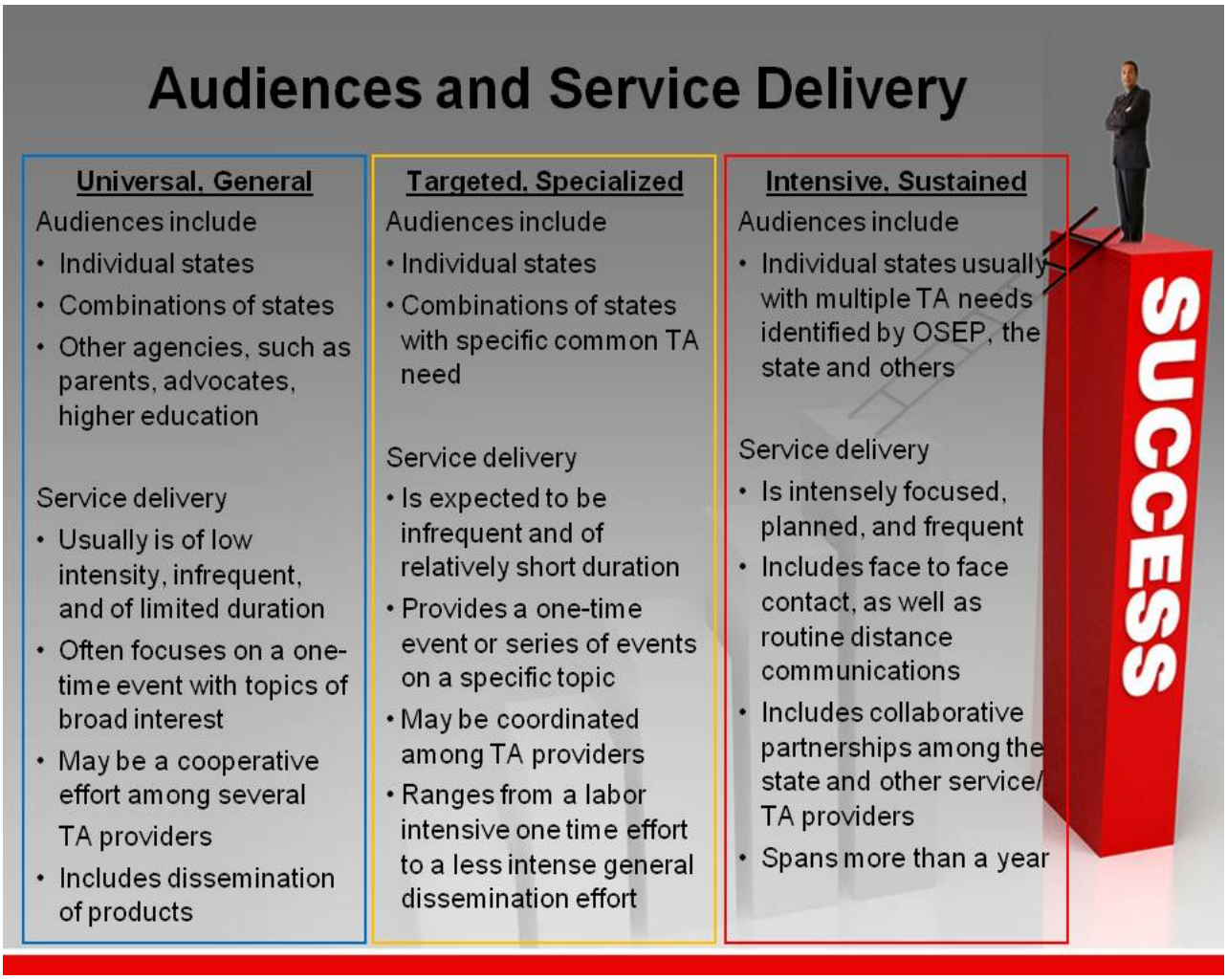


*Note: this graphic is adapted from the OSEP Conceptual Model.

The adaptation of the model is used to demonstrate that the more significant or intensive the needs of the state, the greater the frequency of contact, the longer the duration of service, and the higher the intensity of the work for both the state and TA providers. As frequency, duration, and intensity of need for TA increases, the fewer the

total number of states. The box below provides a general description of each of these categories of TA.

Figure 3: Identifying the Audiences and Service Delivery by Category of TA



This case example is developed based on the work of the Southeast Regional Resource Center (SERRC) and the Data Accountability Center (DAC). We have adapted from the works of Senge (1990), Fullen (2001), Adelman and Taylor (2003), NCRtI (2008), and Christakis (2009) to identify five stages in the provision of technical assistance with states having intensive and multiple needs and with the purpose of sustained systems change. These stages are 1) discovery, 2) planning, 3) initial

implementation, 4) transformation, and 5) sustainability. Appendix A provides a graphic depiction of the stages, components of each stage, and timelines.

Stage 1: Discovery

At the beginning of any personal relationship, those involved go through a process of discovery or learning about the other. A technical assistance relationship involves personal interactions with a similar process of discovery and the added dynamic of discovering what each party – the TA provider and the recipient – brings to the relationship and what would be the benefit of the relationship.

The goal of the discovery process is to reach a better understanding of the organization - the context in which it operates, what needs to be accomplished in order to achieve the outcomes, and understanding the facilitators and barriers to implementation. Often a general assessment and discussion of the need for TA is the beginning point for discovery.

Needs Assessment- General: This case example focuses primarily on describing a state with significant needs in the areas of general supervision and data quality identified through an assessment of needs. The first part of the discovery process was a general needs assessment that included reviews of the state's Annual Performance Report (APR) and State Performance Plan (SPP), the State's OSEP Determination for the past two years, and data submission and accuracy history through records maintained by the Data Accountability Center (DAC). The DAC is a project funded by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). DAC's mission includes supporting the submission and analysis of high-quality IDEA data by reviewing data collection and

analysis, and providing technical assistance to improve state capacity to meet data requirements (www.IDEAdata.org).

After the needs assessment through document review, the Southeast Regional Resource Center (SERRC) and DAC engaged in a discussion of the state's needs. SERRC is uniquely positioned to provide information on the state's needs because of its experience with the state as a resource and TA provider. SERRC is part of the Regional Resource Center Program that "is funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs. The RRCs assist states in carrying out activities that support programs for special education and related services for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities and their families" (http://www.rrfcnetwork.org/content/blogsection/8/54/). SERRC provides TA to 10 states and territories in the southeast region of the United States. SERRC's knowledge and experience with the state served as an invaluable data source.

It is important to note that personnel from SERRC and DAC have experience providing TA in a coordinated manner to states. It is considered that this relationship facilitated the needs assessment process of discovery. Thus, the general needs assessment process continued with the consultation of the DAC and the SERRC.

A final step in this general needs assessment process was discussion with the state's OSEP contact and team leader to review identified needs and triangulate the assessment conclusions. Once the general needs of the state were identified, it was important to determine the willingness or receptivity of the state to accept TA from SERRC and DAC. This was initially accomplished through phone calls and email correspondence.

Needs Assessment - Specific: Identifying targeted areas of need requires a focused discussion with the state staff. In preparation for a state specific discussion, it is important for TA providers to review other sources of information, if available. Examples of potential sources of information include the OSEP documents such as the reports from the state's verification visit(s), compliance agreements, special conditions, and/or the State website. Publicly available state documents that might be useful to review include reports of state and local data and 618 data. The specific needs assessment process begins based on the general and external needs assessment process, yet must progress to a critical internal discussion.

The specific needs assessment process was conducted with state staff on-site in the state. Two activities were used with state staff to identify needs. The first activity was to review the paper *Developing and Implementing an Effective System of General Supervision: Part B* (NCSEAM, 2007) followed by completion of the tool *Assessing the Evidence of a System of General Supervision: Part B* (NCSEAM, Draft April 2007). The second activity was to complete an *Indicator Data Source Table*. This activity required state staff to identify the exact source of data for each SPP indicator, challenges – if any – to data collection and reporting, and personnel responsible for the data and/or indicator. Additionally, it was used as a record of baseline and performance over time. In addition to identifying targeted need areas, these activities engaged the state staff in discussion of their current operations.

The composition of the state staff team must include those involved at programmatic, compliance, and policy levels. Examination of state operations requires that staff at all levels of involvement be present to share, learn, and critically discuss the

"state of the state." This state level examination also considers the organizational context, including initiatives, supports, barriers and constraints.

Executive leadership involvement is necessary for change to occur. This does not imply that leadership takes a "top down," directive approach (Senge, 1999). The executive leader is responsible for the overall accountability of the organization and for producing results. Involvement of leadership is vital to initiating significant change, providing support and inquiry, and working toward decisions being known across multiple levels. The leader also recognizes that involvement means personal attendance and engagement with staff and TA providers beyond mere acceptance of the TA. Today's executive leader recognizes the necessity of having the support and assistance of the staff in order to be effective.

In this state case example, the State Director and assistant were usually present at the beginning and end of each TA visit, as well as periodically throughout the visit. The purpose of their presence at the beginning was to welcome the TA providers and encourage staff to learn; it further served an additional purpose of validating and lending credence to the TA work being done. The purpose of their attendance at the end of the on-site visit was to learn what occurred and was accomplished.

Description of TA Need: A written description of specific state needs can be developed as a result of the general and specific needs assessment activities; a written description helps to formalize and codify the technical assistance request. This description begins the process of building a shared vision and gives structure to the relationship among the state and TA providers.

The description also guides the development of a shared plan of work. Finally, from this description the state staff and TA providers form a team to write measurable outcomes with specified timelines.

Development of Rapport: The successful provision of technical assistance requires, as Trohanis (1982) wrote, “persistent energy, trust, collaboration, and goodwill” (p. 42). Before these can be developed, rapport among the state team and among TA providers is vital. Building upon this theme, Friend and Cook (1990; 2007) identify six conditions for collaboration: mutual goals, parity among participants, shared participation, shared accountability, shared resources, and voluntariness.

Rapport development begins during the needs assessment processes. Rapport is linked to the conditions for collaboration. Rapport provides the connection among TA providers and the state team. As TA providers establish rapport, they increase their ability to provide coordinated and collaborative technical assistance services. Establishing rapport with the state team allows for affinity and understanding of the state context and is vital to effective planning, implementation, transformation, and, finally, for sustainability. TA providers introduce rapport development during the Discovery Stage; however, in order for rapport to truly occur, it must be cultivated over time and at each TA stage.

Stage 2: Planning

Planning is an often overlooked area in the provision of technical assistance because of the time required and level of detail necessary for accountability. OSEP recognizes that for intensive TA to be effective, it must be planned. In the description of levels of technical assistance activities, they write, “These [TA] activities include a

purposeful, planned series of activities that are designed to reach an outcome identified by the TA recipient" (http://www.rrfcnetwork.org/content/view/459/47). Similarly, Trohanis wrote that "technical assistance is a planned endeavor that uses a variety of strategies consisting of carefully designed activities directed toward positive results over time" (1983, p. 42).

Expected Measurable Outcomes: Using the description of state specific needs formulated during the Discovery stage in the case example, the state team and TA providers began to negotiate the expected measurable outcomes for the state. Implicit in the development of outcomes was target setting that included timelines for achievement. The outcomes were organized according to work areas adapted from the writing of Lillie and Black (1976) and Trohanis (1980; 1982; 1983; 2001) on the provision of technical assistance. The work areas identified were knowledge/awareness, skill development, product development, and decision change. The action of writing expected measurable outcomes began to develop shared accountability for both the state and TA providers. This shared accountability became more fully developed with the specific plan of work and identification of responsibilities. Examples of measurable outcomes in each of the work areas are listed below:

- Knowledge/Awareness: Increase knowledge of the SPP/APR data sources, the state's initiatives, SPP/APR improvement activities, and issues of concern by July 2009 as measured by increased evidence on the tool to assess general supervision.

- Skill Development: Demonstrate enhanced management routines for collecting and using 616 and 618 data by having written procedures by November 2009.
- Product Development: Collect data through an integrated monitoring activities framework and pilot the on-site data collection methods by May 2009.
- Decision Change: Examine potential changes in policy as a result of the revision to the enforcement actions, specifically implementation of sanctions, in February 2009.

Backward Mapping Process: Once the measurable outcomes were identified, the state team and the TA providers worked together on mapping from the outcomes to the specific action steps needed. This backward mapping was important in building shared participation and responsibility. Caution: Avoid getting lost in the details during this activity. Trying to identify every specific step to achieve the outcome could result in more planning than action or attention to individual steps rather than results; however, failing to identify discrete action steps has the potential to encourage inaction and limit the ability of the team to see what it should do next.

Plan of Work: A plan of work can be developed using the action steps from the backward mapping discussion. The plan of work is actually an accountability plan – it identifies what needs to be done and who – state or TA providers – has specific responsibilities. Appendix A includes a sample TA plan that incorporates elements from Discovery through Planning.

The plan of work is a working document that directs action and allows for modification when determined necessary. In order for a plan of work to be effective, it must be referenced and reviewed at regular intervals. Regular reviews serve to remind everyone of the work to be done and outcomes to be achieved. These reviews also serve to ensure that the course being taken fits with the steps expected to lead to the measurable outcomes or to inform of the need to reconsider and possibly revise the plan. To ensure that these reviews occurred in the state case example, the agenda for on-site work included a review of progress in meeting the outcomes at six months and nine months. A one year to 18 month timeline was initially used for all expected outcomes. The entire case example plan was to be reviewed, accomplishments evaluated, and decisions made for the future at the 18 month date.

TA Implementation Team: Earlier we wrote that it is important to include personnel with programmatic, compliance, and policy responsibilities in the state team during the needs assessment. It is equally important to have each of these areas represented during planning and subsequent stages.

Success of the project depends on the participation of the right players (Tyree, R.L. 2001). Key people should be selected according to the following:

- Impact – people who have decision making authority.
- Implementation – people who are involved in implementation of the change, including those who are resistant.
- Interest – people who have diverse perspectives.
- Expertise – people with expertise/knowledge of the problem that is to be resolved.

- Imagination – an “outsider” who has a unique perspective.

At this point, it was important to include the state’s OSEP contact and team leader. As it was important during the needs assessment process for states with multiple and significant needs, it was also important for the state, TA providers, and OSEP to discuss the plan to address these needs.

Yet even as we acknowledge and recognize the importance of maintaining contact with OSEP, it must be emphasized that the TA providers must be perceived as trustworthy by the state. “A TA program should develop continuous, trusting, and mutual relationships with its clients. Open and shared channels of communication should be maintained” (Trohanis, 1982, p. 124). The state must be considered the client by TA providers. They must maintain confidences of the state and work to assure mutual respect and trust.

Two items introduced during planning are evaluation and sustainability. There are multiple types of evaluation during the TA work. One that emerges from the plan of work is the routine review of the measurable goals and objectives. Evaluation also involves obtaining feedback from the recipients of the TA to determine the responsiveness of the providers and extent to which the TA is meeting the recipient’s needs. Additional evaluation activities take place and shape the TA at each stage. Even as planning occurs for implementation, consideration of the sustainability of the changes expected from the TA needs to begin at this stage. This is the point at which the four phases of the change process begin. These stages are (1) creating readiness, (2) initial implementation, (3) institutionalization, and (4) ongoing evolution and creative renewal (Adelman and Taylor, 2003).

Stage 3: Initial Implementation

Initial implementation can begin with a plan to guide the work. This plan specifies outcomes; however, during implementation, the state TA team and TA providers develop the vision and build their individual and team capacity to meet the specified outcomes. From the work of Senge et. al (1999), we know that this shared vision allows state personnel to develop a sense of commitment, envision the accomplishment of expected outcomes, and focus for the stated purpose of the technical assistance.

Personal Professional Learning: Initial implementation requires that individual team members build their personal professional mastery which will allow the state TA team to learn together and grow as a team. Individual professional learning is necessary for team members to understand how the outcomes envisioned link to the work they do daily. Building the bridge or connection between current knowledge and that necessary to achieve the specified outcomes requires TA providers and the state TA team to engage in interactive discussions and explorations.

In this case example, one of the first professional learning experiences was that of developing a district self-assessment document to collect information on the extent to which districts were implementing IDEA requirements using evidence grouped according to the SPP indicators. As the document was developed, the State TA team was directed to use the Part B Related Requirements document (http://www.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/bapr/2008/5relstedrequirements081308.doc) to differentiate between good practices and regulatory/statutory requirements. This activity engaged the State TA team in a refinement process that also helped them to

differentiate between requirements of a current court order, the good practices they wanted to see in schools, and IDEA requirements.

For example, the State TA team reviewed a “requirement” that parents receive a copy of the IEP upon the completion of the IEP meeting. After discussion and review of IDEA requirements, the State TA team determined that providing parents with a copy of the child’s/student’s IEP is required, yet not necessarily upon the conclusion of the IEP team meeting. The specificity of the apparent “requirement” had arisen from a court case requirement. We do not want to diminish or negate the requirements states face from sources other than IDEA; however, we want to highlight that it is necessary for State personnel to have a clear understanding of the sources of requirements.

Team or Staff Learning: Even as we describe the provision of technical assistance in this paper as a seemingly linear experience because of the constraint of presentation, it is important to acknowledge how much of what is described occurs in a simultaneously and iterative manner. This is true of team learning. Even as State TA team members are increasing their individual knowledge bases, the team is learning together as they engage in activities necessary to achieve the expected outcomes.

One method of developing team learning is to identify tasks to be completed by the team when the TA providers are off site. In the state case example, after the initial outline of the district self-assessment document, the State TA team finalized the document, developed the materials to teach districts how to complete the self-assessment document, and conducted the teaching sessions.

The importance of team learning is dispersion. This means that no one individual is responsible for being the expert. This method emphasizes that the State TA team is

responsible, even as individuals may have more responsibility for certain activities than others. With the self-assessment example, the State TA team engaged in a team scoring activity to build team understanding and reliability into the process. Once the self-assessment documents were received from districts, the State TA team, with assistance from the TA providers, engaged in a whole group scoring activity for three districts to develop written criteria. Once the criteria were written and distributed to all team members, groups of two scored another set of three districts. These were exchanged across groups to establish reliability and the written criteria were refined. The final scoring step was for individuals to use the written criteria to score self-assessments, then exchange with a colleague.

As staff learn together they increase their personal professional learning and contribute to joint understanding. As Senge et. al (1999) has noted the intent of group learning is for the whole to be greater than the individual parts. Thus, team learning begins the process of building the capacity of the organization.

Organizational Capacity Building: Organizational capacity building is important in transforming and bringing about sustainable change. Organizational capacity building begins, as noted, with the individual professional learning and team learning yet extends to ensuring there is broad based understanding of the changes. This broad based understanding includes both those who will implement at compliance and program levels and those who have the policy implementation responsibility.

In a practical sense, organizational capacity building means that all those with implementation responsibility must be involved. One of the most effective means of ensuring this broad based involvement and understanding is to have all those with

implementation responsibility meet face-to-face on a routine basis, while maintaining communications and contact between these meetings.

States with significant general supervision and data quality needs must approach a number of areas simultaneously. Even as a plan of work appears to be linear, work begins on multiple areas at once.

Earlier there was the example of one approach – the self-assessment – that the state used to collect monitoring data. Yet this was only one activity and area that the state had to address. In this case example, the state also needed to address the quality of data collected for reporting under Section 618, as well as collection of data to verify correction of noncompliance. Work in each of these areas needed to begin during initial implementation in order to develop a coordinated approach.

The challenge TA providers faced was how to develop mastery of learning parallel with the new learning that must occur. For the State used in this case example, learning was introduced in the following stepwise manner:

1. Developed district self-assessment document.
2. Introduced districts to the self-assessment and required submission.
3. Scored district self-assessments using group, paired, then individual work sessions to develop written criteria and reliability.
4. Critiqued this initial self-assessment to revise and enhance.
5. Reviewed specific elements of the database.
6. Ran test reports for specific data collections and information requests.
7. Developed monitoring manual to describe
    a. the monitoring activities, including self-assessment and on-site;

b. data bases and other sources to inform monitoring activities, including data verification, student record selection, and general district information;
c. data collection forms;
d. enforcement; and
e. incentives.

8. Reviewed policies as a result of revised monitoring and data use activities.

This simultaneous, yet continuous forward progression approach allowed the state to address multiple areas.

Initial Formative Evaluation: Formative evaluation steps are critical to the progression toward systems change. After implementation of the case example's plan of work had been in place for six to 12 months, it became time to review the work plan. This action was important to determine the extent to which the action steps had been or were expected to have been implemented, whether the timelines continued to seem reasonable, and whether the plan would lead to the expected outcomes.

Stage 4: Transformation

The transformation stage is the point at which the state begins to incorporate or integrate the new learning. Transformation is a difficult stage to describe completely because of its gradual nature. To truly transform an organization there will be successive steps forward, occasional mis-steps, and sometimes an apparent failure. Yet, even the apparent failure points out where additional teaching and learning are needed and serves an important function for both the state and TA providers.

Professional Development and Staff Learning: Transformation is the time when professional development actually begins. Even as there was professional learning

during the initial implementation stage, now professional development can truly occur. Easton (2008, June) describes professional development as a time to “improve or expand” what educators know and do. Because professional learning has occurred, the State personnel can now improve upon and expand their learning.

TA providers need to take opportunities to build professional development and staff learning into the work. There may need to be formalized events that aim to strengthen the State personnel in a particular area or there may be more informal teaching moments.

In this case example, professional learning and development occurred after the first district assessments were returned to the state by the districts and group scoring began. The TA providers learned that the designed self-assessment had been modified. The state staff had determined as they were developing the activities for presentation to the districts that there was “too” much material and had adjusted. During the scoring process and building upon their initial learning of regulatory items and good practice, they realized the modification had, for some SPP indicators, reduced the regulatory items. The result of this reduction was that they learned it became more difficult to determine whether there were compliance concerns. Thus, staff learned and professionally developed their collective knowledge.

Organizational Leadership and Structure: During transformation, it is critically important to review the changes occurring and expected to occur with state leadership. Another important leadership and structure review is the composition of the state team and any expected organizational or political changes. For example, when an election is expected and there might be reason to believe there will be changes in administration in

the State organization, it is important to assess the extent to which personnel changes would affect the current work. It is recognized that TA providers cannot ensure that change does not occur; yet, they can assist in beginning to build adaptation that is necessary when changes occur.

Change in leadership did occur in the state in this case example after state elections. A new governor appointed a new Secretary of Education, and the state director and assistant were no longer in those positions. A new state director was appointed, and the former head of monitoring activities was appointed as the assistant to the director. Additionally, one of the monitoring activities staff became the new lead for monitoring activities.

Thus, the change in team composition does not inevitably cause a failure in transformation, yet it does change the team dynamic and may slow the process. A change in team leads may also affect and/or slow the transformation. A new leader, even when previously involved as a team member, must now learn and act as the leader. The fluid nature of organizations requires the return at times to activities of initial implementation – staff learning and transformation - professional development and organizational leadership and structure. Even though these shifts may seem minor, maintaining a degree of continuity becomes a barrier to transformation.

Mentoring and Coaching: The roles of TA providers as mentors and coaches become very apparent during the transformation stage. The technical assistance becomes focused on systemic change and the providers must provide ongoing intensive help and support.

The TA providers use questioning and situational examples to assist states in identifying (learning) next steps. Thus, in the case example provided of the self-assessment revision, the state staff had the skill to identify necessary regulatory and good practice items.

Critical Evaluation and Evolution: Even as organizational leadership and structure and critical evaluation and evolution are acknowledged as separate stages, it is vitally important to perceive them as overlapping. This is probably the first formal evaluative examination of the work between the state and the TA providers. One of the first activities of transformation is to evaluate the efforts and activities implemented to date. This activity provides the state with a reflective period to compare and contrast the "new" activities with those from the past. It is a time for critical review and decision making.

The importance of this examination is to ensure the expected consequences of change are agreed upon and to identify unexpected consequences and continuing barriers. It is also a time of re-commitment. Each informs the other. Critical evaluation and evolution include the review of the jointly developed plan of work and determination of accomplishments. These activities involve asking what changes have occurred since the initial plan was written. Changes may include a recent determination by OSEP, the conclusion of specific special conditions, the addition of special conditions, a change in administration or re-organization, or fiscal constraints. Each of these will affect the continued progressive work.

The word evolution was used purposefully here because it connotes the changing nature of organizations and relationships. Specifically, evolution means, "A

gradual process in which something changes into a different and usually more complex or better form" (American Heritage Dictionary, 2000). As the state addresses the significant and multiple TA needs and transformation occurs, the system changes – it evolves.

The caution especially during the evolutionary transformation again is to watch for unexpected consequences. One such consequence—work overload--occurs because work is not linear. For example, in the state that served as the basis for this case example, an unintended consequence was to initially almost double the workload. This occurred as the personnel were writing new procedures, verifying correction of noncompliance, teaching users to use the electronic database, and teaching districts how to conduct a self-assessment all within a six month period while continuing the "all other duties assigned." The solution here is to move toward new routines that, in fact, build a better – more effective and efficient – way of working while returning the workload to accomplishable.

Stage 5: Sustainability

Creating systems change that is sustained after direct technical assistance, including coaching, mentoring, and routine contact, is withdrawn is an intended outcome. The challenge for both states and TA providers is planning for adaptable sustainability of the state. Century and Levy (2002) wrote, "We came to understand that a 'maintained' program had well-established core elements (e.g., instructional materials, professional development program, leadership plan) that were commonly accepted as standard practice. Programs that had become 'sustainable,' however, had moved beyond maintenance and had developed the ability to evolve" (p. 2). We see that

adaptation and ongoing evaluation with refinement as keys to sustaining systems change intended for states with significant needs.

Adaptation in Changing Political and Organizational Climates: State agencies exist within political and organizational climates. The expectation is that the strategies, the skills, and the new ways of operating that resulted from the technical assistance continue in sustainable systems change, even when there are political changes. To achieve this expectation requires, as has been noted, that those involved range across policy, compliance, and program areas and that multiple persons in each area are involved. This breadth and depth provide infrastructure and limit the dependence on any single unit or individual.

Political changes can affect the state agency and make sustaining organizational change within the agency difficult. A new leader, a new mission, or a reorganization may affect sustainability. Again, an expectation is that change that has transformed will be able to continue. Yet, it would be unrealistic not to acknowledge that some changes have a greater effect on sustainability than others. That is why we address adaptation.

States adapt as a result of at least two events. The first is adaptation as the result of evolution; the second is adaptation as a result of political or organizational change. The former can help the organization to remain viable and responsive. The latter can have a similar outcome; yet it is the adaptation for which TA providers have the least control.

Ongoing Evaluation and Refinement: Evaluative activities have been noted since the planning stage and continue to serve the purpose of guiding, aligning, or redirecting the state in making systems change. OSEP's conceptual model for TA notes that at

each level “evaluation and continuous feedback are a requisite.” Similarly, evaluation and continuous feedback are a requisite of the actual provision of TA.

According to literature and based on experience, sustainable change does not begin to be apparent for four to seven years. The collaborative state TA upon which this case example is built has an approximate 18 month history and is still in the transformation stage. It is not possible at this juncture to fully describe the state’s ability to adapt and evolve.

Concluding Comments

The provision of technical assistance is a human endeavor. Even as we talk about provision of TA to a “state,” the provision of TA is actually to the staff, the people. The emphasis on building rapport among the TA providers and the state staff needs to be reiterated. The need for trust and mutual accountability as well as “vesting” in the expected outcomes results from the development and maintenance of rapport.

Even as TA providers and states develop rapport and a successful working relationship, there is always an expectation that TA will be unnecessary at some point. This requires the consideration of how to move the provision of TA from intensive and sustained to targeted and specialized and, finally, to general. This discussion needs to begin during the planning stage and continue with each evaluative step. Movement from frequent and intense contacts for broad based work to more specific and targeted work must be systematic, yet smooth and planned so as not to withdraw supports at the critical point of transitioning from transformation to sustainability. There also may be starts and stops in this shift because of the need to adapt and evolve. Caution must be

taken so that the relationship between the TA providers and the state team does not sustain from habit even though the expected outcomes have been achieved.

A final observation that relates to the challenges states face in transforming and sustaining change. We have identified and discussed the possible difficulties when there are state political and/or organizational changes. What also must be acknowledged are the national political and statutory or regulatory changes. For example, IDEA 2004 introduced major changes with the SPP indicators, annual performance reporting, and state determinations. These changes affect the states' abilities to move from initial implementation to transformation to sustainability. These national changes may also affect the length of the TA relationship and identified exit strategy because it changes the essential nature of the state's TA need.

It bears repeating as we end this paper that the provision of TA, especially to states with multiple and intense TA needs is not linear. The political, organizational, and regulatory contexts may change. The state personnel may change or be re-arranged. Just as the adaptability of states is emphasized for change to be sustained, those providing TA must also adapt and evolve.

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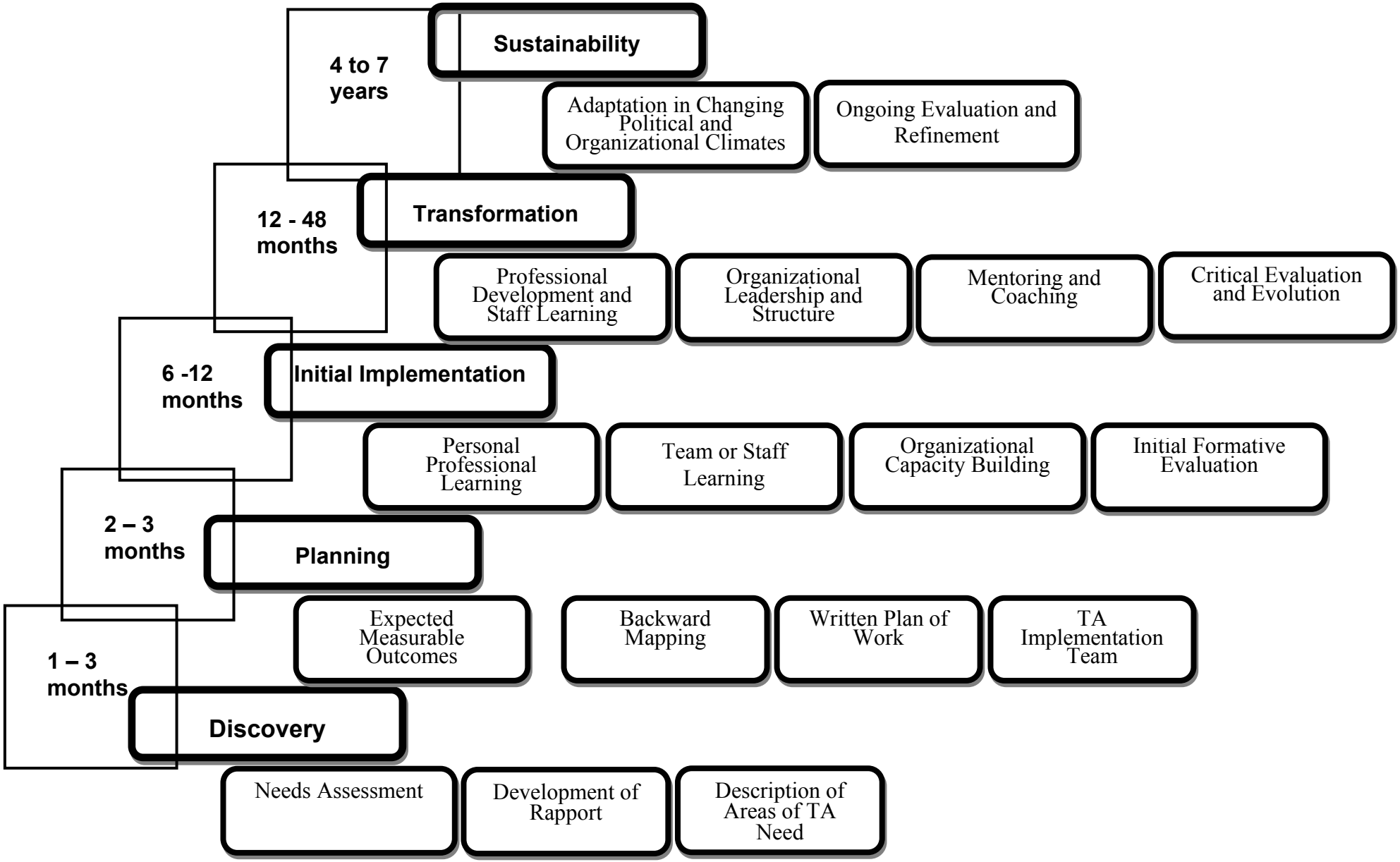
Appendix A

Five Stages for Building Effective and Efficient Technical Assistance

Five Stages for Building Effective and Efficient Technical Assistance



APPENDIX B: Sample Plan of Work

SUMMARY OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY STATE:	**SUMMARY OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY OSEP:**
The state identifies their immediate concern as a need to restructure the monitoring division and the monitoring activities, including how to collect information and data from all levels. The state is also changing to a new electronic individual student data base. **AGREED UPON TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDS (616 AND 618):** 1. To develop multiple data collection methods that are reliable and valid, including methods of collecting monitoring data. 2. To develop reports to generate the data necessary for 616 and 618 reporting. 3. To write monitoring procedures, including enforcement actions. 4. To analyze data collected, including monitoring data, to make decisions and report (to OSEP) (616 and 618).	Compliance Agreement: The state must submit to OSEP all data necessary for compliance with the requirements of administration of Part B of IDEA, especially data required under sections 616 and 618. Special Conditions: The state is required to provide timely evaluations; ensure placement in the least restrictive environment; issue written decisions to formal complaints within 60 days, unless the timeline is extended due to exceptional circumstances; identify and correct noncompliance OSEP Determination: OSEP determined the state to "need intervention." OSEP On-site Verification:

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDS OUTSIDE THE WORK SCOPE OF DAC:
Items #1 and #3 are specifically outside the workscope of DAC. These needs will be addressed through the facilitation of SERRC (see below).

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE OUTCOME(S) AND MEASUREMENT(S) to be achieved in the next 12 months:

__1__ Knowledge/Awareness (provision of information and awareness-introductory information): Review and enhance knowledge/awareness of the components of general supervision. Also, increase knowledge/awareness of the various data collections (616 and 618).

a) demonstrate an increase in the partially and clearly evidenced requirements of an effective general supervision system by one for each of these components: SPP; Effective Dispute Resolution; Data on Processes and Results; and Integrated Monitoring Activities by March 2009.

__2__ Skill Development (acquisition and/or refinement of skills): Skill in collecting data, both 616 and 618, will be demonstrated by timely submission of 618 data and refined on-site data collection methods.

a) identify data sources and methods of collecting monitoring data for each SPP indicator by November 2008.
b) submit 618 data from electronic collections by February 2009.
c) collect data valid and reliable data during monitoring activities and for annual performance reporting by February 2009.

__3__ Product Development (conceptualizing, designing, and rendering a new or revised product): Have a framework for collecting data through integrated monitoring activities and use the on-site data collection methods.

a) have written outline for conducting monitoring activities by June 2009.
b) have piloted on-site monitoring activities, including dissemination of written reports of findings, by August 2009.
c) have evaluated and revised monitoring activities outline by October 2009.

____ Decision Change (reaching an informed decision that may involve policy change):

Responsibilities of the State	Responsibilities of DAC	Responsibilities of Other TA Agency: SERRC
1. The State Director identifies a general supervision team familiar with monitoring, data, SPP/APR, and other general supervision components. The General Supervision team 2. participates in review/re-orientation of the components and requirements of general supervision self-assessment. 3. participates in the identification of SPP data sources and methods and potential solutions. 4. draft on and off site monitoring activities with data collection forms and strategies. 5. pilots the monitoring activities in select districts using the drafted outline procedures. 6. revises the monitoring procedures, including data collection forms and strategies. 7. critically participates in the interim self-assessment of progress. 8. tests generating 618 data collections using electronic database. 9. develops routine validations for the electronic database. 10. develops verification methods.	1. Facilitate identification of data sources and collection methods for each SPP indicator to develop a matrix that shows data collection and reporting strengths and needs for each indicator/indicator cluster. 2. Co-facilitate discussion of monitoring activities; specifically the identification of methods and strategies for collecting 616 and 618 monitoring data. 3. Review specific 618 data collection and reporting issues and identify solutions with timelines. 4. Lead discussions of how 616 and 618 data collections inform the SPP/APR and monitoring process. 5. Assist the state to identify specific reports to test the electronic database. 6. Assist the state to identify methods of data collection, including monitoring data, to ensure timely, valid, reliable, and useful information. 7. Facilitate discussions of validation and verification routines.	1. Provide review/re-orientation of the components and requirements of an effective general supervision system. 2. Facilitate self-assessment of the evidences of the requirements of each component of general supervision. 3. Provide examples of monitoring documents from other similar systems. 4. Co-facilitate monitoring activities discussion; specifically the procedures and process. 5. Facilitate the discussion and outlining of monitoring activities. 6. Facilitate the critique/evaluate the piloted monitoring activities. 7. Review and provide comments/ suggestions as monitoring activities are implemented. 8. Review and provide feedback on the revised monitoring procedures. 9. Facilitate interim self-assessment of progress.