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ABSTRACT

Guidelines for state education agency (SEA) personnel who are responsible for the development and implementation of needs assessment activities are presented, with specific reference to the state's Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD). The guidelines were developed to promote compliance with Public Law 94-142. The following four criteria for an effective needs assessment system are examined: the organizational structure, the planning process, the information gathering procedures, and the analysis and use of information. The varied roles of the SEA, the local education agency, the institutions of higher education, and the interrelationships of these agencies in participatory planning are outlined. Suggestions for determining the kinds of information and methods needed to conduct a needs assessment in the context of CSPD are included, along with questions of concern to an SEA administrator, a local director of special education, and a college/university department head. General data collection guidelines, guidelines for designing needs assessment forms, and a sample grid that can be used to choose the appropriate information collection technique for each research question are presented. Finally, obligations for the use of needs assessment information, beneficial uses of results, and quality control concerns are identified. Thirty-five references are appended. (SEW)

COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT: NEEDS ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

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PROJECT ON COOPERATIVE MANPOWER PLANNING IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

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June 1981

Department of Special Education
University of Missouri-Columbia
Columbia, Missouri

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT:

NEEDS ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

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FOREWORD

Three Symposiums were held in May, July, and October of 1980 in order to address the interest and concern relative to the needs assessment aspect of the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) sections of Public Law 94-142. It is recognized that the quality of services provided to handicapped children and youth is, in part, dependent on the systematic assessment and interpretation of needs within the field followed by appropriate action related to those needs. The Symposiums were used as a forum to discuss the importance, concerns, and strategies associated with needs assessment in the context of CSPD. This document resulted from the Symposiums. It is hoped that it can serve as a resource for those individuals who are involved in needs assessment activities. While it is intended to provide an introduction to needs assessment and offer suggestions about related needs assessment activities, it is obvious that no one document can provide information associated with all the diverse concerns about this subject. Instead, this document should be viewed as one resource which can help the reader develop an overview of needs assessment in the context of CSPD.

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PURPOSE OF HANDBOOK

This handbook is primarily intended to serve as a resource to State Education Agency personnel who are responsible for the development and implementation of needs assessment activities. It is designed to assist these individuals conceptualize, plan, implement, and evaluate their annual needs assessment activities. It is felt that this handbook also would be of value to other agencies and individuals who are or will be involved in various needs assessment activities.

The handbook is concerned with needs assessment in the context of a comprehensive system of personnel development (CSPD). The needs assessment content relates directly to this CSPD context.

The handbook offers alternatives for obtaining, analyzing, and utilizing needs assessment information. It suggests the relationship of needs assessment to participatory planning, preservice and inservice training, dissemination and adoption of promising practices, evaluation, and technical assistance.

SECTION I

NEEDS ASSESSMENT: AN OVERVIEW

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The quality of special education services for the Nation's handicapped children depends upon the competence of those who administer, coordinate and deliver the programs. Public Law 94-142 includes specific provisions designed to promote and ensure staff quality in providing a free and appropriate public education for all handicapped children and youth. Each State Education Agency (SEA) is required to develop a Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) according to Sections 613(a)(3) and 614(a)(1)(c)(i) of the Rules and Regulations of Public Law 94-142. The requirement includes participatory planning, needs assessment, inservice and preservice training, dissemination and adoption of promising practices, evaluation, and technical assistance.

This document will focus on the needs assessment component of CSPD. Implementation of a needs assessment not only meets the requirements of the CSPD sections of Public Law 94-142, but also can contribute to quality planning and implementation of any personnel development activities. Needs assessment information can ensure that planning, implementation, and evaluation of such activities are conducted in a systematic manner. Needs assessment information can be used to:

- Validate the need for specific personnel planning activities.
- Lend credibility to programs and planning.
- Serve as a baseline against which to measure progress.
- Indicate strengths of the program as well as needs.
- Project future needs or possible changes.

Requisites

It is essential to determine and clarify outcomes we want from a comprehensive system of personnel development before beginning a needs assessment.

The use of terms such as "to provide a free and appropriate education", "to deliver quality educational services", or "to develop programs that meet compliance requirements" are too general to serve as a standard by which to measure the effectiveness of various training activities of the CSPD.

A more precise description of the goals of educational services is necessary before the CSPD can be appropriately developed. The more specifically the educational goals are stated, the easier our task will be in determining what is needed to reach them.

Review and analysis of existing information suggests that differences in needs assessment purposes and approaches exist among state education agencies, local education agencies, and institutions of higher education. What is required by law and what is intended by law must be stated operationally to enable the participating agencies to understand the basis for soliciting and collecting information and for directing their responses appropriately.

For those responsible for conducting the important task of needs assessment the initial step is to establish certainty relative to goals. Providing this certainty will also provide the basis for the leadership necessary for achievement of the goals. Only after this is determined can the SEA begin to work productively, both internally and with other agencies.

Definition

Needs assessment is a generic process of collecting and interpreting information that will facilitate decision-making related to issues and problems that must be identified and resolved in order to achieve desired results.

Values and Benefits

The needs assessment process provides the opportunity for individuals, agencies, and organizations to interact toward a common purpose. The value of a needs assessment is that it establishes an information base for decision-making; the results may give you a solution or provide a direction which will be helpful in seeking a solution.

Additional benefits of the needs assessment that are often overlooked include the following examples:

1. The procedures used to collect needs assessment information can allow individuals to think about their roles in a program and become more conscious of other roles and concerns. This helps broaden perspectives.
2. Participatory planning techniques strengthen relationships with other agencies and organizations and can lead to the discovery of other mutual concerns.
3. The process of conducting a needs assessment can serve as a staff development model, enabling staff members to identify new skills and identify the need to strengthen existing skills.
4. Needs assessment focuses attention on specific areas of concern allowing public education or public relations activities to be initiated.
5. Needs assessment can clarify related concerns. For example, in assessing the need for paraprofessionals, problems related to incentives and general working conditions for support personnel may become evident.
6. Needs assessment can create a climate of trust and cooperation that broadens the sense of ownership for the actions taken by the group.
7. The process can generate networks for continuous planning, dissemination, and allocation of resources.

In addition, the results of a coordinated needs assessment process can be used to:

- Improve the quality of services delivered to handicapped children and youth.

- Improve the performance of personnel currently educating handicapped children and youth.

- Influence the number of new personnel qualified to meet existing and emerging needs.

- Identify specific needs for the preparation of personnel at both the inservice and preservice levels.

- Establish priorities for meeting program objectives.

- Provide planning information that can be validated.

- Increase efficiency in the allocation of existing resources to priorities in personnel preparation.

The dissemination and sharing of needs assessment results can also assist participating agencies in organizational development activities, such as the following:

- Development of priorities.

- Consideration of individual agency needs in the larger perspective of statewide priorities.

- Identification of resources that will be available as a result of state priorities.

- Solicitation of resources available to address priorities.

- Determination of how an agency can contribute to the total state effort.

The incentive for continued involvement in the needs assessment process is created when participants recognize the benefits of efforts to the agency they represent and to the total state or federal effort. Thus, the effectiveness of needs assessment activities will be enhanced greatly through participatory planning in developing a needs assessment system, through shared ownership among agencies, and through joint implementation.

> *The purpose of a needs assessment is not just to collect and report numbers, but to give direction and focus for meeting needs within a state.*

Criteria for an Effective Needs Assessment System

Four major areas must be considered in developing an effective needs assessment system applicable to the determination of personnel needs: a) the organizational structure; b) the planning process; c) the information gathering procedures; and d) the analysis and use of information. Problems in any one of these areas can make the needs assessment process ineffective.

The Organizational Structure

The organizational structure for planning and conducting personnel needs assessments will vary in size, depending upon the definition of the task. The original group of persons or agencies may expand or contract as the definition becomes clearer. The structure should be sufficiently large to do the job and placed in a position in the organizational hierarchy where it is viewed as important. In determining the most efficient and effective organizational structure for supporting the needs assessment process, consider the roles of the state education agency, intermediate units, local educational agencies, individual teachers, institutions of higher education, and other educational organizations found within the state.

The Planning Process

The responsibilities of the individuals and agencies in planning the needs assessment must be clear. Skills in identifying what information is needed and knowledge about information collection and analysis are necessary in developing an appropriate needs assessment. If the skills and knowledge do not exist, the time, training, and materials necessary to develop them should be provided.

The roles and responsibilities associated with the needs assessment process are discussed in Section II. Factors to consider in planning a needs assessment are addressed in Section III.

Information Gathering Procedures

Discriminate use of existing information will support the collection process. Be certain of the rationale behind the collection of existing information, however. Information reported for a different purpose may vary significantly from information needed for comprehensive personnel planning. For example: "How many teachers are needed?" based on the existing local education agency (LEA) budget may differ substantially from "How many teachers are needed?" based upon the needs of handicapped children statewide, and differ greatly from "How many teachers are needed?" based upon full-time employee figures used by a university for allocating space, courses, and funds for teacher training.

It is essential for you to determine which questions about personnel needs must be answered, identify whatever information already exists, and then design or revise surveys, questionnaires, and other procedures to obtain the information needed for decision-making.

At all levels of responsibility there is a tendency not to reveal needs that will indicate non-compliance with the rules and regulations of Public Law 94-142 or with state or local rules and policies. For this reason, much of the information collected is invalid for purposes of needs assessment, or needed information is not collected. Make every effort to collect valid and usable information. This means that decisions must be made on what information is needed and then systematic procedures must be used in collecting this information. Factors to consider in information collection are discussed in Section IV.

Information Analysis

The compliance monitoring and problem solving roles of SEA staff members also must be clarified with respect to the gathering and use of needs assessment information. This is essential in order to facilitate the incorporation of needs assessment results into the State Plans.

The relationship of the information to the variables within the state must be clearly described. For example, total numbers might indicate that no personnel shortages exist in certain special education categories. However, closer scrutiny of the information may indicate that severe shortages exist in certain areas of the state, while an oversupply exists in other areas. Design the analysis of information to reflect more than numbers; e.g., to interpret long and short term relationships among, changes in, supply of, demand for, and quality of resources necessary to meet educational goals.

The data analysis also should be designed to produce relatively quick results so the information is available within a short period of time. Too often, needs assessment information is out-dated by the time it is reported to the field.

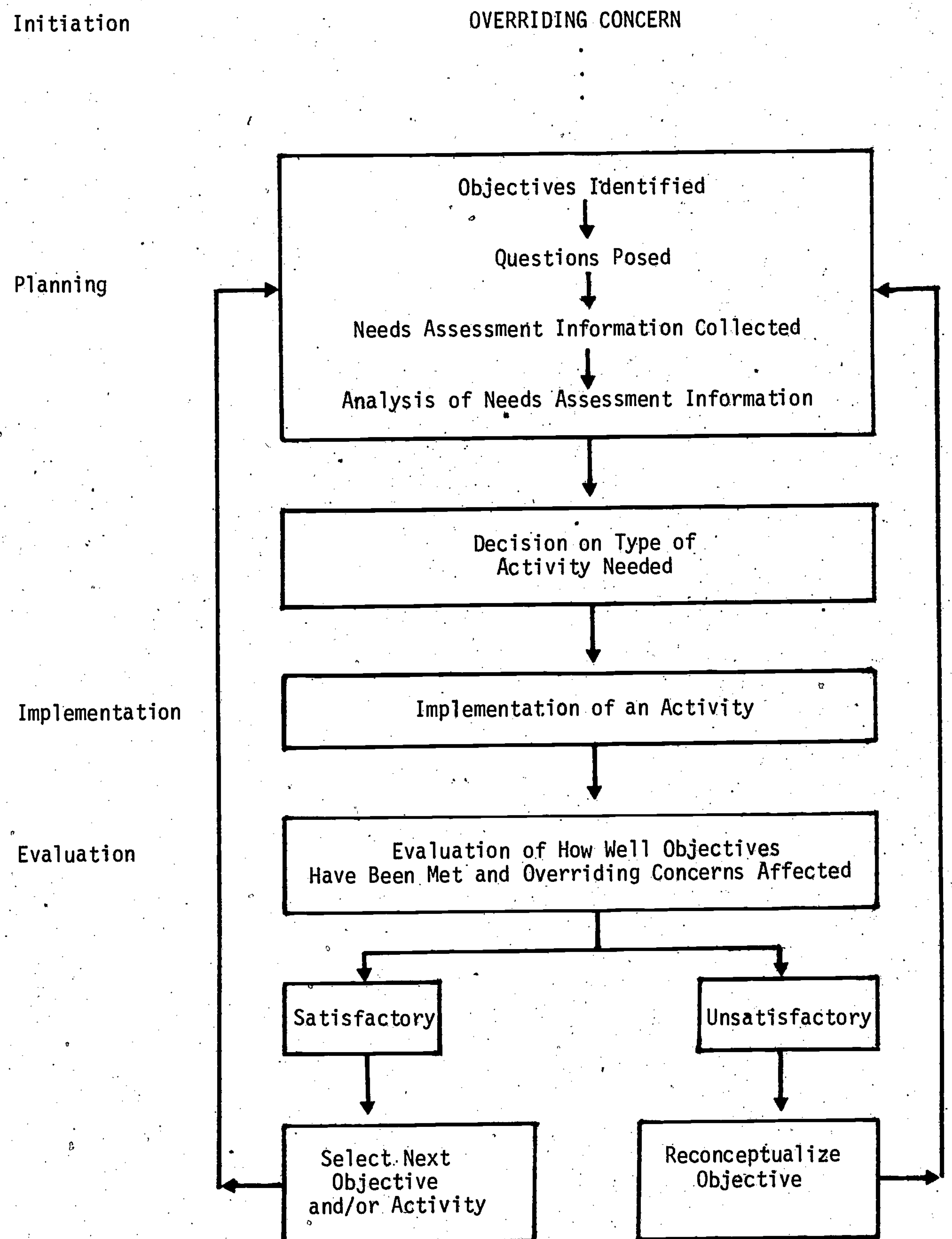
When changes or decisions are made as a result of the needs assessment information, you should acknowledge the source. This emphasizes the use of the information in decision-making and recognizes the process, participants, and product(s) derived from the needs assessment. It encourages continued support of the reporting and collection of needs assessment information. Considerations on the analysis and use of needs assessment results are discussed in Section V.

Needs Assessment in the Decision-Making Process

It is important to understand the place of needs assessment in the decision-making process. Figure 1 represents a schematic model of how needs assessment can influence decision-making. The process begins with the initiation stage when an agency recognizes the need to make decisions related to an overriding concern. At the planning stage, the objectives are identified and questions are posed; the needs assessment provides the information needed to answer these questions. Based on the analysis of information from the needs assessment, the decision is made on the type of activities needed to meet the objective(s). After the implementation of the activities, evaluation of the activities' results is conducted to determine how well the objectives have been met and how the overriding concern was affected. If the results are satisfactory, decisions are made regarding the next objective and/or activity and the process is repeated. If the results are unsatisfactory, the cycle is repeated with the objectives clarified and new questions posed. Additional information is sought to suggest other courses of actions and activities. Thus, needs assessment results provide the basis for decisions.

Figure 1

Needs Assessment in the Decision-Making Process



SECTION II

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

SECTION II

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This section describes the varied roles and responsibilities of education agencies within a state relative to needs assessment. Furthermore, it also discusses the interrelationships of these agencies within the context of participatory planning.

The State Education Agency (SEA)

Public Law 94-142 requires that each State Education Agency annually conduct a needs assessment of General and Special Education instructional, support, and administrative personnel to provide the following information:

1. The number of qualified personnel available;

2. The number of new personnel needed;

3. The number of personnel requiring retraining or development;

4. The content area(s) in which training and retraining is needed for each group; and

5. The target groups requiring training or retraining.

In the annual needs assessment information should be included on all personnel directly or indirectly involved in the education of handicapped children. These personnel include, but are not limited to:

-special education instructional personnel
-regular teachers
-administrators
-psychologists
-speech-language pathologists
-audiologists
-physical education teachers
-therapeutic recreation specialists
-physical therapists
-occupational therapists
-medical personnel
-parents
-volunteers
-hearing officers
-surrogate parents
-vocational educators
-paraprofessionals (teachers aides)
-educational diagnosticians
-others

The SEA staff can use the needs assessment information to increase their organizational management and leadership roles in such ways as:

1. Demonstrating accountability and state compliance with federal mandates.

2. Identifying state needs for retrained and new personnel.

3. Identifying certification needs.

4. Establishing priorities for preservice and inservice programs.

5. Providing information and justification for the allocation of fiscal, personnel, and material resources to meet preservice and inservice priorities.

6. Improving the quality of programs and services to all handicapped students.

7. Providing data to the federal government to:

   a) Demonstrate to Congress the need for existing preservice and inservice programs (accountability).
   b) Gather support for funding needed preservice and inservice programs.
   c) Demonstrate quality programs and services for all handicapped children.

State Education Agencies, therefore, have responsibility for:

1. Developing a consistent needs assessment process (system) which can gather information from sources including:

   a) state advisory committees
   b) local education agencies (LEAs)
   c) intermediate education units (IEUs)
   d) institutions of higher education (IHEs)
   e) non-public schools
   f) parents
   g) other state-operated educational programs
   h) community service providers

2. Acquiring current, accurate and useful information through the statewide needs assessment for the purpose of:

   a) state-level planning and reporting
   b) reviewing and updating the State personnel plan
   c) acquisitioning and allocating resources based on the State personnel plan
   d) completing other CSPD requirements for
      .Technical assistance
      .Dissemination and adoption
      .Evaluation

3. Providing technical assistance to LEAs, IEUs and others in planning, monitoring and evaluating the needs assessment process.

4. Providing coordinated statewide planning, monitoring, and evaluation of personnel development processes with IHEs.

The Local Education Agency (LEA)

The Local Education Agency should be responsible to the SEA for identifying and addressing the conditions required to provide the highest possible quality of educational services to children. For this to occur, you should have:

- .An organized plan of action for assessing needs (administrative structure).
- .A designated person for overseeing the needs assessment activities.
- .A commitment of resources to implement the needs assessment process.

The planning and implementation of the needs assessment process should not be done by just one person. Participatory planning, which includes teachers, administrators, parents, and representatives of various community resources, is necessary to achieve an effective needs assessment system.

Conditions that support successful collection of needs assessment information at the LEA level include having:

1. The designated person be one who has adequate authority in the LEA organizational hierarchy.

2. A local participatory planning committee to promote the needs assessment and ensure its success.

3. Adequate time, support, and personnel allocated to the task.

4. SEA and IHE training resources available to ensure that expertise and support are accessible when needed.

5. Involvement of a number of persons in a variety of positions to assist in the planning and implementation and to increase ownership and participation.

The LEA must develop cooperative relationships with agencies which share their concern and motivation to serve children. Truly collaborative relationships will be enhanced if there is a mutual commitment to share services for conducting a needs assessment and to exchange the resulting information. A primary example of such a relationship is the information exchanged with the SEA. Valid reporting of available LEA data is essential for the SEA to fulfill its role and responsibilities. At the same time statewide information is useful to the LEA for comparative purposes. In addition, identifying LEAs with exemplary programs can facilitate the dissemination of promising practices and material and target needed information to LEAs seeking to improve services.

To fulfill its role, the LEA must provide a clear description of its needs, have well-identified objectives, and utilize methods of measuring progress. This is important because programs provided by other agencies cannot adequately address a poorly defined target. The effectiveness of cooperating agencies in assisting the LEA depends on the ability of the LEA to clearly describe its needs. For further clarification, include a description of what results are expected once the needs are addressed.

The LEA's role is not limited to those children enrolled in public education. A working relationship with non-public agencies has mutual advantages which can result in increased awareness and improved services to all children.

LEAs which are members of a cooperative should coordinate their needs assessment plans. This can be achieved by having a representative from each participating LEA serve on a cooperative Needs Assessment Committee. The results of a needs assessment within a cooperative should reflect the specific needs of each LEA, as well as the broader needs of the cooperative.

The annual needs assessment information is used by the LEA to:

1. Develop a personnel management plan to increase the effectiveness of delivering educational services to children.

2. Identify individual needs in order to establish individual inservice priorities.

3. Identify professional development needs of the staff.

4. Establish priorities for inservice programs.

5. Provide information and justification for allocation of fiscal, personnel and material resources to meet inservice priorities.

6. Provide data to the SEA which will:

   - Demonstrate to the Legislature the effectiveness of existing preservice and inservice programs (accountability).

   - Gather support for the funding of needed preservice and inservice programs.

   - Demonstrate that quality programs and services for all handicapped children exist.

   - Acknowledge the participation of personnel in furthering their own growth and in improving their ability to provide educational services.

   - Allow the results and outcomes of personnel development activities to be publicized and disseminated.

   - Be made available to counselors, high schools and colleges that will enable prospective teachers to make realistic career choices.

Intermediate Education Units (IEU)

Intermediate Education Units include education services centers, resource centers and legislatively-created administrative structures for the delivery of special education services. The role of the IEU in needs assessment usually depends upon state definition and local preference.

Responsibilities of the Intermediate Education Units will vary relative to their lines of authority in delivering services. Responsibilities may include:

1. Facilitating the collection of needs assessment information;

2. Collecting needs assessment information;

3. Providing technical assistance/training in the needs assessment process.

The IEU roles and responsibilities may be similar to those of LEAs as defined by the state. If this is true, the responsibilities previously discussed would also apply to IEUs.

Institutions of Higher Education (IHE)

Colleges and universities are a major source of educational training, technical assistance and consultant services. They are a vital link in the statewide needs assessment, with responsibility for:

1. Supplying information on the number of qualified personnel being trained and the area(s) of training.

2. Reviewing current undergraduate and graduate programs as they relate to state licensure/certification and competencies appropriate to meet the educational needs of students.

3. Identifying the number of IHE personnel requiring retraining and the content of the training.

4. Serving as a resource regarding research in training, model programs, and instructional methodologies.

The information obtained from IHE needs assessment focuses on questions such as:

1. How many students are currently enrolled in the various training programs?

2. What cooperation exists among departments and among colleges and universities preparing personnel in related areas, e.g., medicine, social services, psychology, speech pathology and audiology?

3. What overlap exists across programs?

4. What is the statewide need for personnel by type of personnel?

5. What is the relationship between program (content) and competencies needed by personnel to provide quality programs and services to all handicapped students?

6. What technical assistance and consultant services (human resources) are available to meet personnel needs in geographic areas of the state?

7. What technical assistance is needed to enable the IHE to prepare itself to address the needs?

The needs assessment information is used to:

1. Justify the establishment, revision or elimination of specific courses or programs;

2. Justify projected increases or decreases in enrollment;

3. Demonstrate program responsiveness to SEA and LEA needs;

4. Demonstrate accountability to students by providing them with the skills necessary to satisfy career aspirations;

5. Demonstrate accountability to schools by providing them with qualified, responsive graduates;

6. Justify requests for federal and state funds;

7. Identify trends in service delivery to handicapped students.

Collaborative efforts of the SEA, LEA, IEU and IHE enhances the development and implementation of a well-conceptualized and coordinated needs assessment plan.

Participatory Planning

SEAs, LEAs, IEUs and IHEs may vary in the procedures they employ in conducting needs assessments; a characteristic common of most approaches is a reliance placed on participatory planning. The emphasis is as much on the manner in which participation occurs as the representation of the participants. In carrying out needs assessments in personnel planning, the interagency relationships become central to the planning process. Such relationships depend on the responsiveness of individuals and a general commitment to quality programming. While personal attributes play a major role in influencing how a person interacts with others and, in general, participates in a planning process, there are conditions which enhance participation. Throughout this document an attempt has been made to incorporate suggestions which influence relationships among agencies and the involvement of individuals.

Conditions Which Enhance Participatory Planning

The conditions essential to participatory planning in needs assessment are, for the most part, merely sound planning procedures. They are accented by the value consistently placed on the contributions of all participants, and include the following:

1. The outcomes of participation must be perceived as beneficial to the participants in contributing to the goals of the agency(ies) they represent.

2. The needs assessment procedures employed must be systematic and appropriate for the needs being assessed.

3. Role expectations must be clear for each participant.

4. The manner in which participants are selected should reflect respect for the contribution they have to offer and should be respectful of their ongoing workloads.

5. Needs assessments should be employed primarily to collect data as a basis for making decisions and not merely to comply with regulatory requirements. If the needs assessment is required, then the underlying rationale for the requirement (and not the requirement per se) should be the basis for involvement of others.

6. Beginning with initiation of the needs assessment and throughout the process, attention should be given to the anticipation of outcomes in terms of decisions to be made and/or products to be produced. There should be no confusion regarding why the process is being conducted or the probable point at which decisions will be made.

7. Those responsible for directing the process should be knowledgeable about needs assessment. To a certain extent the person(s) can be developing his or her skills, but the individual must be able to provide leadership. This does not preclude utilizing the skills of participants.

8. Support should be provided at a level sufficient to carry out the activities. Support includes fiscal resources, staff support, and time.

9. The value placed on the needs assessment process and outcomes must be made evident to participants.

10. The climate must be such that participants feel that their views are valued and that the process they are engaged in has merit and will result in decisions being made.

Conditions Which Inhibit Participatory Planning

Certain circumstances interfere with implementing participatory planning. Most of these circumstances are controllable, but some are not. For example, if an SEA has a history of involving IHEs and LEAs in planning activities by exercising its regulatory authority, this history will likely cause agencies to view attempts at participatory planning with suspicion. It is difficult to change perceptions. SEAs with image problems should examine the manner in which they interact with other agencies. Conducting needs assessments depends greatly on cooperation, particularly in the area of determining personnel needs. Other examples of inhibitors to participatory planning include:

1. Relating needs assessment only to compliance with state and/or federal regulations.

2. Using the same techniques which have resulted in unreliable information in the past.

3. Imposing procedures on participants without inviting their input.

4. Giving the impression that other agencies <u>must</u> participate.

5. Initiating needs assessment activities without carefully thought-out, systematic procedures.

6. Poor timing. For example, LEA staffs experience peak workloads during particular times of the year and IHEs are able to collect certain information more easily during registration than during semesters. Waiting until a deadline is due on a report before initiating a needs assessment can also give the impression that little value is placed on the needs assessment process.

7. Failure to assign a competent person to coordinate the needs assessment process not only limits its effectiveness, but also suggests that it is of little value.

8. Failure to articulate the reasons for the activity or to explain what use will be made of the results.

Participatory planning works best when the agency initiating the planning is known as an agency which values and enhances the participation of others. There is no set of rules which will assure an agency that participatory planning will occur. Certainly, there must be a willingness on the part of all participants to be responsive and to assume responsibility, but the agency conducting the needs assessment must assume responsibility for establishing and maintaining the conditions necessary to enhance participatory planning. The advantages of creating a planning process in which participants feel their views are valued and willingly become major contributors are many. One obvious advantage relates to the positive influence such an approach can have on carrying out the needs assessment. On the other hand, there are a number of related benefits, e.g., improved interaction with participating agencies, more assurance of assistance and implementation following the needs assessment, and increased opportunities to cooperate in other planning activities aimed at the improvement of instruction of handicapped students.

In most instances participatory planning contributes to the implementation of systematic procedures and to the effective use of results.

SECTION III

PLANNING A NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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PLANNING A NEEDS ASSESSMENT

This section focuses upon those activities involved in planning a needs assessment. Although basic considerations for the initiation, implementation, and evaluation of a needs assessment are presented, it is to be noted that there is often great variation between SEAs, LEAs, IEUs and IHEs in terms of the circumstances that contribute to this process. Therefore, the readers should be aware that their process will probably need to be modified according to the resources, goals and needs of the individual agency.

Decision to Initiate Needs Assessment

It is important to acknowledge the advantage of making needs assessment a routine part of your planning. While it can be employed as an independent activity to rank needs or to determine the feasibility of responding to an identified need, needs assessment is most effective when integrated into an administrative or planning process.

The motivation to engage in a formal needs assessment may come from several sources. In some cases, involvement may not be by choice. For example, the inclusion of needs assessment information in a CSPD is a requirement. A need may be identified without conducting a formal needs assessment process; e.g., an advocacy effort brings to your attention an omission or deficiency in programming. Or needs assessment may be a routine element in an ongoing planning process. The reason for a needs assessment may influence the extent of staff time and resources allocated to the process. Its importance and purpose should always be directly related to producing information that will lead to better choices in providing services to children.

The following are necessary considerations in initiating a needs assessment:

1. <u>Statement of Intended Outcomes (What decisions are to be made?)</u>: There may be situations in which the intent is to examine a wide range of needs and to establish a priority ranking. In more typical situations, the intent will be to reach a decision on a specific question, such as the following:

    - .What are the inservice needs of paraprofessionals in classes for the severely mentally handicapped?

    - .How many teachers will be needed statewide if a particular program is implemented?

    - .Do IHE faculties have sufficient expertise relating to the least restrictive environment in order to prepare regular teachers to serve handicapped children in the mainstream?

    - .Do administrators need additional skills in managing equal access and due process requirements?

Depending on how the questions emerge, different people will be involved in stating the intended outcomes. Because the total process requires that all participants understand the question(s) and decisions to be considered, it is important that the wording of the statement be subjected to careful review. In addition, to reach agreement on the wording of this statement, it is necessary to make a judgment on its importance in relation to other goals and planning activities being considered by the district, agency, or department.

2. Examination of Related Outcomes (What other "need" questions are being studied?): To avoid costly information collection and unnecessary use of staff time in carrying out a needs assessment, it is important to address related "need" questions whenever possible. In other words, if other related concerns are being explored, you could study them simultaneously through the same needs assessment process. Be careful not to force relationships.

3. Specification of Information Needs (What information is essential to answer the questions?): The determination of needed information may be an individual, staff, or team decision, depending on the circumstances. You must identify the information required in order to make decisions on your "need" questions. Brainstorming techniques are helpful, although they tend to generate an excessive inventory of possible information. Care must be exercised to seek only information that is necessary to your decisions. Resist the temptation to collect a wide array of "interesting" information. Information collection and analysis is costly and the response demands on those persons submitting information are often excessive. Once you have identified your information needs, review them for quantitative and programmatic implications. This will help you in your decision on sources of information and in instrumentation.

Quantifiable Examples	Programmatic Examples
Number of teachers	Inservice topics
Number of dollars spent	Preservice curriculum
Number of children	Parent training
Number of classrooms	Due process
Length of transportation route(s)	Interventions (instructional programs)
Amount of materials	Attitudes
Number of days for screening	Community agency cooperation
Amount of compensation for IEP participation	Long-range planning
Number of courses to be offered	

4. Determination of Information Sources (What sources are available for the collection of needed information?): Once you have reached agreement on the essential information you need to make your decisions, the next task is to identify sources from which the needed information can be obtained. This is an important step because your source(s) will greatly influence

the information's validity, cost, and promptness of response. If the information already exists in files, reports, or some other form and is accessible, you should consider its appropriateness for your use, rather than duplicating efforts. In reaching your decision on sources, first generate a list of options, then analyze each one according to:

a) validity
b) efficiency
c) time
d) availability
e) credibility (Do others place value on the source?)

You may decide to interview principals on a topic even though the needed information is in their annual reports. However, you may feel that it is important for principals to interact with you or your staff on the topic, in addition to providing needed information. Thus, the decision on sources should be carefully studied.

5. Information Collection, Instrumentation and Procedures (What vehicles can be used in obtaining the needed information?): This step involves deciding on how you will collect the needed information, plus developing procedures and instruments if needed. Survey instruments are useful for certain purposes, but they should not be the only method used. In using survey instruments, a major investment should be made in the design of the forms to be used. A well-designed form can greatly enhance responses and information analysis, while a poorly-designed instrument can generate information that is unnecessary, too general for decision-making, or is stated in a manner that is too difficult and time consuming to analyze. Your goal in this step should be to develop procedures and/or instruments which are appropriate and efficient for collecting the needed information from the sources selected. Field test all procedures and instruments prior to using them. Resources spent on this step will save time and funds. This represents the primary quality control on the input you will eventually use in making your decisions.

6. Information Collection (How do we carry out the needs assessment collection process?): At this stage, you (staff or team) will have made decisions on information needs, sources of input, and on procedures for collection. It now becomes necessary to implement a system for information collection. The amount of time and resources required will depend on the nature of the question(s) you are studying and the complexity of the procedures. Attention must be given to the following:

   .Assuring that all participants understand the purpose for the needs assessment and the type of decisions to be made.

   .Communicating clear directions to respondents regarding what they are to do and who is available to them as a resource person should they need help or clarification.

   .Setting up a mechanism for monitoring responses.

   .Making certain that the techniques to be used are appropriately applied. For example, if a mail survey is involved, allow sufficient time. If interviews are to be used, be certain to hold them at convenient times and appropriate places for the interviewees.

7. Analysis and Interpretation (How do we determine the meaning of our information?): Decisions on analysis need to be considered when questions are first being formulated and collection procedures planned. For example, whether analysis is computer-based or manually recorded, the questions, forms and collection methods should be designed accordingly. Before the final decision is made on the information collection techniques, decide on basic analysis strategies.

   Advanced planning on the type of analysis to be used will ensure that you have the information in a form usable for your analysis. Quantifiable data versus programmatic responses will present different analysis and interpretation problems.

   You may need to conduct some statistical tests, depending on the design of your needs assessment study. Typically, needs assessment information is tabulated and organized as percentages, means, and rank orders. It is always important to be objective in interpreting information, but quantifiable results are often easier to interpret than subjective results in programmatic assessments. In using the programmatic approach, you must exercise caution to avoid reading your own biases into responses and making inappropriate inferences. It is best in all cases to organize your raw information (actual responses) in a manner that is not only usable to you in making your analysis, but as a reference for others who may wish to examine your original source of information. There will be some needs assessment studies in which comparisons over time will be of value. In these cases the actual responses become particularly important.

   As you state your questions and plan your collection strategies, begin to determine how you will organize your information, carry out the analysis, and report results. Prepare reports which directly relate to your questions. If you have collected additional "interesting" information which is not directly applicable to the question(s) you posed, report this information separately. You will have to use subjective judgment in determining the format of the report. However, remember that the people who respond to your information collection procedures will usually benefit from receiving feedback.

8. Plan of Action (What constitutes a plan of action once the study is completed?): In needs assessment the goal is generally to define needs and to make a decision. At the completion of the study, you have support for a decision and a description of what is needed. You seldom have a blueprint or detailed plan on how to implement the decision. Actually, as you go through the earlier steps of needs assessment you should begin to consider the implications of possible outcomes. The analyses should present few surprises, as you will begin to get a feel for the responses as the results are processed.

   The plan of action should directly reflect the results of and decisions made from the needs assessment. The purpose of the plan of action has additional meaning when its relationship to the original question(s), needs assessment results, and decisions are clear. The actual implementation of the plan of action may include individuals who were previously involved in the needs assessment process; this enhances the continuity of these activities. In cases where the plan of action involves individuals not previously associated with the project, the history of the needs assessment process should be explained so that the subsequent activities are placed in perspective.

9. Program Coordination (How do you ensure integration?): Too often, needs assessment activities are conducted in isolation from ongoing planning or program development. This tends to focus attention on needs assessment as if it were a separate activity, rather than being incorporated into the ongoing planning process. Needs assessment should not be viewed as an end in itself; instead, program coordination should be designed so that needs assessment is integrated into the structure for overall program development.

Guidelines for Evaluating Needs Assessment Relative to CSPD Activities

The SEAs Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) should provide a statewide umbrella for coordinating all needs assessment activities. A State CSPD implies that a needs assessment system has been developed and is operating to provide data upon which personnel development plans are formulated, implemented, and evaluated. A number of questions should be addressed in order to determine the adequacy, efficiency, and effectiveness of needs assessment procedures utilized in CSPD activities.

Adequacy

1. Are appropriate and interested CSPD consumer groups included as sources of needs data? A partial listing of these groups may be found in the Office of Special Education State Plan Review Guide that is included in the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development: A Writer's Handbook (Schofer, Duncan, and Ueberle, 1980).

2. Are the sources appropriate for the type of information to be gathered?

3. Is there a rationale for collecting each piece of data?

4. Do the needs assessment procedures provide current information? (Decide how current the information must be.)

5. Are the roles and responsibilities for planning the needs assessment clearly defined at each of the following levels?

   a) SEA
   b) IEUs
   c) LEAs
   d) IHEs
   e) Other Agencies

6. Is the needs assessment system an integral part of the evaluation design of the CSPD?

7. Do the needs assessment data indicate the number of qualified personnel available?

8. Do the needs assessment data indicate the number of new personnel needed?

9. Do the needs assessment data indicate the number of personnel requiring retraining or development?

10. Do the needs assessment data identify content areas in which training is needed for each group?

11. Do the needs assessment data identify the groups requiring retraining or development?

12. Does the State Plan contain a description of needs assessment procedures?

13. Is the collected information shared with all involved sources?

Efficiency

1. Are the needs assessment procedures relatively simple and cost-effective?

2. Are current procedures of data collection studied for usefulness and appropriateness?

3. Are the needs assessment procedures coordinated with the day-to-day activities of the relevant sources?

4. Have you designed the needs assessment activities so that they can be tied into the current SEA organizational structure?

5. Are there internal procedures to ensure communication regarding needs assessment activities within the SEA? (Is the State Director involved and/or supportive of intra- and interagency collaborative needs assessment activities?)

6. Do the needs assessment procedures provide data that can readily be analyzed, interpreted, and utilized?

7. Do the needs assessment plans identify time lines?

Effectiveness

1. Are the needs assessment plans articulated in measurable outcomes that can then be utilized in subsequent evaluation activities?

2. Is there organizational agreement concerning:

   a) The importance of needs assessment?
   b) Its use?
   c) Commitment to the support and follow-through required by the needs assessment system?

3. Has an effort been made to make involved parties feel that they have something to offer as well as something to gain from the needs assessment process?

4. Is the data collection procedure systematic?

5. Do individuals who have responsibility for coordinating the needs assessment process have the required skills and expertise?

6. When required skills and expertise are not available, is training provided to prepare those persons who will be involved?

7. Will a relationship between the results of the needs assessment and the changes in inservice training and/or preservice planning be demonstrated?

> *Appropriate planning for and coordinating of the needs assessment process can ensure its adequacy, efficiency, and effectiveness.*

SECTION IV

INFORMATION COLLECTION

The systematic collection and use of information for purposes of decision-making is a basic principle of needs assessment. If information is collected but not used, or if it is obtained in an arbitrary and inconsistent manner, the credibility and value of needs assessment procedures are diminished.

This section is intended to provide assistance in determining the kinds of information and methods needed to conduct a needs assessment in the context of CSPD. The suggestions are based on the view that needs assessment is a generic process which can be applied to a number of concerns. It is important for all agencies to be sensitive to the information needs of other cooperating agencies, however, it should be recognized that needs assessments are conducted at different levels and often for different purposes. For example, SEAs and IHEs are concerned with knowing the state-wide need for personnel and are committed to improving the quality of special education across the state. While LEAs share these concerns, they also have reasons to conduct needs assessments which are unique to local or intermediate district conditions.

Assumptions

Understanding the concept of needs assessment is basic to the application of strategies for conducting this process. Needs assessment is defined as a generic process of collecting and interpreting information that will facilitate decision-making related to issues and problems that must be identified and resolved in order to achieve the desired results.

Five basic assumptions underlying the development of a needs assessment system are:

1. The consequences of the needs assessment will result in some kind of action.

2. Change toward improvement is a primary goal.

3. Improvement can be described, measured, and achieved.

4. It is possible to assess the current status in relation to the desired goal(s).

5. Decision-makers are motivated to make the necessary resources available to achieve improvement.

The above definition and basic assumptions serve as guidelines for the following suggestions.

Needs Assessment Strategies

As a SEA administrator, a local director of special education or a college/university department chairperson, you will have a number of different questions which require some form of needs assessment. Minimally, they require answers which necessitate your collecting data or information. You will probably be dependent on responses from others in order to answer your "need" questions. Examples of such questions might include the following:

SEA Administrator: Sample Questions

1. What is the statewide need for personnel by type of position?
2. Which geographic areas of the state have the greatest need for personnel?
3. How can the SEA aid colleges and universities in responding to LEA needs?
4. What kinds of skills are required to successfully implement a new class for the pre-school mildly handicapped in a rural area?
5. Are IEPs effective?
6. How are handicapped students performing on minimal competency tests?

Local Special Education Director: Sample Questions

1. How many vacancies do I have at the secondary level for each area of exceptionality?
2. What is the best way to assist parents in contributing to the IEP process?
3. How can we improve the rate of learning of students in our severely handicapped program?
4. How many 0-5 year old students reside in the district who require some form of special service?

University Department Chairperson: Sample Questions

1. How many students are currently enrolled in the various training programs?
2. What overlap exists across courses?
3. What is the enrollment pattern in on-campus and off-campus courses?

4. Is there a qualitative difference between instruction offered in off-campus and on-campus courses?

5. How many special education graduates are employed in-State each year?

Questions such as these are necessary in conducting a needs assessment because they provide focus and direction. It is important to realize that answers to "need" questions do not always require the tabulation of numbers. While quantifiable data are frequently the primary source for answering needs assessment questions, in other cases this type of technique may be totally inappropriate.

Guidelines for Information Collection

There are no set rules for the collection of information. Conditions vary which influence the type of techniques to be used. There are many reasons why you will adopt one information collection process instead of another. However, the following are some general guidelines which apply to most settings and may be helpful. They apply to quantitative, as well as to programmatic, questions. (Refer to page 17 for explanation.) They are offered merely as suggestions; you may want to add to the list.

General Collection Guidelines

1. *Once you have decided on your "need" questions, obtain maximum input from those persons having a vested interest in your question. Remember, there is a possibility that you may need to alter your question based on this feedback.*

2. *Analyze your question(s) to determine the quantitative and programmatic responses required. Do not force responses into a quantitative form unless that is the best form.*

3. *Identify the essential information required to answer your question(s). Avoid the temptation to collect "interesting" information. Collection can be costly in terms of staff time and dollars. If you are not going to use it, do not collect it.*

4. *Consider the respondents. Information collection requires someone to prepare responses. Whether the responses are time consuming, complex and are accurate depends on how questions are designed. It is important to obtain needed and accurate responses, but it is equally as important to make the process of responding as simple as possible. If the respondent feels you have made an attempt to simplify his or her response efforts, the probability of receiving accurate and complete information is enhanced.*

continued

5. *Provide for a quick turn-around in reporting information collected. While a number of factors may require that you prepare your needs assessment report at a particular time, it is desirable to report back promptly to those individuals who contributed to the process. This may not always be possible, but, to the degree that your needs assessment allows you to show partial as well as total results, at least preliminary reporting should be done quickly. It is reinforcing to individuals who contributed information to know that their responses are being used. Frequently, they will be able to make good use of the report for their own purposes.*

6. *In asking for responses, clearly communicate the reason for the request and how the results are to be used. Indicate the value of the process and do not reflect attitudes such as, "We are required to" . . . or . . . "the law says we must . . . ", or "this will go into our annual report." Instead, always relate information collection to a practical need which has been determined to be important.*

7. *Avoid changes in procedures, forms and/or involvement of personnel. Field test or at least carefully analyze all procedures so that changes are not initiated after information collection has started. Changes are annoying to respondents and often cause slow or inaccurate responses.*

8. *Use results in decision-making and give visibility to the contributions of respondents to the decision. If you use the results to make decisions, but others are not aware of this use, you are not gaining maximally from the needs assessment process.*

9. *As much as possible, coordinate collection efforts with other agencies with similar concerns. This is particularly true for those topics which require similar information. This does not mean that you must use the same techniques, but, if others need the same results or similar data or information, it is best to collect it from them to avoid duplications in requests to the same respondents.*

Guidelines for Designing Needs Assessment Forms

Not all needs assessment techniques involve the use of forms, but many do. Forms may be efficient in the amount of information collected and can simplify analysis and reporting. Or, they can be complicated, contribute to public relations problems, or may result in the collection of non-usable data. Forms frequently must be designed because the needed information is not available. Often, the development of a new form is the least costly approach. The comprehensiveness of your "need" question(s) will influence the complexity and format of your form(s). There are, however, some guidelines that will assist you in the design of your forms.

Guidelines for Designing Needs Assessment Forms

1. *If you have several similar "need" questions, you may find that a single form will provide the needed information. Whenever possible, consolidate forms.*

2. *Field test all forms under "real" conditions so that they have been "debugged" before placing into use.*

3. *Be certain that the directions are clear and that respondents do have access to the information you are requesting.*

4. *Keep production costs low. However, be certain that the forms are professional in appearance.*

5. *If forms require periodic updating, make the update process simple and efficient. Date forms as they evolve to expedite record keeping and analysis.*

6. *Continuously monitor the use of forms so that problems can be detected and resolved.*

7. *In designing forms, consider the type of analysis to be used. Forms which appear to be simple often are difficult to analyze because the computer requirements or other tabulation needs were overlooked when they were designed.*

Information Collection Techniques

A major goal of this section has been to provide assistance regarding information collection. Once questions have been identified, sources of information and the technique or method of information collection should be examined. You should avoid always relying on one method of collecting information, e.g., requesting responses via a questionnaire. Instead, try to recognize all possible existing sources for the information, as well as identifying different options for collecting information that is not currently available. Developing a list of available sources of information, as well as options for collecting needed information, can guide your information collection effort. Placing the needs assessment topics or questions on a grid next to information sources can help identify possible ways of obtaining the needed information. Figures 2-4 are grids illustrating the relationship of different needs assessment questions to information collection options. Several options exist for each question. You may want to expand or modify the grid to include the needs questions identified by you. In using the grid, include all the options available to you for your particular "need" question(s). Place these across the top of the grid and then list needs assessment topics down the side of the grid. This allows you to examine options and select appropriate techniques and sources.

FIGURE 2

SEA NEEDS ASSESSMENT INFORMATION COLLECTION GRID

Sample Needs Assessment Topics	Sample Source Options	Questionnaires	Telephone Survey	Checklist	Observations Standardized Informal (Supervisor, Peer, Self)	Pre-Post Test	LEA P.L. 94-142 Application Plans	Routine LEA Personnel Reports	IHE Reports	Achievement Scores	Cumulative Records	Census Data	Other:
Number of State Residential Programs													
Trends in Program Development by Category													
Number of Programs by Geographic Area													
Number of Vacancies by Category													
(Please note that this is only a partial list)													

FIGURE 3

LEA NEEDS ASSESSMENT INFORMATION COLLECTION GRID

Sample Needs Assessment Topics	Sample Source Options	Questionnaires	Telephone Survey	Checklist	Observations Standardized Informal (Supervisor, Peer, Self)	Pre-Post Test	LEA P.L. 94-142 Application Plans	Routine LEA Personnel Reports	Achievement Scores	Cumulative Scores	Census Data	Budget Report	Annual Inventory	Other:
Materials Available														
Previous Inservice Training Provided														
Effectiveness of Previous Inservice Training														
Student-Teacher Ratio														
(Please note that this is only a partial list)														

FIGURE 4

IHE NEEDS ASSESSMENT INFORMATION COLLECTION GRID																
Sample Needs Assessment Topics	Sample Source Options	Questionnaires	Telephone Survey	Checklist	Observations	Standardized Information (Supervisor, Peer, Self)	Pre-Post Test	LEA P.L. 94-142 Application Plans	Routine LEA Personnel Reports	IHE Reports	Achievement Scores	Cumulative Records	Census Data	Certification Standards	Accreditation Requirements	Other:
Number of Graduates by Category Employed in State																
Number of Graduates Leaving State																
Number of Full-Time Students by Category																
Program Certification Areas																
(Please note that this is only a partial list)																

Figures 2-4 are examples of how a grid might be developed by a SEA, LEA, and IHE. Examination of Figure 2 indicates how a matrix can be developed to address the needs of an SEA; Figure 3 graphically presents how an SEA can assess local needs; and Figure 4 represents a possible grid for an IHE. In each case, attention should be directed toward more than one information area in order to obtain the necessary information.

Collection of information in a systematic manner directly contributes to the success of the needs assessment.

SECTION V

USING NEEDS ASSESSMENT RESULTS

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USING NEEDS ASSESSMENT RESULTS

The value of conducting a needs assessment is not limited to those situations in which there are omissions in service or where no programs exist. In fact, the typical use of needs assessment is to ascertain what can be done to improve a situation in which a program is ongoing. In such situations, needs assessment results provide supplemental information to aid those responsible for maintaining and developing appropriate programs or services. Thus, the results of needs assessment are seldom merely an answer to a question requiring a "yes" or "no" response. Certainly, in the context of CSPD the results will take many forms; e.g., estimates of personnel needed to serve exceptional children with differing instructional needs; definitive directions on the skills or information needed by teachers; and guidelines for the allocation of fiscal resources.

Since needs assessment is a continuous and ongoing process, results frequently become available at different times. Although needs assessments will occasionally focus on questions which must be addressed at a set time, usually those conducting a needs assessment have access to a flow of information which is somewhat cumulative in nature. For example, several techniques (including interviews, surveys and analysis of student performance) may be used in conducting a needs assessment to determine the inservice needs of teachers. As interviews are conducted you gain insight into the perspective of teachers, but this source of input also must be incorporated with other data before the final results are determined. The results that accrue rarely constitute a surprise. More frequently, they serve to clarify and explain. In some cases they confirm. Most importantly, they are systematically derived in a public manner and provide a base upon which decisions can be made. The credibility of the procedures applied, combined with the merits of the questions studied, add to the acceptance of the results as a basis for decision-making. The same results, derived by the opinion of one or two people, or in a secretive manner, or through questionable procedures, tend not to be acceptable even though they may be reasonably accurate.

Quality Control on Results

While the primary concerns in considering the quality of results are validity and accuracy, there are a number of ways in which the quality of the results is influenced. Accurate analysis of information is of little value if the information was carelessly collected or techniques were poorly designed. Examples of quality control measures that can be introduced include:

1. Clearly define the question(s) or need(s) to be assessed. Do not begin the process until you have clearly identified the questions you are attempting to answer or clarify.

2. Determine who or what represents the appropriate source of information. For example, in situations where the perceptions

of individuals are to be solicited, care must be exercised not to seek responses from groups who are only remotely familiar with the questions and then give equal weight to these responses as well as responses from more informed sources.

3. Carefully design the data collection procedures and instruments because they may greatly influence results, e.g., a poorly designed and cumbersome questionnaire may cause people not to respond or to do so in a hurried and careless manner.

4. Consider how you will analyze your responses when planning information collection procedures. Failure to do so may result in not being able to appropriately analyze your responses, or it may add significantly to the cost of analysis.

5. Make thoughtful and well-planned decisions on the assignment of staff resources. This means having sufficient personnel with the necessary expertise, available at the appropriate time.

Obligations in Using Results

A basic assumption underlying needs assessment is that the results will be used in making decisions. To be sure, the outcome anticipated by those conducting the needs assessment and those supplying input is that some action will be taken in direct relation to the results. Failure to take action or failure to make action(s) known will likely bring discredit to further needs assessment efforts and will certainly bring into question the motives and capabilities of those responsible for the needs assessment. The obligation for the use of results has a number of dimensions, including the following:

1. Provide assurance that systematic and appropriate procedures were used.

2. Use appropriate vehicles for reporting. This may mean having to employ different techniques for different groups. A comprehensive report may be appropriate for those responsible for making related decisions but, for others, a summary may be sufficient. In some situations, a conference with provision for interaction will be necessary.

3. Minimize turnaround time. Undue delay in reporting results will likely distract from the usefulness of the results.

4. Report all the results. Failure to report some results may arouse suspicion and attach inappropriate importance to the results that were withheld.

5. If you have identified errors or problems in your procedures which have had an influence on your results, provide an explanation within all the disseminated reports.

6. Be sure to share results with respondents. If respondents feel good about their participation, this will encourage their support and/or their involvement in future needs assessment activities.

7. Report the data in its proper context. For example, a survey to determine the number of teachers needed for the severely multiply handicapped should take into consideration many factors, such as the number of teachers being trained, the number recruited from other states, the number going to other states, attrition rates, previous efforts to recruit students to training programs, the capability of training programs to expand, the number of teachers with appropriate certification but not teaching SMH students, and efforts by school administrators to recruit and retain teachers. Data alone rarely convey the appropriate meaning. Also, in areas such as inservice training where attempts may be made to determine the skill development needs of teachers, results are frequently aggregated, i.e., individual responses are grouped in order to provide a priority listing. Thus, it is not uncommon for highly ranked topics to be of little importance for specific individuals. For example, knowledge of the characteristics of learning disabled students may be ranked as the topic most frequently included by teachers as an inservice need. However, most teachers of severely and profoundly handicapped may not have identified this topic as a concern at all.

Valid and accurate results are the outcome of well-designed and effectively executed needs assessment activities. Appropriate analysis and clearly written reports do not compensate for careless planning and/or implementation procedures. Once a determination is made to conduct a needs assessment, decisions about activities related to the ultimate results are assumed. Failure to make these decisions tends to negate the value of needs assessment.

SECTION VI

NEEDS ASSESSMENT RESOURCE LIST

Arizona special education needs assessment for public school programs serving the handicapped: Procedural Manual. For information contact Mrs. Diane Peterson, State Director of Special Education, Arizona Department of Education, Phoenix, Arizona; or Dr. Craig Pace, Educational Support Systems, Inc., 2828 East 3300 South Salt Lake City, Utah 84109.

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Oklahoma 1980 LEA inservice training needs assessment survey. Contact Mr. Keith Haley, CSPD Coordinator, State Department of Education, 2500 N. Lincoln Blvd., Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73105.

Oregon survey of needs for personnel to implement "The Education of the Handicapped Act" (Public Law 94-142). Developed by The Teaching Research Division, Oregon State System of Higher Education and the Valley Education Consortium under contract with the Oregon Department of Education. Contact Mr. Bus Nance, Specialist Personnel Development, Oregon Department of Education, 942 Lancaster Drive, N.E., Salem, Oregon 97310.

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