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ABSTRACT

This paper presents findings of a study that documented the initiation and early implementation of 22 projects participating in the Educational Partnerships Program, which is sponsored by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI). This study of the first year in a proposed 5-year program, sought to identify partnership structures and activities associated with successful implementation. The distinction is made between programs that are interorganizational arrangements and those that are programmatic innovations sponsored by a particular partnership. A summary model, developed to explain factors of successful systemic innovation, is based on the premise that all partnerships begin with a set of conversations among potential members, which results in role clarity. Coalitions and collaborations are more likely to achieve full implementation than those with a primary partner and limited partners; the key is how well participants understand their roles and relationships. All of the partnerships implemented at least some proposed organizational or programmatic features; however, early implementation is achieved when there is role clarity and adequate provision of resources for program content. Three figures and seven tables are included. (Contains 17 references.) (LMI)

A NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

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The Southwest Regional Laboratory (SWRL) and the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL), under contract to the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), are conducting a five-year study of the Educational Partnerships Program, which it sponsors. The focus of the first year, on which this paper is based, was on documenting the initiation and early implementation of 22 funded projects.[1] The organization and content of the projects vary, and the projects are housed in organizations throughout the country.

The study was designed to identify partnership structures and activities associated with successful implementation. Data collection and analysis separated discussions of the development of partnerships as innovative interorganizational arrangements and implementation of the programs sponsored by particular partnerships. In this way, we differentiate between program effectiveness and the effectiveness of a partnership as a mechanism for improving education.

Although the full report includes findings related to project initiation and structure, vision, and leadership, this paper focuses primarily on cross-project findings related to implementation. The goal of the study is to provide guidance to both policymakers and program developers about factors associated with successful implementation of partnership programs, as interorganizational arrangements that foster particular reforms.

The paper is organized as follows. A discussion of the conceptual framework guiding the study is followed by a discussion of the study design and methods for collecting and analyzing data. The paper then presents findings related to implementation and concludes with a model of successful partnership development.

The report is organized as follows. This "Overview" is followed by a discussion of the conceptual framework guiding the study. The framework influenced the study design and methods for collecting and analyzing data, which are presented next.

Conceptual Framework

The evaluation uses a conceptual framework drawn largely from the research on innovation and change. From this perspective, the partnerships are an innovation with two distinct aspects. First, the partnerships are an innovation in *organizational arrangements*. Second, the partnerships develop and implement *programmatic innovations*. The two perspectives are important in analyzing the relationships among partnership structure, activities, implementation, and impact.

Studying educational partnerships using the framework is particularly appropriate because educational partnerships began as a means to improving education. Partnerships between businesses and schools increased from an estimated 40,000 in 1983 to 140,000 in 1988 (Foltz,

[1] Currently, 28 projects are receiving funding from OERI.

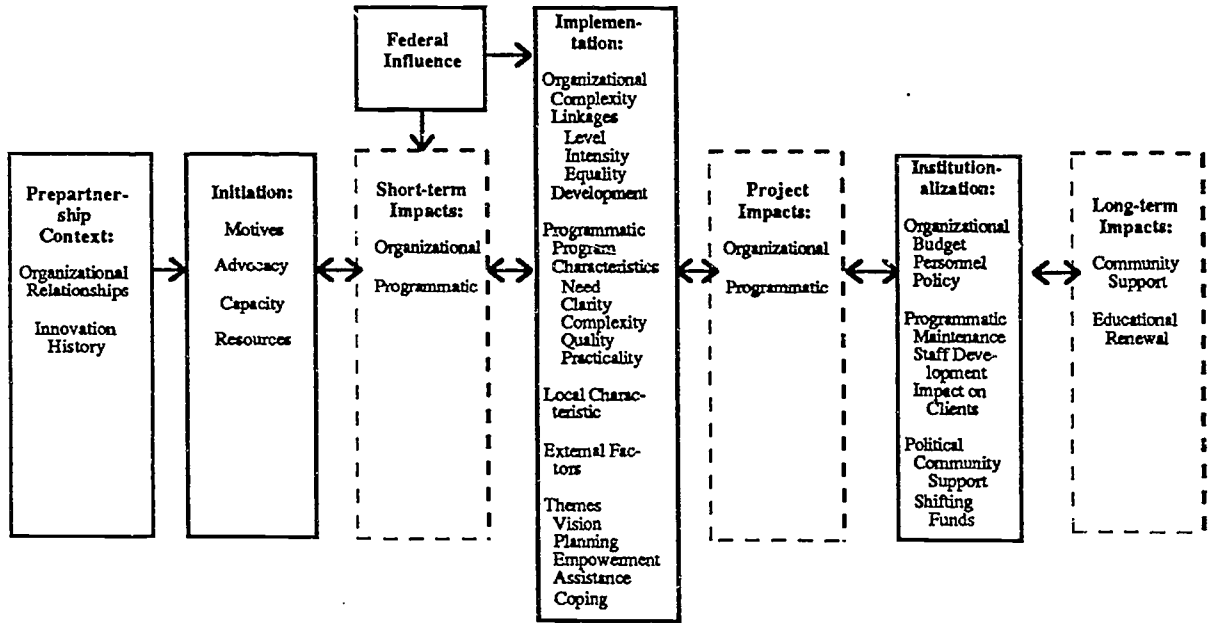
1990). Doyle (1989) asserts that business and industry involvement in education is related to their belief that profit and productivity depend on making changes in schools. Further, the argument is that school people require the political support, resources, and expertise that partnerships bring to public education in order to make the necessary changes (Hood, 1991). Looking at the projects funded by the Educational Partnerships Program as innovative interorganizational arrangements facilitates understanding of whether and how businesses and community-based organizations can support school reform.

The programmatic perspective is equally important. Educational partnerships range from those that provide targeted support for at-risk students, opportunities for teacher summer employment, and materials and equipment to schools that have been "adopted" to those that aim at "systemic" reform. The Educational Partnerships Program has provided funding to projects that exhibit the full range of programmatic characteristics. Consequently, the framework's concern with the relationship between the interorganizational innovation and the program innovation is appropriate to the study.

The framework contains an important element, differentiating this evaluation from other studies of educational partnerships. It includes a focus on the role of federal funding and accompanying requirements in the achievement of partnership objectives. As a federal program, the Educational Partnerships Program provides participants with funds and the opportunity to interact with other grant recipients. Federal requirements and expectations may influence partnership structures and processes in other ways as well. Consequently, the framework explicitly attends the influence of the funding source. The conceptual framework guiding the study is displayed on Figure 1.

Research on innovation indicates that projects are *initiated* for a variety of reasons. For example, some schools and districts begin the innovation process for opportunistic reasons, taking advantage of available funds (Greenwood, Mann, & McLaughlin, 1975). Another form of opportunism is initiating a project as a political response to a situation in which leaders wish to demonstrate to the community that they are trying to solve a problem even if they are not really committed to doing so (Huberman & Miles, 1984). Still another opportunistic motive is using an innovation as a means of career advancement (Smith et al., 1986). Studies of the innovation process have found consistently that opportunistic approaches to educational change are unlikely to have much impact (Greenwood, Mann, & McLaughlin, 1975; Fullan, 1991).

Figure 1
Conceptual Framework



Other projects begin as a response to problems perceived as important, and the initiators use the best knowledge they have to design them. The initiators draw knowledge from several sources, including local understanding and ideas (Greenwood, Mann, & McLaughlin, 1974) and the findings of research and good practice (Crandall, et al., 1982). When a partnership is initiated to address a local (or state) need, success is more likely.

The problem-solving perspective of partnership participants is only one aspect of initiation that can affect the implementation, success, and eventual institutionalization. In addition, the project is initiated within a context that may or may not have the capacity to nurture it. In some settings, for example, partnership-generated services to students may be added to an already burdened system. Alternatively, the partnership may be developed in a system ready to burst into full flower (Marsh, 1991). Those possibilities are explored in the evaluation focus on the context, innovation history, and prior relationships in partnership sites.

Miles (1987) concludes that successful initiation was associated with strong advocacy, a perceived need, active initiation, and a clear model for proceeding. In the case of the partnership program, however, projects designed to bring together key organizations and build consensus about needed programs are least likely to have a "clear model for proceeding." In fact, the clearest models may exist in those partnerships that have limited scopes and aims, and research findings also suggest "little ventured, nothing gained," i.e., the smaller the innovation, the less likely there

is to be implementation and impact (see Berman, 1980; Clark, Lotto, & Astuto, 1984; Crandall, et al., 1982; Louis et al., 1981). The evaluation of the funded partnerships offers an opportunity to explore this seeming contradiction.

The evaluation began *after* the initiation stage so it included a reconstruction of each partnership's initiation and the context in which it was initiated. Because some funded partnerships added to existing arrangements or created new structures for such arrangements, the study of initiation will take such differences into account.

A large portion of the evaluation focuses on the *implementation* of the new organizational arrangements and their accompanying programmatic thrusts. "Implementation" is defined by Fullan (1991) as "the process of putting into practice an idea, program, or set of activities and structures new to the people attempting or expected to change" (p. 65).

Much of the educational-innovation literature focuses primarily on new-program implementation. For the partnerships, the programmatic aspect is inextricably intertwined with the development of the interorganizational arrangement of the partnership. A separate literature is concerned with such arrangements (Havelock, 1981). In the case of the Educational Partnerships Program, there are important intended outcomes on both the organizational (interorganizational) and programmatic dimensions. Consequently, field work and analysis draw on concepts from both bodies of literature.

Fullan (1991) argues that the characteristics of the new program (need, clarity, complexity, quality, and practicality), local characteristics, and external factors interact to influence implementation (pp. 67-68). Implementation is further influenced by what Fullan terms "themes" (p. 67). Louis and Miles (1990) say themes include vision, continuous planning, the empowerment of participants, the mobilization of resources and assistance, and coping with problems as they arise. Because factors interact with one another and with themes, it is impossible to draw a road map for successful program implementation. Program developers must constantly "read" their environment and adapt their strategies to the situation they face. Finally, and this is perhaps the most important message of the research on program implementation, change, as Hall and Loucks (1977) put it, is "a process, not an event." Studying the partnerships requires a longitudinal look. What may look like a mess one year may seem a success the next year. Indeed, one finding from the first year of the study is that there are many examples of "segmented" implementation, some of which may become fully implemented and others that may disintegrate.

On the organizational level, partnerships need to be viewed in three ways. First is the nature of partnership structures. As a result of this year's analysis, we have modified Grobe's (1990) typology of the complexity of partnership structures and now look at differences among primary partner/limited partnership arrangements, coalitions, and collaborative partnerships.

Second, we look at the nature of the linkages between and among partners (Havelock, 1981).

The issues involved include the organizational level on which interactions occur, whether the interactions cover one or more topics, whether the participants come from equal levels in the organizations, and the tightness of the individual and organizational ties. In this view, the partnership can be seen as "a series of transactions or exchanges, resulting in often implicit inter-institutional bargaining and shifts in relative influence" (Havelock, 1981, p. 3).

The third organizational perspective on partnerships focuses on their development over time. Just as change in educational programs is a process, so is change in the relationship between and among organizations. Hord (1986) posits that partnerships move through states, from cooperation to coordination to collaboration. Intriligator and Goldman (1990) elaborate a series of changes that partnerships undergo in their development. For example, as partnerships develop, interagency policy emerges, first promulgated by the participating agencies and then by the partnership itself. Similarly, at the start of a partnership venture, staff members primarily represent their institution's interests; later, their responsibility is to the partnership itself. Finally, as the partnership begins, decisions are made by votes allocated to participating institutions; later, the decisionmaking body works as a unit to decide issues, generally by consensus.

A developmental perspective signals the need to look at changes over time on the organizational dimension, as well as on the programmatic level. That is, partnerships may well change in structure from primary/limited partnerships to coalitions or even collaborations. However, there is nothing deterministic about the development; many partnerships may retain their original structure. Even with the original structure, there may be changes in the scope and intensity of linkages across institutions. And some may evolve contrary to the predicted development, with, for example, a collaborative becoming a primary/limited partnership.

The implementation process also influences the eventual *institutionalization* or continuation after federal funding ends. We have begun to look for signs of institutionalization, knowing, of course, that this early in partnership development few projects will have made many steps. Again, the evaluation has two foci: one, the institutionalization of the program espoused by the partnership and two, institutionalization of structures and procedures of the partnership.

Study Design

In keeping with our developmental perspective, the documentation and evaluation of the Educational Partnerships Program use an iterative design. That is, each year's work helps focus the questions and activities for the next year. The first year of the study relied on site visits to all funded projects and reviews of documents. In subsequent years, we will conduct intensive case studies, revisit other project sites, review documents, and administer questionnaires. Our purpose is to combine rich descriptions of projects with quantitative information that places the case study

information in context. This section describes the data collection and analysis procedures used during the first year of the evaluation.

Two-member teams visited each funded partnership for three days. During our visits, we interviewed project staff, participants in project-sponsored activities, representatives from partner organizations, supervisors of individuals participating in partnership activities teachers, parents, and students. While on site we also observed project activities, including partnership governance meetings, classes, and staff development workshops, if possible. Prior to site visits, project documents were analyzed and interview protocols suited to the particular project were generated. The purpose for site visits was to gather as much information as possible from as many sources to develop an understanding of the nature of the partnership, its activities, and relationships between organizational and programmatic features.

The first-year study involved data triangulation; that is, collecting information from multiple sources using multiple methods. We collected descriptions of activities from project-generated documents; interviews with project staff, staff from participating institutions, and the recipients of services; and observations of the activities. We sought various perspectives on partnership practices, activities, and structures, thereby triangulating interpretations of the meanings of what occurred within the settings. Because the partnerships represent social phenomena, participants often had different views of events and structures. For example, one partnership sponsored a school-to-work transition program involving internship opportunities for students. The representative from the participating business organization who coordinated the internships gave the high school principal a list of students at the start of the year. When he showed up on a particular day, ready to take the students to their placements, the principal refused to release them, saying that parents had not given permission for that day nor had teachers been notified. From the business coordinator's perspective, this event indicated the closed, bureaucratic nature of schools. From the perspective of the high school principal, it demonstrated business's lack of understanding schools' needs to protect students and the potential for liability claims. Such differences in interpretations of events contribute to understanding how the partnerships develop.

The information collected on site, including the different interpretations of events, was synthesized by the site-visit team following their visit. Team members reread interview transcripts, notes from observations, and project documents, coding information according to the conceptual framework. They prepared an interpretive summary of their findings, which served two purposes. First, it provided a concise statement of the progress and problems of a particular funded partnership. The summary also contained tentative analyses that explained the status of the project and hypotheses about relationships among project structure, activities, and success. The hypotheses fulfill the second purpose of each summary: to focus future data collection efforts.

In a staff meeting, site visitors reviewed the interpretive summaries to develop what Yin

(1981) calls "causal arguments" both within and across cases. Frequently, discussions of relationships among activities or structures led us to reexamine the original data, including project documents and interview transcripts. The causal arguments were used to identify the existence of phenomena in more than one case under predictable conditions.

The analytic meetings followed procedures recommended by Miles and Huberman (1984). They note that qualitative data analysis involves "three concurrent flows of activities" (p. 21). The first flow is data reduction, "the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming" the information from field notes and documents. This involves the coding and interpretive summaries. In some cases, it was useful to quantify phenomenon. For example, we were interested in the number of partnerships with particular types of structures and leadership styles.

The second set of activities involved developing "displays," which include matrices, networks, and narrative text. In the analysis, we developed displays for each project based on the conceptual framework. We then built a crosscase analysis by comparing and contrasting the displays. As a result, we identified patterns and relationships that form the basis of this report.

The final activities recommended by Miles and Huberman (1984) are drawing conclusions and verifying them. The displays themselves are tentative "conclusions" about relationships. They are, in fact, causal arguments. At this stage, we have verified the relationships within the projects, against the literature, and across projects. Subsequent years of the evaluation will confirm or contradict our current conclusions. The evaluation will use both qualitative and quantitative findings to do so.

Implementation

This section provides information about partnership structures, policies, and practices that facilitate or impede implementation. It includes initial findings concerning the programmatic features, the processes and activities, that aid or inhibit implementation. Because context and organization also mediate the effects of a program, it also includes a brief summary of those findings.

Implementation is not an all-or-nothing condition. Partnerships can be partially implemented, particularly at the early stage of development reported here. Consequently, the findings will be preceded by a discussion of the levels of implementation observed among the partnership projects.

Implementation is a complex social process of establishing changes in policy and/or practice that affect and are affected by the organizational features and programmatic activities involved. Consequently, this report assesses although each of the projects funded by the EPP in terms of its current stage of implementation. However, such an assessment represents an interim judgment because implementation is a developmental process. This is particularly true of those complex

projects attempting to bring about systemic change. By assessing the level of implementation at different points in time we plan to identify patterns associated with relative ease of implementation or those associated with obstacles to implementation. Even more important, longitudinal assessment helps to identify how implementation unfolds over time.

Implementation does not necessarily lead to institutionalization. For example, one of the partnership projects that is fully implemented is a high-intensity endeavor dependent on large time outlays and sustained zeal and commitment from teachers, as well as on a particularly supportive teacher-principal relationship. Institutionalization is threatened by the potential for teacher burnout and the fact that a principal with new priorities might replace the current principal. This example is fairly straightforward; however, the study of projects over time will help identify differences in prerequisites for implementation versus prerequisites for institutionalization.

Levels of Implementation

As the partnership projects involve putting "a set of activities and structures" into practice, levels of implementation were assessed in terms of partnership structure or organizational features, activities or programmatic features, or both. A project is fully implemented only if both sets of features are in place and functioning as intended. Segmented implementation refers to any condition where some, but not all, of the features are functioning as intended at either the organizational or the programmatic level, or where some of the features at both levels are functioning, but neither level is complete. Failed implementation refers to projects where nothing is taking place as planned. Thus, projects can be thought of as fully implemented, having segmented implementation, or having failed in the implementation effort.

The level of implementation does not indicate the quality or value of the project. A project may be fully implemented and yet be of little value or of low quality. Similarly, a project may only achieve segmented implementation, but those organizational and/or programmatic parts of the project that are implemented may be highly valued or of high quality.

Currently only 36% of the projects can be said to be fully implemented. The remainder (64%) are segmented, having implemented some but not all intended policies and practices. It remains to be seen whether projects with segmented implementation will achieve full implementation. Table 4 illustrates full and failed implementation, as well as all seven forms of segmented implementation, in order of frequency.

Table 4
Levels and Types of Implementation

Implementation level (# projects)	All features functioning as intended		Some features functioning as intended		No features functioning as intended	
	Org.	Program	Org.	Program	Org.	Program
Full (8)	X	X				
Segmented						
Type 1. (6)			X	X		
Type 2. (4)	X			X		
Type 3. (2)	X					X
Type 4. (1)			X			X
Type 5. (1)				X	X	
Type 6. (0)		X	X			
Type 7. (0)		X			X	
Failed (0)					X	X

Full implementation (8 projects)

In fully implemented projects, all organizational and programmatic aspects of the project at the policy/planning level and programmatic/activity level are functioning. Such projects have decided on partnership governance procedures. Whatever governance is in place actively makes policy and plans at both the organizational and program levels. Key players are on board and all planned activities are unfolding on or near established timelines. Program activities have not been canceled, and no key players have withdrawn. Clients are being served appropriately to the project design. Any changes made to the project are adaptive or developmental.

Five of the eight fully implemented projects primarily focus on the transition from school-to-adult responsibility and involve career education. The remaining three vary in program focus. However, none of the fully implemented projects has major curriculum change as a primary focus, although some of them include curricular components (e.g., as in the 2+2 articulations of one project) and the tutoring and teacher in-services of others. It is likely that grant applicants truly underestimated the time required for accomplishing significant curriculum development tasks. Part of this is due also to underestimating the difficulty of the task and the need for assistance.

Failed Implementation (Zero Projects)

During the initial stages of project evaluation, we have adopted a broad view of segmented implementation that leads to a narrow view of failed implementation.

None of the projects can be seen as having actually failed to implement *any* aspect of its plans. Each innovation attempt has resulted, at least temporarily, in a change of practices or in the establishment of new positions in the participating institution(s). However, in some instances the organizational structural change appears to be a house of cards, and the program content is either empty or is severely underused and/or undervalued at the activity level.

Segmented Implementation (14 Projects)

We have termed partnerships in which only portions of the project have been implemented as segmented implementation. Segmented implementation can take seven possible forms, only five of which were observed among the partnership projects.

Segmented Implementation Type 1 (Six Projects)

"Type 1" refers to the condition of "Partial Organization/Some Program Activity." It is by far the most common form of segmented implementation, representing 27% of all projects and 43% of the segmented projects. There are several ways in which "part" of an organization and "some" of the program activities can combine. In some cases, whole program activities or key partners drop out of the project or fail to materialize. Often these conditions are linked, as in one educational reform project where the loss of IBM as a functioning partner led to dropping the interactive learning activity dependent on major support from IBM.

In other cases, expected partners may have failed to join the organization, but the activities associated with them may still be partly operational. This is the case in one school-improvement, community-involvement partnership where a partner dropped out at the start of funding but previously had a paid relationship with the schools. School-based personnel continued to apply their previous learning. Further, another partner failed to take an anticipated role, but took a minor initial role, out of which was generated a list of contacts, enabling some form of community-oriented activity to develop.

Aside from, or in addition to, the role of partners in the organization, broader organizational features may not be fully implemented. In one project formed by the opportunistic joining of two potential competitors for the grant, the long-standing governance committees of each are having difficulty working out joint organizational roles. The managerial group has shifted to an

advisory group, leaving management roles unfilled. The structure of regular meetings has yet to be agreed on and project staffing is incomplete. Meanwhile, numerous activities have been dropped from the project. Unlike the partner-dependent activities in the first example, it is unclear whether an established organizational structure would have aided in implementation at the activity level; rather, segmented implementation seems to be related to many factors.

Segmented Implementation Type 2 (Four Projects)

"Type 2" projects are only segmented at the program activity level. They have "Full Organization/Some Program Activity." This is the other form of segmented implementation commonly found among the funded projects, representing 18% of the 22 partnerships and 29% of the segmented projects. No organizational elements are missing: staff is in place, offices are established, governing bodies meet and make plans and policy decisions, but program activity remains incomplete. This may mean either that entire activities have been dropped while others are partially or fully functional, or that all planned activities are at least partially functional.

An example of such segmented implementation is a school-to-adult transition project that has a fully implemented management team, regular meetings, defined partnership roles, and all aspects of the organization established. Further, all program activities are underway as planned except one parent-involvement program, which the partnership has been unable to implement.

Another example is a math-science teaching and learning project that has all organizational elements implemented but has been unable to implement two program activities and is having difficulty fully implementing a third, although additional activities are functioning as planned. The family involvement activities are operational, and the mentoring program is operating but having difficulty "going to scale" due to lack of mentors. Meanwhile, curriculum development plans have been dropped, and teacher training has not been implemented due to low morale within the system.

Segmented Implementation Type 3 (Two Projects)

In this condition, projects have implemented "Full Organization/No Program Activity." In this type of segmented implementation, all organizational features are present and functioning as intended. However, the programmatic/activity level features have yet to unfold. This may mean that staff is in place, offices are established, and governing bodies meet and make plans and policy decisions, but either no clients are being served or the project activities are not filling the intended role.

One such example is a project with the goal of districtwide systemic change, in which the policy and planning bodies are well-established and their activities fully implemented, even to the

point of long-term institutionalization. However, at the level of intended impact there is no activity as yet, and school-site participants are losing commitment and faith in the leadership of the project.

Segmented Implementation Type 4 (One Project)

"Partial Organization/No Program Activity" describes this type of segmented implementation. In such cases, the anticipated players have yet to occupy roles in the planning or governance of the project. This can be because such roles are still being defined or because partnership participants have yet to be identified or have not made commitments. This condition might have existed from the outset of the partnership or may arise as partners drop out or as conflict causes an organizational structure to be dismantled.

For example, a tech-prep curriculum and student-to-adult transition project got off to a slow start because the superintendent who sought partnership funding retired and the project coordinator/grant writer resigned. The new superintendent was in charge of selecting project staff. Staffing is now underway, and two meetings have taken place, but the relevant school-business reorganization has yet to occur and activities have not yet begun.

This type of segmented implementation is likely to be found in the early stages of a project.

Segmented Implementation Type 5 (One Project)

This "No Organization/Some Program Activity" condition is an unusual form of segmented implementation observed at only one of the partnership sites. Partnerships and governance did not materialize and decisionmaking, problem solving, resource allocation, and other organizational functions are handled at the activity level.

The partnership exemplifying this type of segmented implementation has no official governance structure. Further, the project director operates in a hands-off manner, and no leadership is provided either by the partners or the staff. Rather, sites are expected to manage their own programs despite lack of training in site-based management.

To compound the problems, one established vocational partnership was expected to join the project effort, but did not, anticipated linkages to higher education personnel have not materialized, and the primary partner has withdrawn. The goal of this partnership is systemic change in target schools involving a complex set of programs, of which only a tutoring program and an annual event were fully implemented. The tutoring program involved use of training and materials developed for an earlier grant. The event was organized by a hired consultant rather than through the work of the vanishing primary partner.

In such cases, it might be expected that program implementation primarily centers on activities already familiar to the participants or for which models have predated the partnership. This was largely true in our one example, although in the case of the annual event a consultant was hired to carry out the activity in lieu of appropriate partner participation.

Segmented Implementation Types 6 & 7 (Zero Projects)

These forms of segmented implementation are hypothetical. In such cases, projects are fully functional at the programmatic level while having either partial organizational implementation (Type 6) or no organizational implementation (Type 7). In no case where elements of the organizational structure were absent were the activities of a project complete and operating according to plan, although, as can be seen in Type 5, it is possible to find projects in which some of the activities are functioning despite the absence of organization or structure. Also, as demonstrated by the most common form of segmentation, Type 1, partially established program activities frequently accompany a partially implemented organizational structure.

Although 64% of the partnership projects have achieved only segmented implementation, this condition describes a variety of organizational and programmatic realities. This variety helps explain which types of partnership projects will have difficulty fully "putting into practice" the planned "set of activities and structures new to people attempting or expected to change" versus those that will, like the remaining 36% of the OERI-funded projects, enjoy rapid early implementation.

Partnership Project Variables

The OERI-funded partnerships exemplify a wide range of innovations. Consequently, many variables may help predict the relative likelihood of implementation. Cross-project analysis yielded 18 categories of contextual, organizational, and programmatic features that have varying significance for predicting the level of early implementation. Table 5 shows these features.

Contextual and Initiating Features

Twelve projects (55%) operate in an environment with some negative local characteristics relevant to the project design, most often a depressed local economy and/or a concentration of educationally disadvantaged students. Where local characteristics present relevant negative conditions, only two partnership projects, both involving school-to-work transition, are fully implemented. Seventy-five percent of the fully implemented projects are free of negative mediating local characteristics.

Table 5
Partnership Variables

Categories of significant features	Variable features
Mediating contextual features	
Local characteristics	Demographics, local economy/politics, media interest, community safety/involvement, school board, etc.
External accountability	School boards, district offices, unions, city governance, chambers of commerce, etc.
Partnership organizational change	Adding impetus, smooth, disruptive
Key personnel change	Adding impetus, smooth, disruptive
Preexisting relationships	All new configuration, all preexisting configuration, mixture of old and new
Initiating organizational features	
Concurrent relationships	Cooperative, conflicting, isolated, none
Prefunding involvement	Complete involvement of key players, incomplete involvement of key players
Prefunding information	Complete sharing of project content, incomplete sharing of project content
Organizational themes	
Vision	Linear, bellows, nodal, multilinear
Leadership system	Distributed, programmatic, integrative/supervisory, facilitative, visionary, none
Leadership of personnel	Talent, resource, none
Partnership structures	Primary/limited, coalition/opportunistic, collaborative, none
Problem solving	Independent, programmatic, collaborative, noncoping

table continues

Categories of significant features	Variable features
Programmatic features	
Planning/policy level roles and relationships	Clear roles, clear relations clear roles, confused relations confused roles, confused relations
Activity level roles and relationships	Clear roles, clear relations clear roles, confused relations confused roles, confused relations
Activity level resources	Talent/experience match, training, planning time content assistance/technical support

External accountability includes such limits on the actions of one or more partners as public or private bureaucratic regulations, union agreements, and personnel policies. It was a feature present in eight (36%) projects. Three (37%) achieved full implementation. Further, of the eight projects to become fully implemented, 63% are free of external impingements.

In no case was full implementation achieved without involving all participating organizations. The form in which involvement takes place seems not to matter, as one-on-one involvement accounts for 25% of the fully implemented projects. Sharing content information also is associated with implementation. In all but two of the cases where the players were appropriately involved in prefunding conversations about the roles they were to play, they also were apprised of the content of the program activities. The two projects receiving limited content information remain segmented. As important, full implementation occurred in all but one of the projects with prefunding conversations that included all players and shared complete information on program content.

We explored whether the presence of concurrent partnerships and their style of interaction affected implementation. The few projects with no concurrent relationships, or with conflictual relationships, have not been fully implemented. However, in the case of the former, the service provider project is offering an undervalued service. It is unclear how additional partnerships with different relationships to one another would affect the degree to which the service is valued. In the case of the latter, partnership conflict is a manifestation of the initial absence of shared vision and the differing diagnoses of the problem held by the two participating partnerships. Although attempts have been made to establish management or advisory committees that might lead to cooperation, at this point the conflict remains.

Other forms of concurrent relationships seem to have little relationship to implementation. Where there are multiple nonconflicting partnerships, it seems to matter little, if at all, whether they function in isolation from one another or cooperate. Of the 11 isolated concurrent partnerships, 36% are fully implemented. Among the eight cooperative partnerships, 50% are fully implemented. Among the eight fully implemented projects, isolated and cooperative concurrent partnerships are equally represented. This is not surprising because where participating partnerships have an organizational structure and a set of activities oriented around particular programmatic foci, progress is possible whether or not there is interaction.

Programmatic Features

Programs consist of a variety of roles and relationships. Programs also use resources. Further, individuals implementing program activities must be able to do so, which can involve matching talent and experience to the activities or training personnel. Individuals charged with implementing the activities that comprise innovative programs also need assistance or support and planning time.

Each partnership is implemented through the ways participants enact roles and in their relationships. Roles and relationships exist at the policy and planning level and the activity level. The same participants may inhabit roles at both levels or some participants may be planners and others actors and have varied amounts of integration and mutual understanding in the relationships within and between them.

Roles and Relationships

Particular configurations of roles and relations are associated with implementation. Clear roles may well be a prerequisite for implementation: Participants in all fully implemented projects clearly understood both their planning roles and their activity roles. This supports the view that "implementation is an ongoing construction of shared reality among group members through their interaction with one another within the program" (Fullan 1991, p. 132).

Implementation is most related to clarity of roles and relationships, but only by a small margin. Twenty-one fully implemented projects have clear roles and relationships at the level of activity. In the remaining project, participants understand their roles in project activities but not how the roles relate to one another. The project director is aware of this, asserting that the big picture need not be shared if all participants play their parts well. Successful project implementation may have resulted because the project director serves as a talent scout and has selected participants who play their parts well.

Clarity at the planning level is only slightly less crucial than clarity at the activity level. Three projects achieved full implementation at the planning level despite participant confusion over how planning relationships played out through the partnership.

Having clear roles and relationships at both the planning and activity levels is a strong predictor of implementation. In 19 projects, it led to full implementation. In two of the exceptional cases, the fact that key players were not included in prefunding partnership conversations may have acted to impede implementation. As a result, key players may have failed to buy into the project or there may be a gap between project design and feasibility, both possible consequences of failing to include key players in the early planning process. The remaining partnership failed to achieve full implementation despite involvement of key players in prefunding conversation and despite clear planning and activity roles and relationships as a result of external conditions impeding implementation, i.e., the electrical work required to install the technology on which the project depends.

Resources

Tables 6 and 7 show the types of resources provided at the activity level by each project. The respective tables show resources provided in fully implemented projects (Table 6) and in projects achieving only segmented implementation (Table 7). Clearly both the *number* and types of different resources provided to those implementing program activities are different in fully implemented projects from segmented projects. Projects with segmented implementation are much more likely than fully implemented projects to provide only one form of aid. This was the case for 54% of the segmented projects, whereas all but two of the fully implemented projects provided more than one form of aid, with 36% incorporating three to four different types.

The type of resource also differs between segmented and implemented projects. Fully implemented projects place greater emphasis on technical assistance and content support (88%) than do segmented projects (23%). Conversely, training is emphasized in segmented projects (54%) more frequently than in fully implemented projects (37%).

Two resources are associated with implementation. Projects providing personnel matched to the task (matching), as well as providing appropriate technical assistance or content support (assistance), are most likely to achieve full implementation. Each of these also is individually associated with implementation. *In no case was full implementation accomplished without either matching or assistance.* Matching and assistance are particularly potent when combined, appearing *as a pair* in all but three of the fully implemented projects. The relationships of planning and training to implementation are more difficult to assess.

Table 6
Activity Level Personnel Resources in EPP Projects Achieving Full Implementation

Fully implemented projects	Planning time	Training	Talent/ experience match	Tech. assist./ content support
F		X		X
I				X
U			X	X
N		X	X	X
K		X	X	X
A			X	
R			X	X
S	X		X	X

Implementation Summary

The strongest findings from the first year of the study indicate that early implementation is achieved when people in charge of carrying out program activities know what to do, how to do it, and are provided with the resources to maintain their understanding throughout the implementation process. The structure in which the roles are played and the problems solved is less crucial.

Table 7
Activity Level Personnel Resources in EPP Projects Achieving Segmented Implementation

Segmented projects	Planning time	Training	Talent/ experience match	Tech. assist/ content support
P		X		
O				X
E			X	
B	X	X		
Q		X		
M			X	X
G		X	X	
C		X		
V		X	X	
T			X	
H			X	X
L		X		

Role clarity is present in all fully implemented projects. Planning involves the "what" of

implementation, but activity also involves the "how." Implementation was not fully achieved in any project without role clarity at both levels. Role clarity is best thought of as an indicator of appropriate preparation and/or support for implementation. It is a prerequisite but needs implementation strategies that continually assist in its development.

All players need to be involved in the prefunding conversation about the project. Prefunding involvement is necessary to ensure that project designs are feasible, there is support, and the means for accomplishing tasks, including negotiating potential external impediments to the project, are confronted. It also is a crucial step in identifying rather than assuming who will be on board when the project starts. Segmented implementation often results when projects designed around specific partners find that a key player is not interested in joining the partnership. The roles and responsibilities of others then become either confused or inapplicable. Role clarity is one of the outcomes of the prefunding involvement of key players. Certainly, noninvolvement makes it more difficult to establish role clarity early in the project.

Although role clarity at the planning level can be established through prefunding conversations, role clarity during implementation is fundamentally different. Role clarity at the activity level can be accomplished by matching people to program activities or by providing content support and assistance at the activity level. All fully implemented projects used one and usually both of these strategies. The importance of knowing "how to" at each stage of implementation is emphasized by the relatively weak impact of training on implementation. "Hit-and-run" training without either experienced personnel or ongoing content support has little influence on implementation. Introducing and establishing innovations requires participants to relate to setting and practice in new ways. Such new relationships are not negotiated on a one-time basis but are renegotiated throughout the innovation process until the innovation becomes part of established practice. Technical assistance and content support are crucial in the process of restructuring the setting and/or redefining practice. This is particularly true in the absence of matching, but most successful implementations rely on both strategies. The long-term danger of placing too much reliance on talent matching is the risk of personnel turnover.

Although role clarity is necessary for implementation, it is somewhat less important for all participants to hold a big picture view of the overall partnership or to play their roles within particular structures. Implementation occurred when roles were clear even if participants were confused about the relationships among roles and had noncollaborative partnership structures. Even when problems arose, broad partnership orientations were not essential to implementation. Fully implemented projects included those solving problems either independently or within given activities and those collaborating to solve problems.

A big view of the partnership is not essential, but a shared understanding of specific objectives or broad goals or the means to attain them is. Full implementation can result from

commonality at any one of these three points. In no case were projects fully implemented if they were multilinear, lacking commonality at any of these three points. Partners, in addition to understanding their roles, must have roles that work together at some point in the process, whether in terms of having a shared purpose, working on a shared activity, or working toward a shared end. Otherwise there is no reason for joint effort and implementation suffers.

Many projects' ambitions for systemic change only achieved segmented implementation. Reasons for this are discussed throughout this report. It may be, however, that segmented implementation occurs early in the process and systemic change occurs later. The relationships between various organizational and programmatic features and the achieved level of implementation also provide avenues for speculation on other process phenomena. For example, one project consisting of a number of add-on programs seems to be moving in the direction of systemic change. The project involved all players prior to funding, has the requisite role clarity, and involves participants with a common vision of specific objectives and broad goals. Multiple approaches are implemented as means, with activity-appropriate matching, training, and technical assistance provided across the project. The question is whether full implementation of multiple add-on programs may ultimately influence systemic change, and if so, how. It may be that such shifts occur where the points of innovative interaction and changes in practice are many and draw on numerous preinvolved partners sharing a common view of the ends and a clear understanding of their roles.

Conclusion

The first-year Documentation and Evaluation of OERI's Educational Partnerships Program relied on project-generated documents and data gathered during site visits to generate "causal arguments," hypotheses about relationships that influence implementation, impact, and institutionalization. The hypotheses were developed inductively through the examination and reduction of data from documents, observations, and interviews. In future years, the hypotheses will be tested, modified, or rejected based on brief site visits, intensive case studies, and surveys of participants.

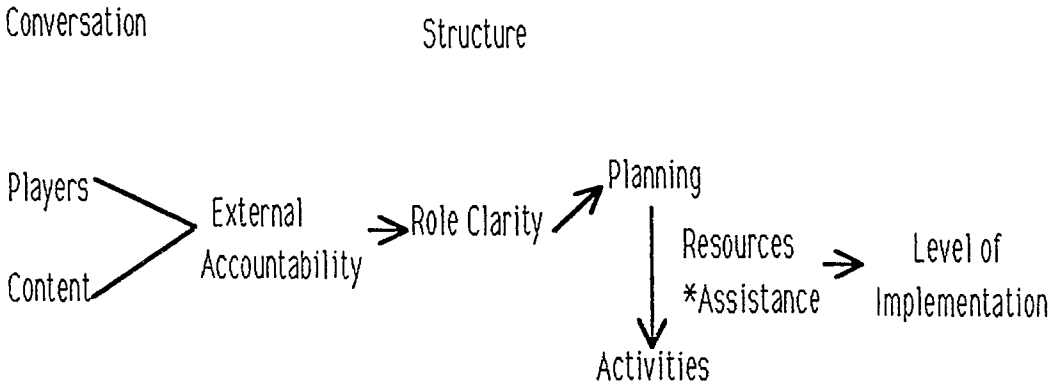
This concluding chapter of the first-year report begins with a model that summarizes relationships noted in the funded projects.

A Summary Model

Figure 3 summarizes important relationships exhibited in the funded partnerships. All partnerships begin with a set of conversations among potential members. Successful implementation is associated with the nature and extent of the conversations. First, when conversations involve all

players, implementation is more easily achieved. Second, the discussion should include talk about the activities the partnership will sponsor. If these conversations are open, representatives of participating organizations share their senses of how the partnership will fit within their own organization and the amount and type of external accountability there will be. In some cases the decision will be to operate without challenging the external limits; in others, the partnership may develop strategies for surmounting them. In any event, the result of the prepartnership conversations is role clarity on the part of participants.

Figure 3
Path to Implementation



Partnerships can be successfully implemented with different structures although partnerships in which there is a primary partner and limited partners are less likely to achieve full implementation than are coalitions and collaborations. The issue is not what the roles and relationships within the partnership are, but rather how well occupants understand and accept their roles. Consequently, partnerships can have broad or narrow scopes, can address problems in a variety of ways, and can develop different approaches to planning and still be successfully implemented. Implementation success is at both the organizational and programmatic levels.

With clear roles and relationships, partnerships are able to plan and adapt to changing circumstances. The core of planning is developing activities and providing the resources necessary to implement them. Of all resources, including training, money, and appropriate staffing, the most important to ensure implementation is assistance in the content of the program. Technical assistance has been particularly important in the partnerships that entailed changes in curriculum and instruction and those that require site-level decisionmaking. The only substitute for content assistance is matching assignments to already existing knowledge and skills, but projects that rely on talent matching have limited potential for broad impact and are easily derailed by personnel

changes. Short-term training does not have the same positive impact as ongoing assistance responsive to needs in the field.

All funded partnerships implemented at least some proposed organizational or programmatic features. Further, some projects with segmented implementation may move to complete implementation. Partners may have simply underestimated the time it will take to implement the proposed structures and activities. However, projects that began without clear roles and that do not provide assistance at the activity level will, it seems, have a more difficult time in achieving their goals. The positive aspect of these findings is that both the lack of role clarity or the absence of content assistance can be addressed at any point in partnership development. If they did not exist prior to funding, conversations can be held at any point. And resources can be allocated to assistance at the activity level.

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