DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 455 666 EC 308 631

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TITLE	Design Considerations for State TA Systems.
INSTITUTION	National Early Childhood Technical Assistance System, Chapel Hill, NC.
SPONS AGENCY	Special Education Programs (ED/OSERS), Washington, DC.
ISBN	ISBN-0-9709924-0-8
PUB DATE	2001-05-00
NOTE	91p.
CONTRACT	H024A960001-96
AVAILABLE FROM	National Early Childhood Technical Assistance System (NECTAS), 137 E. Franklin St., Suite 500, Chapel Hill, NC 27514-3628. Tel: 919-962-8426; Tel: 877-574-3194 (TDD); Fax: 919-966-7463; e-mail: nectas@unc.edu; Web site: http://www.nectas.unc.edu.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Agency Cooperation; Coordination; *Disabilities; Early Childhood Education; Early Intervention; Educational Legislation; Federal Legislation; *Instructional Materials; Preschool Education; Public Policy; *Technical Assistance; *Workbooks
IDENTIFIERS	Amendments; *Individuals with Disabilities Educ Act Amend 1997

ABSTRACT

This planning resource is meant to serve as "stimulus information" to enable and guide a participatory planning process involving a team of key stakeholders of Parts B (including Section 619) and C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and others who are working to improve services for children and youth with disabilities ages birth through 21. Its purpose is to help state sponsors and planners think strategically about the coherent design and effective operation of their technical assistance (TA) systems. The resources consists of the following three parts: "Part I: Foundations and Perspectives of TA"; "Part II: Three Selected Readings on TA"; and "Part III: Workbook for TA Design." Together, these three parts of the document aim to help a planning team understand the possibilities to be considered for crafting a state TA system, which will ultimately improve the quality of local service programs and their results with children, youth, and families. (Contains 32 references.) (SG)

Design Considerations for State TA Systems

BY PASCAL TROHANIS

CONNECTING PEOPLE & KNOWLEDGE
NECTAS
National Early Childhood Technical Assistance System

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MAY 2001

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is a collaborative system, coordinated by the
Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center
of the
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

with

Center on Disability Studies, University of Hawai'i at Manoa
Federation for Children with Special Needs
Georgetown University Child Development Center
National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE)
ZERO TO THREE: National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families

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ISBN 0-9709924-0-8

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May 2001

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U.S. Office of Special Education Programs

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Preface

This planning resource was prepared within the scope of the objectives of our technical assistance cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). The resource is intended to help state sponsors and planners think strategically about the coherent design and effective operation of their technical assistance (TA) systems. The materials are to serve as "stimulus information" to enable and guide a participatory planning process involving a team of key state stakeholders of Parts B (including Section 619) and C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and others who are working to improve services for children and youth with disabilities ages birth through 21.

The planning resource is organized into three parts. Part I provides background information about TA–its knowledge base, policy perspectives and implementation experiences. Collectively, understandings from these perspectives and contributions can underpin the design and operation of a state TA system and its goal to foster change—innovation and improvement. For additional background information about TA, a state's TA system planning team may choose to use any of the three previously published readings on TA that are found in Part II of this planning resource.

By using Part III of this planning resource and its series of worksheets as discussion tools, a state planning team can examine seven interdependent elements of TA system design. Part III can help the team to assess the current status of its TA system and where it wishes to be in the future by addressing some of the following questions:

1. What is the interface between the state's TA system and other state service delivery system components that are implemented at the local level such as child find, service coordination, evaluation assessment, individualized planning, intervention strategies, and procedural safeguards ?

2. Who is likely to request assistance at the local level? What is the volume of requests likely to be? How will requests from the field be handled routinely and by whom? How will families have access to TA from the state?

3. What is the relationship of the state's TA system and other statewide human resource and change initiatives, such as the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD), State Improvement Plan (SIP), State Improvement Grant (SIG), state education and health reform and standards, and others?

4. What role should the state agency, as well as special education advisory panel, state interagency coordinating council (ICC), preschool advisory committee, the state steering committee(s) related to the OSEP continuous improvement and monitoring process, state improvement grant partnership council, and/or local ICCs play in the planning, management and provision of TA?

5. How will the state's plans for local program review, monitoring and continuous improvement planning, and enforcement relate to the planning and provision of TA? How might potential conflicts among these roles be minimized?

6. What resources, human, technological and financial, are available and/or needed to support the provision of TA?

7. What kind of organizational structure for TA will best meet the state's needs?

8. What strategies will be used by the TA organization to provide effective TA and support?

9. How does the state TA system interact and collaborate with other state, regional, and national TA efforts?

10. How will the TA services be evaluated?

Together, these three parts of the document aim to help a planning team understand the possibilities to be considered for crafting a state TA system. Hopefully, the system will reach and influence key audiences and thereby ultimately improve the quality of local service programs and their results with children, youth and families.

The ideas in this planning resource synthesize years of experience in providing TA, as well as draw upon a diverse knowledge and practice base. How well does this resource meet your needs? How useful is it? What improvements do you suggest? Please feel free to contact me with your feedback on this document or if you need additional information or assistance. Much success with your TA system planning efforts.

Pascal (Pat) Trohanis
May 2001

Design Considerations for State TA Systems

BY PASCAL TROHANIS

PART I:

Foundations and Perspectives of TA

Foundations and Perspectives of Technical Assistance

The IDEA Improvement Act of 1997 (P.L. 105-17) intends to improve results for children with disabilities all across America. This outcome is an essential element of our national policy to ensure equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with special needs, from birth through 21 years. As this law and its regulations are implemented in our states and jurisdictions, community-based early intervention, preschool and school-age programs will identify a range of needs and concerns related to how best to serve all eligible children, youth and families.

The implementation of a nationwide public policy, such as the IDEA and its Parts B, C and D provisions, gives rise to numerous challenges affecting people, their capacities, their behaviors, and the operations and practices of the service delivery systems. Examples of challenges that have emerged include areas such as least restrictive environment, interagency collaboration, state and local monitoring and improvement planning, natural environments, parental involvement, finance of services, child identification and eligibility, assessment, early literacy, data systems management, program evaluation, preparing personnel amid rising professional standards and individualized interventions serving all eligible children, including special populations such as children with autism spectrum disorders. These challenges serve as catalysts for service delivery systems and their staff to grow and change, take on more responsibilities and produce better outcomes.

Local service programs are able to address many or some of the above challenges through their own community resources, supports and ingenuity by relying on the use of knowledge from research and practice. Additionally, community-based special education personnel, early intervention providers, parents and others will look to their State Lead Agency for Part C (birth to 3) and State Educational Agency (SEA) for Part B (3-21) for assistance, guidance, support and leadership.

In order to meet the demands of this important and needed support role, state agencies must engage in strategic planning for comprehensive systems change and improvement, reform, innovation, capacity building, and individual growth and development. To guide this broad responsibility of offering help, state Parts B and C programs must:

- examine their current plan and capacities to respond to requests for high quality, knowledgeable assistance to individuals working in local community programs;
- refine their plans for creating and offering a continuous learning environment, proactive guidance and leadership in the use of effective practices from a base of sound research;

- and, determine how to best reach and influence key constituencies and thereby ultimately improve the quality of local service systems and results for children and families.

This systematic, complex and challenging process of making help and support available for change and improvement is referred to as technical assistance or "TA." It is built on the concept of knowledge transfer and use. TA encourages an organized, ongoing, substantial and coherent approach to change versus the more frequently found disjointed, one-shot, hodge-podge, fragmentary and episodic approach to improvement.

Part I of this document provides state planners with foundations and perspectives of TA. It is intended to create a common understanding and appreciation for the concepts and principles of TA that serve as key considerations for system design. A definition of TA is offered. Next information on TA is presented that weaves together a theme of improving results through the development of service delivery systems and their people. In relation to this theme, three main conceptual contributions are described–knowledge base on TA, policy considerations and practical implementation experiences. Finally, a TA system framework, consisting of seven elements, is introduced that can be used to develop a coherent statewide TA system.

Definition

Based on a review of the literature, familiarity with many TA programs, and personal practical experiences, the author of this planning resource offers the following definition of TA:

> TA is a process within a dynamic context that enables a goal-focused, strategy-oriented, accountable organization to transfer knowledge to clients for the purpose of their growth, change, and improvement.

This broad definition contains some key words that are described briefly to help readers get oriented to the concept and meaning of TA:

- Process—the systematic, ongoing, continuous, collaborative interaction procedures used by the TA agency or external third party with the identified clients.

- Context—the broad and complex national, state and local socio-political-legal, economic and service delivery system environment within which the TA is or will be sponsored and provided.

- Goals—the intended outcomes and sustained impacts expected over time from the TA that are developed with the clients and the mutual focus on change such as service delivery and system improvement, innovation, capacity building, knowledge acquisition, strategic planning and skill development.

- Strategies—the various modalities through which knowledge is transferred, such as meetings, consultations, conferences, materials and dissemination, and media and technology.
- Accountable—the activities to document TA, account for accomplishments, evaluate outcomes of the TA over time and report results to the TA sponsor, staff and others.
- Organization—the organized TA agency (typically an external party from the client) consisting of competent staff and resources targeted/earmarked to provide TA help and support.
- Knowledge—the substance or content of the TA (e.g., specific research, policy, practice) that will be assembled, analyzed, transformed, packaged and transfered by the TA organization to clients to use.
- Clients—the specific people, recipients, constituencies, or customers who within their organizations will participate in the TA and utilize the knowledge being transferred by a TA organization.

Based on this definition, TA embodies a planned and coherent enterprise with the major expectation of promoting effective systems change through the transfer and use of knowledge. This outcome seeks to increase the capacity of national, state and local service delivery systems and thereby improve the quality, compliance and results of services and supports for children and youth and their families.

Knowledge Base Foundation

The knowledge base about TA arises from a body of research, literature and practitioner thought. Key sources of information include planned organizational change, dissemination and diffusion, adult learning and continuing education, knowledge management, consultation, policy development and implementation and TA. One notable finding from a review of this eclectic knowledge base is that most references describe a recurring theme—the critical relationships among TA, knowledge utilization and planned change.

Change is most often thought of as a nonlinear and complex process and not an event that affects an organization and its individuals. Pritchett (1993) observes that "change keeps picking up speed. Before the organization can finish getting adjusted to one change, it gets hit with several others. We're living in a constant period of transition, and the shelf life of our solutions keeps getting shorter. What works becomes history in a hurry." (p.1) He sees the sources of change as people, technology, and the explosion of knowledge.

Two authors provide some important thoughts about the general process of change. These ideas relate to how a TA agency must think about its clients and their mutual goals and relationships for supporting planned change. Marsh (1994) describes two types of change that he refers to as the inseparable "performance twins"—improvement and innovation. Improvement deals with the constant improving of how things get done in an organization and the results achieved. These include such things as service excellence, productivity, quality management and costs. Innovation, the second type of change, involves the creation of something completely different. These include such things as a new product, service, policy or benefit. Related to these two types of change are the distinctions made between incremental and fundamental change. Mayeski and Gaddy (2000) define incremental change as fine tuning, constant tinkering or making adjustments within a limited scope to improve the functioning of an enterprise through small increments. On the other hand, fundamental change requires a transformation of a major scope in an organization and its people by requiring new ways of thinking and behaving—a call for dramatic change.

Whether the intent is for making incremental or fundamental change, or promoting innovation or improvement in local service delivery systems, a TA organization must design and use with its clients an approach that will guide the process of planned change. Egan (1988) believes that a three-stage interactive approach may be helpful. The first stage, "current scenario," involves an assessment of client problems, needs, and opportunities; the second stage, "preferred scenario," looks with the client at the future possibilities, engages in agenda-setting for the future and in creating a commitment to change; and, the third stage, "strategies," calls for discussing with the client how to get to the preferred scenario by considering alternative strategies, picking the best one and formulating plans of action. TA systems must have a conceptual understanding of change and incorporate an approach with their clients that will use knowledge to be successful in the implementation of change.

Findings from the research suggest that TA systems are built on the belief that knowledge is a major resource for change. According to Horibe (1999): "Knowledge is a body of information, technique and experience that coalesces around a particular subject" (p. 165). Individuals are expected to take in that knowledge and integrate it into one's work. A TA system must provide the best available knowledge—research, practice and policy information—in diverse and useful formats and in a timely fashion in order to meet the needs of different recipients. Stewart (1999) observed about TA: "Find useful knowledge, bottle it, and pass it around" (p. 120). Knowledge helps policy makers, service providers, families and others in states and other settings make sound decisions and plans for high-performing systems of comprehensive services for children and families.

The management of knowledge is critical for TA. It must be collected, analyzed, reformulated, composed, stored, recalled and distributed in a variety of formats. Through these types of activities a TA program can help people in states and its communities learn and grow in order to accomplish their mutually valued goals of providing high quality services for children and families. As Prusak (1996) describes: "The only thing that gives an organization a competitive edge—the only thing that is sustainable—is what it knows, how it uses what it knows, and how fast it can know something new" (p.11).

Yin and White (1984), of the COSMOS Corporation, studied general TA efforts, most of which were federally sponsored. Their work found that TA consists of two main perspectives: (a) a means of using knowledge to adopt and implement a practice or procedure; and (b) a means of incorporating an intensive, two-way communication process that uses a variety of strategies to promote change—innovation and improvement. Furthermore, they identified that these two building-block perspectives intersected with six ingredients for a TA organization:

- the access to a knowledge base;
- the availability of competent TA providers;
- the use of various communication channels;
- an understanding of the characteristics of the users/clients of the TA;
- a workable TA structure; and,
- the availability of operational resources.

A somewhat similar design, based upon a synthesis of literature by this author (Trohanis, 1995), portrays an approach for externally located TA and dissemination organizations such as those sponsored by federal and state agencies. The intent of these organizations is to facilitate change by bridging knowledge with action. Three broad dimensions of a TA system must be considered:

- the user-client-recipient organization;
- the TA organization and its qualified staff; and,
- three interactive domains referred to as
    - input processes (the available base of knowledge, research, practices and policies);
    - thruput activities (the needed processes, resources and expertise); and,
    - output expectations (the knowledge used by the client).

This constellation of attributes must be driven by a coherent long-term plan and by an extensive, current, qualitative and useful knowledge base *(see Figure 1).* This approach also calls for a commonly shared vision for change, a visible level of user readiness and motivation to work jointly with a TA organization, sensitivity to the unique attributes of clients and the people they serve, and a degree of connectedness and collaborative behavior to a variety of other TA and helping resources. All aspects of a dynamic and ongoing support system must be orchestrated by its planners in order to achieve targeted outcomes. Loucks-Horsley (1998) suggested that the image of a "bridge" to support knowledge with action is useful. From her work at the National Institute for Science Education's

Facilitating Change
Bridging Knowledge with Action

User-Client-Recipient-Organization
Context, needs, interests, expectations,
problems, goals, pressures for change

TA Organization
Philosophy, beliefs, authority, assumptions,
goals, management, qualified TA staff, communications and operations

–Interactive Domains–

IN-put ⇔ **THRU-put** ⇔ **OUT-put**

IN-put: Knowledge required and available

- Research base
- Experience base
- Policy base
- Practice base

THRU-put: Processes, resources, expertise and collaboration to bridge knowledge with action

- Build relationships
- Assess needs
- Plan
- Identify and acquire knowledge
- Analyze
- Translate
- Package
- Deliver assistance via:
  - training
  - consultation
  - materials
- Evaluate

OUT-put: Knowledge used

- Develop and implement new organizational goals, structures and procedures
- Increase availability of skilled personnel
- Formulate and implement policy
- Solve problems
- Facilitate decision making
- Plan instruction or intervention

Figure 1 | Trohanis (1995)

Professional Development Project, she believes that "each bridge requires careful design that considers its purpose, who will use it, the conditions that exist at its anchor points (beginning, midway and end), and the resources required to construct it." (p.2)

The American Institutes of Research (AIR) examined three approaches to TA in relation to the literature on knowledge diffusion and use. The first approach is characterized as "top down" in which knowledge solutions to problems are designed and exported by a competent knowledge producer to end users – e.g., from a State TA Center to local school system staff. The second approach is known as "bottoms-up" in which knowledge solutions are found by users and distributed among themselves to one another – e.g., from a school-based support team to its colleague teachers and staff. The third approach is "linkage" wherein a linking or TA agent works together with a user to identify and bring appropriate knowledge solutions to solve user problems–e.g., a regional Part C TA system works collaboratively with staff of local early intervention programs to identify their needs and solution strategies. All three approaches are often associated with organizations and their qualified staff that provide TA to assist targeted clients in the change process over time (Hamilton, 1998).

With the above ideas in mind about change and knowledge transfer, the following perspectives by several authors describe key aspects for operationalizing TA work. Gallagher (1980), at the University of North Carolina, outlined five key concepts that undergird the relationship between change and TA:

- the recipients (clients) are the starting place for any change effort;
- diagnosis (needs assessment) precedes identification of solution;
- the outside helping role is non-evaluative;
- the recipients' internal support and resources are important for change to occur; and,
- user-initiated change is the strongest kind of change.

These operational guidelines suggest that in order for TA to be effective, it must be planned and responsive to client needs. The enterprise of support and assistance should be ongoing and organized, not fragmentary or episodic events or activities.

Havelock (1978 and 1995), formerly of the University of Michigan, wrote about the operational relationship between TA and change. He described six interactive communication processes involving the client and the TA organization that are necessary for effective TA to move knowledge to action:

- potential client wants to improve and engages in processes to do so;
- client must be able to communicate needs;
- TA organization must receive and understand client messages about needs;
- TA organization engages in problem solving, research and development so as to be able to respond to client;

- TA organization responds to client's needs; and,
- client receives, analyzes and interprets how information or knowledge or skills can be used and determines what actions must be taken.

Additionally, he saw the need for highly trained TA providers who can act as a prod to bring about change through relations building with the client, ongoing support and being able to satisfy needs and concerns.

An adaptation of Havelock's process work was undertaken by Richman and Clifford (1980) of the University of North Carolina. *Figure 2* shows the operational interactions between a TA system and a client system. The processes involve the application of resources to solve a particular client need and/or challenge for change and/or improvement. The transactions between both parties involve active communications to diagnose client needs, clarify resources, find and apply solutions through various strategies such as consultations, workshops, and materials, and evaluate services provided on an ongoing basis.

McEvoy, Davis and Riechle (1993) of the University of Minnesota describe the importance of using a longitudinal approach to TA versus short-term episodic assistance. To make an operational reality, they call upon planners of TA systems to train their TA providers to enable

Change as a Problem-Solving Process

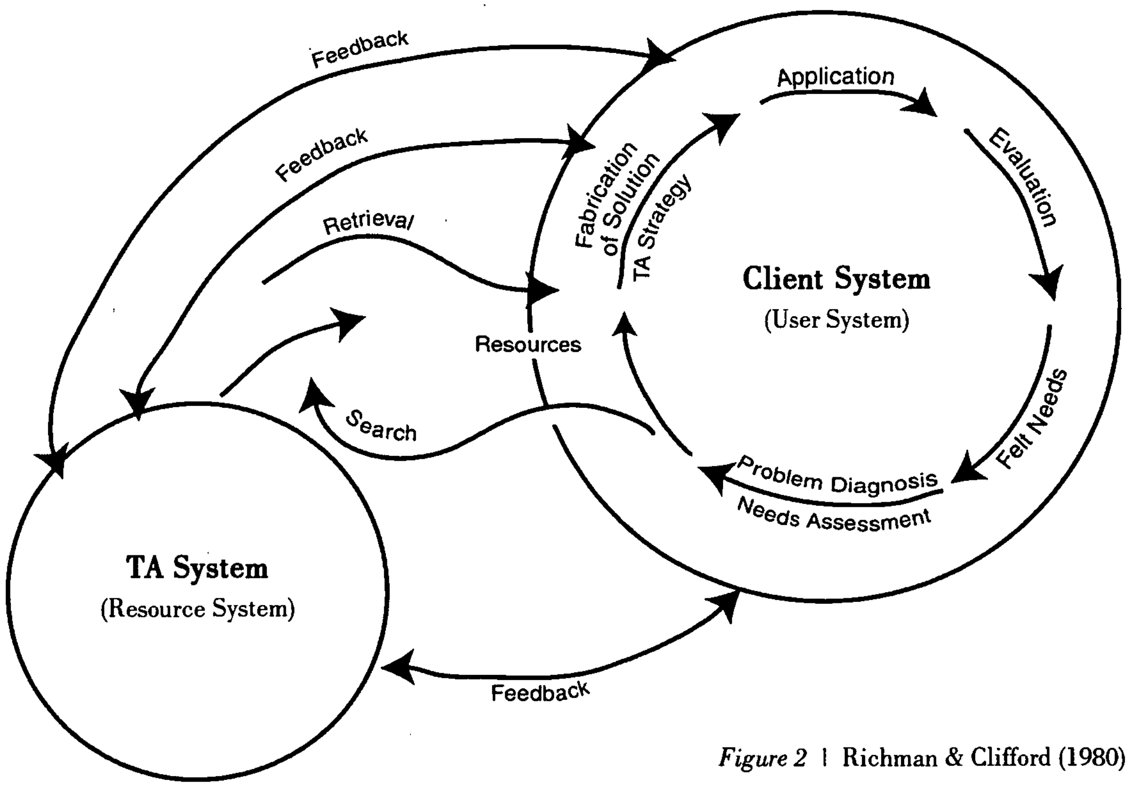


Figure 2 | Richman & Clifford (1980)

them to provide an ongoing process of competent TA to clients, to generate a plan for broad local support for the TA effort, and to have an evaluation plan to assess the outcomes of the TA.

In addition to focusing on knowledge use and organizational change, the literature suggests that planners and operators of TA programs also must pay attention to the personal side of change. This consideration involves the individual clients or recipients of TA. As Hall and George (1978) observed, there are personal feelings, perceptions, frustrations, questions, joys and disappointments that get involved in the change process and individual learning. Loucks (1983) reinforces the notion that "change is a personal process that individuals experience differently, each at his or her own pace. Thus, plans for program and organizational change must be developed with the individual in mind." (p.2) Additionally from her research with the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (C-BAM) on how individuals undergo change, she and her colleagues found that individuals participating in change activities first express self-oriented concerns. For example, "How will the change affect me?" "How will my role change?" "How will I implement this new practice?" "How much of my time will the new practice take to learn and implement?" "How much training and support on the new practice will be available to me?" Once these concerns are addressed individuals can shift their focus on the next set of concerns. These are about the impact of the change in terms of enhancing personal effectiveness, collaborting with others and benefitting children and families. Needs sensing, consultation, collaborative problem solving and facilitation are examples of primary strategies often used by a TA program to address personal concerns and systems change efforts (Haslam & Turnbull, 1996; Clifford & Trohanis, 1980).

Ideas from continuing education or learner-centered professional development offer another consideration related to the personal side of TA. As the former U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley (1999) reported, support systems such as TA operations, serve two purposes:

- to help conscientious but inexperienced staff gain their footing in their jobs; and,
- to provide growth opportunities that enable all staff to enhance their skills and professional standing, and to produce positive results.

Inservice education, distance education, information dissemination, modeling, peer coaching, mentoring and self-reflection are among strategies that a TA organization may use to increase an individual client's capacity to adapt to change and thereby produce positive results such as child and family growth, development and learning. As Newman and Simmons (2000) observed: "When adults learn new skills and competencies, gain insight, construct knowledge and reflect on and practice what they have learned, they better understand how their students learn." (p.11)

TA systems also can contribute to the creation of "learning communities" as Senge (1994) has advocated in his writings. This environment of perpetual individual and team learning (also known as professional learning communities, critical friends group, professional networks or communities of practice) can be a highly interactive, competency building and high-performing one. These communities continuously use knowledge through mutual support and collegiality so as to improve people, policies, programs, practices, services, sensitivities and performance outcomes. TA programs must pay attention to the provision of continuous learning opportunities and foster collaboration among individuals through activities such as convening face to face meetings, using listservs, Web sites and teleconferences, and facilitating mediated discussion forums and chat rooms. Fullan (1995) summarizes this view: "Personal mastery and group mastery feed on each other in learning organizations. People need one another to learn and accomplish things." (p. 257)

In summary, the eclectic knowledge base provides a rich foundation upon which to build an understanding about the complex process of TA and its relationship to planned change and knowledge use. The findings suggest that a TA system must be designed, organized, and operationalized around three major ingredients – principles, staff and a plan – in order to generate positive outcomes over time. Principles of TA include:

- client centeredness, friendliness, and responsiveness to needs, priorities, strengths and readiness;
- goal and results focused so as to make a difference;
- access to knowledge from research, proven models, practice and policy;
- valuing diversity in ideas and people;
- availability of different strategies, resources, and technologies;
- commitment to building trust and an ongoing personal relationship with the client (customer) through active two-way communications; and,
- dedication to the provision of high-quality and timely TA services that may vary in amount, duration and intensity.

The second major ingredient is qualified staff. A TA system must have people who represent a strong mix of content and process knowledge and skills. Staff must be:

- competent in the content or subject matter around which TA will be provided and capable of brokering the expertise of others;
- sensitive to cultural, disability, gender and linguistic groups;
- flexible, credible, responsive and reliable to best meet the current and future needs and circumstances of the clients;
- knowledgable in adult learning and in change agentry;
- able to understand the strengths and appropriateness of different TA or intervention strategies, including technology applications; and,
- competent in such process areas as planning, problems solving, listening, interpersonal relations, teaming, training, communication and facilitation.

Lastly, a plan must be created and followed that incorporates an information base, qualified staff, operational activities and principles, structure, and a personal focus on individual clients. Thus, a coherent state TA system can be expected to achieve a variety of outcomes such as:

- building individual client competencies in relation to high performance standards and quality assurance;
- providing solutions for clients to enhance their functioning;
- providing multidisciplinary, multicultural and parental perspectives to facilitate local capacity building to improve service delivery system results;
- bringing innovative practices forward for consideration and implementation;
- linking clients with others working to solve similar problems;
- building a spirit of individual and organizational renewal, restructuring and pride so as to make a difference on behalf of children and families;
- providing an independent perspective on service delivery system matters; and,
- providing knowledge that is not easily accessible to help reform policies.

Policy Perspective

Federal and state policies and their implementation that involve workforce improvement, personnel development, and systems reform, offer another major source of considerations for TA system design. One specific federal policy is discussed, the IDEA Improvement Act of 1997 (P.L. 105-17), which contains three policy areas that are relevant to state TA design.

The first area pertains to the long-time federal requirement known as the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) for which all state Part B and C programs are involved. In 1997 the MidSouth Regional Resource Center (RRC) at the University of Kentucky developed a conceptual approach to build understanding about the challenging and complex relationships involved in this human resource development provision *(see Figure 3)*. This diagram shows requirements and activities to assure that qualified, competent and adequate supplies of personnel are found in state service delivery systems to be able to address the needs of youngsters with disabilities and their families. A spirit of continuous learning is called for across multiple stakeholders, CSPD and state TA efforts to improve practice and outcomes. As the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) describes in its draft standards for professional preparation: "Continuous learning is a hallmark of a professional in any field, and early childhood is no exception.... Candidates should demonstrate self motivated, purposeful learning that directly influences the quality of their work with young children." (p. 40, 2000). The TA functions and CSPD must work together in a state to use the latest knowledge to support desired changes, innovations and improvements in the local service delivery systems of early intervention and special education and their staff.

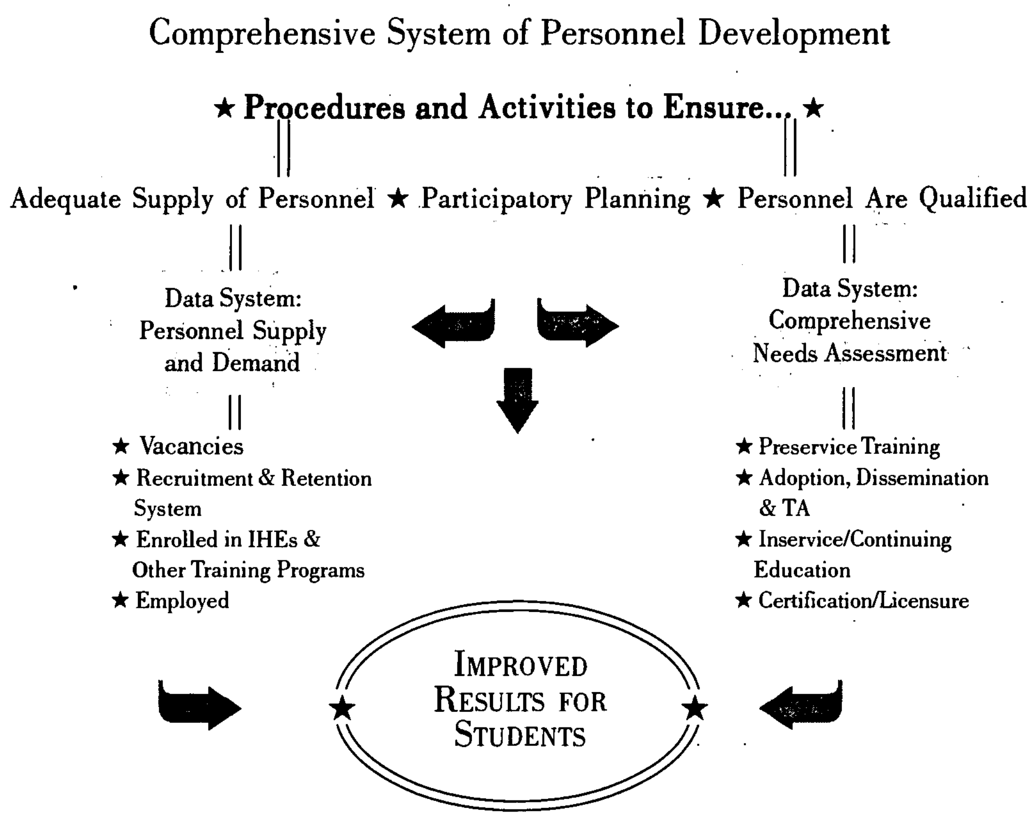


Figure 3 | MidSouth Regional Resource Center (1997)

A second important policy initiative embedded in Part D of the IDEA Amendments of 1997 relates and expands upon the concepts of CSPD. These are the State Improvement Plan (SIP) and its companion State Improvement Grant (SIG) involving TA, human capital development and planned systemic change. The SIG, that aims to develop personnel in order to leverage service delivery system improvement, is a relatively new Federal opportunity. It began in the spring of 1999 with competitive grants awarded by OSEP to 18 states. Nine states received grants in 2000 and another cohort of grantees will be announced in 2001. OSEP hopes that every state will have access to a SIG in the near future. The SIGs emphasize improving child and student outcomes through the use of various systemic and long-term improvement and partnership strategies that respond to critical state needs and involve multiple stakeholders. The Federal Resource Center (2000) of the Academy for Educational Development prepared a report on state needs that were being addressed by SIGS. Needs include service delivery challenges of least restrictive environment, related services, assessments, transition services, early literacy and positive behavior supports, parent involvement and data collections systems. TA and Dissemination (TA & D) activities must be integrated as partners in this multi-pronged state change effort through helping to put knowledge into action. In 2000, the Western Regional Resource Center

(WRRC) of the University of Oregon developed a conceptual model for SIP, shown in *Figure 4*. It depicts the multiple strategies that a state must consider as part of its improvement plan that aim to influence local and statewide system capacity and ultimately affect student outcomes. The WRRC and other RRCs, with input from NECTAS, have prepared summaries of SIG activities by state. Please visit the Web site http://www.dssc.org/frc/sigres.htm for information about these endeavors and insights on connecting SIGs with TA.

A third policy area has become increasingly important over the last three years for state TA operations, personnel development and systemic change. This is the vigorous Continuous Improvement and Monitoring Process (CIMP) designed by OSEP. The CIMP is intended to forge a broad partnership of federal, state, local and other stakeholders such as parents to assess and target improvements in the implementation and enforcement of the IDEA. Nationwide, state steering committees have been formulated to guide closely related activities–self assessment, improvement planning and evaluating systemic change–that are focused on improving results for children, youth and families. (Please visit http://www.dssc.org/frc/mon_res.htm for more information on CIMP, resources about monitoring and their relationships to TA.) Actively collaborating, participating and supporting this process are state and national TA programs. These TA efforts help to facilitate change and improvement by serving as strategic planners, information givers, change facilitators, trainers and capacity builders. Additionally, CIMP has stimulated the refinement of state practices that involve the required monitoring and enforcement activities of local Part B and C service delivery programs. In these instances, state TA organizations have become and will continue to be instrumental partners in the continuous improvement process to leverage and sustain enduring change.

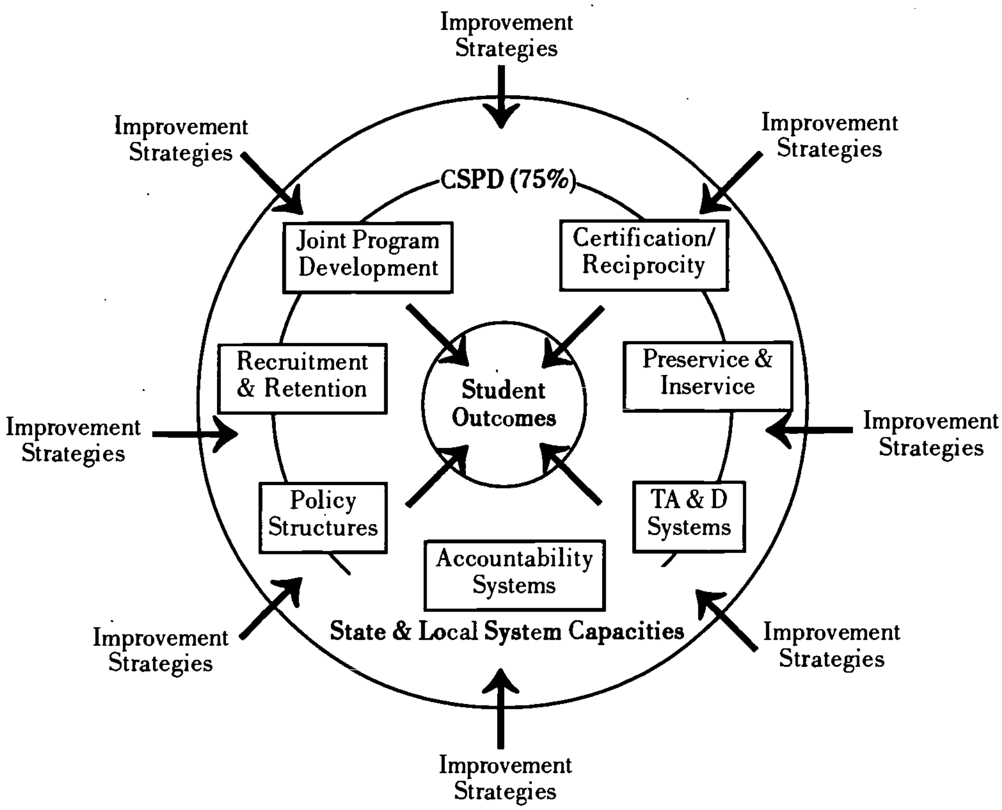
The IDEA and state law provide an impetus for the existence and operation of statewide service delivery systems, including the enhancement of workforce effectiveness, to address the needs of children, youth and families. These systems must serve as the focal point for organizational and individual change–improvement and innovation–through the planning, provision and use of state TA programs. Thus it is vital for planners to be aware of this and other federal and state policies as important sources of consideration for TA design.

Implementation Experiences

Across the U.S., there are examples of TA systems that embody many of these above mentioned considerations for knowledge utilization, organizational change and individual development. Examples of TA operations are introduced from which state planners can do further research to glean ideas and improve the strategic design of their own TA program.

One source of practical implementation experience exists among the numerous programs

A Conceptual Model for State Improvement Planning



The State Improvement Plan...

- is based on needs analyses/ assessments:
  - student outcomes,
  - system outcomes, and
  - system capacities...
- is developed by a partnership that represents agencies, families, students and communities...
- aligns these resources...
  - State Improvement Grant
  - Part B & C set-asides
  - Part D projects in the state
  - ESEA improvement strategies
  - Rehab Act improvement strategies
  - Other public & private resources
- in order to implement the best improvement strategies...

to increase state and local capacity to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.

Figure 4 | Western Regional Resource Center (2000) supported by the U.S. Federal Government, which are available to work with and exert influence on local and state managed programs and their staff. Readers of this planning resource are familiar with many of these programs. Some are sponsored by the Department of Health and Human Services— e.g., National TA Center for Children's Mental Health at the Georgetown University, the network of the Quality Improvement Centers for Head Start, University Affiliated Programs (recently renamed as Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, Education, Research and Services), Quality in Linking Together Program for Child Care and the Early Head Start National Resource Center at ZERO TO THREE. A number of other federally sponsored TA programs are supported by the Department of Education, such as Educational Labs, Regional Resource Centers, Parent Alliance, Equity Assistance Centers, Regional Technology in Education Centers, Networking System for Training Education Personnel, and the National Early Childhood TA System. (Please refer to http://www.dssc.org/frc/ta.htm for more information about these and other TA and Dissemination programs.) Planners are encouraged to consider their own experiences with these types of TA programs to gather ideas that may benefit their state plan for support and assistance.

Another source of practical experience exists among the diverse state-operated TA programs located in state offices, universities and private agencies. These structures are becoming more widespread to help state agencies accomplish their goals. According to Massell (2000), "States turned to external infrastructures and groups in part because of the philosophy that those closer to the field are in a better position to provide regular, sustained and relevant aid, but also as a way of coping with their limited state department capacity." (p.33) State leadership can be recognized in the provision of TA through such efforts as: New Hampshire's Preschool TA Network, Ohio's Special Education Regional Resource Center program, Nevada's Early Childhood TA Resource, Pennsylvania's Early Intervention TA, Arizona's TA System, Indiana's Unified Training System, Illinois' Support and TA Regionally program, Iowa's Area Education Agency regional network, Oklahoma's Statewide TA and Regional Support, North Carolina's Early Intervention Training and TA System, and California's Regional School Support and Improvement Centers. See *Figure 5* for a graphic representation of one sample state TA approach, Arizona-TA System (AZ-TAS), that portrays TA available to help improve services for students with special needs over time. (To acquire more information about state TA systems that can provide ideas for your state TA planning, please refer to the NECTAS Web site at http://www.nectas.unc.edu/ for examples involving early intervention and preschool programs.)

These and other federal and state agencies have established and implemented external mechanisms that are purposeful to provide continuous TA services to people and organizations at community, county, regional, state and national levels. What can be learned from them? TA programs such as those mentioned above rely on an extensive, state-of-the-art, and high-quality information and practice base. They nurture and develop trusting relationships with targeted clients. They initiate and promote active,

Technical Assistance Services Structure

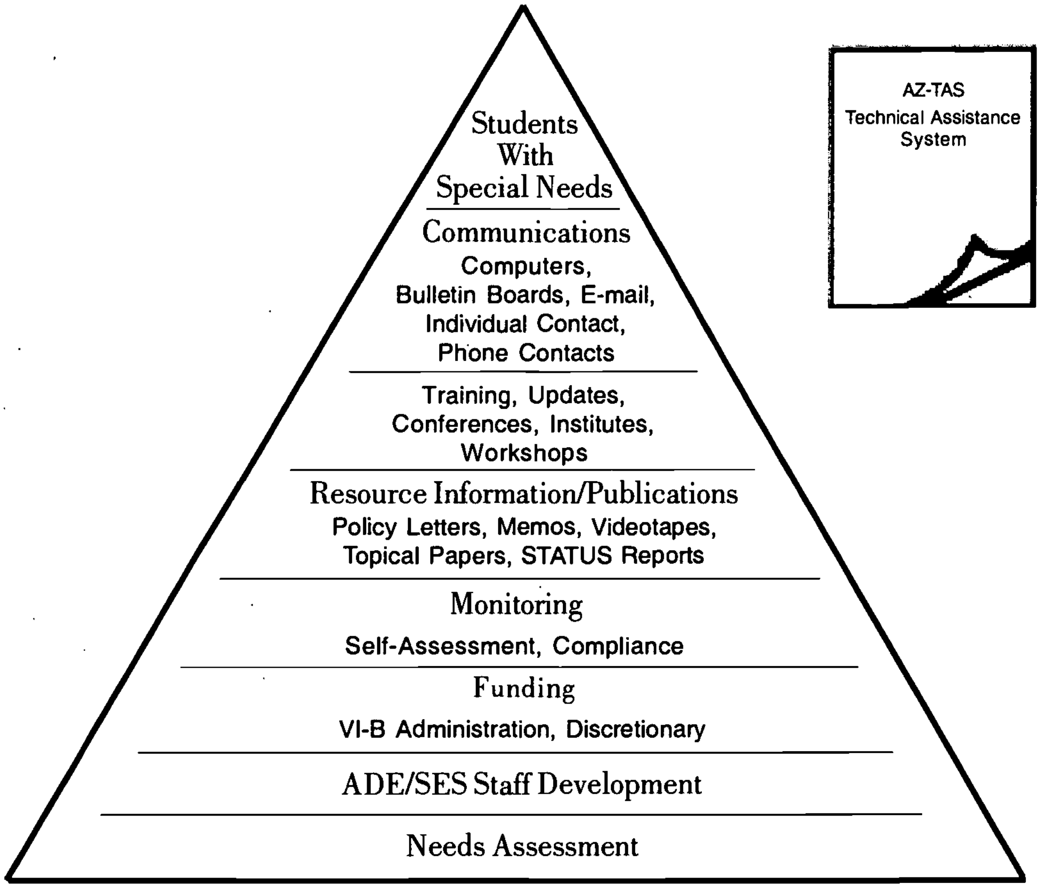


Figure 5 | Arizona Department of Education/Special Education, personal correspondence (1999)

respectful, and clear communication and expectations among all parties involved in the TA enterprise. Additionally, they reflect different organizational structures. They use varied procedures to assess needs and an array of strategies to tailor, customize and individualize the transfer of knowledge in a timely way in order to serve their clients and achieve mutually defined intended outcomes. Also, many tie their TA activities to that of compliance monitoring and continuous improvement. Finally, these TA systems seek to empower recipients through capacity building to become self-sufficient over time to better be able to address their own needs and, therefore, not to be dependent on an external source of support.

Framework

Through an understanding of the knowledge base, policy context and practical implementation experiences from state and national TA programs, a framework has been developed. It consists of seven broad interdependent elements that must be considered by

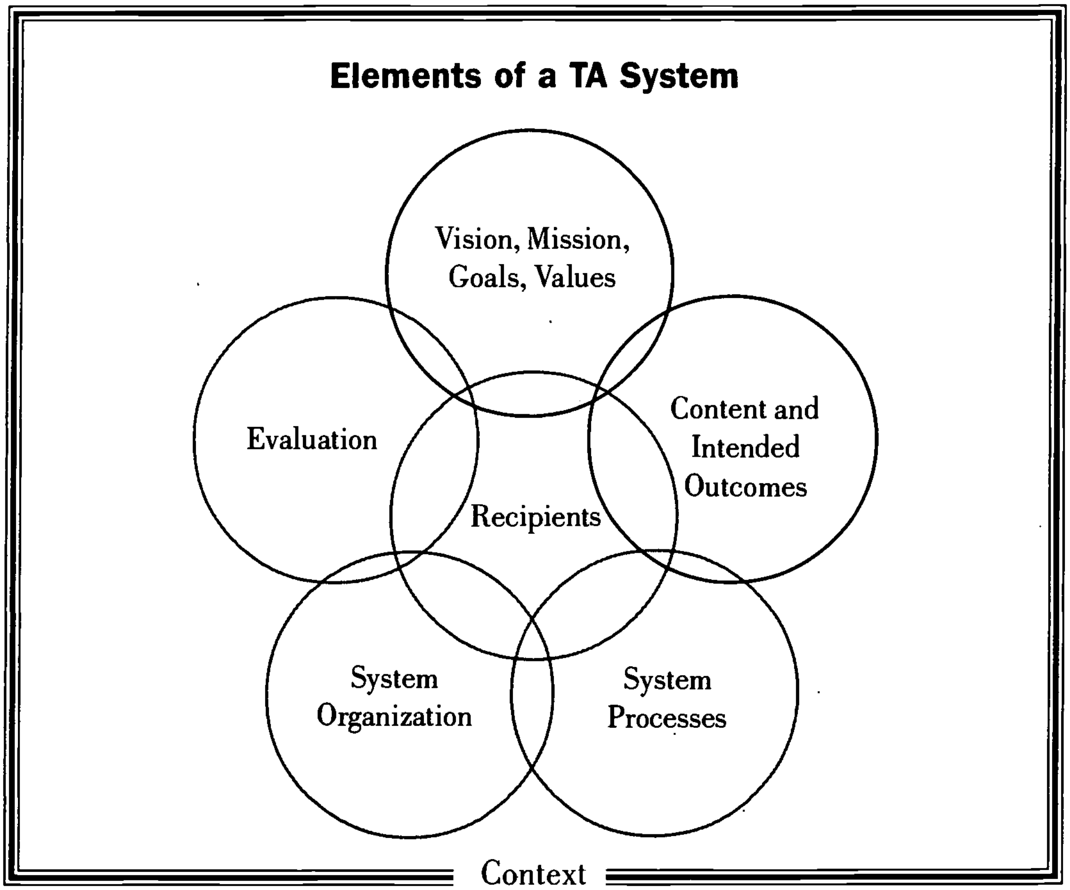


Figure 6 | NECTAS (2001)

planners who have as their goal the creation of a coherent, competent, high-performing, ongoing and results-oriented state TA system. These seven elements are:

- Context;
- Recipients;
- Vision, Mission, Goals, and Values;
- Content and Intended Outcomes;
- System Processes;
- System Organization; and,
- Evaluation.

Please refer to *Figure 6, Elements of a TA System* for a graphical overview of this framework. By carefully analyzing and examining these seven interacting elements, a team of state planners can develop a strategic approach to improve the organization and operation of a TA system. (See "Part III. Workbook for TA Design" of this planning resource for more information about these elements and the worksheets designed to stimulate and guide a planning or review process based on each of these seven interactive elements of a TA system.) The intended outcome of using these worksheets is to prepare an action plan that will guide a state's coherent TA efforts to facilitate change and ultimately lead to the generation of positive benefits and results for children with special needs and their families.

In addition to the Workbook in Part III of this planning resource, the state team may wish to create a logic model. As Wholey (1998) advises, logic models can be used to develop goals, strategies for achieving goals, rationale for the activities, estimates of the resources required to achieve goals, and methods for tracking progress. Kahn, Diefendorf and Kasprzak (1999), of NECTAS, have expanded on Wholey's thinking by encouraging planners to use a logic model to graphically represent the logical structure of a program as well as reveal the presumed causal sequence of events and their connections to proposed outcomes and demonstrable results. This planning tool may serve as a useful complement to the Workbook materials.

In closing, change must be seen as the norm for a TA system. With change comes the need to address complexity and desired results, the need for adaptive staff, the need for a qualitative knowledge base and the need to respond competently to client needs and priorities with timely, helpful and innovative TA services. As Miles and Louis (1990) suggest, assistance from an experienced outside agency can sometimes provide the inspiration and information people need as they "muster will and skill" to change.

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Design Considerations for State TA Systems

BY PASCAL TROHANIS

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PART II:

Three Selected Readings on TA

An Introduction to Technical Assistance and System Design ★

BY PASCAL TROHANIS

First Published in 1982 by
the Technical Assistance
Development System (TADS),
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Note to Reader: TADS was a national TA program sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education from 1971-1984 to serve the former Handicapped Children's Early Education Program (HCEEP).

An Introduction to Technical Assistance and System Design

by Pascal L. Trohanis

A classroom teacher spends a month looking in school supply outlets for instructional materials to challenge his students. He is unhappy with what he finds. However, he needs materials quickly. Where else can he go for new ideas or for responsive and satisfactory assistance? Journals? His department chairman or colleagues? A former professor or master teacher?

Ah, but wait a minute! He hasn't spoken with the resource specialist in the Teacher Resource Center of his school system. She may be able to offer a range of resource opportunities to satisfy his need ....

In the simplest sense, the resource specialist will be acting as a technical assistant. She will be giving the teacher information that will help him do his work better — assistance which he requested to help improve his teaching and the motivation of his students. As a technical assistant, the ultimate focus of her work is helping people solve (or improve their ability to solve) problems. She does her job by providing information or by linking people with other resources.

This chapter focuses on a number of questions that people interested in using technical assistance in education should ask: What are the functions of a technical assistance system? How does technical assistance work in education? What fields of inquiry have had an effect on the operation of present-day TA systems? How do I plan or refine a TA system? How has TADS structured its work with clients? What has helped TADS achieve success?

What Are the Functions of a Technical Assistance System?

- To provide the best available information, skills "linkages," and guidance to a group of clients;
- To do so systematically and continuously over time;
- To address the primary needs of the client or the client's wishes for personal or organizational change, improvement, or enrichment.

Of course, all of these functions are governed by the resources and policy guidelines which support the existence of the technical assistance system. The system itself is created typically by law or via a funding agency mission statement (as is the case with TADS).

The way these functions are handled also will depend on the organizational relationship of the client and TA agent. For example, if client and agent are both within a larger organization, the role of the TA provider may be very specific. If, however, the agent is external or outside of the client organization, the roles may be more general.

The best available information. In education, a TA system must develop or have access to a very sophisticated base of information. This base permits resources, such as materials on test instruments or guidelines on how to use Individual Educational Programs, to be located and deployed as necessary. A TA system must also develop or improve the client's ability to plan, manage, and evaluate. It often must identify new human resources or promising practices. Finally, it may link clients with other people or new resources.

TA client. The service recipients may be only one kind of specialist (e.g., a teacher); a group of people (e.g., everyone involved in early education); or, organizations (e.g., locally-based preschool programs for the handicapped). Likely clients for educational TA include: classroom teachers, principals, specialists (speech, medical, psychological), librarians, supervisors, itinerant staff, local school system central office personnel, and state education agency (SEA) employees. Possible client organizations include: school-building programs or model demonstration projects for school improvement.

Systematic and continuous response. To meet the client's needs appropriately, the TA agency must be relatively stable, have access to adequate information (and other) resources, and use responsive and systematic procedures in working with clients (consultation, printed materials, workshops, field visits, liaison and linkages, microcomputer networks, and so forth). This stability, the access to information, and the procedures must be a part of the TA system over a period of time in order to avoid inconsistency in the quality and quantity of services.

Personal or organizational change. The TA organization must choose goals to guide its work with clients. Goals may include the following: assisting a client in complying with a regulation; helping a client change; improving the client's situation; or enriching the client's present status. In education, these statements may mean the TA system will provide information to, or improve the skills of, particular clients (e.g., classroom teachers) so they can perform their functions better.

How Does Technical Assistance Apply to Education?

Whenever teachers, other specialists, or administrators feel they lack the skills or knowledge to solve problems or achieve stated program goals efficiently, it would be helpful if there were a central resource system for them to consult. Such a system could:

1. Assist teachers in exchanging information with other colleagues about classroom practices or educational materials.
2. Help principals plan and implement responsive staff development opportunities.
3. Assist regional education agency staff members in implementing an ongoing leadership training institute for local school system superintendents.

The list of functions of an educational technical assistance agency could be much longer. For example, TADS longitudinal evaluation data and that of other TA efforts suggest that TA can:

1. Help programs accomplish their goals better
2. Improve the skills of individuals
3. Increase the information available to individuals
4. Link clients with other professionals successfully
5. Facilitate better planning practices
6. Clarify organizational missions and designs [See Suarez et al., 1981.]

But one idea remains a key to all the functions: the agency provides help that is normally beyond the reach of the educator.

What Fields of Inquiry Have Had an Impact on the Operation of TA Systems?

TA has a history in many fields (agriculture, industry, mental health, etc.), and the contributions from each of them could fill volumes. But each field has used a variety of common and unique approaches to work with clients. Six primary areas have contributed the bulk of approaches used in modern educational systems:

1. Planned organizational change
2. Dissemination and diffusion of innovations
3. Adult learning and continuing education
4. Consultation
5. Policy development and implementation
6. Technical assistance

1. Planned organizational change.

As stated earlier, TA must be planned to achieve the client's goals or much of the help given probably will lack focus and, ultimately, yield few results. From those people who deal with helping organizations change, we have garnered the ideas of:

a) mutual (between "change agent" and client) diagnosis of problems and setting of goals
b) the importance of sharing power and decision-making with clients
c) open communication
d) trust building
e) using external (outside the client agency) human resources to catalyze the change procedure

[See: Bennis (1969), Schmuck, Runkel, Arends, and Arends (1977), and Miles (1980).]

2. Dissemination and diffusion of innovations. This area has given us ways of placing new procedures or tools in the hands of clients. Professionals in this area have given us methods:

a) to define needs and organizational characteristics

b) to develop profiles of the kinds of clients to be contacted for particular innovations

c) for devising a mix of communication strategies to reach clients (e.g., personal contact, media, printed material, training workshops, etc.)

d) for creating solutions via change agents

e) for evaluating solutions

f) for ending contact with clients (exit procedures)

[See: Havelock (1973) and Rogers and Shoemaker (1971).]

3. Adult learning and continuing education. Since clients of TA are usually adults, this area has been an invaluable source of information on how to help adults work more efficiently and learn. We have taken from this area:

a) ways to develop organizational climates that are conducive to change

b) ways to use the cycle of mutual planning, needs assessment, formation of objectives (to satisfy needs), evaluation of outcomes and rediagnosis of needs (after the first intervention) to work with clients

c) learning contracts

d) the importance of continuity in intervention

[See: Knowles (1978) and Knox (1980).]

4. Consultation. Since consultation is a primary component of most TA systems, it is important that it be implemented carefully and monitored closely. This field has given us:

a) ways to analyze and clarify needs (preconsultation)

b) methods of preparing for consultation (preconsultation)

c)ways to plan initial contacts (preconsultation)

d) guides for using different consultant styles

e) methods for employing summarization, evaluation, and follow-up activities to make the effects of consultation more durable

[See: Lippitt and Lippitt (1978).]

5. Policy development and implementation. The written and oral agreements that allow a TA agent and a client to work together successfully are critical preliminary activities in any TA operation. This area has been important in supplying ideas about:

a) institutional arrangements

b) operational procedures

c) organizational administration

d) how to use people to implement TA policies

[See: Baker, Michaels, and Preston (1975).]

6. Technical assistance. Professionals working in this field have synthesized the foregoing in various ways and arrived at some more or less new ways of:

a) structuring TA systems

b) delivering assistance

c) assessing needs

d) evaluating technical assistance programs

[See: Reynolds (1975) and Clifford and Trohanis (1980).]

How Can I Create a TA System?

First, investigate! It is critical to know what your expectations are, why (precisely) you want to create a system, and the need for the agency before you begin to plan, much less implement, the system. The twelve questions which follow are designed basically to help you investigate this enterprise. As you will note, each question will give you another angle from which to examine the central issue: The building or refining of an ongoing, responsive, and successful system. With the help of the Considerations/Possibilities sections, found at the end of most questions, make a list of the characteristics of the TA system you envision. This list will include many of the factors you need to consider when you begin planning.

Second, plan! With this list in hand, you can move to the challenges of planning. Put your ideas on paper. Then discuss and refine your TA plan with the help of others. Establish priorities among the key aspects of your system. And finally, pinpoint the action steps necessary to move the design off the drawing board and into actual practice.

1. Questions: Who has called for the establishment of a TA operation? Who, financially, will support the assistance?

The impetus for this effort must come from and be supported by some source. Did a state education agency mandate intermediate unit TA services to a group of local school system clients? Did classroom teachers persuade local administrators to support TA by providing resources? Was a new law adopted (e.g., a special education service mandate or quality assurance standards for teachers) by the state legislature that allowed TA to be designed and delivered by institutions of higher education to local school systems? Know exactly who will sponsor and finance the TA effort and try to grasp their expectations for the undertaking.

Considerations	*Possibilities*
Authorization for TA	Mandate — No Mandate
Support for TA	From Administrative Agency — From Clients
Funding Source for TA	Permanent — Temporary
Amount of Funds	Large — Little

2. Question: Why do I want to provide services to this particular client-group?

Beyond the mandate, examine your motivation for providing TA. In education, at least some humanitarian concerns must be present. But there are probably reasons that go beyond a heartfelt need to serve. Perhaps your proposed TA operation can offer a group of clients better services than anyone else because of your past in-service training experiences. Perhaps TA will enhance your agency's visibility. Perhaps you can provide more services than anyone else. Perhaps you were asked by clients to help. Perhaps TA is a way of earning money to help keep your organization afloat. The possible answers to this question are multitudinous.

3. Question: What kinds of past, present, and future considerations must be addressed before designing and implementing a TA enterprise?

Past: Is there a prior history of TA? If TA was available, how was it organized and financed? How satisfied were clients with the TA? Did it indeed foster desired individual and organizational change, improvement, or enrichment?

Present: What needs exist today to warrant a TA effort? Are data available to buttress this need? Who is to sponsor the TA effort? What are the social, political, legal, and economic contexts within which the TA system will operate?

Future: What is the long-range expectation of this TA and will the benefits justify the costs? Who will be involved in the initial planning of the TA effort? In the decision-making about it? In creating timelines for getting the process started and completed?

4. Question: What is my philosophy toward TA?

Every organization carries out its work with some guiding ideas. The ones which guide TA agencies may vary widely from one agency to another. For example, one agency may have a responsive philosophy (its personnel try to respond primarily to needs identified by clients) while another may be more directive (its personnel determine client needs and how they will be addressed). Some TA may be intended to enrich the client's overall ability to operate while having relatively little impact on any particular deficit or problem area in the operation.

Considerations	*Possibilities*
Approach to TA	Responsive — Directive
Orientation to Client's Needs	Deficit Model — Enrichment Model

5. Question: Who are my clients ?

The clients, their characteristics and needs, must be relatively clear before a responsive system can be designed. In other words: It is important to know precisely who needs services, to have a feel for the kind of services required, to determine the degree of marketing of the TA effort which may be necessary depending on the openness and receptivity of the clients, and to have a sense of the benefits of the assistance for the clients. For example: Will clients receive any academic credit as a result of the assistance? Will their time away from work during any training be covered?

Considerations	*Possibilities*
Client	Individuals — Organizations
Client Participation	Mandatory — Voluntary
Marketing TA to Clients	Not Necessary — Necessary
Course/Certification Credit	Available — None
Other Particpation Compensation	Released Time, Substitutes — Not Available

6. Question: How do I want to come across to clients?

Who will introduce you to clients? Will your agency handle all initial contacts or will these be the prerogative of the TA sponsor? Will you use a soft or hard sell approach with clients?

Do you want to be seen merely as a provider of technical help? Do you want to be seen as a friend, advocate, or counselor? Do you want your people to be seen as experts? Do you want the TA system to be seen as an organization or as a group of people? Do you want the client to feel that you have helped him be more self-sufficient and autonomous in certain areas? Do you want to be seen primarily as a broker who can connect the client with other resources — human or material? The way you answer all questions concerning your role ultimately will affect the receptivity of clients to your help. Your credibility, the level of trust in your relationships with clients, the way you deliver assistance, and the kind of assistance you deliver — depend upon your answers to this question.

Considerations	*Possibilities*
Client's View of TA Role	Supportive — Regulatory
Basis of Relationship	Personal Rapport, — Professional Expertise

7. Question: What kind of impact on the clients do I want to achieve via TA?

Do you want to give your clients all the help they will need to function successfully? Or, do you want, more simply, to supplement the assistance they receive from others? Do you want to foster client growth in one area (e.g., knowledge, skill development, product development, etc.)? Do you want to help clients learn to be better planners or do you, more simply, want to help them comply with new state regulations? Do you want the organization of the client's staff to be more productive and efficient? What you intend to achieve, in fact, may change once you begin operation. But it is important to begin your work with an idea of the "impact" you wish to have upon clients.

Considerations	*Possibilities*
Impact of TA	Individualized Change — Organizational Change
Scope of TA	Narrow Focus — Comprehensive
Amount of TA	Heavy — Light

8. Questions: What is the substance of the TA services that I can provide? How are needs identified?

The substance of your TA must be delineated. For example, will you deal with curriculum, teaching techniques, media and materials, special services, counseling, discipline, cultural awareness, program design, testing, or administration? Once the areas for assistance have been identified, ways to determine the client's needs in each area must be devised. Needs assessment is the focus of Chapter 2.

Considerations	*Possibilities*
Substance or Content of TA	Specified — All Areas
TA Needs Assessment	Individualized — Group
Access to Other Resources	Many Links — Few Links

9. Question: How do I want to deliver services?

The ways are limited only by your imagination. You can design and use printed materials, audio-visual materials, conferences, and workshops. You can have clients visit and learn from other programs. You can act as liaison, connecting the client with other professionals or materials. Or, you can provide personal consultation to clients yourself. This may be done on-site or via the telephone and mails. You can set up courses. Your staff may deliver all or some service themselves, or they simply may arrange for services to be delivered by professionals outside of the TA agency. If your staff delivers services directly, they must be knowledgeable in the substantive areas of concern to the client. On the other hand, if they act as brokers of services (they identify professionals or materials to help the client), their knowledge of various areas can be more cursory.

Considerations	*Possibilities*
TA Providers	TA Agency Staff — Outside Consultants
TA Staff Composition/ Organization	Process People — Content People
Client Contact with Agency	Face-to-Face —Distant (Phone, Mail)
Inservice Training for TA Providers	Available — None
Delivery Strategy	One Primary — Multimodal

10. Question: What about evaluating the TA services?

It is very important to evaluate the TA services provided to clients. Two major strands of systematic activity should be designed and undertaken. The first is a formative one wherein information is collected and used so as to improve the TA system itself. The second one deals with summative evaluation -- information that is acquired and used to demonstrate the effectiveness of the TA system.

11. Question: What is the amount of TA available to clients?

Financial limitations should guide decisions on the level of TA allocated to each client as well as on the scope and intensity of the TA. Disregard of these limitations may jeopardize your relationship with both the client and the sponsor of the TA effort.

Considerations	*Possibilities*
Clients Receiving TA	Designated Staff — All Staff
Cost	Free (TA Program Pays) — Charge (Client Pays)

12. Question: How do I organize the TA effort and what policies and procedures are needed ?

Once the preceding questions have been considered, a TA planner must attend to setting up the system and making it operational. Some of the important details include:

a) Name and introduction: What will the TA system be called? How will it be introduced to clients?

b) Locale: Where will the system and staff be located — in one place or in many? Will staff be close to clients? Where will TA be delivered?

c) Budget and payment: The budget and procedures to pay for the day-today operation of the TA system need to be finalized.

d) Material: Materials, equipment, and furnishings must be acquired.

e) TA staff organization: The staff's size, leadership, composition, and expertise must be determined before hiring occurs. This means that job descriptions, recruitment policies, salary schedules, and lines of authority must be prepared.

f) Reporting requirements: These requirements and the people and agencies who should receive reports of TA expenditures and activities should be pinpointed before opening the agency's doors.

g) Talent and resource bank: This information file must be assembled early. It may take the form of a card or computerized file of materials and professionals who serve the substantive areas of concern to your clients. It may be organized alphabetically, by region (geographic), by substantive area, by consultant availability, by school building location, etc.

h) Protocols for contacting and working with clients: These structures may be determined by your mandate or may be the prerogative of the agency staff. Will you use forms in planning services with the client and identifying TA needs? Will you use contact sheets to keep track of liaison activities?

i) Evaluation: A good design for evaluating the agency's work is important at the beginning, because it will help pinpoint periodically any needs to improve the operations of the organization.

j) Fee schedules: These lists may be developed by the TA agency or its funding source. In any event, fiscal limits will certainly dictate the levels of payment to consultants and the amounts paid for other services provided by the agency

k) Travel reimbursement policies: Sometimes the TA agency pays for a consultant to visit a client, for a client to visit another program, or for an agency employee to journey to another locale. Who pays when (before or after the travel) and how much must be clear.

Considerations	***Possibilities***
Organizational Settings for TA	Within IHE/LEA/IEU/SEA — Outside IHE/LEA/IEU/SEA*
Locus of TA	Single Unit (School Building) — Multiunits (Many Schools, Counties, Regions of State)
Accountability/ Reporting	Regularly and Databased — Occasionally and Narrative
Proximity to Clients	Close — Far Away

All of these questions have been transformed into guidelines for planning in Figure 1, a TA Planning Worksheet. If you are able to fill in responses to the twelve guides, you are well on your way in the planning process.

What Is TADS Plan for Delivering Assistance?

Over the decade of its operation, TADS has used these and other questions to plan the program of technical assistance it offers to clients. Each year has brought new questions. These twelve, however, are basic to agencies just starting out, as well as to well-established TA programs in the process of refining their systems. The plan used by TADS is shown in Figure 2.

** IHE - Institution of Higher Education*
LEA - Local Education Agency
IEU - Intermediate Education Unit
SEA - State Education Agency

FIGURE 1
TA Planning Worksheet

(Answer each question fully; use additional paper as necessary.)

1. Describe the impetus for your TA agency (people, organizations): ____________________

   ____

   Detail financial support: ____

   ____

2. List reasons for providing TA service: ____

   ____

   ____

3. List other TA organizations in this field; describe them; describe their track records:

   ____

   Try to describe political, legal, and economic contexts within which your system will operate:

   ____

   List all persons and agencies to be involved in TA planning : ____________________

   ____

   ____

   ____

4. Describe your TA philosophy (enrichment, deficit; responsive, directive; etc.): ____________

   ____

   ____

5. Describe client(s): ____

   ____

FIGURE 1 (Continued)

6. Describe the image you wish to have with clients: ______________________________

7. State the long- and short-range impact you wish TA to have on clients: ______________________________

8. List substantive areas in which TA will be provided. Explain how client's needs in these areas will be identified: ______________________________

9. Describe ways you will deliver assistance: ______________________________

10. Describe evaluation plans: ______________________________

11. Detail, in dollars, the approximate amount of TA to be available to clients each year: ______________________________

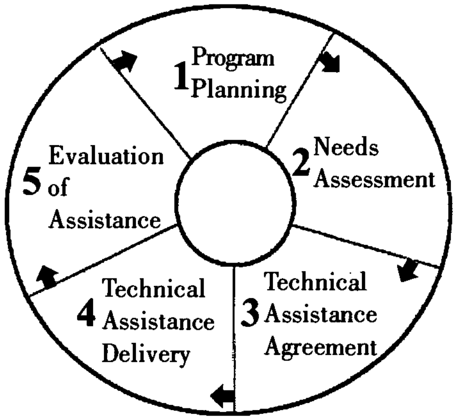
12. List ideas for name of agency; for location; materiel; staff organization; development of talent bank: ______________________________

    List agency and people you must report to: ______________________________

    Develop schedule of fees for TA service: ______________________________

FIGURE 2

TADS Technical Assistance Model



1. Client has mission and plan. Before any technical help can be provided, the client must be clear about the goals of his or her own operation. If objectives and a plan for operation are sketchy, help in planning may be necessary. However, TADS offers help in this area only when requested by the client. Once the client has developed a plan, it is possible to decide on the other kinds of assistance needed or desired in order to fulfill its mission.

2. TA agency and client assess needs. At this juncture, we assume that the client is aware of areas in which assistance would be desirable. Of course, it is possible that the client is unwilling to pinpoint areas of need or feels that no assistance is required. However, in TADS' experience, free help makes the client more approachable than when the assistance is for sale. Consequently, TADS usually has little difficulty in working with clients to pinpoint areas in which their organizations' work, growth, or development can be supported.

3. TA agency prepares agreement with client. This step is the logical follow-up to the assessment of client needs. TADS has found it invaluable to have a memorandum of agreement with the client on: (1) what will be done by each party, (2) when it will be done, and (3) the way the assistance will be evaluated. At TADS, this written letter of agreement is highly flexible and is allowed to change, within reason, as the client's needs change. Also, the document is one way TADS accounts for the use of its resources.

4. TA agency delivers assistance to clients. Delivery may take many forms. At TADS, the most common, satisfying, and highly rated (by clients) form of delivery is face-to-face consultation by an expert in an area in which the client has requested assistance. This consultation is usually rendered by the expert at the client's location.

5. TA agency and client evaluate services. It is in the interest of the TA agency as well as the client to determine the effectiveness of the "help." Evaluation of the agency's work is the only way to avoid repeating mistakes (e.g., a poor consultant), to improve services, and to satisfy clients. At TADS, written questionnaires are often used to determine the client's satisfaction with the technical assistance services received.

Are There Any Guidelines for Success in Using This or Other Schemes? Yes. The guidelines are goals for a TA agency to work toward.

- Build a trusting relationship with clients.
- Develop a system of operation.
- Define clients carefully.
- Build an ongoing system of communication between client and agency.
- Be clear about results expected for clients.
- Develop as many different delivery mechanisms as necessary.
- Provide help in a timely and cost-efficient manner.
- Seek to identify or develop and deploy the best available information, skills, and guidance.
- Maintain administrative, client, and financial support.
- Employ people who are competent, communicative, energetic, and flexible.
- Produce benefits that justify costs.
- Be client-centered.
- Provide the TA staff with access to in-service training to improve knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

As you begin to plan or refine your TA system, keep these goals firmly in mind. While they are not always achieved easily, they are within the grasp of those agencies operating within a well-planned framework... a framework such as the one you are about to investigate in this text.

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An Introduction to Technical Assistance and System Design

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BY PASCAL TROHANIS

First Published in 1982 by
the Technical Assistance
Development System (TADS),
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Note to Reader: TADS was a national TA program sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education from 1971-1984 to serve the former Handicapped Children's Early Education Program (HCEEP).

Introduction

Background

Designing and operating technical assistance (TA) systems at the state level can be challenging and exciting. The venture allows state staff to convey new information to colleagues, to learn and share useful classroom techniques, and to solve problems in collaboration with those requesting help. A mutual undertaking between provider and recipient, TA is a rewarding, stimulating, and systematic way to serve and respond to the needs and interests of the people who educate our children.

State education agencies (SEA) already use a variety of approaches to provide TA to local education agencies (LEA) and others:

- Some SEAs coordinate TA activities with monitoring activities.
- Some SEAs have a systematic, ongoing method to identify successful classroom practices, catalog descriptions of them, and inform teachers how to access easily these practical ideas.
- Some SEAs convene a yearly summer institute for principals to discuss new policies, regulations, and laws. Monthly phone or mail updates follow.
- Some SEAs routinely offer to teachers intensive workshops on the topic of improving instruction for children. The workshops are followed by two days of classroom consultation by state staff or consultants hired by the state.
- Some SEAs, through intermediaries, provide routine print materials and telephone hotlines for parents and LEA staff.
- Almost all SEAs offer direct, on-site consultation to LEA colleagues and others.

An effective state TA system using these various approaches can nurture responsive, high-quality, and cost-effective ways to plan, deliver, evaluate, and revise education and related services for children and their families.

About Part 1

Part 1 will address four questions:

- What is TA?
- What characteristics describe an effective TA system?
- What are the components of a TA system?
- What are guidelines for implementation?

Using Part 1

SEA personnel can use the information in Part 1 of this handbook for various purposes:

- to learn general background information about TA
- to examine and extract ideas for a position paper, policy statement, or written plan for a TA system
- to develop resource materials for staff development and dissemination activities with SEA colleagues, LEA staff, and others
- to provide a framework for a series of staff meetings to discuss TA
- to help committees that design plans for staff development or school improvement
- to plan in-service opportunities for LEA administrators who want to develop or refine their own TA systems.

What Is Technical Assistance?

Many different kinds of state-sponsored support systems have evolved from the literature, research, and practices of various fields of inquiry including consultation, planned change, adult learning, dissemination, and organizational development (Trohanis, 1982). The support system discussed in this handbook is called "technical assistance" and is defined as a systematic process that uses various strategies involving people, procedures, and products over a period of time to enhance the accomplishment of mutual goals of the state and those who request their help. TA is not a fragmented or reactionary strategy that addresses one need at a time.

What Characteristics Describe an Effective TA System?

Eleven characteristics, gleaned from diverse literature, contribute to successful TA efforts (Havelock, 1973; Reynolds, 1975; Lillie & Black, 1976; Trohanis, 1980; Riley & Johnson, 1980; Roberts & Smith, 1982; Loucks & Zacchei, 1983; Yin & White, 1984):

- A TA system has a purpose. The purpose of a TA system must be concrete. The system's purpose may be proactive or reactive and may combine helping activities with monitoring.
- A TA system is responsive to its recipients' needs, strengths and priorities. The TA system must deal with people as individuals and relate to the organizations in which these individuals function. To characterize needs and interests, the TA representative gets the recipient's view of the situation as often and as completely as possible.
- The TA process is systematic and flexible. However, a well-defined, structured framework clarifies the relationship between the TA provider and the recipient, and charts the steps to follow to plan and deliver TA.
- A TA system relies on an extensive and qualitative information base. The TA system keeps information current and accurate by monitoring developments on topics and issues relevant to the present and future interests, needs, and problems of its recipients.
- A TA system acts as a communication network. The system must be structured to expedite the flow of information to and among its TA recipients.
- TA uses a variety of interventions. Interventions may include workshops, consultation, professional networking, field visits, and materials.
- A TA system builds self-sufficiency. The system strives to build for recipients a sense of autonomy and an ability to help themselves.
- TA is continuous and personal. TA is a series of communication and intervention activities. TA is not a set of isolated events. Continuity is achieved by being available in person, by phone, or by mail.
- A TA system is based on trust. Building and maintaining trust with and among the recipients of TA is essential.
- A TA system is timely. The TA provider must manage time efficiently and must schedule activities when the recipients want and need the assistance and are most receptive.
- Evaluation is a must. The TA system uses evaluation information to improve itself and ascertain the worth (effect) of its services. Evaluation data can serve also as the basis for periodic reporting on the progress of the TA system.

What Are the Components of a TA System?

Figure 1 represents the relationship among the six components of a TA system:

- context in which TA is provided
- goals for the TA system
- recipients of the TA
- TA system processes
- TA system operations
- evaluation of the TA

Figure 1 implies that the initial decision to be made when considering the provision or improvement of TA is the context in which TA is to be provided. Determining the *context*, in general, requires the provider to specify existing or possible goals for TA. Such a conferral, in turn, should help to disclose existing or possible *recipients* for TA, the TA system *process* and the TA system *operations*. Once decisions have been made concerning the design or refinement of these five parts of the TA system, each part is *evaluated* for its effectiveness within the TA system.

Context in Which TA Is Provided

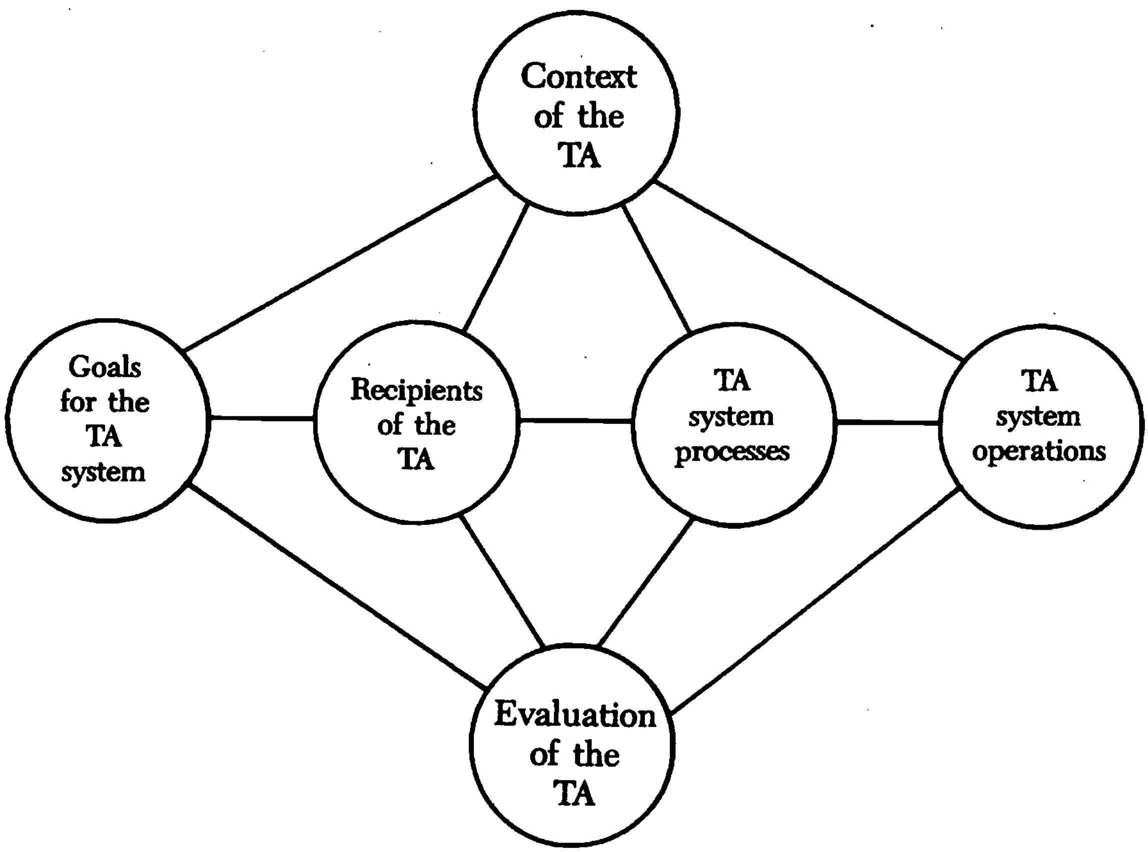
Authority, climate, and content form the context of a state TA system.

• Authority is the impetus, the legitimacy, the sanction, or the justification for the state agency's involvement in TA. The source of the authority can be the needs and interests of TA recipients, state law, a governor's executive order, or a federal mandate.

• Climate is defined by a cluster of features such as a state's history in providing TA, the status of relationships between and among the state agency and local agencies, perceived credibility and quality of TA services, and resources (people, money, and equipment) available or needed.

• Content is the substance of the assistance to be provided by the SEA. Content may focus on the subject of courses offered to children, curriculum or instruction factors, administrative policies, or procedures.

Figure 1
Essential Components of a TA System



Goals for the TA System

TA can help recipients and the SEA reach short- and long-term goals. Goal statements delineate general intent, direction, and intended outcomes for the state technical assistance system. Examples include improving educational programs, fostering compliance to laws, networking recipients and SEA staff, increasing teacher effectiveness, and demonstrating new programs. Within a broad goal such as "improving educational programs," goals may include:

- establishing statewide regulations and standards for educational programs and personnel
- distributing state and federal monies for education
- monitoring compliance and evaluating the quality of education programs
- supporting educational research and program development activities
- providing instructional leadership
- developing and disseminating information about successful practices
- managing the collection, analysis, packaging, and dissemination of data on school districts statewide
- facilitating the coordination of resources at the federal, state, and local levels.

Of course, the degree to which these goals and their accompanying activities shape TA efforts is tempered by other factors such as resources available for TA (money, time, expertise) and the substance (content) of the assistance.

The process for establishing goals is very important. And, involving the recipients in this process can build support and consensus for the goals and create a sense of trust and collegiality among all parties.

Recipients of the TA

These are groups or individuals who are now, or should be in the future, receiving state TA. Recipients may include personnel at the school building level, local central office level, regional level, state level, and others such as parent group representatives and state legislators.

The type, location, number, and expertise of recipients must be clear. Remember, the context and goals will strongly influence decisions about which recipients to serve. For example, available resources alone may dictate that a TA system cannot reach all classroom teachers in the state. Instead, a smaller group, such as all LEA principals or special education coordinators may be the recipients of TA.

Note that children are not included as direct recipients of a state's TA system, but as beneficiaries of TA. That is, children benefit from the efforts and services of those with whom the TA system directly interacts. More indirect or spin-off effects from TA may be observed in other people associated with direct recipients of TA. These outcomes are often less clear and more difficult to track for these persons than for other direct recipients.

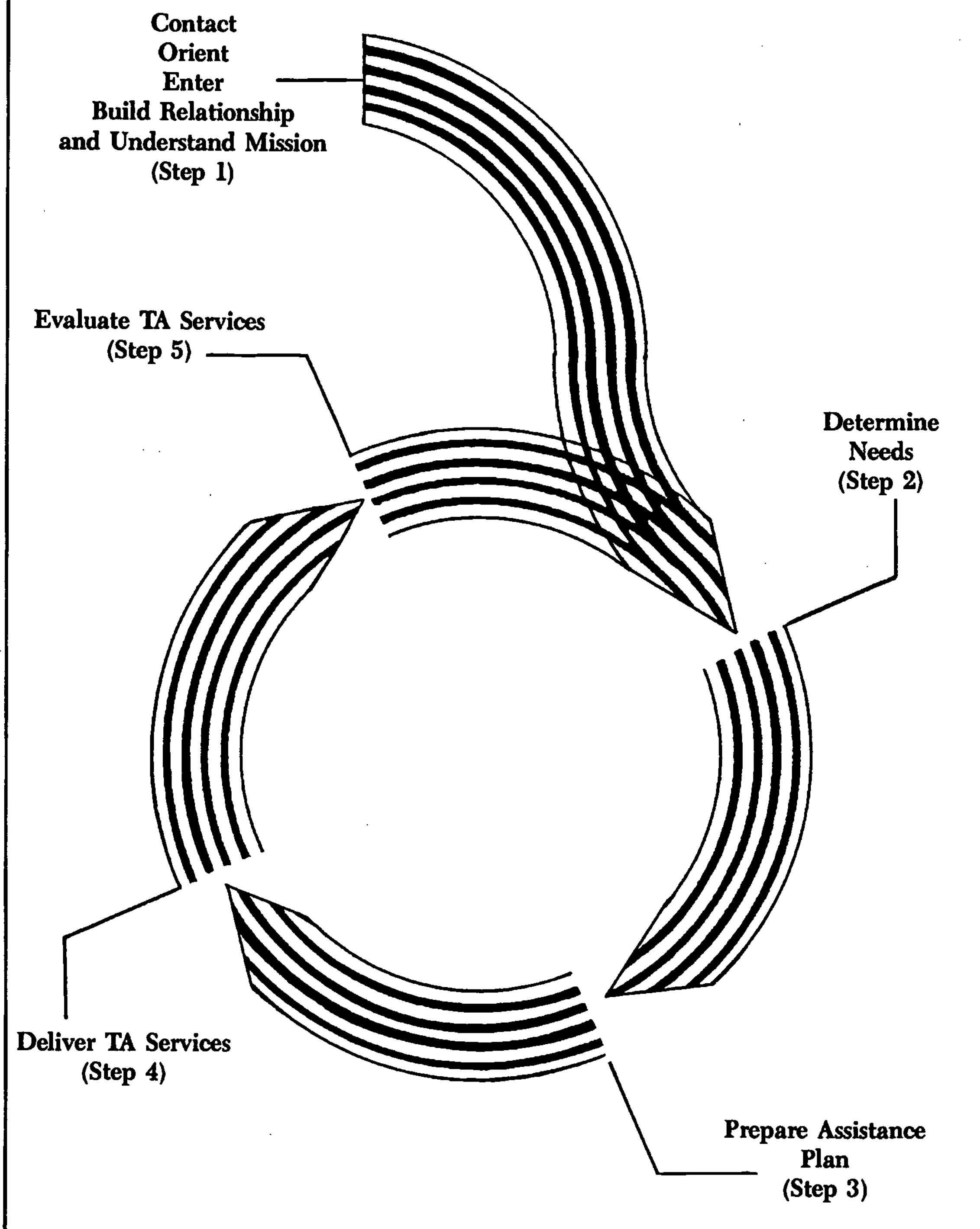
TA System Processes

Figure 2 portrays a TA process model. It usually is used to deliver in-depth, long-term TA activities that respond to a recipient's needs. The recipient may be an LEA that wants to install a new curriculum or modify its current management information system. Or, the recipient might be a teacher with a need to learn about educating hearing-impaired children. The process also can be used for short-term, rapid turnaround TA such as responding to a recipient's need for specific information. And, the process model also can be used to deliver TA services according to the needs of the TA provider (that is, the SEA). For example, the SEA may convene a workshop or send out packets of information to inform district superintendents about new state regulations or guidelines.

Step 1. The process model in Figure 2 begins with an understanding of the goal or mission for the TA. The TA provider contacts the recipients and orients them to the TA system. The TA provider learns about the recipients' context or setting and sets the tone for a successful professional relationship.

Step 2. As the relationship between SEA staff and recipients grows, discussion of specific needs,

Figure 2
A Technical Assistance Process Model



strengths, resources, and interests can begin. Here the TA provider can offer specific procedures that can help identify needs. (TA needs are defined as discrepancies between where the recipient is and where the recipient wants to be.) This step in the process is usually handled through a survey by mail or phone, though face-to-face meetings are sometimes more appropriate.

Recipients' needs can be limited to specific educational content and issues or expanded to include more general topical areas. For example, needs of LEAs might include:

- mainstreaming
- curriculum alignment
- time-on-task
- long-term staff development
- knowledge of resources
- information about regulations, requirements, policies, procedures
- information about the rights of handicapped children
- teacher education and competency development
- group process
- product development
- an external catalyst to spark an internal change
- new educational technologies
- research findings and their use
- compliance with regulations, standards, and laws
- program improvement to increase the quality of services

Step 3. After a recipient's needs are identified, the recipient and the TA provider generate an assistance plan. An assistance plan can be negotiated via telephone, face-to-face meeting, or letter. Usually, a formal or informal plan is written out following negotiation. The plan specifies the need, the TA services to be provided (what will be done, by whom, for whom, how, with what resources, by when), and the intended outcome of the TA event. In an assistance plan, a need is described in general terms (e.g., to improve knowledge, to develop skills, to develop or refine plans or products). Then, the specific content area of the need is identified (e.g., to develop an audiovisual product on mainstreaming). Finally, evaluation activities are specified. Evaluation activities that are part of the assistance plan guarantee recipients the opportunity to comment on the quantity, quality, relevance, timeliness, and effectiveness of the TA services. A specific, mutually accepted assistance plan allows the TA provider and the recipient to allocate resources and plan effectively. Circumstances (illness, staff changes, bad weather, new regulations, etc.) can alter schedules and needs; therefore, an assistance plan should be flexible.

Step 4. The TA is delivered. A TA system uses a variety of approaches to match their own resources to the needs of the recipients. For example, a TA provider may consult personally with a recipient; recipients often rate this type of strategy as most beneficial (Yin & White, 1984). However, when on-site consultation is not feasible, or when a rapid response is required, consultation by telephone or by electronic mail might be appropriate.

Other delivery alternatives can be used. For example, the TA provider may sponsor a workshop to reach a group of recipients with similar needs and interests. Or, the TA provider might arrange for the recipient to visit other programs or classrooms to observe and gain firsthand information about how others deal with problems similar to their own. Some SEAs provide discretionary funds and ongoing consultation to help LEAs and others develop and implement experimental or model (demonstration) programs. Another TA delivery strategy links the SEA and local recipients with computer-based electronic mail networks (e.g., SpecialNet) that allow a rapid exchange of information. Most state TA providers furnish recipients with print and audiovisual products—produced in-house or procured from other sources—to meet the recipients' needs. (Refer to Clifford & Trohanis, 1980, for more information on delivery.)

Step 5. It is in the best interest of the TA provider and the recipient to determine the effectiveness of TA services. An appropriate evaluation provides information about the specific TA event called for in the assistance plan and serves as a quality control mechanism to avoid repeating mistakes. The systematic TA process advocated in this handbook helps make evaluation easier because the recipients' TA needs, objectives, and expectations are clarified and documented in the early steps of the process. Eventually, evaluation data from specific TA events are fed into the TA system's overall evaluation plan and reporting scheme.

The ease with which each of the five steps in Figure 2 is handled depends largely on the following factors: the supportive and trusting relationship built up over time between TA provider and recipient; the complexity of the task; the timelines; and the TA provider's skill. The TA process works best in an environment of mutual trust and open communication. As TA provider and recipient build a trusting relationship, they may begin to streamline the assistance process.

TA System Operations

After examining the TA's context, goals, recipients, and processes, consider the operations component. The fifth component of a TA system contains four related parts: organization and structure, internal policies and management, personnel and expertise, and resources.

Organization and Structure. A state TA service may operate from one central office or from several regional centers. Some states contract a third party (e.g., a school system, an intermediate education unit, a university, or a consulting firm) to provide TA to LEAs and others. Regardless of the approach, an advisory committee of TA recipients and providers can help guide the system.

Closely related to the need for a sound organizational structure is the need for strong support and leadership from SEA, LEA, and other management. Administrators must guide and support the TA endeavor and determine how the TA system will relate to other goals and activities. To garner administrative support, the TA system must display organizational integrity and coherence.

Internal Policies and Management. The leadership and staff of a state TA system should develop management policies and procedures that specify the way the TA system will function, how it will be managed across internal organizational lines, who will manage or coordinate the system, and how decisions will be made. Other specific policies and procedures may govern:

- designing and implementing TA service delivery options
- assessing client needs and strengths
- communicating amount of TA help available to LEAs and other clients
- acquiring the recipients' consent and commitment to participate in the TA system
- building and maintaining the relationship between TA provider, LEA staff, and others
- communicating and approving protocols for TA service transactions
- establishing relationships and networks with other TA services
- designing an overall system that will accommodate recipients who make immediate, critical, unforeseen, or unusual requests

Personnel and Expertise. The SEA must determine the competencies and experiences it desires for its TA staff (e.g., content expertise, group process and interpersonal expertise, product development expertise, problem solving skills, communication or planning expertise, etc). The SEA must also decide if their own TA staff will deliver most of the services, or if they will broker (identify and hire) the expertise of others (consultants). A mix of the two options can be effective.

The SEA must examine the roles it wants its TA staff to play. For example, the SEA may want to build or reconstitute a TA staff to play the roles of compliance monitor and helper. These dual roles may be structured separately or combined in one particular position. Even when playing the role of monitor, a TA service should still strive to minimize conflict over loyalties, maintain trust and credibility, and provide quality TA services.

A TA system requires solid leadership and program coordination. A manager should be appointed, assigned, or hired to provide the kind of quality leadership necessary to oversee the entire operation. Good leaders will use all needs assessment and evaluation information in order to make improvements in the TA system. Good leaders can forecast future TA needs and services. And good leaders provide ongoing motivation and inspiration to staff.

Resources. A TA system must have resources. Competent staff must be hired. If other SEA staff members are reassigned to the TA system, they must be trained in the techniques of TA. Consultation may be needed on an ongoing basis. Space, equipment, and other materials are needed to support the overall operation. The system will need money to pay for the staff, consultants, materials, postage, telephone, travel, and other overhead costs. Effective and efficient operation will stretch available resources.

Evaluation

Figure 1 shows that evaluation interacts with all other components of the TA system. Note that the evaluation of individual TA activities is included in the TA system process component, but evaluation of the state's overall TA system is viewed as a much more complex activity and is considered the last component of the TA system.

System evaluation generates information about the merit of the assistance, the processes that were used, and the products, skills, or organizational changes that resulted from the TA. At the heart of the challenge is the need to ascertain and document what happened as a result of the TA and to judge if the TA had a substantial and positive impact (Suarez & Vandiviere, 1982). Whatever the scope of the evaluation, the state must have a plan that considers:

- the audiences and the relevance of evaluation information
- the purpose of the evaluation
- the data collection methods
- the data analysis procedures
- the format and procedures for the evaluation report
- the resources (money, staff, facilities) available for the evaluation.

What Are Guidelines for Implementation?

Designing and implementing a TA system that will result in educational improvement is indeed a challenge. Usually, efforts will have the intended impact. Sometimes, however, state TA endeavors may prove frustrating and difficult:

> Interventions into a school system are like putting your hand into a bowl of congealed jello. The jello makes way for the hand, but once the hand [is] removed, the jello flows back into its old place again. This flexibility and resilience help schools survive, but they also retard the incorporation of lasting and important changes. . . .
>
> (adapted from Langmeyer, 1975, p. 456)

To inhibit this "jello flow," a state TA system must be carefully planned and managed. The TA system must offer a variety of services and strategies over time. TA services organized exclusively around one-time, brief, fragmented, isolated, or sporadic experiences are generally ineffective.

SEA administrators and staff should consider (and, of course, modify as necessary) the following recipe for success gleaned from the social sciences literature, from know-how and traditions already firmly rooted in state education agencies, and from the experiences of colleagues in the field of technical assistance:

- *Garner the support of recipients and SEA leadership.* Both must sanction the effort. Communicate the TA goals to all parties who need to know, and make sure staff time, incentives, and resources are available.
- *Have a TA philosophy.* The state TA operation must be able to articulate its philosophy about TA and be able to use that philosophy to justify its authority, mission, goals, and recipients.
- *Nurture trust and develop a relationship.* Open and shared channels of communication must be maintained between the TA provider and recipient. This posture creates for the recipient a sense of ownership and commitment to the TA system.
- *Identify recipients and define the content.* A TA program must define the topics on which it will concentrate (e.g., state policies and law, least restrictive environments, school improvement) and those individuals or systems who will receive the TA (e.g., classroom teachers, principals, local administrators, personnel from other state agencies, specialists such as occupational and physical therapists, intermediate unit consultants, staff of institutions of higher education).

• *Develop credibility.* TA staff must be perceived as patient, responsive, flexible, unbiased, competent, and operating within a planned framework. To further gain credibility, the program must offer timely, cost-efficient, high-quality services. Above all, the TA staff and philosophy must convey a willingness to be of help and service.

• *Balance control and efficiency.* A TA program may choose to use its own staff to deliver the bulk of its TA. This strategy allows for firm control of the TA. However, a small staff often dictates a narrow or biased array of competencies and possible staff burn-out. The brokerage function, using consultants from an available talent bank, allows for a broader array of competencies, perhaps a faster turnaround, and greater coverage of client needs. On the other hand, this brokerage format can be costly, involves more risks, and provides less control over activities with TA recipients in the field.

• *Provide ongoing planning.* This process links the important activities in the TA process. Planning helps determine the timing and format of TA delivery. Plans should consider the limits of the TA system's resources and constraints.

• *Initiate and promote communication.* TA staff must be active communicators. Recipients and providers must have a clear idea of how, when, and who to contact. Recipients must know how services are marketed, needs are identified, outcomes and responsibilities are perceived, and action is taken. TA staff should clearly communicate to each recipient the amount of TA available.

• *Play different TA roles.* TA staff members should be able to play roles of facilitator, morale booster, assessor of needs and strengths, broker, teacher, linker, helper, builder of capacity, change agent, program regulator, and monitor. It is important to plan and evaluate carefully how best to play these roles. For example, some literature and experience cautions TA practitioners about combining their roles of monitoring and assistance.

• *Develop a mix of services.* Service delivery strategies may include one-to-one consultation, workshops, audiovisual and print materials, field visits, teleconferencing, networking, etc. Match these services to the needs and interests of the recipients and the authority and resources of the TA program.

Closing

For state department administrators and staff, TA represents a dynamic and challenging process for creating change and improvement. Dwyer (1977) notes that change strategies such as TA put "a premium on initiative-taking, developing new ideas, tackling new jobs in new ways, and working with new people." (p. 54).

When planned, implemented, and operated in a careful and thoughtful manner, technical assistance offers a sound approach for improving the delivery of educational services to children and their families. TA can bring about positive changes in local staffs and other recipients by providing them with new information, skills, practices, and products that will improve their work and, in turn, improve the lives of the children and families they serve.

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Technical Assistance on a National Scale: Efforts to Improve and Expand Supported Employment

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Technical Assistance on a National Scale

Efforts to Improve and Expand Supported Employment

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The National initiative for supported employment has used a number of systems change strategies to increase the availability of integrated employment with long-term support for people with severe disabilities. Technical assistance is one strategy for promoting change that has been used within states and on a national scale. This article discusses the role of technical assistance within the larger context of promoting systems change. Features that contribute to valued technical assistance are discussed in five areas. In addition, this article defines a process for planning, providing, and evaluating technical assistance. Issues about the role of technical assistance projects are discussed in terms of principles of quality improvement and the difficulty of assessing the true impact of technical assistance.

The impetus for social change stems from dissatisfaction with the status quo and the development of new ideas. Supported employment emerged in the 1980s as an improved way to address the community employment needs of people with severe disabilities. The creation of employment for persons with disabilities, regardless of the types or severity of disabilities, required changes in the vision and practices of government agencies, social service organizations, families, employers, and people with disabilities (Bellamy and Melia, 1991; Elder, 1991; Mank, Buckley, and Rhodes, 1990; Rusch, 1990; Will, 1986). Government agencies used a combination of policy directives and funding incentives to encourage widespread implementation of supported employment. The novelty and scope of the supported employment initiative resulted in a situation where many of the implementation issues had yet to be identified or addressed. To help address these needs, federal and state governments made extensive use of another now-familiar strategy for promoting change: technical assistance projects. These projects work with implementors to identify and deal with obstacles to local, state, and national systems change (Firestone, 1983; Mank, Buckley, and Rhodes, 1990a; 1990b; Shafer, Revell, Kregel, Wehman, and West, 1991; Technical Assistance Development System, 1982; Yin and White, 1984).

Supported employment, from its beginnings in demonstration projects in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Bellamy, Rhodes, Mank, and Albin, 1988; Rusch, 1990; Wehman and Moon, 1988), has created a focus on ongoing change and improvements in techniques and outcomes. Changes in techniques have included the following:

1. Approaches to job development that incorporate consumer and employer interests (Leucking and Leedy, 1991; Rhodes, Mank, Sandow, Buckley, and Albin, 1990)
2. More systematic job analysis that considers social contingencies as well as work tasks

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(Buckley and Buckley, 1992; Hughes, Rusch, and Curl, 1990; Yan, Mank, Sandow, Olson, and Rhodes, 1991)

3. More refined and parsimonious use of support strategies (Buckley, Mank, and Sandow, 1990; Rusch, 1990)
4. The use of more natural supports in the workplace (Nisbet and Hagner, 1988; Hagner, 1988).

Improvements in desired outcomes include a greater emphasis on consumer choice, attention to jobs with better pay and benefits, and a focus on career development instead of job placement and job retention (O'Brien, 1990).

Increased expectations raise questions about how community programs should be developed, funded, and regulated. States and communities face the need to expand in two ways:

1. To develop supported employment opportunities across disability labels, including people with brain injuries, long-term mental illness, sensory impairments, and physical disabilities
2. To provide access to all persons with severe disabilities

These pressures define the need for continued changes in systems that include service provider organizations and government agencies.

Systems change in supported employment is an ongoing process. The 1990 *Annual Report to Congress on Supported Employment Activities* reported the results of the 10 systems change grants funded for five years, effective October 1, 1985, by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). These grants helped states begin to change the predominant features of day and vocational services for persons with severe disabilities from facility programs to integrated, community employment. The grants also helped to identify and develop the needed support for organizations within the system, but not directly involved in the provision of service, to help maintain and expand supported employment opportunities over time. The report clearly identified many areas of state systems development still to be accomplished. Making services available to people most in need of supported employment opportunities, measuring and improving the quality of services, and expanding the options available to fund and support extended services were some of the identified needs.

Technical assistance projects should be designed to help implementors in systems change. However, technical assistance must also be understood in the larger context of useful strategies for creating changes in social service systems (Bellamy and Melia, 1991; Yin and White, 1984). Some of the strategies governments can use with technical assistance projects include the development and operation of research and development projects, public awareness activities, pre-service and in-service programs, and evaluation projects. Each strategy requires a different process and brings a unique contribution to change efforts. Each strategy can be applied at national, state, and local levels. Technical assistance must focus on helping implementors make use of the broad band of strategies that can promote change.

THE PURPOSE OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECTS

The primary purpose of technical assistance is to promote improvement. Improvement must be defined in the context of the recipients' needs and opportunities at any given time. How those recipients are defined is important for technical assistance projects because definition of the target audience will define the overall goals of the project. For example, if the recipients of technical assistance are defined as community supported employment programs, the purpose of the technical assistance project is to provide information and support that helps those organizations meet the mission of supporting individuals with disabilities in integrated jobs. If the recipients of technical assistance are defined as state-level projects focused on changing the day services system in a state, technical assistance must focus on assisting states to accomplish systems change. If the recipients of assistance are clearly defined, a technical assistance project can evaluate its activities by identifying the kind of assistance that will improve the recipients' abilities to meet their missions.

Technical assistance focused on state-level systems change should also develop a state's capacity to address future implementation needs. The development of a self-sustaining supported employment infrastructure that will operate successfully after the technical assistance has been delivered should be the major emphasis for both the technical assistance project and the recipients of assistance. States must be helped to develop internal technical assistance capacities that rely on in-state experts and model programs.

With a focus on improvement as the primary purpose of technical assistance, it is necessary to separate technical assistance projects from other government functions such as evaluation and monitoring. The purpose of technical assistance is not to evaluate or judge the progress of the recipients. Rather, technical assistance projects seek to provide help that results in improvement regardless of the recipients' current levels of performance. While evaluation or monitoring activities might be designed to judge the acceptability of a program, the purpose of technical assistance is to promote progress and improvement. In fact, attempts to combine technical assistance with monitoring can inhibit the provision of technical assistance (Mank, Sandow, and Rhodes, 1991). Technical assistance should focus on the most important problems and opportunities faced by the recipients. The evaluative focus of monitoring encourages recipients to present their progress in the most favorable light possible rather than to share problems (Ashbaugh, 1990; Bradley and Bersani, 1990).

Technical assistance is worthwhile if it promotes improvement and helps recipients make progress toward their missions. This focus on continuous improvement also makes it possible to define features that contribute to valued technical assistance.

FEATURES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO VALUED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Ways in which technical assistance is planned and provided can and should vary depending on recipients' situations and needs. This need for responsiveness and individualization results in the need to define features of useful technical assistance rather than a set or standardized approach that is used in the same way with all participants. Features that contribute to effective and valued technical assistance can be organized into the following five areas:

1. Features related to individualized and accomplishment-based planning
2. Features related to the relationship between the technical assistance project and the recipient
3. Features related to setting priorities
4. Features related to the creation of networks
5. Features related to the methods of providing assistance

Features Related to Individualized and Accomplishment-Based Planning

Technical assistance should be individualized to state needs. There is tremendous variability across the 50 states and 6 territories in the degree to which state supported employment services programs have been developed and implemented. This variability cannot be adequately addressed by the design and delivery of workshops and programs that focus on the basic principles of supported employment. Customized technical assistance is the only approach through which states can get the support and assistance they need. Individualized technical assistance plans are necessary to achieve the best results.

Technical assistance should be based on recipients' definition of needs. The definition of needs calls for a shared process for working with recipients of assistance to determine specific needs and to tailor assistance accordingly. While the technical assistance project must be a participant in assessing and defining needs, the recipient must have the final role in defining needs, accomplished in part through a needs assessment process that considers the range of accomplishments needed for statewide implementation of supported employment.

An individualized needs assessment should be accomplishment-based. A needs assessment provides an initial structure for assessing the availability and quality of elements critical to the implementation of a state supported employment initiative. Technical assistance based on a needs assessment helps ensure that the assistance provided is part of an ongoing process that goes beyond a quick-fix, one-time activity (Corthell and Smith, 1989). An accomplishment-based needs assessment is an approach that asks the recipient to consider a full range of issues that influence systems change. An example of this approach can be found in the format used for conducting needs assessments with state supported employment projects (Bellamy, Rhodes, Mank, and Albin, 1988; Employment Network and Supported Employment Technical Assistance Center, 1990; Mank, Buckley, and Rhodes, 1990; Mank, Buckley, and Rhodes, 1991). This structure defines four primary accomplishments for state systems change to supported employment:

1. Creating employment opportunities
2. Developing local services
3. Managing state systems
4. Building consensus and participation

It then defines possible strategies that a state might employ to effect change in each area. This structure allows state-level decision makers to conduct a self-assessment of the availability and quality of supported employment across their state and across a broad range of issues and implementation steps. Decisions can then be made about how resources from within the state can best be used in combination with resources available from an external technical assistance project.

An accomplishment-based needs assessment has several benefits. First, it begins with and maintains a focus on the recipient organization's overall mission. Second, it responds to the full scope of the recipient's responsibilities. Third, it provides a format for the recipient and the technical assistance project to develop a common understanding of the issues and opportunities in a state. Fourth, it provides a method for assessing change and improvements over time. Fifth, it provides the basis for developing a flexible plan for providing specific assistance. Overall, a technical assistance relationship based on a common understanding of a comprehensive needs assessment is more likely to result in assistance that contributes to improvement over time.

Features Related to the Relationship Between the Technical Assistance Project and the Recipient

It is important to consider three features of the relationship between the technical assistance project and the recipient. This relationship forms the basis of collaborative work between the two parties over time.

The relationship between the technical assistance project and the recipient should be long term. This feature reinforces the notion of technical assistance as an ongoing process rather than a one-shot event. A technical assistance project is more likely to be helpful in problem solving if there is an appreciation of the recipient organization's history as well as an understanding of how the technical assistance fits into a larger plan for change. A long-term relationship can result in mutual accountability and shared ownership by the technical assistance project and the recipient of assistance. This calls for shared responsibility in an ongoing cycle of planning, implementation, and evaluation.

The relationship between the technical assistance project and the recipient should be based on mutual accountability. The relationship between the technical assistance project and the recipient is most productive if each party considers itself accountable to the other. The recipient must be accountable for sharing information about opportunities and problems in order for the technical assistance project to help develop, locate, or provide useful information or assistance. The technical assistance project must be accountable to the recipient for the quality and timeliness of the assistance provided. This calls for a customer focus (Scholtes, 1988) on the part of the technical assistance project.

The costs for technical assistance should be shared. Technical assistance can be most effective if the process and the expected outcome is owned jointly by the project and the recipient. Further, the costs of technical assistance, in terms of time and/or money, should be equally shared between the project and recipient wherever possible. A technical assistance project must be flexible enough to share the commitment and costs for assistance with recipients facing different circumstances.

Features Related to Setting Priorities

Large-scale implementation of supported employment is a significant departure from maintenance of a system predominated by segregated adult disability services. Change of this magnitude is not readily attained without a clear plan for change. Jacobson (1987) discussed the need for a process guide toward planned change when implementing supported employment programs. Jacobson referred to a key sequence of events critical to supported employment implementation: values formation, development of a mission statement, formation of a long-range plan, and tracking progress toward the plan. He strongly suggested the need for a strategic planning approach to building statewide supported employment capacity.

Planning should take place at a statewide level involving multiple agencies, consumers, advocacy groups, and other interested parties. In any state many needs can be identified that might be the focus of technical assistance resources. The point of a plan is not to address every possible need but to focus limited resources on the most important problems and opportunities. As a result, priorities must be set.

Priorities for the use of technical assistance resources should be decided in the context of a larger plan for change. A technical assistance plan should represent a broad view for meeting a state's needs. Priorities can be developed in the context of other initiatives, funding, and opportunities in a state. If the larger plan is considered, technical assistance is more likely to focus on activities that build a state's capacity for future implementation.

The use of technical assistance should have an impact on multiple levels in the system. Technical assistance from a source outside the state makes the best use of limited resources if it is focused on needs that cut across levels in the system. For example, assistance aimed at improving a community program's information system might be beneficial to that program. However, if the assistance were tailored in a way that helped an entire state association of community providers create a new focus on valued employment outcomes, there would be statewide impact.

National developments and trends should influence in-state priorities. The emergence of innovations in other parts of the country can and should influence the technical assistance priorities set by a project and a recipient. Opportunities in a state can be considered in a way that capitalizes on experiences and innovations that occur in other places. Rather than reinvent the wheel, a state can set its priorities based on innovations from other states or communities.

Features Related to the Creation of Networks

National-scale technical assistance projects have unique opportunities to observe and participate in innovations and developments in communities and states throughout the country. These projects provide important opportunities to link people with one another where interest, skills, and innovations can be complementary. In the interest of promoting cross-state networks, technical assistance projects of national scope can and should engage in development work as well as in diffusion of information. National projects can help identify the main issues which, when addressed, will create the greatest opportunity for improvement and expansion nationwide. An investment in the network of innovators and implementors can result in improved developments as well as in improved diffusion of information. Technical assistance projects can invest in networks across states in several ways.

Technical assistance projects can sponsor forums on specific content issues. Creating forums where knowledgeable participants develop ideas and implementation strategies can result in networks of people who share future innovations and resources long after the forum is concluded. Such working forums help build a cadre of people who are active participants in addressing systems issues across states. If individuals become part of a larger network, information diffusion is also enhanced.

Technical assistance projects can make use of technical assistance recipients as providers of assistance to others. Another method for extending networks of implementors across states is to call on personnel in one community or state to help address an issue in another state. Personal experience in addressing issues such as policy development or funding priorities in one state may enable an individual to provide assistance to people facing similar issues in another state.

Technical assistance projects can promote the use of technological networks. Recent technological innovations make it possible to link individuals with similar interests or needs in new ways. Computer bulletin boards, computer conferencing, teleconferences, and video conferences now make it possible to exchange information and ideas in ways not considered even a few years ago.

Features Related to the Methods of Providing Assistance

In addition to the content decisions about technical assistance, decisions are needed about the methods for providing assistance. Some requests will originate from an initial technical assistance plan; however, many requests will be of a more informal nature or emerge as a result of in-state changes. While on-site visits by a member of a technical assistance project or an outside consultant may be the method of assistance that most frequently comes to mind, other assistance methods should also be used.

Diverse methods of assistance should be available. The methods of technical assistance should fit the request. Methods should be discussed and agreed upon with the recipient. Some of the available methods include access to written information, referral to knowledgeable people or organizations for training or assistance, ongoing discussion and support by phone or computer, access to regional or national forums or meetings, access to training, and repeated or ad hoc teleconferences on specific issues. Yin and White (1984) provided a useful framework for considering this range of methods available to such projects. The authors presented a matrix to show the direction of communication between provider and recipient of assistance and the intensity of communication between provider and recipient. The matrix provided in Table 1, which is based on the framework of Yin and White, also suggests something of the range of assistance methods that can be used in combination to support the recipient's potential for improvement.

The delivery of technical assistance should be timely and responsive. Technical assistance should be provided in a timely and responsive fashion. While some requests for assistance can be anticipated and planned well in advance, in other instances it is critical to capitalize on unexpected opportunities. For example, a state may not have anticipated the need for assistance in developing supported employment in public-sector jobs. If state personnel discover the opportunity to meet with the state's executive department and the leader of the public employees union, a request for on-site assistance may be made even though it had not been a part of the original plan. A technical assistance project must be responsive to the recipient when opportunities emerge.

Technical assistance delivery should be coordinated with other resources available to a recipient. Within and across states, other training and technical assistance resources are available. National technical assistance projects should complement and enhance the delivery of support from these other sources. The project and recipient should concentrate on developing regional and in-state expertise to continue the provision of needed training and technical assistance over time.

A PROCESS FOR PLANNING AND PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Using a national perspective, the features and processes that make technical assistance effective are also applicable in working with programs and communities. While the content of the assistance provided will vary with changes in scope and geography, the features and processes can apply to multiple levels in the system.

For a technical assistance project to be valuable to both the recipient and the funding agent, it is important to invest in the features that contribute

Table 1. Direction and Intensity of Communication in Technical Assistance

Type of Communication	Remote Communication	Intensive Communication
One-Way	Dissemination of written material Publications and analysis papers	Conference presentations Single large-group workshops
Two-Way	Information and referral services Computer bulletin boards	Ongoing support relationships between project and state personnel Specific technical assistance trips Small-group workshops Issues forums and work groups Cross-state meetings

to effective assistance. It is also important that an ongoing and flexible process be used for planning, providing, and evaluating technical assistance. A process for planning and providing technical assistance should be defined clearly enough so that specific assistance activities fit within a larger plan for change. It must also be flexible enough to respond to changes and opportunities that occur in a system, such as new funding opportunities or policy initiatives. Thus, a prescribed process for planning, delivering, and evaluating technical assistance is needed. This process must be flexible enough to respond to multiple levels in a system, it must be based on individual recipient needs, and it must be responsive to changes over time. The planning process should be continuous rather than a one-time or occasional occurrence.

Figure 1 shows a flowchart that begins with a needs assessment and continues through planning, delivery, and evaluation of assistance. The flowchart demonstrates a continuous loop back to a review of needs and ongoing planning.

CONCLUSION

Technical assistance projects are now recognized features in the landscape of government strategies to change and improve social services. Technical assistance should be considered in the context of emerging, continuous quality improvement methods. Attention should be focused on evaluation and customer satisfaction. Technical assistance should work in concert with new initiatives and ongoing implementation of policy.

The business world has increased its focus on issues of quality improvement (Deming, 1986; Deming, 1982; Feigenbaum, 1983). More and more companies are adopting new ways of doing business, with a clear focus on continuous improvement. Attention to quality and methods of total quality improvement are being applied in social services and in government systems (Albin, 1992; Mank, Sandow, and Rhodes, 1991; O'Brien, 1990). Technical assistance projects seek to help recipients better meet their own missions and should be used as a method of continously improving service quality over time. The methods of quality improvement for analyzing problems, generating ideas, and implementing solutions can be the methods technical assistance projects use to assist recipients.

Technical assistance projects might be considered good-faith efforts to help implement social policy. Nonetheless, information is needed about the usefulness and impact of technical assistance in order to decide about the future use of external supports provided to targeted recipients. Separating the contributions of technical assistance from the work of the recipients is difficult. It is difficult to measure exact impact and it is inappropriate to credit a technical assistance project for the successes realized by a recipient. This leaves technical assistance projects and their funders with a reliance on satisfaction data and professional judgments about the quality of materials developed. It should be possible to observe contributions of technical assistance resources if the recipient moves significantly toward meeting its mission. Conversely, if the recipient is largely unsuccessful

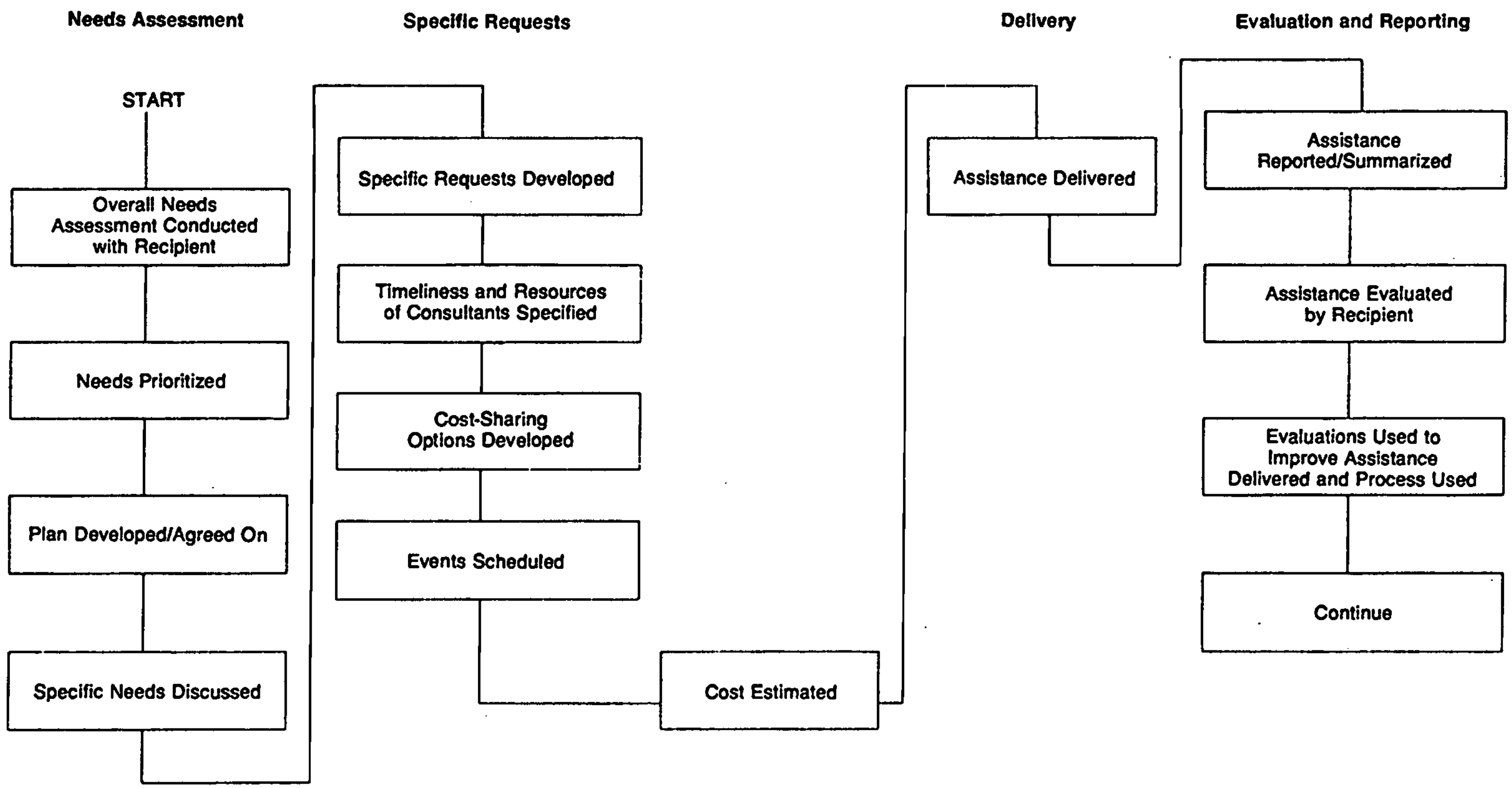

Figure 1. Flowchart of the Technical Assistance Process

in attempts to improve, the technical assistance project cannot claim success in delivering technical assistance.

More often technical assistance projects seem to be used early in an initiative to help address new problems previously not identified or addressed. Later in the course of initiatives, technical assistance resources may be reduced while local resources are expected to suffice. This perspective raises questions about the role of technical assistance projects over time. Perhaps the answer is not to identify the role of technical assistance projects but rather to identify the strategies and resouces needed at local, state, and national levels that will result in improved employment outcomes for people with severe disabilities. Focusing the question solely on technical assistance projects fails to address the primary purpose of positive change for the recipients of technical assistance.

If services such as supported employment are to improve over time, then government at federal, state, and local levels must make an investment in that ongoing improvement. Technical assistance projects that promote continuous improvement can be wise investments.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Preparation of this paper was supported in part by the Rehabilitation Services Administration, U.S. Department of Education, Cooperative Agreements H128A00505 and H128A00504. The views expressed here are those of the authors and no endorsement should be inferred.

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Design Considerations for State TA Systems

BY PASCAL TROHANIS

PART III:

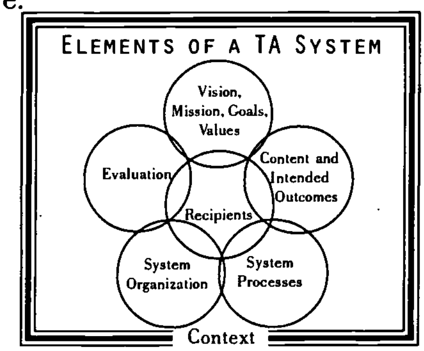
Workbook for TA Design

Suggestions for Using this Workbook

Overview and Purpose

This workbook is to be used by a state agency that intends to create and sponsor a new TA program or examine a current program with a view toward improving its operations and impacts. It is organized to guide a thoughtful and participatory process among state stakeholders to develop an action plan consisting of seven interactive elements of a TA system. These elements were introduced beginning on page 16 in "Part I. Foundations and Perspectives of TA" of this planning resource. Each element serves as a building block for a coherent statewide TA system. The seven elements are:

1. Context
2. Recipients
3. Vision, Mission, Goals, and Values
4. Content and Intended Outcomes
5. System Processes
6. System Organization
7. Evaluation



The workbook is arranged by element. Each has worksheets with descriptors and prompts that define the element for individual reflection and group discussion. Consider each descriptor with its prompts. Then, select and focus on those descriptors and prompts that are most salient to the state's needs for the team deliberations. Feel free to photocopy and share the worksheets with state planning participants. Space is available on the worksheets for written notes on individual thoughts and team discussions about each element.

Additionally, a general planning guide is available. This guide may be helpful for stakeholders to summarize in writing their analyses, findings and decisions from the data gathered. The main parts of a state's action plan should emerge, including follow-through steps to be taken, in relation to each element and how they may connect to one another. Please see Attachment 1. As a result of this and other planning activities, the staff should be able to create a final written plan for TA in whatever format is most useful.

Process Considerations

Before any planning work begins, it is imperative that state leadership and staff concur that there is a strong need to undertake this type of endeavor and are committed to the time and effort that it will take. Additionally, a clear set of intended outcomes must be articulated. For example, determine whether the examination will cover the development of an entirely new TA system or of a current system. All participants must understand and agree that TA is not an "add-on" enterprise, but is an integral one for promoting and supporting change—innovation and improvement over time that will lead to positive and sustained results—

especially in the early intervention and special education service delivery systems for children and youth with special needs and their families.

Also, discuss and determine the parameters of the planning process. For example, identify the team of stakeholders who will be assembled and the perspectives and roles that must be represented. Members may include state agency personnel, local service providers, higher education staff, parents, TA providers, administrators, and others. Determine who will convene or facilitate the team. Facilitators may come from the state agency, an external TA organization, local freelance consultant, university staff, or consulting firm. Clarify how this planning team may need to interact with a larger unit or body such as a CSPD Committee, Special Education Advisory Panel, State ICC, SIG Partnership Council or administrator with responsibility for the current state TA program. Ascertain what group and decision-making processes will be used to guide the overall planning of the state TA system.

Other considerations include:

- resolve how this workbook may be used;
- determine how background readings, such as those included in Parts I and II of this planning resource or others, may be incorporated in the process;
- identify the working environment(s) in which the planning will be undertaken;
- establish a timetable for this activity and determine how many elements to discuss at a given time (refer to Attachment 2 for an outline of the worksheets with their elements and descriptors, along with a suggestion for use.);
- determine if an ongoing record of notes or other documentation will be maintained and by whom;
- clarify the format for the final written plan for the state TA system;
- pinpoint who will develop and produce the written plan; and,
- identify who must review and approve the final plan, oversee plan dissemination and implementation, monitor progress and report on accomplishments.

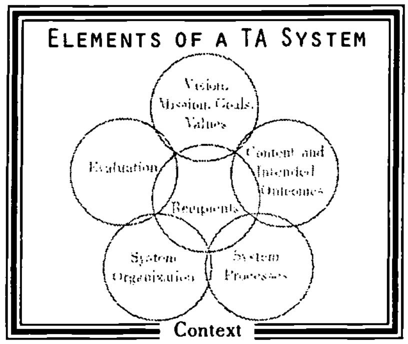
As a related activity of the planning process, the state team may wish to develop a logic model. As introduced in Part I of this planning resource, a logic model can help to create a pictorial view of what the state will be doing with TA, why they will be doing it, and the resources that will be necessary to operate the statewide system. This tool can facilitate a reasonable level of agreement on what the state is trying to accomplish over short- and long-term periods. (Refer to the NECTAS logic model depicted at the NECTAS Web site at http://www.nectas.unc.edu/eval/logicmodel/logic.html.)

Finally, set aside time to review the planning process used to develop a state's TA system. This reflective activity includes reviewing the overall work and group processes engaged in by the state TA system planning group(s), identifying strengths and improvements for future design processes, and making eventual refinements in the TA system itself.

Element 1: Context

A. Describe the Impetus or Need for a State Technical Assistance (TA) System

For example, examine and consider the following:



- socio-economic-political conditions such as governor and/or legislative initiatives and changing demographics in the state and its implications;
- relationship of TA to current performance goals for the statewide service delivery systems for children and families;
- issues, needs, and challenges confronting the proposed recipients for the TA in such service delivery system areas as universal design, diversity of children and youth, quality services and performance standards, positive behavioral interventions, inclusion, integrating technology in instruction, and staff recruitment and retention given staff turnover.
- relationship of the TA system to the state's plan for comprehensive system of personnel development (CSPD), state program improvement grant (SIG), state improvement plans (SIP), and other human resource development initiatives sponsored by the state special education advisory panel, state interagency coordinating council (SICC), and other bodies;
- tie-in to state compliance monitoring and enforcement activities with local programs, implementation agreements or improvement plans with OSEP, corrective actions with OCR, and the use of state performance standards, quality indicators and benchmarks;
- credentialing and licensure practices in relation to state or local school/system reform initiatives;
- plans for low-performing school improvement activities;
- mandates from national and state law or policy;
- relationships with charter, private and home-based schools; and,
- level of need for a collaborative approach to TA to maximize human and organizational resources.

Element 1: Context, *continued*

B. Assemble and Analyze Information About the Status or Reality of the Current State TA System

For example:

- review state history, tradition, politics, financial support and administration/management of the state providing TA to local programs;
- examine the status of the current operating TA system(s) and/or approach(es) and the satisfaction of recipients (clients) and sponsor(s) with TA services;
- look at available evidence of effectiveness and impact of the current TA system;
- review status of client buy-in and bureaucratic support for TA;
- identify the focus of content or subject matter areas in which the state provides or should provide assistance to local programs; and,
- ascertain whether changes are needed in the TA system.

C. Reflect on State's Experiences in Working with Other National, Regional, or State TA Programs

For example:

- identify TA programs with which state has interacted;
- gather information from and about these programs; and,
- review features that have had a positive impact and may be replicated by the state and its TA program.

D. Delineate the State's Definition of TA

For example:

- be clear on the expected results for the TA system;
- discuss views and expectations for the process of sustained change including barriers, urgency, magnitude and timeframe; and,
- create or adopt a definition of TA by considering the philosophy, authority, mandate, and available research/practice literature, policies and experiences surrounding the provision of TA.

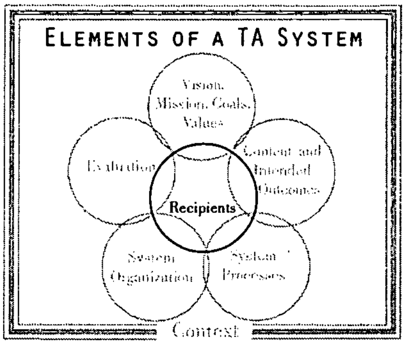
★ This star serves as a reminder to refer to Attachment 1 "General Planning Guide for State TA System" (page 88) to help summarize key points from the discussion and analysis about each element.

Element 2: Recipients

A. Primary Recipient(s) of Direct Services to Be Delivered by the TA System

For example:

- delineate the main clients, participants, targets or customers of the state's TA system who will receive direct, intensive, ongoing and general information and TA services. Examples include:
  - parents
  - physicians
  - psychologists
  - teachers (general, special education)
  - state and local ICC members
  - therapists
  - bus drivers
  - nurses
  - early interventionists
  - local system administrators
  - child care staff
  - librarians
  - paraprofessionals
  - principals
  - university faculty
  - service coordinators



- how many people may be involved; where are they located and in what type of organizations do they reside;
- will TA system work with individual clients or a team of clients?
- what are some general needs, strengths and characteristics such as culture, language and disabilities of the audience(s);
- determine client motivation, buy-in, commitment and readiness for using TA;
- how much time can client devote to participate in TA and change activities;
- are there local leadership personnel or gatekeepers (such as local service administrators, internal facilitators or regional coordinators) that the state TA system must work with and through in order to reach and serve these primary recipients and thus enhance sustained change and improvement? and,
- what additional local resources are available to the clent to support the TA from the state?

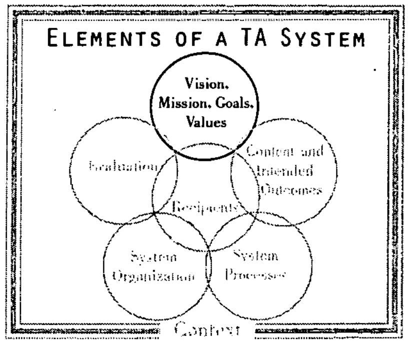
B. Secondary Recipients

For example:

- describe clients who may receive general information and minimal support from the TA system. These recipients would not receive direct and intensive services as would the primary recipients.

★ Refer to Attachment 1 "General Planning Guide for State TA System"

Element 3: TA System Vision, Mission, Goals, and Values



A. Vision and Mission Statement

For example:

- develop broad statement(s) of what the state wants to achieve with its TA system in terms of desired long-term outputs such as promoting quality local programs and improving results for children and families;
- delineate what the TA system is to achieve and for whom, and the scope of the effort that may involve a single agency perspective or an interagency or collaborative perspective; and,
- ensure that the statement reflects a shared vision and provides overall direction, purpose, meaning, motivation and passion for the TA system.

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B. Goal Statements

For example:

- prepare more specific statements of desired results and intended impacts of the TA system, such as local system capacity building, strategic planning, learning and applying new skills, developing a learning community, helping programs become accredited or implementing legal programmatic changes; and,
- aim to align goals for TA with local level educational or early intervention goals.

Goal # . . . .

Goal # . . . .

Goal # . . . .

C. Values

For example:

- what are the four to six core values or guiding principles about technical assistance that your state agency holds to be essential?

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★ Refer to Attachment 1 "General Planning Guide for State TA System"

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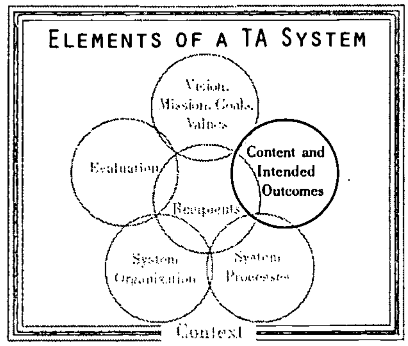
Element 4: Content and Intended Outcomes

A. Content or Topical Focus of the TA System in Order to Address the Needs/ Interests of the Targeted Recipients

For example:



- determine breadth of subject matter for the TA that may include disability populations and age parameters such as birth-3, 3-5, birth-5, birth-8, or birth-21 focus;
- delineate multidisciplinary or discipline specific subject matter;
- consider and review content standards or benchmarks and their relationship to local service delivery system components and operational processes;
- discuss importance of interpretations of Federal and state rules/laws/ policies and requirements;
- use findings from federal/state compliance monitoring and improvement plans;
- stress effective, successful, exemplary or promising (best) practices;
- use research-based knowledge that may include curricular or instructional programs, model projects, reform packages, and measurement tools; and,
- identify and address future trends that may have an impact on the service delivery system for children and families.

B. Intended Outcomes for the TA System in Relation to Elements 1, 2, 3, and 4A

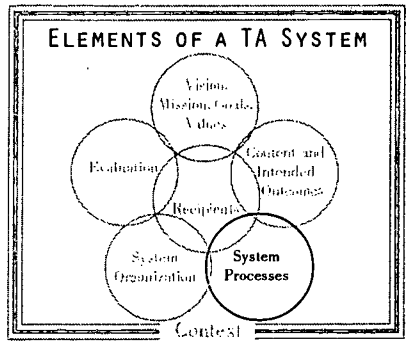
For example:

- delineate the desired short term outcomes of the state TA system in terms of its recipients and expected results. These statements should be concrete, attainable, and measurable. Statements may include language about increased knowledge, improved skills, enhanced program development, solved problems, acquired new attitudes or beliefs, implementation of innovative service delivery practices, involvement in new collaborative relationships, becoming program compliant and development of training or TA products.

★ Refer to Attachment 1 "General Planning Guide for State TA System"

Element 5: System Processes

A. Scope for the TA System



For example:

- identify focus in terms of support of individual client development, local program or organizational development, systems capacity building and change, and local or regional interagency and collaborative undertakings;
- identify problems and find solutions;
- build upon current strengths, needs, priorities and resources of clients;
- investigate all facets of school operations and assist in developing recommendations for improving student performance at schools;
- help others to comply with federal and state laws and regulations;
- provide topical leadership to the state; and,
- clarify how TA may contribute to credentialing, licensure and endorsement.

B. General Procedures

For example:

- discuss the broad landscape of general TA procedures, such as contact with clients, relationships with clients, identification of client TA needs, communication with local leadership personnel, development of a TA plan with clients, delivery of TA services to clients, etc.;
- determine how the amount of TA services will be made available to local recipients across the state, e.g., on a uniform and equitable basis or on an individual need basis;
- identify the amount of time and effort expected to be made available to each primary (secondary) client as may be determined by number of days or hours of consultation, attendance at how many workshops; and,
- clarify state TA role in relation to such matters as controversial practices and neutral (value-free), or value-laden positions.

C. Contact Strategies

For example:

- discuss frequency and intensity of desired contact with clients including local leadership personnel;
- explore methods that will be used by the TA system to establish and maintain contact with recipients such as mail or newsletters, face to face, e-mail, listservs and Internet, routine telephone calls;
- clarify how clients will be able to access TA;
- develop ideas of how the TA system will become aware of, appreciate, and understand the client's context including culture, use of langauge, and connectivity to other TA resources, etc.;
- determine ways to be used with recipients to discuss and negotiate services to be provided by the TA system; and,
- plan to deal with local client staff turnover and need for contact activities.

D. Type of Relationship and Rapport Desired

For example:

- what is feasible and desirable between TA system provider and recipient such as a proactive and ongoing relationship or a more passive one that responds only to requests from recipient?
- is collegeality to be encouraged?
- is relationship to be participatory and collaborative or directive?
- is client participation in state's TA system mandatory or voluntary?
- can open, consistent and ongoing communication be fostered?
- develop respect for local clients and their culture; and,
- strive to create client buy-in and motivation to the value and benefit of TA.

E. Needs Assessment Orientation

For example:

- how will client needs, strengths and priorities be characterized? will needs be predetermined by sponsoring agency policies or mandates (i.e., SEA; Part C lead agency; state ICC) or client determined?
- what existing sources of data about needs may be reviewed—for example, local self-study, state monitoring reports, improvement plans?
- how will the magnitude and urgency of needed change be determined?
- will client needs be viewed as deficit and/or enrichment oriented?
- who will be queried in terms of TA needs—local leadership personnel, teachers, specialists, parents?
- what procedures or methods will be used to identify recipient needs—review and analysis of reports and audits; samples of work; making observations; paper-pencil; telephone; focus group; Internet; face to face interview?
- how will needs information be organized? and,
- how will priorities be established and by whom?

F. TA Objectives and Tentative Plan

For example:

- discuss procedures to be used to set clear objectives for TA based upon priority needs of the specific clients;
- determine whether long-term intensive assistance will be made available and/or short-term help within the context of an ongoing relationship;
- discuss whether to use a TA plan or agreement with the client that will outline possible outcomes for TA, clients to be involved, services to be planned and provided, and a timetable for service planning and provision; and,
- talk about how to set expectations and develop a shared understanding of proposed TA activites with the client.

G. Types of TA Services Available to Recipients

For example:

- establish procedures for discussion with client about the match among intended recipients of TA, TA needs, objectives and possible services; and,
- determine type of TA event(s), strategies, services and/or activities that the TA system will offer to recipients including:

  - expert consultation— on-site and/or telephone
  - mentor program, telementoring or e-mail mentoring
  - conferences
  - workshops
  - training sessions
  - small group meetings
  - seminars
  - summer institutes
  - problem-solving or focus groups
  - networking, referral, and linkage to other resource groups
  - field visits to learn from others
  - establish and support demonstration sites
  - publications including handbooks, "how to" manuals, monographs, catalogs, newsletters, brochures, fact sheets
  - coaching
  - minigrants to support innovative practices or quality enhancement activities
  - interactive video and/or audio teleconferences
  - CD-ROM
  - state TA system Web site
  - Web-based training, including chatrooms, discussion forums and webcasting
  - distance education that may include television and computers
  - e-mail and listservs
  - self-study modules, correspondence courses, bulletin boards
  - self-assessment (monitoring) tools
  - instructional audiocassettes
  - instructional videocassettes or disks (DVD)
  - lending library

- seek clients' advice on which strategies they have found to be effective or noneffective;
- determine possible sources of expertise to draw upon from universities, private vendors, consulting firms, local businesses, publishers, software and media companies; and,
- assess and identify capabilities, resources and time necessary to undertake the planning and design of activities for the implementation of any of the above types of TA services. Is TA system staff adequate to undertake these activities or may outside consultant help be required? Take into account the environment(s) in which the TA event, activity, or service will occur as well as access and availability to special equipment. Also consider multi-language translations, cultural sensitivity, accessibility or other accommodations that may be helpful to recipients (participants).

H. Develop TA Plan Protocol

Develop a final protocol and format for a TA plan, blueprint or agreement that will document the proposed individually tailored and customized TA with targeted clients. The written plan may include objectives, a schedule of TA events and activities for a designated time period (e.g., 12 to 18 months), and specification of TA staff, planning and implementation activities, location of event(s), resources required, and proposed evaluation activities of the TA service.

I. Tentative Scope, Size, and Expertise of TA Staff

For example:

- explore preliminary staffing configuration that may be needed to implement various TA system processes;
- discuss the competencies, knowledge base, attributes and skills needed by the TA staff, such as content and process knowledge and skills, family-centered skills, interpersonal relations, flexibility, credibility, teaming, brokering expertise, facilitation and technological literacy;
- consider diversity in terms of thoughts and cultural, linguistic, gender and disability groups;
- consider need for different roles to be played such as information provider, advocate, trainer, capacity builder, strategic planner, broker or catalyst;
- explore the estimated numbers of qualified and diversified staff who will have the knowledge, skills, and competencies to coordinate, plan, develop, support and conduct proposed TA system events/activities;
- discuss need for and uses of parents as staff members; and,
- discuss needs and plans for ongoing staff development and inservice education opportunities for the TA staff.

Element 5: System Processes, *continued*

J. Tentative Needs for and Availability of Resources and Time

For example:

- clarify sponsorship and tentative funding to implement the TA system processes and its services. Will state TA program be supported via a single source (agency) or through multiple (collaborative) sources (agencies)?
- outline draft budget estimates for such items as regional, university or special TA contracts; materials; fees for substitutes or release time; internet access; Web site maintenance; consultants' fees; and TA staff travel;
- explore how time and resources might be set aside to foster TA system staff skill and knowledge advancement? and,
- investigate options for the funding of the TA system—i.e., request for proposals, sole source contracts.

K. Tentative Costs to Clients

For example:

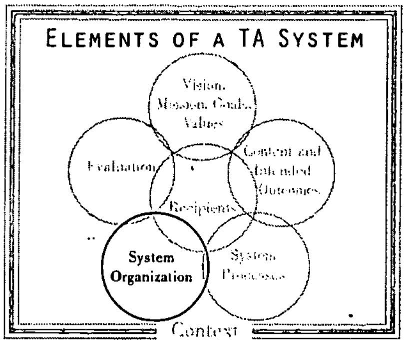
- discuss whether state TA services will be free to recipients, or will there be a charge or cost-sharing between client and TA system; and,
- explore how costs may need to be negotiated and documented in a TA plan, blueprint or agreement with the client, and paperwork administered for payment of TA services.

★ Refer to Attachment 1 "General Planning Guide for State TA System"

Element 6: System Organization

A. Organizational Setting and Structure for the State TA System

For example:



- determine structure that may may range from:
  - a one-person TA operation in the state central office;
  - multiple TA staff in state central office;
  - regional TA operation or offices such as intermediate educational units (IEUs), service centers, health centers, area education agencies or special education regional resource centers (SERRCs);
  - combination of state central office and regional staff;
  - third-party contract(s) with universities, parent groups, private consultant companies, or telecommuter consultants; and,
  - other configurations such as a consortium of institutions of higher education (IHEs) and parent resource groups.
- explore level of intended interagency or collaborative sponsorship which may have an impact on organizational structure; and
- determine how the state agency will manage and who will have responsibility for the supervision and administration of the state TA initiative.

B. Advisory Board

For example:

- determine need for an advisory group or board of directors to oversee and guide the TA system. Identify its membership, including stakeholders such as local service providers, parents, topical experts, state staff, persons with disabilities and others.

C. Organization of and Procedures to Handle the Information and Requests From Clients

For example:

- reconfirm the nature and focus of TA subject matter such as specifics of early childhood topics or more global and broader topics;
- determine how TA system routinely should identify new knowledge, research, and practices that can be useful to local clients;
- specify how information about exemplary models (e.g., OSEP's early childhood demonstration and outreach projects, U.S. Department of Education's comprehensive school reform demonstration programs) should be accessed;
- provide guidance how the acquisition, analysis, and use of potentially controversial practices should be handled; and,
- suggest how TA staff should store, catalogue, and access information—such as paper files, library, electronic databases, intranet, TA staff briefings and meetings—to be able to respond to recipients' needs.

D. Communications

Develop an organizational plan for formal and informal linkages including frequent and open communications involving TA staff and others. Consider four dimensions:

1. ***Communication Between Funding Sponsor and TA System***

   For example:

   - describe nature, timing, modes and responsibilities for communications between funding sponsor and TA program(s);
   - clarify how sponsoring agency and/or multiple sponsors will supervise, offer guidance on and direction for the TA workscope;
   - determine disposition toward handling of public and confidential information, ownership of TA products produced and role in offering interpretations of state and federal statutes and regulations;
   - specify whether roles of TA and monitoring will be integrated or kept separate; and,
   - clarify expectations for monitoring TA system performance and reporting on program accomplishments and outcomes.

D. Communications, continued

2. *Client Communications*

For example:

- which clients, including local leadership personnel, will participate in what types of communications with the TA program?
- how will ongoing communications be executed with the primary clients—e.g., will a designated state TA staff member play a liaison, coordinator or facilitator role with specified clients?
- how will TA services be announced and marketed to the primary and secondary clients? Will a newsletter or a home page on the World Wide Web keep clients and other TA providers informed of system activities?
- how will email and listservs be used?
- how will TA system visibility be promoted and success stories be publicized among the clients and others? and,
- what purposes will be articulated and strategies used for collaborating, communicating, and interacting in the provision of TA with other partners within local agencies where the recipients reside such as teacher unions, local staff development planning councils, local ICCs, site-based management teams, charter or private schools, district professional development bodies, school-based instructional support teams, libraries and learning centers, PTA, and special local grants?

3. *State Connections*

For example:

- consider purposes, strategies and state TA system staff who may team, coordinate and collaborate with other colleagues in the state. These interactions may include program collaborators such as Head Start and Early Head Start, Title I and Even Start, Parents as Teachers, 21st Century Schools, Child Care Development Fund, Parts B, C, and D of IDEA, Maternal and Child Health, ADA, etc. Also explore potential interactions with the state's initiatives of CSPD or SIP or SIG, continuous improvement monitoring, Part C Central Directory, UAPs (now referred to as Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, Education, Research and Services), Parent Training and Information Centers (PTIs), and Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs). Consider connections with state ICC and LICCs, Special Education Advisory Panel, professional associations, and state data collection operations.

D. Communications, continued

4. *Liaison, Partnerships, and Access to Other Regional or National TA Groups*

For example:

- explore purposes, strategies and procedures for engaging and collaborating with and getting enriched by new ideas from other resource people, professional-parent organizations, institutions of higher education, and special grants at the regional and national levels such as ED Labs, Comprehensive Assistance Centers, RRCs, RTECs, NICHCY, Desegregation TA Centers, Transition Alliance, Elementary and Middle School TA Center, Consortium for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education, NECTAS, Parent Alliance and others. For more information about these and other groups, visit the "Links to Related Sites" section of the NECTAS Web site at http://www.nectas.unc.edu/links.html; and,
- offer advice with whom the state TA program will collaborate, describe how the state program will collaborate with these or other TA groups, and assign TA staff to play this role.

E. Staffing Required

For example:

- finalize parameters for TA staff roles and responsibilities, including parents;
- determine division of labor to coordinate, support and maintain the statewide TA system and its plan to conduct TA events and activities;
- identify staff competencies (perhaps core and specialty areas) required such as process, content, information and technology management, cultural and linguistic sensitivities, communications and teaming expertise;
- establish procedures to recruit, orient and retain new and diverse staff;
- make plans for ongoing staff development or inservice education; and,
- determine overall staff management plan including leadership, program and support staff functions.

F. Accessible Facilities Including Office and Conference Space and Furnishings, Available Technology, and Equipment

For example:

- consider office space needs or requirements and virtual facilities for staff use;
- determine equipment needs that may include telephone, fax, photocopy, e-mail, computers, intranet, audiovisual equipment, Internet access and maintenance, and wireless communications; and,
- consider use of distance education network that may incorporate television, web and computer interfaces, and their accessibility for clients with disabilities.

G. Ancillary Staff Support, Transportation Services and Supplies Needed to Support the Operation of the TA System

H. Name of TA Organization

Establish an appropriate name for the TA organization and be prepared to market it to clients and others.

I. Recognition for Participation in TA Activities

For example:

- consider whether TA system will offer certificates, CEUs, credit toward certification or licensure, and/or college credit for client participation in certain specific TA events and activities.

Element 6: System Organization, *continued*

J. Organizational Policies, Operational Planning, and Procedures to Guide Implementation and Evaluation of TA Operation

Consider guidance about decision-making rules, quality standards, resource allocation, flow and handling of the TA system's paperwork, work climate, staffing, administration and management necessary to guide the implementation of the TA operation and evaluation of Elements 1 through 7 of the state TA system.

For example:

- creating a high performing TA operation that is integrated, coherent, greater than the sum of its parts and is aligned to the needs and goals of the early intervention, special education and general education service delivery system(s).

K. Final Budget/Resources/Pricing

For example:

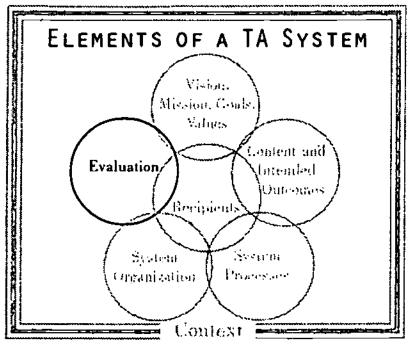
- finalize resources and funding stream(s) that are necessary and essential for the sponsor(s) to operate the TA system on an ongoing basis;
- determine how financing will be handled for TA system operations which may include a competitive "request for proposal" process to fund statewide or regional TA programs for the state;
- finalize whether TA services will be free to clients, a charge or cost-sharing; and,
- finalize need for any client billing procedures.

★ Refer to Attachment 1 "General Planning Guide for State TA System"

Element 7: Evaluation

(For more information on evaluating technical assistance, please see the NECTAS Web site at http://www.nectas.unc.edu/eval/eval.html.)

A. Overall Plan for Accountability



For example:

- review reporting needs and requirements of TA system sponsor(s) or funding agency or agencies;
- examine relationship to general state and federal performance goals and indicators;
- establish evaluation questions, performance indicators, milestones, and design strategies to evaluate the state TA system's activities and outcomes over time;
- prepare an evaluation plan that may include process evaluation (how TA system functions), discrete event evaluation (how well a particular TA event such as a workshop, on-line course or consultation was implemented and received), as well as results evaluation (what the TA system achieved or accomplished, especially in terms of improving results client learning and eventually for children and youth); and,
- consider evaluation data dimensions such as documentation, satisfaction, effectiveness and impacts. Short-term, intermediate and long-term impacts may include areas such as client's knowing something different, doing something differently or valuing something different in relation to TA that the client received which ultimately may impact the improvement of results for children and families.

B. Evaluation Strategies and Format

For example, identify methods that may include:

- client questionnaires or surveys, focus groups, supervisor observation, tests, interviews, case studies and checklists;
- use of paper-pencil formats; and,
- information gathering via telephone or Internet modalities.

Element 7: Evaluation, *continued*

C. Data Collection, Frequency, and Analysis

For example:

- what state regulations must be considered with regard to data collection procedures and matters of confidentiality of personal client information;
- what will be timing and frequency of data collection that relates to methods;
- what units of analyses will be used; and,
- what methods of analyses will be used.

D. Responsibilities and Timelines

For example:

- determine if evaluation will be done by in-house state or regional TA staff, third-party contractor, evaluation consultants or combination; and,
- delineate responsiblities for constructing evaluation instruments, acquiring, handling and maintaining evaluation data, monitoring, analysis, report preparation and timeframe.

E. Develop and Disseminate Evaluation Report(s)

For example:

- determine frequency and format(s) of report;
- pinpoint results to promote in a report;
- identify recipients of report including the sponsoring agency, clients and others;
- prepare and distribute report; and,
- determine other communication strategies that can be used to share evaluation results, such as bulletins, newsletters, state TA system Web site and briefings.

Element 7: Evaluation, *continued*

F. Discuss and Use Evaluation Findings

For example:

- identify procedures for state TA staff to discuss evaluation findings and report in terms of system strengths and needed improvements, side effects,or system fine tuning;
- reexamine and update the logic model for the state TA system as a frame of reference for its intended operations and impacts;
- prepare staff to be adaptable, flexible and ready to cope with possible future changes in the TA system as a result of evaluation findings; and,
- provide the guidance on how these learnings from evaluation and other sources may be used to improve and/or refine TA system by updating the state plan in relation to context, mission and other elements related to the TA system, especially its link to the service delivery system for children and families.

G. Celebrate and Recognize Successes

For example:

- having reviewed the evaluation findings, build-in time to recognize, celebrate and savor the successes, accomplishments and positive contributions of the TA system.

★ Refer to Attachment 1 "General Planning Guide for State TA System"

General Planning Guide for State TA System

(The planning team may find this guide helpful for summarizing their thinking, decisions and possible follow-through actions as each of the seven major design elements of the state's TA system is examined. Pay particular attention on how all elements will relate to one another and help create a coherent and well articulated plan for your state TA system.)

Design Element (circle one): Context Recipients Vision Content Processes Operations Evaluation

Planning Team Members:

Team Leader:

Findings from Review of Element:

Intended Outcome/Desired Result – What Do We Want to Accomplish?:

Activities/Strategies (lists specific tasks to be undertaken)	Member(s) Responsible (Who will do what?)	Timeline (Start–End)	Resources Needed	Additional Considerations

Attachment 2

Outline of the Worksheets: Elements and Descriptors

Note to Planner: *This checklist may be used to keep track of your overall progress in planning activities. Some suggested uses include assigning names of team members for element discussion, checking completion of discussion about an element and documenting target dates for convening an element discussion.*

_____ **Element 1: Context**

- _____ A. Describe the Impetus or Need for a State Technical Assistance (TA) System
- _____ B. Assemble and Analyze Information About the Current Status or Reality of the State TA System
- _____ C. Reflect on State's Experiences in Working with Other National, Regional or State TA Programs
- _____ D. Delineate the State's Definition of TA

_____ **Element 2: Recipients**

- _____ A. Primary Recipient(s) of Direct Services to Be Delivered by the TA System
- _____ B. Secondary Recipients

_____ **Element 3: TA System Vision, Mission, Goals, and Values**

- _____ A. Vision and Mission Statement
- _____ B. Goal Statements
- _____ C. Values

_____ **Element 4: Content and Intended Outcomes**

- _____ A. Content or Topical Focus of the TA System in Order to Address the Needs/ Interests of the Targeted Recipients
- _____ B. Intended Outcomes for the TA System in Relation to Elements 1, 2, 3, and 4A

_____ **Element 5: System Processes**

- _____ A. Scope for the TA System
- _____ B. General Procedures
- _____ C. Contact Strategies
- _____ D. Type of Relationship and Rapport Desired
- _____ E. Needs Assessment Orientation

_____ F. TA Objective and Tentative Plan
_____ G. Type of TA Services Available to Recipients
_____ H. Develop TA Plan Protocol
_____ I. Tentative Scope, Size, Expertise of TA Staff
_____ J. Tentative Needs for and Availability of Resources and Time
_____ K. Tentative Costs to Clients

_____ **Element 6: System Organization**
_____ A. Organizational Setting and Structure for the State TA System
_____ B. Advisory Board
_____ C. Organization of and Procedures to Handle the Information and Requests From Clients
_____ D. Communications
_____ *1. Communication Between Funding Sponsor and TA System*
_____ *2. Client Communications*
_____ *3. State Connections*
_____ *4. Liaison, Partnerships, and Access to Other Regional or National TA Groups*
_____ E. Staffing Required
_____ F. Accessible Facilities Including Office and Conference Space and Furnishings, Available Technology, and Equipment
_____ G. Ancillary Staff Support, Transportation Services and Supplies Needed to Support the Operation of the TA System
_____ H. Name of TA Organization
_____ I. Recognition for Participation in TA Activities
_____ J. Organizational Policies, Operational Planning, and Procedures to Guide Implementation and Evaluation of TA Operation
_____ K. Final Budget/Resources/Pricing

_____ **Element 7: Evaluation**
_____ A. Overall Plan for Accountability
_____ B. Evaluation Strategies and Format
_____ C. Data Collection, Frequency, and Analysis
_____ D. Responsibilities and Timelines
_____ E. Develop and Disseminate Evaluation Report(s)
_____ F. Discuss and Use Evaluation Findings
_____ G. Celebrate and Recognize Successes