Professional Development Resources Supplement: Improving Instruction, Organization, and Learner Outcomes Through Professional Development

A publication of Building Professional Development Partnerships
for Adult Educators Project (Pro-Net)

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Renee Sherman
Mark Kutner
John Tibbetts
Danielle Weidler
Pelavin Research Institute
American Institutes for Research

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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[1] The *Regional Resource Initiative* is not available on-line with this publication. For copies of this initiative please contact Renee Sherman at the American Institutes for Research at 202-944-5327 or by e-mail at rsherman@air.org

[2] *For the Common Good: A Guide for Developing Local Interagency Linkage Teams* is available at the following site http://literacy.kent.edu/CommonGood/Guide/index.html. If you have any questions about this publication please contact Susan Imel at the Center on Education and Training for Employment at Ohio State University at 614-292-8606.

INTRODUCTION:

Professional Development Resources Supplement

IMPROVING INSTRUCTOR, ORGANIZATIONAL, AND LEARNER OUTCOMES THROUGH PROFESSONAL DEVELOPMENT

The *Professional Development Resources Supplement* is an extension of the *Professional Development Resource Guide for Adult Educators* prepared by Pelavin Research Institute in 1996 through a contract with the U.S. Department of Education, Division of Adult Education and Literacy, entitled *Building Professional Development Partnerships with Adult Educators (PRO-NET)*. The Guide was designed to help adult educators develop and implement comprehensive professional development systems that will benefit individual staff, the adult education program, and ultimately, the learner. The original *Resource Guide* provided a rationale for professional development in adult education and discussed four primary approaches to professional development: workshop/ presentation, observation/feedback, inquiry/research, and product/program development. It also discussed the roles of administrators, professional development coordinators, and instructors in designing, delivering, and supporting professional development activities. Finally, it included prototypes of needs assessments and individual professional development plans that could be adapted by state and local adult education programs to suit their own circumstances.

Recently the Pelavin Research Institute produced a separate publication on the use of mentoring as a professional development approach. The publication, entitled *Adult Educators' Guide to Designing Instructor Mentoring*, outlines the steps for designing and implementing mentoring for instructors of adult education programs. The guide includes a detailed discussion of the procedures for selecting and matching mentors and protégés, identifying appropriate mentoring content and developing strategies, and assessing and evaluating mentoring. The mentoring publication supplements the work of the *Professional Development Resource Guide for Adult Educators.*

The *Professional Development Resources Supplement* includes additional resources for adult educators. Information is based on literature and practices in the fields of professional development, adult education, needs assessments, and collaboration. Materials are intended to stimulate discussions and ideas among state and local adult education administrators, professional development coordinators, and instructors about various elements within a professional development system.

How to Use These Professional Development Resources

This *Supplement* serves as a catalyst for careful analysis, open discussion, and considered actions. Individuals, or groups within the adult education community – administrators, professional development coordinators, and instructors – can use the *Supplement* to enlighten, explain, and stimulate. It *does not* tell state administrators or program directors what they should or should not do. It helps them think about ways in which they could improve the delivery of professional development services.

The *Supplement* focuses on two primary areas: needs assessments and collaboration for professional development. These topics were identified through a needs assessment conducted by *PRO-NET* staff prior to a national professional development conference sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education and Pelavin Research Institute. While many adult educators will find both areas useful, some may want to focus on only one area, depending on the individual's role in the organization and on program and staff needs. Materials in each area can serve as the basis for discussions between administrators and staff, or as topics for professional development workshops, inquiry/research projects, and program enhancements.

Each area noted above contains background information, research findings, and sample practices and strategies. The materials are meant to be adapted to the environment and needs of individual programs.

Contents of *Professional Development Resources Supplement*

Guide to *Professional Development Resources Supplement*

This brief guide to the *Supplement* includes an introduction, information on using the materials, a list of the contents, and an overview of the two focus areas: Needs Assessments: The Foundation for All Professional Development Activities, and Collaboration as a Means for Enhancing Professional Development Services.

Needs Assessments: The Foundation for All Professional Development Activities

Overview of Assessments—This document provides background information on assessments with a brief discussion of various assessment procedures, key concepts on which effective assessments are based, steps in implementing an assessment, recommendations for when to conduct assessments, balancing instructor- and program-determined professional development activities, and the relationship between assessment and evaluation.

Two types of model instruments are provided:

1. Sample needs assessment profiles for each of three target audiences: instructors, professional development coordinators, and state and local administrators along with profile forms for aggregating the results of completed instructor and professional development coordinator profiles. A brief orientation on the use of the profiles is included.

2. Sample assessment from the Continuous Improvement Measure (CIM) developed by the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) most often used as a self-assessment, but also used as a team assessment (by a team of instructors or a combination of administrators and instructors) or as a supervisory assessment. It includes a brief discussion on how to introduce supervisory observations to reduce instructor anxiety.

Collaboration as a Means for Enhancing Professional Development Services

Overview of Collaboration—This document provides a rationale for collaboration and includes the definition of collaboration, the pros and cons of collaboration, and steps in the collaborative process.

Other materials included are:

- *Questions to Ask When Considering Collaboration*. These questions are intended to help programs identify potential partners for collaboration. They are organized into seven categories: (1) organizational structure and decision making, (2) funding, (3) staffing, (4) outcomes, (5) culture, (6) perceptions about the organization, and (7) personal experiences. These questions resulted from the collaborative process that established the Northwest Regional Literacy Resource Center. This is a collaboration among five states—Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming—and between adult education and social service agencies within those states.

- *Regional Resource Initiative: A Blueprint for Sharing Resources and Expertise in Adult Education and Literacy Across State Lines*. This report provides the results of a planning grant awarded by the National Institute for Literacy to the Arizona Adult Literacy Technology Resource Center, Inc., in collaboration with the Center for Literacy Studies, University of Tennessee, to explore the feasibility and effectiveness of regional sharing of resources and expertise in adult education and literacy. It includes the study process, challenges to collaboration, and short case studies.

- *For the Common Good: Guide for Developing Local Interagency Linkage Teams*. This guide, prepared by the Center on Education and Training for Employment, College of Education, Ohio State University, describes six steps in establishing interagency collaborations and includes a series of questions agencies should ask themselves at each step.

The complete *Professional Development Resources Supplement* may be accessed on-line at http://www.air-dc.org/nrs. Many of our other publications may be downloaded from this website as well.

Needs Assessment:

THE FOUNDATION FOR ALL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

A dedicated staff committed to improving the quality and effectiveness of adult education services is essential for improving learner outcomes, and can occur only when instructors and other staff actively participate in developing and implementing program improvement initiatives. For that reason, there must be professional development opportunities that allow for staff to participate in developing, recommending, and implementing strategies for improving services. Staff also must have the opportunity to become acquainted with administrative concerns and suggestions. A comprehensive professional development approach must include opportunities for administratively determined activities in addition to self-determined activities.

This document provides an overview of the key concepts on which effective needs assessments are based; identifies procedures for conducting needs assessments; describes the need for balancing instructor- and program-determined professional development activities; and discusses the relationship between needs assessments and evaluations.

Professional development activities must be based on the systematically identified needs of instructors, and not simply on an administrator's *perception* of what instructors in their program require. Needs assessments should be the foundation of all professional development activities. Needs assessment procedures help decision making by clarifying what needs are important and their level of importance. An effective needs assessment raises the level of individual and programmatic awareness concerning: (1) areas of strength; (2) areas for improving instruction; (3) individual learning preferences; and (4) preferred approaches to professional development. Instructors should have a strong voice in identifying the skills and knowledge areas on which professional development activities are to focus, as well as the types of professional development approaches in which they choose to participate.

Key Concepts in Conducting Needs Assessments

Although there is not one "correct" way to assess program and staff needs in adult education, the research literature and practical experience identify key concepts on which effective needs assessments are based. These concepts are discussed briefly below.

- **Consider needs assessment as ongoing.** As staff become more knowledgeable, their awareness of their needs changes and deepens. While generic, even superficial, needs may be identified initially, an awareness of more specific needs usually follows.

- **Make needs assessment the first step in the evaluation.** Evaluation is a key element of staff development. To plan an effective staff development program and determine its outcomes, it is first necessary to gather data on student and staff goals, strengths, needs, learning styles, and preferences, as well as on program needs and legislative or other mandates.

- **Make staff an integral part of the needs assessment**. Participants should be involved in planning the needs assessment, prioritizing needs, and determining the appropriate professional development approaches. If staff do not themselves feel a need or desire to change, the content of the professional development is much less likely to affect instructional strategies. By making staff a party to assessing their own needs as well as the needs of others, the process itself becomes educational and part of professional development.

- **Identify needs by program and by staff experiences as well as by expected competencies for all adult educators.** Staff will be more enthusiastic about professional development that assists them with their specific needs relative to their programs and learner populations. Staff needs may vary widely across programs. Individual needs of staff within programs will vary based on level of experience, types of classes, and previous professional development activities. These needs should be recognized. However, some generally accepted competencies such as knowledge of the adult learner are applicable to staff across all programs.

- **Gather needs assessment information from multiple sources, using different data collection strategies.** This results in a more comprehensive identification of needs and improves the chances that the needs identified are valid and legitimate. A survey alone cannot adequately document need.

- **Analyze the strengths of the system.** Because needs assessments tend to focus on the "gaps," identification of the strengths of the staff and program can help keep a balanced perspective and can bolster confidence.

- **Disseminate the results of needs assessments.** The results of the assessment should be analyzed and disseminated to those individuals who participated in it as well as to other audiences who may have an interest.

- **Link the results of the needs assessment to the professional development activities delivered.** Conducting a needs assessment leads individuals to expect that professional development activities will be developed to meet those needs. Credibility is established when programs are committed to meeting the needs identified.

Consider these concepts as guidelines when developing your own needs assessment.

Procedures for Conducting Needs Assessments

Data for needs assessments can be obtained in a variety of ways, including interviews and written surveys. Administrators also should be involved during the needs assessment. With the high turnover rate among instructors, many may not have a sufficient breadth of exposure to adult learners to understand exactly what their needs are or what the alternative professional development opportunities are for addressing them. Hence, needs assessments should include a *combination* of the following:

- ***Self-reports*** comprise responses to inquiries (the simplest form of needs assessment) about the individual's perception (usually of their own development needs). These responses are most useful as indicators of interest, and are limited by awareness of possibilities and of one's own needs. If used, inquiries should be made as specific and as brief as possible. The data from these assessments should be combined with data from other sources.

- ***Focus groups*** consist of 8 to 12 persons and produce primarily subjective data from a cross-section of respondents. This approach is useful as an initial step for identifying broad interests. Responses are made to carefully formulated questions (usually only five or six are recorded). The skills of facilitators and recorders are critical. An advantage of focus groups is that they allow the facilitator to ask probing questions such as "how" and "why," to gain a deeper understanding of the issues. Approaches to analyzing the data include ethnographic summaries that rely on direct quotes from the group discussion, or systematic coding around content analysis in which topics in the moderator's guide generally serve as the categories for coding.

- ***Nominal group process*** requires 5 to 9 well-informed participants who write answers to specific questions. As participants share responses, group members rank-order or rate those responses. The result is a quantitative component that can be aggregated. This procedure works well with large groups divided into small, nominal groups. Nonetheless, data are subjective.

- ***The Delphi method's*** purpose is to reach consensus on needs. A panel of "experts" respond to a series of questionnaires, each building on the previous questionnaire and each more specific than the previous one. Responses are based on opinions. This procedure avoids the need to meet and can be conducted by fax, e-mail, or regular mail. The process is complete when the most common agreement occurs.

- ***Key informants*** are leaders in a field who are knowledgeable about some group and who share their perceptions. These informants can provide information to be used later for more formal needs assessments. Data are often gathered by telephone or in person, with questions usually focused on educational programming.

- ***Supervisor evaluations*** are based on a knowledge of the field and an opportunity to observe personnel in action. Information may be accurate, if individuals can avoid filtering perceptions through their own preferences or relationships to the person being observed; data are usually more accurate if a performance appraisal instrument is used. Likewise, the results are more valid and reliable if corroborated by several observers.

- ***Surveys, questionnaires, and interviews*** are the most common methods of needs assessments. The advantages of surveys and questionnaires are that they can target large audiences, can serve as marketing tools, and can build ownership. Their value depends on the quality of the instrument (well-constructed and pilot tested) and on the sincerity and knowledge of respondents. Likewise, results of interviews depend on the skill and sensitivity of the interviewer, plus the care taken in constructing questions and in following up. There is real potential for bias if the interviewer is not trained.

- ***Portfolio assessment***, a form of authentic assessment, is gradually becoming more popular for assessing instructor strengths and weaknesses. Instructor portfolios are a purposeful collection of instructional materials selected by the instructor. As the contents are assessed over time, they provide an ongoing record of instructor growth and areas for improvement serve as a way to identify professional development activities.

- ***Analysis of existing information,*** including learner outcomes, attendance and retention, and performance reviews, is a useful method for determining needs. Findings may be used to validate data gathered from other sources.

The combination of needs assessments conducted varies with the type of organization and personnel being assessed.

Steps in Conducting a Needs Assessment

Regardless of the type of needs assessment, there are general steps that should be followed when implementing the needs assessment. These steps include the following:

1. **Identify users and uses of the needs assessment**. The users are generally staff development coordinators or administrators who will be acting on the information

collected. Users at the state, regional, or local levels may want different types of information. Knowing the kinds of information that the users want to obtain is helpful in choosing the processes for obtaining that information.

2. **Identify and describe the target population and its environment for the needs assessment**. Background information—such as demographic characteristics, geographic dispersion, and important features of the environment that may affect needs—is important in selecting the needs assessment processes and the types of professional development support that can best be provided once needs are identified.

3. **Select the needs assessment processes to implement**. Include all the sources of data, procedures for collecting information, and procedures for analyzing the needs once data have been collected.

4. **Implement the procedures of the selected needs assessment**. Determine who the appropriate staff are to collect the data and ensure they have the skills for the task. Interviews with staff require one set of skills while observations require another. An important issue is confidentiality, especially in reviewing performance evaluations. Let the target audience know in advance the purpose of the needs assessment and when it will be conducted.

5. **Integrate the information from various data sources and prioritize**.

6. **Analyze the results of the needs assessments**. Most data can be interpreted in different ways and discussion will help clarify the needs. If needs are not clearly understood and defined, the likelihood of resolving them is minimal and any improvement strategies will be superficial at best.

7. **Communicate the results of the needs assessments to decision makers, users, and other relevant audiences**.

8. **Collaborate in planning staff development**. Staff development coordinators, administrators, and, when feasible, instructors should work together to plan professional development that meets identified needs.

Analysis and communication of the results of the needs assessment are important steps in setting priorities among identified needs and selecting priorities for areas of change.

When to Conduct Needs Assessments

Because adult educators are most often part-time and have a high level of turnover, they are likely to resent completing needs assessment forms unless they can see some immediate benefit. Needs assessments, therefore, should be conducted only when there is a real reason to do so, and when some type of clearly described and useful follow-up will take place as a result of the assessment.

At the same time, the rapid turnover of staff may, indeed, generate one of those reasons for conducting needs assessments. If the organization's mission is not being accomplished, and the reasons are not clear even though staff turnover is high, a formal needs assessment may be in order to determine accurately where the gaps are and the possible reasons those gaps exist. The needs assessment can serve two purposes: to make new staff more aware of the organization's mission and to target professional development needs to close the gaps.

Another appropriate time to administer a needs assessment is when new program changes are imminent. For example, an agency may desire to start a new family literacy program. It would be important to determine what gaps in the organization's mission will be filled by that program; what knowledge and experience about family literacy programs, if any, already exist among the staff; what the interests are of instructors for participating in such a program; and what resources the staff see as essential to making the new program a success. To continue the same example, if such a program were initiated, it would be appropriate to administer a follow-up needs assessment shortly after the program has been implemented, to determine emerging needs for professional development, resources, logistics, and the like.

When an intervention is complete or fully implemented represents another appropriate time for a needs assessment, to answer those evaluation questions raised during planning and to allow for further development, dissemination, and revision. In short, needs assessments should be ongoing at those junctures when data are needed to evaluate progress or to determine the success of an endeavor. Examples might be a needs assessment of students to gather information for the evaluation of instruction; assessment of staff to provide data for the evaluation of professional development; or the need to gather data to evaluate curriculum or program development.

Balancing Instructor- and Program-Determined Professional Development Activities

A comprehensive professional development plan includes opportunities for a balance between activities supporting self-determined learning needs and preferences and those supporting program enhancements. *Instructor determined* professional development allows instructors to select topics and approaches that are best suited to their individual learning styles. It is based on the premise that adults desire to be the origin of their own learning, controlling the "what, who, how, why, when, and where" of possible learning experiences.

Self-determined learning, while necessary to ensure that instructors have the opportunity to identify topical areas of interest to themselves and that addresses the learner's needs and goals, may not always be congruent with program enhancement. *Administratively determined* professional development has a more organizational dimension and is generally targeted to improving instructional services, correcting a program deficiency, or implementing program changes. Program-mandated needs, for example, may result from system changes, the introduction of new standards, or the use of new technology. While not a high priority among instructors, these changes need to be addressed through professional development to enhance program quality. Program-mandated needs also offer instructors the opportunity to become acquainted with administrative concerns and suggestions.

Creating a balance between self-determined professional development and professional development for program enhancement raises the following important questions:

- ❖ If self-determined professional development is the driving philosophy, how are individual needs and learning preferences balanced with organizational goals?
- ❖ If the program goal is to improve services, must all professional development be mandated to ensure that instructional staff have the same requisite skills and knowledge to support the changes mandated by program enhancement?

- ❖ Where do individual needs and personal preferences come into play in program enhancement?
- ❖ How is a vision created for professional development that incorporates organizational goals and self-determined needs and learning?

Relationships Between Needs Assessment and Evaluation

Needs assessment and evaluation are both part of continuous improvement. In fact, the needs assessment is the first stage of the evaluation. Needs assessments provide data that, when analyzed and aggregated, can be evaluated. Thus the evaluation decides the "value" of the needs assessment results. Once assessments are analyzed and evaluated, plans can be made for implementing a professional development program.

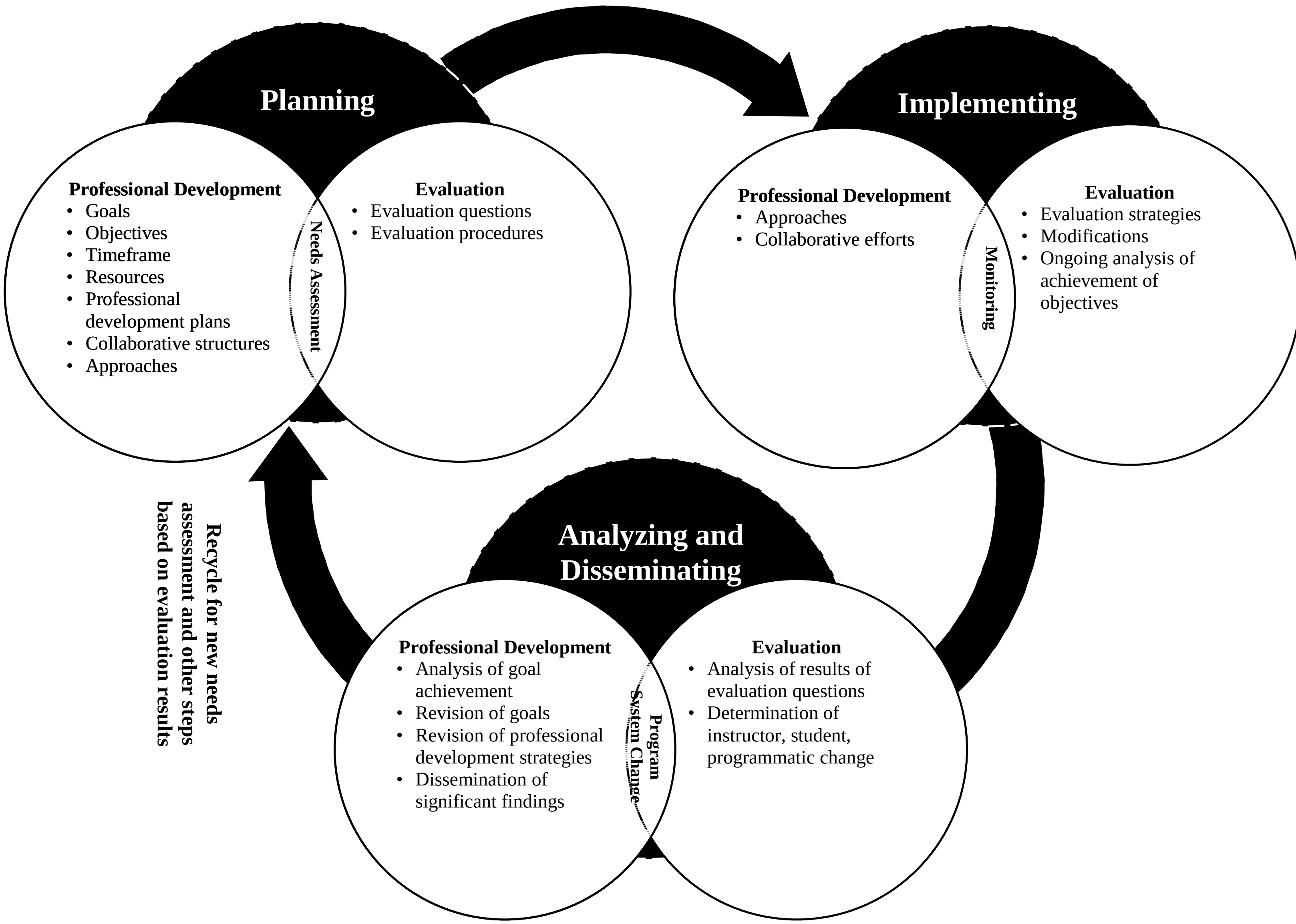
One misconception about needs assessment and evaluation is that needs assessment takes place only at the beginning of an endeavor (whether professional, program, or curriculum development or planning for instruction) and evaluation takes place at the end. That belief has incredibly harmed developmental efforts. It inhibits the flexibility to make ongoing changes as needed and creates a "stamp of approval/disapproval" syndrome rather than fostering continuous improvement.

Furthermore, when evaluation waits until the end, projects are often out of funds, out of steam, or reluctant to face negative results, so evaluation just doesn't happen. Equally discouraging are evaluations that are completed, but never used to recycle development, inform participants, or promote community involvement and support.

The relationship between needs assessments and evaluation is illustrated in Exhibit 1, Professional Development Process Framework. Planning for professional development is based on the needs assessment. During planning, professional development goals, objectives, timeframe, resources, individual professional development plans, collaborative structures, and approaches are established. At the same time, evaluation questions are raised and procedures are put into place to evaluate the progress toward achieving the goals and objectives.

Evaluation continues through implementation of professional development approaches and collaborative efforts. In the final stage, analysis and dissemination, the results of the evaluation questions raised during planning are analyzed and revisions to the professional development plans are made. The information is recycled for a new needs assessment.

EXHIBIT 1
Professional Development Process Framework



Introduction and Sample Needs Assessment Profiles

developed by the

Pelavin Research Institute of the American Institutes for Research

- **Needs Assessement Profile for Professional Development Coordinators**
- **Summary Profile of Professional Development Coordinators**
- **Needs Assessment Profile for Instructors**
- **Summary Profile of Instructors**
- **Needs Assessment Profile for State or Local Administrators**

INTRODUCTION

A Needs Assessment Profile is helpful in identifying instructional and program needs and in planning appropriate professional development activities. In effect, the plan serves as a vehicle for analysis that can become a “road map” for individual-and program-enhancement activities. Needs assessment profiles, in addition, can be completed for different program staff (instructors, professional development coordinators, and state and local administrators). It often is beneficial to aggregate responses from individual instructors' profiles, as well as those responses from professional development coordinators' profiles and have the staff as a team look at instructional and program needs and plan activities to foster both individual growth and program enhancement.

This following includes examples of needs assessment profiles for each of three target audiences: instructors, professional development coordinators, and state and local administrators. It also includes Summary Profile Forms for aggregating the results of completed instructor and professional development coordinator profiles. Adult educators should feel free to adapt these forms to better reflect the environment in which their program operates. Below, we provide a brief orientation to the use of the profiles.

IMPLEMENTING THE NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

Instructors

A local or regional Professional Development Coordinator should give instructors the needs assessment profiles to complete. The instructors should then make one copy of the completed profile for themselves and forward the original to the Professional Development Coordinator for aggregation and analysis.

Professional Development Coordinators

Professional Development Coordinators have a dual role in the use of Needs Assessment Profiles. First, as staff members, they should complete the Needs Assessment Profiles for Professional Development Coordinators, an activity that allows them to analyze their own professional development strengths and areas for further development. In regions or states with several professional development coordinators, the Summary Profile Form should be used to aggregate responses from the individual profiles. Based upon information provided by the summaries, administrators and coordinators can plan appropriate professional development approaches and activities on a regional or statewide basis, for either specific individuals or for groups of professional development coordinators.

If no professional development coordinator is readily available, instructors can complete and analyze the needs assessment profile themselves, and then negotiate the terms of their own professional development with an appropriate administrator.

Second, Professional Development Coordinators should distribute the Needs Assessment Profiles for Instructors, and then collect and aggregate the results. There is a Summary Profile Form for that aggregation. Depending upon how the information from the summaries are to be used, they could be aggregated:

- for all instructors in the agency,
- by teaching tasks such as ABE, ESL, or GED, or
- by individual sites.

Once the data are analyzed, the Professional Development Coordinators must work with instructors to negotiate professional development approaches for individuals and groups, as appropriate.

Administrators

In completing the profile, administrators are provided a chance to reflect upon their own and their staff's professional development needs, and, at the same time, raise administrators awareness of an expanded array of professional development approaches.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROFILE FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COORDINATORS

Name: ______________________________

Title:

____

Agency: ______________________________

(street)

____

(city) *(state)* *(zip)*

Phone: ______________________ Fax: ______________________

e-mail: ______________________

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Briefly describe your current professional development roles/responsibilities:

____

____

Your professional development activities are primarily: (Check one box)

	rural	☐	suburban	☐	urban	☐
Opportunity for collegiality	high	☐	medium	☐	low	☐

SUPPORT

Shade the following bar graphs to the level that best describes administrative support for professional development in your situation:

	Administrative Support		
	Funding	**Policies**	**Practices**
high			
med.			
Low			

TEACHING AREAS

Do you teach? yes ☐ no ☐

If yes, your teaching areas are: ESL ☐ ABE ☐ GED ASE ☐
LD ☐ Workplace ☐ Family Literacy ☐
Other *(specify)* ☐ ______________________

If yes, extent of teaching: Part-time ☐ (______ hours weekly)
Full-time ☐ (______ hours weekly)
Coordination/administration ☐ (______ hours weekly)

COMFORT LEVEL AND ACCESS TO COMPUTERS

Comfort: high ☐ medium ☐ low ☐ *Access*: high ☐ medium ☐ low ☐

EDUCATION/TRAINING

Teacher Education: Yes ☐ No ☐

Teacher Education Focus: Elementary ☐

Secondary ☐

Higher Ed ☐

ABE ☐

ESL ☐

Previous technical training or professional development activities: Intermittent ☐

Ongoing ☐

Types of activities: Workshops/Presentations ☐ Observations/Feedback ☐

Projects (e.g., curriculum development, program enhancement) ☐

Inquiry/Research ☐

Other *(specify)* ☐

Topic areas:

____

____

Level of experience as a trainer or facilitator:

Novice ☐ Limited experience ☐ Very experienced ☐

PREFERRED LEARNING SITUATIONS (Check all that apply)

Large group ☐ Pairs ☐
Small group ☐ Alone ☐

KNOWLEDGE OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES

	Preference			*Knowledge*			*Frequency of Use*		
	Low	**Med**	**High**	**Low**	**Med**	**High**	**Low**	**Med**	**High**
Inquiry/Research	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Observation/Feedback (e.g., coaching, mentoring))	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Product/Program Development (e.g., curriculum development, program redesign)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Workshop/Presentation (ongoing) (e.g., skills acquisition)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Workshop/Presentation (one-time) (e.g., awareness)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

SELF ANALYSIS

Given the preceding profile, what professional development activities do you think should be included in your schedule? (Rank-order, if possible. List as many or as few items as you think necessary.)

1.

2.

3.

4.

SUMMARY PROFILE OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COORDINATORS

Directions: Record the number of persons responding in each category.

Professional development activities are primarily:

rural ☐ suburban ☐ urban ☐

Opportunity for Collegiality high ☐ medium ☐ low ☐

SUPPORT

Place the number of coordinators responding at each level that best describes professional development situations:

	Administrative Support		
	Funding	**Policies**	**Practices**
high			
Med.			
Low			

TEACHING AREAS

Do you teach? yes ☐ no ☐

If yes, your teaching areas are: ESL ☐ ABE ☐ GED ☐ ASE ☐

LD ☐ Workplace ☐ Family Literacy ☐

Other *(specify)* ____________________

____

____

____

If yes, extent of teaching: Part-time ☐ Full-time ☐ Coordination/administration ☐

COMFORT LEVEL AND ACCESS TO COMPUTERS

Comfort: high ☐ medium ☐ low ☐ *Access*: high ☐ medium ☐ low ☐

EDUCATION/TRAINING

Teacher Education Yes ☐ No ☐

Teacher Education Focus: Elementary ☐ ESL ☐

Secondary ☐ ABE ☐

Higher Ed ☐

Previous technical training or professional development activities: Intermittent ☐ Ongoing ☐

Types of activities: Workshops/Presentations ☐ Observations/Feedback ☐

Projects (e.g., curriculum development, program enhancement) ☐

Inquiry/Research ☐

Other *(specify)* ☐ ______________________________

(Tally duplications) ______________________________

____

Topic areas: *(Tally duplications)* ____

____

Level of experience as a trainer or facilitator:

Novice ☐ Limited experience ☐ Very experienced ☐

PREFERRED LEARNING SITUATIONS (Check all that apply)
(Record numbers responding in each category)

Large group	☐	Pairs	☐
Small group	☐	Alone	☐

KNOWLEDGE OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES (Record the numbers responding in each category)

	Preference			***Knowledge***			***Frequency of Use***		
	Low	**Med**	**High**	**Low**	**Med**	**High**	**Low**	**Med**	**High**
Inquiry/Research	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Observation/Feedback (e.g., coaching, mentoring)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Product/Program Development (e.g., curriculum development, program redesign)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Workshop/Presentation (ongoing) (e.g., skills acquisition)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Workshop/Presentation (one-time) (e.g., awareness)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROFILE FOR INSTRUCTORS

Name: ____

Title: ____

Agency: ____
(*street*)

____
(*city*) (*state*) (*zip*)

Phone: ______________________________
Fax: ______________________________
e-mail: ______________________________

TEACHING ASSIGNMENT

Briefly describe your current teaching assignment:

____

____

Your teaching situation: *(Check one box each in #1 and #2)*

1. rural □ suburban □ urban □
2. isolated □ collegial □

SUPPORT

Shade the following bar graphs to the level that best illustrates support for professional development in your instructional situation:

	Administrative Support		
	Funding	**Policies**	**Practices**
high	□	□	□
med.	□	□	□
Low	□	□	□

TEACHING AREAS

Your teaching areas are: ESL □ ABE □ GED □ ASE □ LD □ Workplace □ Family Literacy □
Other *(specify)* □ ______________________________

Extent of teaching:
Full-time □ (______ hours weekly)
Part-time □ (______ hours weekly)
Coordination/administration □ (______ hours weekly)

Number of years experience teaching in adult education ______

COMFORT LEVEL AND ACCESS TO COMPUTERS

COMFORT: High □ Medium □ Low □

ACCESS: High ☐ Medium ☐ Low ☐

Needs Assessment Profile for Instructors

EDUCATION/TRAINING

Teacher Education: yes ☐ no ☐
Focus: Elementary ☐ Secondary ☐ Higher Education ☐ ESL ☐ Adult Education ☐

Previous Technical Training or Professional Development Activities: Intermittent ☐ Ongoing ☐

Types of Activities: Workshops/Presentations ☐ Observation/Feedback ☐
Projects (e.g., curriculum development, program enhancement) ☐
Inquiry/Research ☐
Other *(specify)* ☐

____

Topics Studied in Professional Development Activities: ____

____

LEARNING PREFERENCES *(Check any that apply)*

Large group	☐	Pairs	☐	Hands-on activities	☐	Taught by colleagues	☐
Small group	☐	Alone	☐	Reading	☐		

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PREFERENCES

If you could select your own mode of professional development, what would be your preference? Please rank-order with 1 being your top choice and 5 being your last choice.

_____ Developing your own plan of study with support from your agency.
_____ Researching an issue, problem, or topic in your own teaching environment.
(Please check: Alone ☐ With others ☐ On-line ☐)
_____ Practicing classroom strategies with feedback from another teacher or supervisor who observes you.
_____ Working on an agency project (e.g., curriculum development or agency reorganization).
_____ Attending workshops to learn new instructional skills.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONTENT

List on page 3 an instructional strategy you would like to master or an instructional issue, interest, or problem you would like to study. <u>A few examples are presented to stimulate your thinking</u>.

Strategies

- Using a whole language approach
- Using small groups
- Monitoring student learning
- Teaching for transfer of learning

Issues/Interests/Problems

- Ways to get ESL students to practice using oral English
- Getting students to read for meaning rather than word recognition
- Does the teaching of thinking skills improve GED test performance?
- Will writing skills improve more by using computer-generated journals or by handwritten journals?

Your Topics: *(List no more than 2):*

1.

2.

SELF ANALYSIS

Given the preceding profile, what professional development activities do you think should be included in your schedule? (Rank-order, if possible. List as many as you think necessary.)

1.

2.

3.

4.

SUMMARY PROFILE OF INSTRUCTORS

Directions: Record the number of persons responding in each category.

Teaching situation:

1. rural ☐ suburban ☐ urban ☐

2. isolated ☐ collegial ☐

SUPPORT

(Place in each square the number responding at that level.)

	Administrative Support		
	Funding	**Policies**	**Practices**
high	☐	☐	☐
med.	☐	☐	☐
Low	☐	☐	☐

TEACHING AREAS

ESL ☐ ABE ☐ GED ☐ ASE ☐ LD ☐

WORKPLACE ☐ FAMILY LITERACY ☐

OTHER: ____________________________________

____

____

____

Extent of teaching: Full-time ☐ Part-time ☐ Coordination/Admin. ☐

Years of experience in adult education:

0-5 ☐ 6-10 ☐ 10-15 ☐ 16-20 ☐ Over 20 ☐

COMFORT LEVEL AND ACCESS TO COMPUTERS

COMFORT: high ☐ medium ☐ low ☐

Summary Profile of Instructors

ACCESS: high ☐ medium ☐ low ☐

Summary Profile of Instructors

EDUCATION/TRAINING

Teacher education: yes ☐ no ☐

Focus: Elementary ☐ Higher Education ☐

Secondary ☐ Adult Education ☐

ESL ☐

Previous Technical Training/Professional Development Activities:

Intermittent ☐ Ongoing ☐

Types of Previous Professional Development Activities:

Workshops/Presentations ☐ Observation/Feedback ☐ Projects ☐

Inquiry/Research ☐

Other *(specify)*:

____

____

Topics Studied in Professional Development Activities: *(Tally number, should duplicate topics appear)*

____

____

____

____

____

____

LEARNING PREFERENCES

Large Groups ☐ Pairs ☐ Hands-on ☐ Small Groups ☐

Alone ☐ Reading ☐ Being Taught by Colleagues ☐

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PREFERENCES

- ☐ Developing own plan of study with support from your agency
- ☐ Researching issue, problem, or topic in own teaching environment

  Alone ☐ With Others ☐ On-line ☐
- ☐ Practicing classroom strategies with feedback from observers
- ☐ Working on agency project (curriculum development/agency program)
- ☐ Attending workshops or conferences to learn new instructional skills

INDIVIDUAL CHOICES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONTENT

List choices and tally number, should duplicate choices appear.

1. ______________________________

   ____
2. ______________________________

   ____
3. ______________________________

   ____
4. ______________________________

   ____

RANK ORDER OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES *(From self-analysis)*

1. ______________________________
2. ______________________________
3. ______________________________

______

4. ______________________________

______

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROFILE FOR STATE OR LOCAL ADMINISTRATORS

Name: ____

Title: ____

Agency: ____

(street)

____

(city) *(state)* *(zip)*

Phone: ______________________

Fax:______________________

e-mail: ______________________

POSITION

Briefly describe your position as it relates to professional development in adult education:

____

____

____

Shade the following bar graphs to the level that best describes your participation in professional development:

	Funding	Hands-On Improvement	Ongoing Support
High	☐	☐	☐
med.	☐	☐	☐
Low	☐	☐	☐

Site specific examples of how you demonstrate your support and leadership for professional development.

____

____

____

____

____

____

Where would you would you rank professional development among your funding priorities?

High ☐ Medium ☐ Low ☐

How do you respond to legislative, social, cultural, and fiscal changes that impact on your professional development plan?

____
____
____
____
____
____

COMFORT LEVEL AND ACCESS TO COMPUTERS

COMFORT: High ☐ Medium ☐ Low ☐
ACCESS: High ☐ Medium ☐ Low ☐

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PREFERENCES

What is your professional development preference? Please rank-order with 1 being your top choice and 5 being your last choice.

______ Developing your own plan of study with support from your agency.
______ Researching an issue, problem, or topic in your own teaching environment.
(Please Check: Alone ☐ With Others ☐ On-Line ☐
______ Practicing classroom strategies with feedback from another teacher or supervisor who observes you.
______ Working on an agency project (e.g., curriculum development or agency reorganization).
______ Attending workshops to learn new instructional skills.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES (Please check the level in each column that best fits your profile)

	Types of Approaches Funded by State			*Personal Knowledge of Approaches*			*Frequency of Use By Your Program*		
	Low	**Med**	**High**	**Low**	**Med**	**High**	**Low**	**Med**	**High**
Inquiry/Research (e.g., action research)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Observation/Feedback (e.g., coaching, mentoring)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Product/Program Development (e.g., curriculum development, program redesign)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Workshop/Presentation (ongoing) (e.g., skills development)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Workshop/Presentation (one-time) (e.g., awareness)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Give ways in which you have facilitated access to each of the above professional development approaches.

SELF ANALYSIS

Given the preceding profile, what professional development activities do you feel should be included in your schedule? (Rank-order if possible.)

1.

2.

3.

4.

Introduction and Sample Instrument from the

Continuous Improvement Measure (CIM)

developed by

Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS)

INTRODUCTION

Self-reported needs assessments are a primary means for identifying student learning needs and performance. More complete information is obtained, however, when several types of needs assessments are used. In some situations, new staff from K-12 or other fields may be unfamiliar with the adult education arena and unaware of the instructional strategies and skills most appropriate for adult learners. Even when instructors participate in professional development activities, they may not be fully aware of how to apply new learning strategies to their instructional settings or may need others to help them identify where gaps still exist. In these situations it is helpful to gather information through observations by administrators or supervisors that can be analyzed in conjunction with the self-assessments.

The difficulty with using supervisory observations as a needs assessment tool is that it may increase instructor anxiety. In such cases, the observed behaviors may not be up to the level of the instructor's normal performance. One potential way of decreasing this anxiety is to "practice" the observation process. For example, supervisors share the observation instrument informally with the instructor before using it formally. Another introductory approach to supervisory observation allows instructors to videotape themselves and use the tape to analyze their own instruction prior to a supervisory visit. This method is particularly helpful after participation in professional development activities so instructors may see for themselves how well they are applying new knowledge and skills in their own learning environments. Some instructors prefer to be observed by a colleague prior to being observed by a supervisor. Such peer coaching affords instructors an opportunity to see themselves through another's eyes before being formally assessed. Once instructors become more familiar with and feel comfortable with the observation instrument, the process will seem less threatening.

Supervisors, too, must be familiar with the observation tool. Training on the use of the tool and the methods for scoring and analyzing information should be provided before implementing this type of instructional assessment. Information from supervisory observation tools supplements and corroborates information gathered through self-assessment.

Following is an example of an observation instrument developed by the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS). In addition to its use as a needs assessment instrument for professional development, the Continuous Improvement Measure (CIM) also can be used to provide baseline data to determine progress toward program and instructional goals.

Overview of the Continuous Improvement Measure

The CIM provides a comprehensive tool that assists agencies in developing an action plan for implementing an exemplary adult education program. This CIM has been field-tested in programs throughout the country.

The Program Management Section of the CIM describes characteristics of an exemplary program, with detailed scoring criteria on a scale of 1 to 5. It can be used in a variety of ways, including conducting program self-assessment and prioritizing program needs and goals. The Program Management Section also can be completed by an external evaluator to affirm or question the validity of the self-assessment process.

The Instruction Section provides a list of instructor competencies or indicators of instructional effectiveness. These competencies are organized under six categories: organizing instruction, monitoring and assessing progress, accommodating diverse learning styles, using materials and technology, providing for individual and group learning, and applying learning. The competency statements provide a framework for instructor self-evaluation, peer evaluation, and/or administrator evaluation of instructional performance. (An excerpt from the first category, Organizing Instruction, follows.)

Summary profiles provide instructors with a clear picture of their teaching, based on agreed-upon criteria. Instructors can easily prioritize areas for improvement, determine needs for professional development, and develop an action plan. By using the CIM serially, pre-post scores can be obtained to track an instructor's progress or progress toward continuous program improvement.

The following excerpt from the CIM is an example of one instructional category, Organizing Instruction, with its concomitant scoring criteria. For an opportunity to review the entire instrument, including the program management section and the other instructional categories, contact:

Patricia Rickard, Director, CASAS
5151 Murphy Canyon Road, Suite 220 San Diego, CA 92123
Telephone 858.292.2900
Fax 858.292.2910
Email www.casas.org

1. Organizing Instruction

The instructor:	Evidence
1.1 Provides evidence of carefully planned lessons or individual educational plans IEPs) based on learner needs assessments and identified priority outcomes included in course outlines for program and level.	
1.2 Demonstrates expertise in the content field being taught.	
1.3 Provides well-placed, appropriately sequenced lessons that transition effectively from one activity to another addressing each of the states of a lesson: • warm-up and/or review • presentation of new content/skills • practice • application • evaluation	
1.4 Adjusts lessons to address student needs, goals, abilities or other condition.	
1.5 Provides instruction that clearly addresses identified objectives that are relevant to students' needs and goals.	
1.6 Provides lessons that integrate basic and life skills.	
1.7 Motivates students by providing instruction in small steps that encourage success.	

INSTRUCTION SCORING CRITERIA

1. Organizing Instruction

	1.1 Plans lessons based on IEPs and course outline	1.2 Delivers lessons based on sound content	1.3 Provides lessons that are well-paced and sequenced	1.4 Adjusts lessons to student needs, goals and other demands	1.5 Addresses relevant objectives	1.6 Facilities integration of basic and life skills	1.7 Motivates students by teaching in small steps for success	Ave.
5. Consistently plans and uses in instruction								
4. Is making significant transition to instructional use								
3. Explores use of in instruction								
2. Shows awareness and some interest in								
1. Has little or no use of awareness of								

Collaboration:

A MEANS TOWARD ENHANCING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Collaboration is the “buzz” word frequently used as education agencies, human service organizations, and government and community agencies think how better to meet the increasingly complex needs of clients. Block grants and “one-stop” shops foster the need for collaboration through integrated services. In fact, one of the overarching purposes of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 is to ensure coordination of workforce programs. The demand on adult education providers to meet the varying needs of the community, business and industry, and welfare clients, also makes a strong case for collaboration.

The field of adult education is characterized by a multiplicity of service providers—e.g., four-year colleges and universities; state-supported training centers; local or regional agencies, including adult education programs, community colleges and community-based organizations; and professional organizations—and the uncertainty of resources. Collaboration, therefore, represents a promising strategy for enhancing professional development and for serving adult education clients better.

This document provides an overview of collaboration, including a definition and comparison with other partnering relationships, a rationale for establishing partnerships, the major benefits and challenges in building collaborative relationships, and an overview of steps for developing an effective collaboration. The document may be used as a guide in seeking to collaborate with different organizations providing professional development or between adult education and other systems.

A Definition of Collaboration

Collaboration is one of several terms used to describe relationships between organizations, and while often used interchangeably with such terms as cooperation and coordination, it involves more intense, long-term efforts than the latter partnering processes. A collaboration is when two or more organizations enter into a formal, mutually beneficial, well-defined relationship to achieve common goals. The literature identifies several characteristics of collaboration, as shown in the box below:

CHARACTERISTICS OF COLLABORATION

- The organization's leaders are actively involved in or supportive of the relationship.
- One or more projects are undertaken for longer-term results and are jointly designed, implemented, and monitored.
- New organizational structures and/or clearly defined and interrelated roles that constitute a formal division of labor are created.
- Well-defined communication channels operate on many levels.
- Authority is determined by the collaborative structure, thus some autonomy is sacrificed by the participants.
- Resources (e.g., money, staff, technology) are pooled or jointly secured for a longer-term effort managed by the collaborative structure.

Collaborations require a change in the way agency and organization leaders think and operate, which can be intimidating and threatening. Organizations considering collaborative relationships, therefore, should carefully weigh the advantages and disadvantages of such a relationship.

Assessing the Benefits and Challenges of Collaboration

There are multiple benefits as well as challenges to entering into a collaborative relationship for professional development. This section briefly explores some of these benefits and challenges.

Benefits of Collaboration

Reports by participants in collaborative relationships and findings from selected literature point to several generic advantages of entering into collaborative relationships. Among the benefits are that agencies can:

- **Expand available services** by cooperative programming and joint fundraising or grant programs (e.g., two professional development agencies can share their staff expertise and offer different professional development options based on that expertise).
- **Provide better services to clients** through inter-agency communication about client needs, referral programs, and client case management (e.g., professional development collaborations across agencies may enhance staff knowledge about clients and enhance client services).
- **Share similar concerns while being enriched by diverse perspectives** that different members from varied backgrounds bring to the collaboration (e.g., adult education programs and workforce development boards can brainstorm ways to prepare adults moving into the workforce).
- **Mobilize action to effect needed changes through collective advocacy** (e.g., colleges, state-supported training centers, and local adult education programs can work together to foster the development of competencies for adult education instructors).
- **Achieve greater visibility** with decision makers, the media, and the community (e.g., craft letters to newspapers and community leaders with signatures of all participating agencies to solicit additional funding for professional development to enhance learner outcomes).
- **Enhance staff skills** by sharing information and organizing joint professional development activities (e.g., the local community college provides workshops on instructional approaches while the social service agency provides seminars on support systems for adults).
- **Conserve resources** by avoiding unnecessary duplication of services (e.g., jointly paying fees for facilitator and training facilities).
- **Share resources and expertise** (e.g., adult education programs can share their knowledge about adult learners with other agencies).

Specific benefits of collaboration vary depending on the partners within the collaboration. For example, adult education collaboration with colleges and universities is beneficial in that adult education agencies may gain (1) enhanced prestige from being associated with the college, (2) increased access to professional development for agency staff (e.g., mentoring, inquiry/research, seminars, and course work), (3) enhanced program quality resulting from shared resources, and (4) opportunities for competent instruction on specialized topics.

Collaboration with business and industry produces other benefits to the educational agency. For example, collaboration (1) facilitates the agencies ability to offer on-site instruction to students; (2) provides the opportunity to provide professional development to industry managers and staff and develop new products and services; (3) provides access to state-of-the-art equipment and technology that can be used for instruction and professional development; (4) provides increased visibility and credibility within the community; and (5) extends the mission of adult education to other populations.

Finally, collaboration with other social service and community organizations facilitates a more comprehensive service for participants. An integrated service approach can enhance retention in adult education classes as participant needs are supported through multiple agencies. Collaboration also encourages the efficient use of resources by reducing the duplication of procedures (e.g., intake or assessment) and services both to their client and to staff. Professional development, for example, can be supported across agencies, reducing costs for any single agency. Staff from multiple agencies engaging in program or curriculum development and enhancement benefit from the diverse perspectives brought to the activity, and are encouraged to think “outside the box.”

Adult education agencies exploring the possibility of collaboration should consider how the organization will benefit as well as how the clients will benefit.

Challenges to Collaboration

Building and sustaining effective collaborations require a great deal of commitment and effort. As the literature indicates, several challenges must be overcome in establishing successful collaborative relationships. Often, a feeling of mistrust between agencies and a desire to maintain their own turf inhibits agencies' collaboration. Some agencies may be unwilling to give up authority in any arena for fear they will lose control or have clients drawn away from them. They lose site of the common goal in an effort to sustain their own authority. In some situations, the political or social climate is not conducive for collaboration. For example, agencies that rely on government funding may be wary of collaboration if state officials do not foster such efforts. Lack of mechanisms such as incentives, policy guidelines, interagency agreements, technical assistance, or coordinating councils inhibit collaboration. Collaboration may be more difficult to establish if there are no models within the community. Logistical difficulties such as location in different geographical areas that require time for travel, or involve conflicting state rules, also inhibit collaboration.

Other challenges that must be overcome to develop collaborative relationships for professional development in adult education include the following:

- **Philosophic and programmatic differences among agencies**. Organizations use different terms and work with different program cycles, primary target groups, objectives, expected outcomes, record-keeping practices, and reporting systems. They also have different organizational cultures and polices. These differences are reflected in their perceptions about each other and make it difficult for agencies to work together. Adult education programs, for example, employ primarily part-time instructors, have high turnover rates, and have a staff who generally work from September through June. These programs may have difficulty in developing collaborative professional development relationships with other agencies whose staff are employed full time and year round. The needs and schedules of staff from different agencies for professional development may be very different.

- **Resources diverted away from priority issues**. Individual organizations have their own goals and missions and may fear that a collaborative relationship will force the organization to move in directions that are not priority areas. With limited resources to begin with, this becomes an increasingly important concern. Adult education program administrators and staff, for example, may want to focus on improving the overall literacy skills of program participants. The professional development required to accomplish this goal may be different from the goals of a business partner, who may want to focus professional development on employment-related skills within a particular job skill area. The adult education program may feel that resources spent on professional development for employment-related skills will result in fewer resources to meet its primary mission.

- **Equity issues**. A related resource issue among collaborative partners that requires considerable thought is how to deliver services fairly and equitably to partners, especially when partners contribute unequal resources. For example, a regional collaboration among states to provide training to adult education staff may include some states with more resources than others. The difficulty arises in how to distribute the training across states if state contributions to the effort differ.

- **Slow decision making**. Organizational bureaucracies, differences between public and private agencies, and limited staff time inhibit the ability to make decisions. Difficulty in building consensus among diverse groups and ineffective team leadership contribute to slow decision making. Business partners may be able to make decisions more quickly than adult education or other community partners who may have to jump through more bureaucratic hoops. Such a situation could be frustrating, particularly, to the business partners.

- **Ineffective communication links**. Lack of formal and informal communication channels and different communication styles inhibit the effective sharing of information crucial to collaboration. For example, establishing peer training networks among staff from different adult education programs to train on issues related to developing a results-based adult education reporting system could be difficult if each agency did not designate an individual to serve as the communication link with other adult education programs. Scheduling training to address issues or questions that arise could be problematic without effective communication.

- **Personnel changes that affect momentum and personality differences**. Good leadership in any organization is crucial to its success. Staff stability and continuity of leadership become increasingly important in maintaining an effective collaboration. For example, if the state director or administrative staff responsible for the collaborative effort keeps changing, it would be difficult for other community agencies or businesses to develop a trusting relationship and to establish priorities for the collaboration. In addition, the quality of the personnel and the ability to form positive professional relationships among the people in the partnering organizations are essential to the well-being of the collaboration. Personality conflicts will undermine the work the collaboration hopes to accomplish.

- **Difficulty in building quality assurance and accountability**. In this era of accountability, it becomes necessary to monitor activities and identify outcomes. Accountability and assurance are difficult for individual organizations and are further complicated in a collaborative relationship where organizations have different record keeping and reporting systems. For example, the National Reporting System in adult education may require different outcome measures than those required by business or other community agencies.

These challenges are not insurmountable but to overcome them takes time, energy, patience, and trust. Agencies considering collaborative relationships must recognize that collaborations take time to build, and require accommodation to diverse organizational cultures, as well as a balance between autonomy and involvement.

It is important to recognize that there are situations where a collaborative relationship may not be appropriate and may in fact cause more problems and frustrations for instructors and fewer benefits for the program as a whole. For example, a program whose mission and characteristics differ to a great extent from other adult education programs, already has a sufficient source of funding, and is resistant to change may not benefit from a collaborative partnership. Adult education programs should weigh the costs and benefits in overcoming the challenges listed above in order to decide if the relationship will be worthwhile to them.

Strategies for Developing Collaborative Relationships

There has been a fair amount written in the literature on steps that agencies and organizations should follow in establishing a collaborative relationship. Among the literature is a *Guide for Developing Local Interagency Linkage Teams,* prepared by the Center on Education and Training for Employment, College of Education, Ohio State University. It describes six steps in establishing interagency collaborations and includes a series of questions agencies should ask themselves at each step. This document is included in the Appendix.

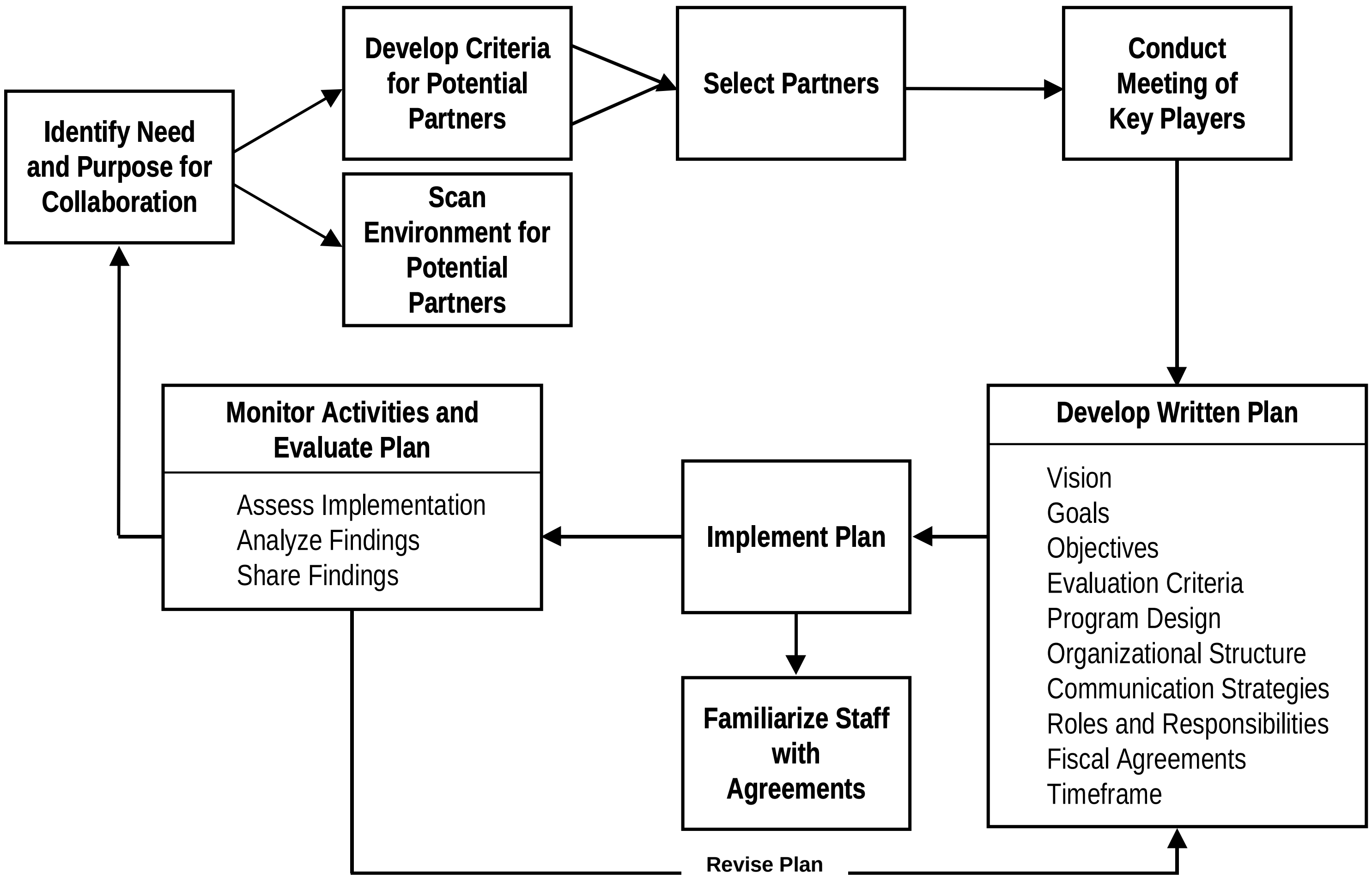
In addition, below is an overview of strategies for developing collaborations, based on the review of selected literature. Exhibit 1 illustrates these strategies.

- ❖ Clearly articulate the need and purposes for entering into a collaborative relationship.
- ❖ Develop criteria for membership into the collaboration.

- Scan the environment to locate potential partners and identify any existing relationships.
- Bring key players together (individuals in decision-making roles), get to know one another, and share knowledge and interests.
- Develop a written plan that provides the framework for guiding the collaboration and delineate a vision, goals and objectives, evaluation criteria, program design, organizational structure, roles and responsibilities, fiscal arrangements, and established timeframes.
- Provide sufficient time during plan development to consider all ideas and options so that final decisions will be more fully supported.
- Put systems in place that foster communication on multiple levels, facilitate decision making, and help resolve conflict.
- Establish monitoring and evaluation procedures to continuously improve the collaborative effort.
- Familiarize staff in the participating agencies with the agreements in the collaboration.

Formal collaborative relationships are guided by written agreements negotiated by the partners. However, it is important to periodically reassess these agreements as well as the action plan to ensure that the collaboration is responsive to changes in the environment and that it continues to benefit the participating organizations. System openness, flexibility, and adaptability are key for successful collaborations. Other key elements are trust and commitment and a feeling of reciprocity among the partners.

EXHIBIT 1
Plan for Developing Collaborative Relationships



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QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN CONSIDERING COLLABORATION

Collaboration is one of several terms used to describe relationships between organizations, and while often used interchangeably with such terms as cooperation and coordination, it involves more intense, long-term efforts than the latter partnering processes. A collaboration entails two or more organizations entering into a formal, mutually beneficial, well-defined relationship to achieve common goals.

The Northwest Literacy Resource Center provides an example of a collaborative relationship among agencies and organizations with common interests in serving the adult population. In 1993, state adult basic education directors in Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington formed the Northwest Regional Literacy Resource Center (NWRLRC) to share the best resources for professional development through a central clearinghouse. In 1997 Wyoming joined the consortium and Alaska withdrew. In 1998 Montana joined the consortium. The Resource Center is funded by the five current member states and is governed by an interstate Board of Governors. Members of the Board as of spring 2000 are:

Board of Governors

Idaho
Cheryl Engel, University of Idaho
Shirley Spencer, State Department of Education

Montana
Becky Bird, State Department of Education

Oregon
Agnes Precure, Office of Community College Services
***Sharlene Walker*,** Office of Community College Services

Washington
Israel David Mendoza, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges
Donna Miller-Parker, ABLE Network

Wyoming
Karen Ross Milmont, The Learning Connection
***Diana Stithem*,** State Board for Community Colleges

For the purposes of a specially funded demonstration project, the NWRLRC worked for a period of 3 years with an interagency Board of Governors (including social services, JTPA, and employment services). During that project, the Board worked specifically on taking a collaborative approach to professional development. As a part of the process they used the question set below as a basis for discussions to clarify that collaborative relationship.

Other agencies may wish to follow this example and use the questions to gather and analyze information about potential partners *before* deciding to collaborate. Reflecting on these questions may help potential partners to identify different structures, funding streams, staffing patterns, and culture, and he impact those differences may have on the collaborative partnership. These questions are arranged by the following seven categories: (1) organizational structure and decision making, (2) funding, (3) staffing, (4) outcomes, (5) culture, (6) perceptions about the organization, and (7) personal experiences.

Organizational Structure and Decision Making

These questions pertain to governance and leadership and help to analyze the stability of the organization.

What level of control does the organization have over decisions regarding which people it will serve, what services it will provide, how those services will be provided, and the performance measures those services will be judged by? What other entities make or influence these decisions? How effective has the organization generally been in influencing decisions related to these areas that are outside of its direct control?

How is the organization governed? What decisions are made at what levels and by what entities? Is the governance structure a long-standing one? Have there been changes in the governance structure over time and, if so, what impact did the changes have on those served by the organization and those working in the organization?

How would you characterize the leadership of the organization? Have there been changes in the organizational leadership in the last year? In the last three years? In the last five years? How have these changes impacted the organization, the people served by the organization, and the people working in the organization? What is the primary leadership "style" in the organization? What is the general political influence of those served by the organization? Of those employed by the organization? Of the organization as part of a larger system, industry, or institution?

How big is the organization? What impact does size have on governance, human resource issues, service levels, etc.?

Organizational Culture

These questions help examine cultural norms and beliefs within the organization as well as the level of diversity. Responses to these questions help to determine the compatibility between your organization and your potential partner.

What are the most important cultural themes or beliefs of the organization? What things do the people in the organization generally assume to be true about the world? For example, is competition or cooperation the cultural norm? Are hierarchical structures or participatory processes supported? What do people in the organization generally experience regarding power, use of resources, interaction with other organizations, level of information flow, what confers high or low status within the organization, etc.?

How diverse is the organization? This relates not only to characteristics generally considered in defining diversity such as ethnic background, gender, etc., but also to the range of beliefs and values represented in the organization. How many people from "outside" does the organization hire? (For example, in an educational organization, how many people from the private sector or from welfare or employment organizations are hired? Are these "outsiders" in the mainstream of the organization or in special departments?) How do recruitment, screening, hiring, and promotion systems either encourage or discourage diversity? How does the organization deal with those who have different ideas or ways of doing things? How much room is there for disagreement and conflict? How are tensions dealt with?

Perceptions About the Organization

These questions provide information about how those outside of the organization (e.g., public, media) view the organization as well as those employed by the organization.

What is the general public perception of those served by the organization? Of those employed by the organization? Of the organization as part of a larger system, industry, or institution? Or, the neighborhood potluck party test: How likely is it that at a gathering of 30 people in your neighborhood, you would hear either negative or positive perceptions of the above?

What is the general media characterization of those served by the organization? Of those employed by the organization? Of the organization as part of a larger system, industry, or institution?

What part of public/media perceptions seems to be based on objective data vs. subjective myths? How much hard data are readily available to support or refute popular perceptions of the organization or those it serves?

Does the organization view itself as experiencing limited, significant, or overwhelming change over the last five years? How do other organizations view the level of change in the organization?

Personal Experiences

These questions help identify advantages and disadvantages of forming a collaborative partnership from the individual's (e.g., administrator, staff) perspective. The responses are based on personal reflections about the organization as well as experiences with the organization.

Would you want to work for the organization? If not, why not? If so, what is attractive about the organization?

Would someone from the organization want to work where you do? If not, why not? If so, what is attractive about your workplace to someone from the organization?

How easy would it be for someone from the organization to get a job in your workplace? What would the barriers be?

Would you gain or lose status in going to work for the partner organization? Why?

How often have you had conflict with people in the partner organization? Why? Did the conflict result in productive discussion and movement or simply reduce trust levels? How was the conflict resolved?

How often do you feel that you or your organization have been "taken advantage of" in dealings with the partner organization? What have you or your organization done when that has happened?

What level of respect or trust do you hear expressed regarding the partner organization and/or partner organization staff in discussions with your organization? What seems to determine this?

What level of "we/they" thinking seems to be evident in discussions about the partner organization?

What are the philosophical differences you see between your own organization and the partner organization? What beliefs are in conflict? Why do people in the partner organization think they are "right"? Why do people in your organization think they are "right"? Can you easily articulate the arguments people in the partner organization would make to back up their position on various issues?

What feelings are most evident in the relationship between the organization's: enthusiasm? comfort? being in sync? being part of something important/successful? frustration? anger? indifference? anxiety? caution? confidence? despair? resistance? mistrust?

What are the personal and organizational beliefs in working with the other organization? What would be lost by not working with them? What can be gained by working with them? In what ways would it be easier not to have to work with the partner organization? Do you feel like the cost/benefit is worth it?

What percentage of the people in your organization are actually affected by the partnership between the two organizations? Is nearly everyone affected to some degree or is it only a very small group of people who deal with the ramifications of the partnerships? How does this affect relationships with the partner organization and relationships within the organization?

Funding

These questions help identify funding sources, determine the stability of funding, and identify any restrictions on how resources can be spent.

How is the organization funded? What specifically results in more funding, what results is less funding?

Has the funding gone up or down in the last year? Five years? Why did the funding change? What impact did funding changes have on the people in the organization? What impact did funding changes have on those served by the organization? What historical "baggage" is tied to funding changes (institutional fear, concerns, expectations, etc.?)

How many "strings" are attached to the funding? (How big are the policy manuals?) What level of law, administrative rule, organizational policy defines how, when, where, and on what the money can be spent? How easy is it to make exceptions?

Staffing

These questions help identify the quality and quantity of staff within the organization.

What determines the quality and quantity of staff in the organization? What sorts of things result in more staff? What sorts of things result in less staff? How are knowledge and skill requirements set for staff? How easily/often are they changed? Are requirements in alignment with current needs of the organization?

Outcomes

These questions help analyze the effectiveness of the organization from the perspectives of the populations served as well as from staff and managers within the organization.

> *How is the "success" of the organization determined? How do people within the organization know when they are doing a good job? Are there outcomes that the organization understands as its mission? How easy is it to objectively know if the organization is successful or not? What happens when the organization is successful vs. what happens when the organization is not successful? How do people who are served by the organization or who work for the organization know if it is doing well or not doing well? Are there outcomes for individual staff members or managers that clearly define "success"?*
>
> *How would people served by the organization describe their level of satisfaction with the services? What are the reasons for the satisfaction or dissatisfaction?*

In summary, agencies seeking to establish effective collaborations with other groups should first engage in a thorough examination of factors important to the partnership. First, they should compare organizational and decision-making structures with potential partners to see if they are complementary. Second, the organizational culture of the potential partner should be examined to determine if there is a match with the agency's own work culture. Third, public perceptions regarding potential partners and any personal views and expectations regarding the collaboration should be assessed. Fourth, funding and staffing issues across agencies should be explored. Finally, an examination of the organization's benchmarks for measuring success is important. Attention to the kinds of questions detailed here for organizations considering collaboration may help in leading to collaborations that in the long run are successful and mutually beneficial.