Making the Transition Program Tool Work for You: Updates and New Features

Paula Kohler, Ph.D.
Claudia Bello-Punto
Shana Arias
University of Central Florida
Why use the “tool”?
Strategic Planning System

• NTACT supports state and local-level planning to foster application of research to practice

• Although we’ve been supporting school improvement efforts since the mid 90s, we moved our planning process from a paper-based process into a web-based application beginning in 2012.
State Capacity Building Process

- Gather team and assess evidence of current practices
- Create yearly plan with data collection methods
- Identify what worked and what didn’t work
- Execute yearly plan and collect data
- Use data collected to evaluate outcomes
- Plan
Local Improvement Process

- Gather team and assess evidence of current practices
- Create yearly plan with data collection methods
- Identify what worked and what didn’t work
- Execute yearly plan and collect data
- Use data collected to evaluate outcomes
Data-Based Decision-Making

- Know your needs – based on data
- Plan to implement evidence-based practices

Improvement activities AND evaluation

What data do you need? What are you collecting?
Fundamental Questions

• What are we doing now?
• How well are we doing it?
• What do we need to do to improve?
• What will we do (now and in the future)?
• How will we measure our progress?
How Do We Know We Improved?

• Do you have a good plan?
• Have you evaluated the effectiveness of your plan?
• Have you measured your progress?
• Have you evaluated your outcomes?
• Did you achieve what you intended?
Our Approach

Strategic Planning System

Application of the logic model for planning and evaluation
Logic Model Components

Your Planned Work
1. Resource/Inputs
2. Activities
3. Outputs

Your Intended Results
4. Outcomes
5. Impact
Logic Model Components

Your Planned Work

1. Resource/ Inputs
2. Activities

Your Intended Results

3. Outputs
4. Outcomes
5. Impact

1. Strengths and needs
2. Evidence - based
3. Products: Credential, policies
4. Behaviors, skills, services
5. Results
Summary of Features

• The system creates a record, across time and through personnel changes
• The system fosters data downloads by the project team and state/local teams
• Data downloads foster
  – Technical soundness assessment
  – Tracking progress (or not) across time
  – Research regarding implementation science
Summary of Features

• Self-assessment and planning focus on using data
• Self-assessment and planning focus on implementation and evaluation of EBPP
• Built-in resources provide EBPP content, outcome indicators, and data sources
Lessons Learned: Technical Soundness

• When we provide teams in-depth feedback about the technical soundness of their plans:
  – Many go back and update or revise their plans
  – Many add to their evaluation plans
Hypothesis

• Our hypothesis predicted that using an online strategic planning tool versus a paper strategic planning tool would improve the technical soundness of annual strategic plans.
Technical Soundness Defined

For the purposes of this study, a technically sound annual team plan for building state capacity to implement evidence-based and promising transition practices includes a goal that addresses a relevant need, is linked to an evidence-based or promising practice, and is related to a transition outcome. It articulates the link between activities, person responsible, the timeline, outputs, and anticipated outcomes of the annual goal. Finally, it provides an accountability framework in the form of planning for sound evaluation and useful results.
Procedures

• Interrater reliability
• Assumption of normality
• Paired samples $t$-test
Results

Paired samples t test supported the hypothesis

• Found a significant increase in technical soundness of
  – online plans ($M = 26.08, SD = 6.44$)
  – compared to paper plans ($M = 19.63, SD = 7.00$)
• $t(37) = 6.26, p < .0001, 95\% CI [4.36, 8.54], d = 1.04$
Technical Soundness and Goals

• We hypothesized that higher quality plans as indicated by technical soundness scores would correlate with the achievement of school improvement goals.
Data Details

• Plans with fully completed reports (n = 33)
• Goals reported as achieved (n = 13)
• Goals reported as in progress or not achieved (n = 20)
• Technical soundness of the plans ranged from 32 to 100 percent (M = 75.74, SD = 16.05)
Technical Soundness and Goals

• Average technical soundness for goals completed:
  88%

• Average technical soundness for goals not completed:
  68%
Technical Soundness and Goals

• Teams with plans with higher technical soundness were more likely to reach their goals
Significance

• Links between educational improvement and strategic planning has been substantiated throughout the literature

• Sound strategic planning is reported to connect to higher achievement for students

• This process applies a collaborative planning process that leads to *data-driven decision making* through
  – Self-assessment
  – Planning
  – Evaluation

• Assists in future studies of the connection between strategic planning, evaluation planning, and student-level outcomes
That’s why!
• Implemented a series of improvements
  – Security
  – Team leaders and members roles
  – Assessments - past and future planning
  – System management

• Looking ahead
  – Using data
  – Inclusive postsecondary education planning
Security

• Firewall
• Log in process
• Authentication
• Verification of email address
Team Member Roles

• Strategies for moving members forward year to year
• Relationship with a team’s site depends on one being a member of a team
• Defines who can see and do what with the team’s site
• State/region/local structure
Assessments and Plans

• State/region/local structure
• Dashboard information
  – Status
  – Info
• Connects previous years’ information, so if you miss a year, you can still pull previous assessment and planning info into the current year
System Management

• Defines NTACT roles
  – Privilege oversight
  – Observers
• Can do the same thing with state user roles to assign access associated with responsibility
• Functions are more user friendly
What’s Next?

• Postsecondary education program planning component (see https://fcsua.org/I_Tool.php)
• Printing information?
• Progress and final reports?
• Generating data reports – what kind?
• Connecting resources?
• Other?