Developing a Theory of Action and Logic Model

Meet the facilitators

Introductions and icebreaker

Agenda

1. Introductions, goals, and norms
2. Review existing data analysis
3. Develop a theory of action
4. Develop a logic model
5. Next steps

Goals and objectives

Participants will understand the role of a theory of action and a logic model in the action-planning process.

Participants will build on prior work to develop a theory of action and a logic model.

Facilitators will share resources from IDOE that corporations can use for school improvement activities.

Norms

- Promote a spirit of inquiry. Ask questions of other participants to enhance shared understanding.
- Welcome all ideas. Share your ideas and listen to the ideas shared by other participants.
- Support inclusion. Invite other participants to speak, and monitor your own contributions to ensure that all voices are heard.
- Invite openness and honesty. Share your thoughts and experiences, and listen to other participants share their own without interruption. Observe confidentiality.
- Be present and engaged. Minimize distractions (e.g., technology use, off-topic conversations) so that everyone contributes fully and our time is well used.
- Assume good intent. Remember that we are all in this together!

Review existing data analysis

Let's review the work you've done so far to identify areas of success and areas of need.

What do the terms *theory of action* and *logic model* mean to you?

Develop a theory of action

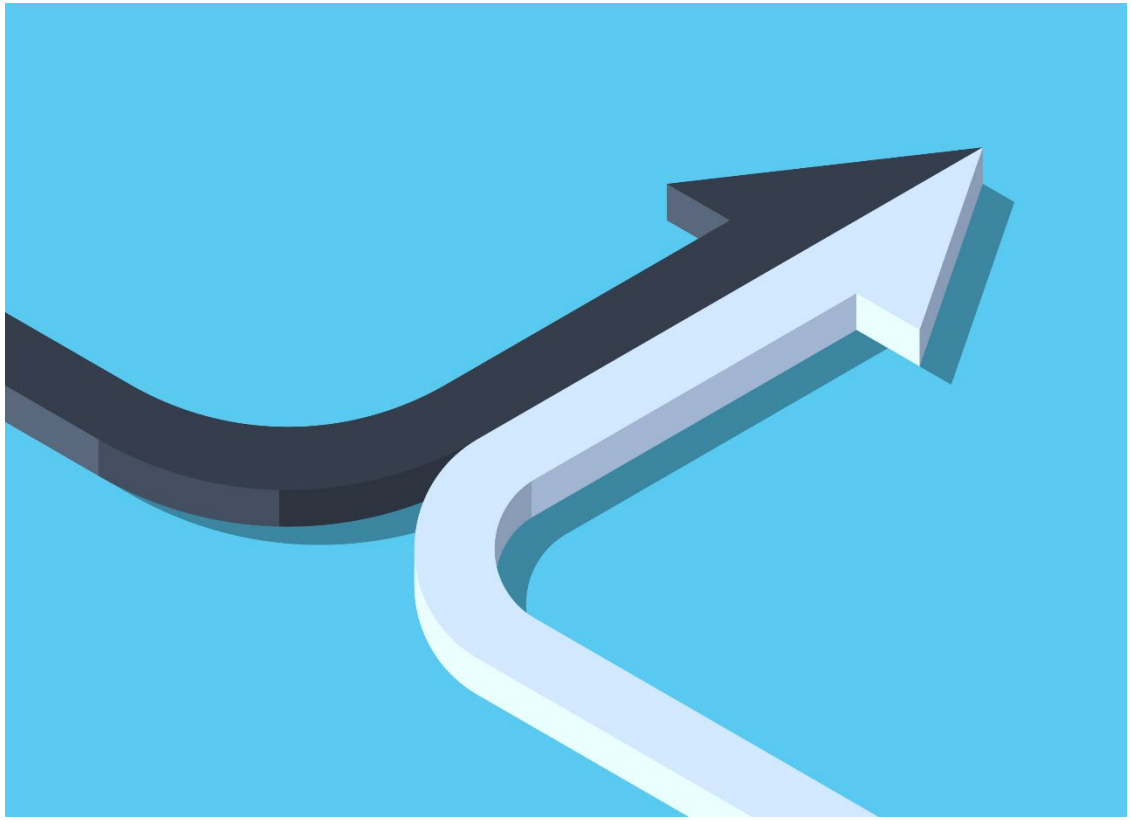
What is a theory of action?

- A theory of action is a depiction of how you conceptualize your program working to produce the outcomes you desire.
- A good theory of action is a deliberate attempt to focus all structures on the same goal, which can lead to improved student outcomes.

Why develop a theory of action?

A theory of action:

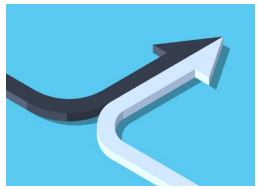
- Articulates your goal—what you are trying to accomplish.
- Describes at a high level the actions that will influence attainment of the goal. (Will X action work to impact Y goal?)
- Is valuable for building buy-in for changes and converging on a key approach.



What is the difference between a theory of action and a logic model?

Theory of action

- Provides a simplified representation of how you believe the change will occur.
- Displays an idea or program in its simplest form using limited information.
- Offers a chance to test plausibility.



Logic model

- Provides a picture of how your organization does its work.
- Links outcomes (both short- and long-term) with program activities and processes and the program's theoretical assumptions and principles.

How can a theory of action be used to shape program decisions?

Some additional ways in which a theory of action can be used

- Define surface assumptions
- Develop a common understanding
- Develop a logic model
- Inform program design decisions
- Allocate resources
- Communicate intentions
- Design an evaluation
- Inform continuous improvement

Developing a theory of action involves the following:

Handout: Creating a theory of action

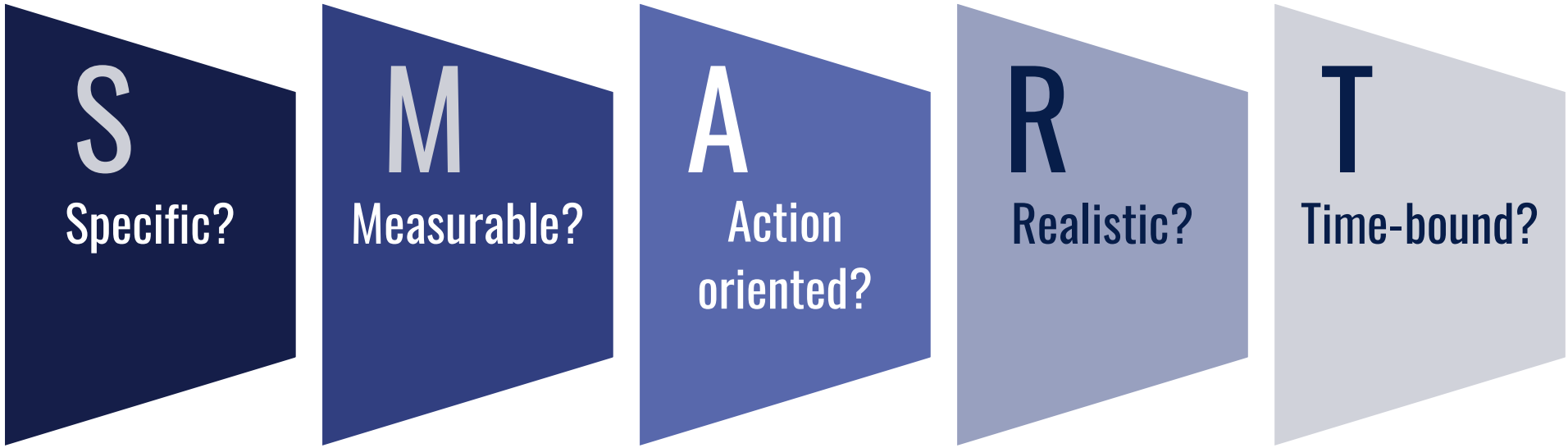
Who is the focus?	What is the desired change (action verb)?	In what (outcome)?	By when?
For example, "students"	*For example, "increase"*	*For example, "reading comprehension"*	*For example, "end of school year"*

Step 1: Reframing your needs statements as measurable outcomes for success

Answer the following questions:

- ❑ What are the strengths of the program?
- ❑ Who are the program targets? Who will implement the program? Who will the program ultimately affect?
- ❑ What is the desired change?
- ❑ What is the timeline for completion?

Are the program targets, hypotheses, desired outcomes, and timeline S.M.A.R.T.?



Step 2: Developing actionable ideas

Answer the following questions:

- ❑ What are the strengths of the program?
- ❑ What is the program able to accomplish?
- ❑ What things will you choose to focus on to reach your desired outcomes?

Step 3: Connecting actionable ideas to outcomes

IF _____

THEN _____

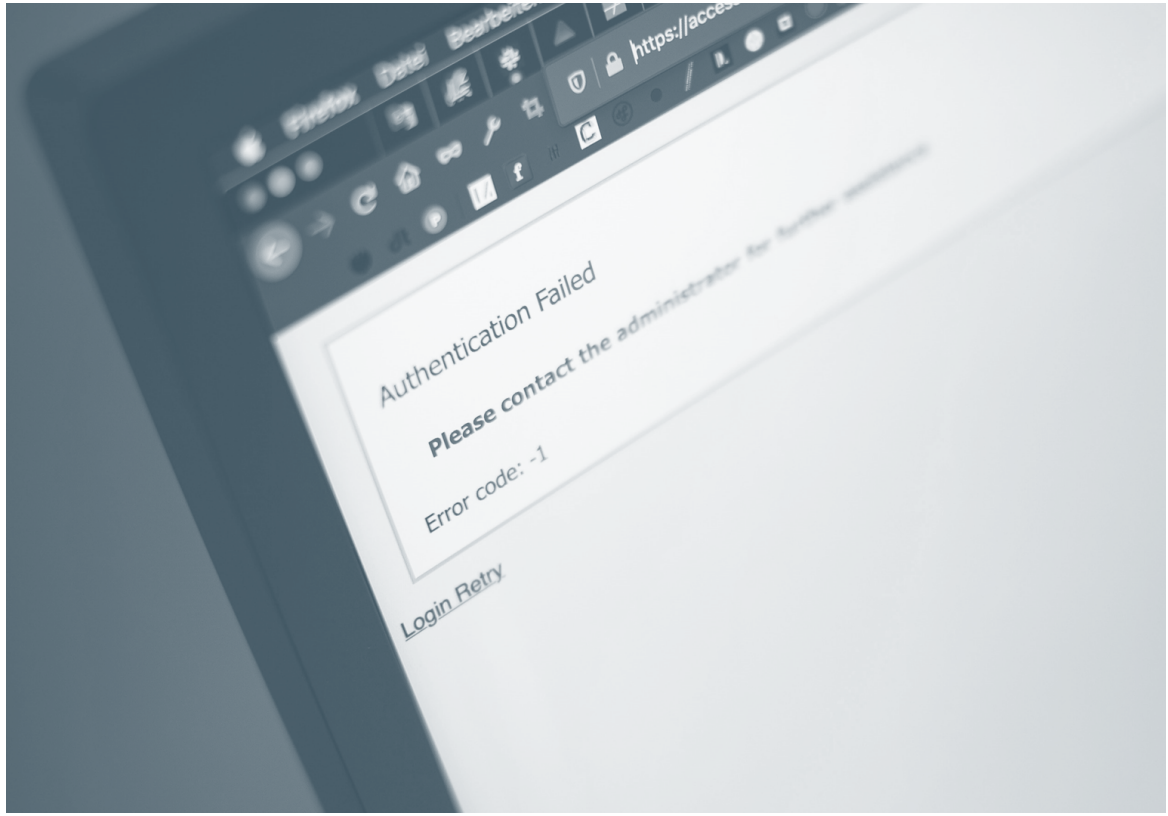
Develop a logic model

A logic model . . .

- Provides a simplified picture of the relationships between program inputs and the desired outcomes of the program.
- Is a framework for:
  - Planning.
  - Implementation.
  - Monitoring.
  - Evaluation.
- Is a graphic and explicit representation of relationships, assumptions, and rationale.

A logic model is NOT…

- A strategic plan or a fully developed plan for designing or managing a program or policy.
- An evaluation design or an evaluation method.



Credit: Markus Spiske, courtesy of Unsplash

A simple form of a logic model

Inputs → Activities → Outcomes

Inputs: What is invested in the program (e.g., money, people, time, resources)?

Activities: What is done in the program (e.g., program strategies and activities)?

Outcomes: What results from the program (i.e., short- and long-term improvements)?

Developing a logic model involves the following:

01

Identifying the outcomes

02

Naming the activities needed to generate the outcomes

03

Identifying the inputs

Handout: Creating a logic model

Program inputs What are the resources, personnel, and objectives that will lead to the outcomes?	**Program activities** How will these resources, personnel, and objectives be deployed?	**Outcomes** What changes will result from the inputs and activities? Which are short-term outcomes and which are long-term outcomes?

Outcomes

In step 1 of the theory of action section, you identified the outcomes. We will now separate these into short- and long-term outcomes. Transfer them into the Outcomes column in the handout.

Outcomes What changes will result from the inputs and activities? Which are short-term outcomes and which are long-term outcomes?

Step 1: Identifying the outcomes

- Short-term outcomes
- Long-term outcomes

Step 2: Naming the activities needed to generate the outcomes

Consider the following questions:

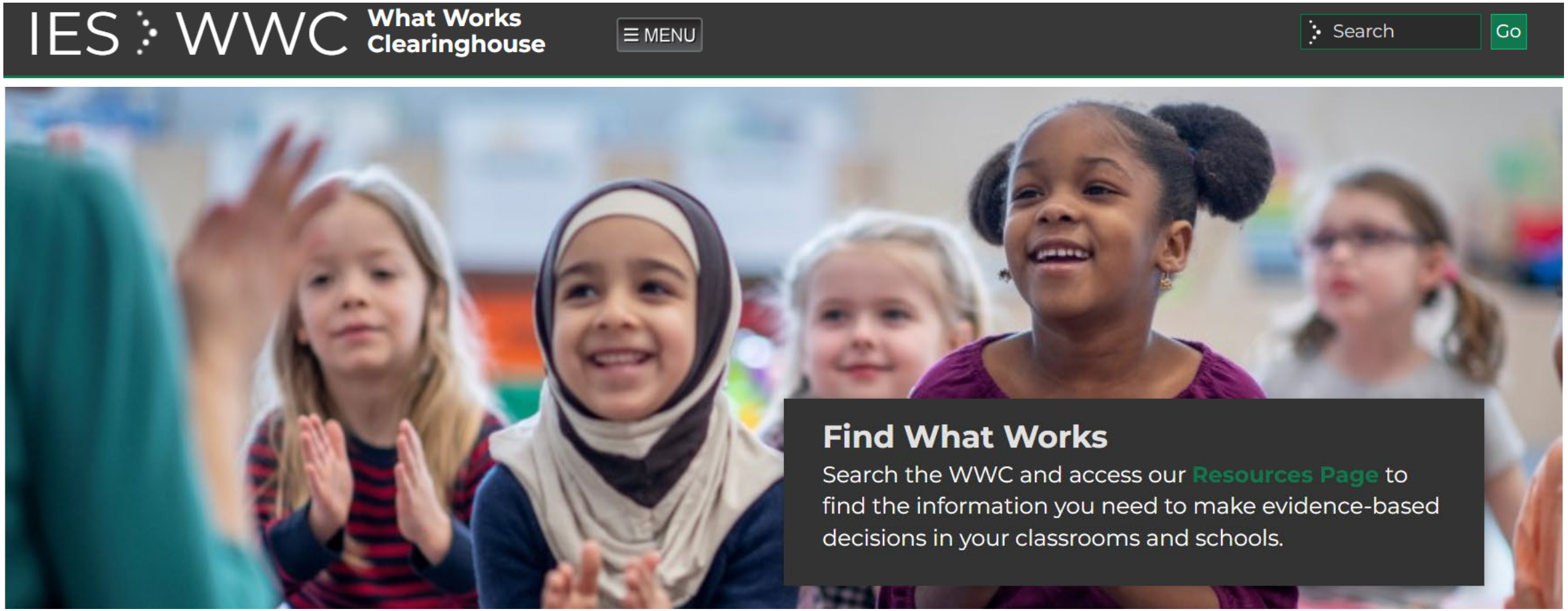
- ❑ What are we already doing?
- ❑ Considering our inputs, what opportunities or constraints do we have?
- ❑ Are our activities evidence based?

Step 3: Identifying the inputs

Consider the following questions:

- ❑ What resources are readily available?
- ❑ What additional resources or supports are needed?
- ❑ Is access to these resources or inputs realistic?

Evidence-based practices



Additional resources

- Leveraging Evidence-Based Practices for Local School Improvement (https://oese.ed.gov/resources/oese-technical-assistance-centers/state-support-network/resources/leveraging-evidence-based-practices-local-school-improvement/)

Review the logic model

As a group, discuss whether the logic model you've developed:

- ❑ Addresses the needs statements and root causes identified earlier.
- ❑ Is feasible to implement.
- ❑ Is measurable.

Next steps

Debrief

Ask yourself the following questions:

- ❑ Do I understand the elements of the theory of action and the logic model and how they differ?
- ❑ How will we use the logic model?
- ❑ How will we ensure we make it a living document?

Suggested next steps

- Compare the theory of action to your school's vision, mission, and goals; see if you want to make any updates or modifications.
- Use the logic model to plan activities and trainings; assess if currently planned activities will support attaining identified outcomes and ensure that activities are evidence based.
- Identify and secure inputs (resources) to implement activities.
- Share what you created today with other teachers and leaders at your school; discuss with the larger group what changes should be made.
- Plan to monitor data to assess progress toward your short- and long-term outcomes.

Contact us

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Supplemental resources on using data to drive decision making

Data take many forms

Quantitative

- Attendance rates.
- Behavior data.
- Course performance/student grades.
- Test scores.
- Demographic data.
- Graduation rates.
- Course enrollments.
- English language proficiency exam scores.
- Teacher evaluation ratings.
- Financial allocations.

Qualitative

- School climate surveys.
- Interviews and focus groups.
- Artifacts of student work.
- Meeting notes and agendas.
- Policies and guidance manuals.
- Lesson plans and curriculum maps.
- Other types of surveys.
- School improvement plans.

Data can be used for multiple purposes

Formative – to assess program implementation, perceptions and experiences, and for continuous improvement

Summative – to assess outcomes or impacts

Compliance or regulatory – to assess proficiency or for required monitoring

Data sharing and data aggregation considerations

- Who has access to data should be determined based on the type of data and how the data will be used.
- Data that is aggregated, such as data from an entire school or grade band, can be shared more broadly than can individual-level data, such as data from a small group of students or an individual student.
- To understand patterns and trends, looking at multiple years of data is helpful. Also, disaggregating data by key factors (e.g., student demographic factors) or teacher and school factors (e.g., grade level or classroom) is useful.

Data best practices

- Data should be:
  - Timely.
  - Accurate.
  - Relevant.
  - Presented clearly.
- Data can be used to:
  - Monitor progress.
  - Set goals.
  - Identify strengths and areas for improvement.
  - Identify areas for additional supports for students or staff.