

## Developing a Theory of Action and Logic Model: Facilitator's Guide

### Using the facilitator's guide

This facilitator's guide contains materials designed to engage participants in the steps for developing a theory of action and a logic model to inform action planning.

The full agenda is designed for an estimated time frame of three hours. Depending on the specific situation and each corporation's individual needs and training requests, content in this guide may be adjusted, supplemented, or deleted. Throughout this guide, we provide suggestions for shortening the sessions and for materials that could supplement the content.

### Materials

- Slide deck.
- Icebreakers (appendix A).
- Participants' agenda (appendix B).
- Prior corporation data analysis work (results of root cause analysis or step 3 and/or step 4 of the Program Evaluation Toolkit).
- Handouts:
  - Developing a Theory of Action (appendix C).
  - Developing a Logic Model (appendix D).
- Supplemental Resource on Using Data to Drive Decision Making (appendix E).
- If in person: Chart paper, markers.
- If virtual: Jamboard.

### Pework

- Review the workshop/training request form and notes from further conversations. Determine if there is a need to begin with the Supplemental Resource on Using Data to Drive Decision Making (appendix E).
- Send participants a copy of the agenda.
- Have participants (or a key contact) locate prior corporation data analysis work (results of root cause analysis or step 3 and/or step 4 of the Program Evaluation Toolkit).
- Customize the slide deck.
- Choose and prepare an icebreaker.
- If in person: Print copies of all handouts; gather chart paper and markers; set up the room.
- If virtual: Upload all handouts for electronic sharing; create Jamboard.

## Annotated agenda

Agenda item	Slides	Materials
Introductions, goals, and norms (15 minutes)	1–6	Icebreaker list (appendix A) Participants' agenda (appendix B) Responses from the workshop/training request form (to inform purpose)

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*To shorten this section to 10 minutes, select a quicker icebreaker question and shorten the overview of goals and norms.*

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### Description

- Welcome participants to the meeting.
  - Using an icebreaker, allow participants to introduce themselves. Appendix A contains a list of possible icebreaker activities.
  - Share the purpose of the meeting and its connection to larger work or initiatives in which participants may be engaged.
  - 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 the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) that corporations can use for school improvement activities.
  - Goals can be adapted and modified to address participants' needs. Reference the following resources for local context:
    - Training request form.
    - Technical assistance form.
    - Prior conversations.
  - Share the norms for the session (see below) and ask participants if they would like to add any norms:
    - Promote a spirit of inquiry.
    - Welcome all ideas.
    - Support inclusion.
    - Invite openness and honesty.
    - Be present and engaged.
    - Assume good intent.
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Agenda item	Slides	Materials
Review existing data analysis (15 minutes)	7	Results of root cause analysis or step 3 and/or step 4 of the Program Evaluation Toolkit

*To shorten this section to 5 minutes, ask participants to review this ahead of time and then spend your time discussing key insights.*

### Description

The corporation requesting training will likely have completed some form of data analysis, either a root cause analysis or an analysis using step 3 and/or step 4 of the Program Evaluation Toolkit. Reviewing these results prior to developing the theory of action will strengthen the theory of action, so include this when possible.

If a root cause analysis<sup>1</sup> was conducted:

- Review the problem statement the corporation has developed.
- Review the fishbone diagram the corporation has developed.
- Discuss possible revisions or changes the corporation may wish to make before crafting the theory of action.

If step 3 and/or step 4 of the Program Evaluation Toolkit has/have been completed:

- Review the current state summaries for the corporation's programs.
- Review the needs statements the corporation has created.

Discuss with participants whether the statements are rooted in data and align with the gaps identified in step 3.

<sup>1</sup> For information about conducting a root cause analysis, please see this resource: <https://oese.ed.gov/resources/oese-technical-assistance-centers/state-support-network/resources/root-cause-analysis-action/>.

Agenda item	Slides	Materials
<b>Develop a theory of action</b> (70 minutes)	8–20	Theory of action handout (appendix C) If in person: Chart paper, markers If virtual: Jamboard

*To shorten this section to 50 minutes, focus on slides 9–12 and 15.*

## Description

**Goal:** Develop a theory of action that can be used to conceptualize program processes and guide the formation of a logic model.

**Strategy:** Develop a theory of action in the form of an if/then statement.

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.

Developing a theory of action involves the following:

- Reframing your needs statements as measurable outcomes for success.
- Developing actionable ideas.
- Connecting actionable ideas to outcomes.

Ensure that all participants have a copy of the handout. You might encourage participants to work from one centralized copy that all can see, either in person or virtual.

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

- Answer the following questions:
  - What are the strengths of the program? Who will implement the program? Who will the program ultimately affect?
  - What is the desired change?
  - What outcome are we trying to impact?
  - What is the timeline for completion?

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

- Are the program targets, hypotheses, desired outcomes, and timeline S.M.A.R.T.?
  - Specific?
  - Measurable?
  - Action oriented?
  - Realistic?
  - Time-bound?
- Once the group has come to a consensus, fill in the outcomes and targets in the theory of action handout.

### **Step 2: Developing actionable ideas**

To keep the work manageable, emphasize the things that are going well within your program. What conditions can you build on that will lead to your desired outcomes?

- 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?
- Use the handout to record your actionable ideas.

### **Step 3: Connecting actionable ideas to outcomes**

- Use the actionable ideas to develop an if/then statement that begins to connect activities to outcomes. If appropriate, you can develop more than one if/then statement.

IF \_\_\_\_\_

THEN \_\_\_\_\_

- For example:
  - IF we provide targeted interventions to our students who would benefit from additional support through our reading intervention period, THEN we will see improved reading comprehension as evidenced by our test scores.
  - IF parents better understand the timelines and demands of the college application process, THEN parents will help their students with the application process.
- Make sure the if/then statements connect directly to the outcomes specified in step 1 and are actionable.

Agenda item	Slides	Materials
Develop a logic model (70 minutes)	21–33	Logic model handout (appendix D) If in person: Chart paper, markers If virtual: Jamboard

*To shorten this section to 60 minutes, focus on slides 24–32.*

## Description

**Goal:** Develop a working logic model that can be used to guide work for the remainder of the year, specifying inputs, outputs, and outcomes.

**Strategy:** Develop a logic model using the Knowlton & Phillips (2012) framework, which works from outcomes to outputs to inputs.

Developing a logic model involves the following:

- Identifying the outcomes.
- Identifying the inputs.
- Naming the activities needed to generate the outcomes.

Ensure that all participants have a copy of the handout. You might encourage participants to work from one centralized copy that all can see, either in person or virtual.

Begin by transferring the outcome(s) identified in the theory of action into the far right column in the logic model handout.

### Step 1: Identifying the outcomes

- As a group, discuss both short- and long-term outcomes and the impact they can have on the program.

### Step 2: Naming the activities needed to generate the outcomes

- As a group, discuss the activities they intend to undertake.
- The group should consider the following questions:
  - What are we already doing?
  - Considering our inputs, what opportunities or constraints do we have?
  - Are our activities evidence based?<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> For resources on selecting evidence-based strategies, participants may reference the What Works Clearinghouse: <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>.

### **Step 3: Identifying the inputs**

- As a group, discuss what inputs are required for the activities to take place.
- The group should consider the following questions:
  - What resources are readily available?
  - What additional resources or supports are needed?
  - Is access to these resources or inputs realistic?
- Enter the discussed inputs into the logic model handout.

### **Additional resources**

- Consider showing participants the What Works Clearinghouse website and demonstrating how to use it.
- Add additional resources to slide 33.

### **Review the logic model**

- As a group, discuss whether the logic model:
    - Addresses the needs statements and root causes identified earlier.
    - Is feasible to implement.
    - Is measurable.
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Agenda item	Slides
<b>Next steps</b> (15 minutes)	34–38
<hr/> <p><b>Description</b></p> <p><b>Debrief session</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask participants to share reflections from conversations during activities.</li> </ul> <p><b>Preview next steps</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using the theory of action and the logic model developed in this session, participants can turn their attention to defining goals, outcome measures, and formative metrics to ensure they can achieve the goals specified during today’s session.</li> <li>• Review suggested next steps.</li> <li>• If additional time is available, discuss the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– What metrics do you already collect that can be used to track inputs and outcomes in the theory of action?</li> <li>– What metrics would you like to collect to track inputs and outcomes in the theory of action?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Provide contact information</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add contact information to the final slide.</li> </ul> <hr/>	



## References

- Andres, A. J., & Nordengren, C. (2022). *Theory of action: The care and feeding of your mission*. Kappan. <https://kappanonline.org/theory-of-action-mission-andres-nordengren/>
- Boudett, K. P., City, E. A., & Murnane, R. J. (2013). *Data wise: A step-by-step guide to using assessment results to improve teaching and learning*. Harvard Education Press.
- Knowlton, L. W., & Phillips, C. C. (2012). *The logic model guidebook: Better strategies for great results* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Regional Educational Laboratory Midwest. (2019). *Continuous improvement through networked improvement communities* [Training material]. <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/rel/Products/Region/midwest/Resource/10410>
- Shakman, K., & Rodriguez, S. M. (2015). *Logic models for program design, implementation, and evaluation: Workshop toolkit* (REL 2015–057). U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northeast & Islands. <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/rel/Products/Region/northeast/Publication/3670>
- W. K. Kellogg Foundation. (2001). *Logic model development guide: Using logic models to bring together planning, evaluation, & action*.

## Appendix A

### Icebreakers

#### Two truths and a lie

Participants share three facts about themselves. Two of these facts are true, and one is a lie. Other participants have to guess which is not true.

#### Mood barometer

Add a selection of pictures to the slideshow that display a number of different emotions, facial expressions, or emojis. Ask participants to choose one and explain why it resonates with them today.

#### Unique skills

Participants respond to the following prompt: What is a unique skill you bring to your job?

#### Would you rather . . . ?

Present a “Would you rather . . . ?” scenario and ask participants to answer the question and explain their answer. Possible questions might include the following:

- Would you rather live in the arctic or in the Sahara desert?
- Would you rather time travel to the past or to the future?
- Would you rather have super vision or super hearing?

#### Highlight or struggle of the month

Participants share their biggest professional or personal highlight or struggle from the past month.

#### Which movie, TV show, album, or song had the biggest impact on you?

Provide participants with a critic’s list of the top movies, TV shows, albums, or songs of all time. Ask them to share which one had the biggest impact on their lives.

#### Personal collections

Ask participants to share if they collect anything or did so during their childhoods.

#### Bucket list

Ask participants to share an item from their bucket list.

## Appendix B

### Developing a Theory of Action and Logic Model: Agenda

<b>Meeting date, time, and location</b>	[DATE] [TIME] [LOCATION]
<b>Participants</b>	<b>Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) staff</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• [NAME].</li><li>• [NAME].</li></ul> <b>Participants</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• [NAME].</li><li>• [NAME].</li><li>• [NAME].</li></ul>
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Participants will understand the role of a theory of action and a logic model in the action planning process.</li><li>• Participants will build on prior work to develop a theory of action and a logic model.</li><li>• Facilitators will share resources from IDOE that corporations can use for school improvement activities.</li></ul>

## Agenda

Time	Topic and description	Materials
[TIME]– [TIME] <i>15 minutes</i>	<b>Introductions, goals, and norms</b> Facilitators will welcome participants and introduce the goals and norms for the session.	Slides 1–6 Agenda
[TIME]– [TIME] <i>15 minutes</i>	<b>Review existing data analysis</b> Facilitators will lead a discussion of the previous work done by the corporation that will inform today’s session.	Slide 7 Results of root cause analysis or step 3 and/or step 4 of the Program Evaluation Toolkit
[TIME]– [TIME] <i>70 minutes</i>	<b>Develop a theory of action</b> Participants will develop a theory of action that can be used to conceptualize program processes and guide the formation of a logic model.	Slides 8–20 Theory of action handout If in person: Chart paper, markers If virtual: Jamboard
[TIME]– [TIME] <i>70 minutes</i>	<b>Develop a logic model</b> Participants will develop a working logic model that can be used to guide work for the remainder of the year, specifying inputs, outputs, and outcomes.	Slides 21–33 Logic model handout If in person: Chart paper, markers If virtual: Jamboard
[TIME]– [TIME] <i>15 minutes</i>	<b>Next steps</b> Facilitators will lead a debrief of today’s session, share additional relevant resources, and lead a discussion of next steps.	Slides 34–38

## Appendix C

### Creating a Theory of Action

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

Actionable ideas:

IF \_\_\_\_\_

THEN \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix D

### Creating a Logic Model

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

## Appendix E

### Supplemental Resources on Using Data to Drive Decision Making

In some cases, you may find that your participants would benefit from some prework designed to increase their foundational understanding and skills in using data to drive decision making.

To support those situations, we have developed supplemental resources to build participant knowledge regarding data use and data literacy. These resources can either be included in an existing training or shared electronically with participants as prework before the Theory of Action and Logic Model training.

We include both a facilitator’s guide section (in case the determination is to include this content as part of a training) and an example email message that can be customized (in case the decision is to share this content as prework).

We recommend further customizing slide 44 prior to using this resource, to add additional data use and data literacy resources that the Indiana Department of Education uses with corporations and local education agencies.

Agenda item	Slides
<b>Supplemental Resources on Using Data to Drive Decision Making</b> (15 minutes) Description This resource is intended to provide support on using data to drive decision making and ensure participants have foundational knowledge about data-use practices. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Review the slides, pausing to address participant understanding and any questions that arise.</li></ul>	39–44

Example email message to share the supplemental resources:

\* Be sure to ***attach to the email message a pdf that includes only slides 39–44***

Dear [personalize greeting],

We are looking forward to our training session on [date, time] about [topic]. To prepare your team for our upcoming session, we recommend that you review the attached slides with your team. These resources provide a short overview of data practices to support the use of data to drive decision making. The review of these materials should take approximately 10–15 minutes.

Thank you, and we look forward to seeing you soon.

[personalize salutation]