A TRAINING REPORT

From "PANTECH SOLUTION"

ON "DATA ANALYSIS"

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I. Introduction

Introduction to the Handbook

This Handbook provides an introduction to basic procedures and methods of data analysis. We provide a framework to guide program staff in their thinking about these procedures and methods and their relevant applications in MSHS settings. Accordingly, this Handbook was developed to support the work of MSHS staff across content areas.

This Handbook was created because "using data in meaningful ways" includes many possibilities — and a great deal of information. Some of this information is complex and highly dependent upon specialized knowledge. However, there are many ways of "using data" that are more basic and that involve relatively simple procedures. Our purpose is to provide MSHS programs with a basic framework for thinking about, working with, and ultimately benefiting from an increased ability to use data for program purposes.

Section I of the Handbook provides introductory information. Section I includes the presentation of the "guiding principles" we use in presenting information, as well as the articulation of specific learning objectives. In Section II, we present an introduction to ways of thinking about data and make the distinction between two basic types of data: quantitative and qualitative. Section III outlines information that we hope will assist program staff understand how to conceptualize data collection and its analysis as a process. In Section IV we discuss management considerations that should be addressed in order to gather and analysis data in an efficient and effective way in your program. We present a framework for managing the process of data collection and analysis. Because using data for program purposes is a complex undertaking it calls for a process that is both systematic and organized over time.

In this Handbook we examine data analysis using examples of data from each of the Head Start content areas. We explore examples of how data analysis could be done. We identify and describe trends in data that programs collect. Finally, we offer a perspective of how data lends itself to different levels of analysis: for example, grantee- wide, by delegate agency, and/or center- or classroom-level. Our intent is to demonstrate how the different analytical procedures and methods can be powerful and effective tools for MSHS managers. Specific procedures and methods of data analysis are discussed withclear ways of using and working with data in order to identify results. Here, procedures and methods for working with both quantitative and qualitative data are presented.