During the past decade, federal and state commitments for preparing educational personnel to work with handicapped students have led to the creation of numerous staff development programs. Not only are the contents of these programs innovative, but the processes of such personnel development programs involve new techniques and procedures. The challenge and concern of staff developers now is to personalize development of educational staff in a similar way that instruction is individualized for school age children. New techniques and procedures make this possible.

The ultimate goal of successful staff development is to bring about change which will lead to school improvement. The Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) (Hall, Wallace & Dossett, Note 3) contributes to understanding, describing and assessing change; it provides for more timely and relevant facilitation of the improvement process. The CBAM offers a unique approach to the understanding of educational change by centering on the needs of the individual. Furthermore, staff development using CBAM concepts acknowledges that individuals need time to assimilate change, and therefore staff developers should gear programs to a pace and frequency dictated by those individual needs.

For a system to change, the individuals comprising it must change, and it is clear to most people that change will not occur overnight. In a system wherein change is mandated by very crucial problems demanding solutions and practices demanding improvement, the change process must be both fully understood and effectively facilitated. The change, and the individuals involved in it, must be nurtured. The Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) has been developed as a means to understand and describe the process. It has also yielded some practical tools which can be applied to the nurturing, or facilitating, of the change effort. This paper will present the model and its application in a special physical education program.

Overview of the CBAM Model

The CBAM is an empirically-based conceptual framework which outlines the developmental process that individuals experience as they implement an innovation (i.e., a program or process that is new to the individual) and participate in attendant staff development. There are four basic assumptions in the CBAM which
provide guidelines for structuring facilitative inservice strategies and activities:

1. Change is a process, not an event.
2. Change is accomplished by individuals first, then institutions.
3. Change is a highly personal experience.
4. Change entails developmental growth in both feelings about and skills for using new programs.

These assumptions underlie the concerns-based approach to staff development; their influence is obvious in the inservice training program reported in this paper.

In essence, the model, diagrammed in Figure 1, views the staff developer (instructional coordinator, consultant, change facilitator, etc.) as a person who has access to resources. This resource system may include informational brochures, materials, equipment, inservice training, consultant services, monies for attending off-site workshops, etc. The staff developer also has CBAM tools for probing or collecting diagnostic information about the individuals and the innovation in the user system. The user system includes teachers and others who may be either users or potential users of the innovation. After diagnostic data are collected, then staff developer can make concerns-based interventions (supportive and facilitative actions), some of them selected from the resources available, and all of them targeted appropriately toward individuals.

To summarize, when those persons responsible for implementing change via staff development have relevant information about those individuals experiencing the process, they are better able to provide more appropriate and effective support. To explain how CBAM can operate to increase the effectiveness of staff development, this paper first describes the planning elements of the model: Levels of Interventions and Game Plan Components which form a framework.

Figure 1. The Concerns Based Adoption Model