As systemic educational change becomes a major force in school restructuring efforts, there is a growing need for educators to become proficient in facilitating and participating in systemic change. To answer this need, professional development programs in systemic educational change must be created to help educators develop an understanding of the process. This understanding should be supported through the acquisition of specific attitudes, knowledge, and skills necessary for proficient participation in the systemic change process. Professional development programs should be designed to address each of the particular needs of preservice, in-service, and post-service educators. They should also encourage collaborative efforts among all levels of education, from the elementary to the university level.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine how each of these issues can be addressed through effective professional development in systemic educational change. This discussion begins with a review of what systemic educational change is and why it is vital to the endurance of school reform, the process educators engage in during systemic change, and the issues affecting this process. The chapter continues with a look at the rationale and purpose of professional development in systemic educational change and the ways in which it can best be accomplished.

SYSTEMIC EDUCATIONAL CHANGE

Educators and the public are concerned with improving the ways in which schools meet the needs of learners. Currently, school restructuring refers to many of the educational reform efforts aimed at helping schools become better learning environments. Yet, many of these efforts are accused of having no clear objective and no clear knowledge of the real clients (Kaufman 1993), while effecting only change at the margins and piecemeal reform (Banathy 1991; Reigeluth 1994). Systemic educational change attempts to overcome many of these shortcomings by taking a contextual approach to change that examines the interrelated components and functions of a school system (Banathy 1992). The systemic approach to restructuring advocates the development of a new paradigm of education built upon evolutionary change, systems thinking, and design theory (Banathy 1991, 1992). These three constructs are the basis from which
systemic change operates and are vital to the formation of a new mindset ready to take on the task of educational restructuring. These constructs will be described in the discussion of how this mindset is developed.

Thus, systemic educational change attempts to address, through systemic redesign, many of the problems plaguing our school systems. The process by which this occurs is centered around a design team made up of those most vested in the success of the school, the stakeholders (Eason 1988). Stakeholders include teachers, parents, students, administrators, and community members. Systemic change involves stakeholders in creating a design of an educational environment that will best meet the future needs of their learners. To assist stakeholders in this process, a facilitator should support and structure their efforts as needed. There should be a significant amount of interaction and group processing among participants, as well as professional development to assist educators. Before addressing this need, we will first discuss systemic change.

THE PROCESS OF SYSTEMIC CHANGE

To be effective instigators, participants, facilitators, and maintainers of systemic change, educators must understand the overall systemic change process. They need to learn: (1) how to participate in each of its nonlinear, cyclical phases; (2) developing a new mindset toward educational change; (3) creating a vision of the ideal future society and its educational systems; (4) designing the needed learning environments and instructional, administrative, and governance systems to support this vision; and (5) operationalizing the design through effective development, implementation, and maintenance.

It is important to emphasize that these phases are not linear. Rather, individuals and teams move into these stages at different times. Also, many of the phases can occur recursively as well as interact concurrently. For the sake of clarity, and to assist in conveying their specific characteristics, the phases are described in a sequential manner.

Instigating Change

The instigation for systemic change begins with an awareness of the historical background from which our current public education system has developed. Throughout history, educational systems have emerged that reflect the needs of society during a given time period (Reigeluth 1994; Toffler 1980). The one-room schoolhouse answered the needs of the agrarian age. Then, as the agrarian age gave way to the industrial age, this was superseded by the current system of mass education. Now, we find ourselves rushing ever faster into the information age and the new demands created by the infoglut of the burgeoning information highway. Just as the one-room school could not meet the requirements of the industrial age, our current industrial age school system cannot effectively prepare learners for their roles in the twenty-first century (Branson 1987). In essence, our antiquated school systems no longer have the agility to respond to the real, contextual demands of learners preparing for the information age—a realization that provides a strong incentive for change. (This should be one element of a professional development program for systemic change.)

Through systemic change, educators attempt to ensure that schools will be able to keep pace with society. This underscores the importance of designing educational environments that prepare learners for the roles necessary for success in the twenty-first century. Reich (1991) discusses these roles in The Work of Nations. He describes the functions of problem solvers and problem identifiers as well as "strategic brokers." Strategic brokers are those who have the skills to link the first two roles. Other information age competencies are also highlighted in the SCANS report (Secretary’s Commission 1991). This report identifies three foundational requirements for all individuals—basic skills, thinking skills, and personal qualities—and four areas that a successful employee must be able to identify and manipulate—resources, interpersonal skills, information systems, and technology. The new learning environments required to educate learners for these roles and skills will be, by necessity, quite different from those that mass produced the
obedient workers needed for the industrial age. This need provides a powerful justification for the redesign of our school systems. Once educators understand these global reasons for systemic change, they can begin to focus on more-localized imperatives for change identifiable within their own communities. (This is a second important element of a professional development program.)

Evaluating how well schools or districts are currently meeting their learners' needs is another activity that educators can do to instigate change. Such an evaluation requires educators to first describe the competencies and attributes their graduates will need for them to be most successful and happy in the twenty-first century, then measure their own schools against this standard (Peck 1994). As educators compare what should be with what is actually occurring in their schools, they can come to conclusions about what changes need to be made. This self-evaluation identifies problems and shortcomings in a nonthreatening way. Self-evaluation is much more powerful than mandates and suggestions from outside sources. It is also the most meaningful incentive for change (and should be a third element of a professional development program).

During the instigation-for-change phase, it is important to recognize that educators from within the system are also better equipped to be sensitive to the culture of the school and community. This allows them to evaluate readiness for change and identify potential problems. Decisions determining the appropriate timing of change as well as negotiations of situations requiring diplomacy are also handled more effectively by those within the school. This can enhance the opportunities for effective systemic change to take place. (All these elements are important for instigating positive systemic change and should be addressed in a professional development program, which is discussed later.)

Developing a New Mindset

Once stakeholders determine that fundamental change is needed, they must begin developing a new mindset that allows them to understand and participate in a systemic change process within their schools. This change begins with a paradigm shift and requires a basic understanding of the underlying constructs of systemic change—evolutionary change, systems thinking, and design theory. Without these three perspectives, educators are more likely to attempt unrelated, piecemeal changes rather than using a holistic, systems approach.

The first phase of mindset development begins when stakeholders acquire an appreciation for the evolutionary nature of educational systems. These systems need to be adaptive and reflexive to societal changes. When society undergoes such massive changes as it did during the industrial revolution and as it is doing now with the advent of the global information age, important new educational needs and contextual conditions emerge. Schools must keep pace with these changes and coevolve with society if they are to meet society’s needs. In order for this to occur, an educational system must be redesigned in such a manner that it can respond to and accommodate evolutionary changes originating from both inside and outside of the system. This process of redesign is also supported by an understanding of the principles underlying systems thinking and design theory. Combined with evolutionary change, these perspectives are integral to the change process as practitioners use them to create new educational systems.

Systems thinking (Checkland 1984) acknowledges the interconnectedness among components (subsystems) within an organized system, such as an educational system. Through systemic thinking, stakeholders are encouraged to think outside of their present definitions of schooling. This new mindset allows them to begin thinking of a school as a human activity system embedded within an environmental context of suprasystems (e.g., social, economic, governmental), peer systems (e.g., social services), and subsystems (e.g., administrative, faculty, maintenance) (Banathy 1992). Each system is interdependent with, and impacted by, the condition and functions of all other systems. This interdependency requires educators to take a global look at a school and address all the systems it influences or is influenced by. This is achieved
through an examination of the interrelationships between the needs, values, functions, and purposes of all elements that impinge upon the school, its learners, and the community. This develops an understanding of the ways in which change in one system or its parts influences change in other systems. Therefore, school restructuring must be approached from the perspective of systems thinking because systemically designed schools more closely answer the current needs of learners, the community, and society at large.

In addition to evolutionary change and systems thinking, design theory is the other important theoretical foundation of systemic educational change. Design theory gives powerful tools and insights for using a design approach. As it relates to systemic change, a design approach is used as a way to resolve problems through customized, pragmatic design grounded in purpose and volition (Nelson 1994). This contrasts significantly with most school reform efforts and their related professional development programs that use an “adoption” approach (Rogers 1983). The adoption approach uses generic, off-the-shelf solutions that are usually devoid of any input from the actual users. In comparison, a design approach seeks to empower users to address the contextual and situational issues affecting a school system and to design the needed innovations. Therefore, it is important for stakeholders to develop design abilities that allow them to think and behave in the same ways that other types of designers do when resolving ill-defined problems (Cross 1990). Applying a design approach also encourages flexibility and adaptability during the creative phases of the change process. In these ways, design theory is a critical complement to the evolutionary and systemic nature of the change process.

As participants begin to meld an understanding of the constructs of evolutionary change, systems thinking, and design theory, a powerful new mindset for educational restructuring emerges. From this mindset, innovative designs for schools develop in anticipation of the educational needs of future learners. (Therefore, these three elements should be included in a professional development program for systemic change.)

Creating a Vision of Society

With this new mindset in place, practitioners can begin to move into the visioning stage, where they create a vision of what they want their society of the future to be like. This is not a process of guessing the future but of envisioning the future as they want it to be. The practitioners are taking an interactive versus a reactive posture to the future by being accountable for creating the future instead of just letting it develop unplanned (Banathy 1991). This process acknowledges the power we have to impact our own futures, rather than to act only as inert recipients.

During this phase, it should be pointed out to participants that this interactive visioning can be contrasted with the more reactive, precursor activity done during the instigation phase. During the initial phase, participants describe what they think learners need in the twenty-first century. In comparison, during the visioning stage, stakeholders take a counterposition as they describe an ideal future society. They actively plan the future rather than passively predict it. After this vision of the ideal future society is articulated, systemic change participants are ready to begin envisioning the learning environments that can prepare learners to function as members and sustainer of that society.

Designing the System

In the visioning phase, the participants conceive and outline the vision of the ideal society, then they design complementary educational systems. Again, participants in systemic change do not seek to predict, but rather to design the learning environments that will most effectively assist in realizing their ideal society. Later, they can compromise as necessary to accommodate existing constraints, then continue to strive to come ever closer to their ideal. This “idealized design” approach has proved advantageous because most constraints can often be overcome later; either in the short run or the long run.

Therefore, participants can begin by using an educational systems design, which integrates systems theory and design theory, to create an ideal design of the specific educational system for their
community. During the creation of their design, stakeholders identify the needs, values, and goals that will provide the underpinnings of their educational system. This vague vision or image of an ideal educational system of the future is then solidified through a series of design spirals that successively identify and clarify the purposes, functions, and components of the new educational system. Each spiral produces a progressively clearer image of the new system. Detailed design plans of each component are created with descriptions of its function and relationships to other components within the system.

To keep the design focused on the learning needs for fostering an ideal community, it is best to start by designing the learning-experience level of the new system and the instructional system that can best foster those learning experiences. But to maintain the systemic nature of the design, it is important to keep in mind the interrelationships or impact each level of the new system has on other levels (learning experience, instruction, administration, and governance).

Once the design is clearly formed, the design team can begin to operationalize it.

Operationalizing the Design

Each level of the system is operationalized as the design team develops, implements, and maintains the components of the new design. Development of the design occurs as the team identifies and activates the specific resources needed for the school system to function. These may include such resources as personnel, instructional materials, appropriate technologies, physical facilities, and sources of funding. Once resources have been identified and acquired, the participants initiate the implementation plan.

Ideally, some elements of the implementation plan are developed and carried out concurrently with the design phase. For example, involving all major stakeholder groups from the beginning of the design work creates an understanding and a sense of ownership that avoids potentially disastrous obstacles to implementation. For this to happen, design plans must be continuously disseminated to all stakeholders, and their input must be sought and acted upon.

Once implemented, the school system is then continuously “debugged” and improved. However, it is important not to expect any dramatic superiority of the new system for at least three to five years. In fact, the first few years may show an actual decrease on the traditional measures of educational effectiveness. This points out the importance of the participants deciding what outcomes they think are important, and making sure that there are appropriate measures for them. Also, to the extent that the ideal design was compromised in its initial implementation, the design team should pursue a plan that will gradually move it back on track. Furthermore, it should not be expected that the new system will remain forever ideal to the community. The community will continue to change; therefore, there must be a redesigning process that ensures the new system can make the adjustments needed to coevolve with it.

Gaining an understanding of the purpose and process of systemic change and developing an ability to participate in it are the major goals for professional development in systemic change. In addition, educators should be aware of the issues that influence and often act as obstacles to systemic change.

ISSUES AFFECTING SYSTEMIC EDUCATIONAL CHANGE

A variety of issues can impact the success of systemic educational change. These influences can originate inside or outside of the primary school system and include opposition to school change efforts, persistence of old paradigms of professional development, availability of needed resources, and political factors. In order to effectively mitigate the potential impact of these issues, they must be well understood.

Opposition to Change

First, there is often open opposition to school reform efforts. This may come from within the school as well as from without. Teachers, administrators, and
community members who are not participating as part of the design team may misunderstand or be intimidated by the changes being discussed. This underscores the importance of strong, open lines of communication, which (1) disseminate information about the team’s activities; (2) educate those who are not participating directly but are affected by changes made; and (3) solicit stakeholders’ input and incorporate it into the design, thereby allowing them to become vested in the process.

Opposition may also come from outside interests not directly related to the school or community. Regional or national interest groups may attempt to curtail restructuring efforts to maintain the status quo. They may advocate that change is not needed for a system that has existed and served the public well for so long. Again, two-way communication about the constructs and objectives of systemic change is needed. If all those genuinely interested in quality education are included and their ideas incorporated, they too will come to support the proposed changes.

Old Paradigms of Professional Development

An additional problem may stem from the fact that professional development in systemic change is unlikely to follow the typical paradigm of staff development. Traditionally, educators are required to attend programs that may only be lecture based, with very little interaction required of participants. In systemic change, participants are the authors and owners of the process, with a facilitator to guide them as needed. Many systemic change programs also require longer periods of time than the brief programs usually offered for inservice development. Professional development in systemic change necessitates a time commitment and a level of involvement not generally expected during regular professional development programs.

Availability of Resources

Another issue that places constraints on systemic change is the availability of human and monetary resources. At this time there are few trained and experienced facilitators of systemic change. It is hoped that this number will grow with the creation of more inservice professional development programs, such as those under development at Indiana University’s Department of Instructional Systems Technology, Pennsylvania State University’s program in instructional systems, and Western Michigan’s Department of Educational Leadership. Likewise, there are few professors in schools of education that have the knowledge base and experience or the support of their departments that is needed for teaching educational systems design to preservice or inservice educators.

Funding is also a problem issue. For a school to go through an effective systemic restructuring effort, a commitment of time and resources must be agreed upon at the onset. Released time for participating faculty and staff is very important. This obligates the hiring of an adequate number of substitute teachers and aids. Often, additional or reallocated funds are needed to design and implement the new system. But there are strong indications that the new system can be more cost effective than the current system once it is implemented and “debugged.” As funding is always a major concern for schools, administrators must be committed to supporting change efforts and employing financial creativity in the design and implementation of systemic restructuring.

Political Factors

Another impact on restructuring efforts are political factors. These include legislative actions and mandates as well as personal political agendas. This reality underscores the need for stakeholders to become politically savvy in order to make the political arena work for them. Such political clout can result in waivers and changed state and local policies.

A good facilitator will quickly identify and mitigate personal political agendas of any stakeholder that might undermine the process. This may be difficult to do and can create potential obstacles for collaborative teams. Yet it is important for the team to recognize such problems and develop solutions to the extent possible. In the same manner, the agendas of local and state school board mem-

Professional Development in Systemic Educational Change

Members must also be addressed. Additionally, it is important for design teams to take into consideration curriculum mandates before they put their designs in action.

Having discussed what systemic educational change is—its process and issues—we will now address the need for professional development in systemic change. In the same way that systemic change requires a new paradigm for school restructuring, it also requires a new paradigm for professional development. The following sections will discuss the rationale and purpose for professional development in systemic educational change and how and where it can occur.

RATIONALE FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN SYSTEMIC CHANGE

Despite opposition, schools continue to seek fundamental reform. Increasingly, educational leaders recognize the need for systemic versus piecemeal reforms of our outdated industrial age schools. Piecemeal reforms have not made large or lasting differences, nor have their corresponding, traditional professional development paradigms provided the knowledge and skills necessary to empower teachers and other stakeholders to create the schools they desire. Hence, there is a need for systemic change, which requires professional development that is systemic, sustained, and long term rather than brief and isolated.

During systemic change all components of a school’s environment and functions should be examined by the school’s own stakeholders and redesigned in order to better meet the immediate and future needs of learners. This emphasizes the need for teachers, administrators, and other educational professionals to provide leadership in systemic educational reform. They must learn to assist parents, community members, business representatives, and other stakeholders in the process of creating our future schools. In order to do this, educational professionals must acquire the attitudes, knowledge, and skills needed to act as instigators, participants, or facilitators of systemic change. Professional development in systemic educational change is crucial to educators gaining the skills of “user-designers” (Banathy 1991). User-designers are stakeholders in a system who take the initiative to identify areas of need and then create action plans and solutions to answer those needs.

As user-designers of systemic change, educators within a particular educational system are empowered to create and maintain needed change. Relevant, permanent change is best initiated by those within the system, which is more appropriate than waiting for outside forces to instigate and dictate it. This type of professional development also supports the current movement toward increased professionalism in the field. Systemic change allows educators to move from being end users of reform efforts initiated by others to becoming developers and managers of changes that they, along with other stakeholders, identify as needed for their respective schools. The need for educators to take leadership positions in systemic restructuring efforts, create needed changes, and increase professionalism is the basic rationale for a truly new paradigm of professional development, which we refer to as systemic professional development.

PURPOSE OF SYSTEMIC PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The purpose of systemic professional development is to prepare educators to instigate, participate in, facilitate, and maintain this urgently needed change process. Each role is critical to the success of systemic change.

As instigators, educators help others within the school system become aware of how learners’ needs are rapidly changing in the information age. This awareness is initiated by comparing what should be and what really is occurring within their own classrooms and schools. Comparing what is needed to what is currently provided leads to an instigation for change. This is a more effective method for initiating change than having problems and solutions identified by outside interests. Initiating change can also lead to participation in the design phase.
Teachers, administrators, and other educational professionals act as key stakeholders on the design team during the systemic change process. Their participation is vital to the success of the process and the educational design it generates. Their prior understanding of systemic change and its objectives strengthens the quality of the process, and they come to the process with an understanding of the underlying theories and phases that it goes through. Most importantly, the participants gain a better idea of what will be expected of them, and they have opportunities to develop and practice skills that lead to a successful process. They can also assist other stakeholders in developing the mindset necessary for effective participation in systemic change.

Process facilitation is one of the most important roles that educators experienced in systemic educational change can assume. There is a great need for facilitators who can assist stakeholders making the “design journey” through systemic change (Banathy 1991). Experienced facilitators can be used to support collaborative school teams through the change process. Their purpose is not to supply predetermined solutions, but to help each school create their own unique design solution that answers their particular mix of educational needs. They need a variety of skills and knowledge, including an understanding of the stages of facilitation, considerations that impact the process, and content to be learned (Salisbury, Reigeluth, and Soulier 1994). Facilitators must also develop the ability to gradually relinquish influence and withdraw support as design team members master the process.

Once the new system is designed, developed, and implemented, it is critical that it be maintained and sustained. After implementation of the system design, educators must be ready and able to debug the system and make needed adjustments to their design in order to continue to meet the changing needs of learners and society. For the design to remain viable, it must have the ability to continue to adapt and coevolve with society. This requires insight and flexibility on the part of the design team as they continue to assess the changing societal environment within which the school system is embedded.

ATTITUDES, KNOWLEDGE, AND SKILLS

There is much to be learned and many skills to be acquired before engaging in a successful systemic change process. This is where effective professional development becomes critical. It is through systemic professional development that educators first learn about the phases of the systemic change process. This knowledge is essential for participation as stakeholders, change instigators, or process facilitators. After gaining an understanding of the overall process, specific attitudes, knowledge, and skills must be developed for effective participation in systemic change. These skills are needed for each participant to maximize his or her contribution to the change process.

Attitudes That Support Systemic Change

Attitudes must be developed that assist educators in being open to change and participating effectively in the dynamic, collaborative environment of a systemic change process. An openness to using this new paradigm of school restructuring is the most important attitude one needs. Professionals must be able to take risks and think creatively while shaping innovative educational systems. They must also be self-reflective, cooperative, and encouraging. With the wide variety of stakeholders that must be involved in a systemic effort, a supportive attitude can facilitate not only one's own design process, but also that of others.

Necessary Knowledge and Skills

One of the most important functions of systemic professional development is direct teaching, not only of attitudes, but also of the necessary knowledge base and skills required for participation. Effective systemic professional development imparts these elements in a timely, logical manner and assists educators in developing a concept of systemic change that they can use either to change their own schools or to act as facilitators for other teams.

As discussed in the section describing systemic change, the most important knowledge and skills
to be acquired revolve around an understanding of evolutionary change, systems thinking, and design theory. These are the most integral constructs of systemic change and should be followed by a supporting repertoire of communication, collaboration, group processing, and managerial and interpersonal skills that underwrite the change process. Communication, collaboration, and group processing skills are especially important for participants to exercise effectively. Experiential-based programs that provide direct instruction in these areas can give participants practical experience in developing these skills. This is often needed, as many people may not have experience with team-building skills.

Managerial skills are used extensively during systemic change, particularly by facilitators. Donahoe (1993) gives a good description of how an experienced educator can function as a facilitator or change agent to prepare a school for change and coordinate its restructuring efforts. The role of facilitators in systemic change is similar to that of change agents in diffusion and adoption theory. Diffusion theory is built upon research that has examined the way in which change agents and organizations can interact effectively during diffusion and adoption of an innovation (Burkman 1987; Dormant 1986, 1992). Some of the most useful elements from diffusion theory that can be utilized in systemic change include recommendations for change agents, descriptions of adopter groups, analysis of adoption issues, identification of adoption stages and corresponding diffusion strategies, and determination of organizational readiness.

Because they support an open, safe environment for collaboration, effective interpersonal skills are imperative for educators planning to become process facilitators. These skills help the facilitator gradually relinquish control and ownership of the process to participants. A strong program also informs managers of change about ways to efficiently bring additional stakeholders on board over the lifetime of the process.

The depth and breadth of what must be learned highlights the need for the creation of systemic professional development programs. How these programs are conducted is very important.
only educators, but also parents and community members and, where appropriate, learners. Other programs sponsored by the school may take place away from the school site. These may also be seminars and workshops as well as retreats. Retreats can be especially effective in building collaborative and group processing skills. Often, when participants are in a neutral environment, hindrances created by the prominence of their professional roles can be reduced and personal reservations can be mitigated. While most systemic professional development is sponsored by the schools, institutions of higher education are beginning to provide increasing numbers of programs to support school restructuring efforts. Examples of these include the Coalition for Essential Schools at Brown University, NCREST at Columbia University’s Teachers College, the School Restructuring Consortium at Indiana University, and the Instructional Systems program at Pennsylvania State University.

College and University Settings

Colleges and universities are another appropriate setting for systemic professional development opportunities. They can provide regular and continuing education classes in systemic educational change within programs such as that described by Salisbury, Reigeluth, and Soulier (1994). As well as offering courses, colleges and universities can also engage in collaborative efforts with public schools. These can be the backbone for many systemic restructuring efforts. The number of graduate programs that are researching and developing applications related to systemic change is increasing. These departments are also a source for trained facilitators and systemic professional development workshops and seminars for schools to utilize (see Lee and Reigeluth 1994). Often these programs can be customized to meet the unique needs of a particular school. Additionally, some universities are now offering services similar to the restructuring support service at Indiana University, which is staffed by professors and graduate students who provide workshops for schools undergoing restructuring efforts. These types of services also provide collaborative teams that can support the stakeholder team based at the school. Collaborative efforts provide an important complement to more formal systemic professional development programs.

Professional Conferences

Conferences and conventions of various professional organizations offer opportunities for systemic professional development. These organizations include the Division for Systemic Change in Education in the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT), the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), and Phi Delta Kappa (PDK). They offer lecture sessions, workshops, and discussion groups that engage in dialogues intended to further the research of systemic educational change and encourage the development of practical applications. The activities in these organizations allow professionals not only to learn more about systemic change, but also to disseminate their findings and experiences from their own restructuring processes.

THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONTINUUM

All these structured opportunities can and should occur throughout an educator’s career. Professional development in systemic change can be viewed in relation to a career continuum. It can occur during each of the three phases of an educator’s career: preservice, inservice, and postservice. Each phase has unique needs and requires a differentiated approach.

Preservice Development

Education in systemic restructuring is particularly important for preservice educators. During preservice professional development, systemic change education should become part of the curricula for teacher education, curriculum and instruction, and educational leadership. Instruction and experience with systems thinking, design theory, and the change process are appropriate disciplines for preservice educators because they are forming many of the approaches and methods of instruction and management that will be incorporated into their classrooms and schools. While
they may not initially have the clout needed to instigate change, their knowledge of systemic change will be reflected in their personal philosophy and approach to learning and learners. This will also prepare them to provide support and leadership for any restructuring efforts that may be initiated in the schools where they are employed. Moreover, they will be better prepared to participate in any inservice programs that become available.

Inservice Development

Most efforts for systemic professional development are currently being applied to inservice development. In this career phase, educational professionals have the greatest potential for becoming active participants in and facilitators of change. Therefore, it is important to empower teachers for their new roles in a systemically restructured school (Lee and Reigeluth 1994). This can be accomplished through workshops, retreats, and other experiential activities that build the necessary foundations of knowledge, skill, and attitude. Professional educators should also be encouraged to build collaborative networks with other schools undergoing restructuring and with those at institutes of higher education that are investigating systemic change. Involvement in professional organizations interested in systemic change can provide additional opportunities for systemic professional development.

Postservice Development

Postservice professionals can be especially valuable participants in systemic change as experienced facilitators and mentors to other educational professionals. These educators are an underutilized or unrealized source of support for systemic change. These mature professionals can provide the following: (1) experience and support, as well as insights into the complex nature of the change process; (2) insights into participation in restructuring efforts that support new efforts; and (3) identification of proven methods, probable obstacles, and viable solutions for teams just beginning their change processes.

CONCLUSION

Systemic educational change offers the most viable type of restructuring for schools. However, educators need to have access to appropriate, well-constructed systemic professional development opportunities. There are a variety of settings and ways to meet these needs, from site-based programs to higher-education classes. The most important goal is for systemic professional development programs to actually be developed and implemented. As of yet, no large-scale opportunities are available. But as more research in this area is done and ways to apply it are formulated, programs will increase. This is evidenced by the ever-increasing interest that educational graduate programs and professional organizations are showing in systemic educational change.

REFERENCES


EMPOWERING SCHOOLS FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGE


