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Layout and Editorial Office: Instructional Systems Technology, 201 N. Rose Avenue, Education 2276, Bloomington, Indiana 47405. Phone 812-856-8467. For advertising rates and deadlines, contact Ned Shaw at the AECT offices, 812-335-7675.

Subscription information: *TechTrends* is published six times per year by Springer Science+Business Media, Inc. (Springer), Volume 50 (6 issues) will be published in 2006.

ISSN: 8756-3894 (print version)

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Guest Editor's Notes

Charles Reigeluth

Introduction to the Special Issue on Systems Thinking and Systemic Change for Education and Training

The purpose of this special issue on systems thinking and systemic change is to be tailored to AECT members' needs and interests. Sections 1 and 7 are particularly target toward this purpose. Also, we are trying a novel format to serve this purpose. The intent is to introduce many diverse ideas and lines of work through short (one page or less) articles we call "blurbs." The idea is to provide enough information for you to decide if you are interested, and then provide links or references where you can find more information.

The systemic change team at Indiana University – which includes Judy Bardonner, Omer Delialioglu, Fang Fang, Pam Green, Nichole Harlin, Pil Kang, Sunnie Lee, Emmanuel Okafor, Daniel Pascoe, Sari Pascoe, Charles Reigeluth, Kurt Richter and Bill Watson – brainstormed the seven sections and input on the concept was sought from all members of the Division for Systemic Change. Also, an invitation was sent to all members of the division to contribute to this special issue.

Section 1 addresses how systems thinking can help AECT members in their work, and how they can contribute to systemic change in whatever their context area may be. There is a blurb for each division, authored by the president of the division, as well as a blurb for the Association as a whole, authored by its president.

Section 2 addresses the need for systemic change, followed by foundational concepts and theories: the learner-centered paradigm of instruction, systems theory, systems thinking, systemic change and professional ethics.

Section 3 discusses the influences of suprasystems and their policies on systemic change. A blurb on general influences of suprasystems in all context areas is followed by blurbs devoted to the public education sector, including federal policies, state policies, NCLB and charter school legislation. There is also a blurb on influences of suprasystems in an Asian country with a more centralized educational system.

Section 4 describes actual experiences in systemic change in public education (school-level, district-level and state-level efforts), corporate training and an international context (Eastern Europe).

Section 5 introduces a variety of approaches to the process of systemic change in public school systems and corporations.

Section 6 describes several "new systems" that have emerged from systemic change efforts in public education, teacher education and corporate training. It also presents a general vision of an information-age educational system.

Finally, Section 7 addresses what AECT members can do with the ideas presented in this special issue. These suggestions are organized by kinds of work that people in AECT do.

We hope you find systems thinking and systemic change exciting and useful to your everyday work. Please let me know what you think of both the content and format of this special issue!

Charles Reigeluth, Guest Editor
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