

■ *Research Paper*

Guidelines for Facilitating Systemic Change in School Districts

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This paper opens by addressing the emerging need for systemic change in K-12 school systems, with consideration given to requirements for new mindsets on educational change. Given the history of less than successful attempts at educational change, the need exists for a guidance system which helps change facilitators to guide school districts and communities through a systemic change process. The paper describes the characteristics and elements of a systemic change guidance system which builds on the principles of process facilitation and systems design. It examines in detail the integral values or beliefs related to facilitation and systemic change, the types of events (sets of activities) typically needed, and the processes which form the guidance system. Also discussed is the process used to create the guidance system. © 1998 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Keywords systemic change process; K-12 education; systems design; facilitation; guidance system

INTRODUCTION

Increasingly, educators are recognizing that the conditions and educational needs of their communities are becoming dramatically different from what they were in the 1950s and 1960s.

Those changing conditions and educational needs include:

- a society in which there is greater need for citizens who can understand and utilize the advancements of new technologies, sustain and advance a democratic way of life, accept the responsibility of protecting the environment, and ensure the future;
- a workplace in which there is greater need for employees with initiative, cooperative skills, communication skills, problem-solving skills,

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life-long learning skills, and diverse perspectives;

- a family in which there is less discipline, less communication, less caring, and more emotional, physical, and sexual abuse;
- a community in which there is more violence, more drug use, more need for civic awareness and action, and less of a sense of community and caring; and
- individuals who face more obstacles and challenges in attaining self-actualization and self-fulfillment.

Educators are also increasingly recognizing that these changes in their communities require systemic change in their educational systems, to significantly enhance their ability to meet all students' needs for coping with such a different world. However, those educators seldom have any experience in undertaking systemic change, and they are finding that it is far more difficult than the piecemeal reforms that have prevailed over the past several decades. They are finding that efforts to bring about such change are rather like a constantly changing kaleidoscope.¹ Each effort mutually influences all interconnected parts and persons, which gives rise to a dynamic interweaving network of events and human activity. They are also finding that efforts at change are less and less predictable and deterministic, more chaotic and increasingly complex. As with the shifting patterns of the kaleidoscope, educators are finding that the interweaving of events gives rise to processes which influence efforts of change. Educators are beginning to understand the need for systemic change, and the need for guidance systems to enable school districts to engage in dynamic educational change.

Fortunately, enough educators have recently engaged in their own kaleidoscope of the change process to provide us with some information about the interweavings of process. Having been involved in our experiences of change, and

studied others, the four of us are currently developing some process maps and descriptions of challenges that stakeholders are likely to encounter as they undertake change. Those descriptions are in the form of guidance for process facilitators and reflect the process skills and knowledge essential to assisting a school district and community in creating their own unique patterns of change.

In this paper, we summarize the guidance system we are developing for a facilitator's guidebook (Jenlink *et al.*, in press).² We begin by offering our view of the definition and purpose of systemic change and identifying our audience. Then we describe a set of beliefs or implied values we feel are important to any systemic change effort. The meat of the guidance system is the description of specific events (sets of activities) that a process facilitator and stakeholders would use to create an ideal vision of the new school system they desire. These events are of two kinds: discrete and continuous.³ Discrete events are those which are generally accomplished just once, and tend to have input-output relationships with each other (each provides feedback and feed-forward in the change effort). That is, the result of one event is needed as input for another event to be most useful. While this suggests a linear order to the guidance system, in fact, we recognize that any change process is more dynamic in nature, and likely to continuously bounce between and among various steps and stages. On the other hand, continuous events are those for which the facilitator and stakeholders need to constantly monitor the needs and conditions and periodically take action to address them.

¹Portions of this paper are excerpted from a book entitled *Facilitating Systemic Change in School Districts: A Guidebook*, by Patrick M. Jenlink, Charles M. Reigeluth, Alison A. Carr, and Laurie M. Nelson. Portions of this paper have also appeared in an article of the title in *Tech Trends*.

²Continuous events are interwoven with the discrete events, providing a system of events that are interrelated and fluid in their movements, complementing one another and forming a human activity system for fundamental change. Throughout the guidance system, there are linkages between the two types of events which inform the facilitator and participants of the change effort when they must pay particular attention within the different phases, events, and activities comprising the guidance system.

³The concept of kaleidoscope is adapted from the work of N. Kathrine Hayles and her study of scientific field models that demonstrates the dynamic interweaving nature of events over time, and illustrates the interrelated and complex nature of social systems engaged in change. See Hayles (1984).

SYSTEMIC CHANGE

The purpose of systemic change is to create a better educational system than that which currently exists. We define *systemic change* as an approach to change that:

- recognizes the interrelationships and interdependencies among the *parts* of the educational system, with the consequence that desired changes in one part of the system must be accompanied by changes in other parts that are necessary to support those desired changes; and
- recognizes the interrelationships and interdependencies between the educational system and its *community*, including parents, employers, social service agencies, religious organizations and much more, with the consequence that all those stakeholders are given active ownership over the change effort.

Systemic change can be thought of as a process based on systems theory and systems design principles. Systems *theory* embraces the importance of a global perspective accounting for myriad components and interconnections in an educational system. In addition, the recognition that change in one part of a system necessarily alters the rest of the system is a cornerstone of systems theory. Systems *design* concerns creating something new by applying a methodology that is grounded in a set of systems design principles. Systemic change is broad in scope and large in scale. It entertains the whole system as the context for understanding change and making decisions related to change. It recognizes that a change in one aspect of a system requires changes in other aspects in order for it to be successful.

The purpose of this guidance system is to help those facilitating a change effort to create and sustain systemic change in their educational system. It helps them to learn from the failures and successes of others, so that they may avoid mistakes that have the potential to divide their community and destroy careers. It focuses on the process for change, rather than on what specific changes should be made. We believe that a community should decide what changes it needs,

and that our role as designers of the guidance system should be to share what we have learned about the change process — the critically important understandings, beliefs, skills, knowledge, and events for effecting a district-wide, community-based change effort.

The guidance system is intended primarily for people who want to facilitate systemic change in education. More specifically, it is for:

- people who recognize that systemic changes require changes beyond the scope of a classroom or a school building — that they require district-level changes as well;
- people who recognize that systemic changes require the participation of all groups in the community that have a stake in their educational system;
- people who realize that systemic change is difficult and who want some guidance as to how to go about it.

GUIDING BELIEFS FOR THE PROCESS

Integral to the guidance system is a set of beliefs and implied values that we hold important to any successful systemic change effort. Within each event (set of activities) specific interrelated beliefs are presented when we believe it most important for the facilitator and stakeholders to use them in guiding their actions. This *just-in-time* approach does not mean that all the beliefs are not important all the time, but rather it suggests a timely fashion in which to learn to use them. Following are those beliefs which we think are important for the facilitator to embrace from the beginning of the systemic change effort.

Caring for children and their future. We value and respect young people, and we hold nurturing their development as the most important task that any community undertakes. Therefore, the purpose of any systemic change effort should be to advance human learning and development.

Systemic thinking. Participants in the change effort should possess a holistic view of their educational system so as to understand the interdependencies among its parts (i.e., the implications of changing one part on all other

parts), and the relationships between the system and the larger system it serves (the community). See, for example, Banathy (1992).

Inclusivity. The change effort should include all people who have a stake in the educational system (stakeholders), such as school board members, administrators, teachers, students, parents, business and community people (including religious, social service, justice, and political leaders), and university people.

Stakeholder ownership. All stakeholders should be given ownership over the change process, rather than just being represented in the process. Unlike typical community participation efforts to gain 'buy-in' or 'input', this sort of empowered stakeholder ownership requires substantial shifts in power from leadership to change team and community members.

Co-evolution. Participants in the change effort should understand that all systems must continuously change in response to changes in their subsystems. Co-evolution is the process of mutually changing in concert with the inter-related parts or persons of a system. This includes the full range from an educational system and its community co-evolving, to an individual and his or her school co-evolving.

Facilitator. The change effort should have a process guide who is viewed as neutral and fair by all parties and who has skills, understanding, and experience for all aspects of systemic change in education. The facilitator should not be viewed as an expert in the sense of someone who can tell the stakeholders where they should go or what solutions to accept. Rather, the facilitator assists them in deciding where they want to go, and assists them in learning how to get there.

Process orientation. Participants in the change effort should understand that how the vision or design for a new educational system is created is more important than the actual nature of the vision or design. It is embracing a 'process orientation' rather than a 'product orientation' and understanding that the potential for change lies within the journey, not the destination — the importance is on the process used to create, not on the product (new design) created. Focusing on the process is critical because that is what brings

about the evolution of mindsets that is fundamental to successful systemic change.

Context. Systemic change (and systems design) is context dependent — dependent upon knowing and understanding the existing context for effecting change. Participants in the change effort should understand that systemic change affects and is affected by the social dynamic in which the change effort is being undertaken. It should be understood that context is not only the cultural systems of values and beliefs, assumptions, and artifacts, but also includes the climate or perceived wellness of the setting as well as the existing structures of the educational system. Understanding the internal context of a community and its school district must be balanced by understanding the larger external context of the state and nation.

Time. Participants should understand that systemic change is a time-intensive process. More than any other investment stakeholders will make, investing time will determine the successes or defeats that they experience along the journey of change.

Space. Participants should understand that, in order to create something new, they will need space where they are not battling constantly with the something old they want to change. They will need a neutral space where they can come together and have conversations of/for change which are uninterrupted, creative, open, and psychologically safe interactions.

Participant commitment. The members of the core change team must possess a deep commitment to the change process, for they will have to give most of themselves and surmount the greatest obstacles. They will also, through their shared commitment, create a pool of energy that other stakeholders can draw from as they come to the change process. In many ways, commitment to change is both a psychological contract that individuals engage in, and a social contract essential to creating a community of change.

Respect. Respect begins within each participant, and having a healthy self-respect is paramount to being able to respect others. Participants should value the perspectives, concerns, and contributions of all other participants. Respect is essential to working closely with

others in change, and it is an important condition for building trusting and open relationships so important to the process.

Responsibility. Being a responsible participant is about fulfilling commitments and meeting obligations essential to sustaining relationships and working together. Being responsible is about your own self-responsible role as well as understanding that as facilitator or stakeholder participants you are always *responsible to and with* others in effecting change; very seldom, if ever, are you *responsible for* effecting change other than in yourself.

Readiness. The preparedness of the facilitator and school district to undertake systemic change is one of the most important initial factors. Being a process guide as well as a participant in the process means that each person has to have certain capacities (conceptual/process skills and knowledge as well as attitudes and mindsets) that will support their active and successful participation. There is no 'later' for readiness; building capacities is an ongoing and continuous part of the process for change.

Collaboration. Collaboration is a process of sharing relationships wherein participants feel safe in exchanging their knowledge and experiences. Collaboration is essential to effecting strong teams and ensuring viable group dynamics. Collaborative relationships are interdependent in the sense that individuals form as collectives with the purpose of effecting the efficient attainment of stated goals. Collaboration can act as a springboard for creating a community of stakeholders who share a common purpose of systemic change.

Community. Community differs from a group or collaborative team. Where groups or teams are used as a means to an end, community is a state of being and becoming a whole. And having a sense of community, which may be possible with a group, team, or collaborative, is different from being a community. Community refers to an open honesty and deep commitment by people to learn together and make each other's conditions their own. Community, in a normative sense of the term, is an association of people, mutually and reciprocally involved with each other, caring for each other, aware of the human

effects of their actions upon those within and outside the association, committed to being responsible for these effects. When stakeholders move toward being in a community of action for change, the building of community is a future-oriented process of inquiry to sustain the continued growth of people. Participants should understand the importance of creating and sustaining community as a key to systemic change.

Vision. It is important for all participants in the change effort to understand that vision is a metaphor for the individually and collectively held shared values, beliefs, and ideals of what something can be. Vision, in effect, is the energy of the change effort. And when this energy is derived from broad stakeholder involvement, then the potential is far greater for effecting change than if the vision is limited to a few people. Participants should understand the importance of the vision-development process and that a shared ideal vision is created in concert with the changes of the larger environment in which the educational system is embedded.

Wholeness. Seeing the interrelated and interconnected nature of parts in a system enables us to understand that each part derives its identity and purpose from the whole. Engaging in systemic change involves systemic thinking and a global consciousness which give rise to participants' ability to see the relationships which connect them to their current educational system and community. Wholeness is important to understanding that a change in one part of the educational system necessitates changes in all parts.

Language. Engaging in systemic change means going to the roots of our experience with change and identifying the language(s) of change we use in interacting with ourselves and others. Facilitators and stakeholders alike all have their own particular language for understanding what change is, most often grounded in their experiences and attempts to enhance their knowledge and skills for effecting change. It is important that participants work together in constructing a shared language for systemic change which is grounded in systems thinking and educational systems design.

Conversation. Participants in the change effort should understand the fundamental importance of conversation to the change process. This includes discriminating between dialogue, discussion, and design as types of conversation, and understanding how each contributes to or takes away from the change process. Knowing the right time for a given type of conversation is critical to moving forward in the systemic change process. And it is equally important to know when to have a conversation with oneself, with others, and with the environment (context) of change. The process of systemic change is premised, in large part, on dialogue and design conversation which differ greatly from traditional forums of discussion and debate.

Democracy. The active participation of stakeholders in the systemic change process must be understood as a critical linkage to systemic change. Giving individuals a personal interest in the process of decision-making and designing change for their school system is at the heart of systemic change. Democracy is about the habits of mind which secure change in social systems without creating disorder or disenfranchisement from that social system of its members.

Culture. The facilitator and stakeholders must understand the power and potential of existing cultures for resisting systemic change. And they must understand how to create new cultures which will support and nurture the appropriate values, beliefs, and creation of artifacts important to initiating and sustaining the change effort. Creating a new culture requires building a strong community of stakeholders who work from a common purpose and sense of identity, toward a shared destiny.

DISCRETE EVENTS IN THE JOURNEY

Discrete events are those which occur at distinct points during the systemic change effort. They may be understood as important transition points in the process. It may be necessary to revisit a discrete event during the change effort, and many discrete events initiate what become continuous events thereafter. There are five major

phases to the systemic change process (see Figure 1):

Phase I. It is important to make sure that both the facilitator and the district meet a certain level of readiness for a systemic change effort, or the chances of success will be slim. It is also important to have a formal agreement so that expectations are clear for all concerned.

Phase II. After those preliminaries, the facilitator should form and prepare a 'core team' to initiate the change process. The first priority is to help the team generate an appropriate culture and for systemic change (Fullan, 1993). This would be very difficult to do on a large inclusive team, so we strongly recommend that this initial team be very small (5-7 people). Other activities that help to both prepare and acculturate the core team include developing skills and understanding in systems design and group process, and exploring and evaluating the current situation in the district with respect to change.

Phase III. As the core team develops appropriate culture, skills, and understanding, they assume more and more of the responsibility for guiding the change effort. As soon as a sufficient level of development has been reached, the facilitator assists the core team in expanding into multiple change teams, including a decision-making team comprised of representatives from all stakeholder groups (about 20-25 people) and a small design support team of stakeholders (about 7-10 members). During this transition, the core team will serve as a support system and provide critical insight for the development of these new teams, including sharing of the core team's knowledge, experiences, and culture for change.

The design support team will be a generative force for ideas and energy, flowing into and throughout the change process. Systems design is the central process for creating change within the district and community, and the design support team serves the district and community through creating a foundation of shared beliefs about education in the community. The decision-making team takes an equally important role in the process, serving as an advisory and decision-making entity necessary to the complex and often kaleidoscopic nature of a systemic change effort. The composition of each team is critical to

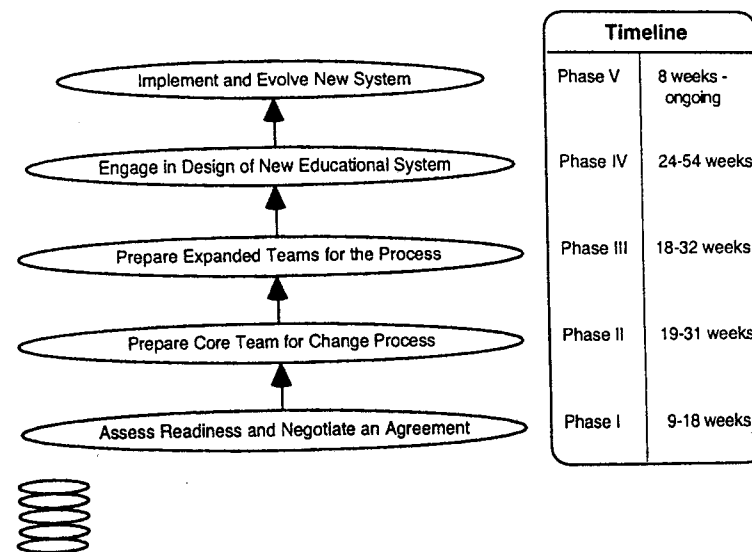


Figure 1. Phases of the change process

providing a strong voice in the change effort, and one that collectively demonstrates diversity in both stakeholder audience as well as in world-views. As the design and decisioning teams work interactively within the change effort, they must develop ownership in, as well as responsibility for, the process, which means that they must be taken through the evolution of mindsets that the core team struggled through. When the core team expands into one of these two teams, it infuses its culture into the expanded group, by virtue of the respect and influence of its members, and it takes the new members through many of the same activities that guided its own preparation.

Phase IV. Now that all the groundwork has been laid — in terms of grass-roots and top-leadership political support (broad stakeholder involvement), development of culture for change, and development of skills and understanding for systemic change — the community is ready to engage in the design process. Pivotal to this process is developing one or more shared visions of an ideal educational system for their community.

An ideal vision process enables participants to transcend existing mindsets and assumptions about schools and educational change. But visions of education are based on beliefs (or values) about education. So the design process must begin by fostering development of a set of shared beliefs about education. After establishing that foundation of common beliefs, it is often desirable to have many different design teams generating different ideal visions, based on variations of stakeholders' beliefs within the framework of the common beliefs, based on the assumption that there is no *one* best way to educate. Different schools may pursue different visions, as long as they do not violate any of the common beliefs. Once the visions of the ideal are created, the details must be worked out for each one that meets approval. Appropriate administrative and governance systems must also be envisioned and designed in the ideal.

Phase V. Once the ideal designs have been generated and approved, the community must develop an implementation process for gradually evolving the current system ever closer to the

ideal(s). Some compromises on the ideal are usually required, especially in the short term, and you will find that the ideal will change as you get closer to it. This means that you need not only a plan for evolving the current system toward the ideal, but also a plan for evolving the ideal. Evaluation must be an integral part of both those processes.

Phase I: Assess Readiness and Negotiate an Agreement

Phase I is comprised of four events, as shown in Figure 2. Those four events are described next.

1. *Assess and enhance your readiness to be a facilitator.* This event is for the person interested in being a facilitator. Before undertaking the responsibility of facilitating systemic change, it is important to conduct a self-assessment of personal readiness and to design a professional development program based on the needs identified in that self-assessment. The self-assessment is based on competencies in three broad areas: skills and knowledge, personal growth and change, and group process. For each competency, a set of questions is provided to help assign a rating to a scale, and all the scales comprise a

profile of individual readiness. Designing a professional development program entails the potential facilitator determining which areas require additional professional development as a *prerequisite* to facilitating systemic change and which areas require ongoing development *throughout* the change effort. It is also important to figure out how to enhance personal development within each area that needs it, both before and throughout the change effort. Finally, the person undertaking to be a facilitator should initiate this program before entering into a formal relationship with a school district, and should continue the program, periodically reassessing his/her development and redesigning the development program as required to successfully facilitate the district's change effort. The facilitator should eventually assist every person involved in process facilitation to similarly assess and enhance her/his capabilities as a process facilitator, so that facilitation can gradually be turned over to the participants.

2. *Establish or redefine your relationship with a school district.* If the facilitator has no relationship with a district, this event entails identifying a school district to consider working with, talking with the contact person by phone, making a site visit, and deciding whether or not to proceed to a

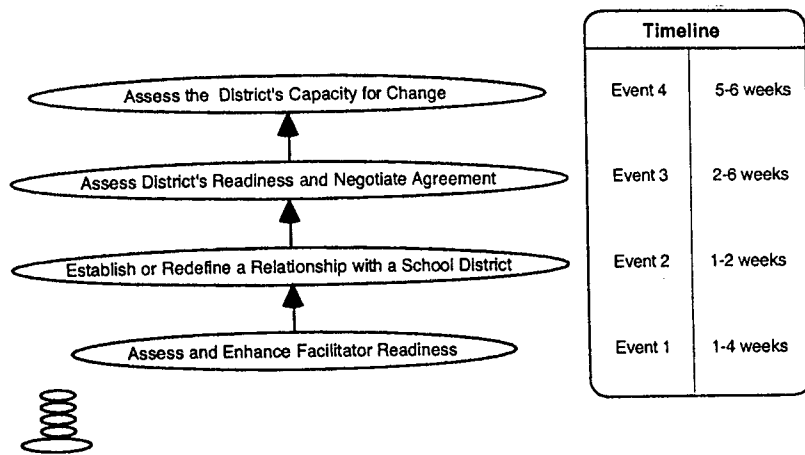


Figure 2. Phase I: assess readiness and negotiate an agreement

more time-consuming assessment of the district's readiness for systemic change. If the decision is yes, then the facilitator enters into a preliminary agreement for conducting a district readiness assessment. If the facilitator already has a relationship with a district, this event entails: attempting to analyze the nature of the existing relationship with key leaders, deciding whether or not to proceed to the next event, and if yes, developing a plan for redefining existing relationships, and entering into an agreement for assessing the district's readiness for change.

3. *Assess the district's readiness for change and negotiate a formal agreement.* This event entails the facilitator assessing the district's readiness for systemic change with a set of criteria by looking at documents and interviewing key people. During this event, it is also important to help those people to acquire a better understanding of the need for, and nature of, a systemic change effort. Finally, a decision is made on whether or not to enter into a formal relationship with the key leaders of the school district for facilitating their systemic change effort.

4. *Assess the district's capacity for change.* In this event the facilitator meets with various stakeholder groups within the district and community to identify the baseline of existing and lacking capacities for systemic change. It is important to gather personality profiles and skill inventories, and communicate understanding about the change process to appropriate participants.

Phase II: Prepare the Initial Core Team

Phase II is comprised of the events shown in Figure 3, each of which is briefly described next.

5. *Select the participants for the core team.* This event entails the facilitator adapting the criteria and selection process for the core team to the specific conditions of the district with the help of key district leaders, identifying types of people for the core team, selecting the initial slate and alternates with the help of key leaders, meeting with individuals to make sure they will all be appropriate, recruiting the members, and announcing the team membership to the public, all while creating a good public awareness and

image of what is going on. If the facilitator is an internal person, it is important to consider that this person may have political 'baggage', and some special precautions should be heeded.

6. *Create the core team dynamic.* In this event, the facilitator designs and facilitates a team development process to build the team at a two-day retreat in which all core team members work together to develop a team culture and essential teaming skills and knowledge. This is a time for bonding and building relationships, a time for creating a sensitivity to personal beliefs, and a time for beginning to create a core of shared beliefs. This team development process will become an experience base for the core team to later design additional team-building experiences for new teams.

7. *Train the core team in systems design.* This event entails helping the core team to develop a skill and knowledge base for educational systems design. Included are attention to systems theory, practice, and various models of systems design. Core team members learn the importance of stakeholder involvement in change and develop a deep understanding and appreciation for the user-designer approach to systems design. Also, you help the core team to begin communicating broadly among all stakeholders the meaning of systems design and the importance of systems design to systemic change.

8. *Design Events 9-11.* In this event the facilitator guides the core team through an important transition in their role by assisting their selection and redesign of Events 9-11. The experience of redesigning these Events enables the core team to develop their skills and knowledge in systems design. This begins with fostering an understanding of the difference between design and redesign, as well as the importance of developing the appropriate skills and knowledge for each event that they design.

9. *Identify competing change efforts.* This event entails the facilitator assisting the core team to identify existing and potentially competing change efforts in the district. Fostering an understanding among core team members of the importance of identifying competing change efforts, the facilitator also helps them identify where district resources are currently being

directed with respect to change. The facilitator and core team approaches those stakeholders who have the most investment in the competing change efforts and fosters an understanding of the importance of suspending those change efforts until the need for them emerges out of the systemic change process. The core team also starts to establish a relationship with each building in the school system and to build a positive image of the core team.

10. *Evaluate openness to change.* In this event the facilitator assists the core team in evaluating the level of openness to change that exists with individuals in the district (school system and community). They also identify why the

individuals are open or closed to change, including an understanding of the past history of successful and unsuccessful change efforts.

11. *Evaluate the existing culture for change.* This event entails facilitating the core team in evaluating the existing beliefs, assumptions, and mindsets about educational change. The facilitator fosters an understanding of what a culture of change is, and the importance of the language of change used by stakeholders in the district.

12. *Redesign Events 13-15.* In this event, the core team determines what processes to use in expanding itself into a decisioning and design support team. The decisioning team is relatively

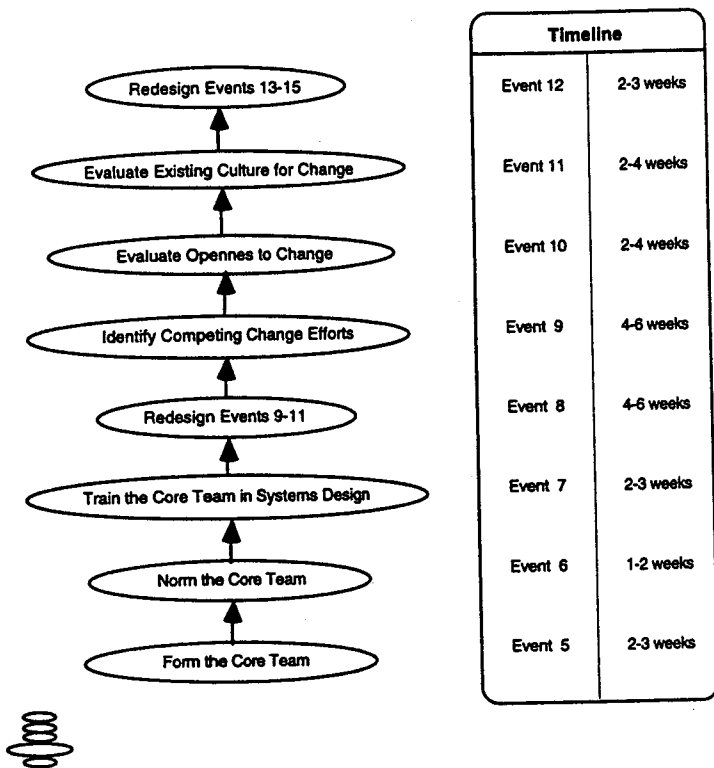


Figure 3. Phase II: prepare the core team for the change process

large (20-25 people) so as to have broad stakeholder and power-broker involvement, and this team has as much decision-making authority as the school board can and will empower them with. In contrast, the design support team is a much smaller group (8-12 people) of respected innovators and creative thinkers who can devote much more time to designing a new educational system for the decisioning team. In this event, the core team also designs the process for forming and norming these two teams.

Phase III: Prepare the Expanded Teams

Phase III is comprised of four events (see Figure 4), which are described next.

13. *Expand and build the decisioning team.* This event, if done before event 14, entails expanding the core team to approximately 20 members, which includes a broad representation of all stakeholder groups. The facilitator must foster an understanding of the role of the decisioning team in the systemic change effort. Included in this event is a similar two-day retreat as was used to build the core team, including identifying personality profiles and identifying common beliefs (Event 6). The core team then facilitates

the development of a skill and knowledge base for participants on the team (similar to Event 7), and develops skills and knowledge for decisioning systemically. The core team also shares the results of all prior evaluations, and the decisioning team designs its own mode of operation.

14. *Select and build the design support team.* This event, if done after Event 13, entails spinning off about five members of the decisioning team to serve on the design support team as well. These five form a nucleus that is expanded into the design support team of approximately 10 people. It is important for the facilitator to also foster an understanding of the role of the design support team in the systemic change effort. The decisioning team designs a similar team-building experience (two-day retreat) as it went through, followed by a similar skill- and knowledge-building experience (Event 13) for the design support team. Finally, the design support team designs its own mode of operation, subject to the approval of the decisioning team. If Events 13 and 14 are done in reverse order, the core team expands into the design support team, which eventually spins off about five members to form the nucleus of the decisioning team.

15. *Train and enculturate the design support team.* This event entails facilitating additional training

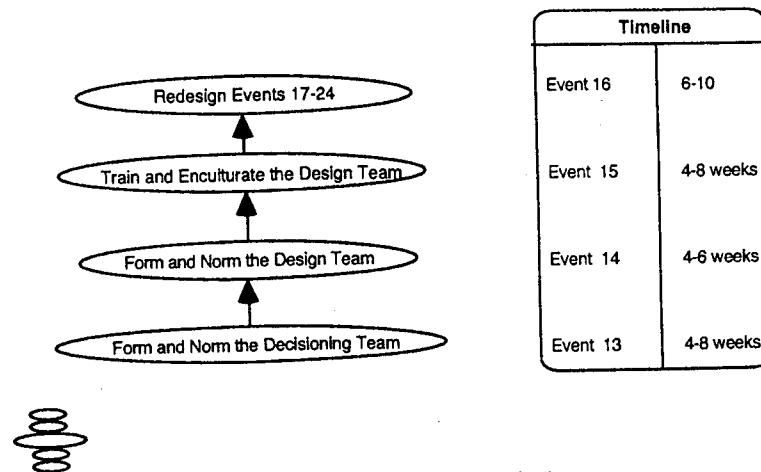


Figure 4. Phase III: prepare expanded teams for the process

for the design support team, primarily with respect to applications of the systems theory, systems practice, and various models of systems design that they learned about in Event 14 (see Event 7). The design support team also explores alternative views and approaches to the change process, such as user-designer vs. expert-designer, interactive vs. non-interactive, designing vs. planning, and outside-in vs. inside-out approaches to change.

16. *Redesign Events 17–24.* Using what they have learned in Event 15, and what is provided in this guidebook for Events 17–24, the design

support team redesigns its own design process. The facilitator engages team members, as user-designers, in understanding their role and responsibility in self-evaluation. This is also the time to foster understanding of how evaluation is an important part of individual, team, and organizational learning within the systemic change effort.

Design a New System

Phase IV is comprised of the eight events shown in Figure 5.

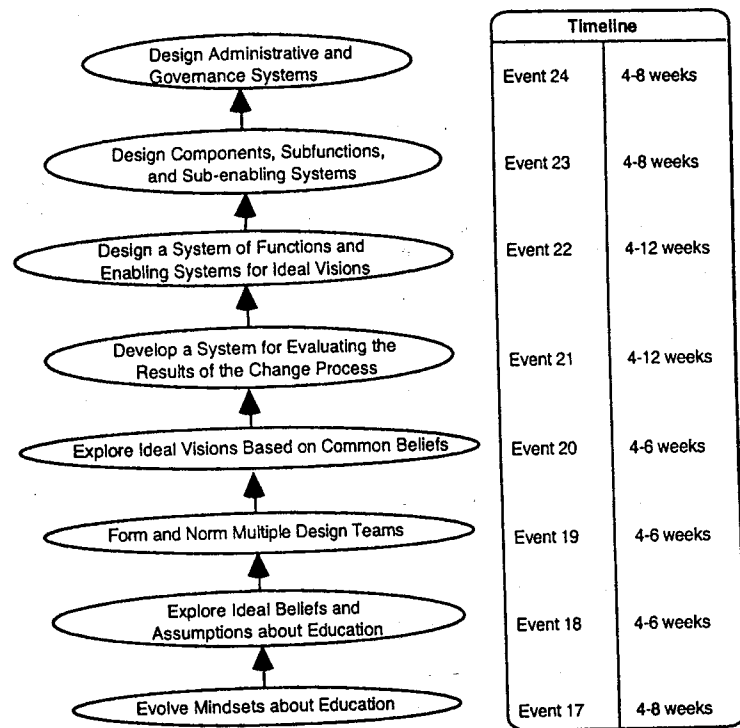


Figure 5. Phase IV: engage in design of the new educational system

17. *Evolve mindsets about education.* In this event, the facilitator fosters an understanding of what a mindset is, and how mindsets contribute to our perceptions of education. At this time, the facilitator also assists the design and decisioning team members to identify their own mindsets, and to leap out of their existing mindsets about education. The facilitator should foster an understanding of different approaches to education and the changes in society which have created the need for systemic change. Understanding that mindsets are grounded in beliefs and assumptions is important, as is understanding that mindsets reflect not only our conceptual understanding, but also the strategies or methods we use to understand education.

18. *Explore ideal beliefs and assumptions about education.* This event entails facilitating the design support team (and subsequently the decisioning team) in developing a core set of ideal beliefs and assumptions about education which they want to see as the foundation for their new system. The facilitator fosters among the design support team, decisioning team, and broader community of stakeholders, an understanding of, and appreciation for, ideal design. It is important, during this event, that the design support team interact with other stakeholders in assessing (and helping to evolve) what beliefs and assumptions to adopt. It is also important to foster an understanding of how shared beliefs and assumptions contribute a strong foundation for the next steps in the design process.

19. *Select and build multiple design teams.* This event entails helping the design support team to plan and implement the self-selection of small design teams based on individuals' beliefs within the framework of the district-wide beliefs. Then each of the new teams needs to go through a team-building process in a two-day retreat (redesigned by the design support team) and development of appropriate skills and knowledge (see Event 14). Finally, the results of all the prior evaluations are shared with the new teams, and they design their own modes of operation, with frequent communication with the district-wide design support team.

20. *Explore ideal visions based on the common beliefs.* In this event the facilitator assists and

co-facilitates the district-wide design support team members to facilitate each design team in the process of reaching consensus on the particular beliefs about learning and education that they would like their 'school' (to use the word loosely) to reflect, within the framework of the district-wide beliefs. The district-wide design support team members also help each team to create their own ideal vision based on their common beliefs and assumptions, starting with what learning experiences they want to foster, and then the instructional system that will best support those learning experiences. This event involves fostering an understanding of the role of ideal visions in bringing about systemic change and how stakeholder participation is key to creating commitment to the ideal vision. Each design team communicates its ideal vision broadly with all stakeholder groups and fosters their understanding and ownership of the vision.

21. *Develop a system for evaluating the results of the change process.* In this event, each design team designs an evaluation system for its new design. This includes developing an understanding of the role of critical examination, reflection, positive feedback systems, and self-renewal as part of the evaluation process. It is important that all stakeholders have clear agreement as to what is important to evaluate and what is not.

22. *Design a system of functions for each ideal vision.* This event entails each design team identifying and designing a set of functions to attain its vision of a new educational system. The district-wide design support team members facilitate an understanding of a function within a system, and guide the design team members in moving from general levels of system function to more specific, detailed levels of subfunctions, and so on. They also foster an understanding of the interconnected and interrelated nature of the various subsystem functions and how they work together to enable the system to achieve its purposes.

23. *Design the components for accomplishing each function.* In this event every design team designs each component necessary to accomplish each function of the new system. The progression from vision to functions to components is a gradual process of developing greater detail on a wholistic image of the new system. This way, the

parts are always designed to be compatible with each other.

24. *Design the administrative and governance systems.* All the design teams come together with the district-wide design support team to design the site-based and district-wide administrative and governance systems, with regular input from the decisioning team.

Implement and Evolve the New System

Phase V is comprised of just two events, as shown in Figure 6.

25. *Develop a process for evolving to the new system.* It is likely that many aspects of the ideal system will not be immediately attainable, so each design team and the design support team all have to figure out how to evolve ever closer to the ideal over time, while trying to minimize incompatibilities between the early elements of the new system and the remaining elements of the old system. This is similar to a strategic plan, but is developed and adopted by all the stakeholders, not just the administration.

26. *Evolve, evaluate, and revise the new system.* This event entails implementing the process, evaluating and revising it while it is being implemented, and evaluating and revising the new system as it evolves, using an evolving version of the evaluation system designed in Event 21. Also, as the new system evolves closer to the ideal, new possibilities and problems will emerge, so it is wise to periodically revisit and revise the ideal design as well.

CONTINUOUS EVENTS INTEGRAL TO THE GUIDANCE SYSTEM

Continuous events differ in one important way from the previous list of discrete events. As a facilitator it is important to continually engage in the activities presented in each continuous event throughout the change effort. And these events are not only for participants, they are equally important to the facilitator, and those who assist in facilitation during the process. The facilitator (and eventually all the participants) needs to constantly monitor the continuous needs of a systemic change process and bolster those needs which fall below a critical threshold. Sufficient time and resources are essential to creating a sustainable change process, as well as implementing the system ideal which participants have created.

Given the beliefs and logic of a systemic change process, here is an overview of the continuous events for the guidance system.

A. Engage in reflection. In this event participants engage continuously in individual and collective reflection as a key process in systemic change. As facilitator, you must nurture in them (and yourself) a self-reflective ethic and self-reflection skills. This continuous event is initiated during Event 1.

B. Evaluate and improve the change process. This event entails continuously evaluating the change process in order to improve it. The facilitator must nurture an understanding of systemic evaluation as a critical process for improving all

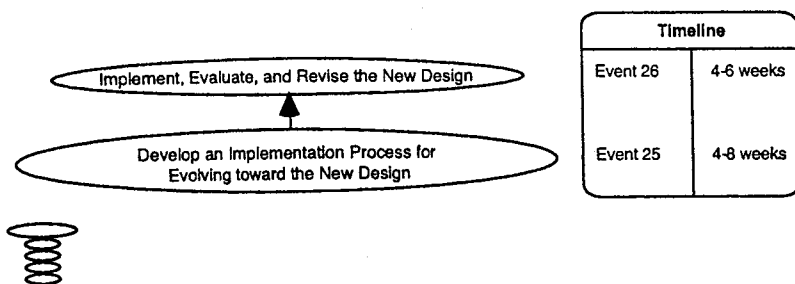


Figure 6. Phase V: implement and evolve the new system

aspects of the systemic change effort. Included here is an understanding of evaluation that moves beyond program evaluation models and seeks to function as a positive-feedback system for learning, self-correction, and formative development of the change process. This continuous event is initiated during Event 1.

C. Build and maintain trust. This event entails continuously building and sustaining trust among people, as well as between the change effort and individuals in the school system and community. The facilitator nurtures an understanding of what trust is, and how trust figures into building successful relationships within and across the change effort. It is also important for the facilitator to nurture the development of skills and knowledge essential to do so. This continuous event is initiated during Event 1.

D. Evolve mindset and culture. In this event participants continuously evolve their mindsets and culture regarding both education and the change process. As facilitator, it is critical to continuously help stakeholders, as user-designers, to develop an appreciation for, and understanding of, the need to continuously evolve their individual and collective mindsets, and the implication this holds for changing culture. And the facilitator must assist them to engage in the dialogue that is essential for this evolution to occur. This continuous event is initiated during Event 1.

E. Sustain motivation. This event entails teams continuously monitoring and sustaining their motivation for systemic change. Systemic change requires a sustained energy created by a balance of extrinsic motivation and deep intrinsic motivation that attends to the beliefs, and identifies with the purpose, of systemic change. As facilitator, it is important to continuously foster participants' understanding of the importance that motivation plays in the change process, and develop facilitator skills and knowledge necessary to monitor and enhance their motivation. This continuous event is initiated during Event 1.

F. Develop skills in systems thinking. In this event participants continuously develop their skills and knowledge in systems thinking. You as facilitator

help them to understand the interrelatedness of all the various parts of an educational system and between an educational system and its community, and you help them to acquire the basic concepts and principles of systems theory. This continuous event is initiated during Event 1.

G. Develop design skills. In this event participants continuously develop their skills and knowledge in the theory and practice of educational systems design, especially design skills, so that they can undertake the responsibility of being user-designers for the new educational system. As facilitator, you assist them to understand the importance of design in a systemic change process, and you help them to acquire the basic concepts, principles, and processes of educational systems design. This continuous event is initiated during Event 1.

H. Build and maintain political support. This event entails continuously negotiating political issues and achieving political support for the systemic change effort. The facilitator role is to nurture an understanding of, and respect for, the politics of change, and to nurture the development of necessary skills and knowledge to prepare the participants to do so. This continuous event is initiated during Event 2.

I. Develop and sustain appropriate leadership. This event entails continuously evolving from a top-down, authoritarian approach to leadership to an approach that is more empowering and supportive. The facilitator nurtures an understanding of the need for and nature of this new approach to leadership for systemic change, as well as nurturing the necessary skills and knowledge to effect this evolution. It includes building and sustaining participatory models of leadership, which lead to empowerment and self-renewal. This continuous event is initiated during Event 2.

J. Communicate with stakeholders (two-way). In this event participants continuously develop their communication skills and knowledge as they apply to systemic change. Included are the importance of open communication systems, which use a common language of change, and appropriate conventions of conversation for effecting systemic change. Your role is to nurture this development. This continuous event is initiated during Event 2.

K. *Periodically secure necessary resources.* This event entails continuously identifying and securing the types of resources essential to successful systemic change throughout the change effort. The facilitator role is to nurture the required skills and knowledge for doing this. This continuous event is initiated during Event 2.

L. *Periodically and appropriately allocate necessary resources.* This event entails participants continuously allocating resources to the systemic change effort. The facilitator role is to nurture skills and knowledge for identifying the resources available and maximizing the use of those resources. This continuous event is initiated during Event 3.

M. *Develop group-process and team-building skills.* In this event, participants must continuously develop their skills and knowledge in group process and team building. The facilitator assists them to recognize and understand the key role that groups and teams play in effecting systemic change, and the importance of those groups and teams devoting time and energy to learning to perform in a healthy and positive manner. This learning also helps to build and sustain community. This continuous event is initiated during Event 6.

N. *Build team spirit.* This event entails developing an understanding and appreciation of team spirit in systemic change. The facilitator role is to nurture the required skills and knowledge to build and sustain team spirit. This continuous event is initiated during Event 6.

O. *Foster conversation skills and knowledge.* In this event participants engage in developing their skills and knowledge in the various types of conversation important to the change effort, including dialogue (generative), design, and community building. Participants continuously engage in conversation as a key process in systemic change. As facilitator, you must nurture in them language and conversational ethics and skills. This continuous event is initiated during Event 6.

P. *Engage in self-disclosure.* In this event participants continuously engaging in self-disclosure as it applies to dialogue, design conversation, and other processes wherein sharing personal beliefs, assumptions, and mindsets is essential to building and sustaining a systemic

change effort. The facilitator fosters an understanding of the importance of self-disclosure in systemic change, and nurtures the skills and knowledge necessary to engage in self-disclosing. This continuous event is initiated during Event 6.

Q. *Build and evolve community.* This event entails continuously developing an understanding of what a community is and how it differs from other forms of collectives, such as groups and teams. It includes developing the skills and knowledge for building and sustaining a learning community for working on systemic change. This continuous event is initiated during Event 9.

R. *Foster organizational learning.* In this event participants continuously develop their skills and knowledge about different types of organizational learning and how they relate to the systemic change effort. Included is developing an understanding of how individual and team learning contribute to organizational learning. Adaptive, generative, and design learning are also explored. Your role is to nurture these processes. This continuous event is initiated during Event 9.

S. *Build an organizational memory.* This event entails developing the knowledge required to understand how schools build and maintain organizational memories over time. You help participants examine how organizational memory contributes to resistance to change, and how this memory may be used to facilitate systemic change in education. This continuous event is initiated during Event 9.

THE DESIGN PROCESS FOR CREATING THE GUIDANCE SYSTEM

The process used to create and test the guidance system (facilitator guidebook) is a design conversation process. As a design team, the authors have engaged in an ongoing generative design which draws on their individual experiences, knowledge, and related research. Working together in formal design team conversation of intense two- to four-day sessions, the team comes together to share, reflect, and dialogue about the phases and events comprising the

guidance system. These conversations are recorded, using audio recording and participant notes (laptop computer). The conversations provide a context in which the design team is able to engage in deep exploration of philosophical, theoretical, and practical issues of the guidance system.

Over time, and as written text is prepared, the team engages in a collective and recursive process of reading, editing, and checking the integrity of design for the guidance system. The recursive nature of the process is comparable with team member experiences in educational systems design and systemic change. During the time when the team is not meeting formally, the design conversation and process continue by using phone conferences and electronic communications (e-mail) to continue the design process across the boundaries of distance, space, and time. Careful attention is given to the design process and the emerging values and beliefs concerning conversation as a methodology.

The team has also developed a formal field-testing process for alpha and beta testing of the guidance system within school districts. The field-testing process focuses on collecting data on the guidance system as well as data on facilitation in the use of the guidance system. The research agenda implicit within the design work on the guidance system is not only concerned with the guidance system for facilitating systemic change, but is also concerned with design conversation and the study of process facilitation.

CONCLUSION

Each event in both the discrete and continuous categories is typically made up of several activities, and the events and their related activities form an interconnected and interdependent system for guidance of systemic change. This guidance is based on our experience and the related literature, but we are also currently engaged in several field tests of the guidance system. We anticipate that we will continuously update the guidance system. We also intend to produce it in the form of an electronic performance support system. In this way, we hope it will become ever more powerful as a tool for helping school districts and their communities to bring about quantum improvements in their educational systems.

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