# Systemic Change Going Public: Prelude to Scene 2

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"My interest has indeed changed/grown as a result of this website. I would like to know more about what parents and school districts can do to begin making this change. Rather than begin a conversation about systemic change on this website, I feel I need to observe and learn first before engaging" (Survey respondent, October 2012)

The *Educational Systemic Change Web Project* began 2011 as a move to bridge the gap between researchers and practitioners aligning with the division's strategic goals. Project aims: begin a conversation about educational systemic change with practitioners, increase the systemic change profile on the Web, and serve as a viable resource center to practitioners. In this session, participants will view the published videos and website, determine how practitioners perceived the media, and discuss the gaps.

## **Background of the Systemic Change and Efforts**

The scholars of Systemic Change in education have written profusely, however, change, innovation, and reform proliferate USA education with little incentive to create positive sustainable – educational systemic change (Reigeluth & Duffy, 2008). The writings include but are not limited to the following: need for systemic change (Chow, 2008; Reigeluth, 1995), theories of systemic change (Banathy, 1996; Duffy, 2003; Fullan, 2010; Senge 1990; Squire & Reigeluth, 2000), framework for understanding (Chow & Bucknall, 2011; Joseph & Reigeluth, 2010), case studies of implementation (Chow, 2008; Richter & Reigeluth, 2006), roles of stakeholders (Peck & Carr, 1997; Richter & Reigeluth, 2006), methods for employing (Duffy, 2008; Jenlink, Reigeluth, Carr & Nelson, 1996; Watson, Watson & Reigeluth 2012) and evaluation (Chow & Guerra-Lopez, 2011). Despite scholarly work, the pragmatic and theoretical understandings of educational systemic change goes unrecognized by those who may directly or indirectly influence education in our society.

Unlike piecemeal reform efforts, educational system change depends on society and values the inclusion of all stakeholders (Coburn, 2003; Goodman, 1995; Hargreaves, 2006). Therefore, the natural extension of the AECT Systemic Change division is to coalesce and broaden an understanding of systemic change for researchers and practitioners. In order to broaden understanding, communication must ensue. Communication often begins with one party initiating a conversation. Thus, the Web and YouTube project are just that; a useful way for others to learn about systemic change through a medium that is safe to examine, critique, and contribute. The videos and website examined are an attempt to commence a larger conversation about systemic change with the practitioner audience.

Moving and merging the academic writing and ideas to a practitioner-focused outreach in educational systemic change takes considerable thought. The free dictionary (http://www.thefreedictionary.com/practitioner) defines a practitioner as "One who practices something, especially an occupation, profession, or technique." The definition contrasts with most writing produced up this point. Previous writing and resources on educational systemic change have not targeted practitioners of systemic change as an audience, but rather it has be useful for other researchers as the writings appear in academic journals. However, moving from research or theory to the realm of practice is not without cost. When moving academic ideas from research/theory audience to practitioner audience, the message needs to be re-interpreted for the different audience, possibly modifying concepts so they are clearly understood (Rogers, 1995).

## There is a Need

Society is signifying a need for a greater understanding of sustainable educational systemic change. The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) program and administrator standards point to the need to facilitate these changes. College and University programs accredited with ISTE are preparing facilitators to be visionary leaders: "Technology coaches inspire and participate in the development and implementation of a shared vision for the comprehensive integration of technology to promote excellence and support transformational change throughout the instructional environment" (ISTE-NETS, 2011). Technology facilitators include a vast number of teachers and technology coordinators. Likewise, the administrator standards espouse "Visionary Leadership" to support "transformation", "inspire and facilitate among all stakeholders," develop "shared vision while advocating" on local, state and national levels for policies, programs"(ISTE-NETS, 2011).

The national movement towards understanding change points to a ripe time for the AECT division. Creating an accessible repository of material may bridge a divide between practitioners and academics/researchers of systemic change.

In contrast, a web search on systemic change yields disheartening results. Currently, when the keywords "systemic change" is searched in Google, the first item listed is an obsolete web site by the National School Boards Association (NSBA). The NSBA definition of systemic change was created nine years ago in 2003, and links to AECT through a broken link. The fact that NSBA has a stated interest in systemic change suggests the potential for the value of this project. However, the concept of systemic change needs to be articulated on the Web with greater precision and with the voices of those who are working on this issue in a long-term, sustained fashion.

### **Design Rationale**

A practitioner focused website was created in 2011 and was vetted by practitioners summer/fall 2012. Practitioners are defined as individuals, who have not formally studied systemic change but who may be interested in how to lead, participate, evaluate, or recognize an inclusive change process. Practitioners may be teachers, administrators, policy makers, or any stakeholder engaged in educational change.

Due to its general ease of use, the practitioner focused website was created using the WordPress® platform. Interoperability with YouTube and other Social media such as Facebook and Twitter make WordPress® an ideal choice. WordPress® allows users to upload media, including pictures and video, research reports, and journal articles. A general information architecture was designed to specifically ensure that information from different audiences were seeking could be easily found.

In an effort to communicate the multifaceted nature of systemic change, web video became a high priority. Video can potentially convey complex messages in a short amount of time with the use of audio and visual displays (Braverman, 2010; Osgood & Hinshaw, 2009;).

In lieu of a traditional method section for research, this paper describes the workflow used in the website and video creation. The concept of workflow seems more valuable as it encourages transparency throughout the design and development process and includes a rationale for the decisions made by the people involved (Gotto, 2004). In addition, workflow is the language of the practitioner who produces media aligning with the end goals of the project, and produces a timeline that can be easily critiqued or modeled for further development.

After description of the workflow, the preliminary results of the usability test will be shared.

## Workflow

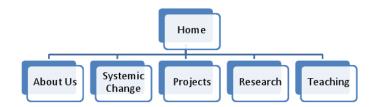
## **Overall Website and Video Creation Workflow**

The website and video project began as collaboration between the current, incoming and elect communications officers of the Systemic Change Division. We determined that there was a need for practitioners to be involved within the systemic change efforts, which was aligned to the strategic plans. The first author took the lead on the video; the second author led the website creation and usability study and the third author refined and supported all processes.

Through multiple communication devices, the design and development process was completed, despite geographical distance. The following tools were used for virtual communication: Skype between officers; Google Docs/Google Spreadsheets for scheduling, task lists, and overall writing components; WordPress hosts the website; YouTube hosts the private videos for reflection and the public video; and Qualtrics administered the usability survey. Technology used for video creation included the following: Adobe Premiere, Adobe Photoshop, and GarageBand.

The site was initially designed by developing an information architecture based on preliminary user analysis and identified information needs for each user group. See Figure 1.

### Design Specifications



#### **User Analysis and Feature Checklists**

Policy Makers	Teachers	College	Researchers	Students	AECT
		Educators			Members
What is it?	What is it?	What is it?	What is it?	What is it?	What is it?
About Us	Why use it?	Why use it?	Examples	Examples	Examples
Why use it?	How to?	How to?	Research	Research	Research
Examples	Examples	Examples	Why use it?	Why use it?	Why use it?
ROI	ROI	ROI	How to?	How to?	How to?
How to?	How to?	How to?	ROI	ROI	ROI
	About Us				

**Figure 1 - Website Information Architecture** 

The site itself was designed around the theme of children and students and delivering specific information about systemic change to policy makers, teachers, university educators, researchers, students, and AECT members centered on five main content and navigation areas – About Us, Systemic Change, Projects, Research, Teaching, and a general area for discussion. See Figure 2.

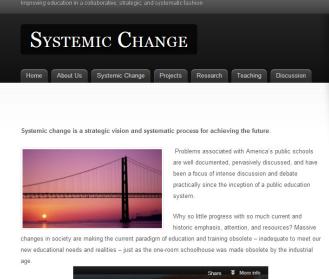




Figure 2 - Systemic Change Website

## Video Workflow

*Video Pre-production:* Spring 2011 the goals all of the video were vaguely established: videos were desired to reach a practitioner focused audience. The interview protocol (see interview questions in Appendix A) was created by the three communications officers and vetting between one another. The interview questions focused on describing and contrasting systemic change with current forms of educational change and reform. Other interview questions sought to illicit personal experience, practices, benefits, challenges, and ways to become involved. The Division Leadership and active members were notified before the AECT 2011 conference and interview times were arranged. Members, who were not contacted prior to the meeting, were solicited for participation at the Systemic Change Division meeting.

*Video Production:* During production the goal was to maintain a conversational tone so that members would be relaxed in front of the intrusive video camera. The video questions were posted in large print on the walls so that the interviewee could easily navigate through the questions. Communications officers conducted the interviews using an informal semi-structured interview approach (Stringer, 2007). Many times the interviewee led the interview tackling the questions he/she felt more comfortable addressing.

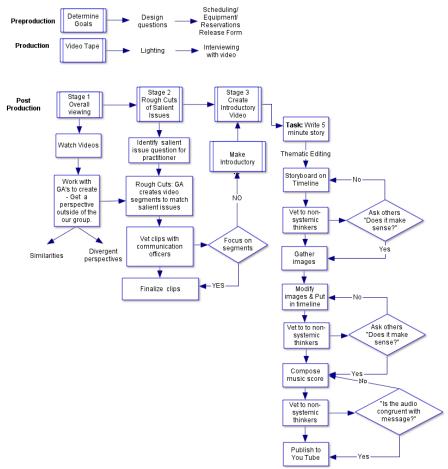
During AECT 2011, fourteen members of the AECT Division of Systemic Change were interviewed creating six hours of video. Each interview was video recorded with the intention of editing the content and distributing the shortened movies on YouTube. The members interviewed varied in their expertise and experience with the hopes of ascertaining diverse perspectives. During production, room lighting was problematic particularly due to lack of contrast between the wall and the interviewee.

**Post-Production - Moving from academic concepts to practitioner focused work:** With approximately six hours of video, post-production of the introductory video was broken down into three stages. After various individuals viewed a rough video edit, viewer critiques were taken into consideration in refining video content. First, the videos were initially watched for a general overview by the first author. Second, the interview videos were parsed into segments addressing key introductory concepts. Third, one introductory video was created based on the portions created on the salient issues that could create a coherent story (See *Figure 3*). The next paragraphs in post-production discuss greater detail of the three stages in video creation.

The first stage took place Spring 2012. The first author viewed all videos. Due to shear volume, it was challenging for all three authors to view all the videos. During viewing, the areas of agreement, variations in perspectives, and the divergent views were noted. In order to create a concise overview of systemic change, the authors chose to focus on the common elements that could be accessible to a novice of systemic change concepts.

Stage two took place in early Summer of 2012. The videos were cut into segments created by the first author and discussed with the second and third author. The segments addressed the following concerns: what systemic change is; what it is not; why is systemic change important; what are the benefits; what are the consequences of not thinking systemically; and interviews that lend themselves to good visual images or b-roll. A Graduate Assistant (GA), with little background of systemic change, was asked to complete the video segments. The goal of the videos was to appeal to the non-systemic change thinker. By choosing a Graduate Assistant with little systemic change background to view/edit the video, the creation team had a better chance of insuring that the general message of systemic change was clear and easy to understand for someone who is not familiar with systemic change.

After the video segments were created, the first author shared the privately shared You-tube video segments with the second and third authors. Together, the videos were viewed and vetting to determine the most important aspects for a practitioner audience. During this time, it was determined that an introductory video was needed that grabbed the audience's attention, simultaneously built credibility, and spoke to the concerns of the viewing audience. From the segments, the communication officers determined that an overall introductory video needed to be created.



**Figure 3 - Video Workflow** 

The third stage began August 2012 with the first author piecing together segments that would create a meaningful story and met the goals for the project. The first author vetted the story through graduate assistants and others who had little background on educational systemic change. During the process, critics helped to modify, move video segments, and vet the title slides that were used to enhance understanding.



Figure 4 - Systemic Change Video

When the video clips were selected, it was clear that the video was going to use thematic editing (Hurbis-Cherrier, 2012). B-Roll was needed to give visual explanation of the dialogue. B-Roll criteria: Images needed to be free of copyright violations. Therefore many Creative Commons and public domain images were used. Additionally the GA students took some photographs with permission from the subjects. Through collaboration, a music score was created using Garage Band Loops. The final video was vetting through people that were novices to systemic change thinking before making the movie public on YouTube.

## Website and Video Usability

"If I was considering systemic change, I would use this website to develop a better understanding of what it is. I can definitely see the potential impact of systemic change and realize we need to get started now as educators and parents." (Survey respondent, October 2012).

In the summer/fall 2012 a pervasive usability process followed a nearly complete design emphasizing general utility, ease-of-use and the site goals (Chow, Smith, & Sun, 2012; Lazar, 2006; Nielsen & Loranger, 2006). The goals were established to align with the division's strategic plan with a high priority features for administrators, teachers, policy makers, and researchers. A 17-item usability survey was administered to 11 graduate students.

Overall feedback was extremely positive. Of the students, three of whom were full-time parents as well, they felt that the site increased their interest in the concept of systemic change (M=5.0 on a 7-point scale), represented a good opportunity to be able to have a "conversation" about the potential systemic change (M=5.7), and did a good job of professionally representing the topic (M=5.6). While the site received high marks for beginning the discussion a common theme was the need for more concrete examples of actual systemic change implementations. One respondent noted, "This is the first time I have heard about systemic change. While it interests me and I recognize its importance, I think I would need more information before engaging in a conversation."

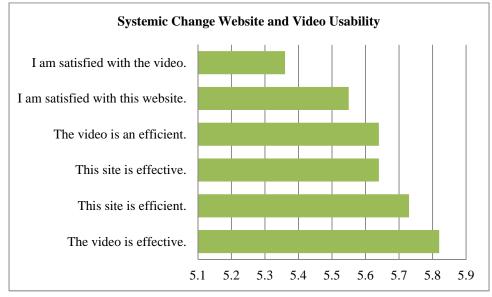


Figure 5 - Website and Video Usability

The video also received high marks. Respondents felt it was "well done" (6.0), helped them better understand what systemic change was (M=5.4), was easy to understand (M=6.4), and was interesting and engaging (M=6.0). According to one respondent, "The video was OUTSTANDING! Throughout the entire website, the video had the most impact on me."

In terms of graphic design and general web design standards, the site and video were well received. Overall graphic design of the site (M=5.0) and video (M=5.8) were rated high, the site and video were found to be easy-to-use (M=6.0) and easy-to-watch (M=6.2), the site was easy to navigate (M=6.4), and was found to be useful and relevant (M=6.1). Overall, respondents felt the site was effective (M=5.6), efficient (M=5.7), and satisfying to use (M=5.6). The video also was rated highly for effectiveness (M=5.8), efficiency (M=5.6), and satisfaction (M=5.4).

As far as overall strengths, one respondent noted, "It gives a description of what systemic change is, and it doesn't come across as over educated people just talking." The video in particular received high praise, "The video held the most impact. The overall message of the need for immediate systemic change was powerful." Another respondent offered, "I think the video is the most engaging part of the site."

Major opportunities for improvement centered on the need for more specific examples. One respondent felt the site was weak in, "Providing concrete examples of how systemic change works in public education." Another noted, "I think seeing real to life examples and results (if there are any yet) would be helpful. Add some content to FAQ and Getting Started and you're "good to go.""

#### Conclusion

The initial goal of the website and video project was to appeal to practitioners in order to begin a conversation about educational systemic change. Our beginning goals were met, but we are not ready to begin the conversation.

Preliminary results suggest that video was key to bridging the initial understanding of educational systemic change. For greater understanding, more videos need to be created. However, creating the videos deemed more challenging than anticipated due to the time consuming process. Interviewed Systemic Change members provided insightful answers to all questions, and so it was a daunting task when navigating the complexity of the answers in order to simplify the message into an accessible manner. Stage 2 of the post-production process was an attempt to focus on the initial key issues for someone new to Systemic Change in Education.

In stage 3 of post-production the first introductory video was created. It was a balance to remain mindful of audience needs and the goals of the Systemic Change Division. It was hoped that AECT Systemic Change members would approve the opening story of systemic change, and as reiterated, provide accessible content to a practitioner focused audience. Yet, the interviews point to a distinct difference among the concepts of systemic thinking, systemic theory, systemic change, and the prescriptions that are appealing to a general audience. Practitioner audiences often desire prescriptions of change more clearly, but it is the prescriptions that can get us into trouble – piecemeal change.

There is further work. More videos will be created based on the video segments created in Stage 2. Also, there is a dearth of practical examples of those that have undergone a systemic change process for creating an exemplary education system. The usability study also supports the need for more practical examples. Simultaneously, the dearth was the impetus for the website and video project. To our advantage, researchers have worked with districts and schools that have undergone an educational systemic change process and have positive results to share. In the future we hope to create and design more videos with the practitioners and provide web resources so that others can also make a positive-sustainable impact in education. Indeed, this project was a prelude to Scene 2 where we intend for Educational Systemic Change to go viral.

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## Appendix A

## **Interview Questions**

- 1. Why are you excited about systemic change in education?
  - a. Please describe the projects you are working on with regard to systemic change --- that gets you excited?
- 2. What is systemic change?
- 3. How do you practice systemic change? Describe your involvement with systemic change: consultant, researcher, practitioner, political, teacher of...
- 4. Please describe the products have you produced through your involvement? How have you made a difference in this field?
- 5. Many reform efforts have been labeled as systemic: No Child Left Behind, Charter Schools... How do you distinguish systemic change from these other kinds of change?
- 6. What is the value (benefit) of seeing things systemically? Policy maker? Administrator? Teacher?
- 7. What is the biggest *challenge you face* with your systemic change work?
- 8. Are there any examples of *educational systemic change* that have had **positive** results?
- 9. What could I do to *understand educational system change* better?
- 10. If I want to make systemic change happen, how would I do that?
- 11. If I want to connect with others that are advocates of educational systemic change, how do get involved?
- 12. What are some of the consequences of *not* thinking systemically?
- 13. What should we ask you that we did not?

## Experiences

In the field of systemic change what project are you excited about? What are the challenges?

## Appendix B

Systemic Change Website Usability Survey

Q1 This survey seeks to understand your thoughts about the website http://systemicchange.wordpress.com. It should take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete this survey.All responses are completely confidential and anonymous.Do you agree to participate in this survey?

- **O** Yes, I agree to participate in this study. (1)
- **O** No, I do not agree to participate in this study and do not want to complete this survey. (2)

Q2 What are your professional affiliations (choose ALL that apply)

- $\Box \quad \text{Student} (1)$
- Graduate Student (2)
- **Teacher** (3)
- $\Box$  Coach (4)
- □ Spiritual Leader (5)
- □ Professor (6)
- Administrator (University or PK-12) (7)
- **D** Business Owner (8)
- □ Management (9)
- □ Sales Associate (10)
- **G** Full-time Parent (11)
- □ Healthcare Professional (12)
- □ Member of AECT Division of Systemic Change (13)
- □ Other (14) \_\_\_\_

## Q3 React to the following statements (for the website http://systemicchange.wordpress.com):

	1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (Strongly Agree) (7)
My interest in the concept of systemic change has increased because of this website. (1)	0	0	O	0	0	O	О
The website does a good job of providing an opportunity to have a "conversation" about this. (2)	O	O	O	О	o	O	О
I would be interested in beginning a conversation about systemic change on this website. (3)	0	O	O	О	o	O	о

# Q4 Please elaborate on your ratings above:

# Q5 React to the following statements:

	1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (Strongly Agree) (7)
The URL for this website systemicchange.wordpress.com is easy to remember. (1)	О	O	O	О	О	O	O
This website does a good job of professionally representing systemic change. (2)	О	O	0	O	O	O	O
I have a good understanding of what the purpose of this website is. (3)	O	O	O	O	O	O	0

Q6 Please elaborate on your ratings above:

## Q7 React to the following statements:

2, 10000000	1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (Strongly Agree) (7)
I would use this website if I was considering using systemic change. (1)	0	О	О	О	О	0	О
This site helped me better understand what systemic change is. (2)	0	О	О	О	О	O	Э
This site helped me get excited about the potential impact of systemic change on education. (3)	O	O	О	О	О	0	Э
I found this site boring. (4)	О	О	О	О	О	0	O
I found this site confusing. (5)	О	О	О	О	О	О	О

Q8 Please elaborate on your ratings above:

# Q11 React to the following statements:

QTTReast is	1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (Strongly Agree) (7)
I thought the video on the homepage was well done. (1)	0	О	О	О	О	0	O
The video on the homepage helped me better understand what systemic change is. (2)	0	О	О	О	О	0	O
The video on the homepage was easy to understand. (3)	0	О	О	О	О	0	O
The video on the homepage was too long. (4)	0	О	0	О	0	0	O
I found the video on the homepage interesting and engaging. (5)	0	O	О	О	О	0	O
The video on the homepage was boring. (6)	0	О	0	О	О	0	О

Q10 Please elaborate on your ratings above:

	1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (Strongly Agree) (7)
I liked the graphic design of the website. (1)	0	0	0	0	0	0	Э
I liked the graphic design of the video. (2)	0	0	0	0	0	0	Э
The site was easy- to-use. (3)	О	О	О	•	О	•	O
The video was easy- to-watch. (4)	О	О	0	0	0	0	О
The information on this site is relevant and useful. (5)	0	О	•	o	•	o	О
The information in the video is relevant and useful. (6)	0	О	0	o	0	o	О
The navigation of the website is intuitive and easy- to-navigate. (7)	О	О	О	О	О	О	О

## Q9 React to the following statements (for the website http://systemicchange.wordpress.com):

Q12 Please elaborate on your ratings above:

## Q13 React to the following statements:

	1 (Strongly Disagree) (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (Strongly Agree) (7)
This site is effective in representing systemic change. (1)	0	0	0	0	0	0	о
This site is efficient in learning about systemic change. (2)	o	o	o	О	o	o	О
The video is effective in representing systemic change. (3)	0	0	0	0	0	0	о
The video is an efficient way of representing systemic change. (4)	0	0	0	0	0	0	о
I am satisfied with this website. (5)	0	0	0	О	0	0	о
I am satisfied with the video on the website. (6)	О	О	О	О	О	0	о

Q14 Please elaborate on your ratings above:

Q15 What are the site's major strengths?

Q16 What are the site's major opportunities for improvement?

Q17 Any other final comments or suggestions about this website?

Q18 If you are a student in either Dr. Beth Rajan Sockman or Dr. Anthony Chow, please email us your name and email address with the code HARLESS so we know you have a completed this survey.