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Development Systems in Adult Basic Education: Lessons from the Field

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Building Professional Development Systems in Adult Basic Education: Lessons from the Field

Volume 2: Chapter Five
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The practice of organizing professional development offerings through a system is relatively new in adult basic education (ABE), dating from the passage of the National Literacy Act (NLA) of 1991, under which all states were required to allocate a minimum of 15 percent of their ABE dollars to professional development and research. This mandate prompted many states to develop a system for providing teachers, tutors, administrators, and other adult literacy staff with continuing education opportunities. We define system in this chapter as an institutionalized set of processes and learning activities, sponsored by a state department of adult education or other state-level entity responsible for ABE, intended to provide ABE practitioners with professional development. The goal of such processes is to support and improve the practice of adult basic and literacy education. By and large, state professional development staff do not have much knowledge of other states' systems: how the systems were built, how they evolved, what has been learned along the way, how the current systems work, how they are alike and different, and what challenges they face. This chapter addresses this knowledge gap by examining the professional development systems in Idaho, Massachusetts, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, each of which has now been in place for several years.

Lytle, Belzer, and Reumann, (1992, p. 1) say that "examining the assumptions that currently inform staff development for teachers, tutors, and administrators and constructing new conceptual frameworks for research and practice have become critical tasks for the field of adult literacy." This is true in terms of both specific professional development activities and the ways in which professional development is organized on a broad scale (that is, through systems). What is also critical is states'

ability to share such information and learn from one another. Interviews with state-level professional development staff around the country indicate that they engage in little of such information sharing or collaborative problem solving. An important first step in improving professional development systems is making available such basic information on these systems and the challenges they face.

This is an especially good time to take a close look at state systems for professional development because the most recent federal legislation that funds ABE, the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, suggests the need for states to (re)examine their professional development system. On one hand, the legislation may implicitly undermine the importance of professional development because it eliminated the 1991 spending mandate (RMC Research Corporation, 1996). On the other hand, marked changes in the legislation, such as the establishment of a national reporting system, challenge state agencies to play a rapid game of catch-up to respond to a new performance-based system, therefore suggesting a pressing need for additional professional development. At this crucial time in the evolution of professional development in ABE, we explore key issues and challenges in the implementation of professional development systems as expressed by professionals in five states.

HISTORY OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN ABE

The history of professional development in ABE is tied strongly to the history of federal funding of ABE, which can be traced to the passage of the Adult Education Act in 1965 and its transfer to the U.S. Office of Education (USOE) (now the U.S. Department of Education) in 1966. Staff training was considered key to the successful implementation of the act (Rose, 1991). In these early years, the primary mode of professional development was conceptualized as baseline training aimed at full-time elementary and secondary school teachers who taught adults part time outside regular school hours. Then, as now, most practitioners entered the field with little or no formal training in how to teach adults. A series of two- to three-week summer institutes sponsored by the USOE was offered to practitioners around the country on the assumption that an accelerated program could be used to prepare ABE teachers. These early institutes, often university based, paid

attention to the teaching of the academic areas of reading, math, and communications as well as life skills, including parenting, the utilization of community resources, civic responsibility, job-seeking and keeping skills, health and safety, and consumer skills. A majority of USOE institutes offered information relating to the psychological and sociological characteristics of the educationally disadvantaged adult, and some approached the problems that might arise because of the conflicting

cultures, values, lifestyles, and communication patterns of predominately white, middle-class teachers and [minority, immigrant, and low-income] adult basic education students. [Leahy, 1986, p. 4]

The institutes grew in number, participants, and sophistication (Leahy, 1986). Although popular, they were criticized for several reasons. Some critics considered them to be "pedestrian in scope and execution" (Hoffman & Pagano, 1971, p. 17); little provision was made for the various levels of participant expertise and experience; the institutes were thought to be expensive, especially given the high rate of turnover in the field; and opportunities for organizers of one institute to learn from another were limited. Although each was required to produce a final report, the reports were submitted to the funder (USOE) and not widely disseminated.

Based in part on these criticisms, a shift in emphasis in professional development away from the use of institutes began in the late 1960s, and the institutes were discontinued in 1971. Beginning in 1969, the USOE supported a regional approach to staff development (Leahy, 1986). Ultimately, ten regional Adult Education Staff Development Projects were established. While regions (made up of several states) were expected to follow the same general guidelines, each also developed its own focus. For example, training programs and materials aimed at specific practitioners or populations were developed regionally. Money also began to flow into the development of graduate and undergraduate programs in adult education. By 1975, there were about one hundred postsecondary training programs in this area.

Next came an important shift in funding. Until the mid-1970s, the USOE had been deeply involved in reviewing and guiding the development of proposals for staff training and made the funding decisions (Rose, 1991). Beginning in 1975, federally controlled monies no longer contributed to an overall, broad-based national plan for training teachers. Instead, staff training funds were allocated on a project-by-project basis at the state level (Leahy, 1986). The states took over much of the responsibility for (and control of) ABE staff training and development (initially known as Section 310 and later as Section 353 money). It has been argued that this shift had negative consequences on two levels (Leahy, 1986). First, although many innovative approaches grew out of the special project money allocated to programs by the states, the piecemeal nature of the work made it very difficult to disseminate information, and there were few opportunities to develop a shared knowledge base built on project findings and experiences. Second, statewide staff development and teacher training efforts were often too general in scope and needed a great deal of adaptation for local implementation. Consequently, the impact of these efforts on staff development at the local level was often

limited.

The early 1980s are remarkable in that they represent the only period since 1966 when funding for ABE did not rise. By 1988, however, a major influx of funds to the field was under way. At this time, Congress "discovered" adult literacy as "a solution to a wide range of problems in other federal programs with which it had been struggling for some time" (Chisman, 1990, p. 222). Along with the increase in funding came more specific goals for literacy education related to the employability of adults with low skills and the integration of immigrants into American society. The skills emphasized were thus not only reading and writing but also mathematics, communication, and problem solving. In many cases, programs did not have the capacity to address these broader goals (Chisman, 1990), and no additional funds were earmarked for staff training. Fingeret (1992) argued that because little attention had been paid to building an ABE infrastructure, the professional development systems that could address these broader goals had simply not been built. She blames this weakness of the field on federal funding policies formulated with short-term crisis management mentality. In general, dollars were appropriated to maximize operating funds rather than to build capacity, and "this thinking undermine[d] proponents of a more robust adult education system and development of a cadre of adult education professionals" (RMC Research Corporation, 1996, p. 20).

By the time ABE funding was reauthorized in 1991, the emphasis had begun to shift away from an approach that could be characterized as short-term crisis intervention to one based on long-term commitment to increasing the literacy levels of adults (Fingeret, 1992). For example, the NLA of 1991 mandated that all states allocate a minimum of 15 percent of their federal ABE dollars for professional development and research (at least two-thirds had to be used for teacher training), leading to a sharp increase in state-initiated professional development activities (Quigley, 1997). In many states, especially those receiving significant funding, this change encouraged the development of comprehensive statewide professional development delivery systems.

Title II of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998, which superseded the 1991 NLA, eliminated the specific set-aside for professional development and research. Instead, a decreased set-aside of a maximum of 12.5 percent is allowed for state leadership funds (defined as a wide variety of support and coordination efforts among existing support services, occupational skill training and employers, and postsecondary educational institutions). Professional development is funded-but not mandated-within this section of the legislation, as are a multitude of other efforts, including incentives for program coordination and performance.1 This cut in spending and the elimination of a specific

spending mandate can be construed as a devaluation of the importance of professional development systems, which had earlier been encouraged to grow and develop. Despite the potential for decreased funding, professional development systems have become integral to the work of many states. Based on conversations with professional development professionals in the fifteen states we contacted for this chapter, professional development appears to be a front-burner issue. These respondents report that they will continue to strengthen their systems while creatively finding ways to streamline expenses and work around the funding constraints imposed by the latest legislation.

SURVEY METHODS

We have synthesized the ways in which five states-Idaho, Massachusetts, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia-have implemented professional development systems. Each state is different in terms of local need, size, political context, ABE service provision, and federal allocation of dollars, and their systems reflect a response to these realities. To develop a set of lessons learned, we studied the systems of these states to make visible a variety of approaches to the challenges of providing professional development systematically.

Because selection of states based on the notion of "best practices" is problematic, we began the process by trying to identify those states that have clearly visible and well-established professional development systems (that is, institutionalized processes and learning activities for providing professional development).2 To do this, we drew on our combined knowledge of various states' professional development systems to list some possibilities for focus. In addition, we solicited suggestions from several state directors and other leaders in the field. As a result, we collected through telephone interviews thumbnail sketches of professional development systems in fifteen states. From these, we selected five that were diverse in terms of size, location, and overall structure to feature here.

After selection, we contacted a key representative (state director or state staff person most responsible for professional development) to secure permission to include that state's system in this chapter. In all, six people from the five states assisted us in creating a detailed profile of their state's professional development system.3 These representatives participated in a telephone interview in which they described their system's strengths and vulnerabilities, key challenges, and important learnings; answered clarifying questions regarding the description of the state's professional development system; and read and responded to a draft of this chapter. Our state profiles are also based on a variety of documents generated by the states to describe their systems: mission statements, brochures, proposals and final reports to funders, and forms

related to professional development planning.

Once we had collected all of the information on the states, we analyzed it for presentation in the following categories: student and teacher demographics; thumbnail sketch, or overview, of the professional development system; significant features of the system; and common issues and challenges faced by each system. Based on the analysis, we identified implications for practice, research, and policy.

ANALYSIS OF FIVE STATE SYSTEMS
Certain challenges are common to all efforts to establish professional development systems. The very existence of statewide professional development systems is unique to adult literacy education. Owing to the history of local funding and control at the Kñ12 level and the configuration of schools with more or less common elements, professional development in that realm is generally organized by schools or by districts rather than by states. Titzel (1998) points out that although public school teachers may face isolation as a result of long-held assumptions about the autonomy of teachers, Kñ12 teachers do work within structures that by their very nature create proximity among teachers and can engender a sense of community. The Kñ12 workforce is generally employed full time, and groups of teachers typically work at or near a common site. Furthermore, although Kñ12 teachers have different levels of experience and skill, they all have preservice training. In adult education, most teachers work part time, and many do not have preservice training in an area of Kñ12, much less in adult education. ABE practitioners must also often overcome geographic isolation if they are to participate in training that fosters the development of learning communities.

Additional challenges of common concern to providers of ABE professional development services include inadequate funding;4 a nagging belief by many that professional development takes money away from direct services to learners; multiple funding streams that make it difficult for programs to establish standardized policies on release time to allow staff to participate in professional development activities; a relative lack of models for statewide systems; a lack of information on how to adapt existing models to the needs of a particular state; a history of poor professional development that has contributed to practitioner apathy; and demands from state agencies that training focus on content that may not match practitioner interests. At the same time, each state also faces challenges unique to its structure, stakeholders, and history.

ABE Student and Teacher Demographics
Idaho, Massachusetts, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia have some

important statistical similarities and differences that are worth noting (see Table 5.1). They represent five regions of the country (the Northwest, New England, the Midwest, the mid-Atlantic states, and the South), and their state and ABE populations range considerably in size. While Idaho has a student enrollment of 10,472, Ohio serves more than ten times that number. Although a simple division of federal and state dollars by number of students enrolled does not account for other funding sources, reflect how dollars are actually allocated, or indicate quality of services, it can indicate differences in the distribution of resources. For example, Massachusetts receives a particularly large state allocation for ABE that allows it to spend more than ten times as much per student ($1,978) as Idaho does, which has the lowest possible dollar amount spent per student ($175) of the five states. Pennsylvania and Virginia, similar to each other in spending per student ($538 and $463, respectively), fall in between Idaho and Ohio ($216) at the low end of the spectrum and Massachusetts at the high end.

States also differ in the type of students they serve. The categories used by the Office of Vocational and Adult Education at the U.S. Department of Education to describe the adult learners served by federal dollars are adult basic education (ABE), English as a second language (ESL), and adult secondary education (ASE). (ESL is also referred to as ESOL, English for speakers of other languages.)5 In Idaho and Pennsylvania, ABE students make up about half of the total adult student population. In Massachusetts, the ABE population makes up only about one-third of the adult student population; more than half of those served are in ESOL programs. This is a far greater proportion of ESOL to ABE and ASE students than in any other of the four states. Proportionally, Pennsylvania and Virginia serve significantly more ASE students than the other three states.

Because our focus is on professional development, it is even more relevant to compare demographic information related to the personnel data for these five states. The student-to-staff ratio varies greatly.6 Idaho, Ohio, and Virginia all have ratios that average around 16 to 1. Pennsylvania and Massachusetts show an average student-to-staff ratio of around 5 to 1. This difference may be an indication of greater emphasis on classroom and group instruction versus one-to-one and small group learning contexts. One might infer that a higher ratio of students to staff indicates a larger percentage of paid staff (assuming that classes are usually taught by paid staff and that one-to-one and small group tutoring is done by volunteers). While it is true that Virginia, with one of the highest student-to-staff ratios (16.6 to 1), has the highest percentage of paid staff (90 percent), the statistics are somewhat inconsistent. Massachusetts has the lowest student-to-staff ratio (4.5 to 1) and the second highest percentage of paid staff (41 percent). While Pennsylvania

and Ohio have roughly the same percentage of paid staff (26 percent and 25 percent, respectively), the student-to-staff ratio is quite different-5.3 to 1 in Pennsylvania and 13.8 to 1 in Ohio.

Another distinction can be found in the percentage of volunteers to total staff. Here, Virginia stands out with a workforce that is only 10 percent volunteer. The other states range from 60 to 75 percent, with most in the upper part of this range. Finally, the statistics indicate that in most cases, only a minuscule proportion of staff work full time in the field.7 In Idaho and Ohio, fewer than 5 percent of the staff work full time. Pennsylvania does only slightly better at 7 percent. Virginia is in the middle of the range, with a 12 percent full-time workforce. Massachusetts is an outlier at 19 percent. Even this relatively high percentage indicates a workforce with very little full-time representation. Unfortunately, there is no information available on how much states spend on professional development.

A number of other features differentiate the contexts of service delivery in these five states, and they illustrate the many ways in which systems can vary while still working to accomplish similar aims. At a general level of structure, these distinctions include whether and what kind of certification is required for practitioners, the number of funded programs in the state, and the mode of service delivery (for example, services may be offered through postsecondary institutions, school districts, community-based organizations, literacy councils, or an eclectic mix). More specifically related to professional development, contextual distinctions include the existence and role of the state literacy resource center (or some similar state-level entity); the ways in which volunteers are trained and supported over time; the availability of stipends, travel expenses, and program-based professional development funds; and the ways in which professional development systems are staffed. Table 5.2 provides a brief synopsis of these contextual features in the five states under discussion here.

Thumbnail Sketches
These sketches of the five states set the scene for the discussion that follows. Following the descriptions of each state, we present a more in-depth, cross-state analysis to illustrate what certain aspects of professional development systems look like in practice.8

IDAHO. Idaho's professional development system is based on a learning organization model defined in the state plan as an organization that supports "systemic organizational learning." The system is envisioned to "create continuous learning opportunities, promote inquiry and dialogue, encourage collaboration and team learning, establish systems to capture and share learning, empower people toward a collective vision, and

connect the organization to its environment."9 The system serves six regionalized literacy service providers that operate multiple learning sites around the state. Professional development leadership is provided by the state director and a staff person who works, under a subcontract, for the University of Idaho. As a member state of the Northwest Regional Literacy Resource Center (NWRLRC),10 Idaho was involved in the development of and has implemented a series of fourteen professional development modules of twelve to fourteen hours each with the following features: presession preparation, introduction of theory, demonstration, practice, structured feedback, application, and reflection and evaluation. The topics covered include adults as learners, communicative English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), cooperative learning, teaching the reading process, and math as problem solving. The professional development system uses practitioners as trainers and an incentive system that certifies participants as advanced and master-level instructors on completion of a specified number of modules. In addition to this form of professional development, aimed at individuals, the state staff has implemented a process of continuous program improvement that requires programs to integrate professional development plans into their funding proposals. A third part of the system funds special projects. Special staff development projects have focused on statewide needs (such as the development of a management information system) and the piloting and implementation of initiatives such as the Crossroads CafÈ, a video-based, distance-learning ESOL curriculum. Grants that fund these latter activities are usually awarded by the state on a regional basis and go to one of the six provider organizations.

MASSACHUSETTS. The System for Adult Basic Education Support (SABES) has been in existence for nearly ten years. Organized geographically, the Massachusetts professional development system has five regional centers and a Central Resource Center. Each regional center has limited flexible funds to provide a menu of training, teacher sharing, practitioner research, and other activities. Representatives from each center meet regularly, along with staff from the state's Department of Education, to plan professional development activities and work toward integrating these with program and system development. SABES encourages the identification of and response to local needs and supports field-based, local professional development leadership. It is also responsible for implementing state-level initiatives, such as the development of a voluntary teacher certification plan. Thus, SABES strives to balance field-driven and funder-driven needs. Full-time practitioners in Massachusetts receive up to fifty hours of paid staff release time to participate in professional development; part-time staff receive a minimum of fifteen hours.

OHIO. The professional development system in Ohio is shaped by input from the field. Each of the state's four regional resource centers develops a calendar of professional development activities based on annual submissions from all funded programs in their areas of a document called the Program Professional Development Plan. This plan is designed to encourage individual and programwide reflection on and planning of professional development needs based on annual program performance reports. Although the resource centers operate somewhat autonomously, they are guided by a common set of goals and objectives. A statewide literacy resource center and an evaluation design team are responsible for research and implementation of initiatives with state and national connections, implications, and applications. These include work on Equipped for the Future (EFF), ABLE LINK (Ohio's management information system), and leadership development. In addition, the evaluation design team is working on developing connections among the program review process, ABLE LINK, and local program evaluation and continuous improvement efforts. Practitioners who work seven or more hours per week in funded programs are required to participate in at least two professional development activities a year. Those who work fewer than seven hours are required to participate in one.

PENNSYLVANIA. Six regional professional development centers (PDCs) provide the majority of professional development in Pennsylvania. Although intended to be responsive to local needs, the PDCs spend a lot of time coordinating local trainings of centrally planned professional development activities. Many of these centrally planned activities are developed (with significant input from the field) in the service of an overall program improvement agenda envisioned by the ABE state director. Some PDCs, as well as other entities (universities, for instance), receive additional funds to develop and provide statewide professional development activities related to special initiatives; these activities may include training modules, workshops on learning differences, technology training, and practitioner inquiry and action research. Although there are no individual requirements for participation in professional development, all funded programs are required to have representatives take part in centrally planned training related to assessment, management information, and program improvement strategies. Participants range from program administrators to volunteers, depending on activity offered, individual and program interests, and time commitment involved.

VIRGINIA. The hallmark of Virginia's professional development system is its requirement that all practitioners working in funded programs develop (with the support of a local learning plan facilitator), individually or in collaboration with others, a yearly professional development plan. The centralized Adult Education and Literacy Centers,

which house the Resource Center and the Center for Professional Development, act as the hub of the system by developing and analyzing a database of all of these plans. These efforts generate professional development activities and help to connect practitioners with similar interests. Other regionally or centrally planned efforts support implementation of the plans. These include regional conferences, a research network, and a quarterly newsletter. Larger urban adult learning programs are assumed by the state to have internal mechanisms for providing professional development in response to site-based needs, and no additional provisions are made to support their efforts locally. However, rural areas are supported by regional adult education specialists, whose key responsibilities include providing instructional assistance and professional development opportunities for the practitioners in their regions.

Professional Development System Features Close-Up
The thumbnail sketches begin to illustrate some features that are similar in the implementation of professional development across these five states. These include what we have termed scope, cooperative leadership, coherence, and accessibility. In fact, these characteristics are so evident across all five state systems that we propose them as key features of ABE professional development systems. This section details the ways in which the five states are acting to implement these features as a way to better illustrate how they function as systems.

We begin by defining these features based on our understanding of the systems we studied. By scope we mean that the system accommodates and serves the full range of practitioners from program managers to volunteer tutors-regardless of role, level of experience and training, and interests; makes professional development available in varying degrees of intensity and duration throughout the year; and provides professional development activities and offerings in a wide range of formats and topics. By cooperative leadership, we mean that state-level staff take clear responsibility for management of the system but often work with practitioners to develop a vision for the system and its implementation. While there is a high level of collaboration, state-level staff usually have a leading role in shaping the system and setting policy and have more responsibility for its maintenance than do practitioners in the field. Coherence signifies that there is a logical relationship among the various activities and an overall alignment across individual and program development needs as well as state and national system reforms. It also involves the development of structures and activities that are based on needs assessment that is demand driven (as articulated by practitioners and programs or by competencies and standards established through legislation, state and federal policy, and a field-driven process of feedback and input). Accessibility implies that the professional

development system makes training available at varied times and locations so that as many practitioners as possible can participate. Distance learning technology is being used increasingly to facilitate accessibility.

SCOPE. The scope of the five professional development systems described here is evident in their offerings. Each of the five states is making a systematic effort to reach out to practitioners who fill all types of job responsibilities and have a wide range of years of experience. For example, Ohio and Pennsylvania offer professional development activities aimed specifically at administrators and program managers. All five ABE departments fund statewide and, in some cases, local tutor training and ongoing support. Massachusetts has a required fifteen-hour orientation for new adult education staff that practitioners must attend during their first year in the field.

Activities occur throughout the year. For example, although the model of summer institutes developed in the 1960s still exists, it has been altered in a variety of ways. Often much shorter (three or four days), institutes now may focus on a particular topic or be aimed at a specific group of practitioners. They are not always held in the summer and sometimes include either face-to-face follow-up or ongoing support through the use of technology. Meanwhile, a wealth of other activities are available throughout the entire year, during the day or evening and during the week or on weekends.

The range of activities being carried out in each state is wide: technical assistance, minicourses, research teams, minigrant projects, peer observations, classroom visitations, mentoring activities, curriculum development teams, inquiry groups and action research, training modules, workshops, conferences, focus groups, publication of newsletters, network building, and college courses. These activities vary greatly in terms of duration (from three hours to a year of ongoing meetings or class sessions) and intensity. They also make very different demands of participants, from simple attendance and participation to completion of research reports and other kinds of final products. These states also have resource centers that provide access to a variety of print materials available for individual reading and research. The varying formats and requirements employ a range of pedagogical approaches, from learner centered, participatory, and constructivist to knowledge transmission.

Similarly, the range of topics is far-reaching, organized around such general educational areas as adult learning and cognition; practice-based topics such as multilevel classroom teaching, project-based learning, and math as a problem-solving skill; programmatic issues such as data

management, recruitment, and retention; and broader issues and initiatives in the field such as Equipped for the Future (EFF), SCANS, and technology use.

COOPERATIVE LEADERSHIP. The very existence of a state-level system for professional development may lead some to assume a relatively traditional hierarchical planning process in which notions of authority and control lead to top-heavy leadership practices. In fact, at least some of the states report that they have recently chosen to try to implement a more centrally driven system after many years of local autonomy and little central leadership or direction. For example, in Idaho, programs were given funds for professional development to use as they saw fit. In Ohio, regional centers were funded and became operational before much central planning had taken place. As a result, each of these centers implemented some unique professional development approaches and strategies. Similarly, Pennsylvania had nine regional professional development providers that for the most part functioned independently and often created programs that were unique but sometimes inconsistent from one to another. Cheryl Keenan, Pennsylvania state director, explained that while professional development offerings in several regions might be on a similar topic, the information presented might vary considerably and could be contradictory from one region to another. The movement toward more centralized planning and uniformity is related to a need to monitor the quantity and quality of offerings more consciously so that more effective links among professional development, practice, and program improvement can be made. Such efforts also assist in the development of overall system coherence. Ultimately such centralized leadership may have been instituted in anticipation of or in response to the demands of WIA for performance-based accountability. Thus, while the state-level agencies are demanding more accountability-owing at least in part to WIA-they are also offering program strategies to cope with these requirements and improve services for learners. Although there may be drawbacks associated with taking greater control, these changes are leading to systems that increasingly are more coherent and linked, evidently as a result of more centralized planning and leadership.

State-level leadership has begun to exert more control over professional development offerings and participation in three ways: (1) requirements, (2) incentives or encouragement to participate, and (3) implementation of statewide professional development initiatives. Requirements include mandated planning strategies (such as the individual or program professional development plans found in Virginia and Ohio), the amount of time practitioners must spend in professional development activities (Ohio and Massachusetts), and the type of professional development activities in which practitioners participate (Pennsylvania requires all

funded programs to send representatives to three different professional development activities; Massachusetts requires new teachers to participate in a specially designed training). Idaho and Massachusetts are using strategies that encourage voluntary use of the professional development system. Massachusetts funds a significant number of hours of participation, while Idaho rewards practitioners by creating titles ("advanced instructor" and "master instructor") that signify a certain level of participation in the professional development system. Another strategy that comes from the top down is the planning and implementation of uniform activities offered statewide, often in multiple venues to maximize accessibility. Training modules used in Pennsylvania and Idaho are good examples of this approach to centralized professional development.

While state-level staff take the lead in many aspects of design and implementation, practitioners help shape systems through various means: participation in planning committees and task forces, design and facilitation of professional development activities, and expression of their professional development needs through participation in individual and program planning procedures. For example, SABES in Massachusetts selects professional development topics in three ways: regional centers conduct ongoing needs assessment with teachers and other program staff to decide on the content and type of staff development activities; discussions between staff at regional centers and at the Central Resource Center help to identify topics of interest to many practitioners across regions; and staff and program development is organized through yearly work plans developed through negotiation among the state department of education, the CRC, and the regional center SABES staff. Such a structure allows for balancing the needs of the ABE system as a whole with those of individuals and programs.

Practitioners participate actively in all of these states as professional development leaders. The SABES system, for instance, is built on the assumption that practitioners best understand their own needs and have the skills and knowledge to support and enable the strengthening of the field. They are frequently involved in task forces and planning groups that help to shape professional development mission statements for the system, set and define policy, and develop implementation strategies. They also frequently function as trainers, facilitators, curriculum developers, conference presenters, and newsletter writers and editors.

The advantages of this high level of involvement are easy to articulate. For example, practitioner participation helps to make the system field driven, it grounds professional development activities in the day-to-day realities of practitioners' work, and it helps create a sense of personal investment and buy-in. Nevertheless, the data from our interviews with

state-level professional development staff suggest that when systems depend both philosophically and practically on practitioners for help in developing and maintaining system activities, there may be a constant struggle to find individuals who have the time and energy to take on leadership responsibilities.

COHERENCE. All five states have worked diligently to establish logical relationships in the range of their professional development offerings to ensure internal coherence across activities. Such coherence creates systems that are simultaneously aligned with program improvement goals (such as management and accountability systems, which contribute to whole system reform), self-identified program and individual practitioner professional development needs, and national initiatives and legislation (EFF, the WIA, and welfare reform, for example).

In each of the five states, the state-level leadership is working to make such alignment more possible by implementing management information systems that can provide programs with useful data about their programs' strengths and weaknesses and to train program staff to analyze and use this information effectively. Ohio, Pennsylvania, Idaho, and Massachusetts have established processes designed to match programwide challenges and needs with professional development through the systematic collection and analysis of program data. In Idaho, the state ABE director and the staff development coordinator visit each funded program at least once during the year for what they call a results-based reporting discussion. In this discussion, program staff are "encouraged to integrate their annual reports into their strategic planning process and to look at the annual report as both a statistical report and a planning tool to support learning gains" (Idaho Adult Basic Education Five-Year State Plan, 1999). Massachusetts, using the integrated program staff development process, engages in a similar activity to encourage program-level planning. Professional development, then, is based on goals developed through a process of continuous program improvement, and program data are used as a planning tool.

Pennsylvania has engaged in a three-year project to train staff at all of its 221 funded programs in a process of program improvement called Educational Quality for Adult Literacy. This process begins with program self-evaluation. Program improvement teams (made up of agency staff) then collect program data in response to a question they have generated regarding program structure, operation, or service provision that emerges from the self-study. Finally, the team develops a plan for professional development that addresses the program and individual practitioner needs identified through this process.

In Ohio, each program is directed to work as a team to complete a needs

analysis using local annual performance report data. During this process, each staff member translates program goals into what is called an Individual Professional Development Plan. These plans are approved by the local program administrator and subsequently summarized in a Program Professional Development Plan. As part of this document, the administrator states whether local professional development is available to address this need or if assistance is needed from the regional resource center. Thus, when planning documents from programs throughout a region are forwarded to the regional resource center, staff can use them as a key source in setting priorities and planning the professional development offerings for the year. For instance, technology training may be planned if it emerges as a commonly stated need at the program level.

Each of these centrally planned and locally implemented strategies for linking professional development with program improvement uses competencies, standards, or other indicators of quality as part of the process. For example, Pennsylvania's self-evaluation is based on the state's program performance standards, which focus on administrative reporting, enrollment, retention, pre- and posttesting, and educational gains.11

Another way in which professional development providers strive to create coherence in their systems is to serve as a clearinghouse, connecting programs and practitioners with the resources and information they need to obtain their goals. Ohio, for example, makes a systematic effort to link individual and program development needs with the state-level staff who can address those needs. Virginia requires all practitioners to submit annual professional development plans and maintains an extensive database that catalogues these plans. The plans help practitioners focus their professional development activities for the year and give the central organization (the Center for Professional Development) a look at professional development needs around the state. Staff at the center use the individual practitioner plans to identify trends and common issues. The professional development staff pass the information along to professional development conference planners or newsletter editors, make matches between individual practitioners and existing professional development offerings, connect practitioners from around the state who have expressed similar interests, and recommend other resources through which practitioners might address specific professional development needs and interests. One example of how this works is evidenced in a call for proposals put out by the Adult Education and Literacy Centers workshops that will be listed in its annual Professional Development Catalogue. The catalogue is based in part on an analysis of the professional development plans submitted in the previous year.

Yet another way in which professional development providers have built coherence into their professional development systems is by acting as a bridge between programs and broad national initiatives and legislation. Each of the five states is using its professional development system to meet requirements related to the WIA. Although the WIA requirements are aimed at state agencies, professional development systems are being used so that programs can help their state agencies meet their requirements. Although such professional development may be an example of the tail wagging the dog, these activities can benefit programs, practitioners, and learners.

For example, all states need to implement a management information system to address the accountability section of this legislation. Idaho and Pennsylvania began implementing a management information system before the legislation was passed and then established professional development activities that enabled programs to meet their federal reporting requirements and better use data to inform program improvement. States are providing professional development related to program standards and teacher competencies. While it may be possible to critique the particulars of some of these initiatives, the overall intent of linking professional development to program improvement in response to federal legislation creates coherence in the system.

Another example of a national initiative is EFF, a content framework for adult literacy standards. Pennsylvania is using the EFF framework as a program improvementñrelated instructional strategy in the context of its program improvement initiative and is providing professional development to support this process. Ohio has encouraged programs to pilot EFF through its quality enhancement grant program and has supported these efforts through ongoing training and support provided by national EFF staff and Ohio-based experts.

ACCESSIBILITY. Because widespread participation is a key element in ensuring that professional development systems fulfill their potential, working to maximize accessibility is viewed as critical in all five states. Accessibility to professional development takes a variety of forms. Bringing professional development as close as possible to the practitioner (rather than centralizing the offerings in one location) is a practical and common strategy that cuts down on travel expenses and the time spent away from classrooms and programs.

To bring the training to the practitioner, four of the five states studied have developed a regional system for delivering professional development, although each of these regionalized structures is different. Some salient differences concern what type of entity houses regional centers, how the centers are staffed, how they relate to each other and to

a central planning body that may be inside or outside the state agency, and how autonomous they are. Regardless of the differences, a regional structure has the advantage of making professional development more accessible than centrally implemented activities and provides a potential for cross-program fertilization and exchange of ideas.

The staff in the five states studied did not discuss the use of technology in relation to the goal of improving accessibility to professional development activities. However, technology is becoming an increasingly important vehicle for communication, data management (as in Virginia's use of a database to analyze and respond to professional development plans for multiple purposes), service provision (distance-learning strategies such as downlinking teleconferences and on-line courses), and problem solving (often using listservs). Most states now have Web sites, many with a link to the state-level entity responsible for ABE, and more and more practitioners have access to e-mail. From the interviews we conducted and our personal experiences, we have found that technology that seemed rare and exotic just a few years ago is now available to professional developers and participants alike. However, the challenges as to how best to use technology for professional development remain. These include how to create learning communities and networks in the face of physical (if not virtual) distance, how to overcome the unequal distribution of technology, and how best to match the range of professional development content and delivery formats with available technology.

Common Issues, Challenges, and Lessons Learned
Each of the five states has a well-defined, coherent professional development system, but each also faces challenges that are to a large extent rooted in the structure of the ABE workforce, which is largely part time and has a high rate of attrition. In the five states studied, only 7 percent of the combined workforce are employed full time, and 68 percent are volunteers. This type of employment structure leads to a high turnover rate and extremely limited time on the part of practitioners for professional development. Sally Waldron, the director of the SABES Central Resource Center, asked, "Is there hope for real capacity building given the essential nature of part-time staff? Would you ever try to educate kids with people who work six hours a week without benefits? Is it folly to try to build a strong system of professional development on a delivery system with such an essential flaw?" In addition, because credentialing of any kind is still rare, practitioners enter the field with diverse experiences, often underdeveloped teaching skills, and no background in adult education, thus taxing the capacity of staff development systems to offer training that is relevant to their varying needs and abilities. In large states with an eclectic combination of programs providing ABE, program support needs are as varied as those

of practitioners. Waldron summarizes the issue well:

When professional development is statewide, and you're trying to reach everyone, you've got a huge range of strengths and needs and experience. The range never gets smaller. There are always new people on the one hand and you have to get them initially trained. On the other hand, there are always really experienced, strong practitioners who need opportunities for in-depth staff development. And then there's everyone in between. Since one of the features of the system is a belief in the need to integrate program development with staff development, the system also faces a challenge in meeting the wide range of program types and needs, which are as varied as practitioners' needs.

Not only does the nature of the workforce complicate efforts to make professional development accessible and appropriate, it also complicates efforts to involve the field in planning, decision making, and implementation. For example, a necessary ingredient of involvement in professional development planning and leadership may be attendance at frequent and lengthy meetings, sometimes quite distant from the workplace. Only the small pool of full-time practitioners are likely able to attend with any consistency. Moreover, while such opportunities may eventually serve as springboards for upward career movement, limited opportunities for state-level responsibilities and leadership make such advancement more of a promise than a reality.

In our conversations with state staff, we noted several challenges that all of the five state professional development systems face:

- Spearheading change by functioning as visionaries responsible for implementing overall reform and growth of the professional development system
- Working to balance top-down and bottom-up needs and interests by involving stakeholders at all levels of the system in planning and implementation while maintaining the basic vision
- Building a shared vision of a professional development system among multiple stakeholders, including professional development staff, program administrators, teachers, and tutors

While these challenges are most related to the problem of establishing coherence in professional development systems and we have compartmentalized them for the sake of discussion, they are all in fact interrelated.

SPEARHEADING CHANGE. Many of the state staff members interviewed talked about spearheading change: taking the lead in building, shaping, and reforming the professional development system in

their states. Cheryl Engel, Idaho staff development coordinator, and Shirley Spencer, Idaho ABE state director, discussed the challenge of moving from a relatively autonomous, field-driven system to one with internal coherence that links professional development to program improvement and learner outcomes. Engel and Spencer focused on the challenges of spearheading change, restructuring, and initiating reform from the top down in an environment that has often espoused a collaborative and participatory philosophy. They see their task as moving slowly and incrementally toward change, all the while ensuring that local programs can see the benefit of a new system. This is a particularly tricky task given that program directors are losing some local control in the process. "If you're going to shift something, it had better be for a good reason," Engel stated. More important, she explained, the rationale for change must be clearly and consistently communicated to make sure it is thoroughly understood at the local level. Change should also be implemented at a slow and steady pace, according to Spencer. "One of the things that I've found with all this is that you do have to allow time and you have to keep cultivating and nurturing what you're trying to do and altering it in small pieces. You don't get where you want to be as quickly as you want to. It takes time to develop a real system and it takes time for it to be recognized as a system-unless you want to be very directive and authoritarian."

Engel and Spencer discussed the approach they have employed to support centrally planned change. Understanding the program managers' points of view is important, they agreed. "You don't want your managers too ruffled," Engel explained,

but I don't think that every decision about what you're going to do as a system can rest in each program manager's hands. But that's a hard line to walk. Sometimes it feels like the net is not close enough. You really have to handle with care. In fairness, my job is to help them elevate professional development to a place in their program where it becomes more of a priority. They have so many things they're trying to juggle that professional development has been relegated to a back burner.

Engel seems to combine a sensitivity to the difficulty of change (especially when it involves ceding control) with a very strong message about its importance (for instance, by requiring that program professional development plans be submitted as part of a program's grant application). "Not to hold a stick over them, but it does imply that it's going to be important," adds Spencer.

This sort of approach to instituting change is also favored by Cheryl Keenan, Pennsylvania state director of the Bureau for Adult Basic and Literacy Education, who, following her appointment as state director,

restructured the professional development system initiated by her predecessor. Keenan found ways to nudge change along at the level of implementation by adjusting some structural procedures. For example, she had regional professional development centers submit bids for funding after having received funding for several years without competitive bidding. As part of that process, she altered the proposal guidelines. Submitted proposals now had to reflect the system's newly developed Guiding Principles for Professional Development. By insisting that professional development centers' goals and objectives be consistent with these principles, she was trying to build commitment to the principles, as well as consistency between the system's overall mission and its actual implementation. She noted the importance of developing and building on field-based expertise in the implementation of various centrally planned but locally implemented initiatives: "This makes a difference in terms of acceptance of new ideas."

STRIKING A BALANCE IN COOPERATIVE LEADERSHIP. The concerns expressed about making changes from the top down may indicate a commitment on the part of professional development staff to find an appropriate and comfortable way of balancing top-down leadership with direction and input from the field; all of the state staff members we talked to discussed the challenge of balancing professional development offerings and requirements that are implemented in response to funding legislation with practitioner needs for ongoing training. Sally Waldron, for example, observes that Massachusetts has experienced a tremendous amount of innovation and change owing to centrally planned strategic initiatives. Although she believes that many program staff see these changes as positive and may ultimately have made some of them anyway, the sheer volume of initiatives is overwhelming:

Programs do want to work on program strengthening, but they can only do so much. This presents two major challenges to the professional development system. First, people in programs are overwhelmed by initiatives, so they are much less focused on their individual professional development needs given the little time available to reflect on those needs. Meanwhile, the technical assistance people are overwhelmed trying to help programs with what they need to respond to these initiatives. Also, this presents a challenge to the field-driven nature of the system, since it is being initiated by the state department of education rather than the balanced field- and funder-driven system that is the vision of both SABES and the state ABE agency.

Cheryl Keenan too talked about the difficulty of responding to the demands for accountability, which have become such a dominant part of the ABE climate, when the philosophical underpinnings of the system (as

stated in Pennsylvania's professional development "Guiding Principles") is of a more learner- and program-centered philosophy. "When I see how people respond to the standards, I'm afraid that the pressing demands of numbers contradicts the philosophy of learning that we're trying to put into place. It's the tail wagging the dog situation. Accountability is here to stay, but it's creating a tension."

Susan Joyner, director of the Virginia Adult Education and Literacy Centers, echoed these concerns. She noted tension in a system that positions itself as driven by teachers' questions about practice when there is a gap between "where practitioners are"-that is, what they identify as their professional development needs-and "where larger trends suggest that they-and programs-need to be." She continued, "The system's impulse to honor teachers' questions and the need to respond effectively to larger trends in the field represent a tension within inquiry-based staff development." In a more general sense, she, like others, is discussing the difficulty of walking the fine line between a commitment to collaboration and responsiveness and the need to implement a particular vision (not necessarily derived through interaction with practitioners) of professional development (and, more generally, ABE service provision). This dilemma, expressed with regard to professional development, parallels one that is inherent in learner-centered education in any context. That is, it raises the questions of where the lines of authority and control should be drawn and how they can best be negotiated when the intent is to put the learner (in this case, the practitioner) in charge of his or her own learning.

The ongoing struggle over what and who should drive the system reflects a learning philosophy that respects the knowledge and experience of practitioners and the challenges of their work. However, there are no easy answers. From a policy perspective, the challenges discussed here reflect the fact that the requirements of the funder (the federal and state governments) are sometimes putting professional development system staff in the middle of the competing interests of practitioners and state and federal policy makers. Although everyone seems to be developing their system from this position, it is not necessarily a comfortable place to be.

Despite the discomfort, state professional development staff are cognizant of the importance of buy-in from the field when professional development requirements and expectations are changed from the top. They believe that the extent of practitioners' commitment to change (no matter where the drive to change comes from) will be determined to a large degree by their perceptions of its usefulness. Keenan explained, "I hope that once people have experienced the process and the ëI have to do this' attitude, they'll see that they got something valuable out of it. This

change in mindset might pave the way to more conscious, thoughtful professional development choices in the future."

Joyner too stresses how important it is for practitioners to realize that professional development can support their needs rather than merely add to their workload. "It remains a challenge for people to see the staff development system as a means of tackling large new initiatives like EFF or welfare reform. Too often people see professional development as separate from, rather than integral to, these initiatives."

BUILDING A SHARED VISION. Denise Pottmeyer, Ohio ABLE LINK supervisor, talked about the challenges of communicating across a system that is striving for but not always achieving coherence-of how hard it can be for the right hand to know (and build on) what the left hand is doing. Because of the way in which professional development is staffed and special projects are funded in Ohio, communication is difficult, and opportunities for professional development staff to benefit from one another's projects are sometimes missed, she reported. Given the structure that is in place, she said, it is very easy for efforts to become fragmented. "We're getting better at this, but it is still difficult." She notes that improving communication among the various parts of the professional development system is key to addressing this problem, which is amplified by the fact that members of the professional development staff are spread out across the state and are often pursuing special (and unique) areas of interest and expertise.

Although Massachusetts and Ohio have on the surface a similar structure for service delivery, Waldron did not share Pottmeyer's concerns about fragmentation. She feels, for the most part, that diverse efforts are well coordinated and that roles and responsibilities are clear. Waldron noted that a collaborative and participatory structure requires concerted effort to ensure the continuation of a shared vision by professional development staff, the composition of which periodically changes as a result of system growth and, to a lesser extent, staff turnover. Such effort, she explained, includes paying regular attention to decision making and communication structures. Massachusetts professional development staff spend an extraordinary amount of time in face-to-face meetings to clarify and coordinate efforts. According to Waldron, these extra efforts at communication do address some of the issues that Pottmeyer raised.

For Susan Joyner, a related challenge is that of ensuring that professional development staff have truly integrated the guiding philosophy of Virginia's professional development system into their own work: "One of the biggest challenges is keeping the original principles in the minds of people who plan and support staff development activities while at the same time allowing the principles to be open to critique and change." In

general, concerns about keeping everyone "on the same page" are exacerbated by the pressures of the work. Everyone seems to feel a tremendous pressure to keep up with rapid change, which can conflict with the need to reflect on, restate, and continually revise the vision for professional development among state and regional professional development staff.

Finally, a number of those interviewed expressed concern about assessing the quality of the professional development offerings in their states. As Joyner explained, now that putting in the requisite hours is no longer enough when it comes to the accountability of the professional development system, there is a gaping hole in the knowledge base related to the evaluation of professional development. Keenan said that since Pennsylvania has put in place a fully functioning professional development system, she is faced with the question, "How good is it, and how well does it really align with, for example, needs and research? Is it internally consistent?" Similarly, members of the Idaho staff wonder how others are measuring the outcomes of professional development and deciding what is useful.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE, RESEARCH, AND POLICY
All staff members in each of the five states expressed great interest in learning from each other. The desire to acquire knowledge of other states' systems and activities seems driven by an interest in doing the best job possible in the most efficient manner. Not surprisingly, questions of best practice arose, indicating a pressing need for more research, not only on what constitutes "best practice" but on how particular learning theories and approaches to professional development translate into statewide delivery systems. For example, Joyner stated that while there is now a growing literature on inquiry-based professional development on the individual level (Drennon, 1994, 1997; Sherman & Green 1997), little information is available on how to translate its principles into a statewide system. Equally important is a curiosity about how other states organize their systems and what content they have developed that could be adopted or adapted. Limited funds, overstretched staffs, rapidly changing requirements, and an extremely diverse workforce in the field compel professional development staff in all the states to learn from each other.

Practice
One key implication for practice is a call to find ways to involve practitioners more fully in shaping the vision and mission of professional development at the system level. Almost everyone we interviewed expressed a sense of frustration in their struggle to balance the sometimes competing interests of the overall system with local program and

individual practitioner needs. Part of the problem may be the point at which practitioners are called in to contribute to the development and implementation of the system. Their role is often more reactive than proactive, being played out mostly at the level of implementation. For instance, when they are called in to collaborate with state- or regional-level professional development staff, it is often to make decisions about professional development offerings within a predetermined system context; they are then invited to make decisions about how practitioners could be involved as developers and facilitators, but only within that particular set of professional development needs. Practitioners need to enter into the important planning and policy conversations at all levels (local, regional, state, and federal) as they are taking place, not after the fact.

Just as practitioners in the field need meaningful opportunities to come together to share information and raise concerns about their work, so do state-level professional development staff. Although this kind of exchange is occurring to some degree within and across states, it is not taking place in a systematic or broad-based fashion. Such exchanges would provide professional development opportunities for the professional developers and contribute to both efficiency and innovation. Staff also need opportunities to learn more about research and policy so that they can more effectively participate in discussions in these areas and assist practitioners in developing their understanding of new requirements, how they may play out at the state, local, and program levels, and what they can do to shape adaptation and response (M. Drew Hohn, personal communication, June 2, 2000). Opportunities for face-to-face and electronic communication, sharing, and problem solving need to be organized nationally, and financial resources for information sharing are needed to support it.

Research
A clear set of research implications emerges from our analysis of the professional development systems. Perhaps most pressing is the need to develop ways to assess professional development outcomes. A lack of consensus on what counts as success and how to measure it on the learner level complicates evaluations of professional development. Many people would like to identify a causal link between professional development and learner outcomes. Research done in Pennsylvania (Belzer, 1999), however, suggests that defining the impact of professional development in broader terms is an important first step in understanding its potential outcome.12 Until we define impact and outcome, questions related to the quality of professional development will remain relatively unanswerable.

Another question to explore is what happens when cooperative

leadership structures that have an implicit or explicit commitment to collaboration and shared decision making bump up against policies that are written by funders. Research could help develop knowledge in the field about "reconciliation" between what are basically divergent paradigms when they must coexist. Research could look outside the field for models of reconciliation that do not exclude the voice of practitioners. Meanwhile, certain tensions are inherent in cooperative leadership even when it is not buffeted by outside forces (Cervero & Wilson, 1994, 1998). When leadership is shared but not equal, as we see in the five states, stakeholders may need additional strategies and tools for mediating competing interests and resolving difficulties related to power and authority. Descriptive research that seeks to understand the multiple perspectives on roles and responsibility, leadership, and decision making that exist in the field may shed light on what shapes both positive and negative interactions among professional development staff, state ABE staff, and practitioners. Such findings could help all involved find more comfortable places from which to plan and implement activities with each other within the limitations and restraints in the system.

Finally, there are research questions related to professional development system structures. The different system structures in these five states raise a number of questions that merit further inquiry. We do not know in what ways participation rates, learner-to-practitioner ratios, employment status of practitioners, and other particulars of the state context influence professional development system structures. What are the critical factors in shaping professional development systems? In what ways are unique system elements serving a purpose relevant to a particular state's context (for instance, the geography, practitioner or learner characteristics, or the program delivery system)? In what ways do differences in system structures influence quality of professional development and, ultimately, learner outcomes? Furthermore, it seems likely that contextual features, such as where ABE is placed in a state bureaucracy and how it is staffed, have an influence on professional development systems. Improving our understanding of these relationships may help professional development staff make more purposeful choices regarding the ongoing evolution and development of professional development systems.

Policy
There are at least two important implications for policy. First, it is important for policymakers to understand that professional development systems are critical vehicles for putting policy into practice. Policymakers should make these systems an integral part of any policy implementation plan and make the funding of these systems a priority. Policy will likely fail unless policymakers recognize that professional development is crucial to any strategy intent on instituting change. The more communication and collaboration that take place among

policymakers, funders, legislators, state directors, and professional development staff, the better that professional development systems can help programs and practitioners respond effectively to policy changes. Such cooperation can open up channels that may better allow the field to influence policy. Without making such connections, changes are more likely to be resisted, to be transitory, and to occur in chaotic and destabilizing environments. What must also be kept in focus here is the importance of addressing professional development needs as expressed by local programs and individuals. It will be important to find ways to moderate the impact of change initiated at the policy level so that professional development systems can remain responsive to the needs expressed at the individual and program level.

Second, it is important to recognize that while professional development systems need participatory leadership from stakeholders at all levels (including program managers, teachers, and tutors), such involvement by practitioners is undermined by employment structures that do not reward it. Until there are more full-time positions for practitioners and more paid positions for those who choose to move into professional development, the potential for a professional development system that is field driven will be limited. Similarly, the potential of professional development to have a positive influence on practice, program improvement, and policy implementation will be limited as long as the predominant employment model in ABE is a part-time and underpaid workforce with limited time and incentives to participate in professional development.

Notes

1. The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, Division of Adult Education and Literacy differentiates adult education funding related to professional development in 1991 and 1998 as follows. In 1991 the legislation required that states "use not less than 10 percent of allotment for teacher training and must use an additional 5 percent for demonstration projects of teacher training." Based on the 1998 legislation, "states must use 12.5 percent of allotment for State Leadership activities which may include not only teacher training but also technical assistance, support for networks of resource centers, program evaluation, incentives, curriculum development, coordination, linking literacy and occupational training, linkages to postsecondary institutions and other projects of Statewide significance."
2. Although the intent of The Annual Review of Adult Learning and Literacy is to focus on best practices, this is a problematic goal with regard to professional development systems because so little research has been done in this area. In a review of the literature,

Titzel (1998) identified twelve principles of effective staff development based on research in Kñ12 in a variety of contexts. The principles include such concepts as change takes time; staff development must be connected to a larger, coherent vision of reform and change; variety is needed in content and format; and student learning should be a central focus of the effort. However, these principles have not been studied empirically in ABE at the individual, program, or system level. We know little about the relationship between the application of these principles, for example, and the improvement of learner outcomes. A few states have conducted, or are in the process of conducting, evaluations of their professional development systems, but none has yet focused comprehensively on the impact of professional development (although this is under way in Pennsylvania). Nor are there studies in which one system is compared with another. In developing this chapter, we hoped that the selected state systems could serve as illustrative models. Given the paucity of empirical data, however, we could not choose state systems based on identification of best practices in the implementation of professional development systems. In fact, the whole notion of best practices is problematic not only because professional development in adult literacy is underresearched but also because it is underconceptualized. In a field that lacks consensus on instructional goals and methods (Imel, 1998), a lack of consensus as to the best way for practitioners to do their jobs and the best way in which they should be trained is unavoidable.

3. Interview participants were Cheryl Engel, staff development coordinator, and Shirley Spencer, ABE state director, Idaho; Sally Waldron, director of the SABES Central Resource Center and of the Literacy Division at World Education of Massachusetts; Denise Pottmeyer, ABLE supervisor of Ohio; Cheryl Keenan, ABLE state director of Pennsylvania; and Susan Joyner, director of the Adult Education and Literacy Centers of Virginia. Each of these respondents holds a position of key responsibility for professional development in her state.

4. Federal funding to states is based on population. Therefore, each state's available resources for professional development vary greatly depending on the size of the state. While it is true that serving fewer people costs less money, it is also true that there are certain baseline costs associated with developing and maintaining a system that are similar no matter the size of the client base. These expenses include communicating with practitioners about professional development offerings, setting up a body that can organize professional development activities, maintaining a database of practitioners, and conducting needs assessments.

5. English as a second language (ESL) is the term used by the U.S. Department of Education. Gaining more currency in the ABE community is English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), the term used in the balance of this chapter.
6. It is important to note that figures on volunteer data reflect numbers of volunteers in federally funded programs only. Volunteer programs that do not receive such funding are not counted in any of the statistics provided by the Office of Vocational and Adult Education, Division of Adult Education and Literacy.
7. The term full time is not defined in the statistical information made available by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, Division of Adult Education and Literacy, Aug. 1999.
8. These descriptions are based on data collected in spring 1999. These professional development systems are undergoing constant change, but we believe that the brief sketches are timely enough to capture the spirit of these five states' efforts.
9. Idaho Adult Basic Education Five-Year State Plan (Draft) (1999).
10. The NWRLRC also provides other kinds of professional development support related to both technology and print resources.
11. Pennsylvania Performance Standards for Adult Basic and Literacy Education Programs (Sept. 1999).
12. By asking a broad range of practitioners in Pennsylvania to define impact with regard to professional development, Belzer identified five kinds of impact: changes in practice, changes in thinking, changes in professional attitude, changes in program structures, and changes in the broader field. She suggested that different kinds of professional development activities have different kinds of impact and that there should not be an expectation that all professional development will have a direct impact on learner outcomes in a measurable way.

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