A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY ON THE MANIFESTATION OF
THE FIVE DISCIPLINES OF A LEARNING ORGANIZATION IN
THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PREPARATORY PROGRAMS OF
TWO HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
OF
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

YELDA SERTDEMİR ERİŞKEN

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN
THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES

JANUARY 2007

Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

_____

Prof. Dr. Sencer Ayata
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

_____

Prof. Dr. Ali Yıldırım
Head of the Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

_____

Prof. Dr. Hasan Şimşek
Supervisor

Examining Committee Members

Prof. Dr. Ali Yıldırım   (METU, EDS)   _____

Prof. Dr. Hasan Şimşek   (METU, EDS)   _____

Prof. Dr. Yaşar Özden   (METU, CEIT) _____

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ahmet Aypay (ÇOMU, EDS)   _____

Asst. Prof. Dr. Ahmet Ok   (METU, EDS)   _____

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Name, Last name: Yelda S. Erişken

Signature   :

ABSTRACT

A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY ON THE MANIFESTATION OF THE FIVE DISCIPLINES OF A LEARNING ORGANIZATION IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PREPARATORY PROGRAMS OF TWO HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Erişken, Sertdemir Yelda

Ph. D., Department of Educational Sciences

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Hasan Şimşek

January 2007, 302 pages

This comparative case study aimed to explore the elements that align with Senge's framework of the Learning Organization, comprised of the disciplines of Personal Mastery, Shared Vision, Mental Models, Team Learning, and Systems Thinking, in the English Language Preparatory Programs of two selected higher education institutions to determine what characteristics of a learning organization they possess.

In this study, qualitative case study method was employed. The study was conducted in two organizations, one (Organization A), part of a private English-medium university, and the other (Organization B), part of a public English-medium university, in Ankara, Turkey. The sample contained seven administrators and twenty-two instructors from Organization A and seventeen instructors and 3 administrators from Organization B.

The data collected through semi-structured interviews were analyzed using content analysis technique. The findings revealed that both organizations are evolving

towards a learning organization, but have not institutionalized the five disciplines to an ideal state yet. Organization A is doing somewhat better than Organization B as regards the disciplines of Team Learning and Personal Mastery; however, there is no considerable difference between the organizations in terms of the disciplines of Shared Vision, Mental Models and Systems Thinking. Overall, in both organizations there are impediments in terms of the development and achievement of personal visions, learning of individuals and teams, development of a shared vision, surfacing and questioning mental models, and acting from a comprehensive systems approach.

Keywords: Learning Organization, Team Learning, Personal Mastery, Shared Vision, Mental Models, Systems Thinking

ÖZ

İKİ YÜKSEKÖĞRETİM KURUMUNUN İNGİLİZCE HAZIRLIK BÖLÜMLERİNDE ÖĞRENEN ÖRGÜTÜN BEŞ DİSİPLİNİNİN MEVCUDİYETİ ÜZERİNE KARŞILAŞTIRMALI BİR DURUM ÇALIŞMASI

Erişken, Sertdemir Yelda

Doktora, Eğitim Bilimleri Bölümü

Tez Yöneticisi: Prof. Dr. Hasan Şimşek

Ocak 2007, 302 sayfa

Bu karşılaştırmalı durum çalışmasının amacı iki üniversitenin İngilizce hazırlık bölümlerini Senge'nin öğrenen örgütler kuramının beş alt boyutu olarak bilinen Takım Halinde Öğrenme, Kişisel Ustalık, Zihinsel Modeller, Paylaşılan Vizyon ve Sistem Düşüncesi açısından inceleyerek, bu kurumların öğrenen örgütün hangi özelliklerine sahip olduklarını ortaya çıkarmaktır.

Bu araştırmada nitel durum çalışması deseni kullanılmıştır. Çalışma, Türkiye'nin Ankara ilinde İngilizce dilinde öğretim yapan, birisi bir vakıf üniversitesinin bir bölümü (Kurum-A), diğeri de bir devlet üniversitesinin bir bölümü (Kurum-B) olmak üzere iki kurumda yürütülmüştür. Bu çalışmanın örneklemini Kurum-A'dan yedi yönetici ve yirmiiki öğretim elemanı ile Kurum-B'den ondokuz öğretim elemanı ve üç yönetici oluşturmuştur.

Yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme yolu ile toplanmış olan veriler, içerik analizi yöntemi ile incelenmiştir. Çalışmanın bulguları her iki kurumun da öğrenen örgüt olma

yönünde aşama kaydetmiş olmalarına rağmen, öğrenen örgütün alt boyutlarını henüz tam anlamıyla bünyelerinde barındıramadıklarını göstermiştir. Çalışmanın sonuçlarına göre Kurum A Takım Halinde Öğrenme ve Kişisel Ustalık alt boyutları açısından Kurum B'ye göre biraz daha iyi durumdadır. Paylaşılan Vizyon, Zihinsel Modeller ve Sistem Düşüncesi alt boyutları açısından ise iki kurum arasında önemli bir fark görülmemiştir. Genel olarak, her iki kurumda da kişisel vizyonların oluşumu ve gelişmesi, bireylerin ve takımların öğrenmesi, ortak bir vizyonun geliştirilmesi, zihinsel modellerin açığa vurulması ve sorgulanması ile sistemsel düşünme alanlarında engel durumlar tespit edilmiştir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Öğrenen Organizasyonlar, Takım Halinde Öğrenme, Kişisel Ustalık, Zihinsel Modeller, Paylaşılan Vizyon, Sistem Düşüncesi

With all my love and gratitude,

To my dear husband and partner of life, Cevat

AND

To my wonderful parents, Nesrin and Şahin Sertdemir

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation is the conclusion of what has been an extremely illimunating yet an ardous journey, one that I could never have completed alone without the help of many. Indeed, I have been very fortunate to have the support and encouragement of a continuing stream of family, professors, colleagues and friends. I will always be grateful to them. I would like to acknowledge those individuals who made this journey both a positive and possible experience for me.

First and foremost, I wish to offer my most sincere thanks and appreciation to my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Hasan Şimşek, for his invaluable advice, unwavering encouragement and support, and understanding and tolerance throughout this study. I have gained so much from this process and I thank you for your patience to guide me through every phase of this endeavour. Many thanks to Prof. Dr. Yaşar Özden, Assoc. Prof. Dr Ahmey Aypay and Assist. Prof. Dr. Ahmet Ok, who gave me their time, interest and expertise. A special thanks to Prof. Dr. Ali Yıldırım for unlocking the world of qualitative research, and for his valuable contributions to this study. My appreciation and gratitude also goes to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Gary Grossman, who was originally on my dissertation committee, and who provided direction and encouragement at the beginning of this journey. Thank you for your words of wisdom and thank you for believing in me.

I'd also like to thank every single one of the teachers I have ever had, pre-school through university, but specifically the excellent professors in the Faculty of Education at Middle East Technical University for contributing to my development and growth. I would especially like to extend my sincerest thanks to Prof. Dr. Hüsnü Enginarlar, who sparked my interest in academic research and helped me bring my talent and potential out.

This dissertation would not have been possible without the kind cooperation of the instructors and administrators of the two organizations involved in this study. Their willingness to share their feelings and opinions was significant and is deeply appreciated. It is my wish that this study will be of practical value to them.

My warmest thoughts and special thanks to my friends and colleagues for their good wishes, love and prayers during this challenging process. I cannot mention all their names, but they are vivid in my heart. I am also indebted to Oğuz Canıaz, who kindly offered his help and found me resources on campus.

Most importantly, I would like to express my deep-felt love and thankfullness to my family who have always been there to support me. To my father and mother; I love you and thank you for your never-ending support, understanding and love over the years.   Your prayers and words of encouragement gave me the strength and courage to persevere and remain focused on fulfilling my goals. To my brother, Yılmaz, who most willingly offered his help and support whenever I needed; I am so grateful to you. And to his wife, Demet, for her good wishes and her help with the paperwork. Many sincere thanks to my younger brother Tolga and his wife Zeynep for supporting and encouraging me with their best wishes and prayers throughout this study. I also want to thank my lovely nephews, Tunahan and Batuhan, for their sweet smiles. Your existence cheered me along the way even when we were thousands of miles apart.

The greatest appreciation and love goes to my loving husband and partner of life, Cevat, whose unconditional love and patience sustained me through the darkest and hardest moments of this challenging journey. I am blessed to have this exceptional and wonderful man as a life partner. A heartfelt 'thank you' to you, honey. It has been a long way but we have made it through. I am truly grateful for the sacrifices you have made, for the countless hours and sleepless nights and your never-ending patience. I cannot imagine that I could have completed this work without your love and support. May God Bless you.

...And I thank God who blessed me with perseverance and strength to undertake this challenge and helped me out in times of doubt. I feel grateful and honoured to have been able to travel this journey.

It doesn't matter
Where you go
Or what you do
Or how much you have
What matters is
Who you have beside you

Anonymous

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The concept of Organizational Learning has received considerable attention by organizational theorists and practitioners alike in the past several years beginning with Senge's (1990) conceptualization of the Learning Organization. The interest in an organization's ability to learn has been mainly due to the recognition of the link between learning and continuous improvement, which was eloquently expressed by Garvin (1993) when he said "continuous improvement requires a commitment to learning" (p. 78). Organizations now feel the need to continually improve themselves to respond to the constantly changing conditions in their environment shaped by new technologies, increasing competition and globalization. In such an environment, learning ability seems to be the most reliable organizational resource for growth, competition and innovation. It enables organizations to make sense of their environment, and adapt and adjust to changes in order to remain competitive and innovative in the marketplace (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Daft & Huber, 1987; Garvin, 1993; Huber, 1991; Levitt & March, 1988; Marsick & Watkins, 1999).

Principles of the Learning Organization have been adopted by several businesses as a strategy to improve their performance and face future challenges (Bennett & O'Brien, 1994; Gephart & Marsick, 1996). For example, the principles of Senge's model have been observed in organizations such as Motorola, Harley Davidson, AT&T and Shell (Kerka, 1995; Senge, 1990; Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross & Smith, 1994). According to this model, a learning organization uses five disciplines to create learning. These five core disciplines of the Learning Organization are Personal Mastery, Shared Vision, Mental Models, Team Learning, and Systems

Thinking. The discipline of Personal Mastery involves "learning to expand our personal capacity to create the results we most desire and creating an organizational environment which encourages all its members to develop themselves toward the goals and purposes they choose" (p. 6). The discipline of Shared Vision focuses on building a shared meaning, which enables the organization to continue to realize its purpose. Mental Models is the discipline which refers to the uncovering and scrutiny of our internal pictures of the world or assumptions and continually clarifying and improving them. Team Learning, which is another important construct for successful practice in a learning organization, is the ability to effectively use dialogue and discussion to think collaboratively and "develop intelligence and ability greater than the sum of the individual members' talents" (p. 6). Systems Thinking involves examining the whole and seeing the interrelatedness of the parts and how each part influences the other components. It helps the realization that decisions, behaviors and activities effect not only the actor but also all the other interrelated parts.

The five core disciplines, which characterize a learning organization, need to be developed simultaneously in order to be effective as they also work as a system. The exercise of the five disciplines helps an organization to develop the capacity to continually improve and realize its highest aspirations (Senge, 1993).

The application of the concept of Organizational Learning is seen across many fields and education is not an exception. Senge underlies the need to see Organizational Learning in relation to educational settings by simply stating "You can make pretty compelling arguments that systems thinking, building a shared vision, dialogue and learning how to reflect on our mental models are, at some level, educational undertakings more than business undertakings" (O'Neill, 1995, p. 23). Fullan (1993) also suggests that promotion of meaningful change and innovation in education could really be achieved through developing learning organizations - organizations that engage in systematic process for continuous improvement, growth and adaptation to new situations through the creation, collection and dissemination of knowledge.

Higher education institutions, as perhaps the most responsible places for collection, production and transmission of knowledge, would seem to be "the organization most likely to epitomize what it means to be a learning organization- a place where its members maximize their own learning, creativity, potential, and organizational performance" (Smith, 2003, p. 1). Unfortunately, while creating opportunities for learning for their students, the literature suggests, they themselves have rarely practiced even the simplest tenets proposed in the theories of learning organizations. Indeed, they have a traditional culture with examples of competitive ratings and rankings, critical judgment, power distance and self interest, and authoritarian and hierarchical structures (White & Weathersby, 2005). However, higher education institutions "need to learn and learn quickly" (Kezar, 2005, p. 20) if they are to survive the requirements and challenges of the emerging times such as the greater demands for accountability, the pressures to produce workers ready for the knowledge driven economy (Bauman & Bensimon, 2002) and calls for restructuring, reorganization and continuous improvement. In the literature of organization theory, there are many calls by scholars like Duke (1999), Martin (1999) and Senge (2000) for change in higher education institutions using the learning organization principles. By applying the learning organization principles to an organization, it is possible for organizations to create work environments that maximize individual and organizational potential and performance (Smith, 2003). Senge's model of the learning organization with a set of disciplines that help build individual and organizational capacity for becoming a learning organization is "apt for those who are seeking ways to conceptualize organizational structures and processes to foster continuing responsiveness, effectiveness, and efficiency in administering higher education" (Dever, 1997, p. 57). In order to become learning organizations, then, higher education institutions, like other educational institutions, should cultivate systemic patterns of thinking, surface and challenge prevailing mental models, build a shared vision, promote team learning, and encourage personal mastery. This would enable them to become places where "people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set

free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together" (Senge, 1990, p. 3).

Other than simply recognizing the applicability of the principles of the learning organization to higher education institutions, and a general recognition that that can help to improve their performance, there has been little attempt in the literature to find out the relative levels of organizational learning within those organizations (Neefe, 2001). A brief review of the literature shows that there are only a handful of studies which have empirically examined this issue and that most of the literature in higher education is advocacy for learning, anecdotally based, and prescriptive (Karsten, Voncken & Voorthuis, 2000; Kezar, 2005). Studying organizational learning in higher education is crucial in order to understand the concept of higher education institutions as learning organizations, and to identify the gaps in their way of becoming learning organizations. This might especially provide invaluable information to those who want to develop reform agenda for higher education institutions. Therefore, there is a need to fill the gap for research related to learning within higher education.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this comparative case study is to explore the elements that align with Senge's framework of the Learning Organization in the English Language Preparatory programs of two selected higher education settings to determine what characteristics of a learning organization they possess. One of the organizations involved in this study is part of a nonprofit private English-medium university while the other is part of a public English-medium university in Ankara, Turkey. For ethical considerations, the names of the two organizations where this study was carried out are not given here. They will be referred to as Organization A and Organization B respectively instead of being called by their original names. The study identified the perceptions of the instructors and administrators working at both organizations with regard to the manifestations of the five disciplines of a learning organization proposed by Senge (1990).

Specifically, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. How do the instructors and administrators in Organization A and B perceive their institution in terms of the following disciplines?

    (a) Personal Mastery

    (b) Shared Vision

    (c) Mental Models

    (d) Team Learning

    (e) Systems Thinking

2. What are the similarities and differences between the perceived characteristics of Organization A and Organization B in the learning disciplines above?

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study hopes to contribute to the sparse body of literature related to learning organizations within the higher education arena, especially in Turkey. Practically speaking, the results of this study should provide organizations and managers aspiring to create learning organizations with useful information. It may help broaden their understanding of their organization as a learning organization, and identify current strengths and barriers to learning in their organization. It could be important particularly for leaders and administrators who desire more knowledge and understanding about the system in which they function and who want to assess their own status as learning organizations by offering insights about how higher education institutions applying Peter Senge's constructs of learning organization may look like.

Moreover, conducting such a study that attempts to understand in-depth the level of organizational learning at the two selected settings may be of use for all the stakeholders of the two programs in the sample by providing them with an opportunity to see themselves in a more complete manner. The feedback that this

study provides may help the organizations investigated to identify their strengths, areas of concern and possible future initiatives to consider in their continual attempt to learn, adapt and improve.

Finally, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, this study is also the first study to assess the degree to which the five disciplines of the learning organization proposed by Senge are being practiced in two settings of higher education in Turkey. It is hoped that it will provide a basis for future studies related to organizational learning in Turkey and inspire new studies that will analyze different higher education settings in Turkey.

1.4 Definition of Key Terms

Organizational Learning: "The process of improving actions through better knowledge and understanding" (Fiol & Lyles, 1985, p. 803).

Learning Organization: A Learning Organization is one "where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspirations are set free and where people are continually learning how to learn together" (Senge, 1990, p. 3).

Discipline: "a body of technique, based on some underlying theory or understanding of the world that must be studied and mastered to put into practice" (Senge et al., 1994, p. 7).

Personal Mastery: "the practice of articulating a coherent image of your personal vision-the results you most want to create in your life-alongside a realistic assessment of the current reality of your life today" (Senge et al., 2000, p. 7).

Shared Vision: A process to establish "a focus on mutual purpose. People with a common purpose … can learn to nourish a sense of commitment in a group or organization by developing shared images of the future they seek to create and the

principles and guiding practices by which they hope to get there" (Senge et al., 2000, p. 7).

Mental Models: "The discipline of reflection and inquiry skills [which] is focused around developing awareness of attitudes and perceptions-your own and those of others around you" (Senge et al., 2000, p. 7).

Team Learning: "The process of aligning and developing the capacity of a team to create the results its members truly desire" (Senge, 1990, p. 236).

Systems Thinking: "a conceptual framework, a body of knowledge and tools that has been developed over the past fifty years, to make the full pattern clearer, and to help us see how to change them effectively" (Senge, 1990, p. 7).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this chapter, first, the concept of "Organizational Learning" is explained. Secondly, the definition of the term "learning organization" and the characteristics of learning organizations are presented. Next, the five core disciplines of a learning organization proposed by Peter Senge are discussed. Finally, research on organizational learning in educational settings is given.

2.1 Organizational Learning

There has been a lot of debate in the literature as to the definition of the term "organizational learning" and, as a result, numerous definitions have been developed.

Dodgson (1993) defines organizational learning as a way of building, supplementing and organizing knowledge and routines around organizational activities and within organizational cultures, and adapting and developing organizational efficiency by improving the skills of the workforce. Dixon (1999) views organizational learning as "the intentional use of learning processes at the individual, group and system level to continuously transform the organization in a direction that is increasingly satisfying to its stakeholders" (p. 6). The term has also been defined as "the process of improving actions through better knowledge and understanding" (Fiol & Lyles, 1985, p. 803); increasing the organization's ability to take effective actions (Kim, 1993); the principal processes through which management innovation occurs (Stata, 1989); detection and correction of error (Argyris & Schön, 1978); and successful restructuring of organizational problems (Simon, 1971). These and many other definitions of organizational learning emphasize the need for knowledge acquisition and the need to translate knowledge

into effective action so that organizational learning brings about organizational success.

Argyris and Schön (1978), whose work influenced thinking on organizational learning, see organizational learning operating at three levels: single-loop, double-loop and triple-loop-learning. As represented in Figure 2.1, single-loop learning, which is also referred to as lower-level learning by Fiol and Lyles (1985), and as adaptive learning by Senge (1990), occurs when errors are detected and corrected, and the organization carries on with its present policies and goals. Single-loop learning simply "focuses on in the present without examining the appropriateness of current learning behaviors" (Yogesh, 1996, para. 9). It is usually based on what has worked in the past. However, this form of learning does not address the underlying causes of the problems and results in superficial solutions. "Single-loop learning" may help improve organizational efficiency, but will not be satisfactory when there is a need for highly innovative organizational responses due to environmental demands, which requires examining underlying beliefs and assumptions in the organization (Cibulka, Coursey, Nakayama, Price, & Stewart, 2000). In contrast, "double-loop learning" – also called as higher-level learning by Fiol and Lyles (1985), and as generative learning (or learning to expand an organization's capabilities) by Senge (1990) - involves questioning and altering organization's underlying norms, policies, procedures and objectives to bring about transformative change. In Senge's opinion, this type of learning requires "systemic thinking," "shared vision," "personal mastery," "team learning," and "creative tension" between the vision and the current reality. The result of double-loop learning is "increased effectiveness of action and better acceptance of failure and mistakes" (Argyris, 1976, as cited in Hedman & Borell, 2005). For real organizational learning to take place, organizations need to learn how to carry out single and double-loop learning, which Argyris and Schon (1978) call "triple- loop learning." Organizations whose members engage in this type of learning reflect on and inquire into previously occurred episodes of organizational learning or failure to learn.

9
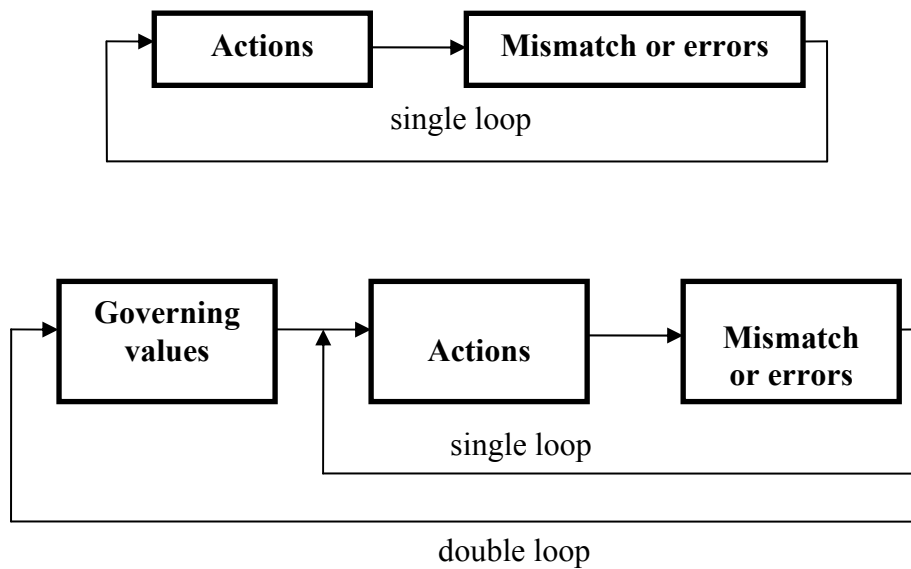
Figure 2.1. Schematic Illustration of Single and Double-Loop Learning (Taken from Bowles, 2005)

Many theorists argue and theorize about the level of analysis at which organizational learning takes place. The question that lies at the heart of the issue is whether an organization can learn itself, or organizational learning is simply the sum of the learning of the individuals in the organization. Some assert that learning exists only at an individual level and that it is individuals, not organizations, that learn (March & Olsen, 1975). This perspective simply views an organization as the sum of its individual members and organizational learning as nothing more than accumulated individual learning (Dodgson, 1993). There are, however, others who believe that organizational learning "cannot be reduced to the accumulation of learning at the individual level" (Louis & Şimşek, 1991). Organizational Learning is a "system-level phenomenon because it stays with the organization even if individuals change" (Nevis, DiBella & Gould, 1995, p.73). There are those who go even further and suggest that organizational learning is a multilevel process beginning with individual learning, that leads to group learning, and that, then, leads to organizational learning (Crossan et al., 1999). Organizational learning is not possible without individual learning and individual learning requires

organizational assistance and context to be effective. An organization becomes a learning organization through the combination and coordination of the three kinds of learning (Simons, 1995).

2.2 The Learning Organization

There are references to both organizational learning and learning organizations in the literature and they are sometimes used interchangeably. However, it is important to differentiate the two terms. Becoming a learning organization could be the goal of an organization. The process through which an organization could achieve this goal is the process of organizational learning (Schwandt & Marquardt, 2000). It is through the implementation of organizational learning that an organization becomes a learning organization (Tsang, 1997).

The concept "learning organization" which gained wide acceptance after Senge's (1990) work is defined in a variety of ways in the organizational learning literature. Garvin (1993) describes the learning organization as being skillful at creating, gathering, interpreting, transferring and retaining knowledge and modifying its behavior to reflect new knowledge and insights. Senge (1990) offers a more comprehensive definition of learning organizations and points out the importance of collective action and learning by defining them as places "where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free and where people are continually learning how to learn together" (p. 3). For such an organization, survival is not enough. 'Survival learning' or 'adaptive learning' must be joined with 'generative learning'- learning that enhances our capacity to create" (p.14).

Gephart and Marsick (1996) describe a learning organization as one

> …that has an enhanced capacity to learn, adapt and change. It's an organization in which learning processes are analyzed, monitored, developed, managed and aligned with improvement and innovation goals. Its vision, strategy, leaders, values, structures, systems, processes and

practices all work to foster people's learning and development and to accelerate systems-level learning (p. 36).

Leithwood and Aitken (1995) set forth another explanation of a learning organization: "A group of people pursuing common purposes (individual purposes as well) with a collective commitment to regularly weighing the value of those purposes, modifying them when that makes sense, and continually developing more effective and efficient ways of accomplishing those purposes" (p. 63).

While many other definitions exist, they all have common themes and emphasize continual improvement and learning capacity within a dynamic, living organization through individual and collective learning.

2.3 Characteristics of Learning Organizations

There is no best way to become a learning organization. Since Senge (1990) started advocating the building of learning organizations, myriad of perspectives have been developed concerning the basic characteristics of a learning organization. As DiBella (2001) says "Although some prescriptive approaches have been popular, there has concurrently been a realization that teams and organizations learn in a myriad of ways and that there is no one way to build a learning organization…" (p. viii). Learning organizations employ different approaches instead of a single prescription for success (Gephart & Marsick, 1996). The remainder of this section discusses different viewpoints related to the characteristics of learning organizations. Table 2.1 presents a full summary of these.

According to Senge (1990), five key elements or disciplines characterize a learning organization. These are Personal Mastery, Shared Vision, Team Learning, Mental Models and Systems Thinking. Senge's basic assumption is that the Learning Organization stimulates learning by the creation and development of teams who continuously learn, follow a shared vision, surface and question mental models and engages in systemic thinking. Since this study is based on Senge's framework of a learning organization, the five disciplines that characterize the learning organization are examined later in detail in this chapter.

Table 2.1

Different Viewpoints Related to the Characteristics of Learning Organizations

	Senge (1990)	Huber (1991)	Garvin (1993)	Watkins and Marsick (1993)	Bennett and O'Brien (1994)	Gephart and Marsick (1996)	Goh (1998)
Personal Mastery	√				√	√	
Shared Vision/mission	√			√	√		√
Team Learning	√			√	√		√
Mental Models	√						
Sytems Thinking	√			√		√	
Knowledge Acquisition		√					
Information Distribution		√	√		√	√	√
Information Interpretation		√					
Organizational Memory		√	√				
Systemic Problem Solving							
Experimentation/Risk Taking						√	√
Learning from past							
Learning from others							
Managerial/Executive Practices					√		
Climate of Openness & Trust					√		
Continuous Learning				√	√	√	
Performance goals/feedback					√		
Training & Education					√		
Rewards & Recognition					√	√	
Promotion of Inquiry & Dialogue				√			
Systems to capture and share learning				√			
Leadership							√

Huber (1991) mentions four constructs as internally linked to learning organizations. These four constructs that are necessary for the existence of learning in an organization include knowledge acquisition, information distribution, information interpretation and organizational memory. Knowledge acquisition, which is the process by which knowledge is obtained, contains five strategies: congenital learning (knowledge which resides at the birth of the organization), experiential learning (learning from experiences within the organization), vicarious learning (learning from other organizations), grafting (by hiring new skills), and searching

and noticing (scanning the external environment). Sharing of information is regarded as an important factor for the success of learning organizations and requires trust between management and individuals in the organization (Gardiner & Whiting, 1997). Huber's second construct information distribution refers to the process by which information is shared among the units of an organization, which leads to production of new knowledge and understanding. Knowledge interpretation, on the other hand, is the process by which shared information is given one or more commonly understood meanings. There are four sub-constructs involved in the interpretation of knowledge: cognitive maps, which suggests that individual interpretation of information is shaped by cognitive maps of individuals, richness of the media used to communicate the information, information load which implies that information overload detracts from effective information interpretation, and unlearning. Organizational memory, the final construct proposed by Huber, refers to "the means by which knowledge is stored for future use" (p.90).

In his framework for studying learning organizations, Garvin (1993) talks about five main activities that learning organizations engage in. These five activities learning organizations are skilled at include systematic problem solving, experimentation with new approaches, learning from past experience and past history, learning from others, and transferring native knowledge quickly and efficiently throughout the organization. Systematic problem solving relies on the scientific method, rather than guesswork, for diagnosing problems, and the data, rather than hunches or assumptions for decision making. The second activity, experimentation with new approaches, involves using a systems approach in seeking and testing of new knowledge, and requires an incentive system rewarding risk taking and innovation. Learning from past experience by reviewing successes and failures, and seeing the later as opportunities for learning is another activity learning organizations are skilled at. Looking at the best practices of others in the external environment and benchmarking to gain a new perspective is still another activity learning organizations use. Finally, learning organizations disseminate knowledge throughout the organization effectively and efficiently through such means as

written, oral, and visual reports, site visits and tours, education and training programs, personnel rotation programs and standardization programs.

Watkins and Marsick (1993) list the following as the characteristics of learning organizations: creation of continuous learning opportunities, promotion of inquiry and dialogue, promotion of collaboration and team learning, systems to capture and share learning, empowering people towards a collective vision and connecting the organization to its environment. In a learning organization, continuous learning is fostered through combination of formal and informal learning through better planning, helping individuals learn how to learn and think more complexly, and supporting performance through just-in-time training which often involves a learning center stocked with self-learning packages. Learning organizations also promote inquiry and dialogue, making it safe for individuals to share their thoughts and opinions openly and take risks. Watkins and Marsick also see teams and groups as means of moving new knowledge throughout the learning organization. Through teamwork, individuals learn how to work in collaboration, "extending the organization's capacity to achieve unified action on common goals" (p. 14). In addition, learning organizations not only establish systems to preserve what is learned in the organizational memory, but also create a collective vision through the empowerment of people, which involves giving them opportunities to take control of the situation, encouraging learning and development, helping them to set and achieve goals, providing the necessary resources and rewarding achievements. Finally, a learning organization acknowledges the interdependencies between the organization and its external and internal environment, and works through them. This connection and interaction can be achieved through a systems perspective.

Bennett and O'Brien (1994), who studied the practice of 25 successful corporations in the manufacturing and service industry, have come up with 12 fundamental organizational building blocks of a learning organization. These include strategy/vision, managerial practices, executive practices, climate, organization/job structure, information flow, individual and team practices, work processes, performance goals/feedback, individual/team development, training/education, and rewards/recognition. According to Bennett and O'Brien, in a learning organization,

the organization and its members have a vision of where they want to go; managers promote continuous learning and create conditions for the individuals to live happy and productive lives; a climate of openness and trust is established; the organizational structure supports continuous learning through fluid job descriptions that respond both to the changing conditions in the external environment and the needs of the organization; advanced technology is used to obtain and distribute information; work processes that encourage continuous learning are incorporated; feedback from customers plays an important role in the communication process; teams and individuals share their learning; individual and team development is encouraged through formal training programs; and individual and organizational learning are encouraged through reward and recognition systems. Bennett and O'Brien state that no single organization excels in all of these 12 areas but the leaders of organizations continually try to improve their organizations to reflect these benchmarks.

According to Gephart and Marsick (1996), a learning organization has six essential characteristics. Firstly, in a learning organization, when individuals share their learning in ways that allow for the transfer of knowledge across the organization and integration of learning into organizational routines and actions, continuous learning occurs at the systems level. Another feature of a learning organization is generating and sharing knowledge quickly and easily in order for people to use it when they need it. A learning organization also encourages critical, systemic thinking as well as promotes a culture where learning and creativity are rewarded and supported. In such an organization, people feel free to take risks, experiment, innovate and explore new ideas. Finally, a learning organization is people centered, that is to say, it nurtures, values and supports the well-being, development and learning of every individual.

Goh (1998) suggests five major organizational characteristics and/or management practices that are essential for learning to take place in an organization. These core building blocks are mission and vision, leadership, experimentation, transfer of knowledge, and teamwork and cooperation. Goh believes that a clear mission and

vision shared by the members of an organization is critical in a learning organization. Moreover, in a learning organization, shared participative leadership is fostered and employees are encouraged to participate in organizational decisions regularly. Leaders are seen as coaches and facilitators and they are open to constructive criticism. A culture fostering experimentation is another feature of a learning organization. People challenge the status-quo by posing the question 'how can we do it better?' Leaders encourage team work to improve processes and facilitate innovation and people are rewarded for innovation. Creating internal mechanisms such as list server to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and expertise and benchmarking for the best practices of others are also useful strategies for organizational learning. Finally, encouraging team work and cooperation by bringing employees from a number of functional areas promotes questioning and learning, fosters innovation as well as systemic thinking to problem solving. Apart from these five core strategic building blocks, Goh identified two supporting foundations- effective organizational design and appropriate employee skills and competencies, which he thinks, must be in alignment of the five strategic building blocks.

Different concepts and viewpoints regarding the Learning Organization do exist; however, as the brief literature review suggests common themes continue to appear. These include team work and team learning, sharing of knowledge and learning, shared vision and mission, a culture of flexibility and experimentation with rewards and recognition, systemic thinking, and continuous development, training and learning of individuals and teams.

2.4 Inhibitors to Becoming a Learning Organization

It is not easy for an organization to simply apply learning practices and turn into a learning organization. There are mainly two reasons for this. Firstly, there are a number of barriers that inhibit the formation and operation of a learning organization, and secondly, very few of these barriers are understood (Sunassee & Haumant, 2004).

One of the barriers to learning is the lack of effective leaders (Murrell & Walsh 1993, p. 295). Senge (1990) asserts that a learning organization requires the replacement of a traditional view of leadership, which relies on "assumptions of people's powerlessness, their lack of personal vision and inability to master the forces of change" (p. 340), with a non-traditional view of leadership. The new view of leadership demands that leaders be conceptual designers of vision and core beliefs, stewards and teachers.

Watkins and Marsick (1993) break the barriers to learning into three: truncated learning, learned helplessness, and tunnel vision. Many organizations initiate learning efforts which are never fully executed. An idea brought up in one part of the organization fails to be put into practice as not all the people necessary for its success are involved. Truncated learning also takes place when the vision is not adequately articulated, or when too many changes are adopted at once "without regard to the limits of human malleability" (p. 241). Still at other times learning is truncated because of a premature evaluation and discomfort with a new norm. Learned helplessness, which is another obstacle in the path of learning organizations, is a feature of not only individuals but also organizations. Learned helplessness is based on the assumption that one is incapable of doing anything to change events. Individuals and teams learn 'helplessness' and turn passive when their efforts at taking control meet with resistance or punishment. Organizations characterized by a rigid hierarchy and over bureaucratization foster this passivity. People may also be inclined towards helplessness when they are faced with unrealistic and unachievable goals. People can unlearn helplessness through training, observing others, changes in reward systems and redesign of work. It is also necessary for organizations to attend to environmental factors that inhibit initiative and reward passivity. Another barrier to learning cited by Watkins and Marsick is 'tunnel vision', which refers to the inability to see oneself and a situation from a systems perspective. Individuals need to see the interdependence of organization-wide structures, norms, and policies to overcome systemic faults.

In his book, *The Fifth Discipline*, Senge also talks about some barriers to learning which he terms 'learning disabilities.' Senge lists these as follows: (1) "I am my

position" (i.e. focusing only on your position and having little sense of responsibility for the results produced- when all positions interact) (2) "The enemy is out there" (i.e. blaming others when things go wrong) (3) "The illusion of taking charge" (i.e. taking aggressive action against an external enemy instead of seeing how we contribute to our own problems) (4) "The fixation on events" (i.e. looking for obvious causes to events instead of seeing the underlying causes) (5) "The parable of the boiled frog" (i.e. failure to recognize gradually building threats to our survival) (6) "The delusion of learning from experience" (we learn best from experience but, when our actions have consequences in the distant future or in a distant part of the larger operating system, it becomes impossible to learn from direct experience) (7) "The myth of the management team" (i.e. instead of working collectively, teams in business spend their time fighting for turf but give the image of a cohesive team, never dealing with the underlying differences) (1990, pp. 18 - 25).

Among the other obstacles that inhibit learning organizations are operational/fire fighting preoccupation, that is, not creating time to sit back and think strategically, being too focused on systems and process to exclusion of other factors, reluctance to train (or invest in training) other than for obvious immediate needs, too many hidden personal agendas and too top-down driven, over tight supervision leading to lack of real empowerment (Fargo & Skyrme, 1995). Still other barriers identified as inhibiting learning include defensive reasoning (Argyris, 1992), lack of a vision as a whole or a lack of a shared vision (Senge, 1999), lack of appreciation for teamwork, and opportunity for individual expression and operating principles, an absence of collaboration across organizational lines, and inability to recognize and change existing mental models (Watkins & Marsick, 1993).

In conclusion, as outlined above, there are several barriers that threaten the ability of organizations to transform themselves into a learning organization. As Senge (1990) notes such barriers to learning can be fatal in organizations where they go unnoticed. Therefore, it is important to identify these barriers and take actions to overcome them in order to create an organization in which learning can flourish (Watkins & Marsick, 1993).

2.5 Senge's Core Disciplines of the Learning Organization

In his book, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*, Senge (1990) proposes that a learning organization is framed by five interrelated disciplines: Personal Mastery, Shared Vision, Mental Models, Team Learning and Systems Thinking. Each discipline is critical to the success of the others and they all need to be put into practice by an organization to build individual and organizational capacity for becoming a learning organization. These five disciplines or constructs help build organizations that can truly learn and can constantly increase their capacity to realize their highest aspirations.

2.5.1 Team Learning

Team Learning, which builds on the disciplines of Shared vision and Personal mastery, is defined as "the process of aligning and developing the capacity of a team to create the results its members truly desire" (Senge, 1990, p. 236). In defining Team Learning, Senge asserts that it is a microcosm of organizational learning. Individuals can learn without affecting organizational learning but Team Learning is the model for organizational learning. Team learning goes beyond traditional team building skills. It starts with personal mastery and self-knowledge and requires looking outward to develop knowledge of and alignment with others in the team. When a team is aligned and they function as a whole, a commonality of direction and purpose emerges; people's energies are harmonized; less energy is wasted; a resonance of synergy develops; a shared vision as an extension of their own personal visions emerges; and an understanding of how to complement one another's efforts develop (Senge, 1990).

There are three dimensions critical to Team Learning. First, there is the requirement to think critically about organizational issues. In this way, multiple perspectives can combine to produce more effective and creative solutions than is possible when one person is responsible for developing solutions. As Senge states, "The IQ of the team can, potentially, be much greater than the IQ of the individuals" (p. 239). Second, there is the need for innovative and synchronized action based on trust

within the team. And finally, there is the prerequisite for cooperative and interactive relationships with other organizational teams.

Senge (1990) notes that mastering the discipline of Team Learning requires two conversational forms, namely, reflective dialogue and skillful discussion. Dialogue has the most potential for improving learning and creativity. Senge asserts that "colleagueship" is a precondition for dialogue. "Dialogue can occur only when a group of people see each other as colleagues in mutual quest for deeper insight and clarity" (p. 245). Senge warns that colleagueship does not necessarily mean that you need to agree or share the same views. "On the contrary, the real power of seeing each other as colleagues comes into play when there are differences of view. ... Choosing to view 'adversaries' as 'colleagues with different views' has the greatest benefits" (p. 245). Colleagueship implies that "the parties involved are ready to forsake the power of rank, hierarchy, seniority, or majority, that they need not have fear in expressing contrary views… [I]t requires an atmosphere of trust where it is relatively safe to take risks and be open" (Ramage & Matzdorf, 2005). Dialogue also involves suspending one's views and assumptions so that free and creative exploration of complex and subtle issues can occur. When judgments are suspended, different points of views can be seen and a climate of trust and safety can be built. People become more willing to express themselves fully as they learn that they will not be judged wrongly, which helps to create an open and truthful atmosphere. Listening to one another in depth and attentively is another skill needed to achieve productive dialogue. The manner in which people listen has an impact on how well they learn and how effective they are in building quality relationships in an organization (April, 1999). "In dialogue, individuals gain insights that simply could not be achieved individually" (Senge, 1990, p. 241). In dialogue "everybody wins, if anybody wins" (Bohm, 1996, p. 7). Additionally, through dialogue, "one's mental maps are clarified" (Ellinor & Gerard, 1998, p. 6). If individuals cannot fully participate in dialogue productively, and if defensiveness or threat is a part of the conversation, then it is not really possible for the team to move forward.

On the other hand, skillful discussion, which is another skill necessary to master the discipline of Team Learning, involves presenting and defending different views in the search for the best solution. Focused reflective discussions help the organization to identify meaningful problem solving strategies. However, traditional discussion, which is oriented towards advocacy with the aim of winning, is not the intent here. Traditional discussion is not a successful way to conduct teamwork, because it undermines learning, and ideas and 'solutions' do not really get the consideration they deserve (Senge et al., 1994). Senge et al. (2000) add that the use of dialogue and skillful discussion foster team learning relationships in sub groups that might otherwise be indifferent or hostile to each other.

The main difference between dialogue and discussion lies in the fact that the intention in dialogue is a spirit of understanding, not competition of ideas, and to build capacities that dissolve resistance in times of upheavals in an organization. In skillful discussion, the primary aim is to tell, sell and persuade as well as reach agreement, defend one's assumptions or convince someone of an idea. The intent, here, is to achieve convergent thinking (Preskill & Torres, 1999). Team Learning requires ability to learn how to deal effectively with powerful forces opposing productive dialogue and discussion when working in teams.

Senge (1990) also states that practising the necessary skills required for successful team interaction and learning is necessary to master the discipline of Team Learning. It is through practice that individuals are able to identify defensive routines, which are "actions or policies that … prevent people from identifying and getting rid of the causes of potential embarrassment or threat. [They] are anti-learning, over-protective and self-sealing" (Argyris, 1990, p. 25). Practicing dialogue and skillful discussion also enables individuals to learn to better suspend personal biases towards others and their views and build a cohesive and productive team. People also see conflict as a natural and healthy part of the learning process.

Since dialogue and skillful discussion seem to be unfamiliar to many organizational cultures, Senge et al. (2000) also advocate the use of a facilitator to promote dialogue through modeling and the provision of skills that are necessary to enhance

the ability of a team to learn together. The more experience and skill teams develop in dialogue, the less crucial the role of the facilitator becomes and "he or she can gradually become just one of the participants" (Senge, 1990, p. 247).

The team approach is central to the culture of learning organizations. Teamwork and cooperation help the creation of an environment where individuals working in teams offer collective skills and knowledge (Bennett & O'Brien, 1994; Goh, 1998). Groups gain insights when they enter into dialogue, and collective discovery, growth and conflict foster organizational learning and growth.

Unfortunately, the current practices in the arena of education today lend very little to this discipline. Educators have a tendency to define learning as an individual phenomenon. Thus, most educational organizations have no time, structural arrangement, or norms to promote Team Learning. Staff development programs almost always support the learning of individuals only (Isaacson & Bamburg, 1992). Moreover, teachers do not have much time or opportunity for collegial collaboration. Conzemius and Conzemius (1996) argue that collaboration and encouragement from an empowering insightful colleague or a lead teacher would be the key learning unit in an educational organization. It is widely accepted that the capacity of educational institutions to innovate relies on team learning or ability to collaboratively examine, discern and apply new ideas about teaching and learning (Fullan, 1993; Marks & Louis, 1999). Research indicates that the most successful learning takes place in educational organizations where teachers find solutions together (Boyer, 1995). It is also suggested in educational literature that decisions tend to be better and that the level of morale and trust increases. There is also evidence showing that student motivation and achievement rise and students tend to share and cooperate when they see their teachers doing the same (Barth, 1991).

In educational contexts, ensuring Team Learning calls for leaders to not only provide teachers with training in collaborative work, but also set aside time for teachers to gather for collaboration. It is suggested that bringing teachers together at the beginning and at the end of each academic year and preferably at least once a week, or frequent and informal problem solving sessions, preparation times

allowing teachers to work together may all support organizational learning. These forums could be used as opportunities to practice dialogue in an attempt to develop collaborative thought, coordinated action and collective inquiry into everyday experiences and what is taken for granted (Beeby & Booth, 2000). Individuals learn how to think together in the sense of analyzing a common problem or creating new pieces of shared knowledge, and resulting actions belong not only to the leader or a teacher but to all of them together (Senge et al., 2000). In support of promotion of Team Learning, Leithwood, Leonard and Sharrat (1998) say that a collaborative culture, where there is mutual support, respect for other teachers' ideas, sharing of open and honest feedback and willingness to take risks, improves team learning behavior.

2.5.2 Personal Mastery

Personal Mastery, the discipline of personal growth and mastery, is another discipline needed to build a learning organization. Personal Mastery emphasizes the importance of the individual learner's role in organizational learning. Organizations learn only through individuals who learn. Individual learning does not guarantee organizational learning but without it no organizational learning occurs (Senge, 1990).

According to Senge, Personal Mastery requires two underlying activities, one of which is learning to keep a personal vision, that is, a "picture of a desired future." Achieving Personal Mastery also requires that one has a clear understanding of current reality, without any biases or misconceptions. Observing and making sense of current realities, in Senge's view, is just as important as a compelling picture of a desired future. For instance, educators may want to ponder the isolation and connectedness they feel; their own capabilities and concerns as a teacher or as an administrator; the condition of their school; the quality of learning; the level of organizational change taking place; the challenges or resistance faced by people; the quality of the changes; and the resources available (Senge et al., 2000).

The gap between where one is currently functioning and where one wants to be generates "creative tension." Creativity results when one is not satisfied with the current situation and is driven to change it. The energy created by this tension is positive energy and it helps the individual to move closer to the vision. The individual who has an accurate view of reality sees what is standing in the way of achieving the vision and does not waver in trying to realize it. In pursuit of personal mastery, the truly creative individual tries to expand his capacity and creates whatever methods and rules are necessary to achieve the vision.

For people with a high level of personal mastery, vision is not just a good idea but a calling. They are inquisitive, aware of their incompetence and their growth areas, more committed to their lifelong learning, connected to each other and have a deeper sense of responsibility in their work. For them, the "journey is the reward" (Senge, 1990, p.142).

Senge et al. (1994) state that "no one else can increase someone else's Personal Mastery. [Others] can only set up conditions that encourage and support people who wish to increase their own" (p.193). In order to develop this discipline, the creation of personal visions must be supported by the organizational climate. People should be encouraged to pursue those things that are most important to them. They should be free to inquire and challenge the status quo, norms should include commitment to the truth and leaders should act as models of commitment to Personal Mastery.

What would an educational organization that fosters the discipline of Personal Mastery look like? It is necessary for administrators and leaders to create an environment where it is safe for people to create visions and where they have time to reflect on their vision. By "modeling behaviors and attitudes that reflect their personal commitment to growth and development," leaders can help foster personal visions (Appelbaum & Goransson, 1997, p. 121). They must have a good sense of their own vision, describe what they want to achieve with other stakeholders, create symbols to communicate it and make public the goals they will set to guide their actions to realize their life's purpose (Synder, 1994).

Moreover, leaders, by being a teacher and a coach, should cultivate and unleash creative tension in each individual and direct it toward taking effective actions and produce results (Larsen, McInerney, Nyquist, Santos & Silsbee, 1996). Palm and Nelson (2000) suggest that leaders ask staff questions that draw forth their aspirations. These questions may include what they wish to accomplish, what strengths and liabilities they have and what help is needed from the organization. They should also encourage establishing an organizational commitment to the truth wherever possible and avoid taking a position about what stakeholders should want or how they should view the world (Senge et al., 2000). Administrators and leaders should also create an ecology of reflection, growth, and refinement of practice- a community of learners (Barth, 1991). "A school that has turned itself into a community of learners is filled with daily examples of people learning from each other, sharing what they are learning, and being excited about and participating in what others are learning" (Collins, 2000 p. 25). While leaders engage in, display and model the behavior that is expected to be adopted by teachers and students (Barth, 1991), teachers examine and refine their skills throughout their careers and are involved with their colleagues for better ways to teach (Collins, 2000).

Personal Mastery implies a willingness to invest what is necessary to create an environment that helps teachers, students and other stakeholders become high quality contributors (Senge et al., 1994). Thus, leaders must provide a wide range of learning options to meet individual preferences and styles (Palm & Nelson, 2000). They must invest intelligence, time, energy and money far beyond what they consider appropriate in the development of individual capacity. They should develop a deep capacity among all of its stakeholders to be at the forefront of knowledge and skill in learning and teaching. This requires more than occasional in-service training or professional development. It necessitates a systematic, purposeful approach ensuring that each aspect of the workplace is conducive to efficient, effective and satisfying work for individuals (Johnston & Caldwell, 2001).

Senge et al. (1994) report that, in many organizations, policies and approaches that tend to block people's intrinsic motivation to learn are employed. Louis, Kruse and Raywid (1996) agree with Senge and suggest that emphasis should be put on

enabling teachers to work and learn together by encouraging the development of practices and structures that foster shared norms where teachers value reflective dialogue, de-privatization of practice, collective focus on student learning and collaboration. Provision of time for taking advantage of opportunities for learning plays a significant role in encouraging Personal Mastery. Schein (1995) argues that organizations need time for people to work in a "parallel system" allowing them to contemplate, reframe thoughts, test new behaviors, make errors and repeat new, desired responses until they become ingrained.

Personal Mastery is an individual component but it is crucial for organizational learning. Organizations where individuals do not learn and grow are likely to have great difficulty of learning collectively. The practice of the discipline of Personal Mastery helps individuals to become systems thinkers with the ability to see the interconnectedness of everything around them and feel more connected to the whole. It is exactly this type of individual that one needs at every level of an organization for the organization to learn (Senge, 1990).

2.5.3 Shared Vision

Shared vision is another essential characteristic of a learning organization. Vision is "a picture of the future" one seeks to create and "it gives shape and direction to the organization's future" (Senge et al., 1994, p. 302). Shared vision, then, is the discipline that answers the question "What do we want to create?" Its purpose is to "create a sense of commonality that permeates the organization and gives coherence to diverse activities" (Senge, 1990, p. 206).

As Senge states, building shared vision is only one piece of developing the "governing ideas," which actually answers the three questions "What," "Why" and "How." While vision answers the question "What? - the organization's current and future aspirations-", the organization's answer to "Why do we exist?" gives its purpose or mission. Core values answer the question "How does the organization want to act while pursuing the vision?" These values might include professionalism, openness, integrity, freedom, etc.

A learning organization cannot exist without a shared vision as it

> … provides the focus and energy for learning. While adaptive learning is possible without vision, generative learning occurs only when people are striving to accomplish something that matters deeply to them. In fact, the whole idea of generative learning- "expanding your ability to create"- will seem abstract and meaningless until people become excited about some vision they truly want to accomplish" (Senge, 1990, p. 206).

It is through this collective energy and drive that the organization can move forward. Senge also points out that a shared vision fosters courage, risk-taking and experimentation needed for continual professional growth and continuous improvement.

Shared visions develop from personal visions. Senge argues that individuals need to have a strong sense of personal vision in order for the organization to build a shared vision. If personal visions are not held in an organization, what people can do is to sign up for someone else's vision. In the absence of personal visions, there is only compliance not enrollment in or commitment to the common vision. Those who hold a firm grasp of their own personal vision can, however, join together to create a "powerful synergy toward what I/we truly want" (1990, p. 211). Therefore, organizations must continually encourage their members to develop personal visions to build a shared vision.

Often, if it comes at all, the vision comes in the form of a document or an edict from those at the top of the organization. Senge's research shows that in most organizations a small number of people are enrolled in this type of vision and even fewer are dedicated to it. The majority of people are in a state of conformity. As Appelbaum and Goransson (1997) state mastering the discipline of Shared Vision, however, requires abandoning the idea that vision comes from top management or from an institutionalized planning process. Visions that are truly shared develop over time from the interaction of personal visions. The shared vision of an organization must be built of the personal visions of its members and must be a result of dialogue at all levels throughout the organization looking for what is valued personally and institutionally. In the Learning Organization what this means

is that the vision must not be created by the leader, rather, it must be created through interaction with the individuals in the organization. The leader's role in creating a vision is to share his own vision with the members of the organization. However, this should not be done to force that vision on them, but rather to encourage them to share their vision, too. Senge (1990) calls this the "the art of visionary leadership." Developing a concise vision acceptable by all members of an organization is an ongoing process (Kleine & Saunders, 1998) and it "engages all the members of the organization in continually reflecting on what they together want to create" (Keefe & Howard, 1997, p. 37). Designing and evolving ongoing processes "in which, people at every level and, in every role, can speak from the heart about what really matters to them, and be heard by senior management and each other" is at the heart of building a shared vision (Senge et al., 1994, p. 299).

When individuals have their own vision and have been actively involved in the formation of the collective vision, they are better able to enroll in the vision, and committed to it. In other words, they feel fully responsible for making the vision happen and are willing to do whatever it takes to make the vision a reality. Enrollment and commitment from organizational members provide a better understanding of where the organization has been and where it is headed and how.

The existence of a shared vision also plays an important role in building learning educational organizations. They also need a common shared vision process if they hope to live by learning (Senge, 2000). The leaders in educational organizations should work collaboratively with the people making up the organization to develop a shared vision reflective of the stakeholders it serves: staff, parents, students, and community members. The vision should describe what people would expect to see, hear and experience at a specified time in the future while making reference to the facility, the curriculum, instruction, assessment, the staff and the community (Robbins & Alvy, 2003).

As Senge (2000) asserts building a shared vision is a creative process which requires time, care and strategy. Administrators and leaders in educational organizations need to give the people the message that they are always free to

express their thoughts about purpose, meaning and vision without any fear of reprisals.

Personal contact is the most effective way of building and spreading shared vision. Communication channels where people can easily and freely talk, and informal meetings and gatherings could be good opportunities for people to talk about what they commonly care about. Computer networks such as electronic mail and computer conferencing, however helpful they may be in keeping in touch and comparing assumptions, are not adequate (Senge, 2000). The role of instructional leaders in spreading and communicating the vision to the people is to create such opportunities for people to have them engage in dialogue and embrace the vision and "continually explain, teach, share, demonstrate, model, facilitate, persuade, and cajole" (McEwan, 2003, pp. 68-69).

2.5.4 Mental Models

As Senge (1990) describes, mental models, which determine how we think and act, are "deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or even pictures or images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action" (p. 8). They are "subconscious, take-for-granted beliefs that limit people's thinking about how the world works" (Isaacson & Bamburg, 1992, p. 43). Senge (1990) says that people are generally not conscious of these mental models, or the effects they have on our behavior. He also adds that many new insights fail to be put into practice as they conflict with deep-seated mental models. Mental models, therefore, may limit people's ability to change or they may impede learning.

Due to the difference in mental models, two people seeing the same event or listening to the same conversation may explain it differently. Thus, it is so natural that people who do not understand each other's mental models can spend time arguing ideas, becoming frustrated and ending up in a compromise in which neither one wins. It is only when individuals are able to surface and discuss their mental models that decision making processes in organizations could be improved and learning could occur (Senge, 1990).

In order for organizational learning to take place, individuals must have the capacity to reveal their own mental models, make their thinking transparent or open to the influence of others, contrast their mental models with others, discuss the differences, and design a perception of what the system really is and what it needs to be (Kim, 1993; Larsen et al., 1996). Identifying the values, beliefs and assumptions of individuals and teams helps organization members not only appreciate why people talk and behave the way they do, but also understand why individuals or groups have trouble moving forward in times of disagreement about direction (Preskill & Torres, 2001, p.101).

How could organizations enable individuals to surface and discuss their mental models, then? Senge et al. (1994) propose that the skills of reflection and inquiry are necessary to master the discipline of Mental Models. Reflection is regarded as an essential skill that individuals must develop and apply in order to raise mental models to a conscious level and then test their validity and usefulness. In general terms, reflection can be defined as a process of carefully considering "the knowledge, beliefs, assumptions, actions and processes that influence our behavior in order to understand our experiences" (Preskill & Torres, 2001, p.101). According to Senge (1990) reflection skills involve slowing down one's thinking process and becoming aware of how mental models are formed and how they influence actions. This kind of reflective practice helps individuals redesign and reconstruct their world (Canning, 1991; Wellington, 1991). This requires that individuals in an organization should set aside some of the daily tasks to both reveal and listen to other people's mental models. This ensures collegial, cooperative and productive work environment in which there is better communication and building of common mental models of how business takes place (Wyckoff, 1998).

Senge (1990) suggests a number of techniques to practice reflection and create new mental models. The first technique is recognizing "leaps of abstraction," which occurs when we swiftly move from observations to generalizations without really testing them. Leaps of abstraction poses a threat to learning since "failing to distinguish direct observation [concrete data] from generalizations inferred from

observation leads us never to think to test the generalization" (p. 193). Thus, people need to learn to become aware of their leaps of abstraction by always testing their generalizations and asking the following questions: "What data is used to support the generalization?" and "Is the generalization inaccurate or misleading?" As Senge says people cannot even become aware of the need for inquiry until they recognize their own leaps of abstraction. One exercise to overcome leaps of abstraction is using "the ladder of inferences," which helps people to become aware of their own mental models and reasoning, make their thinking visible and inquire into other people's thinking and reasoning (Senge et al., 1994).

Another technique Senge proposes to practice reflection and create new mental models is "the left-hand-column." This technique is a powerful way to help people to understand the assumptions and opinions being communicated beneath the words. It starts with writing out a conversation you participate in, listing the spoken dialogue on the right-hand side and people's own internal dialogue (what they were really thinking) on the left-hand side. The aim here is to help people become more conscious about the dichotomy between what they say and what they think. Senge says that with practice, people can reach the point in their personal discipline where they can mentally fill out the left-hand columns in real time. This is expected to provide a significant aid to communication (Fitzgerald, 2003).

Another skill necessary to master the discipline of Mental Models is balancing inquiry and advocacy, that is to say, achieving a balance between articulating one's own mental models and asking questions genuinely in an effort to understand other's points of views (Senge, 1990). Inquiry is "based on open-minded curiosity that enables us to suspend our presuppositions and judgments in the interest of truth or a better solution" (Watkins & Marsick, 1993, p. 74). Individuals can acquire the skills of inquiry and advocacy once they realize what their true mental models are. Many people are good at advocating their views, but they use pure advocacy and no inquiry. They prefer exposing their views and avoid discussing issues that might weaken their position. Organizational cultures too, unfortunately, generally tend to encourage advocacy. Fitzgerald (2003) suggests using the skills of active listening,

asking others to share the reasoning behind their conclusions and using non-aggressive language to ask questions as ways to improve inquiry skills. She adds that in order to improve advocacy skills, you should make your thinking process visible to others by expressing how you have "walked up the ladder of abstraction," encourage others to explore your assumptions, and your data; and acknowledge gaps in your reasoning.

When advocacy and inquiry are balanced, true learning can take place. Senge (1990) clearly states this by saying the following:

> The most productive learning usually occurs when managers combine skills in advocacy and inquiry…By this we mean that everyone makes his or her thinking explicit and subject to public examination. This creates an atmosphere of genuine vulnerability. No one is hiding the evidence or reasoning behind others' views advancing them without making them open to scrutiny. When inquiry and advocacy are combined, the goal is no longer "to win the argument" but to find the best argument (p. 199).

Nevertheless, there will always be people in any organization who will hesitate to express their view for fear that they might be seen as wrong while others maybe disinterested to express their views. It is for this reason that leaders should be skilful at enabling individuals in the organization to use the skills of reflection and balancing advocacy and inquiry through modeling and creating an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect for individuals and their ideas (Bergman, 1992; Depree, 1992).

The importance of reflection and inquiry skills may especially be apparent in their absence. People who are undisciplined in reflective thinking do not have much tolerance for multiple interpretations of events; they see their own interpretation only and they have difficulty hearing what others actually say. On the other hand, individuals who have learned how to reflect make their assumptions explicit, talk more openly and their conversations tend to be more naturally suffused with openness and humor (Senge et al., 1994).

What would an educational organization that supports the development of the discipline of Mental Models look like? Because the mental models held by educational leaders are often different from those held by teachers, it is difficult to establish meaningful dialogue, reflection and sharing of thoughts between them and teachers about day-to-day activities and long term goals for the organization (Steiner, 1998). Leaders and teachers must develop the ability to suspend their mental models long enough to seek out new knowledge which may cause them to revise their beliefs about what they do and why (Bamburg, 2001). Moreover, leaders should analyze the work they do, reveal and clarify their thinking by articulating it orally and in written form, and engage in conversations with others about their work (Barth, 1991). Leaders need also be patient and persevere to achieve the challenging task of combining inquiry and advocacy in a balanced way. When leaders and teachers operate in pure advocacy, the result is obvious: either one side wins or there is no compromise. By inquiring into others' views, including the ones that differ from their own and encouraging others to explore their views, leaders and teachers can make it possible to discover completely new views (Senge et al., 1994). As Senge et al. (2000) point out since most mental models in education are often "undiscussable" and "hidden from view" (p. 7), it is important to develop the capacity to talk about dangerous and discomforting subjects safely and productively. By encouraging different ways of thinking about common problems, leaders of educational organizations can hopefully improve the quality of learning, transform problems into opportunities for improvement and provide an atmosphere of mutual support and trust where personal and professional relationships may be developed (Barth, 1991).

2.5.5 Systems Thinking

The fifth discipline, Systems Thinking, is the cornerstone to all of the disciplines. It is the ability to take a systems perspective of organizational reality. The discipline of Systems Thinking requires "a shift from seeing parts to seeing wholes, from seeing people as helpless reactors to seeing them as active participants in shaping their reality, from reacting to the present to creating the future" (Senge, 1990, p.

69). It "involves the ability to see connections between issues, events and information as a whole or as patterns rather than a series of unconnected parts" (Morrison & Rosenthal, 1997, p. 127). Hite (1999) describes systemic thinking as "an attitude toward a system that incorporates all that is part of the system along with those other elements or systems that may not be a part of the system, but touch on it and influence it" (p. 6).

A system is a "perceived whole whose elements "hang together" because they continually affect each other over time and operate towards a common purpose" (Senge et al., 1994, p. 90). A system can be understood, not by looking at what each part is doing but by looking at how each part is interacting with the rest; and by looking at how the system fits into the larger system it is a part of (Kofman & Senge, 1993). Wheatley (1994) sees organizations as whole systems rather than the sum of many parts. It would be a mistake to consider a subsystem without considering the other systems that might be operating with it (Hite, 1999).

The aim of System Thinking is to enable individuals working in an organization to see the complete pattern of their organization and the influential sphere of their decisions and behaviors. Senge (1990) and Senge et al. (1994) believe that the ability of Systems Thinking to see not only the patterns, but also the whole is an important competency which has an impact on the operational integrity of the other four disciplines.

The three principles of Systems Thinking are leverage, policy resistance and structure that influence behavior. Leverage is the actions and changes that are made within the system to affect enduring change. Changes which are responses to symptoms fail to take into consideration the larger picture and as a result may lead to bigger problems. Actions that leverage significant change, although often small in nature, may have a great impact on the health of the organization (Senge, 1990). Policy resistance especially exists in complex systems in which entrenched norms and ways of doing things compromise change efforts. Senge et al. (1994) state that norms are

woven into the fabric of established power relationships. The norm is entrenched because the distribution of authority and control is entrenched. Rather than pushing harder to overcome resistance to change, artful leaders discern the source of the resistance. They focus directly on the implicit norms and power relationships within which the norms are embedded (p. 88).

Structures that influence behavior not only include concrete things like departments and resources but also less tangible things such as expectations and norms. It is essential to understand the structures within a system to achieve greater clarity for actions that lead to a healthy learning organization.

Senge's approach to Systems Thinking is based on the work done in the 1960s and 1970s by Jay Forrester, Dennis Meadows and Donella Meadows, who observed several recurring systemic structures that describe patterns of human behavior, which Senge calls "systems archetypes." These archetypes are "tools" which act as a framework for understanding and acting upon a specific situation and could be used to develop insights into problems and solutions. Senge (1990) and Senge et al. (1994) believe that the more of these archetypes are revealed, the better the leaders will understand the events in their organizational systems.

Noer (1997, p. 15) notes that Systems Thinking is "harder, deeper, better" than most of the thinking going on in organizations. What individuals and, therefore, organizations usually tend to do is to break a problem into components, study each part in isolation and draw conclusions about the whole, and look for quick fixes to problems (Kline & Saunders, 1998; Marquardt, 1996; Senge, 1990). The problem with this approach is that cause and effect are not always linked in a linear fashion and they are not always close in time and location (Kline & Saunders, 1998; Senge, 1990). The complexity of organizations and the problems they face in today's world call for an urgent need for organizations to adopt systemic thinking and get rid of the "tunnel vision" that leads to two types of behavior: one is a tendency to react blindly and go for the most obvious solution creating a short-term solution to a problem that leads to a bigger long-term problem (Senge, 1990; Watkins & Marsick, 1993) and the other is not being able to make any decision because of the

complexity that allows a problem to grow and expand (Marquardt, 1999; Watkins & Marsick, 1993).

Systems Thinking not only helps organizations to think, see and reflect on potential multiple, system wide causes of problems and the affect of potential solutions (Kleine & Saunders, 1998; Senge, 1990; Watkins & Marsick, 1993) but also enables individuals to move from being immobilized to looking for high leverage behaviors that will impact the organization positively (Marquardt, 1996; 1999; Senge, 1990). Systemic thinking is also a key skill in helping organizations become learning organizations (DiBella & Nevis, 1998; Senge, 1990; Watkins & Marsick, 1993). "Thinking about the big picture, yet seeing underlying, unexpected influences is a rare, and difficult skill to develop, but essential to do smart quantum learning" (Marquardt, 1996, p. 63). Systemic thinking "allows all access to the great amount of knowledge that is spread across the various groups... [and] each group has unique insight... and thus something to contribute to the whole" (Butcher, Crispen, Espinal, & Griffin, 2001, Program and readings, para.8). Systemic view ensures that decisions are made and spread after all sides, ideas, knowledge and insights are taken into consideration.

One assumption underlying systemic thinking is that an organizational system has a capacity to adapt and maintain itself in the face of internal and external changes or circumstances (Schein, 1995). Therefore, environmental scanning by the organization to be able to understand the internal and external environments in which it is functioning is essential in the application of Systems Thinking which results in organizational learning (Nevis et al., 1995). Understanding the link between one's community and one's link is still another idea that is critical to the application of Systems Thinking to organizational learning. Senge et al. (1994) suggest that individuals in an organization must not see others simply as objects for their use, but they must rather see other individuals as fellow human beings with whom they can learn and develop.

Systemic approach in educational organizations is also necessary for them to become learning organizations. There is ample support for the cultivation of

systemic thinking in educational organizations, (Costa & Kallick, 1995; Fullan, 1993; Senge, 2000). Fullan (1993), for example, says that teachers and administrators are always accused of being willfully resistant to change, but the real problem lies not in resistance to change but "the presence of too many innovations mandated or adopted uncritically and superficially on an *ad hoc* fragmented basis" (p. 23). Fullan strongly recommends a systemic approach in dealing with this problem teachers and administrators face. He goes on to say that conflict and problems are necessary steps to learning and rather than ignoring, denying or treating change-related problems as an occasion for blame and defense, organizations should be taking problems seriously by tracking them, not attributing them to 'resistance' or the ignorance or wrong-headedness of others (p. 26). Senge (1990) refers to this in his explanation of the concept of Systems Thinking:

> It is systems thinking that helps one to understand the subtlest aspect of the Learning organization- the new way individuals perceive themselves and their world. At the heart of a Learning Organization is a shift of mind from seeing problems as caused by someone or something "out there" to seeing how our actions create the problems we experience (p.12).

Nevis et al. (1995) concur with Senge saying that individual members in an organization need to learn to think broadly about the "interdependency of organizational variables" and see how the organization's problems may be created by the internal system. Additionally, they also talk about how leaders who do not adopt a systems approach and "elicit unintended consequences by taking actions in one area without seeing its dynamic relationship to its effects" (p. 8) have a negative impact on organizational learning.

Darling-Hammond (1994) relating the concept of Systems Thinking to change in schools remarks that "every change in one part of the organization requires changes elsewhere in the organization, because it is all integrally connected" (p. 11). A change in curriculum, for instance, should precipitate changes in other areas such as the way teaching is done, the grouping of students, or the way staff development is carried out. Costa and Kallick (1995), expressing their concerns about nonsystematic approaches to change in educational organizations say that paradigm

shifting is not possible until all aspects of the system are harmonized and aligned with the new perspective and thus every aspect of a learning organization-individuals, classrooms, the community etc should be exposed to continual analysis, assessment and reflection on system practices.

2.5.6 Summary

Senge (1990) described the Learning Organization as having five core disciplines - Personal Mastery, Mental Models, Shared Vision, Team Learning and Systems Thinking. It is only when people gains personal mastery of themselves, surface and question mental models, follows a shared vision, begins to learn as a team, and engage in systemic thinking, a Learning Organization can develop. As Senge asserts, these disciplines which characterize a learning organization need also to be developed simultaneously in order to be effective as they also work as a system (Senge, 1993). The exercise of the five disciplines helps to increase an organization's effectiveness in carrying out its primary mission, its capacity to adapt to changing internal and external environmental demands and to utilize its members' abilities and motivation, and the level of job and personal satisfaction of its organizational members (Chase, 2000). Given the challenges facing educational organizations today, and the difficulty of managing them, leaders should cultivate systemic patterns of thinking, surface and challenge prevailing mental models, build shared vision, promote team learning, and encourage personal mastery to create a learning organization.

2.6 Research on Organizational Learning in Educational Settings

Since Senge's conceptualization of the Learning Organization, a considerable amount of research has been done related to learning organizations in the world of business. However, not much work has taken place in the field of education. Research that promotes an understanding of how educational settings can function as learning organizations is far from complete (Zederayko, 2000). Especially within the context of higher education, little is known about how learning occurs. Only a handful of studies have empirically examined this issue (Kezar, 2005). The research

studies presented in this part of this chapter are representative samples from among limited studies related to the subject of this study. Table 2.2 summarizes the research studies done abroad.

The work of Tourgee (1994) focused on one of the requirements of becoming a learning organization, surfacing mental models, by studying an elementary school administrator and two teachers involved in restructuring to find out how beliefs, perceptions and understandings about students with special education needs become known to them and how a change initiative influences them. The study described the participants' mental models about teaching and learning, and how these mental models were formed through exploring their personal stories. Reflective dialogue was also used to review the participants' experiences with the change process to find out the coping mechanisms, facilitators and barriers. Results of the study revealed that the formation of mental models for the school administrator and teachers involved in the study were mainly influenced by their own school experiences, the school experiences of their own children, their preparation programs, and their work experience. While the facilitators that contributed to their individual progress toward making the changes in thinking and practice included administrative support, staff development, and group energy and support, barriers included time, class size, and funding for staffing. The use of journals and reflection as a tool for surfacing mental models was found to be beneficial by all the participants. They all valued dialogue and collaborative experiences but underlined that time is the most critical barrier to being able to incorporate reflective practices routinely. While useful in understanding the discipline of Mental Models, the study was only limited to one aspect of building a Learning Organization.

Easley and Head (2000) carried out a study that examined an American university's readiness for becoming a learning organization and proposed strategies for facilitating such a transformation. This survey study used the Dimensions of the

Table 2.2

Research Done on Organizational Learning in Educational Settings Abroad

Researcher	Focus	Methodology / Sample	Results
Tourgee (1994)	Mental models about teaching and learning & how these are formed	Reflective dialogue / Journals An elementary school administrator and 2 teachers	school experiences, preparation programs and work experience influence formation of mental models
Easley& Head (2000)	• an American university's readiness for becoming a learning Organization • proposed strategies for facilitating such a transformation	Survey (DLOQ) 10 senior managers, 5 administrative directors, 5 faculty members	• organization was ranked the highest in Knowledge Performance & Financial Performance and the lowest in 'Establishing Systems to Capture and Share Learning,' Promoting Inquiry and Dialogue & Evaluation of the Systems • Strategies to be employed: institution of a culture focusing on autonomy& autonomous learning initiatives; building a shared vision and, implementation of the reward systems that have the ability to foster creativity, collaboration, inquiry and dialogue within the organization.
Kelly (2000)	behavior of one vocational technical school faculty in reference to the constructs of the LO proposed by Senge	Interview / Survey /Observation (1 assist. superintendent, one principal, two assistant principals, one grant coordinator, seven teachers)	the faculty used some of the principles of the Learning Organization but has not fully achieved the vision of Peter Senge
Neefe's (2001)	comparing the levels of OL maturity of colleges and universities participating in traditional and non-traditional accreditation processes in terms of Shared Mission/Vision, Organizational Culture, Team Work and Team Learning, Sharing of Knowledge, Systems Thinking and Leadership	Survey Faculty at 12 colleges and universities	the non-traditionally accredited institutions had a higher overall Organizational Learning Index and scored higher in the six categories
Wheeler (2002)	exploring the development of a learning organization through the application of Senge's theoretical framework in a school setting in America	interviews/ observations/ journal entries/reflective dialogues / Self Directed Learning Readiness Scale	the value of the LO model as the basis for aligning an educational organization
Abu-Tineh (2003)	the effect of leadership styles of the principals on teachers' practice of the five disciplines of Senge in elementary and middle schools	Survey 144 elementary and middle school teachers	• significant relationship between leadership styles of principals and teachers' practice of five disciplines • elementary school teachers practiced the five disciplines more than middle school teachers
Smith (2003)	development and validation of a conceptual model of the university as a learning organization using Senge's five disciplines	Interview 25 University and State leaders	the model was an effective conceptualization of the university as a learning organization and a guide to learning organization efforts in these organizations
Turkington (2004)	• examining the level of OL in the Catholic Education Office (CEO) Sydney • association between the characteristics of a learning organization and raising standards in religious education, literacy and numeracy in the primary and secondary Catholic schools in Sydney	Survey 136 primary and secondary principals and 23 senior CEO Sydney personnel	• many of the characteristics of a learning organization were evident in the CEO Sydney • association between the characteristics of a LO and raising standards particularly in religious education and literacy

Learning Organization Questionnaire (DLOQ) developed by Karen E. Watkins and Victoria J. Marsick as the major data collection tool. The study surveyed ten senior managers, five administrative directors (the management level immediately below senior management) and five faculty members. The results indicated that the organization was ranked the highest by all the three groups in the categories of 'Knowledge Performance' and 'Financial Performance' and the lowest in the categories of 'Establishing Systems to Capture and Share Learning' and 'Promoting Inquiry and Dialogue' and 'Evaluation of the Systems.' One interesting result of the study was that the Administrative Council and directors ranked the category of 'Provide Strategic Leadership for Learning' in their top three, while the faculty rated this category in their top half. Some of the recommended strategies by the researchers for transforming this institution into a learning organization included the institution of a culture that focuses on autonomy and autonomous learning initiatives, building a shared vision and, implementation of the reward systems that have the ability to foster creativity, collaboration, inquiry and dialogue within the organization.

Kelly (2000) investigated the behavior of one vocational technical school faculty in reference to the constructs of a Learning Organization proposed by Senge. The three major foci of the study were (1) how the organization differed from Senge's constructs in the Learning Organization (2) the processes used in developing the staff into a Learning Organization, and (3) the barriers to be overcome to move to a Learning Organization. Twelve participants, including one assistant superintendent, one principal, two assistant principals, one grant coordinator, seven teachers, were interviewed to determine whether this school or schools of this type could be classified as a learning organization based on Senge's work. A survey was distributed among members of the faculty who were not included in the interviews. Additionally, a team meeting and a faculty meeting were observed. The results of the study indicated that the faculty used some of the principles of the Learning Organization, but more effort was needed to move to a learning organization. Specifically, majority of the participants had personal goals, built team work, and used reflection and inquiry to draw mental models about self and others. However,

as regards the discipline of Shared Vision, there was a limited amount of input into vision. In terms of the discipline of Systems Thinking, there was very little effort to improve collegiality; the communication system was weak and little feedback was received.

Neefe's (2001) study, which surveyed faculty at twelve colleges and universities, aimed to compare the levels of organizational learning maturity of colleges and universities participating in traditional and non-traditional accreditation processes. A survey instrument was developed to quantify managerial practices at colleges and universities relative to the integral components of a learning organization. The results of this study revealed that concepts of organizational learning were present in higher education. In general, the majority of institutions were utilizing practices that are characteristic of learning organizations. The non-traditionally accredited institutions had a higher overall Organizational Learning Index and scored higher in the six categories of Shared Mission/Vision, Organizational Culture, Team Work and Team Learning, Sharing of Knowledge, Systems Thinking and Leadership. Non-traditionally accredited colleges and universities demonstrated statistically significant scores in the three categories of Organizational Culture, Team Work and Team Learning, and Systems Thinking. The results showed that the non-traditionally accredited institutions were more mature than traditionally accredited institutions in those categories.

The study carried out by Wheeler (2002) aimed at exploring the development of a learning organization through the application of Senge's theoretical framework in a school setting in America. The study which used qualitative and quantitative methodologies also examined if the five core disciplines of the learning organization would facilitate the initiatives of the staff in the school's improvement efforts. The qualitative data which consisted of interviews, observations, journal entries and reflective dialogues explored the five disciplines of the learning organization while the quantitative data which was gathered through Guglielminos' Self Directed Learning Readiness Scale determined the degree to which individuals were self-directed learners. The study indicated that (a) teachers were self-directed learners; (b) the application of the five core disciplines fostered an initial

development towards obtaining the desired results of the school's improvement plan; (c) the action research, which focused on the five disciplines, helped the teachers to collaborate and develop the school's mission as a team. The findings of the study suggested the value of the learning organization model as the basis for aligning an educational organization.

Abu-Tineh (2003) investigated the effect of leadership styles of the principals on teachers' practice of the five disciplines of Senge. One hundred and forty four elementary and middle school teachers participated in the study by completing the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire and the Learning Organization Inventory. The results of the study showed that leadership style of principals predicted 32 per cent of the variance in teachers' practice of the five disciplines of learning schools. It was also found that there was an insignificant relationship between transactional leadership style of principals and teachers' practice of the five disciplines. However, the relationship between laissez fair leadership and teachers' practice of the five disciplines was found to be inverse and significant. Overall, the relationship between transformational/ transactional leadership of principals and teachers' practice of the five disciplines was found to be positively significant. Furthermore, the study found that teachers in elementary schools practiced the five disciplines of learning schools more than middle school teachers. There were especially significant differences between elementary and middle school teachers as regards the discipline of shared vision, and the discipline of systems thinking.

Smith (2003) developed a conceptual model of the university as a learning organization using Senge's disciplines and validated the model through a case study of one university. Each of the disciplines was defined by four levels of institutional involvement: essence or value as the core, principles or policies, practices, and outcomes. The study sampled 25 University and State leaders representing various levels of the University's governance structure. Interviews were conducted through an interview protocol designed to explore the existence and relevance of the components of the conceptual model. The results of the study revealed that the model was an effective conceptualization of the university as a learning organization and a guide to learning organization efforts in these organizations.

Turkington's (2004) study aimed to find out which characteristics of a learning organization could be identified in the Catholic Education Office (CEO) Sydney and determine to what extent the CEO Sydney could be regarded as a learning organization. The study also attempted to examine whether there was any perceived association between the characteristics of a learning organization in the first part of the study and raising standards in religious education, literacy and numeracy in the primary and secondary, systemic Catholic schools of the Archdiocese of Sydney. In the first part of the study which investigated the CEO as a learning organization, a survey questionnaire was used to collect data from 136 primary and secondary principals in the system and 23 senior CEO Sydney personnel. The examination of relevant CEO Sydney documentation and policies complemented this part of the study. The eight characteristics of a learning organization, each of which formed a scale in the questionnaire, included 'Systemic Thinking and Mental Models,' 'Continuous Improvement of Work,' 'Taking Initiatives and Risks,' 'Ongoing Professional Development,' 'Trusting and Collaborative Climate,' 'Shared and Monitored Vision/Mission,' 'Effective Communication Channels' and 'Team work and Team Learning.' The second part of the study was also quantitative employing descriptive statistics complemented by Pearson correlation, Multiple regression and canonical correlational analyses. Five demographic groups, namely, gender, role, region, years of experience as a principal and age, were examined to determine whether there were any differences in the degree to which the various characteristics of a learning organization and the curriculum outcome areas (religious education, literacy, numeracy). The results of the study revealed that many of the characteristics of a learning organization were evident in the CEO Sydney, 'Continuous Improvement of Work,' 'Systemic Thinking and Mental Models,' and 'Shared and Monitored Vision/Mission' being the strongest. No statistically significant differences were found in the responses of the different demographic groups. It was also found that there was association between the characteristics of a learning organization and raising standards particularly in religious education and literacy and, less so in numeracy.

As represented in Table 2.3, the studies carried out in Turkey, where this research was conducted, were mostly related to level of organizational learning, organizational learning processes and barriers to becoming a learning organization.

Şahin and Şimşek (1996), for instance, examined and compared organizational learning processes, namely, knowledge acquisition, information distribution, information interpretation and organizational memory in one foundation high school, one private high school and one public high school in Ankara. This study which sampled 24 teachers and six administrators used interview and observation as the major data collection techniques. The results of the study indicated that in the process of knowledge acquisition, information distribution, information interpretation and organizational memory, the Foundation School did better than the Private and Public School. The intensive centralization and administrative processes of the Private School and Public School were the major reasons for the learning disabilities in these schools. Moreover, the foundation school gathered data through a wider variety of sources and distributed information through more intra- and extra- organizational activities than did private and public schools. Both the foundation school and private school had more effective interpretation processes. None of the schools involved in the study had developed mechanisms for storing information for further use.

Another study which was carried out by Töremen (1999) aimed at identifying the barriers to organizational learning and investigating the level of organizational learning in selected 31 private and 52 public high schools by using a survey instrument. The results of this study revealed that the level of organizational learning in private high schools was higher than the level of organizational learning in public high schools. The study identified lack of communication among staff, inadequacy of team work, ineffectiveness of supervisory practices and inspection system, lack of a shared vision, and the negative effect of political forces as the major barriers to organizational learning.

Table 2.3

Research Done on Organizational Learning in Educational Settings in Turkey

Researcher	Focus	Methodology / Sample	Results
Şahin & Şimşek (1996)	examination and comparison of organizational learning processes, (i.e knowledge acquisition, information distribution, information interpretation & organizational memory) in one foundation, one private, and one public high school	Interview/ observation 24 teachers and 6 administrators	Foundation School did better than the Private and Public School in the process of knowledge acquisition, information distribution, information interpretation and organizational memory.
Töremen (1999)	identification of the barriers to OL and investigating the level of OL private and public high schools	Survey / 31 private and 52 public high schools	· higher levels of OL in private high schools compared to public high schools · barriers: lack of communication among staff, inadequacy of team work, ineffectiveness of supervisory practices and inspection system, lack of a shared vision, and the negative effect of political forces
Ertan (2000)	examination of the barriers to OL in primary education institutions	Survey	barriers to OL: A lack of time, inability to think innovatively, fear of reprisals, a lack of activities for the distribution of information and a lack of a delegation of authority
Öğüt et al. (2001)	examining a public university in terms of the criteria of a learning organization	Secondary data & focused observations/ Selçuk University	indicators of a learning organization in the university included: use of a wide variety of information technology, presence of enriched learning environment, encouragement of interdisciplinary research, networking both within the academic community and with the environment, and an emphasis on the internationalization and research, as well as teaching of a high standard
Bulutlar (2003)	the relationship of the level of OL with quality of lessons and knowledge performance in two different departments of a private university	Survey / Dept A: 31 stds and 37 faculty Dept B: 34 stds and 10 faculty	• there was no significant relationship between the level of OL and knowledge performance of the organization · positive relationship between quality of lessons and 'system connections'/ there was a negative relationship between 'quality of lessons' and 'leadership'
Celep (2003)	examining the perceptions of staff in primary schools as regards the present conditions of their schools as LOs.	Survey / 15 primary schools in Edirne	weakest : 'continuous learning' strongest: 'provide leadership'
Kale (2003)	investigation of the level of OL at selected Public General, Public Science and Public Anatolian High Schools	Survey / 68 admin, 295 teachers, 469 students and 434 parents	private schools had a higher level of organizational learning than public schools
Celep (2004)	investigating the extent to which 12 selected universities possess the characteristics of the LO	Survey / 354 faculty members	• the universities did not possess the characteristics of the LO sufficiently in terms of continuous learning, team learning and knowledge performance • age, gender, profession, academic title, the size of the faculty, faculty teaching load, and variety of the courses offered all had an effect on the level of organizational learning
Ağaoğlu (2006)	investigating the degree to which the Faculty of Education of a public university exhibited the characteristics of LO (vision and mission of the school, school culture, organizational structure, strategies, policy and resources)	Survey / 105 faculty members	• exhibited characteristics of the learning organization in terms of organizational culture, structure, policies and resources, and vision and mission • strategies implemented for the transformation of the School into a learning organization were found to be inadequate

Similarly, Ertan (2000) studied the barriers to organizational learning in primary education institutions. The results of this study identified a lack of time, inability to think innovatively, fear of reprisals, a lack of activities for the distribution of

information and a lack of a delegation of authority as major barriers to organizational learning. The study also found differences between administrators and teachers in terms of how they perceived the processes in turning schools into learning organizations.

Öğüt, Berber and Peker (2001) examined Selçuk University, a public university in Konya, in terms of the criteria of a learning organization using secondary data and focused observations. The results of this study indicated that the university excelled in the process of organizational learning. The study identified some indicators of a learning organization in the selected university, including the use of a wide variety of information technology, the presence of an enriched learning environment, encouragement of interdisciplinary research, networking both within the academic community and with the environment, and an emphasis on the internationalization and research, as well as teaching of a high standard.

Bulutlar (2003) studied the relationship of the level of organizational learning with quality of lessons and knowledge performance of the organization in two different departments of a private university teaching similar subject streams. The study used a quantitative survey method. "Dimensions of Organizational Learning Questionnaire" developed by Watkins and Marsick was used as the tool of data collection from the faculty members to assess the level of organizational learning and knowledge performance of the organization. These dimensions included (1) continuous learning, (2) dialogue and inquiry, (3) team learning, (4) embedded systems, (5) empowerment, (6) system connections and (7) leadership. Another instrument which was developed by the researcher using Mark's model of overall course value, and Marsh's SEEQ (Students' Evaluations of Educational Quality) and IDEA (Instructional Development and Effectiveness Assessment) forms was given to both students and faculty members to assess the quality of lessons. The study collected data from 31 students and 37 faculty members from Department A and 34 students and 10 faculty members from Department B. Since the number of faculty members participating in the study from Department B was found to be inadequate, they were not included in the analysis. The results of the study revealed that overall there was no significant relationship between the level of organizational

learning and knowledge performance of the organization. However, a positive relationship was found between knowledge performance and 'system connections,' one of the dimensions of organizational learning. The study also found a positive relationship between quality of lessons and 'system connections.' Nevertheless, there was a negative relationship between 'quality of lessons' and 'leadership.' This study is important in terms of providing insights into the relationship of level of organizational learning with knowledge performance, and quality of lessons. However, because the results of the study reflect the perceptions of the faculty members in one of the departments only, it is not possible to see a comparison across the departments.

The study conducted by Celep (2003) aimed at finding out the perceptions of 224 staff including administrators and teachers working in 15 primary schools in Edirne as regards the present conditions of their schools as learning organizations. The study also investigated whether the perceptions of the participants were affected by gender, level of education, and title. This study which employed quantitative survey method used the Dimensions of Organizational Learning Questionnaire developed by Watkins and Marsick as the main data collection instrument. The results were analyzed using 'T-test,' 'Analysis of Variance,' 'Tamhane Test,' 'Factor Analysis,' and 'Regression Analysis.' The Organizational Learning, which is defined in nine dimensions for organizations that produce goods and services, was reduced to five dimensions in the Primary Schools of Turkey as a result of factor analysis. These five dimensions included (1) continuous learning, (2) team learning, (3) embedded systems, (4) knowledge performance, and (5) provide leadership. The results of the study showed that the schools were perceived to be the weakest in terms of 'continuous learning' and the strongest in terms of the dimension of 'provide leadership.' In addition, the results showed that (1) 'knowledge performance' was perceived to be higher by male participants than the females, indicating higher expectations of the latter, (2) as the level of education increased, the expectations for 'knowledge performance' also increased, and (3) 'knowledge performance' and 'provide leadership' dimensions were perceived to be higher by administrators than teachers.

Kale (2003), also investigated the level of organizational learning at selected Public General High Schools, Public Science High Schools and Public Anatolian High Schools. The study, which surveyed 68 administrators, 295 teachers and 469 students and 434 parents, indicated that private schools had a higher level of organizational learning than public schools.

Celep's (2004) study investigated the extent to which 12 selected universities in Turkey possessed the characteristics of the learning organization. This study which surveyed 354 faculty members through the Learning Organization Questionnaire developed by Watkins and Marsick, and the Learning Organizations Practices Profile Scale developed by O'Brien also aimed at determining whether the perceptions of the faculty members were affected by some personal variables. The findings of the study revealed that the universities involved in the study did not possess the characteristics of the learning organization sufficiently in terms of the following dimensions: continuous learning, team learning and knowledge performance. In addition, the study also found that age, gender, profession, academic title, the size of the faculty, faculty teaching load, and variety of the courses offered all had an effect on the level of organizational learning.

Ağaoğlu (2006) researched the degree to which the Faculty of Education of Anadolu University in Eskişehir exhibited the characteristics of the learning organization. This survey study which sampled 105 faculty members aimed at exploring how the faculty members perceived the level of organizational learning in their faculty as regards the following areas: vision and mission of the school, school culture, organizational structure, strategies, policy and resources. The results of the study indicated that overall the institution had favorable characteristics for transformation into a learning organization. The subjects agreed that their faculty exhibited characteristics of the learning organization in terms of organizational culture, structure, policies and resources, and vision and mission. However, the strategies implemented for the transformation of the School into a learning organization were found to be inadequate. The study concluded that the institution had to determine strategies for both individual and institutional learning besides improving the conditions for transformation into a learning organization.

In conclusion, the research done within the context of education promotes our understanding of educational settings as learning organizations. Studies done both abroad and in Turkey indicate that some characteristics of the Learning Organization are evident in educational institutions and that by applying the principles of the Learning Organization it is possible to improve the institutional performance. The research studies cited here related to higher education, although limited in number, also show that concepts of organizational learning are present in higher education, but, like in other educational contexts, there are barriers to be overcome to move towards becoming a learning organization. Nevertheless, in order to gain a better understanding of higher education institutions as learning organizations, further investigation of the concept is needed. The paucity of research in this area in Turkey also calls for more studies of higher education institutions as learning organizations. As the brief survey of studies shows, Senge's model of the learning organization with a set of disciplines acts as a useful framework for understanding educational institutions as learning organizations. The researcher in this study could not find any study investigating the levels of organizational learning in higher education institutions using Senge's model of the Learning Organization as the criterion. Application of this model into the context of higher education in Turkey may also broaden our understanding of higher education institutions as learning organizations. In addition, the literature is scarce in terms of qualitative research investigating the level of organizational learning in higher education institutions, especially in Turkey. Therefore, there is a need for qualitative inquiry in the area in addition to the quantitative studies carried out, which might help understand in-depth the concept of organizational learning in the context of higher education.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

In this chapter, first, the overall research design is explained. Secondly, the research questions are presented. Thirdly, the context of the study, the sources of data and details of the research sample are provided. Then, an overview of the development of the data collection instruments, and procedures for data collection are given. Following these, data analysis procedures are described. Finally, the limitations of the study are presented.

3.1 Overall Design of the Study

The overall aim of this comparative case study is to explore the elements that align with Senge's framework of the Learning Organization in the English Language Preparatory programs of two selected higher education settings to determine what characteristics of a learning organization they possess.

This study is qualitative in nature. The aim of carrying out a qualitative study is not to verify a predetermined idea but discovery that leads to new insights (Sherman & Webb, 1988). Qualitative research methods have been widely used as modes of inquiry in the social sciences and applied fields such as education (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Qualitative methods are particularly useful in understanding how people perceive their world, in exploring a phenomenon to find explanations, and in developing an understanding of it into a theory. They are invaluable in "describing multidimensional, complex interpersonal interaction where the limited focus of quantitative measures would be inadequate" (Krathwohl, 1998, p. 243).

The qualitative case study method was employed to conduct the study since the focus was on two organizations. Qualitative case studies are especially valuable

when evaluation aims to find out individual differences or unique variations from one program setting to another or from one program experience to another. Therefore, people's perceptions, what they do and why they act or feel in a certain way are of primary importance. The case is a basic unit of analysis. Cases can be people, groups, events, programs or communities. A qualitative case study aims to describe that unit in-depth, in context and holistically (Patton, 1987). The researcher carrying out a qualitative case study typically observes the characteristics of an individual unit and writes a case record. The focus is on the meaning of human behavior and its relation to the context where it occurs (Patton, 1990). Therefore, in order to be able to understand the context of this research in terms of participants' perceptions, feelings, interactions, it was necessary for the researcher to employ qualitative case study method in this study. The basic units of analysis were the two settings of higher education. As this was a comparative case study, each organization was investigated as a single case separately and then the findings were compared and conclusions were drawn.

The data on these two organizations were collected from two groups of immediate stakeholders in each institution, namely instructors and administrators, through standardized open-ended interview technique. The data generated through interviews were subjected to content analysis to explore the patterns of instructors' and administrators' perspectives in each institution. Through detailed views of informants, it was possible to present a holistic picture of the natural setting of the two organizations in terms of the elements that align with Senge's framework of the Learning Organization.

3.2 Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. How do the instructors and administrators in Organization A and B perceive their institution in terms of the following disciplines?

    (a)   Personal Mastery

(b)   Shared Vision

(c)   Mental Models

(d)   Team Learning

(e)   Systems Thinking

2.   What are the similarities and differences between the perceived characteristics of Organization A and Organization B in the learning disciplines above?

3.3 Context

This study was carried out in two selected higher education settings. One of the organizations involved in this study is part of a nonprofit private English-medium university while the other is part of a public university in Turkey. For ethical considerations, the names of the two organizations where this study was carried out were not given. The organizations were called Organization A and Organization B instead of being called by their original names.

3.3.1 Case 1: Organization A

Organization A, with a population of around 2500 students and 140 instructors, operates in two buildings, each on the same campus in the university. The journey between the two buildings takes approximately a five-minute walk. It offers preparatory courses in English to students who will be studying in the faculties and vocational training schools within the university and aims to equip them with the necessary English Language and study skills to be able to successfully cope in their faculties and schools. It is responsible for bringing students to the minimum proficiency level required for study in departments. All students entering the university have to take an English language proficiency test to be able to continue in their departments. Those unable to pass this exam attend preparatory school for 1 to 2 years. Students receive between 20-25 hours of instruction per week depending on their level of proficiency in English language.

The administration of the organization consists of the Director, the Deputy Director, the Head of Teaching Unit Coordinator and 10 Head of Teaching Units (HTUs). The organization is split into various functional units. Teacher Services Unit deals with all staff matters while Student Services Unit is responsible for student matters. There is also a Curriculum and Testing Unit, consisting of curriculum and testing level coordinators who are responsible for the production of language teaching programs and tests. Teacher Training Unit provides in-service teacher training courses and workshop for teachers, and help maintain quality teaching and learning. The institution runs teacher training courses such as Certificate for Overseas Teachers of English (COTE), Cambridge Examination in English for Language Teachers (CEELT), and Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults (DELTA) as well as its own in-house part-time master program in management in Education. The Textbook Project Unit writes a series of English Language Textbooks to be used in the organization. The Computerized Learning Project with an aim to make computerized language learning a regular part of students' learning develops web-based materials for students as well as teaching resources for instructors. The Self Access Unit aims to provide students with opportunities to work independently with the help of Self-Access Facilities (i.e. Learning Center, Language Laboratory and Computer Assisted Language Learning Laboratory).

There are also 10 Teaching Units, each with 15-17 instructors and approximately 150 students. Every teaching unit is managed by a Head of Teaching Unit (HTU) with line management responsibility for the instructors and operations of the unit. Operations of Teaching Units are overseen by the HTU Coordinator. The operations are coordinated and synchronized through regular updates and head meetings.

Each teaching unit generally teaches classes at the same level, which makes it easy for teachers and the head of the teaching unit to follow-up student performance and which enables the instructors to share classes, materials and experiences. In addition to their teaching duties, instructors are expected to carry out non-teaching duties such as invigilating, marking, record keeping, assessing and monitoring students' progress and attending meeting and contribute to institutional and

professional development. Each unit holds weekly meetings to discuss the teaching related and administrative issues. There are also regular weekly development sessions and in these sessions various staff development activities such as workshops and swap shops on specific teaching related areas in line with unit or individual development objectives are carried out.

Students' performance throughout the year is also followed up through Student Academic Profile (SAP), which is kept on the institution's data base and which includes information about students' performance in different skills in classroom, their grades, and their bio-data i.e. year of entry, department, previous levels studied, etc.

In the organization, there is much emphasis on study outside class on a regular basis. In order to encourage independent learning, students are regularly assigned different tasks. The completion of each course is dependent on the successful completion and submission of these tasks. Students are also evaluated on their performance in weekly tests called Cumulative Achievement Tests and the End of Course Assessment Exam constituting the benchmark students must reach to move up to another level.

In order to facilitate the communication between teaching units and other specialist units, to increase teacher involvement and help the head of the teaching unit, each teaching unit has specialist teachers. These are the Head of Teaching Unit Deputy, the Curriculum and Testing Specialist Teacher, coordinating and standardizing curriculum and testing activities across the units; and the Self Access Teacher offering support to teachers and students regarding self-access facilities.

In Organization A, the evaluation of the learning environment is carried out through classroom observations of teachers by the head of teaching units, evaluation of learning questionnaires (ELs) given to students and the feedback given by units to the Directorate. 'The Class Spokesperson Meetings' are held regularly with the Head of the Teaching Unit to give class representatives a chance to voice the views of the student body.

Performance standards and code of professional practice are explained in the job description and the Instructor's Booklet. The researcher was told by one of the senior managers that the vision of the institution is embedded in its mission statement, which is publicized as follows:

> We provide students with a learning environment which:
> - enables them to make the successful transition from life at school / home to life at university;
> - ensures that they attain the level of proficiency in English necessary to enter their chosen School or Faculty;
> - develops their potential as independent 'autonomous' learners;
> - supports the further development of their English language and study skills throughout their study in the Faculties and Vocational Training Schools.
>
> We provide instructors with a professional and stimulating place to work.
>
> We contribute to the maintenance and improvement of English within the university and the community at large.
>
> We contribute to the improvement of general English language teaching standards in Turkey.

3.3.2 Case 2: Organization B

Organization B, with approximately 180 instructors is also located in the capital city of Turkey, Ankara. It aims to provide the students whose level of English is below proficiency level with basic language skills so that they can successfully pursue their undergraduate studies upon entry to their chosen faculty. Those students who fail the in-house prepared proficiency exam attend the preparatory program offered by the institution for one to two years. Students are offered 20 to 30 hours of instruction depending on their level of English. The organization also provides its students with self-study opportunities. The Self-Access Center, with its library, computer and audio-visual laboratories, serves to help students improve their various language skills.

The administration of the Institution consists of the Chair Person, who is in charge of organizing and supervising all the administrative and academic functions and

activities, and two Assistant Chair Persons, one of whom acts as the coordinator of the Testing Unit and the other one acts as the Coordinator of the Syllabus and Materials Development Unit. There is also a Testing Unit comprised of one test writer for each level responsible for the production of exams. The Syllabus and Materials Development Unit is in charge of preparing the syllabi for each level, determining the framework of materials to be developed, following up the implementation and evaluation of the programs and evaluating course books and teaching material. Teacher Education Unit runs a pre-service program for new teachers, and conducts in-service sessions and workshops for the staff.

According to the rules and regulations of the University, all instructors are required to teach 12-16 hours a week. Besides their teaching load, all instructors in the Organization are in charge of carrying out academic and administrative duties assigned to them by authorized University organs; participate in various meetings, and proctor exams. In addition to all these jobs, instructors are welcome to carry out teaching and training in scientific objectivity and conduct scientific research and publish papers.

Students' performance is evaluated through regular pop-quizzes and three mid-terms given each semester constituting the benchmark students must reach to move up to another level. The evaluation of the learning environment is carried out through classroom observations of teachers by Teacher Educators attached to Teacher Education Unit, evaluation of learning questionnaires given to students and the feedback given by instructors to the administration.

Performance standards and code of professional practice are explained in the job description and the Instructor's Booklet. The vision and mission of the organization are publicized as follows:

> Vision
> By implementing the most recent innovations in technology, by following the latest theoretical developments in the field of English language teaching, and with the efforts of its highly motivated and productive staff members, who are open to positive change and who work in harmony, [we aim] at preparing students for the education provided at the departments of our

university by training them to be proficient and skilled at English, and helping them to be equipped with the ability to be analytical and critical thinkers as well as autonomous learners.

The education will be provided in a modern physical environment where there exists a sufficient number of classrooms and offices. The teaching material will be produced solely by the expert staff at the department in accordance with the latest methods and technologies, and will continually be updated so as to carry the quality of education to the uppermost level. With the perfection it has attained, [we] will set an example for and be a leader among similar institutions and organizations, and when necessary, will support them by providing knowledge and information transfer.

Mission
[We provide] basic academic English education for [our] students through the use of the opportunities made available by advanced technology and by using self-prepared books and materials in order to cater for the students' needs to the full, and thus it brings the students' English proficiency level to a degree that will enable them to follow and fulfill the requirements of the first-year courses. The department also prepares the students for the social and academic environment at the university, and contributes to their development as individuals who prioritize ethics and science, who are aware of their responsibility as autonomous learners, who are equipped with critical thinking skills, and who are open to change.

[We train our] new instructors in accordance with the teaching principles of the institution, and emphasize the importance of professional development by providing opportunities for this purpose. To this end, with the aim of contributing to the professional development of instructors and teachers of English in other institutions, [we organize] teacher education programs and conferences, and make the textbooks [we have] prepared available for public use.

3.4 Data Sources and Sampling

Figure 3.1 on the next page illustrates the data sources and sampling strategy used in this study. The two cases (Organization A and Organization B) for this study were selected using criterion sampling. Since the aim of this comparative case study was to explore the elements that align with Senge's framework of the Learning Organization in two selected higher education settings to determine what characteristics of a learning organization they possess, there needed to be sufficient demand for learning in the selected organizations so that it would be detectable with the research method available.
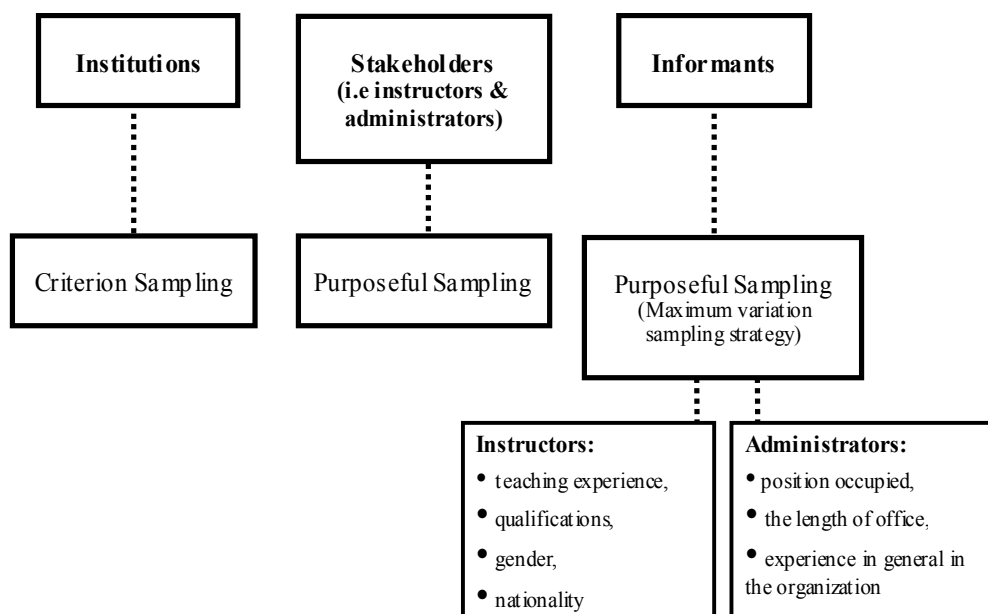
Figure 3.1. Illustration of Sampling Strategy for the Selection of Sources

The organizations chosen do not, however, guarantee that they would be exemplary learning organizations. It is assumed that Organizational Learning is a necessary activity within virtually all educational organizations but the nature, direction, speed and use of it vary widely across them (Watkins & Marsick, 1996, as cited in Leithwood et al., 1998). Therefore, the two organizations have been selected based on the following criterion:

The presence of practices associated with university learning organizations suggested in the literature acted as a guide in the selection process. Higher education institutions have structures and processes in place to facilitate organizational learning for institutional improvement. Missions and goals that provide direction for the organization and departments (Keller, 1995), internal mechanisms to create and gather information about processes and performance such as program reviews, faculty evaluations and student evaluation of teaching, generation of institutional performance, national rankings and accreditation through external interests (Trow, 1998) and commitment to ongoing individual and organizational learning all are the core concepts of university learning

organizations. The two sites involved in this study were selected from two universities which have similar aspects of university learning organizations in place. Another reason for the selection of the two sites involved in the study as the units of analysis was that they are among the most reputable in their own field in terms of the quality of education offered, and development opportunities provided for staff.

The researcher used purposeful sampling strategy during the selection of the participants to be interviewed in the study. Patton (1990) states "The purpose of purposeful sampling is to select information-rich cases whose study illuminates the question under study" (p.169). The instructors and the administrators were selected as the interviewees since they are two of the key stakeholders in educational organizations. Patton identifies 16 types of purposeful sampling, including extreme or deviant case sampling; maximum variation sampling; convenience sampling; snowball or chain sampling; typical case sampling; confirming or disconfirming case sampling; politically important case sampling; and others. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the most useful strategy for the qualitative approach is maximum variation sampling. This sampling strategy allows the researcher to gain more insight into variation in the group, to understand variations in experience as well as investigating core elements and shared outcomes (Patton, 1990). This enables the researcher to "to look for information that elucidates programmatic variation and significant common patterns within that variation" (p. 172). Thus, in the current study, maximum variation sampling strategy for purposeful sampling was employed within each site to select the informants to be interviewed. Samples of instructors interviewed within each site were from varying teaching experience, qualifications, gender and nationality. By including participants with different backgrounds, it was possible to "describe more thoroughly the variation in the group and to understand variations in experiences, while also investigating core elements and shared outcomes" (Patton, 1987, p. 53). Because it was not practical to collect data from all the instructors, approximately one seventh of the instructors (22 instructors) within Organization A and one eight of the instructors (21 instructors) within Organization B were sampled for the interviews. In the course of

selecting the administrators for the interviews, factors such as position occupied within the administration, the length of office and experience in general in the organization were considered. As a result, four of the ten head of teaching units and all of the senior administrators (four in total) were selected for the interviews in Organization A. Due to the small number of administrators in Organization B, all of the three administrators were selected for the interviews. Appendix A displays the demographic characteristics of all the participants in the study.

3.5 Development of the Interview Schedule

Semi-structured interview technique was used as a data collection technique in this study. In order to identify the perceptions of the instructors and administrators working at both organizations with regard to the manifestations of the five disciplines of a learning community proposed by Senge (1990), the researcher prepared two interview protocols -one for the administrators and the other for the instructors- taking the relevant literature into consideration. In order to ascertain whether the two organizations showed examples of Senge's constructs of Learning Organization, the questions in each interview schedule addressed the five core disciplines of building the Learning Organization: Team Learning, Personal Mastery, Shared Vision, Mental Models and Systems Thinking. In general, the two interview schedules included parallel questions. The interview schedules also included some background questions about the age, experience, qualifications and nationality of the subjects. Where necessary, probes were used to yield additional information for understanding the phenomenon under study. Table 3.1 shows the areas explored in the interview protocols with each participant group.

In order to ensure validity of the instruments, before piloting the instruments, the researcher asked a lecturer, who is knowledgeable and experienced in qualitative research methods, to review the questions in the interview protocols to determine their clarity and relevance to the study. After this, some questions which were found to be unclear and ambiguous were revised, changed or omitted.

Table 3.1

Areas Explored in Participant Interview Protocols

	# of questions	
Discipline	**Instructors**	**Administrators**
Team Learning	2	2
Personal Mastery	3	4
Shared Vision	3	3
Mental Models	2	3
Systems Thinking	3	3

Background questions
(related to age, experience, qualifications, nationality)

In the interview protocol prepared for identifying the perceptions of the administrators as regards the organizational learning practices in their organization, there were 15 open-ended questions. The interview protocol included questions addressing the five disciplines that Senge (1990) thinks characterizes a Learning Organization (See Appendix B and C). Two questions were related to the discipline of Team Learning and were designed to identify collaborative practices and learning, the utilization of teams and team work, and the existence of relevant practices and policies. The next four questions, which focused on the discipline of Personal Mastery, were about the administrators' personal visions for the organization, and professional and personal development and growth of the staff. The next 3 questions under the discipline of Shared Vision were related to the organizations overall vision, development and dissemination of it. Three of the questions related to the discipline of Mental Models were formed to uncover participants' perceptions of the existence and effectiveness of reflection, and advocacy and inquiry skills in the organization. The last 3 questions around the discipline of Systems Thinking were developed to determine organizations' adaptability to internal and external changes or circumstances, and to probe Systems Thinking among the administrators.

63

The interview protocol for the instructors, which was comprised of 13 items, included similar questions again addressing Senge's five disciplines. The first two questions focused on Team Learning and related practices. The next three questions were on Personal Mastery. There were also three questions to determine instructors' perceptions on the vision of the organization. The next two questions, on the other hand, were related to existence and effectiveness of reflection and inquiry skills in the organization. Finally, the last three questions were designed to determine organizations' adaptability to internal and external changes or circumstances, and to probe Systems Thinking among the instructors.

3.6 Piloting of the Data Collection Instruments

In order to ensure that the instruments were appropriate to collect the data relevant to the aims of the study, the interview protocols were first piloted before they were administered to the actual interviewees. The aim of the piloting was to see if the questions were clear to the interviewees, if the flow of the questions was appropriate, if the timing was appropriate, and if the questions would create any ethical issues.

The interview protocol prepared for the administrators was piloted with one administrator working in Organization A, while the interview protocol was piloted with two instructors working in Organization A, and one instructor in Organization B.

As a result of the piloting, the researcher felt that two questions were not clear to the interviewees and needed rewording probing. One of the questions which required some probing was the second question under Mental Models in both the administrator's and instructor's interview protocol asking how the interviewee makes his thinking visible to others. Because the participants asked for probes, some probes were added to the question to elicit more information from them. Another question which also necessitated probing was the question under Systems Thinking in instructor's interview protocol, whose purpose was to find out the strategies their organization uses to adapt to the changes and environmental

circumstances. Again, the researcher had to provide the participants with some probes.

As for the timing of the interviews, each interview took approximately one hour to conduct, which was longer than originally planned. Therefore, more time was planned and allocated for the actual interviews. Furthermore, the flow of the questions in both interview protocols did not create any problems and seemed appropriate. Finally, while answering some questions, two of the participants asked for reassurance from the researcher that their answers would remain confidential. This was understandable, and the researcher restated that both their names and the names of the institutions they are working in would be kept confidential. Later, during the actual interviews, special attention was paid to make the issue of confidentiality clear to the informants.

Overall, the pilot study was helpful for the researcher in terms of seeing the areas to be improved and the strengths of the interview protocols. All of the informants stated that they enjoyed the interview.

3.7 Data Collection Procedures

A primary method used by qualitative researchers for data collection is the interviewing of selected individuals. Kahn and Cannell (1957, as cited in Marshall & Rossman, 1999) defines interviewing as "a conversation with a purpose" (p. 108). The aim of this technique is "to find out what is on people's mind-what they think or how they feel about something" (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000, p. 509). The data for this study were also gathered through in-depth interviewing with 49 participants from the two institutions involved in the study. As Marshall and Rossman (1999) state interviewing as a qualitative research technique is a useful way to get large amounts of data quickly and it is possible to have immediate follow-up and clarification.

Patton (1990) classifies interviews into four types: informal conversational interview, general interview guide approach, standardized open-ended interview

and closed, fixed-response interview. In informal conversational interview, there are no pre-determined questions. The reason for this is to remain as open and adaptable as to the interviewee's priorities. The interviewer "goes with the flow." In the general interview guide approach, topics and issues to be dealt with are specified in advance in outline form and the interviewer decides the sequence and wording of questions during the interview. This is to ensure that same general areas of information are collected from interviewees but it allows the interviewer some freedom and adaptability in getting information from the interviewee. In standardized, open-ended interviews, however, the exact wording and sequence of questions are determined in advance and same open – ended questions are asked to all interviewees. This helps facilitate faster interviews that can be more easily analyzed and compared. Closed, fixed response interview types are interviews where all interviewees are asked to choose from among the same set of responses. Interview data for this study were collected from the instructors and administrators in two sites using a standardized open-ended interview instrument, which consisted of questions probing the nature of each of Senge's (1990) five constructs characterizing a Learning Organization.

Figure 3.2 illustrates the actual data collection process. At the end of April, 2004, the researcher asked for approval from the administration of both sites for conducting the study, explaining the aim and nature of it. After the approval was granted, a pilot study was done; as a result of which some minor changes were made to the interview protocols. Later, the actual data collection procedure started. Interviews were arranged with two sets of individuals: the administrators and instructors in each site. The interviewees were contacted by phone, through e-mail or in person and were told the nature of the study to solicit participation. All the contacted people, except one administrator from Organization A and two instructors from Organization B, agreed to participate. 29 interviews were conducted in Organization A: 22 with instructors and 7 with administrators while 22 interviews were conducted in Organization B: 19 with instructors and 3 with administrators. However, the data gathered from two of the interviewees could not be used due to the poor quality of the recordings, leaving 17 instructors in total. The interviews

66

spanned approximately a three-month period beginning in early May and ending in late July. Interviews were arranged to take place at a time and place most convenient for the subjects themselves.

	Organization A	Organization B
Instructors	22	17
Administrators	7	3
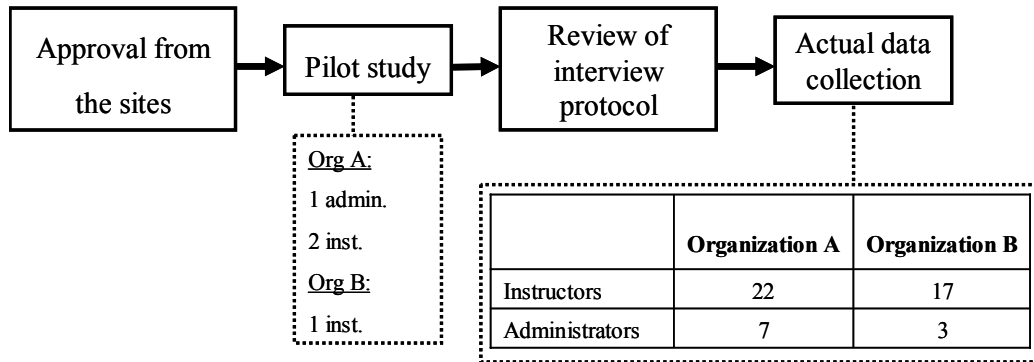
Figure 3.2. Illustration of Data Collection Procedure

As suggested by Yıldırım and Şimşek (2005), prior to each interview, the researcher briefed each participant about the purpose of the study and how the interview data were to be used. How to record interview data seems to be a matter of personal decision in collecting data through interviews. While Patton (1990) says that a tape recorder is "indispensable" (p. 348), Lincoln and Guba (1985) are not in favor of recording "except for unusual reasons" (p. 241) because of the intrusiveness of such devices and the possibility of technical failure. In general, however, recording the data permits the researcher to capture more data in a more accurate way than taking notes and help focus on the interview more. Therefore, the researcher decided to use a tape-recorder for recording the interview data. Permission to use a tape recorder was sought at each interview and assurance was made regarding confidentiality. Participants were also told that they may remove themselves from the study at any time should they wish so. All of the participants gave their consent to be recorded. Each interview held with the instructors from both sites lasted around forty-five minutes to one hour in length. The interview with administrators lasted around one hour to one and a half hours in length. The researcher used probing questions for clarification of concepts and ideas during the

interviews. Being a member of one of the organizations the study was carried out, the researcher paid utmost attention to be as objective as possible while having the interviews with the participants from that organization. Bogdan and Biklen (1998) think that having a prior relationship with the subjects gives the researcher an opportunity to put the subjects at ease during interviews. In fact, the researcher felt that almost all of the participants in the organization she was a member of were very much willing to participate in the study and felt at ease with the interviewer. The researcher knew some of the participants in the other organization involved in the study, and met some of them for the first time; however, overall, it was apparent to the researcher that all of the interviewees felt comfortable talking to the researcher. Most of the participants in both organizations expressed that they enjoyed participating in the study and some even said it was a good opportunity for them "to get things off their chest."

3.8 Data Analysis Procedures

Marshall and Rossman (1999) describe data analysis as "the process of bringing order, structure, and interpretation to the mess of collected data" (p. 150). They identify six phases in the analytic procedure: organizing the data; generating categories, themes, and patterns; coding the data, testing the emergent understandings; searching for alternative explanations; and writing the report.

After gathering all the data together, the researcher can start with "content analysis" which Patton (1990) describes as "the process of identifying, coding and categorizing the primary patterns in the data" (p. 381). This is a "messy, ambiguous, time-consuming [but] creative and fascinating process" (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 150). Identification of salient themes, recurring ideas or language and patterns of belief linking people and settings together requires a significant amount of intellectual work. Once the categories and themes are generated, coding scheme is applied to those categories and themes. While the coding is done, new understandings may emerge, which necessitates changes in the original plan. The researcher, at this stage, gets engaged in evaluating the plausibility of these understandings and explores them through the data while

looking for negative instances of the patterns. The aim here is to evaluate the usefulness and centrality of the data. The researcher should continually be involved in challenging the patterns that seem so apparent and look for other plausible explanations for the data. Bearing in mind that alternative explanations always exist, the researcher needs to demonstrate how the explanation offered is the most plausible of all the others (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Culminating the data analysis process is the final reporting.

The data collected through the interviews in this study were also subjected to content analysis. The procedure of data analysis is illustrated in Figure 3.3 below:
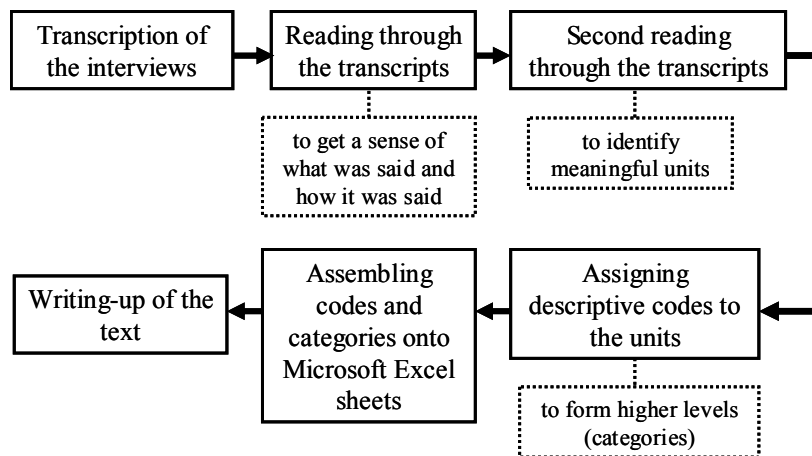
Figure 3.3. Data Analysis Procedure

The data analysis started with the transcription of the interviews. For each institution included in the study, each of the audio-taped interviews was transcribed verbatim by using a word processing program. After transcribing audio tapes verbatim, the researcher read through the transcripts to get a sense of what was said and how it was said. Then, the researcher read the transcripts again to identify meaningful units and assigned descriptive codes to these units in the right margins of transcripts. For example, codes like "*informal gatherings or informal chats*" and "*course preparation days*" were used to describe the data in relation to "Forms of

collaborative practices and learning." The researcher assembled the codes and categories onto Microsoft Office Excel sheets so as to have an overall picture of the data. One Excel sheet was prepared for each participant group in each organization. Figure 3.4 below illustrates how the first-level coding was done:

CATEGORY	Code	Quotation	Code	Code
		Instructor 1	**Instructor 2**	**Instructor 3**
Forms of collaborative practices and learning	*informal gatherings* or *informal chats* "Most of what I have learned about the [organization], about teaching practices or about how to exploit a piece of material came through such interaction with my colleagues."		*course preparation days*	*peer observations and reflections*
A lack of discussion	*different viewpoints not welcomed*		*fear of being reprimanded*	*opinions and possible solutions disregarded*
Sheet1: ORGANIZATION A-INSTRUCTORS				

Figure 3.4. Illustration of First-Level Coding

Once the first-level coding was over, the descriptive codes fitting together meaningfully were grouped into categories such as "Collaborative work and learning," and "Impediments to Team Learning." These categories allowed the researcher to identify the main themes present in the data. Figure 3.5 displays how a sample of the second-level coding looked like.

CATEGORY	Code	Instructor 1	Instructor 2
Collaborative work and learning	Forms of collaborative practices and learning	*informal gatherings* or *informal chats* "Most of what I have learned about the [organization], about teaching practices or about how to exploit a piece of material came through such interaction with my colleagues."	*course preparation days*
Impediments to team learning	A lack of discussion	*Different viewpoints not welcomed*	*opinions and possible solutions disregarded*
Sheet1: ORGANIZATION A-INSTRUCTORS			

Figure 3.5. Illustration of Second-Level Coding

Finally, a third-level coding was carried out to determine the general descriptive themes like "Team Learning," "Personal Mastery," "Shared Vision," "Mental Models," and "Systems Thinking." A sample of third-level coding is shown in Figure 3.6. The thematic coding helped the researcher to establish the report structure within which the descriptions and interpretations of the findings of the study were presented. The final stage included writing-up of the text. The researcher described and interpreted data with representative quotations taken directly from the raw material under the five main themes.

THEME	CATEGORY		Instructor 1
TEAM LEARNING	**Collaborative work and learning**	Forms of collaborative practices and learning	*informal gatherings* or *informal chats* "Most of what I have learned about the [organization], about teaching practices or about how to exploit a piece of material came through such interaction with my colleagues."
	Impediments to team learning	A lack of discussion	*different viewpoints not welcomed*
Sheet1: ORGANIZATION A-INSTRUCTORS			

Figure 3.6. Illustration of Third-Level Coding

3.9 Reliability and Validity Issues

As in all research, it is important to secure the quality of the data gathered in qualitative research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose four criteria for measuring the quality of qualitative research and enhancing reliability and validity or "trustworthiness." These are credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability.

In order to be able to establish credibility, the researcher must be able to show rigor in representing multiple constructions adequately. In other words, "reconstructions … that have been arrived at via the inquiry are credible to the constructors of the original multiple realities" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 296). Research methods such as prolonged engagement, persistent observation, peer debriefing and triangulation are some of the strategies used to increase the credibility of the findings. According to Lincoln and Guba, prolonged engagement is the investment of sufficient time to truly learn a community's culture, test for the misinterpretation of information and

observations, and build trust and establish rapport with the members of the community. Persistent observation, as another technique for promoting credibility, allows the researcher to "identify those characteristics and elements in the setting that are most relevant to the question being pursued and focus on them in detail" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 304). Peer debriefing is a process of communicating to a peer to explore aspects of the study that might otherwise remain only implicit within the researcher's mind. Triangulation, which is another way of establishing credibility, ensures consistency between and among data sets. Triangulation includes data triangulation-using a variety of data sources; investigator triangulation - use of different evaluators or social scientists; theory triangulation- use of multiple perspectives to interpret a single set of data; and methodological triangulation- use of multiple methods such as interviews, observations, documents, etc. (Denzin, 1978 as cited in Patton, 1987).

Transferability, which is analogous to external validity, refers to the extent to which the results of the research can be generalized to other contexts or settings. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) state the burden of proof of transferability lies both with the original investigators as well as with the person seeking to generalize the findings of the research. The investigator can enhance transferability by providing "the data base that makes transferability judgments possible on the part of potential appliers" (p. 316). It is, then, the responsibility of the person wishing to transfer the results to a different context or setting to make the judgment of how sensible the transfer is. LaCompte and Goetz (1982) suggest that specifying the researcher's status or position, careful description of the informants, detailed description of the context, delineation of the analytic constructs, definitions or units of analysis, clearly specifying the methods of data collection and data analysis are some steps that can be taken to ensure transferability of the findings.

Dependability, which is substituted by reliability in quantitative paradigm, refers to the consistency of the results found with the data collected in the study (Merriam, 1998). Miles and Huberman (1994) pose several queries that need to be answered so that data can be deemed reliable. These include researcher's role and status, providing meaningful parallelism across data source such as informants, contexts

and times, clarity of basic paradigms and analytic constructs, appropriateness of the data collection protocols, accuracy of the coding checks of the data, quality checks of the data, and consistency and accuracy of the observers' procedures if there are multiple researchers involved in the research.

Confirmability refers to the objectivity of the study. Guba and Lincoln (1981) suggest a number of strategies for enhancing confirmability. These include searching for negative instances that run contrary to most findings, and conducting a data audit to make judgments about potential areas of bias or distortion.

The researcher in this study took some actions to enhance the quality and trustworthiness of the research design. Credibility of the study was promoted through prolonged engagement with participants. The researcher spent approximately three months in the two sites to collect data, which involved visits to the organizations three or four times a week to conduct the interviews. Data collection stopped when data saturation was reached. Triangulation was another technique used to achieve credibility in this study. The researcher used different subjects (i.e., instructors and administrators) to collect a variety of perceptions on the phenomenon in question. The researcher compared and contrasted the ways in which participants made sense of the social constructs in the setting, asked questions to both parties to clarify certain issues and to cross-check the information. In this way, it was possible to see what perceptions were shared by the different parties involved in the study and what perceptions exhibited variation. Interviewing and discussing the same topic with people from the same organization enhanced the objectivity of the information and allowed the researcher to draw a comprehensive picture on the research topic.

In order to enhance the transferability of the findings, the researcher tried to provide as thick and detailed descriptions of the context, the methods of data collection and data analysis as possible. This should help readers "to assess potential transferability and appropriateness for similar settings" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 278).

In this study, an attempt was also made to attain interrater reliability by having a peer who was knowledgeable of qualitative research methods and who had no stake in the organizations code some of the interview data to determine if the conclusions drawn by the researcher were supported by the data. The peer coded nine of the interviews, which corresponded to almost twenty per cent of the data. Ninety percent of the data were coded with similar codes and categories drawn by the researcher herself.

3.10 Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

The following limitations and delimitations are presented here with the aim of facilitating any research based upon the conclusions and recommendations of this study.

Firstly, the sample of this study was limited to the immediate stakeholders, the administrators and instructors working at the organizations under study. Other stakeholders such as students, and administrative staff were excluded. So, the result of this study is limited with the perceptions and experiences of the sampled group only.

Secondly, the staff of the two institutions had not received formal training to be a learning organization. The sites were used to explore the elements that align with Senge's framework of the Learning Organization to determine what characteristics of a learning organization they possess. Moreover, this study is not a recipe for how institutions of higher education can become a learning organization. It does, however, provide concrete examples of variables that appear to enhance or detract from the development of Senge's five constructs as perceived by the stakeholders in the two organizations under study.

Next, the data for this study were gathered only through in-depth semi structured interviews with the participants. Additional data could have been collected through other qualitative research data collection methods such as observations or document analysis.

In addition, the framework used to assess the degree to which the two selected cases are learning organizations is the one developed by Senge. This framework was only one of other possible frameworks. The conceptualization of the learning organization in a using a different framework may lead to different findings.

Further, it was not possible to carry out member checks due to time constraints and unavailability of the participants for this purpose. In other words, the researcher was not able to check with the participants if they would agree with the codes and interpretations drawn. However, the researcher e-mailed the transcripts of the interviews to some participants and 12 participants responded and gave their confirmation of the data.

Finally, this study investigated two English Language Preparatory programs. Although these organizations are parts of higher education institutions, they are rather unique in that their primary function is teaching, and carrying out research is not a required activity in these organizations as it is in the other departments across the higher education institutions they are part of. This study contains elements that can be found in other settings of higher education, but are highly specific to these two sites, so the results should be cautiously viewed.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to identify the elements that align with Senge's framework of the Learning Organization in two selected higher education settings to determine what characteristics of a learning organization they possess. Interviewing was the major source of this qualitative study. Five disciplines of Senge's model of the Learning Organization served as the criteria or the basis for the interview protocols prepared by the researcher. The data were triangulated by comparing information gathered through analysis of interviews held by two groups, namely instructors and administrators, in each site. By doing so, the researcher hoped to get a multi-perspective picture of the existence of the core disciplines of the Learning Organization proposed by Peter Senge. The data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis.

This chapter presents the findings of the study which comprise of five themes, corresponding to Senge's five disciplines of the Learning Organization. These are Team Learning, Personal Mastery, Shared Vision, Mental Models and Systems Thinking. The findings are organized in line with the research questions.

4.1 Findings on How the Instructors and Administrators in Organization A and Organization B Perceive Their Institution in Terms of Senge's Disciplines

This part presents the findings on how the instructors and administrators in each organization involved in this study perceive their institution in terms of Senge's disciplines.

4.1.1 Team Learning

The discipline of Team Learning requires "creation of opportunities for individuals to work and learn together in a community where it is safe to innovate, learn and try anew" (Senge, 1990, as cited in Cox, 2002). Thinking critically about organizational issues, innovative and synchronized action based on trust, and cooperative and interactive relationships with other organizational teams are three dimensions critical to Team Learning. As Senge (1990) asserts, the discipline of Team Learning also involves mastering the practices of dialogue and skillful discussion. Dialogue requires colleagueship, which involves the individuals' regarding and treating one another as colleagues "in a mutual quest for deeper insight and clarity" (p. 245).

4.1.1.1 Organization A

This part presents the perceptions of instructors and administrators in Organization A regarding Team Learning.

<u>Instructor perceptions</u>

The main categories that emerged from the interviews with instructors in Organization A under the theme of 'Team Learning' included (a) collaborative work and learning and (b) impediments to Team Learning. Table 4.1 gives a full account of all the coding categories under the theme of 'Team Learning.'

Collaborative work and learning

Participants discussed the nature and extent of collaborative work and learning in their organization. They talked about the effect of <u>structural arrangement</u> of the organization, <u>forms of collaborative practices and learning</u> and <u>colleagueship</u> among the members of the organization.

Table 4.1

Team Learning: Codes and Categories for Instructors in Organization A

TEAM LEARNING
  Collaborative work and learning
    Structural arrangement
      unit-based structure promotes collaborative work and learning
      nature & extent of collaborative work and learning depends on the "teaching unit one is in"
    Forms of collaborative practices and learning
      informal gatherings among instructors
      informal chats among instructors
      course preparation days
      peer observations and critical reflection
      meeting of teaching partners for lesson planning and discussing student related issues
      weekly unit meetings
      development slots
      workshops and seminars
      in-house training courses
      Masters program
    Colleagueship
      colleagueship only among instructors
      little or no colleagueship between instructors and administrators
      a lack of colleagueship among instructors
  Impediments to team learning
    A lack of a dialogue
      not really being listened to by the line manager
      fear of being reprimanded or told off by the management
    A lack of discussion
      different viewpoints not welcomed
      opinions and possible solutions disregarded
      fear of being reprimanded
    Scarcity of time
    Lack of rewards or incentives
    Attitude of and lack of commitment by some of the staff
    Competition among staff
    Language difference
    A lack of collaboration, cooperation and interaction with other units
    Leadership style
      dominating style of leadership
      a lack of leadership that is empowering
    A lack of clarity of purpose in some activities

Most of the participants thought the current "*unit-based structure*" in place *promoted collaborative work and learning*. One of the participants described the unit-based structure and how it promoted collaborative work as follows: "[Instructors] are put into teaching units. There are 10 in our unit, for example. We all have common objectives…We work together to achieve those aims. [We] share classes as well, so there is a certain amount of work done together and there is a lot

of interaction in the Unit." Another participant also talked about how that type of structure promoted collaborative work and learning in the following way:

> Working with a group of teachers in the same room, as a unit, rather than everyone working individually, is a great thing… Many problems that we wouldn't be able to deal with on our own are discussed and solved together. There is a lot of sharing of ideas and learning taking place.

Still another noted: "Having units does not necessarily mean that there will be team work, but I think there is team work and collaboration. I worked in other organizations and I think there is team work here."

A number of participants, on the other hand, noted that the *nature and extent of collaborative work and learning* very much *depended on the "teaching unit one was in."* One participant who had changed units a couple of times, for instance, said: "Some units work incredibly well together; some units don't work together at all. The unit I'm in at the moment, for example. It is everyone for himself, which makes it really hard because everybody is doing the same thing over and over again. There is no productivity." Speaking of the current teaching they were working in, more than half of the instructors stated that in general there was genuine collaboration and collegiality among unit members as is expressed through the following comment: "In my unit, people work well with each other. They really help and try to make other people's lives much easier."

While discussing collaborative work and learning, participants also talked about forms of collaborative practice and learning. The most frequent forms cited were '*informal gatherings*' or '*informal chats*' *among instructors* in their individual teaching units during break-times or lunch times, and after school, where teachers shared and exchanged ideas about teaching and student related issues or 'how to do something' or 'how to deal with a problem.' This participant with one-year of teaching experience related how such informal chats or gatherings helped her improve as a new teacher: "Most of what I have learned about the [organization], about teaching practices or about how to exploit a piece of material came through such interaction with my colleagues." Another form of collaborative work and

learning included *course preparation days* during which unit members came together to plan, to prepare materials, and to decide on issues related to curriculum. Also mentioned were *peer observations and critical reflection* as valuable opportunities fostering collaborative work and learning. Related to this, a participant who had more than 20 years of teaching experience said "Some of my colleagues, experienced or inexperienced, observe each other's classroom practices and even I, myself, with so many years of teaching experience, go and observe my younger colleagues in their classes to learn from them and improve myself." There was also reference to collaborative work between *teaching partners for lesson planning and discussing issues related to students*. A number of participants also thought that *weekly unit meetings* and *development slots* were useful opportunities for collaborative work and learning. One participant described what they did during the unit meetings: "We talk about exams and students…the materials that we used; whether they are useful or not. We talk about the course book and exercises." Another one noted: "I share my opinions with friends…Meetings are good opportunities to express problems regarding our classes." *Workshops and seminars* offered on various topics, *in-house training courses* and the *Masters program* were also mentioned as forums enabling staff across the organization to work and learn together.

In discussing collaborative work and learning, participants also talked about colleagueship in the organization. Some participants thought there was *colleagueship only among instructors*, and *little or no between instructors and administrators*. Related to this, while one participant said: "I think there is amongst colleagues at the same level quite a good communication... People are quite honest with each other…And there is a sense of comradery," another one said: "I do think on equal basis people do share opinions. My friends and I; we talk a lot about things here and we share our opinions, but it doesn't go any further." To this, another one added: "I don't find people being very open with sharing their ideas with their line managers." One participant explained the reason for the problem as follows: "People are afraid of the reaction they will get from their line manager. They think like 'If I say this, what will she think about me? She might think I am an ineffective

81

teacher.'" One participant gave his own explanation of the situation: "Semantically, I've noticed that people tend to use 'them' a lot or 'they' for the management; like the management is a separate entity. They don't even say who they are; it is understood who they are. So, it tends to be us and them situation. 'Us' can't share their opinions with 'them.'" While discussing colleagueship, there were also some participants who perceived *a lack of colleagueship among instructors* themselves as well. One participant said: "I don't think that there is complete trust among colleagues." Another one added to this saying: "People are reluctant to share their opinions with each other as they have this fear of 'what will they think of me? Will they think I am an incapable teacher? Will I look stupid in front of my colleagues if I ask this question?"

Impediments to Team Learning

Participants talked about several factors which seemed to impede Team Learning in Organization A. Among these were <u>a lack of a dialogue</u> and <u>discussion</u>, <u>scarcity of time</u>, <u>lack of rewards or incentives</u>, <u>apparent attitude and lack of commitment by some of the staff</u>, <u>competition among the staff</u>, <u>language difference</u>, <u>a lack of collaboration, cooperation and interaction with other units</u> in the organization and <u>leadership style</u>.

One of the biggest concerns brought up by majority of the participants was that of <u>a lack of a dialogue</u> especially between instructors and administrators. Most of the discussions revolved around unit meetings where 'little' or 'no real dialogue' took place. While some participants bemoaned that they were *not really being listened to by* their *line managers*, others complained that they were not able to voice their opinions freely and openly for *fear of "being reprimanded or told off by the management*." While a participant said "meetings are supposed to be open; people stating their minds. We haven't had those kinds of meetings," another one stated "ideas are not listened to. You feel it." As did a few others, this participant talked about the atmosphere of fear prevalent among the staff: "There is a general fear of what will happen to me. I will get into trouble; I shouldn't say that, I should just agree… Before going to meetings …we say to each other 'don't say anything, let's

just get out of this meeting as quickly as possible." One participant recounted how she got warned by her line manager when, once, she criticized a decision at a unit meeting. She said "I was told that I could be negatively affecting the opinions of others. I decided not to say a word again." A few participants added even if they voiced their opinion, they needed to be careful about how to say their opinion as "sometimes things get back to the senior management."

Another noted barrier to team and collective learning was a <u>lack of discussion</u>. Referring to unit meetings, most participants stated that there was no real discussion taking place. Some complained that *different viewpoints* were *not welcomed*; others bemoaned that "*opinions and possible solutions* were *disregarded*." As a result, many felt discouraged and gave up discussing things. One participant's comment on this was as follows:

> …there is a facade here; 'discussion', 'modern management', 'interaction', 'team play', all these words are used freely but actually a lot of it is very dictatorial information. New regulations and ideas are enforced and announced very quickly and even if there is discussion, in the end the original decision stands; the management decision stands. I think I can sense people have given up discussing things.

One participant said that the best place for learning were informal chats among staff about how they would do something or how they would deal with a problem and that, in the meetings, almost no learning took place as meetings tended to be "imposing of somebody else's idea about how you should be doing something." Another participant confirmed his opinion by saying: "We just agree with whatever our [line manager] says because even if we discuss something, we still come to the same conclusion. We would waste one hour discussing it, so we just agree right at the beginning." Some participants also talked about their unwillingness to enter into a discussion for *fear of being reprimanded*. Related to this, one stated: **"**people just accept the decisions" as they do not want to "end up in someone's office with a finger on the face." One participant spoke of the importance of diversity and the need to welcome people with different viewpoints. She concluded "otherwise

meetings turn out to be forums where only announcements are made and you are told what to do."

Scarcity of time was another issue brought up by participants. One participant stated "On the surface, they, kind of, "they" meaning management, tries to… structure some sort of interaction but the reality is that it does not really work because of time constraints." Some attributed lack of time to the amount of teaching hours and the heavy workload. One participant commented on this saying:

> Apart from teaching, we have myriads of things to do such as marking exams and learning portfolios of students. There are also people in the Unit who are involved in developmental courses in addition to their teaching. We are rushing all the time to catch up with the course outline, which is too loaded. So, it is difficult to devote time to collaboration.

A few participants suggested reducing the teachers' teaching hours and scheduling that would better facilitate team work and collaborative practices among teachers. Pointing out the inadequacy of the time allocated during preparation days prior to each course and the tight schedule during courses, one teacher also suggested that 'Wednesday development slots' should be replaced with 'working-together-slots."

Some participants were also critical of a lack of rewards and incentives for additional work involving collaborative work. In discussing the issue, some participants consented that people were neither given extra time to get involved in activities like team teaching, or peer observation, nor were they rewarded or praised enough for volunteering to participate in such activities. To illustrate her view, one instructor with more than ten years of experience said "Some teachers devote their personal time to helping new teachers through peer observations and providing feedback. I have almost never seen anybody being rewarded or praised for doing such kind of things." A number of people also believed that low and uncompetitive teacher salaries affected the motivation of the staff adversely, causing a lack of desire in some to volunteer extra time and effort to engage in activities involving collaborative work.

Another barrier to Team Learning was the apparent <u>attitude of and lack of commitment by some of the staff</u>. While some participants spoke of people who "preferred to work by themselves and do things in that way," others referred to those who complained all the time and tried to avoid additional work. One participant was particularly disappointed with the attitudes of some of the instructors in her unit and she described how her motivation declined: "Here, I don't feel like [I am a part of this unit]. They find it hard to accept that you want to work hard and that influences your behavior. You say 'Ok, in order to be a part of that group, I am not going to speak...I am not going to do anything."

A few participants also talked about a recent increase in <u>competition among staff</u> as a barrier to collaborative work, which, in turn, seemed to affect Team Learning. This especially seemed to result from increased tendency among administrators towards promoting competition among instructors. One exemplified this saying "referring to exam results, saying things like 'your class came the fifth,' they're promoting competition. This is ridiculous. How do you expect good performance from me if you give me the worst group of students? And I don't see any reason why I should be competing with others."

<u>Language difference</u> was also claimed to be a barrier affecting the collaboration between native speaker and non-native speaker instructors in Units. This native speaker participant summed up the problem as follows: "A lot of the interaction takes place in Turkish and for a foreigner that doesn't speak Turkish very well, there is the feeling of kind of being left out … I think it does affect how people interact with each other." Another participant also expressed her concern on the same issue saying that she felt "isolated and ostracized a little bit because of the amount of Turkish going on." Noting that this was a common concern among all the native speakers in the institution, she continued "you just keep your head down, you do whatever needs to be done and you go home because you do not really feel part of the group."

While discussing the barriers to Team Learning, participants also talked about a <u>lack of collaboration, cooperation and interaction with other Units</u> in the

organization. Several participants pointed out "most of the collaboration was down to unit level," with almost "little" or "no" interaction across units in the organization. One participant, for instance, noted "three units are teaching the same level, for example, but there is no cooperation. Resources are wasted." Participants asked for improved administrative support for such interaction and collaboration especially in terms of sharing materials, exchanging ideas about teaching methodologies or exploitation of teaching materials.

Another noted barrier brought up by some participants was leadership style displayed by some administrators. While some participants spoke of a *dominating style of leadership* especially at the middle management level, some perceived *a lack of leadership that was empowering*. Clearly pleased with the efforts of her own unit head, this participant lamented the style of leadership that detracted from effective team work and collaborative activities in other units in the following way: "In some units people are enforced by their line manager. 'OK this group is gonna work on this, you are gonna work on this, this and that. I think in the current unit that I am in, there is more freedom." Her opinion was shared by another participant who said "we are directed to team projects, which is nice, but too much direction might defeat purpose." One participant thought that a domineering style of leadership did not help the functioning of the team at all: "In units…where the leader gives a lot more control to the unit, the members work much closer. If the [leader] takes control, people think they don't have to do much…Consequently nobody does anything." Another participant urged the need for administrators to engage in dialogue with team members to discuss things, to elicit different views and to agree on how to accomplish common goals instead of displaying an authoritarian style, enforcing or imposing their views on people. Many participants, however, still indicated that "despite the leadership," the staff tried to collaborate as the following comment shows: "Even though there is a management structure where we are actually told what to do, in that kind of structure people do work together. You could have a manager that encourages that, or one who doesn't care or doesn't encourage it, but teachers will still do it naturally."

A few participants also perceived <u>a lack of clarity of purpose in some activities</u>. This was expressed by one participant as follows: "sometimes I get the impression that some things are being done for the sake of doing them." She underlined the need for the leader to clearly explain the team the purpose of activities and convince them of their usefulness.

<u>Administrator perceptions</u>

The main categories that emerged from the interviews held with administrators in Organization A under the theme of 'Team Learning' included (a) promotion of Team Learning, and (b) impediments to Team Learning. Table 4.2 gives a full account of all the coding categories under the theme of 'Team Learning.'

Table 4.2

Team Learning: Codes and Categories for Administrators in Organization A

TEAM LEARNING
Promotion of Team Learning
Policies and resources
teaching unit system
task groups
in-service training courses and workshops
weekly development slots
weekly unit meetings
course preparation days
meeting of teaching   partners for lesson planning and discussing student related issues
Impediments to Team Learning
A scarcity of time
A lack of rewards and incentives
Leadership style
top down, authoritarian approach
the leader's 'acting with the team ' hinders team work
not much training available *in terms of how to consult people & how to get people to function as*
a group
Individuals' characteristics
Some staff like working individualistically

Promotion of Team Learning

Participants talked about <u>policies and resources</u> put in place to support Team Learning in their organization.

Developing the *'teaching unit' system* within the organization was reported to be one of the policies instituted with the aim of developing a culture of collaboration and promoting Team Learning. One of the senior managers described how the unit structure developed and promoted collaborative work and team learning over the years:

> We spent a lot of time right from 1993 onwards developing the teaching unit system…the group learning has been centered on the teaching units and that has developed over the years. At the beginning it was quite difficult because we didn't have that culture, working as units, but now if you look at the School, most of the day-to-day operations are planned within the Unit. Unit takes care of a lot of its own homework, contributes a lot to testing these days, does its own course outline planning and everything else.

Setting up of *task groups* to accomplish various tasks was also aimed to promote collaborative work and team learning across the organization:

> It is surprising how much task group there is in this institution. Whenever we need to do something special, what we usually do is we set up task groups. If there is special evaluation to carry out, if you want to look into how [a level] textbook is doing or if you want to look at other aspects of the work of curriculum, then we set up a task group, get people who are interested, set them on the task and then bring their conclusions back to the management so that they can be put into operations.

Another participant stated the belief that collective learning started with group learning and went on to talk about an example of collective learning that took place recently in their organization. He reported that a writing strand for a particular level of students was initiated with a 'task group' of people and that it was later cascaded to all the members of the organization, which enabled anyone teaching that particular level to do the writing strand.

In-service training courses and workshops which enabled instructors across the organization to work and learn together were also cited as opportunities promoting collaborative work and learning. Also mentioned were w*eekly development slots* which entailed workshops, swap shops, presentations and discussions held in each teaching unit. Elaborating on this, one of the senior administrators noted that the development sessions were targeted towards achieving specific objectives decided

by each teaching unit together with their leader. These could be related to students, a specific teaching point or a specific unit development goal set for the year. In talking about the process, she said "The idea behind all this development framework is to encourage collaborative learning and development. [Units] work systematically towards their [set] objectives, which necessitates every single person in the [unit] to participate equally." Another administrator talked about some practices she initiated during 'Wednesday afternoon development slots' to try to enhance team-building and learning:

> I've tried certain things… for team building purposes because we had a huge problem the year before with people splitting up into groups and then we had some of these people leave, and some stay. And then we had new comers on top, which meant that we almost had no culture and we had to learn to again learn to share and collaborate. And that's why I tried to have little activities…to show them that they had to trust each other and that they had to listen to each other and it was easy to label people but then... labeling actually hindered communication between the team members and like that.

Another opportunity for collaborative work and collective learning in the organization was *weekly unit meetings* under the leadership of unit heads. These were described as opportunities to think critically about different organizational issues and finding solutions as a team. For example, one administrator said "I share the [weekly exam] results with the teachers in the Unit and say 'look guys this is what happened. What course of action should we take by looking at the results?' We brainstorm, and take decisions."

Other forms of collaborative work and learning especially at the teaching unit level included *course preparation days* during which unit members came together to plan, to prepare materials, and to decide on issues related to curriculum; and *meeting of teaching   partners for lesson planning and discussing student related issues*.

Impediments to Team Learning

The interviews held with administrators revealed that there were some factors that seemed to impede Team Learning in the organization. Among these were a scarcity

of time, a lack of rewards and incentives, leadership style, and individuals' characteristics.

Scarcity of time was a factor mentioned by almost all of the administrators as a barrier to Team Learning. Some noted that the heavy workload of the staff and the sheer size of students did not leave much time for any kind of really meaningful dialogue to take place. This is best illustrated by the following comments:

> People's workload is very high… If you say you want people to get together every week and spend two hours discussing something, some people may not be happy to do that.

> We need to achieve certain goals at a certain time…there is actually no time for 'Ok, let's come together and decide on it and let's find a common pattern.' That's not always practical.

Also mentioned was a lack of rewards and incentives. One comment on this was "There may not be any incentive to spend a lot of time, being involved in something. If you try to set up a structure where you had a lot more consultation, it would be something over and above your existing workload; you wouldn't get paid for it. People may not be too keen on that." Low and uncompetitive salaries the staff had were also believed to affect the performance of the staff adversely, causing some people to get away with the minimum amount of work.

A few administrators stated their belief that sometimes the style of the leader could act as a barrier to effective collaborative work and learning. One administrator, for instance, thought although most of the leaders in the organization tried to facilitate collaboration, they were not all doing it the same level "because of their understanding of what they need to do in their job, their beliefs and values in terms of what a leader should do." In his own examination of the situation, one of the senior managers described a confounding factor, which he believed, influenced some leaders' approach to their team and teamwork. He explained that the current education system in the country, the way Higher Education Council worked, and the way the university functioned promoted a *top down, authoritarian approach* with a culture of no collaboration. He added: "individual managers perhaps coming

from that educational background may prefer to take decisions themselves rather than to ask other people." He expressed his concern that there was *not much training* available in the School *in terms of how to consult people and how to get people to function as a group*. Another administrator, on the other hand, stated her belief that a leadership style where *the leader 'acted with the team'* hindered team work and collaboration. She made the following comment to illustrate her point: "We have seen leaders in a team where they did not want to act as leaders and who wanted to be seen as a part of the team and at that point you could tell that the leadership did not work at all. They were one of the guys but then the guys did not get anywhere."

Comments were also made regarding the effect of <u>individuals' characteristics</u> on collaborative practices and team work. Related to this, one administrator felt that while in some units there seemed to be a family like culture with people working collaboratively, in others this was something lacking at times because of the existence of people who tended to *work individualistically*. Agreeing on this, another administrator said: "There are people just like in other institutions who would like to be successful just for themselves and who'd like to see that their students have the highest scores in every exam … and these teachers may not like to share so much their activities, their materials, their own whatever."

4.1.1.2 Organization B

This part presents the perceptions of instructors and administrators in Organization B regarding Team Learning.

<u>**Instructor perceptions**</u>

The main categories that emerged from the interviews with instructors in Organization A under the theme of 'Team Learning' included (a) collaborative work and learning and (b) impediments to Team Learning. Table 4.3 gives a full account of all the coding categories under the theme of 'Team Learning.'

Table 4.3

Team Learning: Codes and Categories for Instructors in Organization B

TEAM LEARNING
  Collaborative work and learning
    Forms of collaborative practices and learning
      staff room chats and *discussions*
      teaching partners paired together for lesson planning and discussing issues related to students
      level meetings
      general staff meetings
      specialist units
      joint projects between interested teachers
    Collaborative practices and learning rather limited
      most of the collaboration limited to staff room interactions
      not have much interaction with people other than those in her *staff room*
      partnership system not really *involve much collaboration*
      not much peer observation
      not much team work in the organization other than that taking place in specialist units
  Impediments to Team Learning
    Scarcity of time
    Lack of rewards or incentives
    Apparent attitude and lack of commitment by some of the staff
    Inadequacy of administrative support and encouragement for collaborative work
    Nature of the program not yielding to collaborative work

Collaborative work and learning

While discussing the nature and extent of collaborative work and learning, participants talked about <u>forms of collaborative practices and learning</u> among the members of the organization. There were also some others who expressed that <u>collaborative practices, and learning</u>, were <u>rather limited</u> in their schools.

The most frequent forms of collaborative work and learning cited by the participant instructors were *staff room chats* and *discussions* prior to the start of classes or during break times among instructors. Although some participants reported this interaction to be 'rather limited,' majority of the participants seemed to be pleased with the quality of interaction taking place among instructors. A new instructor said: "The staff room atmosphere is a very good one. Going through the activities with different perspectives is very useful."

Another participant noted "people are well-disposed towards each other and so happy to help that they don't even need to be asked to help. They volunteer to help one another." A number of participants provided explication of the forms of collaborative practices that took place in their particular staff rooms. One participant noted "In our staff room, we discuss whatever comes up in class or current issues, things that we pick up at conferences." One participant said "we ask each other questions and give each other ideas for alternative activities" while another one recounted how they discussed their problems, failures and successes. Another participant reported "our discussions are usually based on what the problems are, and how to improve them. Recently, we have been trying content based teaching, so problems regarding this...We deal with such things." As did a few others, this participant described how experienced teachers helped new comers in their room: "We are really helpful towards new comers…because teaching a new level, teaching a new book, anew teaching environment might necessitate some help from the elders, more experienced teachers." There was also reference to collaborative work between *teaching partners for lesson planning and discussing issues related to students*. A participant noted that *teachers* in some staff rooms depending on the level they are teaching were "*paired together*" to teach the same class, which required "a fair amount of" collaboration and team work. Also mentioned was various forms of 'formal gatherings' such as *level meetings* after each end-of-course exam, and *general staff meetings*. Reference was also made to collaboration among *specialist units* such as the Self-Access Unit, Testing Unit and Syllabus Unit. This participant described how these specialist units regularly came together and interacted with each other: "The coordinators [of each unit] have to talk to the teams with which they work and they have to talk to each other and the head of the department because they want a serious flow of ideas. So, there is a kind of team work going on." Reference was also given to "*joint projects between interested teachers*" and to some teachers' voluntary work with some specialist units.

Notwithstanding the extensive record of ways that the staff engaged in <u>collaborative practices, and learning</u>, there were also those teachers who indicated such activity

was <u>rather limited</u> in their schools. They reported that *most of the collaboration* was *limited to staff room interactions* during ten-minute breaks, which one participant described as occasional and inadequate. One participant said "There is not much collaboration except for what there is in our staff rooms. Maybe other teachers are doing it, I don't know." Another participant commented on the staff room interactions saying "I don't think they are that useful in the sense that [people] just complain about things. People usually criticize." One participant noted she did *not* have *much interaction with people other than those in* her *staff room*: "As we are quiet a crowded staff, I rather tend to communicate with those whom I get together in the same staff room. We don't get the chance to see each other because during the semester we split up into staff rooms and we naturally don't see other staff." Another teacher talked about the fact that there was only one departmental meeting in the entire semester, where she could see the entire staff. Talking about the *partnership system* in place at some levels, one teacher said it did *not* really *involve much collaboration*. She explained it as follows:

> Some courses like the beginners course is a six hour course, so the class is shared by two teachers, but the program is set up in such a way that either one teacher does one separate component or there is really not super much interaction .... It is just the previous teacher telling the one coming in what she could do and couldn't do.

One participant lamented that there was *not much peer observation* among colleagues unless it was compulsory. She said: "Those new teachers have peer observations and that is a requirement of the program. Apart from that when you become experienced they almost never go to other colleagues just to do peer observation." Some participants also said they did *not* really have *much team work* in the organization *other than that taking place in specialist units* like the Testing Unit or Self Access Unit.

Impediments to Team Learning

Participants talked about several factors which seemed to impede team and collective learning in Organization B. Among these were <u>scarcity of time</u>, <u>lack of</u>

rewards or incentives, apparent attitude of and lack of commitment by some of the staff, inadequacy of administrative support and encouragement for collaborative work and the nature of the program not yielding to collaborative work.

Scarcity of time was one issue brought up by participants. One participant noted "people tend to be very pressed with time." Another one stated "There have been cases where some of us wanted to come together and somehow we just didn't. We didn't have enough time." This was mainly attributed to the "hectic schedule" most teachers had. One teacher said: "Most of our teachers are not only giving lessons for the Preparatory School. We also have projects. So, we only meet or see one another in the staff room only during the breaks."

Some participants were also critical of a lack of rewards and incentives for additional work involving collaborative work. They indicated that it required a lot of devotion and extra time and that no one was really willing to do it without monetary rewards.

Another frequently noted obstacle to teacher collaborative practice was the apparent attitudes and a lack of interest by some teachers. They talked of people who just wanted to do the minimum required work and leave as soon as their classes were over, and others who preferred to work alone. One participant said "I think the teachers are not so much interested in taking part in group work or team work. They tend to give their lessons, prepare their lessons on their own and that seems to be it." Talking about the team projects and various tasks requiring team work and referring to her experience as a member of a specialist unit, one participant thought the reason for instructors' lack of interest in such work could be a lack of experience and expertise. A couple of participants also reported that most positions for tasks requiring team work were not advertised and that they were filled in by people assigned by the management. They thought this discouraged those people who would be willing to get involved in such work.

A few participants also spoke of inadequacy of administrative support and encouragement for collaborative practice and learning. One participant suggested

"If there were more suggestions made as to how that might be done, then more people would do it. Peer observation or different things like that. I would be interested in that, but I suppose a little bit more encouragement from the top would be good."

A number of participants stated that the nature of the program did not yield to collaborative work. Regarding this, one participant said "Everyone is doing their own teaching and since the materials are coming from the Syllabus Unit and the tests from the Testing Unit, you can easily work individually." Another teacher shared this view and indicated that except for those cases where people shared the same class, there was no need for team work: "You don't have to work in teams. You can do everything on your own…. That is because of the nature of our work."

Administrator perceptions

The main categories that emerged from the interviews with administrators in Organization B under the theme of 'Team Learning' included (a) promotion of Team Learning, and (b) impediments to Team Learning. Table 4.4 gives a full account of all the coding categories under the theme of 'Team Learning.'

Table 4.4

Team Learning: Codes and Categories for Administrators in Organization B

TEAM LEARNING
    Promotion of team learning
        Policies and resources
            level meetings
            general staff meetings
            training sessions for the new staff
            in-service training sessions
            work for committees
    Impediments to team learning
        Scarcity of time
        Attitude and lack of interest by some of the staff
        Lack of financial incentives

Promotion of Team Learning

Participants talked about <u>policies and resources</u> put in place to promote collaborative work and learning in the organization.

There were references to various forms of 'formal gatherings' arranged to allow the staff to work and learn together. These included *level meetings* after each end-of-course exam where instructors teaching a particular level of students came together to do exam grading and discuss the exam results, and *general staff meetings* held at the beginning and at the end of each academic year. *Training sessions for the new staff* and *in-service training sessions* for the whole staff were also reported to be aimed for enhancing collaborative work and Team Learning. One administrator expanded on this as follows:

> When people are first hired to this institution they go through training, so this is one opportunity where they sit together and learn collaboratively. Later on, we have teacher refresher courses. When there is a change, like lets say teaching approach; this year, we changed the teaching approach, so at the beginning of this year there was a one week teacher refresher course that we offered to all the instructors that was compulsory. This was another opportunity for them to learn together.

There were also opportunities for interested teachers to *work for committees* such as Self Assessment Committee, Strategic Planning Committee, and Department Syllabus Committee. Talking about these, one of the administrators discussed their efforts to encourage the staff to involve in such projects: "The administration definitely tries to encourage collaborative work and learning and announces little projects here and there, asks for volunteers and assigns people to projects in threes, fives and tens."

Impediments to Team Learning

Participants talked about a number of factors that seemed to impede Team Learning in the organization. Among these were <u>scarcity of time</u>, apparent <u>attitude of and</u>

lack of interest by some of the staff in collaborative work and learning and a lack of financial incentives.

All of the administrators stated that scarcity of time was an important factor affecting the amount and quality of collaborative work and learning. Most of the collaborative work was limited to staff room interactions during break times since almost half of the staff had undertaken additional teaching in addition to their basic teaching load as they had to "make ends meet." That meant teaching five or six hours a day, which did not leave much time and energy for involvement in other types of collaborative work.

Also mentioned was the apparent attitude and lack of interest by some of the staff. Participants talked about a group of instructors, mostly consisting of senior staff, who lacked the interest and willingness to commit extra time and energy on such work as they were "more interested in their individual life and they treated the organization like a part time appointment place." In discussing the issue, one of the administrators talked about Special Interest Groups they initiated when they first came into office to enhance collaboration and collective learning. She said that they had to be collapsed as most of the staff were not willing to commit time as it meant staying extra hours after classes.

Lack of financial incentives was considered to be another factor detracting people from committing extra time in collaborative work. Administrators reported that they tried to promote collaborative work through providing incentives other than the direct monetary compensation, but that staff were not willing to do it without monetary rewards. One of the administrators elaborated on this as follows:

> Since we don't have the finances to financially reward people who work on these teams or who will collaborate, we give them priority when it comes to self development. We sponsor them so that they can go to conferences…When there are little opportunities for an extra job, we always try to give them priority so that they are assigned to tasks rather than someone who does not collaborate. Little things like thank you letters, or somehow making them aware of the fact that we appreciate the time and energy that they are investing.

4.1.2 Personal Mastery

According to Senge (1990), the discipline of Personal Mastery requires an awareness of one's personal vision, and a clear understanding of current reality, that is to say, knowing where one is relative to what they want. The gap between where one is currently functioning and where one wants to be generates "creative tension," which can help the individual move closer to the vision. In pursuit of Personal Mastery, the truly creative individual acquires the necessary capacities and creates whatever methods and rules are necessary to achieve the vision. The discipline of Personal Mastery also emphasizes the importance of the individual learner's role in organizational learning. Organizations learn only through individuals who learn. Thus, it is important that continued growth and learning of each individual in an organization are given a high priority.

4.1.2.1 Organization A

This part presents the perceptions of instructors and administrators in Organization A regarding Personal Mastery.

<u>Instructor perceptions</u>

The main categories that emerged from the interviews with instructors in Organization A under the theme of 'Personal Mastery' included (a) personal vision, (b) assets and needs for, and barriers to realizing personal vision, (c) personal development and professional growth. Table 4.5 gives a full account of all the coding categories under the theme of 'Personal Mastery.'

Personal Vision

As one of the main components of the discipline of Personal Mastery is keeping a personal vision, the participants were asked whether they held a vision or not. The interview results revealed that eighteen out of twenty two instructors interviewed had a personal vision while four did not have a personal vision.

Table 4.5

Personal Mastery: Codes and Categories for Instructors in Organization A

PERSONAL MASTERY
  Personal vision
    Vision: have a vision
      improve as a teacher
      specialize in an area
      technologically more advanced organization
      an organization which is not too exam-oriented
      an organization where teachers feel happy, teaching students who want to learn
      an organization where teachers can use their own originality
      an organization where criticisms are not taken as negative, but considered
      an organization where there is more staff participation in decision making
      an organization where teachers can communicate and interact with others

    Vision: no vision.
      lack of support by management to accomplish vision
      feeling unmotivated and discouraged by the negative attitude of the administration

  Assets and needs for, and barriers to realizing vision
    Assets
      personality characteristics
      in-house professional development courses
    Needs
      support from the organization
      incorporation of more technology into teaching and learning
      creation of more time for reflection and dialogue
      personal commitment in one's vision
      ability to learn to adjust and to be patient
      earn a Masters degree and get training in the field she wanted to specialize in
    Barriers
      personality characteristics
      lack of trust in the staff
      having to compromise one's vision
      being told how to develop
      management's disregard for feedback
      scarcity of time
      no barriers
  Professional development, growth and learning
    Support provided by the organization
      in-house certificate and diploma courses
      Master's program
      weekly development slots
    Concerns regarding professional development, growth and learning
      difficulty of keeping up with the heavy workload and of trying to develop as teachers
      difficulty of attainment of balance between personal and professional life
      inappropriateness of timing of development activities
      lack of variety of development and training activities
      management's taking a position about how the staff should develop themselves
      self-development plans outside the organization not really encouraged
      not getting enough support and encouragement from the management to apply to certain posts
      lack of opportunities for individuals to put into practice what they have mastered
      teaching system hinders development
      unwillingness to sacrifice from private life

In general, most of the participants who acknowledged that they held a vision related it to their development and growth. While some expressed their desire to see themselves *improve as a teacher*, others talked about their wish to *specialize in an area* like teacher training, testing, curriculum or management after going through some training. Other visions depicted a picture of the organization participants would like to see. The themes mentioned included an organization which is *technologically more advanced*, which is *not so exam-oriented*, where *teachers feel happy, teaching students who want to learn*, where *teachers can use their own originality*, where *criticisms* are *not taken as negative, but considered*, where *there is more staff participation in decision making*, and where *teachers can communicate and interact with others*. One instructor's vision was not related to the organization. He explained his vision saying: "I would like to *earn more money* as a teacher for a couple of years and then *teach in the Third World countries*."

Three of the participants who said they had no personal vision related it to some organizational factors. One participant said that she no longer had a vision as some people in the organization were *not encouraged by the management to realize* their *vision*. She further commented that everybody without discrimination needed to be encouraged to achieve their personal vision. Her sentiment was echoed by another participant who once had a vision of getting involved in decision making processes in the organization. She added that she went through the necessary training and education to be able to achieve her vision, but she realized that what counted more was "to establish close, personal relations with the key people in the organization, not the skills or training one had, in order to be able to achieve one's aims." One instructor explained her reason for not holding a personal vision by simply stating that she felt *unmotivated and discouraged by the negative attitude of the management towards teachers*. She expressed her feelings as follows: "They make you do all the heavy work but when you want something from them they say 'you are not irreplaceable; you leave and someone else comes.'…Because I am not treated professionally here in this organization, I have not developed a vision." One participant, on the other hand, said she was not really sure of her future goals and currently trying to decide on a vision.

Assets and needs for and barriers to realizing personal vision

In addition to defining what one is trying to achieve, one must also have a true measure of how close he is to the vision (Senge, 1990). Therefore, the participant instructors were asked about their professional and personal assets, their needs, and the barriers standing in their way of achieving their vision.

While talking about <u>assets</u>, half of the participants cited such *personality characteristics* as being creative, intelligent, hardworking, ambitious, perfectionist, self-disciplined and self-motivated and being able to stay focused as assets to accomplish their vision. Four of the participants believed that the *in-house professional development courses* they were currently involved in were helping them a great deal in achieving their vision. This is demonstrated in the comments of one participant: "The quality of input on [the course] is sufficient to make me think that I am moving along towards [my] ultimate goal and I feel that I am gaining the necessary knowledge to achieve it."

While talking about what they <u>need</u>ed to accomplish their vision, a few of the participants expressed that they needed the *support of the organization* to be able to accomplish their vision. One, for example, said that she needed academic support as well as understanding from her colleagues and her managers. One of the foreign instructors admitted that support from the organization would be good, but that she was unsure of the exact nature of that support. Expanding on this, she said "I honestly don't know what they could do because it is very clear that they are not gonna change the organization to match the ideas foreigners are coming with." Also mentioned was the need to *incorporate more technology into teaching and learning environment* and the need to create *more time for reflection and dialogue.* Two instructors expressed that it was not only the organization's responsibility to help them accomplish their vision. They said *self-commitment to* their *vision* was necessary and that they needed to explore different possibilities to achieve it. While one participant said that his vision was not particularly difficult and he only needed the *ability to learn to adjust and to be patient,* another one said that she needed to *earn a masters degree* and *get training in the field she wanted to specialize in.*

While talking about the <u>barriers</u> that stood in their way of achieving their personal vision, of all the participant instructors, only one said she saw *no barriers* to her vision. Four of them reported such *personality characteristics* as not being ambitious and hardworking enough, lacking motivation and being a procrastinator as potential barriers to achieving their vision while four considered the management as a barrier to their visions. One comment related to this was *lack of trust shown by the management*: "They would have to trust me enough... If people trust the people underneath them, their professionalism, they trust them to do a good job." Another participant who had been new to the institution felt that one had to *compromise* their *vision* at a very early stage in this institution. He further made his point clear through the following comment:

> I get the feeling here that if you are outspoken, you speak your mind, if you are emotional about things and if you have too strong vision, especially vision formed outside of the institution, it is a barrier... You could, on the physical side, realize your ambitions ... but I think it would be very much on School's terms. I think the [organization] has a distinct institutional culture and you have to adjust to that and pay lip service to it.

Another participant said that *being told 'how to develop'* by the management hindered rather than help her pursue a vision. She expressed her discontent claiming that she was forced to do an in-house course without really being consulted: "Here, people don't have any choice. Nobody asks your opinion. Decisions are taken for you and you have to obey them... They should at least consult me about the decisions concerning me. I need to be able to tell them what I want for myself. I feel really unmotivated." Another participant whose vision was to see a better organization in many ways cited management's *disregard for feedback* as another barrier. He noted that if the management wanted and asked for it, he was willing to give feedback to help improve the organization but that they did not listen to feedback from staff and they simply 'blocked their ears' towards such kind of criticism. Several other instructors indicated *scarcity of time* as a barrier in trying to accomplish their vision. They pointed out the difficulty of allocating time for self development due to the heavy workload they had.

Professional development, growth and learning

In Senge's (1990) view, organizations learn only through individuals who learn. Thus, it is important that continued development, growth and learning of each individual in an organization are given a high priority.

While discussing professional development, growth and learning of individuals in their organization, more than half of the participants talked about the <u>support provided by the organization</u> through various development opportunities. These included *in-house certificate and diploma courses*, the *Master's program* offered by the organization and *weekly development slots* arranged within each teaching unit. Some instructors emphasized that such development opportunities were useful especially for new teachers and new graduates. One instructor who had been in the institution for three years elaborated on the organization's support for its members' professional growth by describing his experience as a member:

> I think that they really give importance to professional training and I think that is a very good opportunity especially for new graduates. I came here as a new graduate and I think these 3 years taught me a lot in terms of professional and practical teaching. So, I believe that this institution has very good training opportunities and professional opportunities for individuals. For example, the courses that are provided and you get an international certificate and these are very unique to this organization, so that is why I think in terms of this they are really committed to professional development.

Comparing his previous experience in other institutions, one participant commented "This is one of the best [institutions] to encourage development so well. Through the courses, we are learning a lot. The attention paid to you by people observing you, their rising expectations from you, all this encourages you to improve yourself as a teacher."

There were, however, some participants who voiced <u>concerns regarding professional development, growth and learning</u> in the organization. A number of participants commented on the *difficulty of keeping up with the heavy workload* and *of trying to develop themselves as teachers* at the same time. A few participants

also addressed the *difficulty of the attainment of balance between their personal and professional life*. One participant described how she felt with respect to this: "They do value professional development. They are very good at providing support for that, but as they are emphasizing professional development so much…and you have to keep up with work at school; there is just no time for yourself." There were also complaints about *inappropriateness of timing of development activities*. Referring to the development slots held on Wednesday afternoons, one highlighted the importance of the timing of such kind of activities: "Wednesday afternoons are the only times that you can really liaise with your partner and just have a breather. I am not able to concentrate and be effective at all, and produce really cool creative stuff on a Wednesday afternoon when I have been teaching." There was also reference to a *lack of variety of development and training activities*. A few participants stated that teachers needed training not only on English Language Teaching but also on subjects like team building, motivation, stress management, interpersonal skills and computer skills. Several participants also expressed their concern about *management's taking a position about how the staff should develop themselves*. They said that people sometimes felt forced to participate in staff development programs because of the attitude of the management. One person's comment on this was "they do not encourage people, they force people. They don't care if a person is ready or needs to do a course. They say if this is your second year in this institution, do this course, or if it is your third year, do that." Several participants stated that although some people participated in some of those courses voluntarily, some felt forced to participate in such courses for fear of losing their jobs. Commenting on this, one said "sometimes I feel that if you are planning to work here in a kind of long term period, you need to do [these courses] here; otherwise, it might be difficult for you to survive." One teacher went a little further and said:

> the organization is addicted to it… Yes, being addicted is advantageous for the teachers who are new and who need training, but in another way although some teachers do not want to be trained and they think that they are OK, and they are really going well in the classroom with their students, they are kind of pushed to training. I don't think this will be beneficial for those teachers.

Another participant claimed that the main motive of the management for forcing people to participate in development programs was to have as many people with titles as possible. One participant pointed out the contradiction between what the management said they believed and what they actually did. He acknowledged that the mission statement promoted personal development and professional growth and that the organization was committed to development and training in some ways. However, he added that because of the way they acted, he felt they did not want trained or intelligent people: "They are not particularly interested in people who think. They seem to be encouraging people to develop. When you start developing, you start questioning things. If you question things, they don't like it. It is fairly contradictory." A number of participants claimed that as long as it was done within the institution, professional development was highly valued by the organization; however, they added that those people who had *self-development plans outside the organization* were *not really encouraged*. One participant offered her interpretation for this, saying that the management actually wanted the teachers to "adopt a kind of understanding which only belonged to this organization, not anywhere in Turkey." Another participant shared her view and added: "some teachers like me may want to have their own professional development plans. So, that is a kind of disadvantage for those teachers and after a time they start searching for other jobs."

Talking about their concerns related to professional development, growth and learning in the organization, a number of participants complained about *not getting enough support and encouragement from the management to apply to certain posts* within the institution. Related to this, one participant said she liked teaching but she also wanted to get involved in other work, which would help her maximize her potential. She also complained about the fact that the same people occupied the same positions for years, which made it difficult for the others to promote to other positions. *Lack of opportunities for individuals to put into practice what they have mastered* was also another concern voiced by a number of participants. They all agreed that the organization needed to think about ways to benefit from those people whom the organization invests resources in. One participant commented that the organization was losing a lot of assets: "People they train leave as soon as they

finish training… Top people in this field have left this university whereas they could have been used. Once the people leave the organization they take their training and experience with them to somewhere else." Another participant said he was unable to develop fully and he attributed the reason for this to the *teaching system*. He expanded on this saying:

> Teaching here is more about survival sometimes … I like the idea of people having a good atmosphere in the classroom, people actually learning and hungry for more, but the system, the number of hours students have pushes in the other way… So, I find that all the things I want to develop as a teacher, I can't use here because they tend to fail or don't work. So, as a teacher I am not developing at all. I feel like I am forgetting things I used to be able to do.

Administrator perceptions

The main categories that emerged from the interviews held with the administrators in Organization A under the theme of 'Personal Mastery' included (a) personal vision, (b) assets and needs for, and barriers to realizing personal vision, (c) personal development and professional growth. Table 4.6 gives a full account of all the coding categories under the theme of 'Personal Mastery.'

Personal Vision

A leader must develop his own vision before he can provide leadership for others (Bamburg, 2001). All of the administrators in Organization A had a vision for their organization. In describing their vision for the organization, administrators mentioned many characteristics of a learning organization. Some themes mentioned were "*a world-class language School providing teaching based on sound educational principles and serving clients well*," "*the leading organization in the country*," "*a center of academic activity where there is a lot of discussion, research about teaching and where there is a lot of learning taking place*," "*a settled system...where everybody knows where everything is going*," "*more collaboration*," and "*more incorporation of technology*." Some administrators also expressed their desire to see a staff who are "*happy, smiling and enjoying what they are doing*," who "*feel valued, respected, and trusted*," who "*are able to develop themselves,*

who are creative, who have the power to influence things" and whose *skills and knowledge are fully utilized for the development of the organization."*

Table 4.6

Personal Mastery: Codes and Categories for Administrators in Organization A

PERSONAL MASTERY
   Personal vision
      Vision: have a vision
         a world-class language School
         the leading organization in the country
         a center of academic activity with a lot of discussion, research and learning
         a settled system where everybody knows where everything is going
         more collaboration
         more incorporation of technology
         staff who are happy, smiling and enjoying what they are doing
         staff who feel valued, respected, and trusted
         staff who are able to develop themselves, creative, and have the power to influence things
         staff whose skills and knowledge are fully utilized for the development of the organization
         better learning opportunities for students
         School's actual vision to be put into practice more effectively
   Assets and needs for, and barriers to realizing vision
      Assets
         well set-up system
         good development opportunities for the staff
         staff commitment to self-development
         improved student success
      Barriers
         staff resistance to change
         inadequacy of resources
         large size of the institution
         not being really seen as a faculty by the rest of the University
      Needs
         questioning teachers' beliefs and values more
         supporting them to develop in areas they would like to excel in
         providing more quality time for development
         increase in the number of teachers with better qualifications
   Professional development, growth and learning
      Support provided by the organization
         in-house training programs
         Master's program
         reduction in teaching load for involvement in certain training courses in the organization
         not much flexibility in teaching schedule for those with self-development plans outside the organization
         workshops
         weekly development slots
         annual international conference
         release time for attending conferences
         feedback through classroom observations
         administrators facilitators, providing guidance and encouragement for teachers
      Staff commitment to professional development and growth
         high enrollment rate in staff development courses and programs
         a lack of willingness and interest by some of the staff, especially the senior ones
         scarcity of time

The vision of one of the administrators especially focused on *better learning opportunities for students*. He expressed his desire to see a future "where students are cared for individually as well as in groups; where they have the opportunity to perhaps follow more individual learning parts than they can at the moment; where they get lots of individual support from teachers to help; where they enjoy learning." While talking about her vision for the organization, another administrator said that her vision was to see the *School's actual vision to be put into practice more effectively*. She expressed this saying "There is a lot in the organization in terms of planning, organizing, considering the future, identifying students' needs, developing teachers…So, what I would like to see is putting them into practice more effectively."

Assets and needs for and barriers to realizing vision

Administrators talked about their assets and needs for, and barriers to realizing their vision. The <u>assets</u> mentioned by the administrators to realize their vision included a *well set-up system*, *good development opportunities for the staff*, *staff commitment to self-development*, and *improved student success*.

Staff resistance to change, *inadequacy of resources* to satisfy the increasing number of students and new teachers, the large *size of the institution,* which made communication difficult and detracted from developing a common understanding were perceived as <u>barriers</u> standing in their way of vision. One of the administrators also thought that being part of a university but *not being really seen as a faculty by the rest of the University* was another barrier for the organization. Related to this he said "We are not seen to be doing worthwhile academic activity because we are only teaching language…Therefore, what we do here is not always seen by various people in the university as being as important stuff that is done in other departments and faculties." This, in his opinion, put pressure on the School to concentrate on just getting students through the system than doing other things like developing the organization and helping the staff.

The <u>needs</u>, on the other hand, included *questioning teachers' beliefs and values more, supporting them to develop in areas they would like to develop and excel in*

through having individual development plans, *providing more quality time for development*, and an *increase in the number of teachers with better qualifications*.

Professional development, growth and learning

The administrators in Organization A talked about the <u>support the organization provided</u> to promote professional development, growth and learning of individual members in the organization. One of the senior administrators said "Policies in terms of staff development have been designed in such a way that everything we do supports the training of the individual teacher." Participants mentioned several opportunities available to the staff to develop their skills and knowledge. Among these were the *internationally recognized in-house training programs* and *the Master's program*. It was reported that currently 30 per cent of the instructors were enrolled in the Masters program and that around 60 per cent of the instructors including the new comers who would join the institution were expected to get involved in courses for professional development the following year. The programs were offered to instructors according to their level of experience in teaching and in the organization. One administrator explained that the aim of the training courses were, firstly, "to make sure that people coming into the Organization are given the sufficient knowledge and experience to survive" and, secondly, "to encourage people to improve and develop their teaching so that [there is] better teaching in the School." One of the senior administrators stated that such programs made the organization "quite unique compared to similar organizations especially in Turkey, and were really appreciated by the staff." One of the administrators talked about how they tried to encourage the staff to participate in such training courses and programs. She said that one of the policies of the organization was to offer posts to people who have the qualifications the organization would like them to have. Therefore, through update or appraisal meetings, people were told by their line managers that "it would be so much better if they could do a certain course" if they wanted to take up another post within the organization. In addition, *those* who were involved *in certain in-house training programs got a reduction in* their *teaching load*. She added that *not much flexibility* was provided *in the teaching schedule of*

those who had self-development plans outside the organization. In her view, this was one way of "pushing people towards doing courses" within the institution. She expanded on this as follows:

> One way we force people to do professional development we'd like them to do is not really making, providing space for them to go to other institutions for their PhDs and MAs. The weekly timetable does not allow people to be away on certain mornings or afternoons. That way you are limiting people's possibilities of going and doing other professionally developmental things outside the School. So, you are actually giving them another incentive because if they are doing it here, they'll get [some time] off their teaching.

Apart from the programs offered in the organization, there were also references to other specific development opportunities such as *workshops*, Wednesday afternoon *development slots* within each Teaching Unit and the *international conference* held at the School every year. *Financial support* and *release time* were also provided to some staff *for attending conferences*. *Feedback* given to individual instructors by their line managers *through classroom observations* was still another form of support provided for the staff.

While talking about the support provided for staff development and growth, the administrators also talked about their role and what they did to promote development and growth of the staff. They all described their role as *facilitators* of staff development and growth in the organization, providing guidance and encouragement for instructors to develop themselves based on their interests, aspirations and needs. One stated "A line manager's role here is particularly helping the teacher to realize in which area they really want to work and guide them in that aspect." It was also noted that those who seemed to be struggling were approached and directly told to participate in certain development activities. It was noted, however, that some teachers were motivated by this approach while others seemed to interpret it as being forced to participate in staff development programs, leading to the fear that they could lose their jobs if they had not followed what they had been told to do. Related to this, one participant stated that how people interpreted this situation was related to their personality. Another one, however, believed that

the leader's attitude was very important in approaching the individuals and being able to convince them of the usefulness of such activities.

Talking about staff development and growth, administrators also made comments on staff commitment to professional development and growth. More than half of the administrators perceived an interest in and commitment to professional development and growth by most of the staff. An indication of this was the *high enrollment rate in staff development courses and programs* within the organization. However, some administrators perceived *a lack of willingness and interest by some of the staff, especially the senior ones*, to develop themselves and maximize their potential for a variety of reasons such as unwillingness to sacrifice personal time, the belief that they completed their development, resistance to change and their attitude towards their job. One participant said: "Very clearly teaching is not the job for these people. …And these people are looking for ways to get out of this profession as quickly as possible or do the minimum and get away with it... they probably have the capacity but you never get to see it." While she stated the belief that they would not get anywhere no matter what the institution tried with them, another administrator expressed the need for the School to provide additional mechanisms such as financial or non-financial incentives, especially for more experienced teachers who seemed to have lost their enthusiasm towards their jobs, to create the enthusiasm needed to maximize their potential. Feeling of insecurity was also given as another reason for some instructors' lack of commitment to learning new things and developing themselves. One comment made on this was quite interesting:

> They could be people who perhaps haven't done anything for years. Maybe some people have never ever been through any formal training and they see many young people around bubbling with ideas and feeling secure. And to come forward to do any kind of courses is very threatening. [They] might prefer to protect themselves by appearing not to be interested, so a kind of avoidance strategy that you see in students sometimes.

Scarcity of time was considered as an important factor that could prevent some teachers from devoting enough time to self-development. Related to this, one

administrator stated: "if the courses are very packed and if they are working in and out of the classroom, it is very difficult to find the time to develop themselves, but if it is not a packed course and if there is time allocated, [teachers] are willing."

4.1.2.2 Organization B

This part presents the perceptions of instructors and administrators in Organization B regarding Personal Mastery.

<u>Instructor perceptions</u>

The main categories that emerged from the interviews held with the instructors in Organization B under the theme of 'Personal Mastery' included (a) personal vision, (b) assets and needs for, and barriers to realizing personal vision, (c) personal development and professional growth. Table 4.7 gives a full account of all the coding categories under the theme of 'Personal Mastery.'

Personal vision

As one of the main components of the discipline of Personal Mastery is keeping a personal vision, the participants were asked whether they held a vision or not. The interview results with the instructors in Organization B revealed that thirteen out of seventeen participants <u>had a personal vision</u> while four did <u>not have a personal vision</u>.

In general, while most of the participants who acknowledged that they held a vision related it to their self-development and growth, a few others related their vision to the organization. Some of those in the former group expressed their desire to see themselves *improve as a teacher*, others talked about their wish to *specialize in an area* like teacher training, testing, materials improvement or management. Those whose visions were related to the organization spoke of their desire to work in a place which is *technologically more advanced,* where *teachers have more job autonomy*, and where *teaching is done through institutionally-prepared textbooks and materials*.

Table 4.7

Personal Mastery: Codes and Categories for Instructors in Organization B

PERSONAL MASTERY
    Personal vision
        Vision: have a vision
            improve as a teacher
            specialize in an area
            more job autonomy
            technologically more advanced organization
            teaching done through institutionally-prepared textbooks & materials
        Vision: no vision
            feeling satisfied with the current situation and not wanting anything to change
            feeling that change would not be successful
    Assets and needs for, and barriers to realizing vision
        Assets
            personality characteristics
            educational qualifications
            professional experience
        Needs
            team work and collaboration
            training and education
            encouragement from the management
        Barriers
            large size of the institution
            poor physical and technological facilities
            overcrowded classes
            students' lack of motivation
            department's lack of finances
    Professional development, growth and learning
        Support provided by the organization
            management was very encouraging and supportive of the staff willing to develop themselves
            workshops and seminars
            biannual convention
            release time for attending conferences
            flexibility in teaching schedules of teachers with self-development plans outside the institution
            training courses and sessions for the new staff
            in-service training sessions
         Concerns regarding professional development, growth and learning
            a lack of time to attend the in-house development activities
            inadequate number of teacher trainers in the Teacher Training Unit
            teaching program' being too structured and rigid
            inadequacy and ineffectiveness of the incentive systems
            lack of interest in and resistance to self development by some staff
            the negative influence of the senior staff on the new and less experienced staff

Those who said they had no vision related the reasons for lacking a vision mostly to '*feeling satisfied with the current situation* and *not wanting anything to change*,' and *'feeling that change would not be successful.'* One participant, for instance, said "I am happy with what I am doing and there is no target. It looks like I am going to retire here." Another participant thought having a vision was "a key to unhappiness, stress and early death." He said "a cat doesn't think of the future. It

eats and lies luxuriantly in the sun. I decided that that is the key to happiness…I want to continue in this way for as long as possible. I don't want anything to change." Another participant talked about the 'uncertainty' in the organization. She attributed the uncertainty to constant change of the management followed by a change in the system, which made it difficult to carry out long-term strategic goals. She commented on this saying: "The only thing you can do is to start things. You cannot see the results... You think that 'ok whatever I do it is going to be wasted anyway.'"

Assets and needs for and barriers to realizing vision

In addition to defining what one is trying to achieve, one must also have a true measure of how close he is to the vision (Senge, 1990). Therefore, the participant instructors were asked about their professional and personal assets, their needs, and the barriers standing in their way of achieving their vision.

Talking about <u>assets</u>, while a few participants considered such *personality characteristics* as being self-motivated, hardworking, and self-disciplined as an asset to accomplish their vision, others considered that their *educational qualifications* and *professional experience* would help them a great deal in achieving their vision.

As regards the <u>needs</u>, two of the participants considered *team work and collaboration* among the members of the organization as essential in accomplishing their vision. The participant who said his vision was to develop himself as a teacher in order to be able to help his students realize their full potential stated "One needs to be in constant cooperation and collaboration with their colleagues for self-development. This could be in the form of sharing ideas, knowledge or materials." The other participant with the vision of seeing her department improve in several areas also saw the need for team work to realize that vision. Some other participants stated they would need some *training and education* in the areas they would like to specialize in. Some of them said they would need the support of the organization in this. One participant, for instance, pointed out that teachers needed *encouragement*

from the management to accomplish their vision. Another participant expressed a similar opinion saying "I would need assurance of what I believe."

Most of the participants related the <u>barriers</u> that stood in their way of achieving their personal visions to organizational factors. One participant who envisioned the Department as a place where teachers had more autonomy thought that such a vision was difficult to attain due to the *large size of the institution*. She expanded on this saying "the department is so big that they have to have more standardization and be fairly strict about the way things are done. In my hearts of hearts, I'd like to be treated more like a professional and have more say in how I do things. It insults my intelligence to be told to do certain things." *Poor physical and technological facilities*, *overcrowded classes*, *students' lack of motivation* and the *Department's lack of finances* due to being part of a public university were some other factors mentioned by some participants as barriers standing in their way of vision.

Professional development, growth and learning

In Senge's (1990) view, organizations learn only through individuals who learn. Thus, it is important that continued development, growth and learning of each individual in an organization are given a high priority.

While discussing professional development, growth and learning of individuals, participants talked about the <u>support provided by the organization.</u> All of the participants interviewed consented that professional development, growth and learning of the staff were promoted to a large extent in the Department. Participants emphasized that the *management* was very *encouraging and supportive of the staff willing to develop themselves*. One participant said "[the School] is very encouraging to those who want to develop themselves. It doesn't push people who don't want to go beyond where they are now…If you are ambitious and you want to improve yourself, the organization is very supportive of you, very." One participant noted: "Because we are civil servants, it makes it difficult for the administration to strongly encourage or reinforce self development. So, if there is teacher education sessions, inset sessions, they are not mandatory. People attend them in their own

time." Participants talked about various development opportunities available. Some of these included *workshops and seminars* offered by the Training Unit, and *biannual convention* held by the department. Participants also reported that the staff were always *informed of* the *upcoming events* like conventions, seminars, conferences or talks within or outside of the organization and that *financial support and release time* for those teachers wishing *to attend national or international conferences* was provided. Related to this, one participant noted "[the management is] willing to put their money with our mouths and really support those who work hard and who are eager to improve themselves." Provision of *flexibility in the teaching schedules of those teachers having self-development plans outside the institution* such as pursuing a masters or a doctorate degree was another form of support provided for the development of the staff. Some participants also talked about the *training courses and sessions for the new staff*. This teacher who started working in the department eight years ago felt such opportunities were very effective in meeting the professional development needs of the new staff: "New comers participate in a program where they are introduced to the both practical and theoretical side of language teaching, so that is a plus for them." There was also reference to occasional *obligatory in-service training sessions* held in the department as the need arose.

Although most of the participants seemed to be pleased with the efforts made by the management to promote staff development, there were, however, a few participants who raised some concerns regarding professional development, growth and learning in the organization. While some of the participants bemoaned a *lack of time to attend the in-house development activities* such as workshops and seminars due to teachers' tight teaching schedules, others complained about a decrease in the number of developmental activities compared to previous years which was associated with *inadequate number of teacher trainers* in the Teacher Training Unit. A few participants complained about the *teaching program being too structured and rigid*. They indicated that they needed to have more flexibility in their teaching in order to be able to develop themselves and maximize their potential fully as the teaching program being too structured and rigid did not leave

any room for creativity and improvisation. Some also talked about *inadequacy and ineffectiveness of the incentive systems to encourage and reinforce staff development*. For instance, a lack of financial incentives was considered to be an important factor leading to a lack of interest among some staff in professional development. A few participants complained about the 'performance grading system' put in place by the management as an incentive to encourage the staff to commit themselves more to self development. One participant believed that the management had good intentions in starting such a system but she added that the way they initiated it offended some people and created resistance among some staff. She explained the situation as follows: "They didn't tell anything about this and all of a sudden people found these performance grade reports in their pigeon holes and … some of them retired actually because of this." Another one described how this system had made some of the staff really angry. She commented on this saying "I felt that this system has made the uninterested parties angry- the ones who don't subscribe to journals, never visit the library, don't even go to a conference organized right here." One participant perceived this system as unrealistic and said "writing a research paper, publishing, these are not the things many teachers are interested in or involved in." There were also those who were critical of some of the staff, especially the *senior staff* for their *lack of interest in and resistance to self development*. Some participants attributed the reason for this to their 'professional personality.' One participant who had been working in the department for more than twenty years summarized the situation saying: "They feel that they are educated enough and they are usually the more experienced teacher... I am not one of them." A few participants also spoke of the *negative influence of the senior staff on the new and less experienced staff* willing and enthusiastic about professional development. One participant stated "The old teachers tend to say 'OK we were like you but you will get used to it and you will be like us in the near future.' And the new teachers feel themselves like stupid, because they are always trying to do new things in their classes and it is humiliating."

<u>Administrator perceptions</u>

The main categories that emerged under the theme of 'Personal Mastery' included (a) personal vision, (b) assets and needs for, and barriers to realizing personal vision, (c) personal development and professional growth. Table 4.8 gives a full account of all the coding categories under the theme of 'Personal Mastery.'

Table 4.8

Personal Mastery: Codes and Categories for Administrators in Organization B

PERSONAL MASTERY
   Personal vision
      Vision: have a vision
         being the best leading institution in the country and earning international reputation
         an institution producing its own materials based on the needs of its students
         personal and professional development of the staff
         staff acting more professionally
         more incorporation of technology
   Assets and needs for, and barriers to realizing vision
      Assets
         junior staff
      Barriers
         senior staff
      Needs
         more resources
         more maneuverability within the University law
   Professional development, growth and learning
      Support provided by the organization
         talking to staff
         sending messages to staff
         providing development opportunities
         in-house workshops and seminars
         training courses for newcomers
         biannual convention
         financial support and release time for attending conferences
         performance grading system
      Staff commitment to professional development and growth
         junior staff interested in self development
         lack of willingness and interest by some staff, especially by the senior staff

---

Personal vision

A leader must develop his own vision before he can provide leadership for others (Bamburg, 2001). All of the administrators in Organization B had a vision for their organization. The themes which were mentioned by the administrators while

describing their <u>vision</u> included "*being the best leading institution in the country and earning international reputation*," "*an institution producing its own materials based on the needs of its students*," "*personal and professional development of the staff*," "*staff acting more professionally*," and "*more incorporation of technology*." One of the participant administrators who stated that personal and professional development of the staff was her main priority expressed her vision in the following way: "I would like to see people acting and behaving as professionals; more people willing to be involved…; a staff who have better qualifications; and more people who are professional in the real sense, who see this place not as a job, but as a career."

Assets and needs for and barriers to realizing vision

While the administrators perceived the *junior staff* as an <u>asset</u> to realize their vision, they also considered some of the *senior staff* as a <u>barrier</u> especially because of their resistance to change and professional-development. One administrator, for instance, noted "Our junior staff is very very promising. So I have a lot of hope. Once they become the majority, my vision, in a way, will be realized." However, she perceived some of the senior staff as a potential barrier. She clarified her thinking saying "some of the staff remain here and continue to look at this as a job, not as a career and they have no intention of leaving for the next 15 years." To these another participant added: "they will not do their work; they will not progress one step further, and they will use all kinds of abusing language trying to stop progress." He noted that it was, unfortunately, not possible to impose any sanctions on the staff according to the university law the department had to comply with. The <u>need</u> for *more resources* and *more maneuverability within the University law* in terms of being able to make certain decisions related to the staff was considered essential in realizing the organization's vision. Elaborating on this, one of the administrators stated "I want a pay scale or personnel regime in which I can reward good performance and penalize poor performance."

Professional development, growth and learning

The administrators in Organization B talked about the <u>support the organization provided</u> to promote professional development, growth and learning of individual members in the organization. One of the administrators said "If you have good intentions, and determination, I think this is a good place to be at. You can have chances to maximize your self development. The Department will not stop that and it is doing quite a bit to facilitate this." The administrators stated that they were trying to provide the necessary help through motivating the staff to attain higher levels by *talking to them*, *sending messages* and *providing development opportunities*. Participants mentioned several opportunities available to the staff to develop their skills and knowledge. Among these were *in-house workshops and seminars*, the *training courses provided for newcomers*, and *biannual convention* held by the department. It was also mentioned that *financial support and release time* for those teachers wishing *to attend national or international conferences* or present papers were provided. One of the administrators also talked about the '*performance grading system*' instituted to promote and encourage staff development. She said this system was more logical and fair as it allowed for evaluation of individual performance based on accomplishments rather than seniority which the old system used to advocate. She explained that the staff was given credit for presenting papers at conferences, publishing articles or pursuing a degree. She added that the aim of the system was to encourage people to further their self development and reward those who would put more effort into developing themselves.

Talking about staff development and growth, administrators also made comments on <u>staff</u> <u>commitment to professional-development and growth</u>. All of the administrators agreed that it was mostly the *junior staff interested in self development*. However, all of the administrators perceived a *lack of willingness and interest by* some of the staff, especially the *senior staff*, to further their development for a variety of reasons such as the low level of salaries paid to the instructors, the belief that they completed their development, and reluctance to sacrifice personal time to be involved in professional development work. One administrator noted

"When you approach a teacher for extra work apart from classroom teaching, at least the majority of the teachers are reluctant. In our institution, there is a tendency to teach only and go home." Administrators also complained that even though the institution was willing to provide financial support and release time for the staff to attend conferences, not many were interested in such events. A *lack of recognition and respect for the organization by the rest of the University*, which created lack of motivation among some staff, was listed as a possible reason for the unwillingness of the staff. One of the administrators who talked about lack of recognition and respect for the department by the rest of the university elaborated on this as follows: "There is this good old saying that [this department] is full of bunch of housewives. The image is like that among the campus, so they feel inferior in the university. People who are quite professional, doing graduate degrees and who are taking it seriously are free of such feelings." In response to a follow up question about what he did to encourage the staff, he said "I try to send messages, speak, write, and say 'you earn respect rather than you ask for it.' I try to send the message that 'the better you do your job, the more publications you make, the more recognition you will get from the university. You must destroy this housewife image yourself.'"

4.1.3 Shared Vision

Senge (1990) describes shared vision as the "capacity to hold a shared picture of the future we seek to create" (p.9). Having a well-defined and understood vision, one that both commonly held and defined and is acted upon, is a crucial requirement for creating a Learning Organization. The shared vision of an organization must be built of the personal visions of its members, and must be a result of dialogue at all levels throughout the organization looking for what is valued personally and institutionally. The leader's role in creating a vision is to share his own vision with the members of the organization, and work collaboratively with the people making up the organization to develop a shared vision reflective of the stakeholders it serves.

4.1.3.1 Organization A

This part presents the perceptions of instructors and administrators in Organization A regarding Shared Vision.

Instructor perceptions

The main categories that emerged from the interviews with the instructors under the theme of 'Shared Vision' included (a) communication of the vision, (b) incorporation of individual's visions, and (c) sharing of the vision. Table 4.9 gives a full account of all the coding categories under the theme of 'Shared Vision.'

Table 4.9

Shared Vision: Codes and Categories for Instructors in Organization A

SHARED VISION
  Communication of the vision
    Communicated verbally or through written means
    Not clearly communicated
  Incorporation of individuals' visions
    Personal visions not incorporated into the organization's vision
      management either did not ask or   people were afraid of speaking their mind
      individuals forced to comply with the vision
    Personal visions incorporated to a very limited extent
      as far as staff development is concerned
  Sharing of the vision
    lack of a shared vision
      unclear vision
      unrealistic vision
      a lack of knowledge of the vision
      vision imposed by the top management
      dissatisfaction of the staff with work
      does not know whether the vision is shared

Communication of the vision

Talking about the vision of the organization, participants discussed whether and how the vision was communicated to the staff. While some of the participants said that the vision was <u>communicated verbally or through written means</u>, more than half of the staff thought that the vision was <u>not clearly communicated</u> to the staff. Those who said the vision was communicated gave examples of verbal and written

means of communicating the vision. The examples to the former included weekly unit meetings, general staff meetings, induction and probation meetings while examples to the latter included the Staff Handbook, the Weekly Bulletin, and the webpage of the School.

Those who thought the vision was not clearly communicated made the following comments. One said "although the School has a vision, the management are not able to make it clear to the people and that is why, they lose some people on the way." One participant who had been working at the School for 7 years said "when I first started working here, I remember that the School had a vision and the staff shared it, and were committed to it... Now the vision is not clearly explained and I don't think it is agreed by most people anyway. I think it depends a little bit on the leadership." Another participant said "You have to infer the vision. It is not directly communicated." She added "not everybody has to try to figure out what the vision is and they shouldn't be expected to do that." Another participant commented:

> There used to be big blue mission statements everywhere. We don't even have them on the walls any more. The mission was in the Staff Handbook. There is not even a copy of it in units. They changed the syllabus. Does anybody have a copy? There should at least be one copy in every unit room, which people know about and then they can say "we don't have to do this, this is not an objective" but who has it? I don't. I basically know the old one, but then I am not sure if it is the same. They should just tell people or inform people of what they want.

Another participant said "I've never gotten a memo, or a newsletter or anything saying 'our five-year-plan is to do this and this.' [The vision] might be in the [weekly bulletin], but then it isn't clearly said. It might be coming up in the meetings, notices or whatever, but it is never formulated well." Referring to the induction program he participated at the beginning of the year, one participant said "the vision was sort of hinted out there… We were told to read the Staff Handbook. It was not [communicated] verbally really because most of the induction was spent talking about discipline, how to control students, and not much of the vision." Still another participant said the vision was not communicated to the students, either: "I don't see it being passed onto the students." One participant reported that vision

was reminded to people only when they misbehaved or commented on something the management would not like or would find unnecessary.

Incorporation of individuals' visions

In talking about the vision, participants also discussed whether the vision of the organization incorporated the personal visions of the individuals in the organization. Most of the participants felt that individuals' visions were not really incorporated into the organization's vision. While one participant said "it is the vision of certain people in the management, not ours," another participant said "I think the individual feels forgotten." On elaborating the reasons why they thought the vision did not encompass individual visions, some said that the *management either did not ask people's individual visions* or they were *not aware of what people's individual visions were because people were afraid of speaking their mind*. Another participant thought *individuals* were *forced to comply with the vision of the organization*. To this, one participant added that "those who do not comply with the vision of the School are systematically beaten down. I have seen it happen." There were a few participants who admitted that they had no other choice but stay in the organization and comply with the vision of the School although it did not encompass their own visions. They noted "we have to earn our living."

There were, however, a few people who acknowledged that the vision incorporated individuals' visions to a very limited extent. For instance, two participants felt the *School's vision incorporated individual's visions as far as staff development was concerned*. One commented "The management values professional development and the staff also wants that, so in this respect, the School's vision encompasses people's visions." Another participant stated "On a very low level, I have seen personal visions implemented whether it is a kind of material or a way to do a particular lesson."

Sharing of the vision

While discussing the vision of the organization, most of the participants talked about a <u>lack of a shared vision</u> in the organization. This was expressed in one participant's comments as follows: "I don't think we are all working towards a common goal." Participants gave various reasons to explain why they thought there was a lack of a shared vision. Some talked about the organizational vision being *unclear* while others talked about *its being unrealistic*. Other reasons included *a lack of knowledge of the vision of the organization*, its being *imposed by the top management*, and *dissatisfaction of the staff with* their *work*.

Six participants talked about the vision's being *unclear*. One participant who had been working in the institution for four years expressed herself saying: "The School has a vision which is posted on the News for the Week, but I don't know who gets into the meaning of it." Another instructor who had been in the institution for 10 years commented: "They say they have a vision, but I think neither the students nor the teachers understand what it is. I had worked in many different institutions but this is the only place where I have had difficulty understanding …where the organization is headed towards." She added that they themselves were not clear about the vision, referring to the Directorate by the word 'they.' She further expressed herself by using the analogy of a tunnel and saying "we don't see light at the end of the tunnel." In explaining the reason why she did not understand the vision of the organization, another participant said:

> Their mission on their website is completely different from what they do. They claim to educate the whole person, and I am not really sure what that means…I think they are not honest about the fact that this is actually test preparation. They should say what it is. And no, they do not educate the whole person.

In addition to those who thought the vision was not clear, there were a few participants who thought the vision was *unrealistic*. They said there was a big gap between what the organization was aiming at and the current reality, which was summarized by one instructor in the following comment: "Yes, they have a nicely

worded vision, but it doesn't work in the classroom; it doesn't work with the student population we have. It doesn't work with the exam system we are following." Similarly, another participant said:

> I think the vision of the university is to look good on paper whereas we are struggling daily with facing the class, which are two completely different things. And what the university tells in the prospectus they give out for new students when they enroll is like 'oh, on paper look what we can offer you' whereas in fact it is not real at all. It is a false reality and it is a false perception they create in students … The direction they are going in is impossible for us to follow.

Another participant expressed people's disbelief in the vision by saying "In general, when you speak to people, they say 'That won't happen. It is impossible here. How are they going to do that?'"

There were also participants who believed that the vision was *imposed from the top*. Related to this, one of the participants made an interesting comment: "It is like a tyranny here. The management team comes together, makes decisions without consulting us and tries to impose them onto us."

There were also some participants who thought that the vision was *not known* by the staff. In fact, during the interviews, out of twenty-two participants, only five indicated that they knew exactly what the vision of the organization was. One participant stated that she partially knew the vision. She said "I know that they want the teachers to develop, but other than that I don't know what the vision involves." Two participants said they did not remember the vision. One participant, for instance, said "It is on the website… I haven't read it for a long time and I remember there is a sort of very striking sentence… you know 'the School will do and does this and believes in X and thinks Y', but to be quite honest, I can't even remember what that is."

There were also a few participants who attributed the lack of a shared vision to the *dissatisfaction of staff with* their *work*. One of them commented "when you are satisfied, you give more and when you are dissatisfied you give less." He added that

people who are new to the organization seemed to share the vision but after some time, he claimed, they also lost their commitment due to the feeling of dissatisfaction. Another participant stated: "I think [the vision] is lost. I heard people saying it used to be a lot better, and they enjoyed working here." To these, another participant who had been in the institution for more than ten years added: "In order for people to commit themselves to the vision and see themselves as part of it, the management needs to consider human factor. But here the [instructors] see themselves as outsiders; and they only see themselves as parts of a machine for the system to run."

Administrator perceptions

The main categories that emerged from the interviews with the administrators in Organization A under the theme of 'Shared Vision' included (a) promotion of the vision, (b) sharing of the vision, and (c) incorporation of individual's visions. Table 4.10 gives a full account of all the coding categories under the theme of 'Shared Vision.'

Promotion of the vision

The participant administrators discussed the behaviors and strategies they demonstrated to promote the staff to collectively focus and commonly care about the organization's vision.

Administrators stated that the vision, which was enshrined in the mission statement of the organization, was *communicated through written and oral means* to the staff. These included the webpage of the organization, Weekly Bulletin, and the Staff Handbook. Weekly unit meetings, general staff meetings, individual informal and formal talks with the staff, workshops or swapshops were mentioned as other ways of promoting the organization's vision directly or indirectly. Talking about the importance of meetings to promote the vision, one of the senior administrators said "you are not necessarily talking about the vision and mission of the School all the time in those meetings, but your operations which are governed by the development plan, which, in return, is governed by the vision and the mission." Some

administrators talked about their role as being *role models* in promoting the vision. They said they tried to communicate the vision "by the way they acted" or "through certain things they did."

Table 4.10

Shared Vision: Codes and Categories for Administrators in Organization A

SHARED VISION
    Promotion of the vision
        behaviors and strategies
            communicated through written and oral means
            administrators as role models
            heads of teaching units having important responsibility
    Sharing of the vision
        Awareness of the staff about the vision
            knew the vision
        Clarity of vision
            clearly understood
            level of understanding of the vision changes
        Degree to which the vision was shared by the staff
            vision is shared
            concerns about the sharing of the vision
        Obstacles to shared vision
            vision found unrealistic by the staff
            role as administrators in communicating the vision
    Incorporation of individuals' visions
        Incorporated as much as possible
        Not always possible to 'give in' to the aspirations of the staff
            organization protective and quite rigid in terms of its vision
            staff not articulate about their own visions

The administrators also underlined that the *heads of teaching units,* as people closely working with the instructors, *had an important responsibility in promoting the vision*. One of the administrators said that because of the large size of the institution, it was especially necessary to promote the vision within the working units of the organization through heads of teaching units. Some of the comments relayed by the heads of teaching units related to what they did to promote the vision were as follows:

> We refer to the vision from time to time, maybe during the preparation days just before a course starts, or whenever a discussion arises. I can refer to the relevant points and just make things clear.

> We try to communicate the vision by giving the aims of certain things done that serve the vision.

> Through presentations and maybe through workshops, swap shops, not maybe directly. But, sometimes directly 'OK this is our vision and we are aiming at this and this', but sometimes through cases and things like that.

Sharing of the vision

In discussing the sharing of the vision of their organization, administrators talked about <u>awareness of the staff about the vision</u>, its <u>clarity</u>, <u>the degree to which the vision was shared by the staff,</u> and <u>obstacles to shared vision</u>.

Speaking of <u>awareness of the staff about the vision</u>, all of the administrators in Organization A thought the staff *knew the vision*. One of the senior managers, for instance, said "if the staff were asked about [the vision], in general terms, I think they would say that they are aware of what the School is trying to do." Another senior manager said "I think people are still very much aware why we are here and why the School exists." Still another one stated "almost every single teacher in this organization knows exactly where the School wants to go."

As for the <u>clarity of the vision</u> of the organization, four out of the seven administrators thought that the vision of the organization was *clearly understood* by the majority of the staff. One of the senior managers, for instance, noted "there is a common understanding of the vision among the staff." Two of the administrators stated that the *level of understanding of the vision would change* among the staff depending on the time spent in the organization, background and qualifications of the individuals. One elaborated on this saying:

> Those who have been here for some time would have a full grasp of what the vision and mission are, but those who are new to the institution must be just at the beginning of understanding it. And there are people who come

here and don't stay for long, and I don't think they at all understand the vision and mission; there is no time for them to do so.

There was also another administrator who was not sure if the organization's vision was understood by the staff or not.

As for the <u>degree of the sharing of the vision</u>, administrators had mixed views. Three of the administrators thought the organization's *vision was shared* by the majority of the staff. One of the senior managers said "A lot of them share it." Another one said "those who do not share the vision leave the organization anyway." Similarly, another said "otherwise, they would have found it unbearable to live in this organization. The fact that they continue doing what they are doing; the fact that they continue producing [shows they share the vision]." On the other hand, there were those who expressed *concerns about the sharing of the vision*. While one of the senior managers said "they do not always seem to agree," another administrator's comment was interesting:

> The exact details of the vision and a clear vision of the future is something that I think quite often is in the minds of the senior managers and yet the vision in the minds of the people below maybe very very different. In terms of the details the shared vision is I think something that is not there.

To this another one added **"**We assume that they do [share the vision], we want to believe that they do, but when you go into that, when you question it I believe some issues are becoming problems." One administrator was not sure if the vision of the organization was shared by the majority of the staff.

In their attempt to explain the possible <u>obstacles to shared vision</u>, one of the administrators thought that some of the staff found the *vision unrealistic* "given the current considerations like time, the input and the student profile." To exemplify her point, she referred to the institution's aim of producing autonomous learners, and to the teachers' concerns about its being unrealistic and difficult to realize. Another administrator questioned their own *role as administrators in communicating the vision*. She clarified her thinking by giving an example:

When you decide to have observations with the teachers, for example, it is a part of the vision that we have teacher development. But are we really giving this right message to teachers that we are doing this for the teacher's development? The teacher should get this and should also believe this. Only then that observation can serve as your vision and can serve the aim. If the teacher feels insecure and if the teacher feels that there is some hidden agenda behind this observation, it is impossible for the teacher to share that vision with you.

In fact, one of the senior managers admitted the inadequacy of efforts shown to communicate the School's vision: "There was a time when … we tried through the heads of teaching units and other heads to keep that vision going and to share and remind all the people all the time … but I suspect that, to some extent that has been lost a little bit."

Incorporation of individuals' visions

As regards the incorporation of the individuals' personal visions into the organization's vision, there were mixed views. A few participants said individuals' visions were incorporated into the organization's vision as much as possible. One of the senior managers, for instance, asserted that they listened to and tried to cater for people's aspirations as much as possible. Another one said they did this by "talking to the teachers or trying to incorporate teachers as much as possible into the decisions." One senior manager recounted an evaluation carried out on teacher motivation in the School ten years ago and actions taken to improve certain things as a result of the feedback gathered from the instructors. Some of these improvements, for example, included starting of the Staff Development Program and delegation of more autonomy to teaching units, which were also mentioned as examples by another administrator to indicate people's aspirations were listened to and catered for.

However, it was also reported that it was not always possible to 'give in' to the aspirations of the staff. One administrator said the fact that the views of the staff were sometimes listened to did not necessarily mean that they would be acted upon. This was echoed by another administrator who said "not necessarily everyone's

views, beliefs or all the visions are incorporated into [the School's vision]." One of the senior administrators explained the reason for this by saying: "it is not always possible to 'give in' to their aspirations as not everyone is well-qualified, professional and capable of being independently professional." One of the senior managers attributed the reason for this to the fact that the *organization* was *protective and quite rigid in terms of its vision.* As did another administrator, she also expressed the belief that the *staff* was *not articulate about their own visions.* However, a number of participants spoke of the need to devote more effort to the incorporation of the views of the staff into the vision of the organization. One of the senior managers admitted that the staff was not as much involved in the vision as they were in the past. He elaborated on this as follows:

> When those development plans…were drawn up, … one of the main ideas was to find out how people felt, get people's ideas, work with those ideas, come up with something, go back and discuss it again, to come up with something which is shared by everybody. I think initially attempts were made. It was putting headings in News for the Week and in the Staff Handbook, the sections were always there, that sort of thing. It is not enough. I think you need to go back to people again and ask people for their evaluation of how the School is doing according to those aims. And that is something that I don't think has been done in the last 2 or 3 years.

4.1.3.2 Organization B

This part presents the perceptions of instructors and administrators in Organization B regarding Shared Vision.

Instructor perceptions

The main categories that emerged from the interviews with the instructors in Organization B under the theme of 'Shared Vision' included (a) communication of the vision, (b) incorporation of individual's visions, and (c) sharing of the vision. Table 4.11 gives a full account of all the coding categories under the theme of 'Shared Vision.'

Table 4.11

Shared Vision: Codes and Categories for Instructors in Organization B

SHARED VISION
  Communication of the vision
    Communicated verbally or through written means
      on the website of the department
      general staff meetings held at the beginning and at the end of each semester
      during induction program for the new instructors
    Implicitly communicated rather than explicitly expressed
    Not aware of how the vision was communicated
  Incorporation of individuals' visions
    Incorporated into the organization's vision
    Not really incorporated into the organization's vision
  Sharing of the vision
    Existence of a shared vision
    A lack of a shared vision
      a lack of knowledge of vision of the organization
      vision's being unclear
      not been communicated well
      concerns about the implementation of the vision

Communication of the vision

Talking about the vision of the organization, participants discussed whether and how the vision was communicated to the staff. More than half of the participants stated that the vision of the department was communicated verbally or through written means. It was reported that the vision and mission of the organization were displayed *on the website of the department*. One said "We have a written vision on our webpage. Everyone should know what our vision is." It was also stated that the vision and mission were communicated verbally to the staff through *general staff meetings held at the beginning and at the end of each semester*, and *during induction program for the new instructors*. There were also a few who stated that the vision of the organization was implicitly communicated rather than explicitly expressed. Related to this, while one participant said "Those who start working here, in one year or maybe less than one year, feel it. It is usually implied," another one said "it is inferred in a way… [People] feel it." There were a few participants who were not aware of how the vision was communicated. Two native speakers of English stated that the general staff meetings were held in Turkish and this could be

134

one reason why they were not aware if the vision was being communicated during those meetings. Another one said she was not aware if the vision was being communicated through written means. She stated "there are papers coming in and out. There is a lot of e-mail. I don't read most of them, so I don't know if it is communicated through those."

Incorporation of individuals' visions

In talking about the vision, participants also discussed whether the vision of the organization incorporated the personal visions of the individuals in the organization. There were mixed views in terms of whether the vision of the organization encompassed individuals' visions. Some of the participants felt that individuals' visions were incorporated into the organization's vision. They all indicated that the vision was developed as a result of a series of evaluations carried out in the department through commissions which involved instructors and was the product of common consensus. They also reported that the administrators sought for whole staff feedback through messages and e-mails, trying also to incorporate the feedback of those who had not been involved in any committee work. One of the participants added, however, that while some of the staff responded and tried to give feedback, some others did not participate in the process. One participant offered her interpretation of the situation saying:

> the administrators were not experienced politicians. They did not do any coalition building. They were straightforward with everything, and so some of the older staff who at that time didn't use email and didn't read messages sent online… didn't read the messages the administrators had sent. So when everything was kind of finished with feedback from whoever gave it and from the committee work, they said they didn't share some of the ideas.

There were, however, those who felt that individuals' visions were not really incorporated into the vision of the organization. Discussions centered on the establishment of the vision and mission of the organization three years ago and the changes the organization had gone through following it. Participants complained that the views and feedback of the staff were either not sought or seriously taken

into consideration. One participant provided a representative view and is worth quoting at length:

> it should have been something that was done slowly. And the teachers should have been more active in the process. There should have been a lot more piloting of the new things before they were totally put into practice… They didn't really ask for opinions. They came and said 'this is the way it is going to be and it is much better blau, blau, blau, 'we want your feedback, we want your feedback' and by the time we gave our feedback and basically by the time they answered our feedback, we were giving feedback on something that had already been decided, so what was the point?

Sharing of the vision

In discussing whether the organization had a shared vision, there were mixed views among participants. While seven out of the seventeen participants talked about the existence of a shared vision, ten talked about a lack of a shared vision. One of the comments made by one of those who talked about a shared vision was as follows:

> There is a common vision we all share…Most of the staff love their jobs so that is why they do it so willingly…We do whatever we can to keep up with the standards. We do lots of office hours; we provide additional materials for the students. We just try to get to know each student's weaknesses, and what is hindering them from learning. That is part of attempting to achieve the vision.

There were, however, those who talked about a lack of a shared vision. One participant said "[The organization] has a vision, but it's not shared. Personally I don't share it." Participants made various comments as to why they thought there was a lack of a shared vision among the staff. Some attributed it to *a lack of knowledge of vision of the organization*. One, for instance, stated: "In order to have a shared vision people need to know where they are going. They really don't know what we are going to do in the future." In fact, during the interviews four of the participants indicated that they did not know what the vision of the organization was while one participant said she did not remember the vision. Five participants attributed the lack of a shared vision to the *vision's being unclear*. One, for instance, claimed "I don't think many of the people including the managers

themselves... really understand what we are aiming at." She added that she did not understand how some of the things instructors were expected to teach in class contributed to the overall vision of the organization. Another one said: "The vision is not clear…what we will do, how we will work to achieve it. Perhaps we should come together, and discuss our vision." In explaining the reason why he thought the vision was not understood, one of the participants said "Perhaps it has *not* been *communicated well*." His view was shared by another participant who opinioned "I don't think you really could have a vision unless you communicate it to people; make them understand it."

Some of the participants linked the reason for a lack of a shared vision to the way the vision had been put into practice. They all expressed *concerns about the implementation of the vision*. Most of the discussions revolved around the change initiatives undertaken following the development of the vision and mission of the department three years ago. Participants questioned how some of these changes contributed to the vision and mission set at the beginning. They were mostly critical of the curricular change and method of instruction in place. One, for instance, said "[the current content-based system] is not working. We are wasting time; we are wasting the students' time…You feel sorry for those kids…They come here with great hopes and they are disappointed." Another participant expressed her feelings as follows: "The system they started and put into practice this last year has been absolutely a nightmare…People have really worked hard to make changes which weren't actually necessary." Several participants complained that the administration followed a 'top-down approach' in implementing the current system. One participant said "the administration fell flat on their faces because it was not a bottom-up decision…They didn't win the hearts of the teachers. I think, if they had totally won the hearts of the teachers, they would have been much more successful." Another participant made an interesting comment: "It was like a new religion. They tried to get people to share that religion."

Administrator perceptions

The main categories that emerged from the interviews with administrators in Organization B under the theme of 'Shared Vision' included (a) promotion of the vision, (b) sharing of the vision, and (c) incorporation of individual's visions. Table 4.12 gives a full account of all the coding categories under the theme of 'Shared Vision.'

Table 4.12

Shared Vision: Codes and Categories for Administrators in Organization B

SHARED VISION
  Promotion of the vision
    Behaviors and strategies
      written and oral means
  Sharing of the vision
    Awareness of the staff about the vision,
      staff should know the vision
    Clarity of the vision,
      vision understood
    Degree to which the vision was shared by the staff
      vision not comprehensively shared
    Reasons for a lack of a shared vision
      staff resistance to change
      unrealistic
      the way the vision implemented
  Incorporation of individual's vision
    Individuals' visions incorporated into the organization's vision

Promotion of the vision

In discussing the vision, the participant administrators discussed the behaviors and strategies they demonstrated to promote the staff to collectively focus and commonly care about the organization's vision.

Participants stated that the vision had been communicated through *written and oral means*. The examples for the written means of communication included the department's web page, operational procedures, curriculum documents and e-mail messages. One of the administrators said "it is on our website. Everybody has

access to it." Another administrator said the syllabus and the teaching materials reflected the department's vision. She also described how during staff recruitment they tried to communicate the vision to the applicants. She said "we have a written test and in the written test we give to [the applicants] a topic which reflects our vision and mission statement to see what they think of it, for instance." General staff meetings and staff recruitment interviews were mentioned as other ways of promoting the organization's vision directly or indirectly. Talking about meetings to promote the vision, one of the administrators noted "I think I am doing my best to promote the vision because I address them at least twice in the year as a big group and give them a synopsis of what has been done academically in one or two areas." Similarly, another administrator stated: "when we are doing something new or when we are taking a new step we constantly refer to our vision. So, most of meetings involve one of us referring to our vision, putting it up where the teachers can see it once again."

Sharing of the vision

In discussing the sharing of the vision of their organization, administrators talked about <u>awareness of the staff about the vision</u>, its <u>clarity</u>, <u>the degree to which the vision was shared by the staff</u> and <u>reasons for a lack of a shared vision</u>.

Speaking of <u>awareness of the staff about the vision</u>, all of the administrators in Organization B thought the staff *should know the vision* as it was "made public." As for the <u>clarity of the vision</u>, all of the administrators believed the *vision was understood* by the staff.

However, regarding <u>the degree of the sharing of the vision</u>, all of the administrators voiced concern that *the vision was not comprehensively shared* by the staff. It was argued that although the vision came out as a result of a collaborative effort by various stakeholders including the instructors, and thus reflected their individual visions, there seemed to be a lack of ownership of and commitment to the vision on the part of some of the staff. The director of the School commented on this as follows: "When you read such statements, vision statements to people, they find

very little to object to because it all sounds very nice, very good in wording. But, when it comes to acting towards achieving those goals people tend to disagree."

Speaking of the <u>reasons for a lack of a shared vision,</u> participants talked about *staff resistance to change*, the belief on the part of some of the staff that the vision was *unrealistic*, and *the way the vision had been implemented*. The administrators frequently spoke, with considerable concern, of the general resistance among staff towards change and their desire to keep the old status-quo as an important reason for a lack of commitment in the vision. One of the administrators put it this way: "Some people, maybe half, they have a belief that what they have been doing, they are doing well... And if you try to impose a vision on them that will elevate the standards, like 'make them more international' etc, they don't want to adopt, espouse that." Another one noted:

> They are content with what they are doing. If you are happy with what you are doing, and if you don't see any reason for change, you don't want to change for the sake of change. So, when you write a vision statement and when you say something like 'using solely our materials', they don't see a need for that… If you don't believe in the need for these changes, then you can't really own the vision.

Administrators exemplified their thoughts referring to the change process the organization had gone through following the establishment of the vision and mission. They observed that some of the staff felt their teaching practices and beliefs were being questioned, which caused them to feel threatened by the changes happening. They thought this led to a lot of tension among the staff and created anger and resentment towards the administration. One of the administrators reflected on this in the following way: "People thought what they were doing was really good and enough to educate our learners. Then, all of a sudden you come and say 'Well, this is not really that good, let's change this.' That is what we were blamed for."

Participants also perceived a lack of disbelief in the vision on the part of some of the staff, considering it unrealistic. One expanded on this saying:

Vision is something you try to make these people put on, wear. Put this on, you know, it will look good on you. You will look better 5 years or 10 years later. Some of them, about half of them, find that a bit too far-fetched, unrealistic, not reachable, not fitting. You will tell them to be international, they will say, I hear comments to this end, 'we don't care what is happening in the world and we must face our own realities. [Our students] are different from [other students in other universities].

Participants also attributed a lack of a vision to dissatisfaction of some of the staff with the way the vision had been implemented. One administrator expressed this as follows: "[some of the instructors] were not happy with the method of instruction. If they are not happy with the new method of instruction, the implementation itself, how can they be happy with the mission or vision?"

Incorporation of individual's vision

As regards the incorporation of the individuals' personal visions into the organization's vision, all of the administrators consented that <u>individuals' visions were incorporated into the organization's vision</u>. They reported that the vision of the organization came into existence as a result of the strategic planning process, which was a collaborative effort engaging a representative sample of stakeholders including the students and the instructors. One of the administrators summarized the process as follows:

in their small groups what [the instructors] did was to look at the current situation, strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities and they formed lists … In a way they stated what they wanted to change, so based on those we devised the vision and mission statement.

4.1.4 Mental Models

Senge (1990) describes, mental models as "deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or even pictures or images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action" (p. 8). Mental models may limit people's ability to change or they may impede learning. In order for organizational learning to take place, individuals must have the capacity to reveal and discuss their own mental

models. Senge et al. (1994) propose that the skills of reflection, and skills of balancing advocacy and inquiry are necessary to master the discipline of Mental Models.

4.1.4.1 Organization A

This part presents the perceptions of instructors and administrators in Organization A regarding the discipline of Mental Models.

<u>Instructor perceptions</u>

The main categories that emerged from the interviews with instructors in Organization A under the theme of 'Mental Models' included (a) reflection, and (b) advocacy and inquiry. Table 4.13 gives a full account of all the coding categories under the theme of 'Mental Models.'

Reflection

Reflection involves slowing down one's thinking process, and becoming aware of how mental models are formed and how they influence actions (Senge, 1990). This requires that individuals in an organization should set aside some of the daily tasks to both reveal and listen to other people's mental models (Wyckoff, 1998).

While discussing the nature and extent of reflection in their organization, participant instructors talked about <u>individual</u> and <u>collective reflection</u>. Speaking of the former, all of the participants except for one reported that they *set aside some time* to reflect on their practices and actions. Frequency of individual reflection changed from "often" to "every day." Most of the individual reflection was reported to be on the *teaching and learning processes*. One participant declared "[I reflect] usually after the lesson if it has worked or if it hasn't worked. I think about why or why not and I try to think about what I have done; why the results have been like this so that I can make their coming results better." Another one said she reflected on students' learning at the end of each course, self-inquiring as to whether and how she contributed to her students' growth and learning. There were

a few others who stated that they reflected on their *self development and growth*. While one said "I reflect on if I have improved myself as a teacher," another one stated "I reflect on the changes in my personality." Two participants also stated that they reflected on their *relations with* other *people* in the organization. Talking about his relations with his colleagues, one, for instance, stated "I am not a person to blame everybody, but some of the blame doesn't lie with me. So, a lot of my reflections are trying to sort out what is my blame and what isn't."

Table 4.13

Mental Models: Codes and Categories for Instructors in Organization A

MENTAL MODELS
   Reflection
      Individual reflection
         time set aside for individual reflection
         reflection on teaching and learning processes
         reflection on self development and growth
         reflection on relations with other people
         inability to change things as a result of reflection
         scarcity of time
         heavy workload
      Collective reflection
         in-house courses and programs
         informal chats among teachers
         meeting of teaching partners
         classroom reflections
         teacher appraisals
         course evaluations
         unit meetings
         unit meetings, teacher appraisals and course evaluations not really allow for any sort of effective reflection
   Advocacy and Inquiry
      Advocacy
      No advocacy
      Unwillingness to make thinking and reasoning visible
         personality
         fear of being reprimanded and threatened by the management
         views not valued and listened to by the management
      Inquiry
         Feels more comfortable inquiring when with colleagues
         listening
         questioning
      Reluctance for Inquiry
         discomfort in questioning decisions or opinions of people from the management
         people not comfortable with each other's opinions

While discussing individual reflection, a few participants expressed some concerns. Some said they felt discouraged because of their *inability to change things as a result of* their *reflections*. They felt that as a result of their reflections, they wouldn't be able to change anything, so they did not reflect on issues other than their classroom practices. Related to this, one commented: "Most people have ideas about how things could be better, how things could be done differently, in a better fashion, but we are not listened to." There was also one participant who stated she did not reflect on anything any more saying "As a result of my reflections, I tried to voice my concerns, change things, but in vain. I feel limited by the constraints imposed upon us by the management. You can't change things, so I no longer sit down and reflect on things." S*carcity of time* and *heavy workload* were also mentioned as barriers preventing the staff from reflecting effectively.

Participants also talked about opportunities for <u>collective reflection</u> in the organization. A few participants talked about i*n-house courses and programs* as useful opportunities for individuals across the organization to come together to reflect about and discuss their own beliefs and practices about teaching and learning. One noted the course he is attending helped him improve his reflection skills and made him 'really critical.' Frequent *informal chats among teachers in groups or in pairs* in their individual units during breaks or outside of working hours were cited as another form of collective reflection. Related to this, one participant noted "we chat a lot about how we feel and why we feel like this." There was also reference to *meeting of teaching partners* to reflect on student progress, and teaching and learning-related issues. A couple of participants also mentioned *classroom reflections* they had with their students. While one participant said these reflections helped her to understand and evaluate her learning and teaching a lot, another participant stated that such reflections had helped her refine her teaching skills over the years. *Teacher appraisals* held by each individual teacher with their line manager, *course evaluations* held in each unit at the end of each course and *unit meetings* were also mentioned as other forums for collective reflection. Among those who talked about these, there were a few participants who expressed <u>concern</u> about their usefulness. They all said such forums did *not really allow for any sort of*

effective reflection to take place as they were unable to express their views freely and comfortably. One participant, for instance, who was critical of course evaluations made the following comment:

> The course evaluation report is read by our own head of teaching unit. If we happen to criticize her, or some other things, she takes it personally. So, what the teachers are doing now is to write comments which would please her even if they don't believe it. Then the line manager gets the report; there are no criticisms. Then she writes her own report in a similar way, not really reflecting the reality, and sends it to the senior management…so we have learned not to talk freely.

Talking about unit meetings, another participant added:

> I don't say anything [in those meetings] because it can be used against later in evidence for something that I have done wrong. Because when you do say something like this, when you go to your appraisal two weeks later, you have it thrown back at you like 'you said…' So they try to be open but you feel like 'no, I am not gonna fall into your trap, I am not gonna say what I really think because you'll use it.'

Another participant teacher expressed concerns about the impracticality and ineffectiveness of some forums in place such as Monday-morning meetings prior to class or meetings after a long day of teaching, and reported a desire to create better opportunities for staff across the whole School to come together and exchange ideas. He explained his view as follows: "If there were more forums … in which daily pressures aren't present. Maybe at a different time of the year when teachers could come together, and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the course."

Advocacy and inquiry

While advocacy involves revealing one's mental models, making one's thinking visible or open to the influence of others, inquiry involves asking questions genuinely in an effort to understand others' points of views. Achieving a balance between advocacy and inquiry is necessary to master the discipline of Mental Models (Senge, 1990).

Participants were inquired about if and how they made their thinking and reasoning visible to others. Interview results revealed that only five of the participants used advocacy. A number of the rest of the participants seemed to use no advocacy while others expressed their unwillingness to make their thinking and reasoning visible.

Participants who used advocacy said that they tried to express their views clearly and discuss it with others. One participant, for instance, said "I prefer sharing my thinking with my friends and having discussions at unit meetings." Another participant commented "I sit down and talk about my view, explain what the reasoning behind my thoughts is, why certain things, in my opinion, wouldn't work, and argue about it with others."

There were, on the other hand, a few other participants who made comments showing that they did not engage in any advocacy in making their thinking visible. One participant, for example, declared "I state what I think clearly and whether people take it or not is not my concern." Another one said he preferred not to convey his thoughts explicitly but rather indirectly hinting them.

Those participants who talked about their unwillingness to make their thinking and reasoning visible to others gave several reasons for this. Two of the participants related the reason to their *personality*. While one said "I am kind of a 'keep my thinking to myself kind of person,' another said "I am not much worried about communicating my thoughts to others." Some participants noted that they refrained from making their thinking visible when there were administrators around. Related to this, one participant, for instance, said "I try to refrain from expressing my views and discussing them when there are people around from the management. I have no problems sharing and discussing my views with my friends." A few other participants related the reason for this to *fear of being reprimanded and threatened* by the management. One said "I try not to make my thinking visible in this organization as it may be used against you as a weapon if necessary." Another participant recounted an incident: "I had a case. I said something but the reply was so harsh and so aggressive that I just didn't want to say any other thing from then

146

on." There were also a few participants who said they did not want to make their thinking visible just because their *views* were *not valued and listened to* by the management. As did some other participants, one participant stated that people were so much discouraged with the attitude of the management that they were reluctant to voice their opinions even in instances where they were given the opportunity to discuss things. Being a foreigner, she also wondered whether this was more of a culture issue than a management problem. She depicted the situation in the following way:

> I have been in unit meetings where we have been asked to voice our opinions on stuff... First of all, no one says anything and then to save face the head makes a proposal and then everyone says "ok, cool, yeah, that is fine". And then after the meeting, when our head is gone, everybody bitches about it... Why don't they say that in the meeting? Maybe that is a Turkish thing, but where I come from that would never happen, ever. We have this philosophy of "don't keep people guessing. If you don't like something, tell them. If you don't tell them, they are not gonna know.

Participants were also asked about if and how they inquired into others' thinking and reasoning. Participants, in general, explained that they felt more comfortable doing this when they were around with colleagues. The strategies listed to inquire into others' thinking and reasoning included '*listening*' and '*questioning*.' Related to this, one participant said "Not having been here long, I am still learning about the world. So, I like to hear people's opinions and especially how Turkish people think." Talking about how she and her colleagues came together to share their opinions, one participant said "when we come together with friends here, we listen to each other and exchange our views. Everybody respects each others' opinions." Another participant said "I think, there is, amongst colleagues at the same level, quite a good communication. People will tell you things and you could easily question them."

Although participants seemed to be aware of the importance of inquiring into each others' thinking, some expressed their reluctance for inquiry. They reported that they did not always feel comfortable doing this for a variety of reasons. A few participants talked about their *discomfort in questioning decisions or opinions of*

people from the management. One participant, for instance, described how she was having difficulty talking to her line manager: "I cannot really go into a discussion with my line manager as she doesn't give me much opportunity to do that…And I don't want to offend her by questioning her about a decision taken by the senior management. That's why I cannot be assertive talking to her." Similarly, another one stated "when I first came here, I used to ask questions and argue. However, being outspoken was a bad thing and questioning was a bad thing…Actually I was just looking for knowledge, but for some reason it seemed to be taken as criticism." A number of other participants expressed a general concern that people were *not comfortable with each other's opinions.* One participant noted, however, that this depended very much on "the teaching unit one was in": "While in some units people feel very comfortable discussing and questioning things openly, in others they are reluctant to do that."

Administrator perceptions

The main categories that emerged from the interviews with administrators in Organization A under the theme of 'Mental Models' included (a) reflection, (b) advocacy and inquiry, and (c) open debate engaging advocacy and inquiry. Table 4.14 gives a full account of all the coding categories under the theme of 'Mental Models.'

Reflection

Speaking of reflection in their organization, administrators talked about the <u>ability of the staff to reflect</u>, <u>barriers to reflection</u> and <u>forums for reflection</u>.

While some of the administrators thought that in general the staff *had the ability to reflect* on their practices and actions, others thought *some needed the help and perspective of others* on certain issues, and that would require a more collaborative reflection. Another one consented saying that "Not everyone can reflect on their own teaching or what they develop. They get the support even in trying to learn to ask the right question."

Table 4.14

Mental Models: Codes and Categories for Administrators in Organization A

MENTAL MODELS
    Reflection
        Ability of the staff to reflect
            most staff have the ability to reflect
            some need help and perspective of others
        Barriers to reflection
            scarcity of time
        Forums for reflection
            unit meetings
            group meetings for the head of teaching units and specialist units
            course evaluations
            updates and appraisals
            in-house development courses and programs
            Wednesday development slots; *heads of teaching units-day-outs*
    Advocacy and inquiry
        Advocacy
        Inquiry
            Listening
            questioning
    Open debate engaging advocacy and inquiry
        Staff able to advocate their thinking and inquire into others' thinking and reasoning
        Some staff unwilling to express their views or inquiring into others' thinking
            effect of individual style of the administrator
            individuals' beliefs and personalities
            not feeling comfortable to express views in groups
            not wanting to be different from the group
            the feeling that nothing will change even if 'I raise my view or question things'
            need to adopt a more standard approach in terms of creating a more open atmosphere

---

All of the administrators noted *scarcity of time* as a major barrier to reflection and spoke of the need to create more time to do that. One participant administrator stated: "I don't think we have enough time to sit down and reflect on what we are doing. We would like to have some time to sit down, think about certain things … and try to find suggestions, solutions, and different ways of doing things... We never have that." Another administrator reflected on the possibility of making this compulsory by setting up systems and procedures for people to reflect in groups rather than leaving it to people to do it automatically. He admitted that both had advantages and disadvantages: "If it is compulsory, more people would do it, but maybe not do it properly. If it is voluntary, a lot of people won't do it, but those who do it would do it properly." He reiterated, however, that some people definitely

needed some time to share and reflect with other people in order to develop themselves.

Participants also talked about forums for reflection in the organization. The most frequently cited forum for the staff to reflect collectively was *unit meetings* for instructors; and other *group meetings for the head of teaching units and specialist units*. Speaking of the teaching unit meetings, one of the senior administrators stated:

> There is a lot of unit discussion. From what I understand, when the unit gets together, if there are issues, they talk about them. They will talk about the Learning Portfolios together; they will talk about the course outlines. If they have student problems, they'll try to solve them. So, there is a lot of reflection.

Course evaluations held by teachers in groups in each teaching unit; and teachers' and heads of teaching units' *updates* and *appraisals* held with their line managers were also other noted opportunities for the staff to reflect collectively. One administrator described the opportunity for the staff to talk about any issue they would like during those forums: "In the unit meetings, in the appraisal scheme and … course evaluation, for example, there is a pro-forma. To make it as open as we can, we put 'any other issues.' If the questions do not cover everything and if there are other issues, just go and write." *In-house development courses and programs*; *Wednesday development slots*; *heads of teaching units-day-outs* were cited as other opportunities to reflect collectively.

Advocacy and inquiry

Participant administrators were inquired about how they made their thinking and reasoning visible to others and how they inquired into others' thinking and reasoning. All of the participants said that they used <u>advocacy</u> to make their thinking visible. One of the administrators, for instance, described how she advocated her views in case of a conflict: "I try to make the reasons behind it quite clear to the person and also describe him why I believe like this and what the foundations are. Usually I try to find out a basis for the decisions, decisions not

given as a result of my hunches and feelings but kind of basis." Similarly, another one stated: "I try to be very clear and precise... and I repeat myself. And I try to do this especially with people I am not really sure that I am getting through to. And, for example, in order to be able to get through to him, I say 'How do you feel about this kind of thing?' trying to probe an answer."

When asked about how they <u>inquired</u> into others' thinking and reasoning, all of the participants responded '*listening*' and '*questioning*.' Related to this, one participant said: "I first need to understand what the person's thinking is and why… I need to question why that person gives that reaction or that person is negative about that issue or why this became a problem for this person. If you find the reason, only then, you can help that person." Similarly, another one stated: "Listening intensively is important. You should have time …for anybody who would like to talk to you."

Open debate engaging advocacy and inquiry

Participants also discussed whether the staff were able to freely advocate their thinking and reasoning and inquire into others' thinking and reasoning. Three of the administrators believed that the staff were <u>able to advocate</u> their <u>thinking and inquire into others' thinking and reasoning</u>. Related to this, while one commented: "at least the ones I meet, they express their opinions and feelings very openly in this room," another one said: "Teachers are open and honest [in expressing their thinking]." Administrators also reported that they tried to encourage people to express their opinions and question things through different forums such as unit meetings and appraisals, and by following an open-door policy in the organization. Related to this, one administrator said: "You can always come and state what you want. If you have an idea, people will listen to it." He added to these statements that "sometimes with stresses, pressures, we might lose our temper, or things might not happen exactly the way we want them, but …once we get over the anger, we can sit down, we can still talk about them and come up with solutions… After reflection, you can change things."

151

On the other hand, some administrators thought that some of the staff were <u>not willing to express their views or inquiring into others' thinking</u> for a number of reasons. Most of these administrators attributed the reason for this to the *individual style of the administrator*. While some administrators were very approachable and gave the others the message that they could unhesitantly express their opinions, others might give the perception to their subordinates that it is better not to disagree or voice opinions. Relating her visits to teaching units and unit meetings she had attended that year, the head of the teaching units, for example, said: "In some units… members have these open discussions and they openly raise their views, but in others they do not… Some [administrators] might be encouraging more that kind of environment in their unit, but others might just be discouraging it with their approach." In fact, one comment made by an administrator seemed to support this view: "There are times when we appear to be listening, and other times we can be quite dismissive of other views that don't seem to be in agreement with ours. So, the message being sent to the staff might be that it's sometimes in your best interest not to disagree or voice your opinions." Another administrator related the reasons for the whole problem to various factors such as *individuals' beliefs and personalities, not feeling comfortable to express views in groups*, not *wanting to be different from the group*, and *the feeling that nothing will change even if "I raise my view or question things."* She elaborated on this as follows:

> [It could be] some characteristics of that individual teacher that 'I do not want to talk about this in the meeting' or more practical reasons like they do not want to have longer meetings, or 'let's have someone decide for us instead of taking the responsibility.' There is also that aspect of 'what will change if I say this? Or just not questioning that decision or not participating in the decision, but there is the culture of talking about it not in a meeting but after it. That is how I feel in this School. That is maybe a part of the culture. There is that gossip side of the issue or people not being happy with an issue or having a complaint about an issue but not stating it where they should…And also as people are working as a team, they want to be part of that…They do not want to be different in the aspect that they say something totally different from their colleagues. I do not see this as problem of this institution only though because I believe this is a part of Turkish culture also. As Turkish people this is how we are trained always.

Like a number of other participants she also acknowledged the *need to adopt a more standard approach* in the organization in terms of creating a more open atmosphere in each unit where teachers would feel more relaxed about raising their views and where they would feel their opinions matter.

4.1.4.2 Organization B

This part presents the perceptions of instructors and administrators in Organization B regarding the discipline of Mental Models.

Instructor perceptions

The main categories that emerged from interviews with instructors in Organization B under the theme of 'Mental Models' included (a) reflection, and (b) advocacy and inquiry. Table 4.15 gives a full account of all the coding categories under the theme of 'Mental Models.'

Reflection

Reflection involves slowing down one's thinking process, and becoming aware of how mental models are formed and how they influence actions (Senge, 1990). This requires that individuals in an organization should set aside some of the daily tasks to both reveal and listen to other people's mental models (Wyckoff, 1998).

Participant instructors talked about <u>individual</u> and <u>collective reflection</u> in their organization. Speaking of the former, all of the participants reported that they *set aside some time* to reflect on their practices and actions. Talking about the frequency of reflection, while some of the participants said they reflected 'frequently,' 'on a daily basis,' 'every night,' 'daily perhaps hourly,' 'after class,' others stated they reflected 'every time I do something new,' 'whenever I feel there is a problem,' 'every time you open an email, every time you read a message, when people talk about issues,' and 'not in a systematic way.' Most of the individual reflection was reported to be on *teaching and learning processes*. Related to this, one participant, for instance, said "I reflect on my teaching, whether I have done it

right or wrong; whether the activity worked or not; the reasons why the students got low grades; whether the material worked or not; why it did; why it didn't; how can it be improved." Some participants reported that course evaluations instructors made individually at the end of each semester and feedback gathered from students were good opportunities to reflect on teaching and learning related issues. Related to this, one participant said: "Student evaluations are very useful. It is a chance to reflect on your teaching to think about it critically because students are really frank about how they feel." Two participants reported that they had also kept reflective journals of their experiences and practices, which had contributed to their self-development to a great extent. A few teachers also stated that they reflected on their *interactions with their students, colleagues or administrators*.

Table 4.15

Mental Models: Codes and Categories for Instructors in Organization B

MENTAL MODELS
  Reflection
    Individual
      set aside some time
      reflection on teaching and learning processes
      reflection on interactions with students, colleagues or administrators
      the need for allocating more time for individual reflection
    Collective reflection
      general staff meetings
      level meetings after midterms
      informal chats among instructors
      post-observation sessions
      need to allocate more time for collective reflection
  Advocacy and inquiry
    Advocacy
    Unwillingness to make thinking and reasoning visible
      presence of a more controlling and domineering group
      lack the ability to communicate properly
      fear from the reaction of the administration
      the feeling that nothing will change
    Inquiry
      listening
      questioning
    Unable to inquire
      inadequacy of time
      existence of a group of people who advocate but who do not let others inquire into their thinking

---

While discussing individual reflection, a few participants talked about *the need for allocating more time for individual reflection*. One participant said she had not done as much reflection as she could. She noted "I could put a lot more effort into it." Another participant said "that is probably an area that all of us could work on." Referring to the recent changes taking place in the organization, she admitted that they could have done more self evaluation and reflection to enhance the process. She elaborated on this as follows:

> In particularly this year, since we have been so focused on the new things, that we haven't been putting any of the blame on ourselves, that we have been putting more of a blame on the new material, the new techniques and everything that has been given, the method of teaching and so on that has been kind of forced on us… I don't think the majority of us spent enough time evaluating what we have done personally to help or hinder the process. And to a certain extent, the success or failure of what happens is because of us.

The interviews revealed that although most of the interaction was done on an individual-basis, there were also a few opportunities for collective reflection. Some of these included *general staff meetings held at the beginning and at the end of the year*, *level meetings after midterms*, and *informal chats among instructors* in groups or in pairs in their staff rooms during breaks or outside of working hours. Regarding the level meetings, one participant reported: "During level meetings, we reflect on the materials, on how the syllabus works, on how the program has worked. We do give feedback and accordingly, sometimes changes are made." There was also reference to *post-observation sessions* for new teachers, which allowed them to reflect on their teaching practices with the help of other professionals in the organization. Talking about collective reflection, a few participants underlined the *need to allocate more time for collective reflection*. One participant commented "If there was one hour a week allowed for the staff to sit down with the other people in the staff room and say 'OK, now what did we do this week in terms of this and that?... What could we have done to do better and what can we do in the future to improve?' I think this would be great."

155

Advocacy and inquiry

While advocacy involves revealing one's mental models, making one's thinking visible or open to the influence of others, inquiry involves asking questions genuinely in an effort to understand others' points of views. Achieving a balance between advocacy and inquiry is necessary to master the discipline of Mental Models (Senge, 1990).

Participants were inquired about how they made their thinking and reasoning visible to others and how they inquired into others' thinking and reasoning. Regarding making thinking and reasoning visible, interview results revealed that while most of the participants used <u>advocacy</u>, a few expressed their <u>unwillingness to make</u> their <u>thinking and reasoning visible</u> for a number of reasons.

Participants who used advocacy said that they tried to express their views clearly and discuss it with others. While one participant said "most of us here are pretty verbal. We express what we are thinking through speaking with the people," another one stated "I tend to be very forthcoming and state exactly what I think. I temper my language so as not to hurt their feelings." This participant described how she advocated her views in case of a conflict with another person:" If somebody comes to me and says "oh you did this and blau, blau, blau" and if I think the person is right for feeling this way I would say 'well I understand you feel this way and I am sorry…but the reason why I did was this sort of thing.'" There were also a few participants who reported that they also preferred written communication to make their thinking visible. They said they used the list server of the department for this purpose.

Those participants who talked about their unwillingness to make their thinking and reasoning visible to others gave a number of reasons for this. Some thought this was partially because of the *presence of a more controlling and domineering group*. One noted "Certain people are so controlling…It doesn't matter what you say. They don't hear you. You try to explain 'I did this because of this.' It doesn't matter it just comes from one ear and goes out from the other." Another one talked about

how some new teachers felt inhibited to speak their minds because of the attitude of some of the older and more experienced staff. She said "[the older staff] start talking. They talk and talk and talk. They do not even ask your opinion. It is like a monologue, so the new ones feel inhibited by this. When the new teachers speak their mind they are criticized for being rude." Some others related the problem to the existence of a group of people who *lack*ed *the ability to communicate properly*. There were complaints about 'unprofessional, harsh criticisms,' 'personal verbal attacks and accusations' and 'aggressiveness.' One participant noted "People talk about whatever they want to, but sometimes not in an appropriate way. They become very aggressive or emotional. They have a lot of freedom of whatever they want to say, but they do it without really evaluating what they are saying." "*Fear from the reaction of the administration*" and "*the feeling that nothing will change even if I raise my view*" were other reasons given for the reluctance of some of the staff.

When asked about how they <u>inquire</u>d into others' thinking and reasoning, participants listed '*listening*' and '*questioning.*' Related to this, one participant said "I try not only to make others understand how I feel about a particular subject or topic but I also try to understand the other person's view." There were also a few participants who expressed they were <u>unable to inquire</u> into others' thinking and reasoning. They reported that they could not do this either because of *inadequacy of time* or because of the *existence of a group of people who always had the tendency to advocate but not to let others inquire into their thinking*. Related to the former, one said: "we have these group meetings and some people really want to cut it short… like they want to have those meetings end in 20 minutes. So, we don't really have the time to discuss or question things."

<u>Administrator perceptions</u>

The main categories that emerged from the interviews with administrators in Organization B under the theme of 'Mental Models' included (a) reflection, (b) advocacy and inquiry, and (c) open debate engaging advocacy and inquiry. Table

4.16 gives a full account of all the coding categories under the theme of 'Mental Models.'

Table 4.16

Mental Models: Codes and Categories for Administrators in Organization B

MENTAL MODELS
  Reflection
    Forums for reflection
      general staff meetings
      level meetings
      staff room chats
      discussions on the list server
      questionnaires distributed to the staff
    Ability of the staff to reflect
      some staff, especially the senior ones, lacking the ability
      junior staff had better reflection skills
    Barriers to reflection
      scarcity of time
  Advocacy and inquiry
    Advocacy
    Inquiry
      listening
      questioning
      writing
  Open debate engaging advocacy and inquiry
    Some staff lacking the skills of advocacy and inquiry
    Some staff, mainly the junior ones, refraining from expressing views & questioning things
      presence of a more controlling and domineering group
      unwillingness to engage in discussion with people who do not share the same opinions

---

Reflection

Speaking of reflection in their organization, administrators talked about <u>forums for reflection</u>, <u>ability of the staff to reflect</u>, and <u>barriers to reflection</u>. The most frequently cited forums for the staff to reflect were *general staff meetings* and *level meetings*, *staff room chats* during breaks, and *discussions on the list server* of the department. Speaking of staff room chats, one of the administrators reported "there is a lot of critical thinking that is going on in little staff rooms. They sit in fives, sixes and eights. There is also some critical thinking and reflection on the two hundred people list server." He added that they also tried to encourage reflection

through *questionnaires* distributed to the staff from time to time. Referring to one of the recent surveys he carried out in the department, he said "I think things like this should be done although the results may not be very comforting. I intend to make those available in secretaries' offices. People will come and read them. I will publish the results on the Internet or as a report."

Regarding the <u>ability of the staff to reflect</u>, all of the administrators thought that some of the staff, especially the senior ones, *lacked the ability* to reflect properly. One of the administrators said "They are too critical and hasty in giving judgments about changes, practices and they are not tolerant or understanding towards administration." Another one added that when it came to reflecting together some people were too outspoken and domineering, not leaving much opportunity for the others to speak. Referring to the list server of the department, another one said it had lost one of its important functions, that is, to encourage reflection, as it was "being overpowered and dominated by noisemakers and negative people." The majority of the staff was, therefore, not willing to write any more. However, one administrator commented that the *junior staff had better reflection skills*. She attributed this to the teacher education program offered for the new teachers to improve their ability to do reflection. She elaborated on this saying: "Majority of the junior staff have been trained in a way to be reflective teachers because this is what we base our teacher education on. I don't know how many of them continue once the program is over but as far as I can see the majority of them are still reflecting on their practices."

All of the administrators noted *scarcity of time* as a major <u>barrier</u> to reflection. One participant pointed out that most of the reflection was limited to staff room chats during ten-minute breaks. She said it was too short a time and some of the staff did not go to their staff rooms during breaks anyway. Administrators spoke of the need to create more time for reflection. However, they noted that this could mean "staying extra hours after school" and that some of the staff would not be willing to do that.

Advocacy and inquiry

Participant administrators also talked about how they made their thinking and reasoning visible to others and how they inquired into others' thinking and reasoning. Interview results indicated that all of the participants used <u>advocacy</u> to make their thinking visible. One of the administrators, for instance, talked about how he advocated his views and inquired into others' thinking: "I tell people what I want… then I say 'What do you think about this or do you have alternatives for this?'"

When asked about how they <u>inquired</u> into others' thinking and reasoning, all of the participants responded '*listening,*' '*questioning,*' and '*writing.*' Related to this, one participant described how the administration team dealt with a conflict they had faced the previous year. She reported that some of the staff were not happy about the curricular change and as a result they created a sort of 'upheaval,' displaying their anger, shouting and yelling at some people and writing in an unprofessional manner on the list server accusing others. She said as the administration they called a meeting and brought all of the staff together. She described what they did as follows: "we said 'you want to talk, let's talk.' So they talked about everything they were unhappy about. We listened to them and took all the criticism and we tried to explain to them why we were doing certain things."

Open debate engaging advocacy and inquiry

Participants also discussed whether the staff were able to advocate their thinking and reasoning and inquire into others' thinking and reasoning. All of the administrators expressed concerns regarding the issue. One of the concerns raised was that some of the staff <u>lacked the skills of advocacy and inquiry</u>. Recounting on the change initiatives they had taken and their attempts to gather feedback from the staff then, one of the administrators talked about how communication suffered because of the inability of some of the staff to advocate their views. She elaborated on this as follows:

160

we were constantly asking for feedback... But I guess they weren't equipped, they just kept saying things like it doesn't work. When we asked them 'tell us exactly what didn't work?, they were unable to say anything. So after a while communication started to break down. It looked as if the admin turned a deaf ear and is not listening to us but we were trying to listen but they weren't really saying anything.

Another concern expressed by the administrators was that although they tried to create forums for the staff to be able to discuss and question things openly and freely, some of the staff, mainly the junior ones, refrained from expressing their views and questioning things. They thought this was partially because of the *presence of a more controlling and domineering group* who "were outspoken and not very tolerant of other people's opinions." They also related the reason for the reluctance of the staff to their *unwillingness to engage in discussion with people who did not share the same opinions* with them.

4.1.5 Systems Thinking

Systems Thinking is the ability to take a systems perspective of organizational reality. One assumption underlying systemic thinking is that an organizational system has a capacity to adapt and maintain itself in the face of internal and external changes or circumstances (Schein, 1995). Systemic Thinking also "involves the ability to see connections between issues, events and information as a whole or as patterns rather than a series of unconnected parts" (Morrison & Rosenthal, 1997, p. 127). Systemic view ensures that individuals in an organization see other individuals as fellow human beings with whom they can learn and develop (Senge et al., 1994).

4.1.5.1 Organization A

This part presents the perceptions of instructors and administrators in Organization A in terms of the discipline of Systems Thinking.

Instructor perceptions

The main categories that emerged from the interviews with instructors in Organization A under the theme of 'Systems Thinking' included (a) adaptability to internal and external circumstances and changes, (b) interconnectedness, and (c) areas for improvement. Table 4.17 gives a full account of all the coding categories under the theme of 'Systems Thinking.'

Adaptability to internal and external circumstances and changes

Participants discussed the organization's adaptability and responsiveness to external and internal circumstances and changes. While only a few participants thought that their organization was quite <u>adaptive, responsive and flexible</u>, others expressed some <u>concerns</u> regarding the issue.

Those who talked about the organization's adaptability and responsiveness gave examples showing the organization's readiness. These included how the organization managed to adapt and responded to the economic crisis the country had recently gone through, and the recent changes undertaken in an effort to align its curriculum and testing to the Common European Framework (CEF). One participant stated "the organization is open to change and development and other trends happening all around the world. These are reflected into our teaching, the materials and the books we use and the training we get." Speaking of instructors, another participant said "Many of the teachers [here] are cutting-edge teachers and they are responding to all the changes that are happening in the teaching load. Many of them are applying it in their classrooms. So, in that respect the organization is responsive."

There was also reference to *strategies* employed by the organization to be adaptive, flexible and responsive to internal and external circumstances or changes. These included *benchmarking* the standards of teaching and testing against other national and international institutions, *evaluation of existing activities*, *getting feedback from stakeholders*, and *researching the best practices* in English Language Teaching. Talking about the strategies, one participant stated:

> There is a kind of benchmarking from other universities and systems abroad. ... There is also great interest in research here. For example, to change the curriculum all the literature is searched and they are trying to look for what is suitable for the School and what is not. And there is a kind of really hard work going on to make changes.

There were a few participants who were unaware of or unclear about the strategies used in responding and adapting to internal or external circumstances or changes. Regarding this, one participant said "How am I supposed to know? We are not told. We don't see what goes on."

On the other hand, most of the participants expressed some concerns regarding the organization's adaptability and responsiveness to external or internal circumstances or changes. Some participants thought that the organization sometimes was rather *slow in responding and adapting to internal or external circumstances or changes.* One participant exemplified this by talking about the changing demographics of students and the organization's inability to adapt and respond to this: "the profile of students has changed significantly over the last year, but not much has been done to align the teaching program to meet the needs of these students." Another participant commented that it took "a significant amount of time" or "a serious event" to make a change. He thought that this was mainly because of the large size of the institution: "Being such a big organization, it loses all its flexibility as all big organizations do." Another participant said that sometimes the organization's slowness to react "led to a waste of resources."

There were also some other participants who thought that, in its attempts to adapt and respond to internal or external circumstances or changes, the *organization sometimes acted too quickly*, without really assessing the situation or considering the possible consequences of actions on all parties. Related to this, while one participant commented "the changes [the management] makes directly influence our daily lives and I don't know if they are just unaware of or indifferent to the results of those changes," another one said "they are trying to do innovations, trying to keep up with the latest trends in the field, but while doing so they are not really considering or exploring whether a particular innovation is appropriate in the

context of the organization." A number of participants attributed the reason for the whole problem to a perceived inability to see things holistically and objectively.

Table 4.17

Systems Thinking: Codes and Categories for Instructors in Organization A

SYSTEMS THINKING
  Adaptability to internal and external circumstances and changes
    Adaptive, responsive and flexible
      benchmarking
      evaluation of existing activities
      getting feedback from stakeholders
      researching best practices
    Concerns
      slow in responding and adapting to internal or external circumstances or changes
      organization sometimes acts too quickly
      large-scale organizational changes made without adequate involvement of the staff
      management's lack of responsiveness to feedback
  Interconnectedness
    Fragmented view of organization
    People not having much impact on or control over events and processes/ outsiders

factory	*mental institution*
computer	*politicians*
work camp	*black and white*
pyramid	*people with masks*
military service	*tree and water*
hand	*thin cow with very bad milk*
frustrated and demoralized	*mixture of heaven and hell*
dust in the wind	

  Areas for improvement
    Improving student motivation and success
      the need to move away from over reliance on tests
      more stimulating and enjoyable teaching environment
      more trust in students
    Improving teacher motivation
      recognize and reward the teachers
      improvement of facilities and instructional equipment
    Building a culture of trust in the organization
      more autonomy and freedom
      genuine communication with staff
    Better staff involvement in decision making
    More forums for collective reflection and open debate
    Involvement of the senior management in teaching
    Risk taking and tolerance for mistakes
    Learning from past experience and mistakes
    Removing the root causes of problems
    Structural change
    Shift of mind

One participant expressed this as follows: "if you stand too close to something, you don't see it for what it is; it becomes a blur. I think people have been too close to the system for too long and they don't see it for what it is, or take very bad things and they think they are normal. They are too used to them." Another participant related this to the management's staying too far away from teaching. She thought if the management themselves were engaged in teaching for at least a couple of hours from time to time, this would help them to improve their understanding of the teaching and learning processes in the School and judge the current reality better.

There was also a belief among some participants that sometimes decisions for *large-scale organizational changes* were being made *without adequate involvement of the staff*. One participant exemplified this by referring to the recent changes in the curriculum:

> [The management] says they are going to change the curriculum, but they do this without asking for our input. Teachers are the ones who will be implementing the curriculum. So, teachers need to be involved in the planning of such a change. I heard that they will be giving a presentation about the changes next week. They have made the changes and they are presenting it to us now. What kind of changes have been made...I don't know.

Another concern that was brought up by some participants was *management's lack of responsiveness to feedback*. Participants reported that the feedback provided through various means was not really taken into consideration or responded to by the management. While one participant said "They don't listen to feedback," another one said "We used to give detailed feedback but now seeing that it is not taken into account, we don't really bother. What we do now is put down three or four sentences the management would like to hear." Another participant expressed her concern that students' feedback was not seriously considered or responded to, either. She said "I have seen instances where some of my students provided very useful feedback; requests that could be very well responded to but that were not acted upon [by the management]. Seeing that, most of my students don't even bother to give any serious feedback now." Some participants were unsure about to what extent feedback provided by instructors or students were influential in actions

taken by the management. Speaking of the feedback obtained from instructors and students at the end of each course, one participant said "we understand that this feedback is taken and then this will inform the next course... But how much of [this] feedback is influential in change, I don't know." One participant noted "[people] need to be provided with good reasons as to why [their recommendations] cannot be implemented because otherwise they stop." Speaking of various means of gathering feedback in the organization, one participant also complained about lack of feedback mechanisms to evaluate the management to help things improve. She commented on this as follows: "We never get to fill questionnaires about the management. Why not? Why should we live in a glass ball? The students are evaluating us and we are expected to make the necessary changes. If you take that approach then, why can't the teachers evaluate the management?"

Interconnectedness

Senge (1990) defined the discipline of Systems Thinking as the recognition of the primacy of the whole in the organization. In order to examine whether participants held a Systems Thinking perspective, they were asked to describe their view of the organization and their role and place in it. Majority of the participants used metaphors and images, which described a <u>fragmented view of organization</u>. Participants described their connections as either outsiders or as people not having much impact on or control over events and processes.

One of the most frequently used metaphors was the image of a *factory*. Two participants, for instance, resembled the organization to "a factory with students on an assembly line" and teachers responsible for moving the students along, "not having much control over the kind of work they do." Another participant drew the image of a "sausage factory" with machines operated by teachers, grinding students through them. He added:

> the whole process isn't very sophisticated; it is very crude. What really matters is getting these people through at all costs…It doesn't matter what a finished product is as long as it is out and processed…I guess financial considerations are important and the pass rate is important; but finer things like how good those students are, how much they enjoyed it, what they have

166

really learned, how much they develop for the future possibilities, I think they don't really matter at all here**.**

In explaining her choice of the image of a factory, another participant noted that although she liked teaching, she felt like an outsider as a result of not being able to get involved in major decisions: "I am a person who is satisfied with her teaching and likes her job but is not able to or qualified to say anything about this organization…I don't think I belong to this organization. We're just working and doing the production, going home and not involved in certain major decisions." The metaphors of "*computer*" and "*work camp*" used by two participants also focused on teachers' lack of control over their work. The participant who used the "work camp" metaphor explained herself saying "everyone is expected to want to try and escape, where nobody is here by choice. There is just a general feeling that if we don't make them work, they don't work." The metaphor of a "*pyramid*" with teachers at the bottom and that of "*military service*" were other metaphors suggested by participants, representing a traditional organizational structure with no flexibility. In describing the organization, one participant depicted herself as someone with a worried look, carrying a heavy load of books, materials and photocopies handed over to her by a "*hand*," which, she referred to, as the organization.

The images drawn by a few participants focused on participants' feeling of not being trusted or valued by the management. One participant described herself as someone feeling "*frustrated and demoralized*." She talked about how the organization transformed into a place where teachers could not voice their opinions freely and they no longer felt happy working there and where students were not treated like adults. She believed all this negativity in the organization was coming from teachers' feeling of not being trusted and valued by the management. She concluded saying "they say they have an open door policy but who dares to go and talk to them? We cannot enter into dialogue with them." In explaining her image of "*dust in the wind*," a participant likened herself to a piece of dust and the wind to the organization and said "people here in this organization are not considered irreplaceable. So, that means I am not irreplaceable either. The wind would still

blow away other pieces of dust even if I wasn't here." She concluded that individuals in the organization were not actually getting the value they deserved. Using the image of a *"mental institution"* to describe the organization, one participant said "they systematically break you down so that you have no personality." Her image focused on people's inability to laugh. She said the idea originally came from one of the new instructors who told her "Did you ever notice that nobody laughs here? Nobody really laughs." She added that it had nothing to do with her colleagues, but it was just "a lack of trust' and 'control' on the part of the management.

The images used by a number of participants showed that they did not see the organization as a whole. One participant described the organization as divided into two groups: managers, which she referred to as *politicians*, and their followers; and those who voiced their opinions about the things they were not happy with even if it meant disagreeing with the managers, but who did not arrive anywhere. She said she belonged to the second group. Similarly, another participant described the organization consisting of two opposing colors, *black and white*. She used the former to refer to the majority of the people in the organization, and the latter to a small minority thinking differently from the others. She described her place among this minority but she added that she feared that she might be forced to conform to the majority. She concluded that most of the time, she did not feel a part of the organization: "I am working here but why am I not happy? Why can't I say I belong to here?" Another interesting metaphor used by a participant was that of a place with *people with masks*. Elaborating on this image, she said the 'masked people' represented the management. She defined her connection to the organization in terms of someone wearing glasses trying not to see the management as the only thing she really cared about was her teaching and her students. One participant used the images of a *tree and water*, comparing herself to a tree being watered and growing: "[The organization] is helping me to develop…and improve myself." She added, however, that she did not want to reach the management. She said "I am not close to them. Yes I know their names, their personality a little bit, but management is management for me. It keeps the order in the institution. It is

there to be there…I don't want to be bothered by anything good or bad happening up there."

The image of a *thin cow with very bad milk*" used by another participant seemed to suggest that she did not get the necessary support to grow and support the healthy functioning of the organization. She talked about teachers as people "who produce the milk." She elaborated on the image saying "as the teachers, we don't get proper food. You know we are running understaffed, overworked; we are like a skinny cow, but we have to keep producing milk. But we don't have the energy, we don't have the fuel, we don't get the right food, which is kind of scary."

The metaphor of a *mixture of heaven and hell* used by another participant to describe the organization emphasized the difficulties faced by the students and instructors in the organization, on the one hand, and focused on the benefits such as regularly paid salaries that she enjoyed as a teacher working in this institution, on the other hand.

Areas for improvement

In order to probe the concept of Systems Thinking further, participants were also asked how the organization they are working in could improve. Participants talked about many systemic issues that impacted teaching and learning in their organization and offered suggestions as to how to improve the organization. These included improving student motivation and success, improving teacher motivation, building a culture of trust in the organization, better staff involvement in decision making, necessity of the involvement of the senior management in teaching, risk taking and tolerance for mistakes and a shift of mind.

The area of greatest concern was that of student motivation and success. Many participants commented on increased student apathy, disinterest and lack of motivation to learn, which seemed to affect the performance of the students negatively. Participants related the reasons to systemic factors such as "too many rules and requirements enforced on students" and the "test-driven" education system. One participant stated: "I think these kids have difficult lives. They are

struggling to cope with the pressure of passing exams, pressure for good grades, and pressure from their parents. They are really stressed out and as a result they can't really do anything." Many participants thought the "test-driven" system not only put pressure on students themselves but also caused a waste of resources as there was an "endless cycle of designing, administering, marking, standardizing, collating and giving feedback." Consensus emerged on *the need to move away from over reliance on tests* to measure student success and to move towards other assessment techniques to keep students actively engaged in learning.

It was also expressed that creation of a *more stimulating and enjoyable teaching environment* would help increase student motivation, which, in return, would increase student success. A number of participants suggested organizing extracurricular activities as a way of creating a stimulating and enjoyable teaching environment. While one participant said "It would be nice if [the students] didn't have to spend so many hours in the classroom. I think that really makes it tiring for the students and teachers. It is not natural for someone to be in the same classroom for five hours," another one stated "an odd day trip would do wonders for everyone's moral." One participant suggested more variety in the curriculum, which he thought, "would help avoid the general sense of boredom that twenty-five hours with the same teachers tends to induce." Many participants expressed a clear preference for activities that would match real world tasks and encourage transferability of learning beyond the context of the current courses. Different types of activities were mentioned including project work, individual research and other independent study opportunities. One teacher demanded "I'd like to see a lot more speaking going on or discussion, debate, communication among students, meaningful communication." It was believed that such an approach would not only make the instructional system more enjoyable for both teachers and students but it would also "induce a feeling of ownership of the learning process" in students and help develop student autonomy, creativity and critical thinking, "alleviating some of the pressure that the current policy of micro-managing students places on already overworked teachers." The need for wider application of technology in instruction to help create a richer learning environment for students was also raised by some

170

participants. While some teachers complained about the inadequacy of technology resources such as overhead projectors or tape recorders, others lamented students' and teachers' limited access to computers. The need to place *more trust in students* was also seen necessary to promote student success and motivation. One teacher noted "It could be made clear to students and their parents that they are now adults so they have to shoulder more responsibility for learning even if this involves accepting that some students will initially abuse this trust."

Improving teacher motivation was another issue that was constantly brought up by participants in their discussions of improvements needed in the organization. One teacher emphasized how important teacher motivation was by saying "motivation affects the teacher performance a lot, and this affects the performance of the organization." Another teacher perceived promotion of teacher motivation important in order for teachers to feel a closer link and a sense of belongingness to the organization. Lack of recognition for accomplishments was a noted factor related to teacher demotivation. Some talked about the need to *recognize and reward the teachers* for their accomplishments. One participant's comment on this was interesting: "We are not donkeys; we don't work with the 'stick on the back' system. We work with incentives, not necessarily money incentives." This view was shared by another participant who opinioned: "The entire management system could be geared more towards reward than the negative reinforcement that prevails now. This would negate much of the paranoia bred by the knowledge that even the most minor infringement of the School's many rules will lead to a strong chastisement." A few participants thought *improvement of facilities and instructional equipment* in the organization would also help improve teacher morale and motivation. One participant provided a representative view and is worth quoting at length:

> I want to see improvements in this staff room, in other facilities, resources, and in the environment within and outside of the building. If they don't pay teachers well, they could provide other things which could make their lives and make them happier. The minimum requirement for me when I go to classroom is paper, board marker and ink, OHT pens. We don't get those.

We are 15 teachers in this room sharing one OHP and two computers and we are begging for ink and this is [a private university].

In discussing how the organization could improve, majority of the teachers also underlined the need for the management to <u>build a culture of trust</u> within the organization. While one participant stated "I just wish they had more trust, more confidence in their teachers… they hired us for a reason. Trust us, we can do it. We do have intrinsic motivation …there is just no trust, and it's really disheartening and demotivating," another one said "They need not be so paranoid… They have this attitude towards their teachers: when the cat is away, the mice will play…People deserve to be treated like adults here." Another view related to this was as follows: "When you don't create a sense of trust among your employees, they are not happy enough, they are not motivated. This is also reflected into their teaching, and their performance. In the last two years, the number of people leaving the organization is very high. This I think is a kind of indication of this problem." It was believed that giving *more autonomy and freedom* to teachers would help build a culture of trust in the organization and help them realize their full potential. Related to this one teacher said "teachers need to feel more empowerment and they need to feel more control over their own work. It can make a big difference." Establishing *genuine communication with staff* was also perceived important by many staff in building trusting relationships. One participant said "[The School] does need to communicate teachers more of its long term goals, [strategies], that kind of thing that might make teachers feel more valuable."

The need for <u>better staff involvement in decision making</u> was still another issue often mentioned by participant teachers in their discussion of how the organization could improve. One participant commented on how involvement in decision making would create a sense of belongingness in the staff: "[staff are] not asked their opinions about some important decisions… Teachers' opinions should be taken into consideration more and they should be somehow involved in decision making process so that they have a sense of belongingness to the organization." Talking about the necessity of involving teachers more closely with important decision making, another participant addressed the possibility of teachers being

given the opportunity to "sit in on meetings" with the management, instead of being this purely a prerogative of other parties. He believed that this would give the system a degree of transparency, and some sense of ownership within the staff.

Creation of <u>more forums for collective reflection and open debate</u> was another area of concern among participants. It was stated that this would help promote a culture of collaboration in the organization.

The senior management's staying too far away from teaching was also considered to be another factor affecting the quality of teaching and learning in the organization. Therefore, many participants talked about the <u>necessity of the involvement of the senior management in teaching</u> so that they could better understand the students' and teachers' perspective and would not lose perspective. As did a few others, this participant pointed out that first-hand teaching experience with teaching was essential in informing the decisions and judgments made by administrators. She clarified her thinking as follows:

> I think management needs to teach 20 hours a week so that they can see what the realities are. They don't have to teach 20 hours a week for a long time, just a couple of weeks. I think that would be really cool. You see this on television all the time...Like in Mc Donalds, the big manager going to a randomly chosen McDonalds and working among the staff a couple of days, a week or so, to see what things are like. And then they make really clever decisions based on their experience. I think management has been out of classroom too long because when they were still teaching things were much more different.

Similarly, another participant commented: "The management should go into class. They should teach a minimum of at least five hours to see the reality; the reality of quality of students which has gone down." One participant commented:

> They have no idea of the difficulties teachers are experiencing, the stamina teaching requires, how tiring it is mentally and physically to teach five consecutive blocks. They need to understand how someone would feel going through the same cycle in each course again and again.

In discussing how the organization could improve, almost all of the teachers talked about the importance of creating a safe atmosphere for <u>risk taking and tolerance for mistakes</u> in the organization. One teacher described how even small mistakes led to chastisement and organization-wide enforcement of strict rules and sanctions, which did nothing but instill fear among staff. <u>Learning from past experience and mistakes</u> and <u>removing the root causes of problems</u> in order not to repeat the same mistakes were also perceived important by most participants. One participant expanded on this with a specific example:

> We have classes of repeating students. There is a reason why these kids failed several times. So, why teach them the same exact book and use the same exact method. Maybe they need different methods of teaching... When I asked about that I was told that there is not enough staff or hours available to give people time to develop a course like that, but it just seems like it's a cycle those kids are into. If you had to teach the same book for the third time, are you gonna be motivated, pay attention in class? Then you have stressed out teachers and students. It's just a cycle that keeps going.

A <u>structural change</u> in the organization was also an issue that was brought up by a number of participants in their discussion of improvements needed in the School. One participant suggested a move from current unit-based system to a structure that would allow for more collaboration and communication among people in the organization. She said "even though I have been working here for 3 years, there are teachers with whom I haven't spoken a word with. If we come together and be closer, then a sense of organization should be created." Another participant suggested creating smaller semi-autonomous units which would "have a freer hand in trialing new teaching methodology and introducing syllabus innovation." He went on to explain his view saying: "As long as there is adequate cross unit liaison, then any success generated in one place could be replicated elsewhere. This would be an improvement on the current 'one size fits all' approach which seems to choke the creativity and sense of professional fulfillment."

The opinion relayed by another participant regarding how she thought the organization could improve was very much aligned with Senge's view of the learning organization. She believed that 'a <u>shift of mind</u>' was necessary for

improvements to be made in the organization. She said "we really need a change of mindset from people in key positions in this [organization]." She also noted "we need new people with fresh perspectives, inquiring minds, and different views. Only then can we get rid of old mental models and old faulty knowledge and begin to change our organization."

Administrator perceptions

The main categories that emerged under the theme of 'Systems Thinking' included (a) adaptability to internal and external circumstances and changes, (b) interconnectedness, and (c) areas for improvement. Table 4.18 gives a full account of all the coding categories under the theme of 'Systems Thinking.'

Table 4.18

Systems Thinking: Codes and Categories for Administrators in Organization A

SYSTEMS THINKING
   Adaptability to internal and external circumstances and changes
      Flexible, adaptive and responsive to internal and external circumstances or changes
         benchmarking
         strategic planning
         gathering feedback from stakeholders
      Concerns
         rather slow in adapting and responding to external or internal changes and circumstances
         organization sometimes acting too quickly
   Interconnectedness
      Interrelated view of the organization
         ship
         people working towards a shared vision
         big and a very active organism with its components
         circle
         flat structure
         école
         train made up of a locomotive and a number of carriages
   Areas for Improvement
      Improving the overall atmosphere and morale of the staff
      More open and fluid communication system
      More autonomy at teaching unit level
      Need to promote a shared vision
      Wider application of technology in instruction
      Creating quality time for reflection and discussion

Adaptability to internal and external circumstances and changes

Participants discussed the organization's adaptability and responsiveness to external and internal circumstances or changes. Majority of the administrators thought that the organization was <u>quite flexible, adaptive and responsive to internal and external circumstances or changes</u>." There were also a number of participants who expressed some <u>concerns</u> regarding the issue.

Participants cited several examples to illustrate the past successes of the organization regarding the organization's adaptability and responsiveness. Some of these included how the organization successfully adapted and responded to the economic crisis the country had recently faced; and the recent curriculum change the School had undertaken in an effort to align its testing and curriculum to the Common European Framework (CEF).

Participants also talked about strategies employed by the organization to be adaptive, flexible and responsive to internal and external circumstances or changes. *Benchmarking* the standards of teaching and testing against other national and international institutions was one strategy employed by the organization. Related to this, one participant said: "We are always looking at the other institutions and how they are doing and to what extent we can adopt the innovative ideas and bring them here." Also mentioned was *strategic planning*. While one of the administrators said: "I think we are trying to be ready for lots of different possibilities and different scenarios," another one commented:

> We have a management structure which analyzes changes and finds out about them, discusses them and comes up with ways of dealing with them. There have to be structures which connect you to the outside of the organization. You have to hear what's going on; you have to evaluate the level of threat and then you have to talk about it within the organization and come up with strategies which help you deal with that.

Frequent references were also made to feedback mechanisms in place for *gathering feedback* from various stakeholders for evaluation purposes. These included annual teacher appraisal meetings, course evaluations carried out in each teaching unit,

reports written by heads of teaching units, student evaluations of learning and teaching and meetings with other departments within the University. Speaking of these feedback mechanisms, While one of the senior managers said: "The school is learning and trying to adapt its procedures and its approaches according to the feedback coming from inside, outside. I can say that it is quite flexible there…and it tries to respond all these requirements," another one commented:

> there's lots of information coming and I think people are quite good at taking it seriously and taking action. Sometimes the action is immediate action and sometimes it means let's discuss this a bit more and sometimes it means lets go and try to talk to teachers about it… So, I don't think it is a school where people just sit back and say 'well we have got a system in place and we're just gonna leave it' I think there is a constant desire to find out what is going on.

On the other hand, a number of participants expressed <u>concerns regarding the organization's adaptability and responsiveness</u>. They thought the organization was *at times rather slow in adapting and responding to external or internal changes and circumstances* due to several constraints such as the big size of the institution, inadequate resources, external mandates imposed by the Higher Education Council and the University itself. One participant also thought that in its attempts to adapt and respond to internal or external circumstances or changes, the *organization sometimes acted too quickly*, without thinking.

Interconnectedness

As regards their view of the organization and their connection with it, all of the participants used metaphors or images which depicted an <u>interrelated view of the organization</u>.

One of the metaphors focusing on the interconnectedness of the organization was that of a '*ship*' headed towards a particular destination. This image focused on the roles of people working in different parts of the organization, all working towards certain goals, and the challenges and difficulties the organization faced from time to time. The participant who used this metaphor described the ship as "quite a happy

ship" with a lot of positive energy. He did not necessarily see his role as the captain of the ship, up on the front driving the ship but rather as a combination of many. He described himself right in the middle of everything saying:

> I can be strict when I want to be, I can lay back and I can take charge when I need to be, I can defer to others, I can take orders when I have to… I can sit at the back watching the waves behind it, or I can be feeding the seagulls. I can be serving in the restaurant, I don't really mind. What for me quite important is that everybody on that ship feels it is worthwhile being there.

Similarly, another administrator considered the organization consisting of *people working towards a shared vision*, taking pride in what they are doing. He described his connection as someone working hard together with the teachers. Another participant used the image of a '*big and a very active organism with its components*' to talk about the interrelatedness of the organization: "it is quite clear how [this organism] works... It is not a rapid organism with different parts working all on their own without any connection. The connections are quite clear and the patterns and the kind of work going on is quite clear." She noted, however, that sometimes the organization could not adapt and react to unexpected changes as quickly as it should "due to this speed going on within the organization." In describing her connections with the organization, she considered herself as part of the organization, "exercising power" within her limits to help the organization function better. The image of a '*circle*' drawn by another participant depicted the organization as consisting of students, teachers and the management all related to each other, with the students in the center as the main stakeholders. This participant described her role as that of a messenger ensuring effective communication among different parties and bringing them together and that of a guide helping teachers and students. In discussing her view of the organization, another administrator used the image of an organization with a rather *flat structure*. She explained it in the following words: "I have the picture of that boxy structure thing. You have the director; you have little boxes; teaching units and in the units, you have the heads and the teachers. They are all at equal distance to the Directorate."

Another administrator used the French word '*école*' to describe the organization. He elaborated on this as follows: "This school has certain ways of doing things. It is open to new ideas and ready to adapt them and also tries to be the number one. [It is] ambitious, wants [the entire] staff to be professionals, adequate and efficient people and ... thinks about the welfare of the teachers."

The image of a '*train made up of a locomotive and a number of carriages*' suggested by another administrator represented a big organization consisting of several parts, each with its own sub-culture, headed towards a particular destination. The image, however, also implied that information flow and communication among different parts of the organization were sometimes ineffective and that some of the members of the organization did not really have a clear understanding of its vision. This participant described his role in the following words: "I am sort of partly in the locomotive, partly in bits of the train. So, I'll spend some of my time walking up and down the train meeting with some people in some of the different bits of the train."

Areas for improvement

Participants talked about several systemic issues that needed to be addressed and offered suggestions as to how to improve the organization. These included improving the overall atmosphere and morale of the staff, setting up a more open and fluid communication system, more autonomy at teaching unit level, promoting a shared vision, wider application of technology in instruction, and creating quality time for reflection and discussion.

Some administrators underlined the need to improve the overall atmosphere and morale of the staff. While one administrator stated this could be done by "creating an atmosphere where people feel they are valued and … their views are appreciated and valued more," another one said it could be achieved by focusing on "the positive more than the negative; on the things that have been done rather than things which have been done wrongly; encouraging people to make mistakes; working on people's own potential a lot more; …and bringing people together a lot

more to discuss various issues." Another one believed that providing more recognition for the accomplishments of the staff would also increase staff morale.

Setting up a <u>more open and fluid communication system involving better feedback loops</u> was also perceived necessary for the improvement of the organization. One comment related to this was as follows: "Some people feel that 'we give feedback, but nothing changes'…That kind of thing shouldn't be a problem for anyone in the School... Even if it wasn't found valid, the feedback should go back to the people ... to get rid of those kinds of feelings and thoughts." Another participant shared this view and said "We should make people aware of the fact that their contribution is appreciated; their feedback is taken into consideration."

The need to work towards <u>more autonomy at teaching unit level</u> was also seen necessary for the improvement of the organization. One participant, for instance, said "I would like to see my teachers to have more discretion in decisions related to students." She added as a teaching unit head she would also like to have the discretion, for example, to be able to free some of the teachers from teaching in return for their good work. She said that this would not only motivate them but also give them more "breathing space" because "[that good teacher] will have less load and maybe more time to get prepared for her classes or more time to think about her students, and their individual needs."

Also mentioned was the <u>need to promote a shared vision</u> in the organization. One administrator indicated this by saying "What I understand from quality teaching; what a teacher, a senior manager, or a student understands from it should be the same.… If all the stakeholders share that common understanding, then they would all serve for that purpose and this would be really good for the school."

Other suggestions to improve the organization included <u>wider application of technology</u> in instruction and <u>creating quality time for reflection and discussion</u>. Reflecting on the latter, one of the senior managers said "we have been so much wrapped up in what we are doing, trying to improve things that we haven't stopped and said 'lets reflect on this, lets read some articles and so on and so forth."

4.1.5.2 Organization B

This part presents the perceptions of instructors and administrators in Organization B in terms of the discipline of Systems Thinking.

<u>Instructor perceptions</u>

The main categories that emerged from the interviews with instructors in Organization B under the theme of 'Systems Thinking' included (a) adaptability to internal and external circumstances and changes, (b) interconnectedness, and (c) areas for improvement. Table 4.19 gives a full account of all the coding categories under the theme of 'Systems Thinking.'

Adaptability to internal and external circumstances and changes

Participants discussed the organization's adaptability and responsiveness to external and internal circumstances or changes. While some participants thought that their organization was quite <u>adaptive, responsive and flexible</u>, others expressed some <u>concerns</u> regarding the issue.

One of the participants who commented on the organization's adaptability and responsiveness said: "As soon as a problem arises it is addressed, it isn't swept under the carpet and they think about what they can do and they do something about it…They really grasped the nettle and they really are highly adaptable." One example that many participants referred to in order to illustrate the past successes of the organization regarding the organization's adaptability and responsiveness was the recent renovation of the curriculum in response to "the global changes, changing student needs, and changing technology."

Participants cited several examples as regards the strategies employed by the organization to be adaptive, flexible and responsive to external and internal circumstances or changes. *Benchmarking* the practices of other similar national or international institutions was one strategy the Department employed. One participant said "we work with other institutions and find out what they are doing and if they have been successful or not."

Table 4.19

Systems Thinking: Codes and Categories for Instructors in Organization B

SYSTEMS THINKING
    Adaptability to internal and external circumstances or changes
        Adaptive, responsive and flexible
            benchmarking
            collaboration and interaction with stakeholders
            feedback from stakeholders
        Concerns
            organization sometimes acting too quickly
            management's lack of responsiveness to feedback
            large-scale organizational changes made without adequate involvement of staff
    Interconnectedness
        Interrelatedness of the organization
            torch
            pie
            puzzle
            growing pine tree
        Fragmented view
            strong river flowing in a certain direction with intentions
            separate sharks swimming around
            closed box
            bunch of housewives
            aquarium with fish
            pleasure cruise ship sailing around on the same sea not traveling far away
            a witch's cauldron
            thorny bush
            benign hydria
    Areas for Improvement
        Open communication and dialogue
        More evaluation
        Efficient feedback mechanisms
        More commitment from staff to professional development
        Improving student learning
            more autonomous teachers
            testing system incorporating alternative ways of assessment
            bigger testing unit
            materials bank
        More collaboration

Also mentioned was *collaboration and interaction with* various *stakeholders*. The needs analysis that was carried out prior to the curriculum renovation within the organization, for instance, involved various stakeholders including the students enrolled in the Department in the previous years, and the faculty members in other departments in the university. There was also reference to feedback mechanisms in place for gathering *feedback from* various *stakeholders* for evaluation purposes. One participant noted "They are open to students' suggestions. They give

questionnaires to students and students write their opinions. They consider all these comments." Another one said "They are doing online surveys and paper-based surveys with the teachers and students."

On the other hand, there were some other participants who expressed some concerns regarding the organization's adaptability and responsiveness to external or internal circumstances or changes. A few participants thought that, in its attempts to adapt and respond to internal or external circumstances or changes, the *organization sometimes acted too quickly*, without really assessing the situation or considering the possible consequences of actions. Most of the discussions related to this revolved around the 'content-based teaching" that came along with the curriculum change the organization had undertaken recently. There were complaints that the change was sudden and that teachers were not ready for such a big change in terms of knowledge and training needed. Commenting on this, while one participant said "for most people it was a slap on the face," another said the following:

> They started a new system but it didn't work that well... We didn't have enough materials developed for this system and our staff was not prepared. OK they had pre-service seminars but still they were not enough... [Some of the staff] felt lost. They should have waited and developed their programs. But I think they had only one year left in office and they had this urge to do this thing before they left. It was a mistake.

Another concern that was brought up by some participants was *management's lack of responsiveness to feedback.* Participants reported that the feedback provided through various means was not really taken into consideration or responded to by the management. While one participant noted "sometimes when we give feedback, we feel that they are not taken into consideration, so this is what makes us feel uneasy," another one stated "sometimes [the management] do not give the reason why they ignored your feedback." There was also a belief among some participants that sometimes decisions for *large-scale organizational changes* were being made *without adequate involvement of the staff.*

Interconnectedness

Senge (1990) defined the discipline of Systems Thinking as the recognition of the primacy of the whole in the organization. In order to examine whether participants held a Systems Thinking perspective, they were asked to describe their view of the organization and their role and place in it. Majority of the participants used metaphors or images**.** While a few of these described the <u>interrelatedness</u> <u>of the</u> <u>organization</u>, most presented a <u>fragmented view</u> of it.

Some of the metaphors focusing on the interconnectedness of the organization included the image of the organization as a '*torch* giving light to its environment' with teachers as 'torch bearers;' the image of a '*pie'* with teachers making up the pieces; and the image of a '*puzzle'* with different pieces coming together to make a whole. Another image used by one participant to describe the organization was that of a '*growing pine tree'* with lots of branches. She described herself as one of the branches. She said "There is change and hopefully the tree will bend with change. And the different branches should bend a little bit."

On the other hand, many of the metaphors presented a fragmented view of the organization. One participant, for instance, depicted the organization as a "*strong river flowing in a certain direction with intentions.*" She described herself as a fish swimming in the same direction. However, she noted that there were also some *separate sharks swimming around*. She said the sharks represented the resistant group in the organization, threatening the people's willingness and motivation in an unprofessional way. Similarly, using the image of a '*closed box,'* one participant said the box represented some of the staff as she thought they were not very open to change. She described herself outside the box, together with the administration trying to open the door. Her image was similar to another participant, who also talked about the efforts of the administration to change the organization and the resistance by the staff. Using the metaphor of a '*bunch of housewives'* to refer to some of the staff in the organization, she said "a lot of people see this place as a part-time place. All they want to do is to teach for four hours and go home." She noted that this had been the case for many years and that it had almost become the

184

culture of the organization. She added that she did not have a place in this image. The image of an '*aquarium with fish*' not wanting to grow and that of a '*pleasure cruise ship' sailing around on the same sea not traveling far away* focused on the unwillingness of some of the staff to improve. Another participant used the image of '*a witch's cauldron*' to describe the attitude and mentality of people in the organization. She elaborated on this saying "They don't do anything, but criticize the ones who are doing something for the benefit of the whole." She added that she did not take any sides and could work with anybody as long as she believed in what they were doing. One participant, who was apparently not happy with the changes taking place in the organization recently, likened the organization to a '*thorny bush.*' He added "I am trying to protect myself and my class from the thorn as much as possible." Another metaphor suggested by a participant focused on the change process the organization had been going through and the difficulties experienced. He used the image of a '*benign hydria*'- a medical beast with many heads and many necks, each trying to run back and forth pulling the body in several directions in search for food, sometimes leading to some confusion. In explaining her image of "a piece of sand on the beach," one participant considered herself unimportant, not having a say in the important decisions being made.

Areas for improvement

In order to probe the concept of Systems Thinking further, participants were also asked how the organization they are working in could improve. Participants talked about many systemic issues that impacted teaching and learning in their organization and offered suggestions as to how to improve the organization. These included <u>open communication and dialogue</u>, <u>more evaluation</u>, <u>efficient feedback mechanisms</u>, <u>more commitment from staff to professional development</u>, <u>improving student learning</u>, and <u>more collaboration among staff</u>.

A few participants talked about the need for more <u>open communication and dialogue</u> for the improvement of the organization. One participant especially expressed his desire to see better dialogue between the administration and the staff. He thought that the administration was defensive and not open to criticism. To exemplify his point,

he described the defensive routines the administration succumbed to during the debates about the change initiatives taken. He said they became so defensive that they turned the blame on some of the staff saying that they were too old and that they were not prepared to take on a new challenge, instead of taking on the criticisms and acting on them. He continued to talk about the importance of honesty and openness in establishing better communication and said: "I would like to be informed of the changes, the would-be or the changes that are planned to be made beforehand, not at the last minute. And I would also like to see at least an attempt to convince me about the reasons."

Speaking of how the organization could improve, a number of participants also discussed the need for more evaluation for the organization to be able to identify its needs better, to overcome its weaknesses and to build upon its strengths. One participant put is this way: "I would like this organization to see what they have in their hands, the students, the teachers, everything, and evaluate it really well and then find the 'best management strategy' and 'the best culture.'" In a similar vein, another participant said "I like to look at what we are doing, find the weak points in the system and find ways to improve those, and try to take the opinions of the students and see how they feel about what we are doing and change what we are doing that way as opposed to throwing the whole thing away."

Also mentioned was the need for a system with more efficient feedback mechanisms, incorporating and responding to teacher feedback in a timely manner. While one participant noted "sometimes when we give feedback, we feel that they are not taken into consideration, so this is what makes us feel uneasy," another one stated "sometimes [the management] do not give the reason why they ignored your feedback."

A number of participants stated the organization could improve if the staff were more willing and committed to self development. One participant put it this way: "I would like [this organization] to consist of professional minded people who are interested in self development and who are interested in the learning process, not just teaching process." Another participant talked about the need to have a larger teacher

training unit with more teacher trainers so that they could offer support not only to new instructors but to other staff as well.

Another area of concern was that of <u>improving student learning</u>. While some participants talked about giving *teachers more autonomy* in the classroom to achieve this, others talked about establishing a *testing system incorporating alternative ways of assessment.* Speaking of the understaffed Testing Unit and the Materials Development Team struggling under pressure to develop instructional materials, one participant underlined the need to establish a *bigger testing unit* with more staff and to *set up a materials bank* to reduce time spent on materials bank and to better meet the needs of the students. Another participant perceived the need to develop learners with a mature approach to learning, who aware of their learning process and of their responsibility in it: "I'd like to see a pre-service for students where they discover their learning styles, learn about other ways of learning, become aware of language learning… They should be more knowledgeable about what they could get, what they should get, what they should do." One participant, on the other hand, thought interaction of students with each other was necessary: "I'd like our department to be a place where students can really interact with each other… There should also be some interaction between the students here and those other universities or foreign universities."

The need for <u>more collaboration</u> among staff was another issue brought up by a few participants in their discussion of how the organization could improve. One participant, for example, said she wished to see people with different levels of experience work together. Expanding on this, she said:

> There are teachers whom I really don't know very well…I wish we had a more random choice of staff rooms… It happens that some people who are more senior get together with the same people …, but for the less experienced teachers or the people who don't know them, it would be a nice experience to get to know them and work with them. We would benefit more from each other.

Administrator perceptions

The main categories that emerged under the theme of 'Systems Thinking' included (a) adaptability to internal and external circumstances and changes, (b) interconnectedness, and (c) areas for improvement. Table 4.20 gives a full account of all the coding categories under the theme of 'Systems Thinking.'

Table 4.20

Systems Thinking: Codes and Categories for Administrators in Organization B

SYSTEMS THINKING
  Adaptability to internal and external circumstances and changes
      Flexible, adaptive and responsive to internal and external circumstances or
      changes
          benchmarking
          collaboration and interaction with stakeholders
          feedback from stakeholders
  Interconnectedness
      Interrelated view of the organization
          Institution in charge of the English standards on campus
          leader, chief, conductor
      Fragmented view
          staff divided into two
          rough sea
  Areas for Improvement
      More focus on staff development
          more incentives
          staff willing and committed to self development
      Openness to change
      Culture of professionalism

Adaptability to internal and external circumstances and changes

Participants discussed the organization's adaptability and responsiveness to external and internal circumstances or changes. All of the administrators thought that the organization was quite <u>flexible, adaptive and responsive to internal and external circumstances or changes</u>.

Participants referred to the recent change process the organization had gone through to illustrate the past successes of the organization regarding the organization's adaptability and responsiveness. One of the administrators described how the

organization changed from a rather closed system to a more open system especially with the change initiatives undertaken recently:

> Practically for 15 years we had been doing the same old thing; just changing the course books once in a while. But, our philosophy to teaching was pretty much the same. Last year, we started talking about change. That is when we started writing the new curriculum… We were closed to change but now we are slowly opening up to change…I think from now on people will be more used the term 'change' because they are more experienced.

Several examples were cited as regards the *strategies* employed by the organization to be adaptive, flexible and responsive to the changes in its environments. *Benchmarking* the standards of teaching and testing against other national and international institutions was one strategy employed by the organization. Related to this, one of the administrators said "we can only develop by looking at what other people are doing and learning from those people. So, I think now at least half, if not all, of the staff realized that we need to be on the look-out."

Also mentioned were the constant efforts to *collaborate* and *interact with* internal and external *stakeholders*. The needs analysis that was carried out prior to the curriculum renovation within the organization, for instance, involved various stakeholders including the students enrolled in the organization in the previous years, and the faculty members in other departments in the university. There were also references to feedback mechanisms in place for gathering *feedback from* various *stakeholders* for evaluation purposes.

Interconnectedness

As regards their view of the organization and their role and place in it, majority of the participants used metaphors or descriptions. While one of these depicted an interrelated view of the organization, the others depicted a fragmented view of the organization.

One of the administrators described the organization as a part of the University serving one of its needs and his connection as the leader of the organization: "I

think it is the institution that is *in charge of the English standards on* this *campus*. And I am the boss, the *leader*, the *chief*, the *conductor* of this organization."

On the other hand, the descriptions of the other two administrators presented a <u>fragmented</u> view of the organization. Stating that she was "slightly angry at the staff," one administrator described the organization as follows: "I see the *staff divided into two*. People on my side are aliens, so in a way we don't belong. The majority… a crowd where everybody is talking at the same time, not saying much. We are outlookers, bystanders watching shocked. We can't make sense of what is happening." The description of the other administrator depicted the lack of harmony between the staff and the current administration. Using the image of a '*rough sea*,' she said: "It was like a calm sea before we overtook the administration. The sea became rough and maybe we were the waves. The teachers are the sea, but previously they were a calm sea."

Areas for Improvement

Participants talked about a number of systemic issues that needed to be addressed and talked about areas in which the organization should improve. These included <u>more focus on staff development</u>, <u>openness to change</u>, and establishing a <u>culture of professionalism</u>.

One area of concern brought up by participants was <u>staff development</u>. Speaking of some of the inadequacies regarding staff development, all of the administrators agreed that there needed to be more focus on staff development for the improvement of teaching and learning in the organization. One said: "we need more teacher education, ongoing education, not just for the new staff but for the senior staff. It has to become part of our culture." Another administrator spoke of the need to be able to offer *more incentives* to promote staff development and growth. It was also emphasized that organization could improve if the *staff* themselves were more *willing and committed to self development*.

Also mentioned was the <u>need to be more open to change</u>, which was illustrated through one administrator's comments: "If you are closed as an organization, I don't see any way to develop." She added that the staff needed to adopt this

approach as well: "I think the staff should become a little bit aware of what the world is doing, where the world is going and try to stop thinking that they are doing the best to improve themselves." To this, another administrator added that a <u>culture of professionalism</u> rather than a "culture of blame" was what was needed to improve the organization. She elaborated on this as follows:

> Professionalism is collaboration; looking at a problem together and trying to find solutions together; making interpretations together without becoming personal, without crossing the line and becoming rude. Putting the interests of your students and your Organization Before your personal interests is professionalism. What is not professionalism and which happens a lot here is blaming everybody for something but not talking about what can be done.

4.2 Similarities and Differences Between Organization A and Organization B as Regards the Manifestation of Senge's Five Disciplines of a Learning Organization

This part discusses the similarities and differences between Organization A and Organization B in terms of the manifestation of the five disciplines of a Learning Organization.

4.2.1 Comparison of Organization A and Organization B: Team Learning

Table 4.21 displays the similarities and differences between Organization A and Organization B in terms of the discipline of Team Learning. The examination of data collected from instructors and administrators in Organization A and Organization B showed that in both organizations, there were opportunities and forums for the staff to work and learn together. In-service training programs and workshops, teaching partnership system, staff meetings, although more frequent in Organization A, informal chats and discussions among staff in their staff or unit rooms were activities common to both organizations. While in Organization B there were joint projects between interested instructors, in Organization A, there were other opportunities promoting collaborative work and learning, including weekly development slots, course preparation days, peer observations and task groups. The

development of unit-based structural arrangement in Organization A and the existence of more opportunities for people to come together and learn from each other seemed to support the development of this discipline more in this organization, compared to Organization B.

Table 4.21

Team Learning: Comparison of Organization A and Organization B

	Org. A	Org. B
Collaborative work and learning		
Forms of collaborative practices and learning		
in-service training programs	√	√
workshops	√	√
teaching partnership system	√	√
staff meetings	√	√
informal chats and discussions among staff	√	√
joint projects between interested instructors		√
weekly development slots	√	
course preparation days	√	
peer observations	√	
task groups	√	
Structural arrangement		
unit-based structure	√	
Impediments to team learning		
Scarcity of time	√	√
Lack of rewards or incentives	√	√
Negative attitude and lack of commitment by some of staff	√	√
A lack of dialogue and discussion	√	√
not being listened to	√	
being reprimanded or told off by the management	√	
presence of a more controlling and domineering group especially senior staff		√
unprofessional harsh criticisms		√
personal verbal attacks and accusations		√
aggressiveness among staff		√
Lack of collaboration, coordination and interaction among teaching units	√	
Competition among staff	√	
Language difference between native speakers and non-native speakers	√	
Lack of clarity of purpose in some activities	√	
Dominating leadership style among some administrators	√	
Inadequacy of administrative support for collaborative work		√
Nature of the program not yielding to collaborative work		√

Participants in both organizations mentioned several conditions that seemed to detract both organizations from practicing Team Learning optimally. Lack of quality time for the staff to collaborate; lack of incentives for work involving collaboration; and a perceived lack of commitment by some staff in collaborative

work were some common impediments to meaningful interactions and shared-work activity in both organizations. Both organizations also seemed to struggle as regards the practice of dialogue and skillful discussion, which are necessary to master the discipline of Team Learning. There was substantial evidence of inconsistent dialogue and discussion within both organizations. In Organization A, there was a lack of a dialogue especially between instructors and administrators. Instructors especially complained about meetings and gave "not really being listened to" and fear of "being reprimanded or told off by the management" as the main reasons for the lack of a dialogue. It was also expressed that different viewpoints were not welcomed and possible solutions were disregarded. In Organization B, on the other hand, the reasons for the lack of a dialogue and discussion included presence of a more controlling and domineering group, especially consisting of senior staff, who seemed to "shut down" others; and unprofessional harsh criticisms, personal verbal attacks and accusations, and aggressiveness among staff especially in whole staff meetings.

While some other impediments in Organization A included a lack of collaboration, coordination and interaction among teaching units; competition among staff; language difference between native speakers and non-native speakers; a lack of clarity of purpose in some activities; and a dominating leadership style among some administrators, those impediments to collaborative work and learning in Organization B included inadequacy of administrative support and encouragement for collaborative work and the nature of the program with a set curricula, exams and centrally-prepared materials. Moreover, although the unit-based structure in Organization A seemed to encourage team learning, there were perceptions that the nature and extent of collaborative work differed from one Teaching Unit to another. This seemed to cause a lack of standardization across units as regards the development of Team Learning in the organization.

4.2.2 Comparison of Organization A and Organization B: Personal Mastery

As Table 4.22 illustrates, all of the administrators and three-fourths of the instructors in both organizations had a personal vision. All of the participants who

acknowledged they had a vision were well aware of their assets, and needs to achieve their vision and the barriers standing in their way of vision.

Table 4.22

Personal Mastery-I: Comparison of Organization A and Organization B

	Org. A	Org. B
Personal vision		
Keeps a vision (all admin + three-fourths of the instructors)	√	√
No vision	√	√
feeling discouraged by the negative attitude of the administration	√	
lack of support by management to accomplish their vision	√	
feeling satisfied with the current situation and not wanting anything to change		√
Assets and needs for and barriers to realizing vision		
Assets		
personality characteristics	√	√
in-house professional development courses	√	
educational qualifications		√
professional experience		√
well set-up system	√	
staff commitment to self-development	√	
improved student success	√	
junior staff		√
Needs		
support and encouragement from the organization	√	√
Personal commitment in one's vision	√	
training and education		√
team work and collaboration		√
questioning instructors' beliefs and values more	√	
supporting instructors to develop in areas they would like to excel in	√	
providing more quality time for development	√	
increase in the number of instructors with better qualifications	√	
more resources		√
more maneuverability within the University law		√
Barriers		
scarcity of time	√	
personality characteristics	√	
lack of trust in the staff	√	
being told how to develop	√	
management's disregard for feedback	√	
having to compromise one's vision	√	
large size of the institution		√
poor physical and technological facilities		√
overcrowded classes		√
students' lack of motivation		√
Department's lack of finances		√
staff resistance to change	√	
inadequacy of resources	√	
large size of the institution	√	
not really being seen as a faculty by the rest of the University	√	
the senior staff		√

Instructors in both organizations saw their personality characteristics as assets to realizing their vision. Other assets in Organization A included professional courses offered in the organization and instructors' educational qualifications and professional experience in Organization B. Administrators in Organization A, on the other hand, listed a well set-up system, good development opportunities for the staff, staff commitment to self-development, and improved student success as assets to realizing their vision while those in Organization B cited the junior staff as an asset.

Instructors in both organizations needed support and encouragement from the administration to realize their vision. Moreover, commitment in one's vision was also considered essential in Organization A while more training and education, and team work and collaboration were seen as necessary in Organization B. Administrators in Organization A thought that questioning instructors' beliefs and values more, supporting them to develop in areas they would like to excel in, providing more quality time for development, and an increase in the number of instructors with better qualifications were essential to realize their vision. Administrators in Organization B, however, said they needed more resources and more maneuverability within the University law in terms of being able to make certain decisions related to the staff.

As regards the barriers standing in their way of vision, instructors in Organization A referred to scarcity of time, some of their personality characteristics, lack of trust in the staff, being told what to do by the management, management's disregard for feedback and having to compromise one's vision in the organization while those in Organization B mentioned the big size of the institution, poor physical and technological facilities, overcrowded classes, students' lack of motivation and the Department's lack of finances. The barriers mentioned by administrators in Organization A were staff resistance to change, inadequacy of resources, the size of the institution and not really being seen as a faculty by the rest of the University. Administrators in Organization B, on the other hand, cited the senior staff as a barrier especially because of their resistance to change and self-development.

There were also those who did not hold any vision in both organizations. While in Organization A those who did not have any personal vision related the reasons for lacking a vision mostly to 'feeling discouraged by the negative attitude of the administration,' and a 'lack of support by management to accomplish their vision,' those in Organization B related the reasons for lacking a vision mostly to 'feeling satisfied with the current situation and not wanting anything to change, and an 'uncertainty in the organization.'

As Table 4.23 illustrates, in both organizations there were opportunities and support provided for the professional development, growth and learning of individuals. Administrators in both organizations expressed their belief in continuous development and learning of the staff. They all saw themselves as facilitators of staff development and growth, providing guidance and encouragement to staff.

Organization A encouraged individual learning through such means as in-house training programs, the Master's program, workshops, weekly development slots, classroom observations, provision of release time and financial support for attending conferences and a reduction in teaching load for the staff involved in certain training courses in the organization. Similarly, Organization B provided workshops and seminars for the whole staff; training courses and sessions for the new staff; as well as financial support and release time for attending conferences. Organization B also provided flexibility in the teaching schedules of those teachers having self-development plans outside the institution.

Many instructors in both organizations expressed appreciation for the development opportunities and support available for individual learning and growth in their organization. There was a high enrollment in staff development courses and programs in Organization A. Most of the administrators attributed this to a general interest in and commitment to professional development and growth among staff. However, similar to administrators in Organization B, who thought it was mostly junior staff interested in development and learning, there were also some administrators in Organization A, who perceived a lack of willingness and interest by some of the staff, especially the senior ones, to develop themselves and

maximize their potential. Unwillingness to sacrifice personal time and 'the belief that they completed their development' were common reasons for this expressed by administrators in both organizations. Other reasons mentioned in Organization A were resistance to change, teachers' attitude towards their job, and feeling of insecurity while those cited in Organization B were the low level of salaries paid to the instructors, and a lack of recognition and respect for the organization by the rest of the University, which created lack of motivation among some staff.

Table 4.23

Personal Mastery-II: Comparison of Organization A and Organization B

	Org. A	Org. B
Professional development, growth and learning		
Support provided by the organization		
administrators as facilitators of staff development and growth	√	√
in-house training programs	√	√
Master's program	√	
workshops, weekly development slots, classroom observations	√	√
release time and financial support for attending conferences	√	√
reduction in teaching load for staff involved in certain training courses in the organization	√	
flexibility in teaching schedules of those teachers having self-development plans outside the institution		√
Staff commitment to professional development and growth		
development opportunities and support available for individual learning	√	√
high enrollment in staff development courses and programs	√	
a lack of willingness and interest by some of the staff, especially senior ones	√	
scarcity of time	√	√
the belief that instructors completed their development	√	√
Concerns		
difficulty of keeping up with the heavy workload and of trying to develop as teachers	√	
difficulty of attainment of balance between personal and professional life	√	
inappropriateness of timing of development activities	√	
lack of variety of development and training activities	√	
management's taking a position about how the staff should develop themselves	√	
self-development plans outside the organization not really being encouraged	√	
not getting enough support and encouragement from the management to apply to certain posts	√	
lack of opportunities for individuals to put into practice what they have mastered	√	
a lack of time to attend the in-house development activities due to tight teaching schedules		√
inadequate number of teacher trainers in the Teacher Training Unit		√
teaching program' being too structured and rigid		√
inadequacy and ineffectiveness of the incentive systems		√

197

In both organizations participants mentioned several factors which seemed to act as barriers to individuals' development, growth and learning. Among those cited by participants of Organization A were difficulty of keeping up with the heavy workload and of trying to develop as teachers, difficulty of attainment of balance between personal and professional life, inappropriateness of timing of development activities, lack of variety of development and training activities, management's taking a position about how the staff should develop themselves, self-development plans outside the organization not really being encouraged, not getting enough support and encouragement from the management to apply to certain posts, and lack of opportunities for individuals to put into practice what they have mastered. In Organization B, on the other hand, the factors that seemed to act as impediments to individuals' development, growth and learning included a lack of time to attend the in-house development activities due to tight teaching schedules, inadequate number of teacher trainers in the Teacher Training Unit, teaching program' being too structured and rigid, and inadequacy and ineffectiveness of the incentive systems.

4.2.3 Comparison of Organization A and Organization B: Shared Vision

Table 4.24 displays the similarities and differences between Organization A and Organization B in terms of the discipline of Shared Vision. Talking about the vision of their organization, all of the administrators in both organizations stated that the vision was communicated through written and verbal means. This view was shared by some of the instructors in Organization A and more than half of the instructors in Organization B. The Staff Handbook, the Weekly Bulletin, the webpage of the organization, weekly unit meetings, general staff meetings, induction and probation meetings, informal and formal talks with the staff, and workshops and swapshops were listed as means of communicating the vision in Organization A. Similarly, in Organization B, the webpage of the organization, general staff meetings, the induction program for the new instructors, operational procedures, curriculum documents, e-mail messages, staff recruitment interviews were mentioned as means of promoting the organization's vision directly or

indirectly. In both organizations, administrators believed that they had an important responsibility in promoting the vision of their organization. In addition, in Organization A more than half of the instructors thought that the organization's vision was not clearly communicated to the staff. In Organization B, on the other hand, while only a number of instructors thought it was not clearly communicated, a few stated that it was communicated implicitly rather than explicitly.

Table 4.24

Shared Vision: Comparison of Organization A and Organization B

	Org. A	Org. B
Communication of the vision		
Communicated through written and verbal means	√	√
Staff Handbook	√	√
Weekly Bulletin	√	
webpage of the organization	√	√
weekly unit meetings	√	
general staff meetings	√	√
induction and probation meetings	√	√
informal and formal talks with the staff	√	
workshops and swapshops	√	
e-mail messages		√
staff recruitment interviews		√
Problems with communication of vision	√	√
Problems with incorporation of individuals' vision	√	√
Lack of a shared vision		
lack of knowledge of organizational vision	√	√
unclear vision	√	√
unrealistic vision	√	√
top-down vision	√	√
inadequate efforts to communicate vision	√	√
dissatisfaction of staff with work	√	

The results also revealed that most of the instructors in Organization A felt that individuals' visions were not really incorporated into the organization's vision. In Organization B, on the other hand, there were mixed views regarding the issue. While some of the instructors thought the vision of the organization encompassed individuals' vision, others thought it did not. Moreover, all of the administrators in Organization B said individuals' visions were incorporated into the vision of the organization. However, while a few administrators in Organization A shared this view for their organization, there were also those who admitted that it was not

always possible to "give in to the aspirations of the staff." Administrators associated the reasons for this to protectiveness of the organization in terms of its vision, staff not being articulate about their vision and to the inability of the staff for "being independently professional."

The interviews with instructors and administrators in both organizations also demonstrated that most of the instructors and almost half of the administrators in Organization A, and more than half of the instructors and all of the administrators in Organization B talked about a lack of a shared vision in their organization. Common reasons for the lack of a shared vision cited by instructors of both organizations included a lack of knowledge of the vision of the organization, its being unclear and unrealistic, its being imposed by the administration and its not being clearly communicated. Dissatisfaction of the staff with their work was also given as another reason in Organization A. Some of the reasons cited by instructors for the lack of a shared vision in their organization were also mentioned by administrators in their organizations. For instance, some administrators in Organization A thought that some of the staff found the vision of the organization unrealistic and that the efforts shown to communicate the organization's vision were inadequate. In addition, the administrators in Organization B stated that some of the staff in their organization found the vision unrealistic and were dissatisfied with the way the vision was implemented. However, unlike the instructors in their organization, all of the administrators in both organizations believed that the staff knew the vision of their organization. Moreover, more than half of the administrators in Organization A and all of the administrators in Organization B thought the vision of the organization was clearly understood by their staff.

4.2.4 Comparison of Organization A and Organization B: Mental Models

Table 4.25 illustrates the similarities and differences between Organization A and Organization B in terms of the discipline of Mental Models. The results of the interviews with administrators and instructors in Organization A and Organization B indicated that both organizations engaged in individual reflection. Instructors in both organizations stated that they tried to set aside some time themselves on a

regular basis for individual reflection as much as possible. Questionnaires distributed to the staff and course evaluations instructors carried out individually were also cited as means of individual reflection in Organization B. Most of the individual reflection in both organizations seemed to be on the teaching and learning processes, followed by interactions and relations with others in the organization. However, a lack of quality time for reflection due to factors such as heavy workload and tight teaching schedules seemed to be a major barrier to individual reflection in both organizations.

Table 4.25

Mental Models: Comparison of Organization A and Organization B

	Org. A	Org. B
Reflection		
Individual reflection	√	√
Collective reflection	√	√
Ability of staff to reflect		
most staff having ability to reflect	√	
some need help and perspective of others	√	
some staff, especially senior ones lacking the ability		√
junior staff with better reflection skills		√
Barriers to reflection		
scarcity of time	√	√
some forums not allowing for effective reflection	√	
Advocacy and inquiry		
Problems with advocacy and inquiry	√	√

Although fewer in Organization B, there were also opportunities for collective reflection in both organizations. Forums for collective reflection in Organization A included in-house courses and programs, teachers' and heads of teaching units' updates and appraisals held with their line managers, course evaluations held in each unit at the end of each course, weekly unit meetings, Wednesday development slots, meeting of teaching partners, informal chats among teachers in groups or in pairs in their individual units, other group meetings for the head of teaching units and specialist units and heads of teaching units-day-outs. In Organization B, on the other hand, the forums for collective reflection included general staff meetings held at the beginning and at the end of the year, level meetings after midterms, post-

observation sessions for new teachers, informal chats among instructors in groups or in pairs in their staff rooms, and discussions on the list server of the department. Again, a lack of quality time was cited as a major barrier to effective collective reflection in both organizations. Participants in both organizations agreed on the need to create more quality time for both individual and collective reflection. Although, participants in both organizations expressed appreciation for opportunities for collective reflection, they also voiced some concerns related to these. In Organization A, for instance, some instructors thought some of the forums such as meetings, course evaluations and teacher appraisals did not really allow for much effective reflection to take place mostly for reasons which seemed to be related to a lack of dialogue and discussion between instructors and administrators. On the other hand, inability of some of the staff, especially the senior ones, to reflect properly was one concern voiced by all of the administrators in Organization B.

As regards if and how they made their thinking visible to others, all of the administrators in both organizations stated that they used advocacy. However, the interviews with instructors showed that in Organization A only a small number of instructors used advocacy to make their thinking visible. The rest of the instructors either did not engage in any advocacy, or were unwilling to make their thinking and reasoning visible, especially in the presence of administrators for reasons such as fear of being threatened, or the disregard for their ideas. In Organization B, although many participants stated that they used advocacy in making their thinking visible, there were also those, like the ones in Organization A, who expressed their unwillingness to make their thinking and reasoning visible for reasons such as the presence of a more controlling and domineering group, presence of a group of people who lacked the ability to communicate properly, fear from the reaction of the administration and "the feeling that nothing will change even if I raise my views."

Regarding if and how they inquired into others' thinking and reasoning, all of the administrators in both organizations stated that they engaged in inquiry through listening, questioning or writing. On the other hand, despite a number of instructors

202

who stated that people were not comfortable with each others' opinions, most of the instructors in Organization A stated that they felt more comfortable engaging in inquiry mostly when they were around their colleagues and felt reluctant to inquire into administrators' thinking. In Organization B, while many participants stated that they engaged in inquiry through listening and questioning, there were also those, who expressed that they were unable to inquire into others' thinking and reasoning because of inadequacy of time and the presence of a group of people who always had the tendency to advocate but not to let others inquire into their thinking.

Some of the concerns cited by instructors related to advocacy and inquiry in their organization were also mentioned by administrators in their organizations. For instance, despite some administrators who believed that the staff were able to freely advocate their thinking and reasoning, and inquire into others' thinking and reasoning, more than half of the administrators in Organization A thought some of the staff were not willing to express their views or inquire into others' thinking for reasons such as discouraging leadership style of some individual administrators, individuals' beliefs and personalities, not feeling comfortable to express views in groups, not wanting to be different from the group, and the feeling that nothing will change even if "I raise my view or question things." Similarly, in Organization B, all of the administrators thought some of the staff, especially, the junior ones, refrained from expressing their views and questioning things mainly because of the presence of a more controlling and domineering group and inability of some of the staff to engage in advocacy and inquiry.

4.2.5 Comparison of Organization A and Organization B: Systems Thinking

Table 4.26 displays the similarities and differences between Organization A and Organization B in terms of the discipline of Systems Thinking. In terms of adaptability to internal and external circumstances and changes, while most of the administrators in Organization A and all of the administrators in Organization B thought that their organization was quite flexible, adaptive and responsive to internal and external circumstances or changes, this view was shared by only a few instructors in Organization A and by some instructors in Organization B.

203

Table 4.26

Systems Thinking: Comparison of Organization A and Organization B

	Org. A	Org. B
Adaptability to internal and external circumstances and changes		
Adaptive, responsive, flexible	√	√
benchmarking	√	√
evaluation of existing activities	√	√
getting feedback from stakeholders	√	√
researching best practices	√	√
strategic planning	√	√
Concerns		
slow in responding and adapting o internal or external circumstances or changes	√	
organization sometime acting too quickly	√	√
large scale organizational changes made without adequate involvement of staff	√	√
management's lack of responsiveness to feedback	√	√
Interconnectedness		
Fragmented view of organization (instructors)	√	√
Fragmented view of organization (administrators)		√
Interrelated view of organization (instructors)		√
Interrelated view of organization (administrators)	√	
Areas for improvement		
Improving student motivation and success	√	√
Improving teacher motivation	√	
Building a culture of trust in the organization	√	
Better staff involvement in decision making	√	√
More forums for collective reflection and open debate		
Involvement of the senior management in teaching	√	
Risk taking and tolerance for mistakes	√	
Learning from past experience and mistakes	√	
Removing the root causes of problems	√	
More open and fluid communication system	√	
More autonomy at teaching unit level	√	
Need to promote a shared vision	√	√
Wider application of technology in instruction	√	
Creating quality time for reflection and discussion		
Open communication and dialogue	√	√
More evaluation		√
Efficient feedback mechanisms	√	√
More commitment from staff to professional development		√
More collaboration		√
More focus on staff development		√
Openness to change		√
Culture of professionalism		√

Those who talked about their organization's adaptability and responsiveness gave examples showing their organization's readiness. Benchmarking, strategic planning, investigating the best practices in their external environment, evaluation of the existing activities and gathering feedback from various stakeholders were some of the strategies employed by both organizations in order to facilitate their adaptiveness and responsiveness.

On the other hand, there were several negative comments made by instructors in both organizations regarding the issue. The common concerns raised by participants in both organizations were that "the organization sometimes acted too quickly without really assessing the situation or considering the possible consequences of actions on all parties," "decisions for large-scale organizational changes were being made without adequate involvement of the staff," and that "the administrators did not respond to feedback effectively." In Organization A, another concern voiced was that the organization was sometimes rather slow in responding and adapting to internal or external circumstances or changes. A number of administrators in Organization A also agreed that their organization sometimes acted too quickly or was, at times, rather slow in adapting and responding to external or internal changes and circumstances.

Many of the metaphors and images used by instructors in both Organization A and Organization B to describe their view of their organization and their role in it depicted a fragmented view. While this was supported by metaphors used by two administrators in Organization B, all of the administrators in Organization A used metaphors or images referring to the interconnectedness of their organization.

Unlike the administrators in Organization A who used metaphors such as a 'ship,' 'train made up of a locomotive with carriages,' 'circle,' 'flat structure,' and 'big and active organism with its components,' which described an organization with several parts headed towards a particular direction, the instructors used metaphors depicting a traditional organizational structure with no flexibility where people do not have much control over their work (i.e. 'factory,' 'computer,' 'work camp,' 'pyramid,' 'military service,' and 'hand'), describing feeling of not being trusted or valued by the management (i.e. 'dust in the wind,' and 'mental institution'), referring to a lack of support for growth (i.e. 'thin cow with a very bad milk'), and referring to the groups of people distant from each other (i.e. 'black and white,' 'people with masks,' 'politicians and opposers'). Similarly, in Organization B, despite a number of metaphors focusing on the interconnectedness of the organization such as a 'pie,' 'puzzle,' 'growing pine tree with branches,' and a 'torch,' most of the metaphors used by instructors described an organization divided into two opposite groups,

those who are open to change (i.e. a 'strong river flowing in a certain direction with intentions') and those who are against change and unwilling to improve (i.e. 'sharks swimming around,' 'closed box,' 'bunch of housewives,' 'aquarium,' 'pleasure cruise ship sailing around on the same sea not traveling far away' and 'witch's caldron'). The descriptions (i.e. "the staff divided into two" and "rough sea") used by two administrators in Organization B also supported this view.

Administrators and instructors in both organizations were able to identify some systemic issues that seemed to impact teaching and learning and offer suggestions as to how to improve their organization. Improving student motivation and learning, and the need for open communication, dialogue and discussion, better staff involvement in decision making, promoting a shared vision and more efficient feedback mechanisms were common suggestions offered in both organizations. In addition, other suggestions made by participants in Organization A included improving teacher motivation and morale, building a culture of trust in the organization, the necessity of the involvement of the senior management in teaching, a culture of risk taking and tolerance for mistakes, the need to learn from past experience and mistakes, removing the root cause of problems, setting up a more open and fluid communication system, more autonomy at teaching unit level, and a wider application of technology in instruction. In Organization B, on the other hand, suggestions to improve the organization included the need for more evaluation of the existing activities, more collaboration among staff, more focus on staff development, openness to change and establishing a culture of professionalism.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

In this chapter, first, conclusions reached based on the findings of the study are presented. Next, some analytical generalizations are made. Finally, implications for practice and for further research are discussed.

5.1 Conclusions Regarding the Manifestation of the Five Disciplines of a Learning Organization in Organization A and Organization B

Below are the conclusions drawn by the researcher as regards the manifestation of the five disciplines of a Learning Organization in the organizations involved in this study.

5.1.1 Team Learning

In this part, first, conclusions reached regarding the discipline of Team Learning are presented for each organization. Then, a comparison is made between the two organizations.

5.1.1.1 Organization A

In the light of the findings presented in the previous chapter, it could be concluded that Organization A is supporting Team Learning by implementing some components of this discipline; however, there are still gaps in several areas critical to this discipline.

The discipline of Team Learning requires "creation of opportunities for individuals to work and learn together in a community where it is safe to innovate, learn and try

207

anew" (Senge, 1990, as cited in Cox, 2002). Supporting this view, Organization A had taken the initial steps necessary to become an organization that practices Team Learning. The development of team learning has been part of the organization's philosophy especially since 1993 and has been gradually enhanced by initiatives such as the development of unit-based structural arrangement. Team learning has been especially centered on teaching units in the organization. It is clear that the 'teaching-unit-based structural system' has been quite useful in terms of promoting collaboration and learning in teams. Individuals had the chance to come together to share information and learn from others' knowledge and experience, discuss individual students' problems or situations, plan courses, prepare materials, and decide issues related to curriculum. Formation of task groups and creation of several other opportunities including weekly development slots, course preparation days, teaching partnership system, peer observations, weekly unit meetings and in-service training programs and workshops also contributed to the development of team learning. Instructors' beliefs and the way they interacted with each other was another factor promoting team learning in this organization. Many instructors were willing to collaborate with each other. There was a widely held belief that individuals could learn from each other and, as a result, they deliberately structured opportunities such as informal gatherings and informal chats in their own units, and peer observations. This finding also reflects Conzemius and Conzemius's (1996) view that collaboration with empowering insightful colleagues is the key learning unit in an educational organization.

Nevertheless, the study identified a number of specific features that detracted the organization from practising Team Learning fully. Firstly, although the unit-based structure was regarded as positive and beneficial in promoting Team Learning, the nature and extent of collaborative work seemed to differ greatly from one teaching unit to another. The researcher thinks that this stifles the development of the discipline of Team Learning across the whole organization. There needs to be standardization across the organization in terms of the practice of this discipline. In addition, there were several conditions that inhibited meaningful interactions and collaborative work among staff. These included lack of quality time for the staff to

collaborate; lack of incentives for work involving collaboration and lack of rewards for the teams for their organizational contribution; a lack of collaboration, coordination and interaction among teaching units; negative attitude of and lack of commitment by some staff; competition among staff, which, in some instructors' views, seemed to be caused by administrators; language difference between native speakers and non-native speakers; an authoritarian leadership style among some administrators; lack of clarity of purpose in some activities; and a lack of training in terms of how to consult people and how to function as a group. The issues presented by participants is a particular concern to the researcher as there are consistent references to many of these items in the literature as constituting barriers to meaningful interactions, and shared work activity (Dipardo, 1997; Kruse & Louis, 1997; Leonard, 1999; Watkins & Marsick, 1993). Therefore, the researcher concludes that these impediments to collaborative work contribute to a stifling of the development of the discipline of Team Learning in Organization A.

Further, a lack of effective dialogue and discussion appeared to be detracting from the development of the discipline of Team Learning in Organization A. As Senge (1990) asserts, the discipline of Team Learning involves mastering the practices of dialogue and discussion. Dialogue calls for not only colleagueship, which involves the individuals' regarding and treating one another as colleagues "in a mutual quest for deeper insight and clarity" (p. 245), but also suspension of individual views and assumptions, listening of one another closely so that free and creative exploration of complex and subtle issues can occur. Discussion requires that individuals present and defend their ideas and perspectives on the issue at hand with the aim of searching for the best solution for the team. Organization A clearly struggled with this aspect of Team Learning. There was substantial evidence of inconsistent dialogue and discussion within the organization. This was mainly related to a lack of dialogue and discussion between instructors and administrators. Regular unit meetings and formal gatherings under the leadership of administrators did not really appear to encourage the unit members to participate in effective discussion and dialogue. Many instructors gave up expressing their views and discussing things as they felt that ideas were not really being listened to; different viewpoints were not

welcomed; and that possible solutions were being disregarded. Meetings were often described by instructors as forums where announcements were made, decisions taken by the administration were imposed, and people were told what to do by their administrators, not places where team members had open dialogues and searched collectively discussed things for the best solution. There was also a generalized fear of "what will happen to me if I express my views," which seemed to result from a perceived lack of colleagueship largely between instructors and administrators. Ramade and Matzdorf (2005) note that colleagueship requires an atmosphere of trust where it is safe to take risks and be open. Unfortunately, this was somehow lacking in this organization. There were perceptions that leaders in the organization needed to work on creating a more open atmosphere where individuals would feel more relaxed about raising their views and where they would feel that their opinions matter. This is consistent with the reports in the literature (Zederayko, 2000) that actions of leaders improve team learning. Leaders can enhance team learning behavior through creating an atmosphere of trust and openness, and developing the confidence to participate and take risks in group meetings.

Overall, the researcher thinks that the organization had structures, beliefs and several practices to promote Team Learning, and made some progress towards this discipline. However, it needs to consider ways of dealing with some of the barriers that seem to impede the development of this discipline. Firstly, the organization needs to address the issue of inconsistent dialogue and discussion prevalent within the organization. The lack of standardization across the organization in terms of the practice of the discipline of Team Learning due to the variation of the nature and extent of collaborative work from one teaching unit to another also needs to be dealt with. Finally, several of the barriers cited above that seemed to inhibit meaningful interactions and effective collaborative work should be overcome.

5.1.1.2 Organization B

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that Organization B has some positive elements of the discipline of Team Learning in place; however, there

are still problems in terms of several areas critical to the cultivation of Team Learning.

This study revealed that Organization B had taken the initial steps necessary to become an organization that practices Team Learning. Existence of several opportunities for the staff to collaborate and learn from each other enhanced team learning. These included staff room chats and discussions, meetings where instructors teaching specific levels came together, general staff meetings, meeting of teaching partners, in-service trainings and workshops, and joint projects between interested teachers. Research in literature indicates that the most successful learning takes place in educational organizations where teachers find solutions together (Boyer, 1995). This was also true in Organization B. Members of the organization had the chance to work together in teams to share knowledge and information with each other, talk about issues concerning the whole organization; individual students' problems or situations; the evaluation of programming; and the implementation of actions which required large group acceptance.

Nevertheless, this study also found that the cultivation of the discipline of Team Learning in Organization B was hindered by several barriers. First of all, the study revealed perceptions that while there were opportunities for the staff to collaborate and learn from each other, these were occasional and inadequate. Most of the collaborative work was limited to informal staff room interactions. Opportunities for the staff across the organization to interact with each other were inadequate. The nature of the program did not yield to collaborative work, either. This is not surprising given the bureaucratic structure of the organization, with set curricula, testing and centrally-prepared materials. There is support in the literature (Van Dijk, 2003) that a too bureaucratic structure could impede the implementation of a learning organization. There were also other impediments to meaningful interactions and shared-work activity in Organization B. These included lack of quality time for the staff to collaborate; lack of incentives, particularly monetary rewards, for work involving collaboration; negative attitude of and lack of commitment by some staff; and inadequacy of administrative support and encouragement for collaborative work. These issues are a particular concern to the

researcher as there are consistent references to many of these items in the literature as constituting barriers to meaningful interactions, and shared work activity (Dipardo, 1997; Kruse & Louis, 1997; Leonard, 1999; Watkins & Marsick, 1993). Therefore, the researcher concludes that these impediments to collaborative work prevent the cultivation of the discipline of Team Learning fully in Organization B.

It can also be concluded that despite some progress made towards practising the skills of dialogue and discussion, Organization B still needs to overcome some major obstacles detracting the full mastery of these skills. The study revealed perceptions that staff room interactions among staff, however limited, encouraged the individuals to participate in open dialogues and collective discussion. Similarly, level meetings after each end-of-course exam, where instructors teaching a specific level came together also promoted dialogue and discussion among team members. On the other hand, the sheer size of the general staff meetings which were attended by as many as 200 people, coupled by the presence of a more controlling and domineering group, consisting especially of the senior staff, who attempted to 'shut down' others, seemed to make it rather difficult for meaningful dialogue and discussion to take place. This appeared to become an issue especially after the initiation of 'content-based instruction,' which caused heated debates in the organization. The conversational tone changed from polite exchanges to unprofessional, harsh criticisms, personal verbal attacks and accusations, and aggressiveness. What could have been a productive exchange of ideas and solutions and successful team experience seemed to fail due to inability to enter into effective dialogue and meaningful discussion.

Overall, the researcher thinks that although the Organization B has a number of practices to promote Team Learning, it needs to consider ways of dealing with some of the barriers that seem to impede the mastery of this discipline. The organization needs to focus on implementing the necessary tools to develop productive dialogue and discussion. Organization B should reconsider directing more resources to create more opportunities for the staff to collaborate and learn from each other. Finally, several of the barriers cited above that seemed to inhibit meaningful interactions and effective collaborative work should be overcome.

5.1.1.3 Comparison of Organization A and Organization B in Terms of the Manifestation of the Discipline of Team Learning

In the lights of the findings of this study, it can be concluded that Organization A is doing somewhat better than Organization B in terms of the discipline of Team Learning; however, both organizations have weaknesses preventing them from fully mastering this discipline.

The better performance of Organization A relative to Organization B in this discipline is not surprising given the unit-based structural arrangement of the organization and the greater number and variety of the opportunities fostering collaborative work and learning. It could be argued that, as part of a public university, due to its comparatively limited resources, it may be difficult for Organization B to create sufficient opportunities to promote collaborative work and learning within the organization. Moreover, one could also argue that the comparatively larger size of Organization B with around 200 staff may be hampering the organization's ability to promote collaborative work and learning effectively. In fact, the existing literature (Celep, 2004; Matthiesen, 2006) reports that lack of resources and size of the organization hinder learning in a organization. In addition, it can be said that, Organization A, as part of a private university whose survival depends on the number of students it attracts, has to consider ways of maximizing the level of learning of its employees to improve the level of education provided for the students in order simply to respond to market conditions. Therefore, it is to be expected that more success is shown by Organization A to create opportunities for enhancing team learning relations. Clearly, there is a need for Organization B to consider ways of developing mechanisms for more opportunities fostering team work, collaboration, and collective learning.

Nevertheless, despite its advantages in terms of the discipline of Team Learning, Organization A, like Organization B, also needs to improve in several areas in order to excel in this discipline. For instance, both organizations seemed to be struggling particularly as regards the skills of dialogue and discussion, which are two important components of the discipline of Team Learning. This study revealed that,

in Organization A, several forums intended for team learning did not seem to serve their real purpose largely because of a lack of a dialogue and discussion between instructors and administrators. A perceived authoritarian leadership style among some administrators, leading to a general atmosphere of fear of "being told off" or of "what will happen to me if I express my views" seemed to be a major obstacle to a productive exchange of ideas and solutions in this organization. This could be partially attributed to 'high-power distance culture' present in Turkey (Hofstede, 1984 as cited in Nichols, Sugur & Demir, 2001). In high power distance cultures, supervisors tend to be autocratic and, subordinates are inclined to be afraid of their supervisors and authorities (Li, 2007). In fact, a recent study carried out by Wasti (1998, as cited in Nichols et al., 2001) found that Turkish managers have a highly developed sense of power distance and that employees lack the autonomy and are afraid to disagree. In such cultures, it may be difficult for the subordinates to freely enter into dialogue and discussion (Benefiel, 2002). In Organization B, on the other hand, a lack of skills necessary to achieve effective communication appeared to be the major impediment to dialogue and discussion. One could very well argue that this problem may have been heightened by the recent change process the organization had gone through which caused a lot of turmoil and resistance among staff. Given that the organization experienced such a wide-scale change for the first time in its history, it is not surprising that dialogue and discussion suffered. This may not have been the case prior to the change process. However, the researcher does not feel that she has enough data to comment on the situation before the change took place. In addition, the problem of inconsistent dialogue and discussion may also be attributed to the large size of the institution. It is not surprising that not much meaningful dialogue and discussion take place in meetings attended by as many as 200 people. It is clear that the administration need to develop mechanisms for communicating better with such a large group of individuals to allow for better dialogue and discussion leading to better team learning experience.

Furthermore, both Organization A and Organization B need also to address some of the impediments to collaborative work and learning, which seem to impede the development of the discipline of Team Learning. For instance, lack of quality time

for the staff to collaborate, which was a common issue in both organizations, constitute an important barrier to meaningful interactions and shared work activity. It can be said that with the large number of students both organizations need to serve and the heavy workload of the instructors, this is not something unexpected. Moreover, the lack of interest and commitment of some of the staff in collaborative work, which was more of an issue in Organization B, partly because of lack of incentives, is also a challenge with regard to the development of Team Learning. There is support in the literature (Bennett & O'Brien, 1994) that financial or non-financial reward systems encourage the development of a learning organization. The lack of interest in Organization B could also be attributed to the lack of a sense of a closely-knit team, resulting from the absence of a structural arrangement fostering teamwork and the large size of the organization, which may cause individuals to feel that their individual contribution is not crucial to the success of the program.

Overall, the researcher would like to reiterate once again that both Organization A and Organization B are still struggling with some principles of the discipline of Team Learning, and need to address the gaps in this discipline in order to move towards becoming learning organizations. This finding is also consistent with the results of the study carried out by Celep (2004) in 12 universities in Turkey, which demonstrated that the higher education institutions investigated did not possess the characteristics of the Learning Organization sufficiently in terms of the discipline of Team Learning.

5.1.2 Personal Mastery

In this part, first, conclusions reached regarding the discipline of Personal Mastery are presented for each organization. Then, a comparison is made between the two organizations.

5.1.2.1 Organization A

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher concludes that while some principles of the discipline of Personal Mastery are clearly evident in Organization A, there are still problems in terms of the manifestation of this discipline in this organization.

According to Senge (1990), the discipline of Personal Mastery requires learning to keep a personal vision, and a clear understanding of current reality, that is to say, knowing where one is relative to what they want. The difference between the vision and reality gives rise to "creative tension" that can help the individual move closer to the vision. In pursuit of Personal Mastery, the truly creative individual tries to expand his/her capacity to learn and creates whatever methods and rules are necessary to achieve the vision. Supporting Senge's view, all of the administrators in Organization A held a personal vision. Three- fourths of the instructors interviewed also kept a personal vision although it did not appear to be specifically encouraged by the organization. Both the administrators and instructors who acknowledged they had a vision were well aware of their strengths and needs to achieve their vision and the barriers standing in their way. The "creative tension" Senge describes was clearly evident in descriptions of many participants. While some felt confident in their ability and capacity to move towards their vision, some believed they would be able to realize their vision with some personal effort and more support from their organization.

On the other hand, the interviews in Organization A revealed that among those who held a personal vision, there was a group of individuals who seemed to feel rather demotivated and frustrated with the barriers in their way of vision, and who seemed to lose their willingness and enthusiasm to move towards their vision. In addition, almost one fourth of the instructors interviewed had given up their vision, feeling frustrated and discouraged. The reasons given by both groups of individuals tended to center on some deficiency in the organization, such as 'feeling discouraged by the negative attitude of the administration,' a 'lack of support by management to accomplish their vision,' a 'lack of trust in the staff,' 'having to compromise one's

vision in this organization,' and 'being told how to develop.' In Senge's terms, this may be a result of not being able to 'hold the creative tension' necessary to achieve one's vision, which tends to occur when individuals are faced with a wide discrepancy between their vision and reality and, therefore, choose to allow the vision to erode instead of generating energy and effort to change the reality. Senge thinks that this is a major barrier to achieving Personal Mastery. In light of Senge's view, the researcher feels rather concerned with the existing situation in Organization A. The existence of a group of individuals with no vision, coupled by the existence of another group of individuals who seemed to lose their willingness and enthusiasm to move towards their vision, rather contradict Senge's concept of the Learning Organization. In addition, the factors mentioned by a number of participants to explain their lack of a vision and their lack of willingness to move towards their vision, all seem to imply that there are some problems in terms of the cultivation and development of the discipline of Personal Mastery in Organization A as a direct consequence of the organization. The literature (Senge et al., 1994) is clear about the need to support the creation and pursuit of personal visions through fostering an appropriate organizational climate. It is important that the administrators in Organization A create an environment where it is safe for every single member of the organization to create a personal vision and where they are assisted in accomplishing their vision. In fact, the interviews with administrators identified that although there were efforts to listen to and cater for individuals' aspirations and visions, these were inadequate. It was acknowledged by a few administrators that individuals' beliefs, values, aspirations and goals needed to be questioned more. This finding is congruent with Palm and Nelson's (2000) suggestion that leaders ask staff questions that draw forth their aspirations.

The discipline of Personal Mastery also emphasizes the importance of the individual learner's role in organizational learning. Organizations learn only through individuals who learn (Senge, 1990). Thus, it is important that continued growth and learning of each individual in an organization are given a high priority. This was also evident in Organization A. The organization promoted professional development, growth and learning of individuals in the organization in many ways.

217

Administrators had strong beliefs in the need for continuous development and learning for the staff, and saw themselves as facilitators of development. The staff, in general, was interested in and committed to professional growth and learning. Many instructors were actively involved in teacher training and development activities. One obvious reason for this was that the organization supported the professional development, growth and learning of individual members through various means such as in-house training programs, the Master's program, workshops, weekly development slots, and classroom observations, and through provision of release time for attending conferences and a reduction in teaching load for the staff involved in certain training courses in the organization. Many instructors expressed satisfaction and appreciation for the development opportunities available in the organization.

Nevertheless, the study also identified some problems regarding professional development, growth and learning of the staff in the organization. First of all, as it was the case across all disciplines, time was an issue in the discipline of Personal Mastery. The perceived lack of quality time for self-development and growth, the examples of time constraints and struggle with time management due to heavy workload emerged as barriers to individuals' development, growth and learning. This result corroborates with Zederayko's (2000) report that insufficient time for individual learning hinders development of personal mastery. In addition, whilst instructors regarded the importance of development opportunities available, some perceived a lack of variety of development and training options that would help them to develop fully. As the relevant literature suggests, it is important for leaders to invest intelligence, time, energy and money far beyond what they consider appropriate in the development of individual capacity (Johnston & Caldwell, 2001) and to provide a wide range of learning options to meet individual preferences and styles (Palm & Nelson, 2000). Therefore, the researcher concludes that Organization A should reconsider directing more resources to strengthen its ways of promoting its employees' development, growth and learning.

The leaders in Learning Organizations avoid taking a position about what stakeholders should want or how they should view the world (Senge et al., 2000)

and stay away from policies and approaches that tend to block individuals' intrinsic motivation to learn and to develop themselves (Senge et al., 1994). However, the findings of this study were not in alignment with this view. Although administrators all described their role as facilitators of staff development, growth and learning in the organization, providing guidance and encouragement for instructors based on their interests, aspirations and needs, some of the instructors interviewed were concerned that the administrators in the organization took a position about how the staff should develop themselves, disregarding the aspirations, or needs of individuals. There was a perception that the staff felt forced to participate in training courses or programs without being consented or asked their opinion. Some had to comply for fear of losing their jobs. There was also a perceived lack of support by the organization for professional development plans outside the institution. This was, in fact, evidenced in the words of one administration who said that individuals were "pushed towards doing certain courses in the organization" by not being provided much flexibility in their teaching load if they wanted to pursue development opportunities outside the organization. While all of the instructors interviewed believed in the importance of professional development, growth and learning, some of them felt discouraged and demotivated by the attitude of the administration in promoting it. It was clearly evident that there was a sense of disbelief among several instructors in the intentions of the administrators to support the development, growth and learning of individuals in the organization. Some of the administrators, on the other hand, perceived a lack of interest by some of the staff in their development and growth, attributing the reasons mostly to their unwillingness to sacrifice personal time, a resistance to change, or feeling of insecurity. The issues presented all above is a particular concern to the researcher as she feels that they seem to be acting as constraints for the development of the discipline of Personal Mastery in Organization A.

From preceding discussions, it can be concluded that Organization A has some positive elements of the discipline of Personal Mastery; however, given the instructors' and administrators' perspectives, there is more work to be done to cultivate this discipline in the organization. The development and achievement of

personal visions need to be supported more in the organization. It is also necessary that the leaders in Organization A follow a systematic, purposeful approach ensuring that each aspect of the workplace is conducive to the development, growth and learning of the individual.

5.1.2.2 Organization B

Based on the data collected from instructors and administrators in Organization B, it can be concluded that the organization implemented several components of the discipline of Personal Mastery; however, there are still gaps in several areas critical to this discipline.

In terms of the development and achievement of personal visions, which is one of the key principles of the discipline of Personal Mastery, the organization has made some progress; however, it still has some work to do. All of the administrators in Organization B and almost three-fourths of the instructors interviewed kept a personal vision. Both the administrators and instructors who acknowledged they held a personal vision were well aware of their strengths, and needs to achieve their vision and the barriers standing in their way to achieving it. While some felt confident in their ability and capacity to move towards their vision, some believed they would be able to accomplish their vision with more training and education and, support and encouragement from the administration. On the other hand, the interviews in Organization B revealed that among those who held a personal vision, there was a group of individuals who seemed to feel rather demotivated and frustrated with the barriers in their way of vision and who seemed to lose their willingness and enthusiasm to move towards their vision. Their reasons for their frustrations tended to center on some deficiency in the organization, such as 'the large size of the institution,' 'department's lack of finances,' and 'poor physical and technological facilities.' In addition, almost one fourth of the instructors interviewed reported that they did not keep a personal vision. The reasons for their lack of a vision tended to center on their desire to keep the status quo as well as a belief that change would not be successful.

220

According to Senge, individuals who do not keep a personal vision or who cannot "hold the creative tension" necessary to accomplish their vision do not participate in a learning organization. In the light of this thinking, the researcher feels rather concerned with the existing situation in Organization B. The existence of a group of individuals with no vision, coupled by the existence of those who seemed to lose their willingness and enthusiasm to move towards their vision, does not seem to support Senge's concept of the Learning Organization. Therefore, the researcher concludes that this constitutes a barrier to the full development of the discipline of Personal Mastery in this organization.

This study also identified that the organization promoted professional development, growth and learning of individuals in several ways. Administrators voiced their strong beliefs in the need for continuous development, growth and learning for the staff, leading to their efforts to provide the means for those wanting to expand their capacity to acquire the skills and knowledge they needed. Many instructors expressed appreciation for the development opportunities and support available in the organization, including workshops and seminars; training courses and sessions for the new staff; as well as financial support and release time for attending conferences; and flexibility in the teaching schedules of those teachers having self-development plans outside the institution. These showed strong support for the discipline of Personal Mastery in Organization B and should continue to be practiced. This finding is in line with Senge et al. (1994) who advocate a willingness to invest what is necessary to create an environment conducive to the development of Personal Mastery.

Nevertheless, based on the findings of the study, the researcher concludes that Organization B is still struggling with this aspect of the discipline of Personal Mastery due to the existence of some conditions detracting the development, growth and learning of individuals in the organization. Some of these conditions included a lack of quality time to attend development activities due to tight teaching schedules; inadequate number of teacher trainers; and inadequacy and ineffectiveness of the incentive systems to encourage and reinforce individual development, growth and learning. This was not surprising given a perceived

inadequacy of resources, and rules and regulations imposed by the University. However, organizational learning literature is clear about the need for leaders to invest intelligence, time, energy and money far beyond what they consider appropriate in the development of individual capacity. Therefore, the researcher feels that in order to further develop this discipline, leaders in Organization B should reconsider directing more resources to strengthen the organization's ways of promoting individuals' development, growth and learning. The examination of data gathered from administrators and instructors also revealed a perceived lack of interest in professional development, growth and learning by some of the staff, especially the senior ones, mostly because of their unwillingness to sacrifice personal time, and their belief that they completed their development. Senge (1990) states that organizational learning could not occur until individuals within the organization started to learn. In the light of this thinking, the researcher feels rather concerned with this situation in Organization B as she feels it seems to act as a barrier to the development and learning of the organization.

Overall, the organization is supporting Personal Mastery by creating opportunities for the development, growth and learning of individuals but it needs to consider directing more resources to strengthen the organization's ways of promoting individuals' development, growth and learning, and find ways of encouraging individuals to increase their Personal Mastery. The learning can then be shared organizationally.

5.1.2.3 Comparison of Organization A and Organization B in Terms of the Manifestation of the Discipline of Personal Mastery

In the lights of the findings of this study, it can be concluded that a number of effective promoters of personal mastery are apparent in both Organization A and Organization B; however, both organizations have certain weaknesses preventing them from fully mastering this discipline.

The data revealed that both organizations did quite well in this discipline in terms of providing support for individual learning. Development, growth and learning of

individuals have been part of the vision of both organizations, and have been supported by the administration. Many individuals in both organizations expressed appreciation for the development opportunities and support available for individual learning and growth in their organization. Nevertheless, the data showed that in general there seemed to be more interest in professional development, growth and learning in Organization A compared to Organization B. The high enrollment rates in developmental activities were perceived to be an indicator of this. However, this result should be viewed cautiously as the high enrollment in such activities may not necessarily be a proof of individuals' real willingness and interest. In fact, interviews with some of the participants showed that some felt forced to participate in the in-house training courses for fear of losing their jobs as a result of pressures coming from their line managers. In Organization B, however, which is part of a public university and, where, therefore, instructors are considered as civil servants, it is "difficult for the administration to strongly encourage or reinforce self development," which may lead to fewer number of people participating in developmental activities. Moreover, the reason for the less interest in Organization B could also be attributed to a lack of incentives, particularly monetary rewards, and low level of salaries paid to instructors, leading many staff to undertake additional teaching in addition to their basic teaching load to make ends meet, which does not leave much time for engaging in professional development, growth and learning. The development of personal mastery appears to depend on the extent to which an individual is willing to sacrifice personal time. In Organization B, it may be worth examining the real reasons for the perceived lack of interest by some staff in their development, growth and learning. This would also help understand whether some of the reasons given by administrators for the lack of willingness and interest by some of the senior staff, such as resistance to change, their belief that "they completed their development" and unwillingness to sacrifice personal time, are the real reasons for their perceived lack of interest. Similarly, in Organization A, where, although not as prevalent as in Organization B, there was a perceived lack of interest by senior staff in their development, growth and learning for reasons similar to the ones proposed by administrators in Organization B, it may also be well worth investigating the underlying reasons for this problem. In this way, both

organizations may gain better insights into the problem at hand and develop strategies to overcome some of the barriers to individuals' development, growth and learning in their organization.

In addition, both Organization A and Organization B need to address some of the impediments preventing them from fully mastering the discipline of Personal Mastery. In Organization A, these included a lack of quality time for development, growth and learning, lack of variety of development and training activities, management's taking a position about how the staff should develop themselves, not getting enough support and encouragement from the management to apply to certain posts, and lack of opportunities for individuals to put into practice what they have mastered. In Organization B, the factors that seemed to act as impediments to individuals' development, growth and learning included scarcity of time, inadequate number of teacher trainers, the rigidity of the teaching program, and inadequacy and ineffectiveness of the incentive systems. Among these, scarcity of time appeared to be a major obstacle to development, growth and learning of individuals in both organizations.

Based on the findings of the study the researcher also thinks that both Organization A and Organization B need to address another issue that seemed to contribute to the stifling of the cultivation of the discipline of Personal Mastery in both organizations. The development and achievement of personal visions is an important component of the discipline of Personal Mastery. Despite a sizeable group of individuals in both organizations, who held a personal vision and who seemed enthusiastic about achieving their vision, the existence of a group of individuals with no vision, coupled by the existence of another group of individuals who seemed to lose their willingness and enthusiasm to move towards their vision mostly because of factors as a direct consequence of the organization rather contradicts Senge's concept of the Learning Organization. Therefore, the researcher believes that the creation and pursuit of personal visions in both organizations should be supported through fostering an appropriate organizational climate so that both organizations can come closer to the discipline of Personal Mastery.

Overall, the researcher concludes that although both Organization A and Organization B support some principles of the discipline of Personal Mastery, there is still more work to be done to cultivate this discipline in both organizations. The organizations should encourage the development and achievement of personal visions, and develop strategies to overcome the barriers to individuals' growth and learning cited above.

5.1.3 Shared Vision

In this part, first, conclusions reached regarding the discipline of Shared Vision are presented for each organization. Then, a comparison is made between the two organizations.

5.1.3.1 Organization A

Based on the findings of the data collected from instructors and administrators, it can be concluded that Organization A is weak in the discipline of Shared Vision and that a lot of work needs to be done to cultivate this discipline in this organization.

The existing literature (Goh, 1998; Senge, 1990; Watkins & Marsick, 1993) is clear that shared vision is critical in a learning organization. In the light of this thinking, it is of great concern that when a group of employees are interviewed, most of them say they do not share the vision of their organization. This was one finding in Organization A that was of particular concern to the researcher, as it seemed to be linked to the lack of an effective leadership style needed for an organization to become a Learning Organization. As Senge (1990) asserts, individuals in an organization need to have a strong sense of personal vision in order for a shared vision to develop. A shared vision must be reflective of the personal visions of individuals and this could be achieved through dialogue at all levels throughout the organization, looking for what is valued personally and institutionally. In the Learning Organization, this requires the leader to share his own vision with the members of the organization, as well as encourage them to share their vision, too.

Based on these visions, the organization's collective vision should evolve. In this way, individuals establish better ownership of the vision and are more committed to it. This study identified that like all of the administrators, most of the instructors had a strong sense of their own personal vision and many of them involved many characteristics of a Learning Organization. However, the study revealed that the leaders' efforts in Organization A to build and spread a shared vision were inadequate. From the instructors' perspectives, the administrators were not really aware of the personal visions of members of the organization either because individuals' aspirations and hopes were not sought or because the individuals were afraid to voice them. One could argue that this was an extension of the previously reported perception of a lack of dialogue across the organization. Nor did the administrators, contrary to what some reported, seem to be successful in communicating their vision to the employees, as the data show that the vision of the organization was not known or unclear to many members of the organization. The result was that the organizational vision was perceived as top-down and unrealistic by staff, engaging the compliance but not the ownership or commitment of many in the organization.

Overall, the researcher thinks that Organization A has many weaknesses in terms of the application of the discipline of Shared Vision. The leaders in the organization should work collaboratively with the people making up the organization to develop a shared vision reflective of the stakeholders it serves.

5.1.3.2 Organization B

In the light of the findings of this study, it is concluded that Organization B is weak in the discipline of Shared Vision, and that a lot of work needs to be done to develop this discipline in the organization.

This study identified that this organization lacked the necessary commitment to a shared vision. All of the administrators saw themselves as having a strong vision for their organization, yet it was not shared by many. Many individuals across the organization did not feel that they were supporting a common purpose. This was of

particular concern to the researcher, as it seemed to be linked to the lack of an effective leadership style needed for an organization to become a Learning Organization. Contrary to what administrators believed, their efforts to build and spread a shared vision seemed to be inadequate. They thought the vision of the organization was known and understood by the staff when, in fact, it was unknown or unclear to some of them. While administrators viewed themselves as providing and promoting an exciting vision, some individuals did not see it that way. They did not share the vision as for them the vision was unrealistic. As Senge asserts, in many cases, when individuals see a wide discrepancy between the vision and reality, or when they are afraid of failure, they may choose to allow the vision to erode instead of generating energy and effort to change the reality. This could become even a greater challenge when individuals are content with their current situation. To an extent, this seemed to be the case in Organization B. Some individuals clearly lacked the "creative tension" Senge (1990) mentions necessary to drive the organization towards its goals. They were happy with the old system; their students were doing well and they did not see a need for the changes that came about as a result of the development of the vision. It must also be remembered that the staff had never been involved in such a big change. Some felt lost; some felt unheard because they did not feel their feedback and aspirations were taken into account. Others thought they were not adequately prepared and supported to implement the new initiatives in a manner effective for their students. The result was anger and frustration, which was then projected upon the organization. One could argue that this change pulled a potential shared vision too far from what some felt was their current level of reality. The outcome was an unrealistic vision to some, engaging compliance but not the ownership or commitment of them. The organization clearly needed the leadership that would cultivate, unleash and hold the creative tension necessary to build a shared vision.

In conclusion, there are gaps in many areas critical to the discipline of Shared Vision in Organization B. The leaders in the organization should work collaboratively with the people making up the organization to develop a shared vision through which individuals can channel their efforts.

5.1.3.3 Comparison of Organization A and Organization B in Terms of the Manifestation of the Discipline of Shared Vision

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher concludes that both Organization A and Organization B are weak in the discipline of Shared Vision.

"Learning organizations depend on the participation of many individuals in a collective vision" (Watkins & Marsick, 1993, p. 195). However, this study clearly revealed that this was something lacking in both organizations. While all the administrators had a strong vision for their organization, many individuals in both organizations did not feel that they were supporting a common purpose. Research (Abu-Tineh, 2003; Zederayko, 2000) shows that leadership considerably affects the development of a shared vision. This was also supported by this study. The lack of a shared vision in both organizations seemed to be linked mostly to inadequacy of leadership needed to build and spread a shared vision. Administrators in both organizations thought the vision of their organization was known and understood by the staff when, in fact, it was unknown or unclear to some of them. While administrators viewed themselves as providing and promoting an exciting and compelling vision, some individuals did not see it that way. For them, the vision was unrealistic. They clearly lacked the "creative tension" necessary to achieve a vision. This seemed to be an important problem especially in Organization B, who had recently undergone a change process. Several reasons, such as not having been involved in such a big change before, not getting adequate support and training to implement the new instruction system and the feeling that their feedback and aspirations were not really taken into account caused many to feel despaired, frustrated and angry, all of which pulled a potential shared vision too far from what some felt was their current level of reality. Similarly, many individuals in Organization A thought the administrators were not really aware of the personal visions of members of the organization either because individuals' aspirations and hopes were not sought or because the individuals were afraid to voice them. In addition, the efforts to communicate the organization's vision were clearly inadequate. In conclusion, the administrators in neither of the organizations were able to enlist the commitment of many to the vision of their organization.

Further, in both organizations, there were problems as regards surfacing and discussing mental models openly, safely or productively, entering into effective dialogue and discussion and thinking about the organization as a system, which seemed to detract from the development of a shared vision. This is consistent with reports in the literature such as Zederayko's (2000) that the presence or absence of Shared Vision appears to depend on the presence of each of the other disciplines. The absence of one or more of these appears to inhibit conditions necessary for developing a shared vision.

Overall, the researcher thinks that neither Organization A nor Organization B supports the discipline of Shared Vision. Both organizations need to focus on implementing the necessary tools to develop a shared vision.

5.1.4 Mental Models

In this part, first, conclusions reached regarding the discipline of Mental Models are presented for each organization. Then, a comparison is made between the two organizations.

5.1.4.1 Organization A

This study indicated that the discipline of Mental Models is rather weak in Organization A and more work needs to be done to cultivate this discipline in the organization.

Mental models, which determine how we think and act, may limit people's ability to change or impede learning. Senge et al. (1994) propose that the skills of reflection are necessary to improve mental models in an organization. Reflection skills require that individuals in an organization should set aside some of the daily tasks to both reveal their own mental models and listen to others.' In alignment with this characteristic of the discipline, Organization A supported learning organization principles of Mental Models through creating opportunities for individual and collective reflection. Individuals were aware of the importance of reflection, and set aside some of their time to reflect on their actions and practices. There were also

several opportunities for individuals across the organization to come together to reflect and discuss their own beliefs and practices about teaching and learning. Nevertheless, the study also identified some problems in the area of reflection, which seemed to act as constraints for the development of the discipline of Mental Models in the organization. Scheduling and appropriations of time for forums for collective reflection, and a lack of quality time for individual reflection due to heavy workload were two areas that emerged as major barriers to this aspect of Mental Models. The study also identified that the previously reported perception of a lack of a dialogue and communication served to deter effective engagement in collective reflection. Some forums for collective reflection such as meetings, course evaluations and teacher appraisals did not seem to allow for much effective reflection to take place as the data showed individuals were often unable to express their views freely and comfortably.

Another skill necessary to master the discipline of Mental Models is balancing inquiry and advocacy, that is to say, achieving a balance between articulating one's own thinking effectively, making that thinking open to the influence of others and asking questions genuinely in an effort to understand other's points of views (Senge, 1990). The examination of data showed that Organization A needs to focus on this aspect of the discipline in order to improve the learning of the organization. The administrators and some of the staff were aware of the importance of the skills of advocacy and inquiry in communication; however, most of the staff appeared to struggle in this area. While several of the staff seemed to be lacking the ability to articulate their thinking or make it open to the influence of others, most of the others showed reluctance to make their thinking visible, or inquire into others' thinking, especially in the presence of administrators. This finding is congruent with the characteristics of high power distance culture prevalent in Turkish organizations (Wasti, 1998, as cited in Nichols et al., 2001). When people communicate in a context with high power distance, it may not be possible for them to effectively express their ideas and inquire into others' opinions to identify each other's assumptions (Alavi & McCormick, 2003). In fact, there were many reports related to discomfort in questioning decisions or opinions of the administrators, fear

of "what will happen to me if I express my views," and not feeling comfortable with each others' opinions. One could argue that some of the previously reported problems in Personal Mastery, Shared Vision and Team Learning areas are all related to this problem the members of the organization were struggling with. Without openly talking about personal aspirations and hopes, without frankly discussing what is commonly cared about, without constantly questioning the way things are done and without tolerance for multiple interpretations of events, a learning organization becomes virtually impossible. It is, therefore, important for instructors and administrators in Organization A to create opportunities for serious conversations about teaching and learning and learn to surface and discuss their mental models with each other. Only by having communications that acknowledge rigidly held assumptions by all involved and then attempting to forge new perceptions, can educational organizations come up with the creative solutions necessary to become learning organizations (Bohm & Peat, 2000).

In fact, throughout the interviews it became clear that there were several undiscussed perceptions held by both instructors and administrators that seemed to act as constraints for the learning of the organization. Most of the administrators believed that they and their organization had a shared vision, when, in fact, most of the instructors talked about a lack of a shared vision. Many instructors expressed frustrations that they were not able to realize their full potential and put most of the blame on the administration while some administrators thought they did their best to help the staff and blamed some of the staff for lacking the willingness and enthusiasm to improve themselves. While administrators believed they were invested in and committed to the development, growth and learning of the individuals, several instructors expressed doubt about the intentions of the leadership. There were many other examples of such mental models that need to be surfaced, discussed and changed for the improvement and learning of the organization.

Overall, the researcher concludes that Organization A has several weaknesses preventing it from mastering the discipline of Mental Models. The organization needs to focus on the necessary strategies to develop the skills of reflection and

skills of balancing advocacy and inquiry to cultivate this discipline across the organization.

5.1.4.2 Organization B

This study indicated that the discipline of Mental Models is rather weak in Organization B. The organization needs to improve in several areas to further improve the application of the discipline of Mental Models.

In terms of the skills of reflection, which is one of the key principles of the discipline of Mental Models, the organization has made some progress; however, it still has some work to do. There were opportunities for individual and collective reflection in the organization. Individuals were aware of the importance of reflection, and set aside some of their time to reflect on their actions and practices. There were also several opportunities for individuals across the organization to come together to reflect and discuss their own beliefs and practices about teaching and learning. These showed support for the discipline of Mental Models in Organization B and should continue to be encouraged. Nevertheless, the study also identified some problems in the area of reflection, which seemed to act as constraints for the development of the discipline of Mental Models in the organization. The consistent issue of a lack of quality time across all the other disciplines also emerged as a barrier to this aspect of Mental Models. The study also identified that the previously reported problems with dialogue and discussion also served to deter effective engagement in collective reflection. Some forums for reflection such as meetings, and the list-server of the organization, did not seem to allow for much effective reflection to take place. There were perceptions that some individuals, especially the senior staff, lacked the ability to reflect effectively. While some were too critical and hasty in giving judgments, others were outspoken and domineering, not leaving others much opportunity to speak.

The examination of the data also showed that Organization B struggled with the skills of advocacy and inquiry. Some seemed to be lacking the appropriate skills to articulate their thinking and inquire into that of others, while some refrained from

expressing their views and questioning others. This was not surprising given several factors that seemed to act as barriers to learning conversations that balance advocacy and inquiry. Several interviewees alleged that this was mostly because of the presence of a controlling and domineering group consisting primarily of senior staff who wouldn't let others speak or who would not be able to manage a conversation in a professional tone; and a lack of willingness to enter into dialogue and discussion with others with dissimilar opinions. In Senge's terms, without developing the capacity to learn to surface mental models, and discuss them openly, safely and productively with each other, a learning organization becomes virtually impossible. What seemed to be lacking in Organization B was this capacity for individuals to surface, discuss and contrast their mental models in a collegial, cooperative and productive environment, with respect for individuals and their ideas.

In fact, the interviews revealed several undiscussed mental models held by both instructors and administrators that seemed to act as constraints for the learning of the organization. The administrators believed that their efforts to involve individuals in the development of the organization's vision were adequate, when, in fact, many instructors talked about failure of the administrators to incorporate individuals' visions. Some instructors expressed frustrations that they were not listened to and did not get adequate support during the change process and put the blame on the administration while the administrators thought they did their best and saw those who criticized the change initiatives as naysayers who did not want to change what they had been accustomed to. There were many other examples of such mental models that needed to be surfaced, discussed and changed for the improvement and learning of the organization.

Overall, the researcher concludes that there are problems in terms of the manifestation of discipline of Mental Models in Organization B. The organization needs to consider ways of developing the skills of reflection and skills of balancing advocacy and inquiry to cultivate this discipline across the organization.

5.1.4.3 Comparison of Organization A and Organization B in Terms of the Manifestation of the Discipline of Mental Models

In the lights of the findings of this study, the researcher concludes that both Organization A and Organization B are rather weak in the discipline of Mental Models.

Reflection is an essential skill that individuals must develop and apply in order to raise mental models to a conscious level and then test their validity and usefulness (Senge et al., 1994). Both Organization A and Organization B supported this aspect of the discipline of Mental Models through creating opportunities for individual and collective reflection. However, in both institutions there were several factors that impeded or challenged the examination and revision of mental models. In Organization A, these included scheduling and appropriations of time for forums for collective reflection, and a lack of quality time for individual reflection due to heavy workload. In addition, some forums for collective reflection such as meetings, course evaluations and teacher appraisals did not seem to allow for much effective reflection to take place mostly as a result of a lack of a dialogue and discussion in the organization. Similarly, in Organization B, a lack of quality time for reflection, and inability of some of the staff to reflect properly served to deter effective engagement in reflection.

Day (1994) and Burgoyne (1995) recommend that employees should feel free to speak their mind openly and honestly on important issues and inquire into each others' thinking in order for learning to take place. Unfortunately, this study found that both of the organizations also seemed to struggle with the skills of advocacy and inquiry, which are necessary to improve mental models. In both organizations, there were individuals who seemed to be lacking the appropriate skills to articulate their thinking and inquire into others as well as those who refrained from expressing their views and questioning others. What seemed to be lacking in both organizations was the capacity to surface, discuss and contrast mental models in a collegial, cooperative and productive environment, with respect for individuals and their ideas. In fact, the data revealed that both organizations had several

undiscussed perceptions and assumptions that needed to be discussed and addressed for the improvement and learning of the organization. This finding supported Watkins and Marsick's (1993) idea that inability to recognize and change existing mental models is an obstacle inhibiting learning. There was clearly a need for an effective leadership needed to encourage an open and truthful atmosphere with mutual respect for individuals and their ideas, individuals' beliefs and personalities.

In conclusion, it can be said that there are gaps in both organizations in several areas of the discipline of Mental Models. Both organizations need to address their weaknesses as regards the skills of reflection, and advocacy and inquiry.

5.1.5 Systems Thinking

In this part, first, conclusions reached regarding the discipline of Systems Thinking are presented for each organization. Then, a comparison is made between the two organizations.

5.1.5.1 Organization A

The study identified some principles of the discipline of Systems Thinking in Organization A; however, the organization still has several weaknesses preventing it from fully mastering this discipline.

Systems Thinking is the ability to take a systems perspective of organizational reality (Senge, 1990). One assumption underlying systemic thinking is that an organizational system has a capacity to adapt and maintain itself in the face of internal and external changes or circumstances (Schein, 1995). In alignment with this view, Organization A had some systems in place to be adaptive, flexible and responsive to the internal and external circumstances or changes. The organization employed various strategies including strategic planning, investigating the best practices of others in the external environment, benchmarking, and evaluating the existing practices. This showed support for Systems Thinking and should continue to be practiced.

Nevertheless, the study revealed perceptions that at times the organization tended to be rather slow in responding and adapting to internal or external circumstances or changes. This was not surprising given the large size of the institution, a perceived inadequacy of resources, and external mandates imposed by the University and the Higher Education Council. There were also times, however, when the organization seemed to act too quickly without really assessing the situation or considering the possible consequences of its actions. This was of particular concern to the researcher as systemic thinking requires the adoption of a view that change or behavior in one component or element has impact on other elements within the system, as well as on the system's desired outcomes (Senge, 1990). "Taking actions in one area without seeing its dynamic relationship to its effects" (Nevis et al., 1995, p. 8) may elicit unintended consequences and have a negative impact on organizational learning. Thus, the researcher concludes that the organization needs to work on this area to help develop the discipline of Systems Thinking across the organization.

Systems Thinking also ensures that decisions are made and spread after all sides, ideas, knowledge and insights are taken into consideration as everybody has "unique insight … and thus something to contribute to the whole" (Butcher et al., 2001). This study identified perceptions that sometimes decisions for organizational changes were being made without adequate involvement of the staff. The organization needs to foster an environment in which people feel more empowered to make decisions about their work. This would also help promote a sense of belongingness to the organization, which seemed to be lacking among the individuals.

One evidence to Systems Thinking is the use of feedback to "close the loops" and construct or reinforce learning (Senge, 1990). This study identified that there seemed to be a need for more open and fluid feedback channels and mechanisms in Organization A. The organization had various feedback mechanisms in place to collect information, input and suggestions from stakeholders, including students' Evaluation of Learning Questionnaire, and Course Evaluations by instructors; however, there were perceptions that follow-through in response to the input was

lacking, and that there was a need for more feedback in terms of both number and efficacy. This was another concern to the researcher as it seemed to worsen the already existing feeling of disconnectedness to the organization prevalent among the instructors.

The discipline of Systems Thinking requires "a shift from seeing parts to seeing wholes, from seeing people as helpless reactors to seeing them as active participants in shaping their reality, from reacting to the present to creating the future" (Senge, 1990, p.69). Both administrators and instructors were able to talk about many systemic issues that impacted teaching and learning, and see the interrelatedness of them, yet instructors described their connections as outsiders, not having much impact and control over the kind of work they did. This feeling of lack of belongingness to the organization and lack of power was evident in many of the metaphors used by instructors such as the images of 'factory,' 'computer,' 'work camp,' 'pyramid,' 'military service,' 'dust in the wind' and 'mental institution.' Administrators portrayed an interrelated view of the organization, describing themselves working closely with instructors through using metaphors such as a 'ship,' 'train,' 'circle,' 'flat structure,' and 'an organism with its components.' However, instructors perceived a distance between administrators and themselves, which was supported by metaphors like 'black and white,' 'people with masks,' and 'politicians and opposers.' The 'us versus them' mentality apparent in the organization did not seem to support systemic thinking as Systems Thinking worldview "dispels the 'us versus them' mentality by expanding the boundary of thinking. 'Us' and 'them' are part of the same system and thus responsible for both the problems and solutions" (Goodman, 2005).

One could argue that some of the previously reported problems such as the perceived lack of a dialogue and discussion among instructors and administrators, inadequate involvement of the staff in decision making, and in the development of the organization's vision could have contributed to the feeling of disconnectedness to the organization and lack of power prevalent among the instructors.

In addition, the consistent issue of a lack of time across all the other disciplines also emerged as a barrier to practicising Systems Thinking. In educational organizations, the focus is usually on keeping the organization on a daily basis. Educators and administrators wrestle with the daily activities required to accomplish instruction. This continuous "fixation on events," which is listed as one of the seven learning disabilities of an organization by Senge (1990), leaves little time and energy to reflect on the meaning and different aspects of the work. Organization A was no different in this regard. The organization was afforded some opportunities to set aside daily tasks of the organization to investigate other issues, but the study revealed perceptions that there was never enough time. The ongoing struggle with the present seemed to keep the organization from slowing down enough to reflect on the underlying systemic issues which could have a greater impact on the organization's operation such as student and teacher motivation, overreliance on tests, problems with facilities and instructional equipment, lack of genuine communication, and a lack of trust.

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concludes that although Organization A shows alignment with some principles of Systems Thinking, there are still several gaps in terms of the application of this discipline. The organization needs to especially address the issue of prevalent feeling of disconnectedness and lack of membership in the organization among instructors.

5.1.5.2 Organization B

The study identified that Organization B supports some principles of the discipline of Systems Thinking. However, there are still gaps in several areas critical to this discipline.

The results of the study demonstrated that Organization B had some systems in place to be adaptive, flexible and responsive to the internal and external circumstances or changes. Strategies to facilitate the organization's adaptiveness and responsiveness included strategic planning, investigating the best practices of others in the external environment, benchmarking, and collaboration and

interaction with stakeholders. This showed support for Systems Thinking and should continue to be exercised.

Nevertheless, the study revealed perceptions that at times the organization seemed to act too quickly without really assessing the situation or considering the possible consequences of its actions. An example of this was the recent renovation of instruction and the move towards 'content-based instruction.' For some, the transition seemed insurmountable because it was too sudden and they did not feel ready for it. Their lack of knowledge and the need for further training, coupled by the fact that they had never experienced such a change of this magnitude might have made them want to continue with what they had thought had been successful in the classroom, i.e., the "old way." They were reluctant to release the grammar-centered instruction with ready-made textbooks that had formed the pillars of the program. Others had been supportive of the new 'content-based instruction,' which meant more focus on skills and the replacement of old textbooks with in-house made materials. The gap between those who questioned the effectiveness of change and those who were interested in change grew wider, causing conversations to become hostile or cease altogether. The result was severe tension and hostility between the members of the organization. In Organization B, what the administration originally started with good intentions in an attempt to restructure, and what could have been a successful change experience turned into a battlefield. What seemed to be lacking in this organization was, in Senge's (1990) terms, the ability to take a systems perspective of organizational reality. Several issues that seemed to have an impact on the change attempt should have been considered before undertaking such a large-scale change. The mental model of what had been considered an appropriate education by some that had taken root over the years in the organization needed to shift, first. Many needed sustained coaching in learning new skills and reorienting and integrating themselves to the new method. By making more time for discussion and feedback, everyone could have gained a better understanding of others' perceptions, looked at the larger picture and turned this into a successful learning experience. The consistent issue of a lack of time and ongoing struggle with the present seemed to keep the organization from slowing

down enough to reflect on the underlying systemic issues which seemed to have an effect on the organization's operation.

This study also identified some problems regarding the feedback channels and mechanisms in Organization B. The organization had various feedback mechanisms in place to collect information, input and suggestions from stakeholders; however, follow-through in response to the input was lacking, and that there was a need for more feedback in terms of both number and efficacy.

Furthermore, the study revealed a lack of a sense of unity and harmony within the organization. Both administrators and instructors were able to talk about many systemic issues that impacted teaching and learning, yet most portrayed a fragmented view of the organization. This was evident in many of the metaphors and images used by both instructors and administrators, depicting the organization as consisting of opposing groups. Administrators together with some instructors separated themselves from others referring to them as naysayers, not wanting to change or improve while those so-called naysayers felt they were not listened to and did not get adequate support, and put the blame on the administration. The images and metaphors such as 'aliens,' 'sharks swimming around,' 'closed box,' 'bunch of housewives' and a 'thorny bush' all supported this 'us versus them' mentality prevalent in the organization. The 'us versus them' mentality did not support the discipline of Systems Thinking. It could be argued that this was mainly because of the 'culture of blame,' one of the learning disabilities of an organization listed by Senge (1990), which pervaded the organization. However, Systems Thinking shows us that "there is no outside; that you and the cause of your problems are part of a single system. The cure lies in your relationship with your 'enemy'" (Senge, 1990, p. 67).

Overall, Organization B made some progress towards Systems Thinking, but there is evidence to suggest that the organization was not really successful at acting from a comprehensive systems approach.

5.1.5.3 Comparison of Organization A and Organization B in Terms of the Manifestation of the Discipline of Systems Thinking

In the lights of the findings of this study, it can be concluded that although both Organization A and Organization B have some elements of the discipline of Systems Thinking, they have many weaknesses preventing them from fully mastering this discipline.

Both organizations seemed to have some systems in place to be adaptive, flexible and responsive to the internal and external circumstances or changes, which is one of the essential components of the discipline of Systems Thinking. Both employed similar strategies such as strategic planning, investigating the best practices of others in the external environment, benchmarking, and collaboration and interaction with stakeholders.

Nevertheless, the study revealed some obstacles that detracted both organizations from practising Systems Thinking optimally. In addition to perceptions that Organization A tended to be rather slow in responding and adapting to internal or external circumstances or changes at times, there were also perceptions that both organizations sometimes tended to act too quickly without really assessing the situation or considering the possible consequences of its actions on all parties. This had serious impacts especially in Organization B when the organization had undergone a big change. Several issues that seemed to have an impact on the change attempt had gone unnoticed or undiscussed, leading to a failure of what could turn into a successful learning experience.

Furthermore, the study identified some other barriers to the discipline of Systems Thinking in both Organization A and Organization B. These included a lack of more open and fluid feedback channels and mechanisms, inadequacy of involvement of staff in decisions, and a lack of quality time to examine and address many underlying systemic issues that could have an impact on the functioning of organizations.

Moreover, the prevalent feeling of disconnectedness and lack of belongingness to the organization, which seemed to be of greater concern in Organization A compared to Organization B, and the 'us versus them' mentality, which, unlike Organization A, was apparent not only among instructors but also administrators, did not seem to support systemic thinking. Clearly, the 'tunnel vision,' referred to as the inability to see the interdependency of the organization by Watkins and Marsick (1993) was evident in both organizations.

To conclude, the data collected from both instructors and administrators suggest that both Organization A and Organization B have several gaps in their way of mastering the discipline of Systems Thinking.

5.2 Summary of Conclusions

This study identified that there are indicators that both Organization A and Organization B have come closer to some principles of Senge's Learning Organization model. As Table 5.1 illustrates, Organization A is doing somewhat better than Organization B as regards the disciplines of Team Learning and Personal Mastery; however, there is no considerable difference between the organizations in terms of the disciplines of Shared Vision, Mental Models and Systems Thinking. Both organizations still have impediments in terms of the development and achievement of personal visions, and development, growth and learning of individuals. The lack of a shared vision is a common issue in both. There are also problems in terms of surfacing and questioning mental models, and dialogue and discussion. In addition, both organizations have still difficulty acting from a comprehensive systems approach.

Overall, it could be concluded that both organizations are supporting learning, but struggling to integrate learning systematically. Both are evolving towards a learning organization, but have not yet institutionalized the five disciplines to an ideal state. These organizations should become more familiar with the five disciplines of a learning organization. There needs to be a concentrated effort by the administration

of both organizations to integrate the five disciplines in the organization in a more systematic way.

Table 5.1

Overall Comparison of Organization A and Organization B in Terms of Five Disciplines

	Organization A	Organization B
Team Learning	√√√	√√
Personal Mastery	√√√	√√
Shared Vision	√	√
Mental Models	√	√
Systems Thinking	√√	√√

√√√: most support, √: least support

5.3 Some Analytical Generalizations

The analytical generalizations that could be drawn from this study can be summarized as follows:

- Some commonalities are observed in higher education settings regarding characteristics of the Learning Organization they possess, independent of whether they are public or private institutions.

- Learning organizations depend on the participation of many individuals in a collective vision (Watkins & Marsick, 1993). The two settings of higher education examined in this study shared a commonality as they both lacked the capacity to hold a shared picture of the future that all individual members seek to create, which impeded the development of the discipline of Shared Vision. A clear mission and a vision are crucial to the development of a higher education institution into a learning organization.

- Learning Organizations are also places where individuals have the capacity to present their own mental models, contrast them with those of others, and discuss differences safely and productively in order for true learning to take place. The two settings of higher education investigated in this study shared another commonality as both of them struggled in terms of the surfacing and questioning of mental models. In order to learn in deep and fundamental ways, higher education institutions must discuss the undiscussable, and question things that go unaddressed.

- A learning organization engages in systemic thinking. Another commonality the higher education settings studied had was that they both had difficulty acting from a comprehensive systems approach. Lack of adequate staff involvement in decision making, lack of open and fluid feedback mechanisms, and an inability to see the system as a whole were important barriers to learning in these higher education settings.

- Private higher education entities which have to respond to market pressures have an increased incentive to make investments in the learning of individuals and teams. The private higher education setting researched in this study supported Team Learning through making a structural arrangement that lent itself to more team learning relationships. Moreover, individual development and learning were more strongly encouraged and reinforced, which resulted in more interest or involvement in developmental activities. On the other hand, the public higher education entity seemed to make fewer efforts to invest in learning of individuals and teams as it had a more centralized structure, leaving little opportunity for collaborative work and learning, and less reinforcement on staff development. This is principally because the administration had less of an opportunity to engage in significant staff development opportunities because the staff in question were civil servants. This may suggest a relative disadvantage to public entities wishing to engage in promotion of learning of individuals and teams.

- Leadership is influential in the formation of a shared vision. The leadership in both settings involved in this study lacked the capacity to enlist the commitment of many to the vision of their organization and this impeded the development of the discipline of Shared Vision.

- Lack of capacity to surface and discuss mental models hinders the development of a shared vision.

- Speaking one's mind openly and inquiry are less likely to occur in organizations which are embedded in cultures with high power distance such as Turkish culture.

- The failure to provide staff with adequate support to ensure that they possess the knowledge, skills, and confidence necessary to effectively implement a new initiative challenges the development of a shared vision.

- The ability to surface and test mental models can catalyze successful change.

- Lack of support for the creation and pursuit of personal visions discourage faculty to strive for personal mastery.

- Provision of self-development opportunities accelerates Personal Mastery, which, in turn, improves Organizational Learning

- Lack of support for individuals' own professional development plans may lead to a decline in commitment to learning.

- Inadequate support in terms of time or money hinders development of personal mastery.

- Having a structural arrangement enabling individuals to work together fosters team learning. The teaching-unit-based structural arrangement adopted by the private higher education setting in this study contributed to better team learning relations.

- A too bureaucratic structure could hinder the implementation of a learning organization. The bureaucratic structure of the public higher education setting involved in this study, with set curricula, testing and centrally-prepared materials, impeded the mastery of Team Learning, which, in turn, affected the capacity of the organization to learn.

- Absence of reward systems and incentives may lead to a decline in commitment to individual and team learning.

- Dialogue and discussion necessary for the development of Team Learning is likely to be less effective in organizations embedded in cultures with high power distance, such as Turkish culture.

- Lack of resources limits the capacity of higher education institutions to learn.

- Drastic change may impede learning capacity of higher education institutions.

- Double loop learning is crucial in order to improve organizational learning in higher education settings.

- Faculty teaching load has an effect on the level of organizational learning.

- Individual, team and organizational learning are encouraged through reward and recognition systems.

- External mandates in higher education institutions prevent the application of Systems Thinking to several facets of the organization's operations.

- Size of the institution has an influence on the learning of an organization.

- Leadership style is influential in organizational learning. Examples of perceived authoritarian leadership style hindered dialogue and discussion in the private higher education setting studied. If higher education institutions want to develop into learning organizations, leadership must play an instrumental role.

- A culture of trust is crucial to the development of a learning organization.

- In general, concepts of organizational learning are present in higher education settings. There is willingness and efforts to transform into learning organizations. Both of the cases examined in this study were using practices that are characteristics of learning organizations. However, both are struggling to integrate learning systematically. Higher education settings such as the ones studied here need to show greater efforts toward becoming Learning Organizations.

5.4 Implications and Recommendations for Practice

Below the researcher will discuss the implications and recommendations for practice.

5.4.1 Organization A

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations for Organization A are proposed under each discipline:

Team Learning

Organization A had the structural arrangement and several opportunities for individuals to work and learn together, all of which promoted Team Learning. These should continue to be practised.

However, team learning efforts were threatened by a lack of a dialogue and discussion largely between instructors and administrators in this organization. Therefore, the organization should focus on implementing the necessary tools to develop productive dialogue and discussion among team members. Individuals including administrators need professional development directed at communicating effectively with others for the healthy functioning of teams. As Senge et al. (2000) suggest, the organization may need to consider using a facilitator in teams to promote dialogue and discussion through modeling and provision of skills necessary to enhance the ability of a team to learn together. As discussed in the relevant literature, the leaders in Organization A may especially want to work on

building a climate of trust where individuals and teams feel respected and valued for their ideas, where there is open and honest sharing of ideas without fear of reprisals, and where different ways of thinking about common problems are encouraged, which are all necessary to enhance the ability of the teams to enter into productive dialogue and skillful discussion. "Rewarding new ideas and creating an atmosphere where new ideas are listened to and encouraged should improve team learning" (Shepherd, Tesch & Hsu, 2006, p. 199). This would also help mediate the perceived lack of colleagueship largely between administrators and instructors.

There are multiple forms of collaborative practices occurring in Organization A. Yet, at the same time, there are several barriers to meaningful interactions and collaborative work in this organization. Leaders in Organization A should, first of all, reconsider scheduling and appropriations of time for collaborative work. They should also think about ways of providing incentives for work involving collaboration and rewards for the teams for their organizational contribution. This would also help alleviate the present situation of individualism and a sense of competition existing among some individuals in the organization. Another barrier to collaborative work and learning in Organization A, which the organization needs to consider, is how to eliminate the sense of alienation on the part of some of the foreign staff, resulting from language difference between native and non-native speakers.

There is a variation in terms of the nature and amount of collaborative work in the organization. It should be underscored that the variation that characterized collaborative practice seemed to be reflected in circumstances at the teaching unit level. While in some units there was more evidence of collaborative work, in others this seemed to be lacking. This may stifle the cultivation of Team Learning across the whole organization. There needs to be standardization throughout the organization in terms of the practice of this discipline. Given the perceptions of instructors and administrators, this situation seems to be caused by especially the variation in the quality of leadership displayed. A perceived top-down authoritarian approach and a lack of leadership that was empowering in some teaching units seem to be acting as a barrier to effective collaborative work and learning in this

organization. Therefore, it is recommended that the leaders get training directed at how to get people to function as a group. It is also suggested that the organization examines the degree of and underlying reasons for the variation among units and take actions in order to ensure standardization across the whole organization in terms of collaborative and team work.

According to Senge (1990), one of the dimensions crucial to Team Learning is cooperative and interactive relationships with other organizational teams. The study revealed perceptions that, in this organization, there is not enough collaboration, coordination and interaction among teaching units. Therefore, developing systems to share information and learning with other teams and providing more time and opportunities for collaborative work among staff across teams in the organization may support Team Learning.

Personal Mastery

The support provided to the staff by the organization for professional development, growth and learning of individuals, and considerable level of interest and commitment by the staff in their own development and growth should continue in Organization A for the further development of the discipline of Personal Mastery.

There are many opportunities available for the staff to increase their knowledge and skills, and to develop themselves, but it is evident that a lack of quality time, and struggle with time management due to heavy workload stifle the personal mastery of individuals in this organization. Leaders in learning organizations invest time, energy and money far beyond what they consider appropriate in the development of individual capacity (Johnston & Caldwell, 2001). It is, therefore, suggested that the organization reconsider scheduling and appropriations of time for the opportunities provided for the staff. Moreover, as the organizational learning literature suggests leaders must also provide a wide range of learning options to meet individual preferences and styles (Palm & Nelson, 2000). The organization should, therefore, create further training for those who would like to develop themselves not only in English Language Teaching, but also in other areas such as team building, motivation, stress management, interpersonal skills and computer skills.

The leaders in Organization A should also look into the real reasons for the lack of interest and motivation by some of the individuals in their development and learning as perceived by some administrators, and consider ways of encouraging and motivating those individuals. The leaders may want to have one-on-one conversations with those individuals to investigate the real reasons and to listen to their aspirations, without creating an atmosphere of threat and fear. The organization may also think about providing additional mechanisms such as financial or non-financial incentives to increase their motivation to learn and grow.

It is clearly evident that there is a sense of disbelief among several instructors in the intentions of the administrators to support the development, growth and learning of individuals in the organization. Some of the reasons for this included a lack of support by the organization for professional development plans outside the institution, and feeling that some had of being forced to participate in training courses or programs without consent or being asked their opinion. In a Learning Organization, the growth and learning of individuals should be fostered, but its shape and direction must be up to the individuals themselves (Hughes & Kritsonis, 2006). It is important that the leaders in Organization A should avoid taking a position about what stakeholders should want or how they should view the world (Senge et al., 2000) and stay away from policies and approaches that tend to block individuals' intrinsic motivation to learn and to develop themselves (Senge et al., 1994). The leaders in this organization should also give the staff the message that the professional development, growth and learning of each individual in the organization is crucial for the development and learning of the organization, and follow a systematic, purposeful approach ensuring that each aspect of the workplace is conducive to the development, growth and learning of the individual.

One of the requirements of the discipline of Personal Mastery is learning to keep a personal vision and creating the necessary capacities to achieve that vision (Senge, 1990). While a considerable number of individuals in Organization A held a personal vision, there was no evidence suggesting that this was encouraged specifically by the organization. In fact, the study revealed that there were some problems in terms of the development and cultivation of personal visions as a direct

consequence of the organization, which was evidenced by a group of individuals who lacked a personal vision and a group of individuals who, despite having a vision, seemed to lose their willingness and enthusiasm to move towards their vision, for reasons such as 'feeling discouraged by the negative attitude of the administration,' a 'lack of support by management to accomplish their vision,' a 'lack of trust in the staff,' 'having to compromise one's vision in this organization,' and 'being told how to develop.' Thus, in order for the discipline of Personal Mastery to develop optimally in Organization A, it is strongly recommended that the creation and pursuit of personal visions should be supported through fostering an appropriate organizational climate (Senge et al., 1994). Leaders in this organization must ask every individual questions that draw forth their aspirations. These questions may include what they wish to accomplish, what strengths and liabilities they have and what help is needed from the organization (Palm & Nelson, 2000). In fact, the study indicated that the participants were well aware of their strengths, and needs to achieve their vision and the barriers standing in their way to achieving it. Some needed support and encouragement from the organization in many ways. The "creative tension" Senge describes was clearly evident in descriptions of many participants. What the leaders in Organization A, therefore, need to do is, by being a teacher and a coach, to cultivate and unleash creative tension in each individual and direct it toward taking effective actions and produce results (Larsen et al., 1996). Moreover, leaders in this organization should "model behaviors and attitudes that reflect their personal commitment to growth and development" (Appelbaum & Goransson, 1997). The administrators involved in this study all had a good sense of their own vision and their visions involved many characteristics of a Learning Organization. Thus, they should describe what they want to achieve with the members of the organization, create symbols to communicate it and make public the goals they will set to guide their actions to realize their life's purpose (Synder, 1994).

251

Shared Vision

Shared vision means that individuals involved have a sense of ownership for their vision and are committed to it. A learning organization cannot exist without a shared vision as it "provides the focus and energy for learning" (Senge, 1990, p. 206).

In Organization A, it is clear that there was a lack of a shared vision. Many individuals across the organization did not feel that they were supporting a common purpose. Several reasons seemed to have contributed to this. In the minds of individuals, the vision was unknown, unclear or unrealistic. There were also perceptions that individuals' personal visions were not adequately incorporated into the vision of the organization. The efforts of the leaders to build and spread a shared vision seemed to have been inadequate. Senge (1994) clearly states that it is the leader who is ultimately responsible for the collective development and support of the organization's shared vision to foster organizational learning. Thus, in order to make individuals understand and appreciate the organization's vision, and get their commitment, the leaders in Organization A should engage in activities which would ensure that the vision and the mission of the organization are effectively communicated to all the individuals.

The organization is reported to have a vision, which is embedded in its mission statement displayed in the Weekly Bulletin and some documents such as the Staff Handbook. However, not everybody should be expected to infer the vision of the organization from the mission statement. The vision should be clearly specified, and both the vision and mission should be displayed in various places within the organization where everybody can see them. The leaders should also make use of every opportunity to reiterate and explain the organization's vision and mission, and how the decisions and actions taken reflect the overall goals. It is important that they communicate the hope and dream of the vision through their daily actions - "walking one's talk" (Deal & Patterson, 1994 in Brown, Lemus & Dollbaum, 2006; Sashkin, 1988).

In order to ensure that the staff are more committed to the vision of the organization, the leaders in the organization must not only share their own visions with the members of the organization but also encourage them to share their personal visions, too. Designing and evolving ongoing processes "in which, people at every level and, in every role, can speak from the heart about what really matters to them and be heard – by senior management and each other" is at the heart of building a shared vision (Senge, 1994, p.299). Therefore, the leaders in the organization must take the necessary time to listen to their aspirations and hopes. Based on these visions, the organization's collective vision should evolve. The leaders should also give individuals the message that they are always free to express their thoughts about purpose, meaning and vision without any fear of reprisals. If the members of the organization feel that their personal visions are reflected in the organization's overall vision, they would establish better ownership of the vision.

In short, the leaders in this organization should work collaboratively with the people making up the organization to develop a shared vision through which individuals can channel their efforts.

Mental Models

Organization A supported learning organization principles of Mental Models through creating opportunities for individual and collective reflection; however, scheduling and appropriations of time for these should be reconsidered. The organization may want to set up systems and procedures and allocate work time for individual reflection. The organization could also provide training to improve the skills of its employees to reflect individually and collectively. Case scenarios and reviews might be used to encourage effective reflection across the organization. As Senge (1990) suggests, the techniques of "leaps of abstraction" or "the left-hand-column" as was discussed earlier, could be used to practice reflection.

The organization seemed to struggle with using the skills of advocacy and inquiry effectively, which are necessary to master the discipline of Mental Models. It is recommended that individuals in the organization including the administrators get

training related to advocating their views, active listening, questioning others' opinions and views, and how to achieve a balance between advocacy and inquiry.

The leaders in the organization should encourage an open and truthful atmosphere, valuing the importance of questioning how things are done and allowing people to speak openly and honestly about the organization and about dangerous and discomforting subjects safely and productively (Senge et al., 2000). This would allow anyone in the organization to put forward ideas of improvement and facilitate the development and learning of the organization.

The study revealed that there were many rigidly held assumptions and generalizations held by the members of the organization. Therefore, mental models across the organization need to be addressed and strategies to deal with outdated or wrong mental models need to be developed.

Systems Thinking

Organization A supported learning organization principles of Systems Thinking through employing strategies such as strategic planning, investigating the best practices of others in the external environment, benchmarking, and evaluating their existing practices. These should continue to be practiced.

The study revealed perceptions that the organization at times tended to be rather slow in responding and adapting to internal or external circumstances or changes. The systems, processes and resources in place should be reevaluated and improved in order to develop the organization's capacity and readiness in the face of internal and external changes or circumstances.

The study also revealed perceptions that the organization tended to act too quickly at times without really assessing the situation or considering possible consequences of its actions. As Nevis et al. (1995) suggest, the organization needs to learn to think broadly about the "interdependency of organizational variables" and take the larger picture into consideration. The organization should develop tools and

strategies to analyze, assess and reflect on the possible consequences of a change or action in one area on other sub-systems.

The organization had various feedback mechanisms in place to collect information, input and suggestions from stakeholders; however, there were perceptions that follow-through in response to the input was lacking, and that there was a need for more feedback in terms of both number and efficacy. Therefore, in order to support Systems Thinking, the organization should evaluate its existing feedback system, and strengthen it to have more open and fluid feedback channels and mechanisms.

The prevalent feeling of disconnectedness and lack of membership in the organization among instructors do not seem to support systemic thinking. In order to drive out the sense of disconnectedness to the organization among individuals, the leaders in this organization should make them feel that they are essential for the functioning and improvement of the organization. This could be done by involving individuals more in decision making processes, empowering them more to make decisions about their work, showing that their feedback and input are valued and considered, and informing them about the to-be state in a timely manner. The study showed that while the individuals saw themselves as outsiders, they were able to talk about many systemic issues that impacted teaching and learning, see the interrelatedness of them, and suggest ways of improving the system. The leaders in the organization, therefore, should provide more opportunities that would allow anyone in the organization to openly discuss systemic issues that could have an impact on the organization's operation, and to put forward ideas of improvement for the healthier functioning of the system.

The organization must also dispel the 'us versus them' mentality prevalent among individuals (Goodman, 2005). The leadership, especially the senior leadership, in the organization could be instrumental in this regard. They need to give the message that 'us' and 'them' are part of the same system and are working together for the development and learning of the organization. Some of the possible means and forums that could be used for this purpose could include more frequent individual or small-group face-to-face meetings or gatherings or informal chats, and

social activities. The leaders in this organization should also work on building a culture of trust within the organization, and try to get rid of the prevalent sense of fear of making mistakes and fear of reprisals among individuals. All of these would help bridge the distance apparent between instructors and administrators and improve colleagueship, which are necessary for the proper functioning of the organization.

The senior administrators might want to consider getting involved in teaching activities. This would help them to improve their understanding of the teaching and learning processes in the organization, better understand the students' and teachers' perspectives, look at things more holistically and objectively, and make better decisions and judgments for the improvement of the organization.

The consistent issue of a lack of time across all the other disciplines also emerged as a barrier to practising Systems Thinking. The organization seemed to be engaged in what Argyris and Schon (1978) call 'single-loop learning,' which does not address the underlying causes of the problems. In actuality, the study revealed that there were many systemic issues in this organization such as increased student apathy, disinterest and lack of motivation, lack of teacher motivation, a lack of a shared vision, and a lack of a culture of trust, which all need to be addressed. There was little time available to deal with such underlying systemic issues which could be inhibiting potential learning and growth of the organization. It is clear that the organization needs to be afforded more quality time to set aside the daily chores of the organization and to investigate many of such underlying systemic issues through engaging in 'double-loop learning' which involves questioning and altering organization's underlying norms, policies, procedures and objectives to bring about transformative change.

5.4.2 Organization B

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations for Organization B are proposed:

Team Learning

Organization B supported Team Learning through provision of opportunities for individuals to work and learn together. These should continue to be encouraged. Despite the existence of opportunities and forums for collaborative work and learning in the organization, the number, and frequency of such activities seemed to be inadequate. Most of the collaborative work among staff were limited to staff-room interactions prior to lessons and during break times, which were found to be occasional and inadequate. In addition, the nature of the program with a set curricula, exams and centrally-prepared materials seemed to limit the amount of collaborative work taking place in the organization. Therefore, the organization should develop more tools, strategies and systems, and reconsider directing more resources to strengthen its ways of promoting team work, collaborative practices and group learning. As discussed in the relevant literature, it is suggested that bringing individuals together more often, having frequent problem solving sessions, arranging course preparation times, or encouraging peer observations or team teaching may all support Team Learning. The organization may also consider shortening some days in their School calendar to provide time for teachers to meet and work in teams.

The organization may also consider altering the organizational structure into one, similar to the unit-based structure in Organization A, which would allow for more collaborative work and learning. Moreover, it is also suggested that the administrators think about ways of providing incentives for work involving collaboration and rewards for the teams for their organizational contribution. This would also help alleviate the lack of interest and commitment of some of the staff in collaborative work.

This organization, like Organization A, seemed to struggle as regards the practice of dialogue and skillful discussion, which are necessary to master the discipline of Team Learning. There were examples of inconsistent dialogue and discussion within the organization. Thus, the organization should focus on implementing the necessary tools to develop productive dialogue and discussion. Individuals might be

provided training directed at communicating effectively with others for the healthy functioning of teams. As Senge et al. (2000) suggest, the organization may also need to consider using a facilitator in teams to promote dialogue and discussion through modeling and provision of skills necessary to enhance the ability of a team to learn together.

Personal Mastery

The support provided to the staff by the organization for professional development, growth and learning of individuals should continue in Organization B for the development of the discipline of Personal Mastery.

Several opportunities are available for the staff in Organization B to increase their knowledge and skills, and to develop themselves. However, it is evident that some factors such as a lack of quality time to attend development activities due to tight teaching schedules; inadequate number of teacher trainers; and inadequacy and ineffectiveness of the incentive systems to encourage and reinforce individual development, growth and learning seemed to detract the development, growth and learning of individuals in this organization. Therefore, it is suggested that in order to further develop this discipline, leaders in Organization B should reconsider directing more resources to strengthen the organization's ways of promoting individuals' development, growth and learning. As Richards (2005) suggests, it may be a good idea to use regular newsletters, bulletins, or e-mail communication in which colleagues can pass on experiences, exchange ideas and report on successful teaching experiences, particularly for those unable to participate in developmental activities, may be a good idea to support individual development and learning.

The study revealed a perceived lack of interest in professional development, growth and learning by some of the staff. The leaders in Organization B should look into the real reasons for the lack of interest and motivation by these individuals in their development and learning, and consider ways of encouraging and motivating those individuals. It may be a good idea for the leaders in the organization to have one-

on-one conversations with those individuals to investigate the underlying reasons and to listen to their aspirations, without creating an atmosphere of threat and fear. They may also think about providing additional mechanisms such as financial or non-financial incentives to increase their motivation to learn and grow.

One condition that seemed to detract both organizations from practising Personal Mastery optimally was related to development and achievement of personal visions. Despite a sizeable group of individuals who held a personal vision and who seemed enthusiastic about achieving their vision, the existence of a group of individuals with no vision, coupled by the existence of another group of individuals who seemed to lose their willingness and enthusiasm to move towards their vision rather contradicted Senge's concept of the Learning Organization. The leadership in Organization B could be instrumental in supporting the creation and pursuit of personal visions through fostering an appropriate organizational climate. As suggested in the relevant literature, leaders in the organization should cultivate and unleash creative tension in each individual by talking to them individually and asking questions to learn about their aspirations, strengths and weaknesses, and what help is needed from the organization. In addition, they should share and communicate what they want to achieve with the members of the organization.

Shared Vision

The results of this study showed that similar to Organization A, Organization B lacked a shared vision. Not all people across the organization felt that they were supporting a common purpose. Several reasons seemed to have contributed to this. The vision was unclear to some or unrealistic and top-down for others. There were also perceptions that the vision of the organization did not really encompass individuals' personal visions as the leaders had not taken the necessary time to listen to individuals' aspirations and hopes. Contrary to what they believed, the efforts of the leaders to build and spread a shared vision seemed to have been inadequate. Therefore, in order to make individuals understand and appreciate the organization's vision, and get their commitment, the leaders in Organization B are recommended the following:

259

The leaders should take every opportunity to focus the attention of the staff on the organization's mission and vision. Communication channels where people can easily and freely talk, and informal meetings and gatherings could be good opportunities for people to talk about what they commonly care about. By constantly aligning conversation and action with the stated mission and vision of the school leaders can build unity in purpose, values and goals (Thompson, 2004). The leaders in the organization should constantly give the people the message that they are always free to express their thoughts about purpose, meaning and vision without any fear of reprisals.

Organization B has a vision and mission statement displayed on its webpage. However, it is also suggested that both the vision and mission should be displayed in various places within the organization where everybody can see them.

In order to enlist the commitment of the staff in the vision of the organization, the leaders in the organization must not only share their own visions with the members of the organization but also encourage them to share their personal vision, too. By taking into account the perspectives, personal goals and ideas of the individuals, a common mission guiding the short and long term planning and functioning of the organization should evolve (TLO, 2005).

Mental Models

Organization B supported learning organization principles of Mental Models through creating opportunities for individual and collective reflection. These should continue to be practised. However, a lack of quality time for reflection, and inability of some of the staff to reflect properly emerged as barriers to this aspect of Mental Models. The organization may consider setting up procedures and allocating work time for individual reflection. It is also recommended that the organization provide training to improve the skills of its employees to reflect individually and collectively.

This organization had some problems with the skills of advocacy and inquiry, which are necessary to develop the discipline of Mental Models. The organization may consider providing training opportunities for the individual members directed at advocating views, active listening, questioning others' opinions and views, and how to achieve a balance between advocacy and inquiry.

The study revealed many rigidly held undiscussed assumptions and generalizations held by the members of the organization. Thus, it is recommended that leaders in the organization create forums and opportunities allowing individuals to reveal, discuss and compare their mental models safely and productively.

Systems Thinking

Organization B, like Organization A, developed some strategies to be adaptive, flexible and responsive to the internal and external circumstances or changes, including strategic planning, investigating the best practices of others in the external environment, benchmarking, and evaluating their existing practices. These should continue to be practiced.

The study revealed perceptions that the organization sometimes tended to act too quickly without really assessing the situation or considering possible consequences of its actions. This does not support systemic view. Thus, the organization should learn to look at the larger picture, and develop tools and strategies to analyze, assess and reflect on the possible consequences of a change or action in one area on other sub-systems.

There were various feedback mechanisms in Organization B; however, there were perceptions that follow-through in response to the input was lacking, and that there was a need for more feedback in terms of both number and efficacy. Thus, the organization needs to develop more open and fluid feedback channels and mechanisms.

Many of the individuals including the administrators presented a fragmented view of the organization throughout the interviews. The 'us versus them' mentality was

prevalent even among the administrators. "The enemy is out there"- one of the learning disabilities Senge (1990) mentions- was clearly evident in this organization. The members of the organization must get rid of these mental models in order for the organization to become a learning organization. The leadership in the organization could be instrumental in this regard. First of all, they should dispel the prevailing 'us versus them' mentality among individuals. They need to give the message that 'us' and 'them' are part of the same system and are working together for the development and learning of the organization. Some of the possible means and forums that could be used for this purpose could include more frequent individual or small-group face-to-face meetings or gatherings or informal chats, and social activities.

Participants talked about many systemic issues that seemed to impact the functioning of the organization. However, there was never enough time to deal with such issues. It is clear that, like Organization A, Organization B needs to engage in double-loop learning. Therefore, the organization should be afforded more quality time to set aside the daily chores of the organization and to investigate many of such underlying systemic issues that may be affecting the organization's operation. It is recommended that the leaders in the organization provide more opportunities for individuals to come together to openly discuss systemic issues, and to put forward ideas of improvement for the healthier functioning of the system.

5. 5   Implications and Recommendations for Further Research

Studies examining the levels of organizational learning in higher education settings are very scarce. In this respect, despite its limitations, this study also made a contribution to the sparse body of learning organization literature within the higher education arena. Painting a picture of two organizations, which are part of higher education institutions, in terms of learning practices, and conditions that promote and detract from learning may provide meaningful case studies from which other institutions can learn and grow.

This study attempted to understand in-depth the learning practices at the two selected settings. The feedback that this study provides may help the organizations investigated to further the development and learning of their organizations. It may be prudent for the educators and leaders in these organizations to critically look at the learning processes in their organizations, work on their strengths and the barriers to learning identified in this study, and engage in possible future initiatives to consider in their continual attempt to learn, adapt and improve.

As mentioned in detail earlier, this study used Senge's framework of the Learning Organization. In general, this framework proved useful in terms of determining which characteristics of learning organization the two settings of higher education institutions involved in this study possess. However, its application as a framework is worthy of further investigation and confirmation as the study identified a number of Learning Organization characteristics that seemed to be inconsistent with Turkish culture. There were problems in the organizations studied with regard to skills such as the ability to speak one's mind openly and inquire into others' opinions, and the ability to enter into effective dialogue and discussion necessary for learning to occur. Given that Turkish culture is characterized as a high power distance culture (Hofstede, 1984 as cited in Nichols et al., 2001), where supervisors tend to be autocratic, and subordinates tend to be afraid of their supervisors and authorities (Li, 2007), such skills may be very difficult to effectively apply. Therefore, based on these inconsistencies, concepts of the Learning Organization developed by Senge may need to be reviewed in the light of culture construct.

In addition, this study found that although some commonalities are observed in private and public higher education settings regarding characteristics of the Learning Organization they possess, some characteristics of the Learning Organization found less support in the public higher education setting than the private higher education setting due to its certain characteristics (bureaucratic, more centralized structure, comparatively limited resources). These results imply that some concepts of Senge's model of the Learning Organization may be less applicable in public educational organizations. However, that does not mean that learning is absent in these organizations. Therefore, Senge's framework may need

to be reviewed by taking into consideration the limitations of public educational entities so that it could be broadly applicable across all types of organizations.

Further, there are different ways of analyzing learning organizations. The framework used to assess the degree to which the two higher education settings are learning organizations is the one developed by Senge. The conceptualization of the learning organization using a different framework may lead to different findings. Thus, further research could be conducted using a different framework to assess the level of learning in each site under the study. The results could provide a means of comparison with the information gathered in this study.

Moreover, the sample of this study was limited to the perceptions of the administrators and instructors working at the institutions under study. To ascertain the perceptions of other stakeholders such as the students and other staff in the organization, a replication of the study could be conducted. Their perspectives could provide better insights into the manifestation of the learning disciplines in the organizations studied.

Also, the data for this study were gathered only through in-depth semi structured interviews with the participants. A further extension of the study can be followed by other qualitative research data collection methods such as observations or document analysis in order to increase the utility of the study.

It might be also interesting to carry out further quantitative studies with larger scopes surveying Turkish higher education institutions to investigate which characteristics of learning organizations they possess.

Finally, the organizations that were the focus of this study were parts of the two leading universities in Turkey- one public and one private. Both settings of higher education had gaps across all the disciplines of a learning organization. It would be interesting to replicate this study in other similar contexts to determine if they possess similar characteristics to the organizations in this study.

REFERENCES

Abu-Tineh, A. (2003). *Exploring the relationship between the perceived leadership style of principals and their teachers' practice of the five disciplines of learning schools*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Florida State University College of Education, Florida, USA.

Ağaoğlu, E. (2006). The reflection of the learning organization concept to School of Education [Electronic version]. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education-TOJDE, 7* (1), 132-148. Retrieved September 30, 2006, from tojde.anadolu.edu.tr/tojde21/pdf/article_12.pdf.

Alavi, S. B. & McCormick, J. (2003). *Some cultural considerations for applying the learning organization model to Iranian organizations*. Paper presented at Tehran International Management Conference, Tehran, Iran.

Appelbaum, S. H., & Goransson, L. (1997). Transformational and adaptive learning within the learning organization: A framework for research and application. *Learning Organization, 4*(3), 115-128.

April, K.A. (1999). Leading through communication, conversation and dialogue. *Leadership and Organization Development Journal, 20*(5), 231-242.

Argyris, C., & Schön, D. (1978). *Organizational learning: A theory of action perspective*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Argyris, C. (1990). *Overcoming organizational defenses: Facilitating organizational learning*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Argyris, C. (1992). *On organizational learning*. Massachusetts, USA: Blackwell Publishers.

Bamburg, J. D. (2001). *Learning, learning organizations, and leadership: Implications for the year 2050*. Retrieved September 15, 2005, from http://www.newhorizons.org/trans/bamburg.htm.

Barth, R. B. (1991). *Improving schools from within: Teachers, parents and principals can make the difference*. San Francisco: Jossey-Based.

Bauman, G. L., & Bensimon E. M. (2002). *The promotion of organizational learning through the use of routine data*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, Sacramento, California.

Beeby, M., & Booth, B. (2000). Networks and inter-organizational learning: A critical review. *The Learning Organization, 7*(2), 75-88.

Benefiel, R. (2002). *Book review*. Retrieved October 12, 2006, from http://wesley.nnu.edu/ 2002-GNTC/extra/ eric_law_rev.doc.

Bennett, J. K. & O'Brien, M. J. (1994). The building blocks of the learning organization. *Training, 31*(6), 41-49.

Bergman, A. B. (1992). Lessons for principals from site-based management. *Educational Leadership, 50*(1), 48-51.

Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (1998). Qualitative research in education: An introduction to theory and methods. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Bohm, D. (1996). *On dialogue*. New York: Routledge.

Bohm, D., & Peat, F. D. (2000). *Science order and creativity* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.

Bowles, M. (2005). *Learning cycles*. Retrieved September 18, 2005, from http://www.marcbowles.com/sample_courses/frontline_v5/fmc14/fmc14e.htm.

Boyer, E, L. (1995). *The basic school: A community for learning*. New Jersey: The Carnegie Foundation.

Brown, T., Lemus, N., & Dollbaum, S. (2006). *The three secrets of effective school leaders: Team building, school climate, and school vision*. Retrieved August 20, 2006, from http://hdcs.fullerton.edu/faculty/orozco/stlec-secrets.html.

Bulutlar, F. (2003). Öğrenen örgüt unsurlarının ders kalitesi üzerindeki etkileri [Electronic version]. *Endüstri İlişkileri ve İnsan Kaynakları Dergisi, 5*(1). Retrieved 8 August, 2006, from http://www.isguc.org/ogrenen_orgut.php.

Burgoyne, J. (1995). Feedings minds to grow the business. *People Management, 1*(19), 22-25.

Butcher, G., Crispen, P., Espinal, D., & Griffin, C. (2001). *Knowledge management: The school as learning organization*. Retrieved May 7, 2005, from http://www.edsw.usyd.edu.au/current_students/postgraduate/leadership/ EDPA6016.shtml.

Canning, C. (1991). What teachers say about reflection. *Educational Leadership, 48*(6), 18-21.

Celep, C. (2003). Örgütsel öğrenme açısından ilköğretim okulları. XII. Eğitim Bilimleri Kongresi, Gazi Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Ankara, Türkiye.

Celep, C. (2004). *Assessment of Turkish universities as learning organizations*. Paper presented at Hawaii International Conference on Education, Honolulu, Hawaii.

Chase, M. L. (2000). *The learning organization*. Retrieved January 15, 2006, from www.unc.edu/courses/2006spring/sowo/239/957/Readings/learningorg.htm.

Cibulka, J. G., Coursey, S., Nakayama, M., Price, J., & Stewart, S. (2000). *Schools as learning organizations: A review of the literature*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education.

Collins, D. (2000). *Achieving your vision of professional development* (3rd ed.). Tallahassee, FL: Southeastern Regional Vision for Education (SERVE).

Conzemius, A., & Conzemius, W. C. (1996). Transforming schools into learning organizations. *The Learning Organization, 3*, 23-25.

Costa, A.L., & Kallick, B. (1995). *Assessment in the learning organization: Shifting the paradigm*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD).

Cox, M. (2002). *Designing and implementing staff learning communities: An effective approach to educational development*. Retrieved August 1, 2006, from http://www.csd.uwa.edu.au/iced2002/publication/Milt_Cox.pdf.

Crossan, M., Lane, H., & White, R. (1999). An organizational learning framework: From intuition to institution. *Academy of Management Review, 24*, 522–537.

Daft, R. L., & Huber, G. P. (1987). How organizations learn: A communication framework. *Research in the Sociology of Organizations, 5*, 1-36.

Darling-Hammond, L. (1994). *Standards for teachers*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, Chicago, Illinois.

Day, G. S. (1994). Continuous learning about markets. *California Management Review, 36*(4), 9-31.

DePree, M. (1992). *Leadership jazz*. New York: Doubleday.

Dever, J. (1997). Reconciling educational leadership and the learning organization. *Community College Review, 25* (2), 57-63.

DiBella, A. J. (2001). *Learning practices: Assessment and action for organizational improvement*. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall.

DiBella, A. J., & Nevis, E. C. (1998). *How organizations learn: An integrated strategy for building learning capability*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

DiPardo, A. (1997). Of war, doom, and laughter: Images of collaboration in the public-school workplace. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 24*(1), 89-104.

Dixon, N. (1999). *The organizational learning cycle: How we can learn collectively* (2nd ed.). London: Gower.

Dodgson, M. (1993). Organizational learning: A review of some literatures. *Organization Studies, 14* (3), 375-394.

Duke, C. (1999). Lifelong learning: Implication for the university of the 21st century. *Higher Education Management, 11*(1), 19-35.

Easley, C.A, & Head, R.L.(2000). *Collaborating for the new millennium: The assessment of a midwest university as a learning organization and proposed intervention strategies*. Retrieved May 7, 2005, from http://www.sba.muohio.edu/management/mwAcademy/2000/42c.pdf.

Ellinor, L. & Gerard, G. (1998). *Dialogue: Rediscovery the transforming power of conversation*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Ertan, Z. (2000). *İlköğretim okullarını öğrenen örgüte dönüştürmede yönetici ve öğretmen algıları*. Unpublished Master's thesis, Gazi Üniversity, Ankara, Turkey.

Farago, J., & Skyrme, D. J. (1995). The learning organization. *Management Insights,* (3) Retrieved June 12, 2006, from http://www.skymre.com/insights/3lrnorg.htm.

Fitzgerald, D. (2003). *Understanding your mental models can help sharpen your PM skills*. Retrieved May 7, 2005, from http://builder.com.com/5100-6315_14-5034656.html.

Fiol, C.M., & Lyles, M.A. (1985). Organizational learning. *Academy of Management Review, 10*(4), 803-813.

Fraenkel, J.R., & Wallen, N. E. (2000). *How to design and evaluate research in education*. Boston: McGraw Hill.

Fullan, M. (1993). *Change forces: Probing the depths of educational reform*. London: Falmer Press.

Gardner, P., & Whiting, P. (1997). Success factors in learning organizations: An empirical study. *Industrial and Commercial Training, 28* (2), 41-51.

Garvin, D. (1993). Building learning organizations. *Harvard Business Review, 71*, 78-91.

Gephart, M. A., & Marsick, V. J. (1996). Learning organizations come alive. *Training and Development, 50* (12), 35-45.

Goh, S. C. (1998). Toward a learning organization: The strategic building blocks. *SAM Advanced Management Journal, 63*(2), 15-21.

Goodman, M. (2005). *Systems thinking as a language*. Retrieved September 2, 2005, from http://www.thesystemsthinker.com/tstlang.html

Guba, E.G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1981). *Effective evaluation: Improving the usefulness of evaluation results through responsive and naturalistic approaches*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Hedman, J., & Borell, A. (2005). Broadening information systems evaluation through narratives [Electronic version]. *The Electronic Journal of Information Systems Evaluation, 8* (2), 115-122. Retrieved June 15, 2006, from www.ejise.com.

Hite, J. A. (1999). *Learning in chaos: Improving human performance in today's fast-changing volatile organizations*. Houston: Gulf Publishing.

Huber, G. P. (1991). Organizational learning: The contributing processes and the literatures. *Organization Science, 2*(1), 88-115.

Hughes, T. A., & Kritsonis, W. A. (2006). A national perspective: An exploration of professional learning communities and the impact on school improvement efforts [Electronic version]. *National Journal for Publishing and Mentoring Doctoral Student Research, 1* (1), 1-12. Retrieved December 15, 2006, from http://www.lpig.org/artman/uploads.

Isaacson, N., & Bamburg, J. (1992). Can schools become learning organizations? *Educational Leadership, 50*(3), 42-44.

Johnston, C., & Caldwell, B. (2001). Leadership and organizational learning in the quest for world class schools. *The International Journal of Educational Management, 15*(2), 94-103.

Kale, M. (2003). *Liselerin örgütsel öğrenme düzeylerinin belirlenmesi.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Fırat University, Elazığ, Turkey.

Karsten, S., Voncken, E., & Voorthuis, M. (2000). Dutch primary schools and the concept of the learning organization. *The learning organization, 7* (3), 145-156.

Keefe J. W., & Howard, E. R. (1997). *The school as learning organizations*. Retrieved June 15, 2006, from http://www.lecforum.org/publications/ school_ as_learning_org.htm.

Keller, G. (1995). The changing milieu for educational planning. *Planning for Higher Education, 23*(2), 23-26.

Kelly, D. W. A. (2000). *Senge's learning organization concepts applied to one vocational school faculty*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Immaculata College, Pennsylvania, USA.

Kerka, S. (1995). *The learning organization: Myths and realities*. Retrieved April 12, 2006, from http://www.cete.org/acve/docgen.asp?tbl=archive&ID=A028.

Kezar, A. (2005). Campuses need to know about organizational learning and the learning organization. *New Directions for Higher Education, 2005* (131), 7-22.

Kim, D. H. (1993). Towards learning organizations: Integrating total quality control and systems thinking. M.I.T Sloan School of Management, Special Report Series. Cambridge, MA: Pegasus Communications.

Kline, P., & Saunders, B. (1998). *Ten steps to a learning organization*. Arlington, VA: Great Ocean Publishers.

Kofman, F., & Senge, P. M. (1993). Communities of commitment: The heart of learning organizations. *Organizational Dynamics, 22* (2), 5-23.

Krathwohl, D. R. (1998). *Methods of educational and social science research* (2nd ed.). New York: Addison Wesley Longman.

Kruse, S. D., & Louis, K. S. (1997). Teacher teaming in middle schools: Dilemmas for a schoolwide community. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 33*(3), 261-289.

Larsen, K., McInerney, C., Nyquist, C., Santos, A., & Silsbee, D. (1996). *Learning organizations*. Retrieved February 3, 2006, from http://home.nycap.rr.com/ klarsen/learnorg.

Leithwood, K., & Aitken, R. (1995). *Making schools smarter: A system for monitoring school and district process*. Newbury Park, CA: Corwin Press.

Leithwood, K., Leonard, L., & Sharrat, L. (1998). Conditions fostering organizational learning in schools. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 34*(2), 243-276.

LeCompte, M.D., & Goetz, J.P. (1982). Problems of reliability and validity in ethnographic research. *Review of Educational Research, 52*, 31-60.

Leonard, P. (1999). Understanding the dimensions of school culture: Value orientations and value conflicts. *Journal of Educational Administration and Foundations, 13*(2), 27-53.

Levitt, B., & March, J. G. (1988). Organizational learning. *Annual Review of Sociology, 14*, 319-340.

Li, R. (2007). *The representation of degrees of freedom in cross-cultural web design: A comparison of government agency and business entity website characteristics*. Retrieved January 14, 2007, from http://www.alise.org/conferences/2007_conference/docposterabstracts.html.

Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Louis, K. S., & Şimşek, H. (1991). *Paradigm shifts and organizations' learning: Some theoretical lessons for restructuring schools*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the University Council for Educational Administration, Baltimore, Maryland.

Louis, K.S, Kruse, S., & Raywid, M. A. (1996). Putting teachers at the centre of reform: Leaning schools and professional communities. *NASSP Bulletin, 80*, 9-21.

March, J. G. & Olsen, J. P. (1975). Organizational learning under ambiguity. *European Journal of Policy Review, 3*(2), 147-171.

Marks, H. M., & Louis, K. S. (1999). Teacher empowerment and the capacity for organizational learning. *Educational Administration quarterly, 35*, 707-750.

Marquardt, M. (1996). *Building the learning organization*. New York: McGraw Hill.

Marquardt, M. (1999). *Action learning in action: Transforming problems and people for world-class organizational learning*. Palo Alto, CA: Davies-Black.

Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (1999). *Designing qualitative research* (3rd ed.). London: Sage Publications.

Marsick, V. J., & Watkins, K. E. (1999). *Facilitating learning organizations: Making learning count*. Vermont: Ashgate Publishing.

Martin, E. (1999). *Changing academic work: Developing the learning university*. Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press.

Matthiesen, R. V. (2006). *Seminar series*. Retrieved July 3, 2005, from http://www.continuous-innovation.net/Events/Seminar2006/downloads/ research_descriptions/Matthiesen_research_description.pdf.

McEwan, E. K. (2003). *7 Steps to effective instructional leadership* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Miles, B.M., & Huberman, A.M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Morrison, M., & Rosenthal, A. (1997). Exploring learning organizations: Enacting mental models - the power of the Rosenthal stage. *Journal of Workplace Learning, 9* (4), 124-129.

Murrell, P. H., & Walsh, J. P. (1993). Leadership development at Federal Express Corporation. *Human Resource Development Quarterly, 4* (3), 295-302.

Neefe, D. O. (2001). *Comparing levels of organizational learning maturity of colleges and universities participating in traditional and non-traditional (academic quality improvement project) accreditation processes*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Wisconsin, USA.

Nevis, E., DiBella, A., Gould, J. (1995). Understanding organizations as learning systems. *Sloan Management Review, 36*(2), 73-85.

Nichols, T., Sugur, N., and Demir, E., (2001). Labour in a global world: Management strategy and worker response in the Turkish whitegoods industry. Working Paper, Cardiff University.

Noer, D. M. (1997). *Breaking free: A prescription for personal and organizational change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

O'Neill, J. (1995). On schools as learning organizations: A conversation with Peter Senge. *Educational Leadership, 52* (7), 20-23.

Öğüt, A., Berber, Ş., & Peker, A. (2001). *Learning organisation in the information age: The case of Selcuk University, Turkey*. Paper presented at CIES 45th Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C.

Palm M. E., & Nelson M. A. (2000). Leadership development course for creating a learning environment. *The Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing, 31*(4), 163-168.

Patton, M. Q. (1987). *How to use qualitative methods in evaluation*. California: Sage Publications.

Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Preskill, H., & Torres, R.T. (1999). *Evaluative inquiry for learning in organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Preskill, H. & Torres, R.T. (2001). The role of evaluative enquiry in creating learning organizations. In Easterby, S., Burgoyne, J., & Araujo L. (Eds.), *Organizational learning and the learning organization: Developments in theory and practice* (pp. 92-114). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Ramage, M., & Matzdorf, M. (2005). *Cui bono? A stakeholder approach to CSCW evaluation*. Retrieved July 3, 2005, from http://www.comp.lancs.ac.uk/computing/ research/cseg/projects/evaluation/cuibono.html.

Richards, J.C. (2005). *Program factors in effective foreign and second language teaching*. Retrieved June 8, 2005, from http://www.professorjackrichards.com/pdfs/program-factors-effective-teaching.pdf.

Robbins, P., & Alvy, H. B. (2003). *The principal's companion: Strategies and hints to make the job easier* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Sashkin, M. (1988). The visionary leader. In Conger, J.A.,and Kanugo, R. N. (Eds.), *Charismatic leadership: The elusive factor in organizational effectiveness* (pp. 122-160). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Schein, E.H. (1995). *Learning consortia: How to create parallel learning systems for organization set*. Retrieved July 3, 2005, from http://www.solonline.org/res/wp/10007.html.

Schwandt, D., & Marquardt, M. (2000). *Organizational learning*. New York: St Lucie Press.

Senge, P. M. (1990). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*. New York: Doubleday.

Senge, P. (1993). Building the learning organization. In Frantzreb, R. B. (Ed.), *Training & development yearbook: 1993/1994 edition*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Senge, P. M., Kleiner, A., Roberts, C., Ross, R. B., & Smith, B. J. (1994). *The fifth discipline fieldbook: Strategies and tools for building a learning organization*. New York: Doubleday.

Senge, M., Kleiner, A., Roberts, C., Ross, R. B., Roth, G., & Smith, B. J. (1999). *The dance of change: The challenges to sustaining momentum in learning organizations*. New York: Doubleday.

Senge, P. M. (2000). Systems change in education. *Reflections: The SOL Journal on Knowledge, Learning and Change, 1*(3), 52-60.

Senge, P., Cambron-McCabe, N., Lucas, T., Smith, B., Dutton, J., & Kleiner, A. (2000). *Schools that learn*. New York: Doubleday.

Shepherd, M. M., Tesch, D.B., & Hsu, J.S.C. (2006). Environmental traits that support a learning organization: The impact on information system development projects [Electronic version]. *Comparative Technology Transfer and Society*, *4*(2), 196-218. Retrieved November 21, 2006, from http://muse.jhu.edu/ journals/comparative_technology_transfer_and_society/toc/ctt4.2.html.

Sherman, R. R., & Webb, R. B. (1988). *Qualitative research in education: Focus and methods*. Philadelphia: The Falmer Press.

Simon, H., A. (1971). Designing organizations for an information rich world. In M. Grenberger (Ed.), *Computers, communications and the public interest* (pp. 37-52). Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press.

Simons, P.R.J. (1995). New roles for HRD-officers and managers in learning. In T. Campbell & V. Duperret-Tran (Eds.), *Best practices in learning organisations: Measuring the reality* (pp. 275-293). La Hulpe: European Consortium for the Learning Organisation.

Smith, B. H. (2003). *The university as a learning organization: Developing a conceptual model*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Montana State University, Montana, USA.

Stata R. (1989). Organizational learning - the key to management innovation. *Sloan Management Review, 30*, 63-74.

Steiner, L. (1998). Organizational dilemmas as barriers to learning. *The Learning Organization, 5*(4), 193-201.

Sunassee, N., & Haumant, V. (2004). *Organisational learning versus the learning organisation*. Retrieved July 3, 2006, from http://portal.acm.org/citation.cfm? id=1035053.1035088.

Synder, W. (1994). *A comprehensive model for visioning*. Unpublished manuscript.

Şahin, A.E. & Şimşek, H. (1996). *A qualitative assessment of organizational learning processes in selected Turkish public and private high schools*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the University Council for Educational Administration, Louisville , Kentucky.

The learning organization (2005). Retrieved August 10, 2005, from http://www.ngosofindia.com/e-books/LO.htm.

Thompson, D. R. (2004). Organizational learning in action: Becoming an inviting school. *Journal of Invitational Theory and Practice, 10*, 52-72.

Tourgee, B. K. (1994). *Surfacing mental models: Interpretive case histories of three educators*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Indiana University, Indiana, USA.

Töremen, F. (1999). *Devlet liselerinde ve özel liselerde örgütsel öğrenme ve engelleri.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Fırat University, Elazığ, Turkey.

Trow, M. (1998). American perspectives on British higher education under Thatcher and Major. *Oxford Review of Education*, 111-129.

Tsang, E. W. K. (1997). Organizational learning and the learning organization: A dichotomy between descriptive and prescriptive research. *Human Relation, 50*(1), 73-89.

Turkington, M. (2004). *The catholic education office (CEO) Sydney as a learning organization and its perceived impact on standards*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Australian Catholic University, Strathfield, Australia.

Van Dijk, H. G. (2003). *Critical issues impacting on skills development in the Department of Public Service and Administration: trends and options*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa.

Yıldırım, A. & Şimşek, H. (2005). *Sosyal bilimlerde nitel araştırma yöntemleri* (5th ed.). Ankara: Seçkin Yayıncılık.

Yogesh, M. (1996). *Organizational learning and learning organizations: An overview*. Retrieved October 13, 2001, from http://www.kmbook.com/orglrng.htm.

Watkins, K., & Marsick, V. (1993). *Sculpting the learning organization: Lessons in the art and science of systemic change*. San Francisco: Jossey- Bass.

Wellington, B. (1991). The promise of reflective practice. *Educational Leadership, 48*(6), 4-5.

Wheatley, M. J. (1994). *Leadership and the new science*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

Wheeler, L., L.. (2002). *Building a learning organization: A native American experience*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Fielding Graduate Institute, California, USA.

White, J. & Rita, W. (2005). Can universities become true learning organizations? *The learning organization, 12*(3), 292-298.

Wycoff, S. L. (1998). *Schools as learning organizations: A study of instrument development*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Wichita State University, Kansas, USA.

Zederayko, G., E. (2000). *Variables in schools becoming learning organizations*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The University of Montana, Montana, USA.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF
THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE STUDY

		ORGANIZATION A	ORGANIZATION B
Job Title	Instructor	22	17
	Senior Manager	4	3
	Middle Manager	3	-
Degree Held	B.A / B.Sc	20	9
	M.A / M.Sc /Ed.M	9	8
	Ph.D / Ed.D	0	3
Age	≤25	4	1
	26-30	3	4
	31-35	6	6
	36-40	7	2
	>40	9	7
Gender	Female	19	12
	Male	10	8
Nationality	Turkish	20	14
	Native Speaker	9	6
Experience in the current position	0-5	15	10
	6-10	8	5
	11-20	6	3
	>20	0	2

APPENDIX B

INSTRUCTOR INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

BACKGROUND QUESTIONS

1. Gender: (a) Male   (b) Female

2. Age   :
    (a) ( ) ≤ 25
    (b) ( ) 26 - 30
    (c) ( ) 31 - 35
    (d) ( ) 36 - 40
    (e) ( ) >40

3. Nationality

4. Job title

5. Teaching experience in this organization:
    (a) ( ) 0 - 5
    (b) ( ) 6 - 10
    (c) ( ) 11 - 20
    (d) ( ) >20

6. Qualifications:
    (a) B.A / B.Sc Degree
    (b) MA / M.Sc/ Ed.M Degree
    (c) Ph.D / Ed.D

SECTION I (TEAM LEARNING)

1. Would you please describe your professional interaction with staff members throughout this organization?
(Probe: Are there opportunities for people to work and learn together?, collaborative practices, collaborative learning, colleagueship, structures to enhance this, dialogue and discussion)

2. What factors do you think inhibit collaborative practices and learning in this organization?
(Probe: time, training, quality of leadership, lack of incentives, agreement on goals and direction)

SECTION II (PERSONAL MASTERY)

1. Do you have a personal vision (i.e. future goals)? What is it?

2. What professional or personal assets (qualifications) do you have to accomplish this vision and what barriers stand in your way?
(Probe: things or people you need to help you succeed, barriers i.e. culture)

3. Do you think your organization is committed to professional development, growth and learning of its members? Can you give examples?

SECTION III (SHARED VISION)

1. Does this organization have a vision? Do you know it? Do you think it is understood and/or shared by the majority of the staff?

2. How is it communicated or enacted?
(Probe: written, verbally, administrator/supervisor disseminating)

3. How well do you feel the official vision/goals of this organization encompass the   vision of the entire staff? (Does it incorporate people's personal visions?)

SECTION IV (MENTAL MODELS)

1. Could you describe how you reflect on your practices and actions? (Do you ever evaluate and review /think about critically your practices and actions/your work in the organization)? Are there any forums for collective reflection in this organization?
   (Probe: when and how often, usually about what)

2. How do you make your thinking and reasoning visible to others (Probe: support cause, advocacy)? How do you inquire into others' thinking and reasoning?

SECTION V (SYSTEMS THINKING)

1. Is this organization adaptive, flexible and responsive to internal and external changes or circumstances? To your knowledge, what kinds of strategies are being employed to do that? (Probe: evaluating existing activities, constantly searching for new opportunities, collaboration and interaction with customers, competitors).

2. If you were to draw a picture or use words to help me see your view of this organization and your connections (your place in this organization), what would it be like?
   (Probe: metaphor)

3. How do you think this organization can improve?
   (Probe: new ideas, focus on delivery of instruction)

ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

BACKGROUND QUESTIONS

1. Gender: (a) Male   (b) Female

2. Age   :
    (a) ( ) ≤ 25
    (b) ( ) 26 - 30
    (c) ( ) 31 - 35
    (d) ( ) 36 - 40
    (e) ( ) >40

3. Nationality

4. Job title

5. Experience in the current position
    (a) ( ) 0 - 5
    (b) ( ) 6 - 10
    (c) ( ) 11 - 20
    (d) ( ) >20

6. Qualifications:
    (a) B.A / B.Sc Degree
    (b) MA / M.Sc / Ed.M Degree
    (c) Ph.D / Ed.D

SECTION I (TEAM LEARNING)

1. What kind of policies or resources have you put in place to support collaborative work and team/ group learning?

2. What factors do you think inhibit collaborative practices/team work and learning in this organization?
    (Probe: time, training, the quality of leadership, lack of incentives, agreement on goals and direction)

SECTION II (PERSONAL MASTERY)

1. What is your personal vision for this organization?

2. What do you have/need to accomplish this vision and what barriers stand in your way?

3. What kind of policies and resources have you put in place to support personal development and professional growth of individual members of this organization? Are they sufficient?

4. Are the staff committed to developing themselves personally and professionally?

SECTION III (SHARED VISION)

1. Does this organization have a vision? Do you think it is understood and shared by the majority of the staff?
    (Probe: staff commitment)

2. What behaviors or strategies do you demonstrate to promote staff to collectively focus and commonly care about the organization's vision (probe: your role in building, communication, dissemination of the vision)

3. How well do you feel the official vision of the organization encompasses the vision of the entire staff? (Does it incorporate people's personal visions?)

SECTION IV (MENTAL MODELS)

1. Do you think the staff have the ability and time to reflect on their practices and actions?
    (Probe: when and how often, usually what about)

2. How do you make your thinking visible to the staff? How do you inquire into others' thinking and reasoning? (Probe: advocacy and inquiry, support cause?)

3. Are the staff in this organization able to advocate their thinking and reasoning and inquire into others' thinking and reasoning? (Probe: What do you do to encourage this? Factors inhibiting or facilitating this)

SECTION V (SYSTEMS THINKING)

1. Are there systems, structures, procedures designed to make your organization adaptive, flexible and responsive to internal and external changes or circumstances? Can you give specific examples? What kinds of strategies are being employed to do that? Do you have any specific examples within the last several years that could be proof of this strategic readiness?

    (Probe: evaluating existing activities, constantly searching for new opportunities, collaboration and interaction with customers, competitors, suppliers).

2. If you were to draw a picture or use words to help me see your view of this organization and your connections (your place in this organization), what would it be like?
    (Probe: metaphor)

3. How do you think this organization could be improved?

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

Hello, my name is Yelda Erişken. Currently, I am engaged in a research project regarding various practices utilized in your organization. I am here to get your opinions and perceptions of those practices. I really want your honest opinions and feelings about these practices. I would like to assure you that the conversation we are going to have will be confidential. I will not use the names of the individuals or the school in anything I will write. I would appreciate it if you could allow me to tape our conversation. If you are discontented with the interview we can clear it up afterwards. The interview will approximately take one hour. At the conclusion of the study I will be happy to inform you about my findings.

Thanks for your sincerity and participation.

APPENDIX E

TURKISH SUMMARY

Giriş

Bu karşılaştırmalı durum çalışmasının amacı Türkiye'nin Ankara ilinden seçilen, birisi bir vakıf üniversitesinin bir bölümü, diğeri de bir devlet üniversitesinin bir bölümü olan iki kurumu Senge'nin öğrenen örgütler kuramının beş alt boyutu olarak bilinen Takım Halinde Öğrenme, Kişisel Ustalık, Zihinsel Modeller, Paylaşılan Vizyon ve Sistem Düşüncesi açısından inceleyerek, bu kurumların öğrenen örgütün hangi özelliklerine sahip olduklarını ortaya çıkarmaktır.

Örgütsel öğrenme kavramı, 1990 yılında Senge'nin "öğrenen örgüt" kavramını ortaya atmasıyla önem kazanmış ve günümüze kadar giderek artan bir ilgi görmüştür. Örgütlerin öğrenmeye olan ilgileri temel olarak öğrenme ve sürekli gelişme arasındaki ilişkinin anlaşılması ile ön plana çıkmıştır. Garvin (1993) bunu "sürekli gelişme öğrenmeye sıkı bir bağlılık gerektirir" şeklinde ifade etmiştir. Günümüzde örgütler, yeni teknolojiler, artan rekabet ve küreselleşme ile şekillenen ve hiç durmaksızın değişen şartlara ayak uydurabilmek için kendilerini sürekli geliştirme ihtiyacı duymaktadırlar. Öğrenebilme yeteneği, örgütlerin büyüme, kendilerini yenileyebilme ve rekabet edebilmeleri için en önemli kaynaktır (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Huber, 1991; Marsick & Watkins, 1999).

Öğrenen bir örgüt, bilginin yaratılması, edinilmesi, yorumlanması ve aktarılması ile yeni bilgilerin ve anlayışların oluşturulması için davranış değiştirme becerisine sahip bir örgüttür (Garvin, 1993). Nitekim Gephart ve Marsick (1996) öğrenen örgütü, "öğrenme, değişim ve gelişmelere uyum sağlayabilme kapasitesine sahip örgüt" (s. 36) olarak tanımlamaktadır. Leithwood ve Aitken'e (1995) göre öğrenen örgüt "ortak (ve aynı zamanda kişisel) amaçları olan ve kendilerini bunları düzenli olarak değerlendirmeye adayıp, gerektiğinde yenileyen ve amaçlarına ulaşmak için

sürekli olarak daha etkili ve verimli yöntemler geliştiren bir grup insanlar topluluğudur" (s. 63). Senge (1990) ise öğrenen örgütleri "kişilerin gerçekten istedikleri sonuçlara ulaşabilmeleri için kapasitelerini durmadan genişlettikleri, yeni düşünce ve fikirlerin beslendiği ve geliştiği; ortak emellerin gerçekleşmesine imkan sağlandığı; insanların birlikte nasıl öğrenebileceklerini sürekli olarak öğrendikleri ortamlar" (s. 3) olarak tanımlamıştır.

Senge, öğrenen örgüt olabilmenin gereği olarak gördüğü öğrenmenin beş temel alt boyutunun örgüt içinde ayrı ayrı ve bütün olarak uygulanması gerektiğini söylemektedir. Senge'ye göre öğrenmenin beş temel alt boyutu *takım halinde öğrenme*, *kişisel ustalık*, *paylaşılan vizyon*, *zihinsel modeller* ve *sistem düşüncesi*dir. Öğrenen örgütler, kendilerini sürekli geliştiren ve öğrenen, ortak bir vizyona sahip, düşüncelerini açığa vuran ve sorgulayan, sistem düşüncesiyle hareket eden takımların oluşturulması ve geliştirilmesiyle öğrenmeyi tetikleyen örgütlerdir.

Öğrenmenin alt boyutlarından biri olan *takım halinde öğrenme* "takım üyelerinin birlikte uyumlu bir şekilde çalışarak istenilen sonuçlara ulaşma kapasitesini geliştirme süreci" (s. 236) olup ortak vizyon ve kişisel ustalık disiplinleri üzerine kuruludur. Ancak ortak vizyon ve kişisel ustalık yeterli olmayıp aynı zamanda birlikte çalışmayı bilmek de gereklidir. Takım halinde öğrenme önemlidir, çünkü takımlar öğrenmedikçe örgütler de öğrenemez. Takım halinde öğrenmede "diyalog" ve "tartışma" çok önemlidir. Diyalog bir takımın bireylerinin varsayımları askıya alıp, karmaşık içerikli sorunların özgür ve yaratıcı bir şekilde araştırılması için birbirlerini can kulağıyla dinlemelerini gerektirir. Tartışmada ise en iyi çözümü bulmak için farklı görüşlerin sunulması ve savunulması vardır. Örgütlerde diyalog ve tartışma potansiyel olarak birbirini tamamlayıcıdır ve normalde birbirine tepkisiz veya düşmanca davranışlarda bulunabilecek alt grupların takım halinde öğrenme ilişkilerini geliştirmekte ve güçlendirmektedir (Senge ve diğerleri, 2000). Takım halinde öğrenmenin bir diğer gerekliliği de bireylerin birbirilerini çalışma arkadaşı olarak görmeleridir. Bireylerarası bu tür ilişkiler çalışma ortamlarında daha samimi

bir hava yaratıp herkesin görüşlerini ve düşüncelerini rahatlıkla ortaya atabilmelerine ve açıkça tartışılmasına imkan sağlamaktadır.

Kişisel ustalık alt boyutu ise bireyin örgütsel öğrenmedeki rolünün önemini vurgular. Örgütler, ancak öğrenen bireyleri aracılığıyla öğrenirler. Senge'ye (1990) göre kişisel ustalık, kişisel vizyon belirleme ve gerçeği tarafsız olarak görebilmeyi gerektirir. Gerçeği tam olarak görebilme yeteneğine sahip bir birey vizyonunun önündeki engellerin farkına varır ve mevcut kapasitesini genişleterek vizyonuna ulaşmak için ne gerekiyorsa yapar. Mevcut gerçeği tarafsız olarak görebilme ve idrak edebilme yeteneği kadar gelecekteki resmi de aynı şekilde algılayabilmek çok önemlidir. Bireyin mevcut durumdaki imkan ve gerçekleri ile kendisinin gelecekte ulaşmayı hedeflediği şartlar arasındaki fark 'yaratıcı gerilim'i ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Bu gerilimin doğurduğu enerji sayesinde birey sürekli öğrenerek karşısındaki tüm engelleri ortadan kaldırır ve vizyonuna doğru ilerler. Aslında bu, kişisel ustalık düzeyi yüksek olan bireyler için sadece güzel bir fikir değil bir çağrıdır; bu sebeple de vizyona yapılan yolculuk onlar için bir ödüldür (Senge, 1990, s. 142). Bir bireyin kişisel ustalığını başka birisinin artırması mümkün değildir. Mümkün olan sadece bireyin kendi kişisel ustalığını geliştirmesini teşvik etmek ve desteklemek için imkan ve şartların sağlanmasıdır (Senge ve diğerleri, 1994, s. 193). Örgütlerin de çalışanlarının kişisel ustalıklarını geliştirmeleri için yapmaları gereken budur. Bu, örgütler için son derece önemlidir çünkü kişisel ustalığı gelişmiş olan bireyler sistem bazında düşünme yeteneğine sahip bireyler olup, çevrelerinde gelişen olayların birbirileri ile olan bağlantılarını okuyup değerlendirebilmekte ve kendilerini örgütle bütünleştirebilmektedirler. Örgütlerin öğrenen örgüt olabilmeleri için bünyelerinde bu tür bireylerin bulunmasına gerçekten ihtiyaçları vardır.

Öğrenen örgütlerin bir diğer alt boyutu olan *paylaşılan vizyon* oluşturmak "birlikte ne yapmak istiyoruz?" sorusunu cevaplayarak bir örgütün çalışanları arasında ortak bir kimlik ve kader duygusu yaratmaktır. Senge'nin de dediği gibi paylaşılan vizyon olmadan öğrenen örgütün oluşması mümkün değildir, çünkü paylaşılan vizyon "öğrenme için gerekli odaklanmayı ve enerjiyi sağlamaktadır" (s. 206). Paylaşılan vizyon kişisel vizyonların toplamıdır. Dolayısıyla kişisel vizyonların

olmadığı bir ortamda ortak vizyona katılım veya bağlılıktan ziyade boyun eğme vardır. Gerçek anlamda paylaşılan vizyon ancak kişisel vizyonların etkileşimi ile gelişir. Örgütün vizyonu bireylerin vizyonlarının üzerine kurulmalı ve kişisel ve kurumsal değerleri bulmaya yönelik örgütün tüm düzeylerini kapsayan bir diyalog sonucunda ortaya çıkmış olmalıdır (Appelbaum & Goransson, 1997). Ancak örgüt çalışanları kişisel vizyona sahip olduklarında ve ortak vizyonun oluşturulmasında faal olarak görev aldıklarında, örgütün vizyonuna gerçek mânâda katılım ve bağlılıktan söz edilebilir. Bu sebeple, örgütlerdeki yöneticiler ve liderler çalışanlarına amaç ve vizyonla ilgili düşüncelerini endişe etmeden ifade etmelerinin bir mahsuru olmadığı mesajını vermeli ve hatta bunu teşvik etmelidirler. Yönetici ve liderler aynı zamanda örgütün vizyonunu da çalışanlarına duyurmak ve vizyonun örgüt içinde bilinmesini sağlamak durumundadırlar. Bunun gerçekleştirilebilmesinde yapıcı liderlerin rolü, çalışanlarını diyalog ortamına sokabilmek ve vizyonun çalışanlar tarafından kucaklanmasını sağlamak için imkanlar oluşturmak ve vizyonun "sürekli olarak izah edilmesini, öğretilmesini, paylaşılmasını, uygulanmasını, yapılandırılmasını, geliştirilmesini, çalışanların ikna ve razı edilmesini" mümkün kılmaktır (McEwan, 2003, s. 68-69).

Senge'ye göre öğrenen örgüt olabilmenin gereklerinden bir diğeri de örgüt içindeki bireylerin değişime olan eğilimlerini kısıtlayan ve dolayısıyla öğrenmeyi engelleyen *zihinsel modeller*in iyileştirilmesidir. Zihinsel modeller, çevrede olup bitenleri gerçek anlamda görmemizi engelleyen, düşünme biçimimizi ve davranışlarımızı belirleyen, bilinçaltına yerleşmiş düşünceler ve sorgulanmayan inanışlardır (Isaacson & Bamburg, 1992, s. 43). Zihinsel modeller açığa vurulmadığı sürece çevredeki olayları gerçek anlamda kavramak mümkün değildir. Bu yüzdendir ki aynı olayı gözlemleyen veya aynı konuşmayı dinleyen iki kişinin konu hakkındaki düşünceleri farklılık gösterebilmektedir. Örgütlerde de ancak zihinsel modeller açığa vurulup tartışıldığı durumlarda karar alma mekanizmaları geliştirilebilir ve öğrenme gerçekleşebilir (Senge, 1990). Öğrenmenin örgütsel düzeyde gerçekleşebilmesi için bireyler kendi zihinsel modellerini açığa vurabilme, düşüncelerini şeffaflaştırabilme veya diğer bireylerin etkilerine açabilme, başkalarının zihinsel modelleriyle kıyaslayarak farklılıkları tartışabilme ve

288

nihayetinde genel olarak sistemin ne olduğunu algılayabilme yeteneğine sahip olmalıdırlar (Kim, 1993; Larson et al., 1996). Zihinsel modelerin tam olarak gelişebilmesi için gerekli olan öğrenme becerilerinden birincisi düşünme ve sorgulama becerisidir. Düşünme becerisi, bireylerin düşünme süreçlerini yavaşlatarak kafalarındaki zihinsel modellerin nasıl oluşturulduğunu ve bunların bireyin davranışlarını ne şekilde etkilediğini anlamayı içermektedir (Senge, 1990). Bu şekilde bir düşünme becerisi bireylerin kendi dünyalarını gözden geçirerek yeniden yapılandırmalarına yardımcı olmaktadır (Canning, 1991; Wellington, 1991). Sorgulama becerisinin geliştirilmesi ise can kulağı ile dinleme, diğer bireylere varılan sonuçların arkasındaki gerekçeleri paylaşmalarını isteme ve karşı tarafa saldırı görüntüsü vermeden soru sorma yeteneklerinin geliştirilmesi ile mümkün olmaktadır (Fitzgerald, 2003). İkinci beceriyse savunma ve sorgulamanın dengelenmesiyle ilgilidir. Diğer bir deyişle, bireyin kendi zihinsel modellerini açığa vurması ile karşı tarafın bakış açılarını anlayabilme çabasıyla sorulan sorular arasında iyi bir denge kurabilme becerisidir (Senge, 1990). Bu gerçekleştirildiğinde amaç artık tartışmayı kazanmak değil en uygun fikri ortaya çıkarmak olmaktadır. Sonuç olarak, örgütsel öğrenmenin geliştirilebilmesi için liderler bireylerin 'düşünme' ile 'sorgulama ve savunma'nın dengelenmesi becerilerini kullanmalarını ve geliştirmelerini sağlayacak yeteneklere sahip olmalı ve bunun için ortamlar hazırlamalıdırlar.

Senge'nin ortaya attığı alt boyutlardan beşincisi olan *sistem düşüncesi* öğrenen organizasyonlar için tüm alt boyutların temel taşıdır. Sistemlerde bütünü meydana getiren parçaların kendilerine özgü işleyişleri olmasına rağmen, sistemin başarılı olması parçaların birbirileri ile olan etkin ilişiklerine bağlıdır. Örgütlerdeki problemleri bileşenlerine ayırıp her bir bileşeni bağımsız olarak inceleyerek bütün ile ilgili sonuçlara ulaşmak ve hızlı çözümler getirmek de bu prensibe dayanmaktadır (Kline & Saunders, 1998; Marquardt, 1996; Senge, 1990). Sistem düşüncesi "parçaları görmekten bütünü görmeye; bireyleri çözüm üretmeden tepki gösteren kişiler olarak görmekten gerçekleri şekillendirebilen faal katılımcılar olarak görmeye; mevcut durum ile uğraşmaktan geleceği şekillendirmeye doğru bir zihniyet değişimini" gerektirmektedir (Senge, 1990, s. 69). Sistemsel düşünmenin

temelinde örgütün içsel ve dışsal değişimlere uyum sağlayabilme ve bununla birlikte yeni şartlarda varlığını sürdürebilme yeteneğine sahip olması yatmaktadır (Schein, 1995). Bunun yanında sistemsel düşünme, meseleler, olaylar ve veriler arasındaki bağlantıları birbirinden bağımsız olaylar zinciri olarak değil de bir bütün olarak görebilme yeteneğini içermektedir (Morrison & Rosenthal, 1997, s. 127). Örgütsel öğrenmenin gelişebilmesi için liderler sistem yaklaşımını benimseyip örgütün bir parçası haline getirmeli ve bir konuda karar alırken bu kararın örgütün diğer dinamiklerini nasıl etkileyebileceğini öngörmelidirler.

Yukarıda bahsedilen ve öğrenen örgüt için temel teşkil eden beş alt boyutun uygulamaları, eğitim de dahil olmak üzere bir çok alanda görülmektedir. Bilginin toplanması, üretilmesi ve aktarılmasında en çok sorumluluk sahibi olan örgütler olarak yükseköğretim kurumları aslında öğrenen örgüt olması gereken kurumların en başında gelmelidir (Smith, 2003). Günümüzün gereklilikleri ve zorlukları karşısında, varlıklarını devam ettirebilmeleri için tüm diğer örgütler gibi yükseköğretim kurumlarının da gerçekten de çok hızlı bir şekilde öğrenmeleri gerekmektedir (Kezar, 2005). Öğrenen örgüt olma yolunda temeller atan kurumların amaçlarına ulaşabilmeleri için kendilerinin bu konuda güçlü ve zayıf yanlarını bilmelerine ihtiyaçları vardır. Kurumlar, ancak bu sayede öğrenen örgüt olabilmek için daha uygun ve etkili stratejiler belirleyebilirler ve hedeflerine ulaşabilirler. Kurumların güçlü ve zayıf yönlerini belirlemek, bu kurumların bazı kıstaslara göre incelenmesi ve değerlendirilmesi ile mümkündür. Bu bağlamda, yükseköğretim kurumlarının da öğrenen örgütlerin hangi özelliklerini ne derecede taşıdıklarının bilinmesi, hem öğrenen örgütler olarak yükseköğretim kurumlarının daha iyi anlaşılması hem de bu kurumların öğrenen örgütler olabilmeleri yolunda katetmeleri gereken mesafenin belirlenmesi açısından önemli olmaktadır. Bu tür inceleme ve değerlendirmeler özellikle yükseköğretim kurumlarının yeniden yapılandırılması için stratejiler geliştiren teknisyenler ve karar vericiler için son derece önemlidir.

Bu çalışmada araştırmacı, birisi vakıf üniversitenin bir birimi diğeri de bir devlet üniversitesinin bir birimi olan iki kurumu Senge'nin öğrenen örgütler kuramının

beş alt boyutu olarak bilinen Takım Halinde Öğrenme, Kişisel Ustalık, Zihinsel Modeller, Paylaşılan Vizyon ve Sistem Düşüncesi açısından inceleyerek, bu kurumların Öğrenen Örgütün hangi özelliklerine sahip olduklarını ortaya çıkarmayı hedeflemiştir.

Araştırma Soruları

Bu araştırmada aşağıdaki sorulara cevap aranmıştır:

1. Kurum A ve Kurum B'nin yöneticileri ve öğretim elemanları kendi kurumlarını aşağıdaki alt boyutlar açısından nasıl algılamaktadırlar?

   (a) Kişisel Ustalık

   (b) Paylaşılan Vizyon

   (c) Zihinsel Modeller

   (d) Takım Halinde Öğrenme

   (e) Sistem Düşüncesi

2. Yukarıda belirtilen alt boyutlar açısından Kurum A ve Kurum B arasında ne gibi benzerlikler ve farklılıklar vardır?

Yöntem

Bu araştırmada karşılaştırmalı nitel durum çalışması deseni kullanılmıştır. Araştırmacı, Senge'nin Öğrenen Örgütler kuramından yola çıkarak yöneticiler ve öğretim elemanları için özel olarak yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşme soruları hazırlamıştır. Çalışmanın örneklemini Kurum A'dan 22 öğretim elemanı ve 7 yönetici ile Kurum B'den 17 öğretim elemanı ve 3 yönetici olmak üzere toplam 49 katılımcı oluşturmuştur. Veriler, 2004 yılında katılımcılarla gerçekleştirilen yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşme yöntemi ile üç aylık sürede toplanmıştır. Kaydedilen görüşmeler daha sonra araştırmacı tarafından çözümlenmiş ve içerik analizi yöntemi ile kodlar ve temalar ortaya çıkarılmak suretiyle analiz edilmiştir. Daha

sonra, yazım aşamasında bulgular araştırma soruları ile biraraya getirilerek düzenlenmiştir.

Araştırmanın geçerlilik ve güvenirliği için görüşme soruları pilot çalışmasına tabi tutulmuş, birden fazla gruptan veri toplanmış, çözümlenen metinlerden bazıları ilgili katılımcılara gönderilerek doğruluğu yönünde onay alınmış ve bulgular ile analizler nitel araştırma alanında bilgi ve deneyim sahibi olan bir meslektaşla karşılaştırılarak tarafsızlığı incelenmiştir.

Bulgu ve Sonuçlar

Çalışmanın bulguları her iki kurumun da öğrenen örgütün alt boyutlarını henüz tam anlamıyla bünyelerinde barındıramamış olmalarına rağmen öğrenen örgüt olma yönünde aşama kaydettiklerini göstermiştir. Genel olarak, her iki kurumda da kişisel vizyonların oluşumu ve gelişmesi; bireylerin ve takımların öğrenmesi; hem örgüt hem de bireyler tarafından paylaşılan bir vizyonun geliştirilmesi; zihinsel modellerin açığa vurulması ve sorgulanması; ile sistemlerin bütünlüğü açısından yaklaşım alanlarında engel durumlar tespit edilmiştir.

Çalışmada elde edilen bulgular ışığında Kurum A ve Kurum B'nin durumlarının Senge'nin ortaya attığı alt boyutlar temelinde değerlendirilmesi aşağıda verilmektedir.

Takım Halinde Öğrenme

Bu çalışmanın sonuçları Kurum A'nın Takım Halinde Öğrenme alt boyutu açısından Kurum B'ye göre biraz daha iyi durumda olduğunu göstermektedir. Kurum A'nın yapısal düzenlemesinin sonucu olan öğretmenleri gruplar halinde bir arada tutan üniteler bazındaki yapısı ve bu kurumdaki işbirliği ve öğrenmeyi teşvik eden faaliyetlerin sayı ve çeşidinin Kurum B'den fazla olması göz önünde bulundurulduğunda Kurum A'nın daha başarılı olması doğal görünmektedir. Ancak her iki kurumun da bu alt boyut bakımından mükemmel düzeye ulaşmasını engelleyen zayıf yönleri bulunmaktadır.

Her iki kurum da Takım Halinde Öğrenme alt boyutunun çok önemli bileşenlerinden olan diyalog kurma ve tartışma becerileri açısından sorun yaşamaktadırlar. Bu sorunu çözmeden iki kurumun da takım halinde öğrenmeyi başarabilmesi mümkün görünmemektedir. Kurum A'daki takım halinde öğrenmeye yönelik olarak hazırlanan bazı forumların, özellikle öğretim elemanları ile yöneticiler arasındaki diyalog ve tartışma eksikliğinden dolayı amacına uygun faaliyet gösteremediği belirlenmiştir. Bu kurumda var olan otoriter lider özelliklerine sahip bazı yöneticilerin bireylerde oluşturduğu "azarlanma" veya "düşüncemi söylersem bana ne yaparlar" gibi korku havası, etkili fikir alışverişlerinin önünde önemli bir engel oluşturmaktadır. Kurum B'de ise etkili iletişim kurma becerilerinin eksiklikliği, diyalog ve tartışma ortamının oluşmasını engelleyen en önemli etmen olarak ortaya çıkmıştır.

Her iki kurumda da görülen diğer bir eksiklik ise kurumların işbirliği ve birlikte öğrenme konularında yeterli gelişme gösterememiş olmasıdır. Kurumlardaki bireylere birlikte çalışabilmeleri için ayrılan zamanın kısıtlı olması, bireylerarası etkileşimin geliştirilmesi ve ortak faaliyetlerin artırılması bakımından önemli bir engel oluşturmaktadır. Kurum B'de daha çok ortaya çıkan ve teşviklerin yetersizliğinden kaynaklandığı ifade edilen 'bireylerin birlikte çalışmaya olan istek ve bağlılıklarının eksikliği' de Takım Halinde Öğrenme'nin engellenmesinde diğer bir etmen olarak görülmüştür.

Kurum A'da Takım Halinde Öğrenmeyi engelleyen diğer etmenler öğretim elemanlarının bir arada bulundukları ünitelerin birbirileriyle olan işbirliği ve etkileşim eksikliği, çalışanların takım çalışmasına yönelik olumsuz yaklaşımları, bazılarının değerlendirmesine göre yöneticiler tarafından sebep olunan çalışanlar arasındaki rekabet, çalışanlar arasındaki dil farkı, bazı yöneticilerin otoriter tarzı, bazı aktivitelerde amacın tam olarak belirtilmemesi, ve bir grup olarak nasıl çalışmak gerektiği konusunda eğitim eksikliği olarak bulunmuştur. Benzer biçimde Kurum B'de de Takım Halinde Öğrenmeyi engelleyen bazı etmenler ortaya çıkmıştır. Bunlar; programın doğasından kaynaklanan işbirliği eksikliği, çalışanların takım çalışmasına yönelik olumsuz yaklaşımları, işbirliğinin yöneticiler tarafından desteklenmemesi ve teşvik edilmemesi, ve kurumdaki bireylerin

biribirileriyle etkileşimini sağlayacak imkanlara yeterince yer verilmemesi olarak verilebilir.

Kişisel Ustalık

Çalışmada elde edilen bulgulara dayanarak her iki kurumda da kişisel ustalığın gelişmesini sağlayacak etkili teşviklerin bulunduğunu söylemek mümkündür. Ancak her iki kurum da bu alt boyutun tam olarak uygulanmasını engelleyen bazı etmenlerin varlığını da göz ardı etmek mümkün değildir.

Veriler her iki kurumun da bireylerin öğrenmesi için destek ve imkan sağlamak hususunda başarılı olduklarını göstermektedir. Bireylerin yetişmesi, gelişmesi ve öğrenmesi, örgütlerin vizyonlarının bir parçası olup ayrıca yönetim tarafından da desteklenmektedir. Kurum A'da bunun göstergeleri olarak; kurum içindeki eğitim programları, seminerler, haftalık gelişim toplantıları, sınıf gözlemleri, konferanslara katılmak için zaman tahsisi ve kurum içerisindeki bazı eğitim programlarına katılanların ders saatlerinin azaltılması göze çarpmaktadır. Kurum B'de ise seminerler, kuruma yeni katılanlar için düzenlenen eğitim programları, konferanslara katılmak isteyenlere finans desteği ve zaman verilmesi, kendilerini geliştirmek isteyen bireylere ders saatleri konusunda esneklik gösterilmesi çalışanların yetişmesi, gelişmesi ve öğrenmesi için yönetim tarafından sağlanan destekler olarak ortaya çıkmıştır.

Her iki kurumdaki bireylerin çoğu kendilerini geliştirmeleri için sağlanan imkan ve desteklerden dolayı memnuniyetlerini dile getirmişlerdir. Bununla birlikte, bulgular kişisel gelişim, yetişme ve öğrenmeye olan ilginin Kurum B'ye göre, Kurum A'da daha fazla olduğunu göstermiştir. Kurum A'daki gelişim etkinliklerine katılım oranının daha yüksek olması bunun bir göstergesi olarak değerlendirilmiştir. Kurum B'de katılımın düşük olmasının gerekçesi olarak da bu kurumun çalışanlarının devlet memuru olması sebebiyle yöneticilerin kurumdaki bireyleri bu tür aktivitelere yönlendirmekte güçlük çekmesi gösterilmektedir. Ayrıca Kurum B'deki maddi teşviklerin yetersiz olması ve ücretlerin düşük olması sebebiyle kurum çalışanlarının ek ders yapmak durumda kalması sonucunda bu tür faaliyetlere

katılmak için yeterli zaman bulamamaları da katılımın düşük olmasını beraberinde getirebilir. Kurum B'deki kadar olmasa da Kurum A'da da, Kurum B'dekine benzer sebeplerden dolayı, kıdemli öğretim elemanlarının gelişim ve öğrenme faaliyetlerine karşı isteksiz oldukları belirtilmiştir.

Her iki kurumun da bu alt boyut açısından tam olarak gelişebilmeleri için bazı engelleri ortadan kaldırmaları gerekmektedir. Kurum A'da elde edilen bulgulara göre bu engeller bireylerin yetişmesi, gelişmesi ve öğrenmesi için düzenlenen faaliyetlere katılmak için yeterli zaman adanmaması, bu tür faaliyetlerin çeşitlerinin az olması, kurumdaki bireylerin kendilerini ne şekilde geliştireceklerine yöneticilerin karar vermesi, kurumda ortaya çıkan bazı iş olanaklarına başvuru yapılması için yönetimden yeterince destek ve teşvik gelmemesi olarak adlandırılabilir. Kurum B'de ise yeterli zaman adanmaması, öğretim elemanlarını eğitecek elemanlarının sayıca yetersiz olması, öğretim programında esneklik olmaması, ile teşvik sisteminin etkili olmaması ve yetersiz oluşu bu engellere örnek olarak verilmiştir. Bütün bunların arasında 'yeterli zaman adanmaması' her iki kurumda da bireylerin yetişmesi, gelişmesi ve öğrenmesi için ortaya çıkan engellerin başında gelmektedir.

Her iki kurumda da görülen diğer bir özellik de bireylerin kişisel vizyonlarıyla ilgilidir. Kurumlardaki bireylerin oldukça büyük bir bölümünün kişisel vizyona sahip oldukları ve bunu başarmada istekli oldukları görülmekle birlikte, hiç vizyonu olmayan ve buna ilave olarak büyük ölçüde örgüte bağlı sebeplerden ötürü vizyonuna ulaşma hevesini ve isteğini yitirmiş kişilerin bulunması Senge'nin Öğrenen Örgüt kavramıyla oldukça çelişmektedir.

Paylaşılan Vizyon

Her iki kurumun da Paylaşılan Vizyon alt boyutu açısından oldukça yetersiz durumda oldukları tespit edilmiştir.

Çalışmada elde edilen bulgular her iki kurumda da ortak vizyonun oluşturulmasında bireylerin katkılarının gözardı edildiğini açıkça ortaya koymaktadır. Örneğin,

yöneticilerin tamamı örgütleri ile ilgili güçlü bir vizyona sahipken, öğretim elemanlarının çoğu aynı amacı desteklediklerini düşünmediklerini belirtmişlerdir. Aynı şekilde, Kurum A ve Kurum B'deki çalışanlardan bazıları tarafından vizyon bilinmemekte veya bu kişiler tarafından açık olarak anlaşılmamaktayken, yöneticiler örgütün vizyonunun bilindiğini ve anlaşıldığını düşünmektedirler. Bunlara ek olarak, yöneticiler kendilerinin heyecan verici ve mücadeleci bir vizyon ortaya çıkarttıklarını ve geliştirdiklerini düşünürken, çalışanlardan bazıları olayı bu şekilde değerlendirmemektedirler. Onlar vizyonu gerçekçi bulmamaktadırlar. Bu onların "yaratıcı gerilim"den yoksun olduklarını göstermektedir. Bu durum özellikle son zamanlarda bir değişim süreci geçiren Kurum B'de önemli bir mesele olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır. Değişim sürecinde bireylerin yeterince fikirlerinin alınmaması, yeni öğretim sisteminin uygulanmasında yeterli destek ve eğitim verilmemiş olması, geribildirimlerinin ve beklentilerinin dikkate alınmaması gibi nedenler birçok bireyin ümitsizliğe kapılmasına ve kızgınlığına sebep olmuştur. Kurum A'da da bireylerin çoğu, gerek kişilerin beklentilerinin ve umutlarının araştırılmamasından gerekse kişilerin bunları dile getirmekten çekinmesinden dolayı yöneticilerin çalışanlarının vizyonlarından haberdar olmadıklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Yine bu kurumda, vizyonun etkili bir şekilde çalışanlara ulaştırılması çabalarının da yetersiz kaldığı görülmüştür.

Zihinsel Modeller

Her iki kurumun da Zihinsel Modeller alt boyutu açısından oldukça yetersiz durumda oldukları tespit edilmiştir.

Düşünme becerisi zihinsel modellerin ortaya çıkabilmesi, geliştirilmesi ve geçerliliklerinin doğrulanması için gerekli olan bir beceridir. Hem Kurum A hem de Kurum B'nin bireylere kişisel ve birlikte 'düşünme' imkanları sağlayarak zihinsel modeller alt boyutunu bu anlamda destekledikleri görülmektedir. Ancak her iki kurumda da zihinsel modellerin değerlendirilmesi ve yeniden yapılandırılmasını güçleştiren veya engelleyen durumlar gözlenmiştir. Çalışanlar için 'birlikte düşünme' için yeterli kaliteli zamanın olmaması bu durumun Kurum A'daki örneklerindendir. Ayrıca, genel toplantılar, ders değerlendirme toplantıları ve

öğretmen değerlendirme faaliyeti gibi 'birlikte düşünme'ye ortam hazırlanmasını amaçlayan forumlar örgüt içindeki yetersiz diyalog ve tartışma sebebiyle etkin düşünmeye imkan vermemektedir. Kurum B'de de benzer şekilde 'düşünme' için gerekli zaman yetersizliği ve çalışanların bir kısmının böyle bir becerisinin olmaması 'düşünme' sürecine etkin katılımı engellemektedir.

Her iki kurumun da zihinsel modellerin gelişimi için gerekli olan savunma ve sorgulama becerileri konusunda da problem yaşadıkları görülmüştür. Kurum A ve Kurum B'de hem uygun biçimde düşüncelerini ifade edebilme ve başkalarının fikirlerini sorgulayabilme becerilerinden yoksun olan hem de kendi düşüncesini söylemekten ve başkalarının fikrini sorgulamaktan kaçınan bireylerin var olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Bu sebeple her iki kurumda da bulunması gereken ancak eksik olan becerilerin, düşünceleri açığa vurma, tartışma, zihinsel modelleri arkadaşça, işbirliği içinde verimli bir ortamda, başkalarının fikirlerine saygılı olarak karşılaştırmak olduğu görülmüştür. Çalışmadan elde edilen bulgular, her iki kurumun da gelişmesi ve öğrenmesi için kurumlardaki tartışılması ve çözümlenmesi gereken açığa çıkmamış fikirlerin üzerine gitmeleri gerektiğini göstermektedir.

Sistem Düşüncesi

Çalışmanın bulguları ışığında Kurum A ve Kurum B'nin Sistem Düşüncesi alt boyutunun bazı özelliklerini taşımasına rağmen, her iki kurumun da bu alt boyutun tam mânâda uygulanabilmesini engelleyen birçok zayıf yanlarının olduğunu söylemek mümkündür.

Her iki kurumun da sistem düşüncesi alt boyutunun gereklerinden biri olan iç ve dış şartlara veya değişimlere uyum sağlayabilme, esneklik gösterebilme ve cevap verebilme yeteneğini geliştirmek için bünyelerinde bazı sistemler geliştirdiği gözlenmiştir. Stratejik planlama, çevredeki diğer kurumlardaki gelişmeleri araştırma ve değerlendirme, performans karşılaştırma ve diğer paydaşlarla işbirliği ve etkileşim halinde bulunma geliştirilen sistemler için her iki kurum bireyleri tarafından verilen örneklerdir. Bu tür özelliklerin varlığı yanında, çalışmanın

bulguları ayrıca her iki kurumda da Sistem Düşüncesi alt boyutunun tam olarak uygulanmasında engeller olduğunu göstermiştir. Kurum A'nın iç ve dış şartlara ve buralarda meydana gelen değişikliklere uyum sağlamakta zaman zaman yavaş davrandığı gözlemlenirken bazan her iki kurumun da eylemlerinin mümkün sonuçlarını ve diğer birimler üzerindeki etkilerini değerlendirmeye meydan bırakmayacak kadar hızlı davrandıkları görülmüştür. Her iki kurumda da Sistem Düşüncesi alt boyutunun geliştirilmesinde engel teşkil eden diğer durumlar da, daha açık ve akıcı geribildirim kanalları ve mekanizmalarının yetersizliği, öğretim elemanlarının karar alma sürecine yeterince dahil edilmemesi ve kurumun işleyişini etkileyebilecek sistemsel meselelerin belirlenmesi ve incelenmesi için yeterli zaman ayrılmaması olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Bunlara ilave olarak, özellikle Kurum A'da daha baskın olarak ortaya çıkan bölünmüşlük hissi ve kuruma ait olma duygusu eksikliği ile Kurum A'da sadece öğretim elemanlarında görünürken, Kurum B'de yöneticiler arasında da görülen 'biz ve onlar' zihniyetinin varlığı sistemsel düşünce ile bağdaşmamaktadır.

Çalışmanın Önemi ve Öneriler

Yüksek öğretim alanındaki öğrenen örgütlerle ilgili dünyada ve özellikle Türkiye'de kısıtlı olarak gerçekleştirilmiş olan çalışmalara ek olması bakımından bu çalışmanın bu konudaki literatüre katkısı olması beklenmektedir. Uygulama bazında düşünüldüğünde, bu çalışmada elde edilen bulgular öğrenen örgüt seviyesine ulaşmayı arzulayan örgütlere ve yöneticilere faydalı bilgiler sağlamıştır. Özellikle eğitim alanındaki liderlere, örgütlerini öğrenen örgüt bağlamında anlamaları, sahip oldukları güçlü yanları ile öğrenen örgüt olma yolundaki engelleri tespit etmeleri ve bunların ışığında Senge'nin Öğrenen Örgüt yaklaşımını benimsediklerinde örgütlerinin ne duruma geleceğini görmeleri bakımından da faydalı olması beklenmektedir. Yüksek öğretime bağlı iki kurumun alt birimlerindeki genel durumu ortaya koyan bu çalışma, benzer alanda faaliyet gösteren diğer kurumların da kendilerini geliştirmek için kullanabilecekleri, çeşitli uygulamaları anlamaları ve öğrenmeyi teşvik eden veya engelleyen şartları görebilmeleri açısından da faydalı bulgular ortaya çıkarmıştır. Yazarın yaptığı

araştırmalar ve edindiği bilgilere göre bu çalışma, bazı kısıtlamaları olmasına rağmen, Senge tarafından ortaya atılan öğrenen örgüt alt boyutlarının Türkiye'deki yüksek öğretim programlarında ne derecede uygulandığını değerlendiren ilk çalışma olması bakımından da önemlidir.

Bu çalışmanın hedefindeki kurumlar biri vakıf, diğeri devlet olmak üzere Türkiye'nin başta gelen üniversitelerin bünyelerindeki yabancı dil hazırlık programları olmuştur. Her iki kurumda da öğrenen örgütlerin alt boyutlarını gerçekleştirme düzeyleri açısından zayıflıklar belirlenmiştir. Benzer kurumların benzer özellikler gösterip göstermediklerini görebilmek için bu çalışmanın başka yerlerde de tekrarlanması yararlı olabilir.

Bu çalışma nitel bir durum çalışması olarak hazırlanmıştır. Gerek bu çalışmada ele alınan kurumlar, gerekse Türkiye'deki yükseköğretime ait diğer kurumlar örnek alınarak anket yöntemiyle gerçekleştirilecek ve kurumların öğrenen örgüt özelliklerinden hangilerine ne derecede sahip olduklarını nicel yöntemlerle değerlendirecek çalışmaların sonuçları, burada elde edilen bulguları genelleme bakımından tamamlayıcı olabilir.

Daha önce de belirtildiği gibi bu çalışmada Senge'nin Öğrenen Örgüt modeli kullanılmıştır. Genel olarak, bu çalışmanın gerçekleştirildiği yükseköğretime ait iki programda öğrenen örgütlerin hangi özelliklerini taşıdığını belirlemede bu model uygun görülmüştür. Ancak hem dünyada hem de Türkiye'de eğitim kurumlarında genel olarak uygulanabilir olduğunu görmek için, bu modelin daha fazla ülkede ve kurumda denenmesi ve geçerliliğinin doğrulanmasına gerek vardır.

Bu çalışmada, öğrenen örgüt özelliklerinden bazılarının Türk kültürü ile uyumunun sorgulanabileceği türünden bulgular elde edilmiştir. Bu yüzden, bu tür uyumsuzluklar bazında değerlendirildiğinde Senge tarafından geliştirilen Öğrenen Örgüt modelinin tekrar gözden geçirilmesinde fayda olduğu düşünülmektedir. Buna ilave olarak, yükseköğretime ait özel ve kamu kurumlarında Öğrenen Örgütün bazı özelliklerini taşımaları açısından ortak yönler gözlemlenmesine rağmen, kamu

kurumunun Öğrenen Örgütlerin diğer bazı gerekliliklerini, gerek bürokratik ve merkeziyetçi yapı gerekse kaynakların kısıtlı olması gibi bu kuruma has durumlardan ötürü, özel kuruma oranla daha az düzeyde gerçekleştirdiği görülmüştür. Ancak bu, yükseköğretime ait kamu kurumlarında öğrenmenin gerçekleşmediği anlamına gelmemektedir. Bu bulgulara dayanarak, Senge'nin Öğrenen Örgüt modelini kamuya ait öğretim kurumlarındaki örgütsel öğrenme düzeyinin belirlenmesinde kullanırken daha dikkatli olmak gerektiği söylenebilir. Diğer bir deyişle, Senge'nin modelinin hem kamu kurumlarında hem de özel kurumlarda uygulanabilmesi için, kamu kurumlarının kendilerine has özelliklerinden kaynaklanan bazı kısıtlamalarını da gözönünde bulunduracak şekilde yeniden gözden geçirilmesinde fayda görülmektedir.

CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name	: Erişken, S. Yelda
Nationality	: Turkish (TC)
Date and Place of Birth	: 4 September 1969, Balıkesir
Marital Status	: Married
Phone	: +90 312 240 4902
Email	: yeldaerisken@hotmail.com

EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
Ed. M.	Rutgers University, Department of Psychology, Educational Statistics, Measurement and Evaluation (Major); Educational Theory, Policy and Administration (Minor),	2005 -
MA	METU, English Language Teaching	1995
BA	METU, English Language Teaching	1991

WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
Feb–April2005	Bilkent University	Acting Line Manager
1991 - 2005	Bilkent University	Instructor

CERTIFICATIONS

CEELT (2001) Cambridge Examinations in English for Language Teachers- Level Two, University of Cambridge (UCLES)

Curriculum and Testing Training Course (1999), Bilkent University School of English Language

TÖMER (1998) Diploma in German Language, Ankara University

COTE (1992) Certificate for Overseas Teachers of English, University of Cambridge (UCLES)

Certificate for Teachers of English, BBC English (1992) Queen Mary and Westfield College, London.

SCHOLARSHIPS & AWARDS

Rutgers University (2006). Graduate School of Education Alumni Association, Challenge Scholarship, NJ, USA.

Bilkent University (2004). Research Development Program, Ankara, Turkey.

Queen Mary and Westfield College (1992). Scholarship awarded for a training course for teachers of English at Queen Mary and Westfield College, granted by BBC English, The English Speaking Union International House, London, England.

LANGUAGES

Advanced English, Moderate German