

THE LEARNING ORGANIZATION AND LEADERSHIP  
FOR THE COLLEGE SYSTEM

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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**THE LEARNING ORGANIZATION AND LEADERSHIP  
FOR THE COLLEGE SYSTEM**

by

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## ABSTRACT

In order to remain viable and relevant in the global era, colleges must address the challenges of finding an effective operating system with a new style of leadership (Dennison, 1995). The purpose of this qualitative study was to determine the feasibility of the concept of the learning organization within the college system. Specifically it asked: Is the concept of a learning organization a viable framework for leadership within the college system?

The study was conducted through semi-structured interviews with four senior college administrators in order to obtain their views on the purpose of the study. They were selected on the basis of their experience in college administration and thus are seen as "experts". The study analyzed the feasibility of the five individual learning or leadership disciplines - Personal Mastery, Mental Models, Building Shared Vision, Team Learning, and Systems Thinking - that together define a learning organization (Senge, 1990).

The data collection instruments consisted of several field research forms and tape-recorded interviews with individual administrators. The primary research tools used in the study were the Interview Protocols.

Data analysis revealed that three out of four administrators interviewed believe the concept of the learning organization is feasible and can provide a viable framework for leadership within the college system. Only one administrator felt strongly that the "public" nature of the college system limited the feasibility of the concept, even

though it was seen as desirable. All administrators felt that obstacles such as lack of autonomy, lack of organizational stability, inflexible attitudes, and lack of balance with respect to the roles and responsibilities of the individual versus the college have inhibited organizational learning.

Principal implications of the study include the need for professional development as well as accountability and feedback mechanisms. Findings are expected to contribute to the body of existing research on learning organizations in general, within community colleges in particular, and on leadership for colleges as learning organizations. Conclusions may be particularly useful in government, board of governors, and administrative planning, design, and implementation of an organizational structure and leadership approach required for the development of a responsive and relevant college. In responding to this challenge, colleges have a chance to re-establish themselves as flexible, responsive organizations (Dennison, 1995).

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Current realities, both financial and human, are such that the drastic restructuring of postsecondary education is necessary if it is to remain effective and efficient... To meet this challenge, institutions are expected to collaborate in their planning and to develop improved learning partnerships... All of these initiatives lead towards a more integrated, rather than a more diversified, institutional structure. (Dennison, 1995, p.6)

The regional community college system of Newfoundland and Labrador is presently being restructured into one provincial college system. Reasons for the restructuring include the following: to meet financial constraints; to keep pace with the changing economy; to stay abreast of advances in technology; and to meet demands for accountability, accessibility, efficiency, and responsiveness (Dennison, 1995; Ministerial Statement, Education and Training, April 1996; President's Newsletter, September 1996; Press Release, Education and Training, June 1995, July 1996).

Directly related to the issue of restructuring is the issue of management. Determining how the college system should be managed in the future includes identifying new forms of leadership needed in a changing social and economic environment. Development of an effective organization can only occur through new views of leadership (Apps, 1994; Barlosky & Lawton, 1994; Bass, 1990; Bennis, Parikh & Lessem, 1994; Fullan, 1993; Kotter, 1996; Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Levin, 1995; Senge, 1990; Sergiovanni, 1995; U.S. Department of Education, 1993).

The newly restructured provincial college is now searching for an operational

and leadership framework to take it into the twenty-first century (Provincial College of Newfoundland and Labrador, February, 1997). Senge (1990) proposes the "Learning Organization" as a model for organizational success in this age of interdependence.

This study was undertaken to determine the feasibility of a leadership approach for the college system based on the concept of a learning organization. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with four senior community college administrators, selected on the basis of their experience and expertise, in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. It is hoped that the study will inform stakeholders as the college reorganizes into one provincial college system.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The several restructurings of college systems in Saskatchewan, Newfoundland, and New Brunswick, over relatively short periods of time, suggest that some provincial governments have felt free to require a scale and frequency of organizational change that would have caused tremendous social unrest had it been proposed for any other sector of post-secondary education. (Gallagher, 1995, p.259)

In 1985, the government of Newfoundland and Labrador called for the establishment of a regional community college system. Legislation, enacted in 1987, established a network of five community colleges. A key characteristic of the regional college system was the establishment of an appointed board of governors and a president to each college. Control and autonomy of each college was delegated to the board and the president. Since 1987, the college system has undergone three major

reorganizations along with a number of reforms at each regional college (Community Colleges Act, 1987; Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, June 1985; Quinlan, 1989).

Owen (1995) states that the dependence of colleges on governments for financial support, "has limited their autonomy and, hence, their ability to respond to community needs"(p.164). However, colleges are still expected to respond to "rapidly changing economic and sociopolitical demands"(p.164). This often means "the response required is major organizational change... and this, in itself, exerts a lot of pressure on them"(p.164). A recent trend, has been to use community colleges as "a province-wide resource, especially in programs with very high overhead costs and shortage of teaching expertise" (Minister of Supply and Services, 1996, p.28).

Advances in technology, combined with equally impressive changes in telecommunications...has set the scene for a major transformation of the global, national and provincial economies. Newfoundland and Labrador is *already* an integral part of this global change. (Economic Recovery Commission [ERC], March 1994, p.3)

The ERC document, At the Crossroads: The New Economy in Newfoundland and Labrador, describes the economy of Newfoundland and Labrador as clearly in a time of transition. A new economy is emerging, one that is quite distinguishable from the old, resource-based economy (Table 1). The new economy is knowledge-based requiring advanced education and literacy from employees: "Workers were once



Table 1  
A Comparison of the Old and New Economies

<b>CHARACTERISTIC</b>	<b>OLD ECONOMY</b>	<b>NEW ECONOMY</b>
Main Industries	Resource-based	Knowledge-based
Labour Force	Manual Workers	Information Processors
Education	Basic	Advanced
Literacy	Desirable	Essential
Reliance	Dependent	Self-Reliant
Main Organization	Large Corporation	Small Firms
Entrepreneurship	Undeveloped	Highly Developed
Labour Relations	Confrontational	Cooperative
Number of Industries	Few	Many
Technology	Slow moving; distinct fields	Rapid change; merging fields
Competition	Little foreign competition	Strong foreign competition
Markets	Focus on domestic markets	Focus on global markets
Products	Mass-produced products for mass markets	Complex products for sophisticated consumers
Human resources	One factor of production; slow changing skill requirements	The competitive edge; rapidly changing skill requirements
Growth area	In large firms, mainly through attracting outside investment	In new and small firms; through new development investment

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regarded as just another factor in the production process. Today, because of the rapidly changing skill requirements, workers give a company *the competitive edge*" (p.8).

Taking into account the changing economy and the fiscal constraints of governments, the ERC concluded: "Newfoundland and Labrador can no longer rely on resource industries and government transfers on their own to support its people at the standard of living to which they have become accustomed. We have to change"(p.11). Society, therefore, is in the midst of a major transition, one that is challenging all social organizations, institutions, and their members to change (Apps 1994; Bennis et al., 1994; Dennison, 1995; Fullan, 1993; Karpiak, 1996; Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Senge, 1990).

How can institutions, particularly educational institutions deal with the challenges of change?

We are talking about the larger social agenda of creating learning societies. The focus of change must be on all agencies and their interrelationships, but education has a special obligation to help lead the way in partnership with others. (Fullan, 1993, p.6)

In Fullan's (1993) view, the challenges of change can be effectively dealt with through life-long learning and collaboration. Porter (as cited in Dietsche, 1993) states, "The competitiveness of post-industrialized nations will increasingly depend on their scientific and technological capacity as the main source of diversification and

development of their economics" (p.189). According to Dietsche (1993), higher education has an important and special role to play in the development of this capacity. All members of the postsecondary system must learn how to cope effectively with change: "Canada's colleges and universities are the principal means by which most young people prepare for the labour market and they are also among the most important sources of new knowledge and employment skills for adults" (Minister of Supply and Services, 1994, p.1). This position recognizes that colleges exist to serve their communities, that if communities are to change, so must the colleges. According to Sarason (1990), "you cannot have students as continuous learners and effective collaborators, without teachers [and all college members] having these same characteristics" (as cited in Fullan, 1993, p.46).

The current mandate of the community colleges is to help organizational members learn the knowledge and skills required for today's technological era. Therefore, based on the characteristics of the new economy (Table 1), colleges must be knowledge-based, literate, and self-reliant communities which are composed of highly educated entrepreneurs and information processors who adjust rapidly to the challenge and opportunity of change. Colleges must be competitive and at the same time cooperative; generalized and specialized, global and localized in outlook and responsiveness. Colleges must also see the relationships between their community and the global village, they must identify opportunities and changes that will impact on them and them on the global community. Colleges must help develop knowledgeable,

world citizens.

For both social and economic reasons, as well as the fact that knowledge and skills are becoming obsolete at a faster and faster rate, the concept of lifelong learning is becoming firmly embedded in our society. Demands are being placed on the educational system by learners who are increasingly more likely to be older, part-time, and have less flexible opportunities for study. (Training for Tomorrow, Inc., March 1993, p.95)

The Government document, Organizational Linkages in Education and Training (Training for Tomorrow, Inc., March 1993) calls for the establishment of an articulation system composed of linkages between the educational/training system and the labour market. Linkages are defined as "well-established practices for linking the post-secondary sector with the world of work, or linking institutions within the post-secondary sector with other institutions" (p.i). Such linkages would benefit students by facilitating: transfer within the learning continuum, experiential learning opportunities, and opportunities for adults in the labour force to continue their education. In general, an articulation system would increase the flexibility of the post-secondary system, reduce barriers to education, increase efficiency, and foster the development of lifelong learning.

To recapitulate, the challenge of change can be met through learning and collaboration. However, in order to develop an organization with a learning, collaborative culture, traditional hierarchical structures and management approaches must be changed.

In the early 1990s, post-secondary educational institutions, including

community colleges in Newfoundland and Labrador, started adopting TQM in an effort to manage change (Newfoundland and Labrador College Executive Network, February, 1995). TQM utilizes an integrated systems approach to problem-solving. Its principles include teamwork, customer relationships, shared vision, assessment, continuous improvement, commitment, trust, and knowledgeable and empowered workers (Barlosky & Lawton, 1994; Cornesky & Lazarus, 1995; Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Levin, 1995; Shelnutt & Buch, 1996; Sherr & Teeter, 1991; U.S. Department of Education, 1993).

For many colleges and campuses in the province, TQM was seen as a success and altered members' views on organizational operations. However, not everyone experienced success with TQM and not all colleges adopted TQM, as evidenced by the search for a new leadership model and operational framework (Provincial College of Newfoundland and Labrador, February, 1997).

The current, drastic restructuring of the regional colleges into one provincial college provides an opportunity to rejuvenate the province's community college system. Levin (1995) declares, "the challenge for the community college is to abandon the old conception of leadership (and its obsession with control) and to embrace a more vital and nourishing concept of leadership for the decades ahead" (p.107). Leadership theories are being questioned, and new approaches are emerging which are consistent with the attributes and functions of transformational leadership according to research conducted by Barlosky & Lawton (1994), Bass (1985), Bass &

Avolio (1994), Leithwood (1992), Leithwood & Steinbach (1993), and Middlehurst (1995).

Fullan (1993) contends, "it is no longer acceptable to separate planned change from seemingly spontaneous or naturally occurring change. It is only by raising our consciousness and insights about the totality of educational change that we can do something about it" (p.vii). According to Senge (1990), organizations will remain competitive and relevant only if they encourage organizational members to expand their capacity to create and learn both individually and collaboratively. These are organizations where the leaders design, steward, and teach learning. Senge argues that managing change in today's fast-paced world can only be accomplished through "organizational learning". Bennis and Nanus (1985) describe organizational learning as "the process by which an organization obtains and uses new knowledge, tools, behaviors, and values" (p.191). Senge proposes the concept of the Learning Organization as a body of theoretical and practical knowledge that can contribute to organizational learning.

The learning organization is composed of five major disciplines: Personal Mastery, Mental Models, Building Shared Vision, Team Learning, and Systems Thinking (Senge, 1990). Since Senge's focus was on business management and public administration, there has been little application of this theory to college settings. There is a need for research which will examine the feasibility of the learning organization as a framework for leadership within the college system.

The provincial college system in Newfoundland and Labrador presents an opportunity for such research since it is presently undergoing the third major restructuring since its inception in 1986. In June 1995, the provincial Minister of Education and Training announced the reorganization of the five regional community colleges into one provincial college. In July 1996, restructuring began with the selection of a college headquarters as well as the appointment of a board of governors and a new college president. In April 1997, the new provincial college, named College of the North Atlantic, was officially launched (President's Newsletter, April 1997; Press Release, Education and Training, June 1995, July 1996).

#### **Purpose of the Study**

The general purpose of this study was to determine the feasibility of the concept of the learning organization within the community college system. Specifically, this study sought to answer the question: Is the concept of a learning organization a viable framework for leadership within the college system?

The researcher interviewed four experienced college administrators to obtain their views on the viability of the concept of a learning organization for the college system. In particular, the researcher examined the importance of each of the five disciplines for the college system: Personal Mastery, Mental Models, Building Shared Vision, Team Learning, and Systems Thinking (Senge, 1990).

### **Definition of Key Terms**

**COMMUNITY COLLEGE:** Community colleges, Colleges of Applied

Arts and Technology (Ontario), CEGEPs (Quebec), Institutes of Technology, Technical Schools, and Institutes of Applied Arts and Sciences all compose Canada's college component of the post-secondary education system. Colleges "are usually locally based, non-degree granting institutions offering general or specialized programs. They meet training and upgrading needs of the private and public sectors, especially business, and industry and the health care sector" (Minister of Supply and Services, 1996, p.28).

**POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION:** Statistics Canada defines post-

secondary education programs as those that meet the following criteria:

- the normal entrance requirement is high school completion;
- the program is one year or more in duration;
- the program leads to a certificate, diploma or degree; and
- the program is not classified as trades/vocational. (Minister of Supply and Services, 1996, p.1)

**New Era:** This is one of a number of terms used interchangeably in the literature.

Other terms include the postindustrial society, postmodern age, information age, knowledge age, communication age, global age and age of interdependence ( Apps, 1994; Bennis et al., 1994; Dennison, 1995; ERC, 1994; Karpiak, 1996; Senge, 1990).



### **Significance of the Study**

The importance of this study is three-fold. The concept of a learning organization is relatively new in education and research on the concept of learning organizations in the community college setting is very limited. This study will contribute to the growing body of knowledge on learning organizations in general and within community colleges in particular.

Research on the concept of leadership for the community college as a learning organization is limited. This study will contribute to the body of knowledge on leadership for colleges as learning organizations.

This study has implications for those interested in the restructuring of the provincial community college system. The college system is currently in a state of transition. This study will provide a timely examination of the organizational structure and leadership required for the development of a responsive and relevant college.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

This chapter is a review of the literature on the concept of a learning organization as well as a review of the literature on leadership for the development of a learning organization. It examines each of the disciplines of the learning organization: Personal Mastery, Mental Models, Building Shared Vision, Team Learning, and Systems Thinking as well as five leadership themes identified as being essential to the development of a learning organization: Shared vision; Challenge, Change, and Learning; Collaboration and Empowerment; Modelling, Trust, and Commitment; and Motivation, Encouragement, and Inspiration.

#### **Organizations for Change - Learning Organizations**

Productive educational change roams somewhere between overcontrol and chaos (Pascale, 1990). There are fundamental reasons why controlling strategies don't work. The underlying one is that the change process is uncontrollably complex, and in many circumstances 'unknowable' (Stacey, 1992). The solution lies in better ways of thinking about, and dealing with, inherently unpredictable processes. (Fullan, 1993, p.19)

The reality of the our world has changed. Peters (1995) reminds us that "hierarchies have been flattened, old command-and-control structures are not possible (let alone desirable), and knowledge (and the creative power of knowledge workers, all of us) is the new basis for economic value" (as cited in Kouzes & Posner, 1995 p. xvi). Change is the one constant in life. However, the pace and type of change in the information age is new. Not only is change occurring at breakneck speed but it is also

unpredictable and discontinuous (Apps, 1994; Bennis et al., 1994; Fullan, 1993; Pucik, Tichy & Barnett, 1992; Senge, 1990).

Bennis et al. (1994) identify the change as being both quantitative and qualitative in nature. Quantitatively, the change is rapid and complex. The term "raplexity" (a combination of rapidity and complexity) is used to describe the magnitude and pace of quantitative change. Qualitatively, the change "consists of layers of simultaneous revolutions, ranging from the agricultural to the informational" (p.365).

Senge (1990) distinguishes between two types of complexity: "detailed complexity", situations where many variables influence a problem; and "dynamic complexity, situations where cause and effect are subtle, and where the effects over time of interventions are not obvious" (p.71). According to Fullan (1993), "the real territory of change" (p.20) is dynamic complexity. Both Senge (1990) and Fullan (1993) agree that a better understanding of dynamic complexity is needed in order to deal with change in the new era.

How can social organizations deal with change in this new era? Senge (1990) declares: "The organizations that will truly exceed in the future will be the organizations that discover how to tap people's commitment and capacity to learn at *all* levels in an organization" (p.4). Senge (1990), and others (Apps, 1994; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Bennis et al., 1994; Benveniste, 1994; Fullan, 1993; Karpiak, 1996) put forth the concept of a "learning organization" as the basis for organizational success in

the new age.

Senge (1990) describes a learning organization as "an organization that is continually expanding its capacity to create its future" (p.14). He asserts that "at the heart of a learning organization is a shift of mind" (p.12). Such a mindshift allows members to see how they are connected, how they impact on each other, and ultimately, how they are often the cause of their own problems. Fullan (1993) restates Senge's (1990) belief of the importance of a new mindset for change - "metanoia" - and applies it specifically to the conservative educational system: "Without such a shift of the mind the insurmountable basic problem is the juxtaposition of a continuous *change theme* with the continuous *conservative system*"(p.3). Bennis et al. (1994) also see the need for a shift of mind, "a reorientation of your mind, or your thinking"(p.364), is the essence of global management.

The fundamental conception of the learning organization is based on a synergistic model grounded in holistic views, connectedness, personal mastery, lifelong learning, reflection, inquiry, dialogue, shared vision, collaboration, commitment, and trust. Development in each of these areas is the new work for every member of a learning organization (Apps, 1994; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Bennis et al., 1994; Fullan, 1993; Karpiak, 1996; Senge, 1990).

Senge (1990) outlines five learning disciplines - "a discipline [is] an activity we integrate into our lives"(p.141) - to be used by members of an organization to help build a learning organization. It should be pointed out that Senge (1990) does not see

the five disciplines as the entire system but rather, as a foundation upon which new disciplines will be built and added to as we become more knowledgeable. Bennis et al. (1994) and Fullan (1993) reinforce Senge's conception of the learning organization. Senge's five disciplines are described below.

### **Discipline 1: Personal Mastery**

Senge (1990) and his colleagues used the phrase "personal mastery" to describe "personal growth and learning"(p.141): It is a level of proficiency - a commitment to lifelong learning - of continually clarifying and deepening personal vision. Senge states that there are two aspects of personal mastery which together, invigorate organizational members through creative tension:

The first is continually clarifying what is important to us (purpose and vision)...  
The second is continually learning how to see current reality more clearly.

The juxtaposition of vision (what we want) and a clear picture of current reality (where we are relative to what we want) generates what we call "creative tension": a force to bring them together, caused by the natural tendency of tension to seek resolution. The essence of personal mastery is learning how to generate and sustain creative tension in our lives. (p.141-142)

Senge (1990) asserts that no individual can be forced to embark on a path of personal growth. However, leaders can foster personal mastery by promoting a climate which encourages members to practice the principles of personal mastery in their daily lives:

That means building an organization where it is safe for people to create visions, where inquiry and commitment to truth are the norm, and challenging

the status quo is expected - especially when the status quo includes obscuring aspects of current reality that people seek to avoid. (p.172)

For Senge (1990), this discipline is the foundation of a learning organization. He states that without individual learning and team learning there can be no organizational learning: "The organization's commitment to and capacity for learning can be no greater than that of its members" (p.7).

Fullan (1993) identifies personal mastery as one of the four core components needed to generate change capacity: "New mindsets arise from new mastery as much as the other way around" (p.16). And he quotes Senge's (1990) definition of personal mastery in his discussions.

Bennis et al.(1994) view the learning organization as a manifestation of continuing development. They use the term "self-mastery" to refer to a movement away from uncertainty and towards "competence and uniqueness". They state, "Leadership and self-mastery, intuition and vision characterize the individual, new-paradigm manager"(p.7).

### **Discipline 2: Mental Models**

Just as "linear thinking" dominates most mental models used for critical decisions today, the learning organizations of the future will make key decisions based on shared understandings of interrelationships and patterns of change. (Senge, 1990, p.204)

In Senge's (1990) view, mental models are the internal assumptions or pictures of the world that influence our understandings and actions. People usually carry these

around with them and are unconscious of the effects they have on their perceptions and actions. These models are often the cause of conflict and resistance encountered by change: "New insights fail to get put into practice because they conflict with deeply held internal images of how the world works, images that limit us to familiar ways of thinking and acting." (p.174). Individuals need to consciously examine these assumptions and make them open to the influences of other people: "the discipline of managing mental models - surfacing, testing, and improving our internal pictures of how the world works - promises to be a major breakthrough for building learning organizations" (p.174).

Fullan (1993) identifies inquiry as one of the four core components needed to generate change capacity. For him, "the formation and enactment of personal purpose is not a static matter. It is a perennial quest." (p.15). He states that inquiry provides the checks and balances needed to ensure that an individual's "mental maps" have changed to fit the territory. Questioning, experimentation, reflective practice, personal journals, action research, and working in innovative settings are just a few of the strategies that can be used to develop mental maps.

Bennis et al.'s (1994) conception of "conflict resolution" is similar to Senge's conception of mental models. They state, "accurate analysis of the underlying causes of the conflict, of which the parties themselves may not have been aware but which they uncover in the process of studying the problem together, changes the situation and helps the parties to find answers to it. Analysis and resolution go together"

(p.149). For Bennis et al., conflict can be resolved through development of "techniques of integration", new attitudes of openness, dialogue, and cooperation.

### **Discipline 3: Building Shared Vision**

A shared vision is not an idea... It is, rather, a force in people's hearts, a force of impressive power. It may be inspired by an idea, but once it goes further - if it is compelling enough to acquire the support of more than one person - then it is no longer an abstraction. It is palpable. People begin to see it as if it exists. Few, if any, forces in human affairs are as powerful as shared vision. (Senge, 1990, p.206)

According to Senge (1990), a genuine shared vision is one that "binds people together around a common identity and sense of destiny" (p.9) and leads to the development of self-learning and mastery: The leader does not dictate a vision but unearths a shared vision, one that fosters "genuine commitment and enrollment rather than compliance" (p.9). Senge asserts that shared vision is essential for the learning organization because "it provides the focus and energy for learning"(p.206). Senge (1990) explains that "shared visions emerge from personal visions... If people don't have their own vision, all they can do is 'sign up' for someone else's. The result is compliance, never commitment"(p.211). Shared vision must be valued by organizational members: "A vision not consistent with values that people live by day by day will not only fail to inspire genuine enthusiasm, it will often foster outright cynicism"(p.223).

Fullan (1993) identifies personal vision-building as one of the four core



components needed to generate change capacity. He asserts that developing personal purpose and vision is a good starting point for developing a shared vision: "for it [shared vision] to be effective you have to have something to share" (p.13). He cites Block in emphasizing the need for visions to be made explicit:

Block (1987) emphasizes that 'creating a vision forces us to take a stand for a preferred future'(p.102); it signifies our disappointment with what exists now. To articulate our vision of the future 'is to come out of the closet with our doubts about the organization and the way it operates' (p.105). Indeed it forces us to come out of the closet with doubts about ourselves and what we are doing. (Fullan, 1993, p.13)

Bennis et al. (1994) state, "a vision articulates a view of a realistic, credible, attractive future for the organization, a condition that is better in some important ways than what now exists" (p.50). A vision is very important to management because it identifies why an organization was formed in the first place: "An organization is a group of people engaged in a common enterprise"(p.50).

#### **Discipline 4: Team Learning**

Senge (1990) describes team learning as "the process of aligning and developing the capacity of a team to create the results its members truly desire"(p.236); alignment refers to "a group of people function as a whole"(p.234).

Teams must practice and master dialogue, discussion, reflection, and inquiry as well as learn how to recognize patterns that undermine learning. Team learning starts with "dialogue" where team members "suspend assumptions and enter into a genuine

'thinking together'"(p.10): "Dialogue articulates a unique vision of team learning... reflection and inquiry skills provide a foundation for dialogue and discussion" (p.248). For Senge, conflict is a good indicator that a team is learning.

Teams have the capacity to be far more intelligent than its individual members (Senge, 1990). As the team learns, the individual members learn far more than they would on their own. Senge argues that "Teams, not individuals, are the fundamental learning unit in modern organizations" (p.10). If the teams do not learn, the organization does not learn.

Fullan (1993) identifies collaboration as one of the four core components needed to generate change capacity. He states, "there is a ceiling effect to how much we can learn if we keep to ourselves. The ability to collaborate - on both a small and large scale - is becoming one of the core requisites of postmodern society" (p.17). He asserts that without collaborative skills and collaborative relationships, it is not possible to learn or continue to learn as much as one needs to learn, "in order to be an agent for societal improvement" (p.18).

For Bennis et al. (1994), "Understanding the dynamics of group relations is essential to the new paradigm manager"(p.133), and developing "efficient and effective teams which fulfils its changing task" (p.115) is the goal of management.

### Discipline 5: Systems Thinking

The essence of the discipline of systems thinking lies in a shift of mind:

- seeing interrelationships rather than linear cause-effect chains, and
- seeing processes of change rather than snapshots. (Senge, 1990, p.73)

Senge (1990) describes systems thinking as "a discipline for seeing wholes"(p.68). A conceptual framework of integration designed to make the complete system clearer: the connections, interrelations, and in particular "the 'structures' that underlie complex situations"(p.69).

According to Senge (1990), the building blocks of systems thinking are (a) reinforcing or amplifying feedback which produces growth, (b) balancing or stabilizing feedback which maintains the desired level of change, and (c) delays which interrupt "the flow of influence which make the consequences of actions occur gradually"(p.79). One of the most frustrating problems experienced by organizations is that actions taken in one part of the system may take years to show effects in that or other parts of the system. A second problem is the frequent occurrence of unintended outcomes. According to Moss (1993), "Unintended consequences of restructuring are often as important as, or more important than, intended consequences"(p.110).

Senge (1990) contends that individuals in organizations tend to look only at parts of the system and try to solve problems without the full picture, thus, they are often overwhelmed by complexity. He argues that systems thinking is needed if members of organizations are to see the "big picture" and to determine how to change effectively: "Systems thinking is the antidote to this sense of helplessness that many

feel as we enter the 'age of interdependence'" (p.69).

Fullan (1993) asserts, "Learning organizations are part of a greater complexity that requires a holistic view to survive and develop."(p.84). One of the eight lessons which he identifies as being critical for success in "the new paradigm of change"(p.21), includes "Connection with the Wider Environment"(p.22). He too believes, based on his research, that organizations must learn externally and internally: "Seeing 'our connectedness to the world' and helping others to see it is a moral purpose and teaching/learning opportunity of the highest order" (p.39).

Bennis et al. (1994) supported this integrated model for learning organizations. They argue that the world view of reality is changing, moving from the mechanistic ("to understand the whole, you must understand the part"), to the holistic ("to understand the part, you must understand the whole"), to the holographic ("the part *is* the whole") (p.366).

Bennis et al. (1994) have coined the term, "social synergy" to refer to flow and connectedness and to the process of visualizing the big picture:

In effect you lead, or bring about change, through a synthesis (not a compromise) of several opposing or conflicting parameters, not only externally but also within yourself... The synthesizing, synergistic, or 'win-win' approach involves enlarging the 'context' of any problem or conflict in any situation and enabling an understanding 'above' or beyond the opposing or conflicting interests. (p.370)

To summarize, Senge (1990) has outlined a five discipline model called a learning organization for dealing with change. Each of the five disciplines must be

practiced by, and indeed become a way of life for, all organizational members. Only through their efforts to integrate and to practice the five disciplines can organizational learning occur.

How do we create such an organization? Theorists suggest that it is through a new view of leadership.

### **Leadership for the Development of a Learning Organization**

The new view of leadership in learning organizations centres on subtler and more important tasks. In a learning organization, leaders are designers, stewards, and teachers. They are responsible for *building organizations* where people continually expand their capabilities to understand complexity, clarify vision, and improve shared mental models - that is, they are responsible for learning. (Senge, 1990, p.340)

The primary function of leadership is to produce adaptive or useful change (Kotter, 1990). The traditional views of leadership, a power position held by an individual (hierarchical structure) or a select few leaders (managerial structure) at the top of an organization, are no longer appropriate for dealing with the complexity of change in the new era: "The concept of a learning organization provides us with a new language and framework for leadership and membership in organizations" (Karpiak, 1996, p.46). A growing number of theorists are arguing that a leadership model for organizations in the new era should be based on the five learning or leadership disciplines of the learning organization (Apps, 1994; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Bennis et al., 1994; Barlosky & Lawton, 1994; Fullan, 1993; Karpiak, 1996;

Senge, 1990; U.S. Department of Education, 1993).

Leadership in a learning organization utilizes learning to transform individuals and organizations. Leaders in such a model take on various functions: develop a learning culture; cultivate holistic thinking throughout the organization; promote reflection, inquiry, and mastery; encourage collaboration and trust through dialogue, modelling, team building, and honesty; and help develop commitment to a shared vision (Apps, 1994; Bennis et al., 1994; Depree, 1989; Fullan, 1993; Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Senge, 1990).

The 1990s have seen a variety of leadership theories emerging under a variety of names. New Leadership (Bryman, 1992), Superleadership (Manz & Sims, 1989), Global Management (Bennis et al., 1994), Social Learning and Cognition (SLC) (Sims & Lorenzi, 1992), Extended Multiorganizational Level Leadership (Hunt, 1991) and Transformational Leadership (Bass, 1985, 1990) are just a few examples of such theories. Fortunately, there is much overlap in the new leadership literature. Five themes stand out as being central to those new leadership images: (a) Shared vision; (b) Challenge, Change, and Learning; (c) Collaboration and Empowerment; (d) Modelling, Trust, and Commitment; and (e) Motivation, Encouragement, and Inspiration. These themes overlap but each needs to be considered separately.

#### **Theme 1: Shared Vision**

Vision is the most commonly occurring theme in the literature on new

leadership and has been a central theme in leadership theories for a number of years. Charismatic leadership, visionary leadership, mystical leadership, and transformational leadership all have vision as a core component (Bass, 1985; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Bryman, 1992; Conger & Kanungo, 1987; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1996; Senge, 1990).

Apps (1995) describes his conception of vision as follows: "A vision statement is a road map and a dream combined. A vision simultaneously provokes passion and provides parameters" (p.127). Kouzes and Posner (1995) compare a leader's vision to an architect's blueprints or an engineer's models. Seeing it as an image that guides leaders in their pursuits: "The dream or vision is the force that invents the future" (p.10).

According to Kotter (1990), one fundamental aspect of leadership is establishing direction; a process that produces "a vision of the future and strategies for producing the changes needed to achieve that vision"(p.6). Kotter describes that process as: "largely inductive in its analytical approach. That is, it gathers a broad range of data on the context and looks for patterns, relationships, and linkages that help explain things" (p.37).

Vision is useless if it is not shared with organizational members (Bryman, 1992). Senge (1990) agrees and contends: "Building a shared vision begins to establish a sense of trust that comes naturally with self-disclosure and honestly sharing our highest aspirations" (p.275). In Senge's view, inspiring or "breathing life into" the vision is the first act of leadership (p. 340). In other words, the leader is the *"Steward"*

of the vision" (p.346).

Sims and Lorenzi (1992) describe vision in the following way: "we see vision or mission as a sort of superordinate goal... [representing] a higher, broader, more encompassing goal, a goal to be shared by many, perhaps all, organizational members. Vision can be inspiring because it can energize employees around some value system" (p.118).

Visions are inspirational: "Visions are exhilarating. They create the spark, the excitement that lifts an organization out of the mundane" (Senge, 1990, p.208). They also lead to commitment to the long-term.

A word of caution is voiced by Bennis et al. (1994). They emphasize that a vision must be repeatedly communicated until it becomes part of an organization's culture in order for it to promote true change.

### **Theme 2: Challenge, Change, and Learning**

The entire system learns as it obtains feedback from the environment and anticipates further changes. At all levels, newly learned knowledge is translated into new goals, procedures, expectations, role structures, and measures of success. (Bennis & Nanus, 1985, p.191)

In Senge's (1990) words, "Challenging the grip of internal politics and game playing starts with building shared vision" (p.274). Leaders must, according to Bryman (1992), "create a culture that is consistent with the vision" (p.147). Senge (1990) concurs, and declares that if the vision is to develop a learning culture, then the



leader must design the learning processes. This is the role of the "leader as designer" in the learning organization (Senge, 1990, p.341).

In this role, leaders must continually challenge the organization to grow and change. Kouzes and Posner (1995) argue that leaders must not be afraid of risk, they must create a safe environment for others that allows for risk-taking. In the end, experience gained through such actions allows all organizational members to learn from their mistakes (p.10). Senge (1990) states that "Shared vision fosters risk taking and experimentation"(p.209). Kotter asserts, "It is not possible to make major change without undertaking some risk"(p.37). Similarly, Fullan (1993) contends, "the capacity to suspend belief, take risks, and experience the unknown are essential to learning"(p.17).

Of course, the leaders must also grow and change as a result of their experiences. In Senge's (1990) discussions of "leader as steward" (p.345), changes in the leader's perspective towards his personal vision are examined: "leaders may start by pursuing their own vision, but as they learn to listen carefully to others' visions they begin to see that their own personal vision is part of something larger" (p.352). According to the U.S. Department of Education (1993), the leader's attitude towards work also changes. The leader's attitude changes from a desire to want to work to a desire to aspire to leadership.

In Senge's (1990) discussions of the role of the "leader as teacher", he refers not only to leading or modelling the way for organizational members but also to

teaching people to be their own leaders and teachers. Senge cites Depree (1989) who states, "the first responsibility of a leader is to define reality" (p.11). Senge concurs with this statement and asserts, "much of the leverage leaders can actually exert lies in helping people achieve more accurate more insightful, and more *empowering* views of reality" (p.353). Truly empowering views of reality are achieved mainly through the disciplines of systems thinking and mental models. A commitment to lifelong learning, both personal and collaborative, is the "spiritual foundation" of a learning organization (Senge, 1990 p.7). In the view of Kouzes and Posner (1995), organizational success depends on learning: "The key that unlocks the door to opportunity is learning" (p.10).

### **Theme 3: Collaboration and Empowerment**

Alignment helps overcome this problem [of powerlessness] by empowering people in at least two different ways. First, when a clear sense of direction has been communicated throughout an organization, it allows even lower-level employees to initiate actions without the same degree of vulnerability... Second, because everyone is aiming at the same target, the probability is less that a single person's initiative will be stalled because it comes into conflict with someone else's. (Kotter, 1990, p.59)

At the core of the new leadership models is the concept of empowerment (Apps, 1995; Bennis et al., 1994; Bryman, 1992; Kotter, 1990; Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Levin, 1995; Senge, 1990; Sims & Lorenzi, 1992). Empowerment refers to sharing power as well as "recognizing and accepting the power that people already have" (Apps, 1995, p. 229). Empowered workers feel a sense of ownership and

responsibility for organizational success (Apps, 1995; Bennis, 1995; Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Senge, 1990).

Levin (1995) states, "Leadership can and should be a shared process"(p.116); a community of leaders where "those in positions of responsibility aid others to practise leadership in meeting rooms and/or classrooms" (p.116). He promotes the delegation of authority throughout an organization as well as the decentralization of power. He believes this will permit greater participation in decision-making and in daily work. Levin cites Cameron and Ettington (1988) in the statement, "Participatory institutional cultures arguably result in the most effective postsecondary organizations" (p.117).

Senge (1990) states, "localness - moving decisions down the organizational hierarchy"(p.287) - is vital in times of rapid change:

People learn most rapidly when they have a genuine sense of responsibility for their actions. Helplessness, the belief that we cannot influence the circumstances under which we live, undermines the incentive to learn, as does the belief that someone somewhere else dictates our actions. Conversely, if we know our fate is in our own hands, our learning matters. (p.287)

As a result, learning organizations will become more localized in their operations.

On a different note, Senge (1990) asserts that empowering others provides most of the leverage that leaders, in the role of teacher, possess. In addition, Senge adds, empowering others is deeply rewarding for the leaders in their role as designers of the learning process. Empowerment, however, occurs in a context of interdependence:

A central feature of modern organizations is interdependence, where no one has complete autonomy, and most employees are tied to many others... These linkages present a special challenge when organizations attempt to change, and

thus to the process of leadership; unless a large number of individuals line up and move together in the same direction, people will tend to fall all over one another. (Kotter, 1990, p.49)

Thus, Kotter (1990) views alignment as one of the fundamental aspects of leadership: "the process of getting people to understand, accept, and line up in the chosen direction" (p.ix). Alignment is seen by Kotter as a "complicated communications challenge"(p.ix) that is needed to influence cooperation and the formation of teams and coalitions: "One of the most visible characteristics of successful alignment process is what appears to be a great deal of communication"(p.51).

Sims & Lorenzi (1992) predict, "Self-managing teams appear to be the wave of the future. Teams are an important work element for implementing an effective leadership paradigm" (p. 215).

Bennis et al. (1994) state that the focus of the new-paradigm manager is building team spirit and collaboration, "social synergy", both within and outside the organization. Social synergy is achieved through conflict resolution by way of integration: "this method of resolving conflict... helps to develop individual powers and to combine them into the total power of the team, a truly dynamic force that enables it to achieve its tasks with 'gusto and with feeling'" (p.157).

In order for the teams to learn they must analyze problems together. For Kouzes and Posner (1995), "Leadership is a dialogue, not a monologue" (p.11).

To summarize, numerous theorists contend that the best way to achieve organizational success is through collaboration and team work (Apps, 1995; Bennis et

al., 1994; Bryman, 1992; Kotter, 1990; Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Levin, 1995; Senge, 1990; Sims & Lorenzi, 1992).

#### **Theme 4: Modelling, Trust, and Commitment**

The road to change... is through the development of trust - through acts which involve risks and conditions that make the risk-taker vulnerable 'if the trust is abused' [Skolnik, 1988, p.109]. Effective leadership will be that which leads Canada's colleges into an environment of trust.(Levin, 1995, p.114)

Kouzes and Posner (1993, 1995) have developed a model of leadership based on trust. Their extensive research on leadership has led to the identification of leader "credibility" as the essential leadership prerequisite. If people do not believe in the messenger, they will not believe the message and if there is no trust, people will not take risks. Kotter (1990) echoes the sentiments of Kouzes and Posner when he states, "A major challenge in leadership efforts is credibility - getting people to believe the message"(p.57). The actions of leaders speak louder than words, thus, leaders must 'walk the talk'.

According to Bennis and Nanus (1985), "[The] quality of fostering organizational learning by example may be one of the most important functions of leadership" (p.205). Leaders must model desired behaviours, a fact that is acknowledged by many and expressed by Bryman (1992): "Leaders who fail to lead by example when projecting their vision to others are also less likely to achieve the levels of trust that are required"(p. 147-148).

Commitment, on the part of both leaders and followers, is also required in a learning organization:

If this type of organization [a learning organization] is so widely preferred, why don't people create such organizations? I think the answer is leadership. People have no real comprehension of the type of commitment it requires to build such an organization. (O'Brien as cited in Senge, 1990 p.339)

Bennis et al. (1994) agree and suggest a vision is only successful if it creates commitment on the part of the followers:

A vision cannot be established in an organization by edict, or by the exercise of power or coercion. It is more an act of persuasion, of creating an enthusiastic and dedicated commitment to a vision because it is right for the times, right for the organization, and right for the people who are working in it. (p.60)

Similarly, Kouzes and Posner (1995) assert, "Leaders cannot command commitment, only inspire it." (p.11).

Modelling desired behaviours and practicing the right attitude wins respect, confidence, commitment and, in the end, changes behaviours: "modelling is one of the fundamental psychological processes by which new patterns of behaviour can be acquired and existing patterns altered" (Sims & Lorenzi, 1992, p.141). Overall, it appears the leaders must be trustworthy, open, and predictable "models" for all members of the organization (Apps, 1995; Bennis et al., 1994; Bryman, 1992; Kotter, 1990; Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Senge, 1990).

### **Theme 5: Motivation, Encouragement, and Inspiration**

Ideas were important and creative tension was accepted as a working tool, and these things meant a lot in shaping my young life and my values.(Kieschnick as cited in Bennis & Nanus, 1985, p.204)

Senge (1990), Bennis and Nanus (1985), and Fullan (1993) believe that the paradoxes produced by change and the creative tension resulting from the gap between reality and vision can be harnessed to energize and motivate organizational workers. Fullan states, "These tensions must be reconciled into powerful new forces for growth and development"(p.4). Senge (1990) declares that the role of the leader is to generate and manage creative tension in themselves and the organization:

This is how they energize an organization. That is their basic job. That is why they exist.

Mastering creative tension throughout an organization leads to a profoundly different view of reality. People literally start to see more and more aspects of reality, as something they, collectively, can influence. This is no hollow "belief," which people say in an effort to convince themselves that they are powerful. It is a quiet realization, rooted in understanding that *all* aspects of current reality - the events, the patterns of change, and even the systemic structures themselves - are subject to being influenced through creative tension.(p.357)

Two fundamental aspects of leadership, according to Kotter (1990), are motivation and inspiration which he describes as: "energizing people to overcome major political, bureaucratic, and resource barriers to change by satisfying very basic, but often unfulfilled, human needs"(p.6). The motivational and inspirational processes energize members, "not by pushing people in the right direction, as a control mechanism often does, but by satisfying very basic human needs"(p.63). These

processes manifest themselves mainly through (a) making the vision and the work important to the members, (b) involving members in decisions, thus "giving people a sense of control"(p.63), (c) providing enthusiastic support through coaching, feedback, and role modelling which promotes personal growth and increased self-esteem, and (d) recognizing and rewarding the successes of members publicly.

Kouzes and Posner (1995) view encouragement as how the leaders visibly and behaviorally link rewards with performance; "Leaders make sure people benefit when behaviour is aligned with cherished values" (p.14). For Bennis et al. (1994), encouragement comes by providing "conditions in which the work itself has its inherent value and allows the individual to release and direct his or her energy and imagination into the work... The core of motivation, then, lies in valuing something" (p.294).

Senge (1990) asserts that leaders draw their inspiration from their sense of stewardship while, as noted by the U.S. Department of Education (1993), organizational members are inspired and motivated by the leader's attitude towards his or her work .

In summary, the themes identified in the literature on new and emerging leadership theories are consistent with the conceptualizations of leadership for a learning organization. How can such leadership be developed in the community college system? According to Senge (1990),

they [the five learning disciplines] provide a framework for focusing the effort



to develop the capacity to lead. Systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, building shared vision, and team learning - these might just as well be called the *leadership disciplines* as the learning disciplines. Those who excel in these areas will be the natural leaders of learning organization. (p.359)

Senge has developed a model for organizational learning based on a conceptual framework of five key learning and leadership practices which are consistent with the themes identified in the research on new leadership: Personal Mastery, Mental Models, Building Shared Vision, Team Learning, and Systems Thinking. These five practices will be examined with respect to their suitability for leadership in the community college setting in this study.

#### **Research Question**

Based on the literature review, this study assumes that to become efficient and effective learning organizations, colleges must have a leadership approach consistent with the components of leadership required for the development of a learning organization. The purpose of the study is to determine the feasibility of the concept of the learning organization within the community college system. Specifically, this study examined the views of senior college administrators on the concept of a learning organization in order to answer the question: Is the concept of a learning organization a viable framework for leadership within the college system?

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

A qualitative, case study research design was utilized to gather and analyze data relevant to answering the research questions (Borg & Gall, 1989; Yin, 1984). Specifically, semi-structured interviews with four experienced administrators in the community college system were conducted in order to assess the feasibility of the concept of the learning organization as a viable model for leadership within the college system.

#### **Sample and Setting**

The sample consisted of four senior administrators selected from regional colleges throughout the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. The individuals were selected on the basis of their experience with administration in the college system and therefore, for the purposes of this paper, they are considered "experts" within the system. The sample included males and females from different geographical locations, different levels of management, and possessing different ranges of experiences.

The study was conducted during the transition period from the regional, five-college system to the single, provincial college system. All administrators interviewed had senior positions in the regional colleges and were newly appointed, or expecting to be hired, into senior administrative positions in the new college system. Therefore, these individuals are likely to be in formal positions and given the legitimate power to have a major impact on the structure of the new college organization.

### **Instruments**

The data collection instruments consisted of several field research forms and a tape-recorded interview with individual administrators. The instruments served to inform the administrators about the research procedure and to assist the researcher in data collection and review. The instruments included:

1. Administrator Personal Data Sheet (Appendix B)
2. Administrator Interview Information (Appendix C)
3. Selected Topics, Lead-in Statements (Appendix D)
4. Interview Protocols (Appendix E)

The following provides an overview of how each instrument was utilized in the collection process.

#### **Administrator Personal Data Sheet**

The Administrator Personal Data Sheet (Appendix B) was employed to gather relevant background data on each administrator and to gather information on their current college setting.

#### **Administrator Interview Information**

The Administrator Interview Information (Appendix C) served to remind the administrator about the purpose of the study and to outline the interview structure.

### **Selected Topics, Lead-in Statements**

The Selected Topics, Lead-in Statements Sheet (Appendix D) was designed to assist the administrator in focusing on the interview questions for each element.

### **Interview Protocols**

The primary research tools used in the study were the Interview Protocols (Appendix E). The protocols were designed for the following purposes: to provide the administrators with an open forum for sharing their perceptions and opinions on the research topics, to structure the interviews, and to assist the researcher in determining administrators' perceptions of the usefulness of the concept of a learning organization as an option for the college system.

The protocols were developed using the constructs of the Process of Professional Learning (PLS) Survey (Leithwood, 1995), the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) questionnaire (Kouzes & Posner, 1989), The Fifth Discipline (Senge, 1990), and from questions the researcher wanted to examine.

The semi-structured interview protocols were divided into two parts. Part I covered the five elements of the learning organization and accounted for the majority of the interview questions. Part II asked several concluding questions.

Part I interview topics were:

Element A: Personal Mastery

Element B: Mental Models

Element C: Building Shared Vision

Element D: Team Learning

Element E: Systems Thinking (Senge, 1990)

Each of the five topics was composed of eight parallel questions. All questions sought administrators' beliefs, perceptions, and opinions:

1. Questions A1 to E1 were intended to seek out administrators' personal beliefs, values, and opinions on the importance of each element.
2. Questions A2 to E2 solicited the administrators' perceptions of the importance of each element to the college membership.
3. Questions A3 to E3 were designed to identify the source of leadership for the development of each element as determined by the administrators.
4. Questions A4 to E4 sought administrators' beliefs on the current stage of development of the college system as a learning organization with respect to each element.
5. Questions A5 to E5 were designed to identify strategies currently being used, or strategies that should be used, to implement each element as determined by the administrators.
6. Questions A6 to E6 were designed to identify who in the organization should be practising each element as perceived by the administrators.
7. Questions A7 to E7 solicited the administrators' opinions on the

timeliness of developing each element, given the current restructuring of the college system.

8. Questions A8 to E8 sought additional comments from administrators on each element.

Part II of the protocols asked several concluding questions with respect to the feasibility of the concept of a learning organization within the community college system. All questions sought administrators' beliefs, perceptions, and opinions:

1. Question one solicited administrator's opinions on the feasibility of the five elements of a learning organization for the college system.
2. Question two solicited administrator's opinions on the feasibility of the five elements of a learning organization as a leadership model for the college system.
3. Question three sought administrator's opinions on the likelihood of the newly restructured college system stimulating organizational learning.
4. Question four asked for additional comments on any topic from administrators.

### **Design of Data Collection**

The selected administrators were initially contacted by phone or E-Mail, at which point the researcher introduced herself and informed administrators about the study and its aims. Once interest and/or consent to participate was expressed, Letters

of Disclosure and Consent (Appendix A) were faxed or hand-delivered to the administrators. Upon receipt of a consent form indicating a willingness to participate, the researcher contacted the administrator to set up a tentative date for an interview and to answer any outstanding questions. Once interview times were established, travel plans were made.

All interviews were conducted on the island portion of Newfoundland and Labrador during a one month period from March 13, 1997 to April 2, 1997. Three of the interviews were conducted at the administrators' offices and one interview was conducted at a conference room at Memorial University of Newfoundland.

Data for the study was gathered using one-on-one audiotaped interviews with each of the administrators. Prior to conducting the interview, administrators were asked to complete the Administrator Personal Data Sheet. This pre-interview information session gave the researcher and administrator time to get to know each other a little better and helped set the tone of the interview.

Upon completion of the data sheet, the researcher provided the administrator with the Administrator Interview Information sheet to refresh the administrator's memory about the purpose of the study. Each administrator was also provided with the Selected Topics, Lead-in Statements to help him/her focus on the questions at hand. Again, discussions resulting from these two tools helped set an informal and relaxed atmosphere for the interview.

Once the administrator was ready to be interviewed, the audiotape recorder was

turned on and the researcher followed the structure outlined in the Interview Protocols.

Throughout the interview, breaks were taken at the end of one or more interview topic(s), as requested by the administrator, and the recorder was turned off. On average, each interview took approximately one and one half hours to complete. Participants were interviewed once during the study. Arrangements were made for a telephone or E-Mail follow-up as necessary.

### **Design of Data Analysis**

Tape recordings from the interviews were duplicated and placed in a secure place as a safety precaution, as were photocopies of the data sheets. Upon completion of all the interviews, the tapes were then transcribed verbatim into computer files. Separate files were created for each administrator. Each file was composed of six sections: five sections were labelled "Element A", "Element B",..."Element E" and contained all questions and responses relevant to those topics; the sixth section was labelled "Concluding Questions" and contained all questions and responses relevant to that topic. All questions were coded by element and question number, for example, Element A question 1 was coded as "A1". Finally, transcriptions relating to each speaker, Interviewer (I) or Subject (S), were separated by paragraph.

Once all tapes were transcribed and checked, an in-depth analysis was conducted. Each administrator's interview was reviewed separately by section and by question until the researcher became familiar with the responses. The researcher then



compared all the administrators' responses by section and by question until she felt familiar with the data. At this point, reoccurring issues or themes were identified. The data was then re-examined to ensure all themes had been identified. Each issue was then analyzed and re-analyzed until the researcher felt familiar with the issues and satisfied with her assessment (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Baksh & Martin, 1986). All themes were then analyzed together to generate a general statement on the feasibility of the concept of a learning organization for the college system and the viability of the concept for a model of leadership in the college system.

In chapter 4, Analysis of the data, quotes are generally verbatim but phrases and sentences are omitted when necessary for clarity and expression of ideas. Omissions are indicated by use of ellipsis points. At all times, an effort has been made to include the original quote so that the reader can also interpret the intended meaning. Repetitive expressions such as "you know", "right", "hums", and "ads" have mostly been deleted, as well as specific names and locations that may put the confidentiality of individuals, campuses, or colleges at risk.

#### **Limitations of the Study**

The general concerns for all qualitative case studies are of concern for this study. The degree of generalizability of the results from this study are limited. There is no way of knowing how typical the administrators are of the population in general. Although the administrators were selected on the basis of "expertise", the sample is

not, and was not, meant to be comprehensive.

The study was conducted during a transition period from the old (regional) to the new (provincial) college structure. The administrators in the study were being considered for, or had been appointed to, senior administrative positions in the new college system. Such extraneous variables or biases may have affected the internal validity of this qualitative study (Borg & Gall, 1989).

The two hour interviews and personal data sheets may have limited data collection and interpretation of the data. As well, the data collection instruments, including the researcher, may have introduced biases into the study and results.

The interview is an extremely subjective research tool and the degree to which the biases of the researcher may have distorted the data are unknown. Even though the researcher is employed at a college not included in the sample of administrators for this study, her experiences as an instructor who was impacted on by the restructuring may have affected the collection and interpretation of the data and conclusions reached about the results. All efforts were made to reduce any observer bias which may have influenced the collection of data and the interpretation of results.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **ANALYSIS OF DATA**

This chapter presents a section on the profile of the research sample, a section on each of the five elements of the learning organization, a section on the concluding questions, and a section on the document analysis of the college model.

For confidentiality, administrators are identified only as Administrator A to Administrator D and the gender used may or may not be accurate. The results of data analyses for the four administrators are included in this analysis.

Data for this study were collected from community college administrators at four different campuses of three regional community colleges (or three college districts in the new provincial college structure) on the island portion of the province on Newfoundland and Labrador.

Table 2 presents the demographic data on the sample. Administrators ranged in age from 40 to 49 years. Two administrators were male and two were female. Three administrators had achieved a Master of Education degree and one administrator was completing a Master of Education degree. All administrators had worked for at least 9 years in the college system and at least six of those years were as administrators in the college system. The administrators had seventy years of experience in the college system between them. It is worth noting that all administrators had taught for at least one year in the college system.

Table 2  
Demographic Data for Administrators

Administrator	Highest level of Post-secondary education	Years in the College system	Years as an administrator
A	M.Ed.(in progress)	<10	5-10
B	M.Ed.	>25	20+
C	M.Ed.	<15	5-10
D	M.Ed.	<25	5-10

#### Interview Protocols

The Interview Protocols (Appendix E) used in this study were designed to elicit responses from administrators and to gather evidence, in the form of administrators' perceptions, on the feasibility of the concept of the learning organization within the community college system and the usefulness of the concept for leadership within the college setting.

Each discipline of the learning organization was presented simply as "Element A" to "Element E" in an attempt to keep the terminology simple and jargon to a minimum. The eight questions per element and the four concluding questions were posed to all administrators. For the purposes of analyzing the interview data, each element and the concluding questions will be presented in separate sections in this chapter; The individual questions per section as well as conclusions will be presented in sub-sections. Results are summarized in Tables 3 to 8.

### **Element A: Personal Mastery**

Senge's first discipline of the learning organization, Personal Mastery, was presented as Element A. Administrators were introduced to the concept then asked to apply it to the community college setting in answering the questions that followed.

Eight of the sub-sections below present a complete analysis of the data per question on element A. These sub-sections describe the administrators' beliefs, perceptions, and opinions on the concept of personal mastery. Table 3 summarizes the responses from the administrators. The ninth sub-section briefly summarizes the results and draws conclusions on the feasibility of personal mastery for the college system.

#### **Question 1: The Importance of Personal Mastery to the Administrators**

Question 1 sought the administrators' personal beliefs on the importance of personal mastery to the college setting:

- A1. **How important** do you believe the pursuit of lifelong learning and continuous improvement is to people in the college system? **Why** is it (un)important?

All of the administrators agreed that personal mastery was tremendously important to college members. Reasons given for its significance included: personal mastery as a basic philosophy of the college system, personal mastery as a basic philosophy of administration, and personal mastery as a basic philosophy of a student-centred approach to the education process.

Administrator A pointed out that lifelong learning is part of the mission statement for most colleges in the province. She believes that if it is internalized by college members in a learning organization, it should be, "of utmost importance to the faculty and staff and actually the stakeholders in the delivery of the educational process".

Administrator B felt that the two facets of personal mastery - lifelong learning and continuous improvement - are essential to college members. However, he asserts that they must be analyzed separately. This analysis is discussed further in question A5.

Administrators C and D thought the concept of personal mastery was particularly important for the students in the community college system. Administrator D asserts:

Within the college system we have to realize that the student is in the centre or should be at least in a learning organization, and everything we do should be to improve the student...So considering that, we have undoubtedly to look at lifelong learning as something that's important for administration, for faculty, for staff and within the college system, I think, the onus is on the administration to make sure that there is an opportunity for professional development for staff as part of Human Resources plan, that should be, I think, central to that.

Administrator C expresses a similar sentiment:

There's actually an old Indian saying that I came upon one time which states that "one who learns from one who is learning drinks from a running stream" and so, I think the indication of refreshment, of newness, of creativity, housed in that statement is very important to the vitality of the future of the people within the organization, the people we serve - I think in this particular case, students - and to the growth of the organization itself in terms of progress,

diverse thinking that will lend to progress.

She also points out that personal mastery is, "one of the basic philosophies" that she intends to utilize to a larger extent.

### **Question 2: The Importance of Personal Mastery to the College Members**

Question 2 sought the administrators' opinions on the importance of personal mastery to the college membership in general:

A2. Do you believe that most people in the college system also see this concept as (un)important?

All administrators agreed that most members of the college organization would, in a general, see this concept as important. However, several administrators felt that issues of commitment, organizational stability, organizational values, and cynicism were a real problem.

Administrator A felt that committed individuals would view personal mastery as important. However, non-committed individuals may have difficulty seeing its importance:

For persons committed to their industry and their field of expertise, yes. For persons who have not identified with the area of expertise in which they teach it becomes more and more difficult...The committed individual would hold this view, undoubtedly, however, the non-committed individual would have much more difficulty in understanding the rationale for working to improve themselves in an industry in which they feel already competent to perform the tasks and duties of their position, whether that be staff or faculty.

Administrator B believes that all of the restructuring in the college system over

the past ten years, has made people uncertain as to what the organization now values. As a result, members are uncertain about the direction their personal development should take. However, he did make the point that in general, people were committed to personal mastery. He also expressed the view that when individuals learn, the organization learns if it wants to:

The problem that you would have now in the college system in Newfoundland is that we've had 3 or 4 major reorganizations in the last ten years, right, and that... seems to have been done in any event... totally in response to kind of economic concerns and I guess most people are asking themselves now, "What does the organization value?" and if that's a bit difficult to determine. So, if you don't know what the organization values then it's difficult to align your personal vision, or personal development, with the organization, right... if that's a question mark for you, right, and I suspect is it now for a lot of people, but yes, I think generally, in the generic sense, people would say that it's important for them - lifelong learning is important for them and continuous improvement is important for them and... when individuals learn, I think the organization learns and the organization can take advantage of that, if it wants to, but... it has to be valued, there has to be a value assigned to it. So what you have... what people are feeling now is that, you know, they're not sure what the organization values.

Administrator C points out that all the restructuring and instability has led to a fair amount of low morale and cynicism on the part of organizational members, regarding whether administration will facilitate personal mastery. She feels that through the development of trust and through the modelling of desired behaviours, these fears can be overcome:

I mean we have gone, in my relatively short history with the organization of 12 years, gone through I guess five restructurings in that short period of time. People now are looking for stability, job security, so it's a time when it's hard to get people to feel as though they have an involvement, that there is an aim to help them develop professionally and whatever, but there is certainly a need



for that and unless we do it, I don't think we will get rid of the people being too introspective rather than looking outward to what can be better in the future, a positive outlook.

Administrator D was of the opinion that college members in his area would see the concept as important because in the past, the college's strategic plan placed a strong emphasis on personal mastery and there was a commitment from the top - Board of Governors, President - through to the faculty. He felt certain this commitment would continue.

### **Question 3: The Source of Leadership for Personal Mastery**

Question 3 sought the administrators' perceptions of the source of leadership for developing personal mastery in the college setting:

- A3. **Who** should be promoting lifelong learning and continuous improvement in the college system? Should anyone take a **lead** role?

Administrators B, C, and D all felt that the source of leadership should come from the top of the organization, whereas Administrator A was of the opinion that the source should be the individuals themselves and professional organizations.

Administrator B felt there has been a commitment on the part of the executive which is clearly communicated and demonstrated to the college members. Demonstrating "commitment to people" has to be there in these uncertain times.

Administrator C believes that the administrators themselves should be the key promoters of personal mastery since they have been entrusted with a leadership role.

In time, she feels that others will be enabled and shared leadership will be developed:

Then others will be more enabled than maybe they are now and I'm sure there are some people who are already enabling that philosophy. I think we're all leaders and followers at the same time and we have to be able to see ourselves as that if we are going to really enable involvement. And so in time there will be leadership in the followers that we have now in terms of advocating and helping to implement that type of outlook.

Administrator C felt strongly about the administrators' lead role:

I think in terms of developing that type of philosophy, because I don't think it's existent in a holistic manner right now, that we do have the leadership responsibility to provide for that.

Administrator D felt the Board of Governors and in particular, the President should take the lead role in promoting personal mastery. Initially, he believes there should be a commitment from the top of the organization, not just a verbal commitment, but also, a demonstrated commitment in terms of resources being put in place. He was emphatic that the commitment must be demonstrated. In time, he hopes faculty and staff would take the lead in professional development:

There has to be a commitment to it from above and, I think, it has to come directly from the Board or the governing body of the institution and from the President to show that a commitment is there and it's no good to say that we have a commitment... it's no good for the President to come out and say we are committed to lifelong learning - there has to be resources put in place and a plan put in place so that the faculty and staff can take advantage of that. That means that there should be finances there to provide professional development and lifelong learning to those people... and then of course it will come down initially or hopefully, to faculty and staff themselves being very much involved in professional development, on planning the professional development activities that they need or desire, but they have to know that there is a commitment to that.

Administrator A felt the source of leadership for personal mastery should be

the faculty and staff, not the administration of the organization. She felt initiatives would be more valued if they came from the individuals themselves. She notes that such leadership requires certain structures and resources and that in all likelihood, only the committed individuals would participate:

The single biggest problem I feel that has occurred with the implementation of continuous improvement processes for staff, faculty or individuals in any organization has been the notion of a top down or a human resource department initiative. This always gets...viewed with a jaundiced eye and this comes from more than just the current organization of the college system, in which I have worked, but in other as well. It becomes much more valuable to the individual and much more well respected when the individual themselves identify the need and identify the methods for dealing [with] the need. In other words, satisfying a given need in professional development. That requires a bit of organization and not all people within the organization are going to abide by it or even look toward it. As I said in the previous question, it comes back to the issue of commitment to the industry in which you are training people for.

She also expresses the view that the professional organizations representing the college members should promote continuous improvement. For those members who are non-aligned, new organizations need to be formed:

I feel strongly that continuous improvement should be a role that's actively pursued by the professional organization which represents the individual... To be proactive I feel that currently faculty and staff in the college system have to look to the professional organizations to which they belong.

Also, we have to look to support for non-aligned faculty. In that area I feel that a professional organization for teachers in the college system would be a benefit. Support staff, similarly, in their area of expertise, whether it be as a secretary, a purchaser, or an accountant would have to look to their area of expertise to find the support they need. It has to be proactive, the resources have to be provided - without resources being provided it will not be perceived as being a serious effort to support and it must be identified from the stakeholders, the team themselves.

Administrator A states that an organization that helps the instructors in their professional development endeavours promotes motivation, a sense of belonging, and focus for members in their career endeavours.

**Question 4: Developmental Stage of Personal Mastery in the College System**

Question 4 sought the administrators' opinions on the current stage of development of personal mastery in the college setting:

- A4. Does the college system **currently foster** the development of lifelong learning and continuous improvement?

Administrators A, C, and D agreed that the system does promote lifelong learning and continuous improvement to a very limited degree, whereas Administrator B felt the college did not promote it to any significant extent.

Administrator A believes opportunities do exist, within the limited resources, for those individuals who demonstrate a need.

Administrator C states that even though lifelong learning is part of what historically defines a community college, we have not been very successful in its implementation:

I think that it has been recognized that there has not been enough development of the staff in general and from more particularly, of administrators in terms of their enabling of the staff, their leadership potential, in terms of practicing the theories that have been put forward... in terms of the history of community colleges... the aspect of lifelong learning is part of what a community college is defined as and has been defined as. As to actually implementing and practicing, I think there is a lot of work to be done yet.

Administrator D also believes that even though the significance of lifelong learning and continuous improvement has been realized, and efforts have been underway in his area to foster its development for approximately six years, the college still has a long ways to go. With respect to the new provincial college system, he feels it is too early to judge, but initial meetings indicate professional development is "an important component of the whole human resources area".

Administrator B points out that this is a time of transition with respect to the development of the college system. A time when on the one hand, some people's lives are becoming totally dismantled, while on the other hand opportunity is being offered to others. He believes there is a trend occurring now, one where the role of the organization is being decreased and there is very little, in the way of a professional development strategies, being put in place for members:

The role of the organization perhaps is being diminished intentionally... in the sense that the message is basically to people, "Look, you have to take responsibility for your own learning and there's only so much the organization can do and the rest of it is entirely up to you". I think what the organization can do is to provide good, strategic information, for example, about where the organization is headed, what it sees as its priorities, and then individuals can make a decision about their own learning relative to that - if they want to stay with the organization.

#### **Question 5: Strategies for the implementation of Personal Mastery**

Question 5 sought administrators' opinions on strategies that are currently being used, or that should be used, to develop and implement personal mastery in the college system. The question was composed of an open-ended query, followed by a number

of examples of strategies:

- A5. **What** sorts of things are being done or should be done to foster the development of lifelong learning and continuous improvement in college members?

I have several examples here which I am going to ask for your input and opinion on, example:

- 1) Is the college providing for professional development to college members? Is it enough?
- 2) Do college goals foster self-improvement in college members? Should they?
- 3) Does the college celebrate or acknowledge the achievements of college members? Should they?
- 4) Does the college encourage people to seek out challenging opportunities that test their skills and abilities? Should they?

In response to the open-ended query, all administrators proposed a professional development or a vocational plan as a means to foster the development of personal mastery in college members.

Administrator A describes a strategy that she has experienced: An individual identifies an opportunity for learning and pursues the necessary support from the college. However she feels that in all likelihood, only proactive, motivated, and committed individuals would use such a strategy:

Usually individuals who do that are already committed to their industry and to their profession and to the teaching of that profession. For that reason then, they will see the support. Unfortunately, what happens without the motivation that can occur, individuals which would benefit greatly from... such

opportunities don't always take advantage of them. So the proactive nature has to be fostered, supported. Is that occurring currently in the college system? I think to a limited extent.

Administrator B suggests examining lifelong learning and continuous improvement separately. He believes lifelong learning must be supported from a professional development perspective; at present there is not enough structure or opportunity available to individuals. However, he believes this is being addressed now by helping members take control of their learning since the role of the organization is being diminished:

Some of that is being addressed now through some work that is being done - internal links within the college and to enable people, I guess, to kind of take charge of their own learning.

With respect to the continuous improvement aspect of personal mastery, Administrator B felt that benchmarks must be put in place in order to determine if things have improved:

If you wanted to ascertain if something has actually improved then you have to benchmark where you are now and then you have to measure your performance, I guess, relative to that particular benchmark to see if there was actually an improvement.

Administrator B is in the process of creating a benchmark or reference for faculty and staff, by tying faculty and staff evaluations to their professional development plans.

Administrator C strongly believes that the new college structure, with its "shared team leadership" approach, is strongly committed to lifelong learning; as indicated by the responsibility of professional development being given to senior

administrators. She also states that faculty and staff involvement in decision-making has been strongly articulated and that the function of enabling others has been specifically assigned to certain administrators:

In the new philosophy, it thinks nothing is a sole responsibility. [Certain administrators will] expand the philosophy of involvement through various types of teams that will actually make the consensus decision that will help the organization move ahead... As it grows, more people will take on that hopefully.

Administrator D suggests the development of a "general awareness" campaign as an initial step in fostering personal mastery in college members. He felt that many individuals had been in the college system for a long time and may not even be aware of their need for professional development. He also suggests resources be provided, keeping in mind the fiscal constraints and the fact that much professional development could be conducted in-house. Finally, he suggests two types of professional development plans are needed: individual and group.

**Question 5: Personal Mastery Example 1**

- (1) Is the college providing for professional development to college members? Is it enough?

Upon presenting the administrators with Example 1, all agreed that there is not enough professional development for college members. In addition, several strategies were highlighted.

Administrator A states that most faculty members are provided with a learning



resource centre and professional journals by the college. However, she felt it was not sufficient and that the college had failed to support, "the most valuable and most expensive resource we have, which is our human resources".

Administrator C notes that the new college had started the process of providing professional development to its newly hired administrators:

Providing for their initial professional development in the sense that they understand clearly what their roles are. It has proven, I guess thus far in the last couple of months, that it's going to actually practice what it's preaching.

Administrator D felt that the college has attempted to provide professional development for members, but he is of the opinion that more resources, both financial and human, are needed to ensure that plans are put in place and opportunities are provided.

#### **Question 5: Personal Mastery Example 2**

- 2) Do college goals foster self-improvement in college members? Should they?

In response to example 2, all administrators agreed that the college goals are intended to promote self-improvement in college members. However, what actually occurs in practice may not be what was intended.

Administrators A and C point out that a major objective of the college mission statements is professional growth of college members. However, whether that actually happens is another matter.

Administrator B felt that the college goals were well intended and presents an example of how college goals foster self-improvement in members: The impact of technology is affecting the goals of the college which in turn are affecting college members. Instructors for example, often need to learn these new technologies for course delivery. In response to this need, the college offers in-house training to those who have the initiative to take advantage of it.

Administrator D was of the opinion that in order for faculty and staff to educate and train individuals for the workforce, they must also be improving personally.

**Question 5: Personal Mastery Example 3**

- 3) Does the college celebrate or acknowledge the achievements of college members? Should they?

Example 3, prompted a unanimous response of "not enough" from the administrators.

Administrator A states that there are some acknowledgement strategies being used, such as newsletters. However, she believes that since the college is a public organization, there are restrictions on incentives, for example, implementing financial incentives would be practically impossible.

Administrator B identifies newsletters and recognition at assemblies, as two acknowledgement strategies currently being used.

Administrator C felt that the celebration of achievements could be done formally or informally. However, she believes that a formal incentive system would have to be worked out. She is of the opinion that the public college has, in general, done a poor job of promoting itself to the public:

But even in terms of the media and public relations that, we to a large extent, we haven't done [it]. I think that one of the big weaknesses of the previous history of the college system is that in public forum we have not celebrated our achievements in programming, staff achievements and we should be doing more of that.

Administrator D also felt that there was no real recognition of peoples' achievements. For example, he talks about individuals who had taken leave without pay or with reduced salaries in order to upgrade their skills and abilities:

I don't think there is any real recognition when this person comes back and is more qualified for the position. I don't think we really recognize that in any form and I think we should.

#### **Question 5: Personal Mastery Example 4**

- 4) Does the college encourage people to seek out challenging opportunities that test their skills and abilities? Should they?

All Administrators responded with a resounding "no" when presented with example 4.

Administrator A states that in a climate of restraint, "these opportunities are often missed, overlooked, or consciously ignored". She also felt that this was unfortunate, considering such opportunistic times ought to be capitalized on and probably would be by proactive individuals.

Administrator B believes that the college does not encourage such activities in an "overt way" and that only individuals who are "somewhat independent of the organization" could take up the challenge.

Administrator C felt that in the past, the colleges did not have the structure required to challenge members:

There have been artificial barriers to challenging staff in terms of rules and regulations and I don't think we've dealt with those rules and regulations to a large extent in a flexible manner. We've kind of, in a lot of ways seen things from a black and white instead of grey and moving the barriers around, so that we can enable staff to have opportunities, whether they be leaves to go back to industry in their particular areas, to have a real life situation again, whether it's, for instance, an administrator to go into a classroom occasionally where you can talk about the aspect of leadership with students who will be the future leaders and that's one thing I have put forward myself. It's important for me to be real and to go into classes every once in a while, talk about those generic things that I have some skills to share in or debate with or whatever, but certainly there have been many staff in the past who have come forward and made suggestions that I don't think have been fully listened to or enabled. I think we have to start listening more in terms of the creative ideas that can come forward and enable some of those things now to happen.

Administrator C also expresses the view that college members, and in particular administrators, are not trained in the techniques required to encourage members to seek out challenges:

Even if you have the structure, I think that the aspect of being broader thinkers, seeing the big picture so that you're not always boxed by compartments, departments, to specific thinking and I don't think in our past schooling, people of my age for instance, really were enabled to do that through our schooling from kindergarten on and now we have to sort of go back and be re-educated, if we're truly going to have an administrative being that enables that. If we don't do it ourselves we're not going to enable it.

Administrator D describes the college's position as "reactionary" when it comes

to encouraging members to seek out challenging opportunities. Basically, the onus is on the individual to seek out such opportunities and the college will then "react to the request". He felt that if the college promoted a general awareness program, as discussed above, members would be more encouraged and supported in their endeavours.

#### **Question 6: The Practitioners of Personal Mastery in the College System**

Question 6 sought the administrators' opinions on the identity of the college members who should be practicing personal mastery:

- A6. Who in the college should be actively engaged in lifelong learning and continuous improvement?

Administrators B, C, and D state that all college members should be actively engaged in personal mastery, whereas Administrator A felt that faculty and staff should be engaged in such activities.

Administrator C also points out that professional development activities are often focused primarily on faculty, however, this is overlooking the important work done by the support staff:

I guess I have a bit of an advantage in that I have been an administrator of support staff to a large extent in the student services area and know how important their ongoing empowerment through information and growth through professional development is to our students in terms of they're being the first that they meet at the door, etc. That those people that counsel them into courses and provide them with advice...or shoulders to lean on at times. So there needs to be a greater integration of faculty and support staff needs as well because often times the jobs are very, very integrated.

Administrator A believes that faculty and staff should be actively engaged in personal mastery:

I strongly think that it should be the faculty and staff - the people that do the actual work. These are the people that need to have the most current, the most technically competent skills, I should say knowledge, skills and attitude developed.

She points out that the administrators have learning experiences available to them, outside the college, which the faculty and staff do not have available:

For the persons that are in administrative roles at the campus or college headquarters level, they have an opportunity to see outside the college system periodically and that in and of itself constitutes a lifelong learning environment. Although it might be implied, the implicate nature of it is a benefit. That is not readily available or identified with by the faculty and staff and they are the individuals that benefit the most because they perform the work and that it is where the resource and opportunities should be put.

### Question 7: Appropriateness of Developing Personal Mastery during the College

#### Restructuring

Question 7 solicited the administrators' beliefs on the timeliness of fostering personal mastery during the restructuring of the college system:

- A7. Given the **restructuring** of the college system, do you feel the **time is right** for fostering or continuing to foster continuous improvement and lifelong learning?

In general, all administrators agreed that the time was right to foster the development of personal mastery. Administrator A believes that a period of transition is also a time of opportunity, thus there is no better time to rework the organizational policies, keeping in mind the financial constraints:

Because it is a period of transition it probably offers the most opportunity to identify lifelong learning and continuous improvement as a conscious effort of the organization, in so far as the reworking of organizational structures, the retooling of the post secondary system in the province has a financial parameter. Within that financial parameter policy can be established to identify specific resources on an ongoing basis for professional development, lifelong learning and continuous improvement of faculty and staff.

Administrator B asserts that the time is definitely ripe for developing personal mastery "if" there is a period of stability for the next 3 to 5 years. He also felt that people must become somewhat "independent" of the organization if they are not to be continuously victimized by change. This type of personal and professional development would keep individuals ready for a world of change:

I think what people are learning now, certainly in the college system, is that there's no such thing as security or loyalty or commitment. People are not seen from a human resource perspective where... they contribute 'a' particular thing to the organization... You're very dispensable.

Administrator B points out that in these uncertain times, it is difficult for an organization to contribute to its membership's professional growth because there is such a short relationship with these individuals:

In some cases, most people are starting to feel that... the organization don't want to have a commitment. That they would rather, in fact, recruit someone for three months or six months and then let them go. So in that context, it's very difficult for an organization to contribute a lot to continuous improvement and professional growth of people because their relationship with the individual is very short term. So that's why I said earlier, that it's becoming an individual thing. That what the individual needs to do is to develop strategies where they become independent of the organization.

Administrator C was of the opinion that the new provincial college is moving in the right direction as indicated by the shared leadership approach being modelled by

the President and senior executive, as revealed in the job interview she experienced, and as indicated in the proposed administrative evaluations:

We have started off on the right foot through the leadership of the President and the senior executive, in that even in the interviews for the... positions we were asked questions such as "Do you think you can indeed work as a leader of a team? Do you think you can implement shared leadership?" and it has been put forward that the evaluation that will be done with us will be done largely on the basis of our proven ability to implement that kind of philosophy. I think that we have started off on the right foot. I've got a lot of hope for the future in that respect.

Administrator D felt that the college cannot afford not to move in this direction. He hoped that the new college would direct a portion of the limited resources into the professional development areas.

#### **Question 8: Additional Comments on Personal Mastery**

Question 8 sought additional comments from administrators:

A8. Are there any additional comments you would like to add on element A?

The only additional comment made was by Administrator D. He points out that since the college is trying to impress upon the students, "the significance of lifelong learning", it needs to model that behaviour for the students.

See Table 3 for a summary of responses.



Table 3

Summary of Administrators' Responses to Questions on Element A - Personal Mastery

Question #:	Administrator			
	A	B	C	D
A1: Importance-Administrator?	Very important	Very important	Very important	Very important
A2: Importance-Members?	Yes, if they are committed	Yes, generally. Need stability & clear values	Yes, however morale is low-cynical	Yes in the past, had commitment Future-hopeful
A3:Source of Leadership?	Individuals themselves & professional organizations	Executive commitment. Lead is same	Administrators then members share leadership. Lead-administrators	Top incl. board and president. Lead is president
A4:Does college foster personal mastery?	Yes to limited extent.	No, not a lot. Organizational role being diminished	Yes,in theory very little in practice	Yes, to a limited extent.Too soon for new college
A5:Strategies?	Vocational plan	Professional Development	Professional Development	Professional Development
A5(1): Professional Development?	Yes,not enough	Not enough	Yes, has started in new college with admin.	Yes, need more resources and opportunities
A5(2):College Goals?	Yes in mission statements	Yes, well intended	Yes, in mission statements	Yes, nature of the job
A5(3): Celebrate?	Yes but are restrictions	Yes, not enough	Not enough	Not enough
A5(4):Encouragement?	No,not in climate of restraint	No, not in an overt way	Not enough,there are barriers.	Lacking here, very reactionary
A6:Who?	Fac & staff	Everyone	Everyone	Everyone
A7:Is the time right?	Yes, it is a time of opportunity	Yes, if have a period of stability	Yes,are indicators.Future is hopeful	Yes,it must. Need to provide resources

### **Personal Mastery: Conclusions**

The data collected in response to questions A1 to A8 show that administrators believe that the element of Personal Mastery is feasible for the college system. The administrators believe the philosophy of lifelong learning and continuous improvement is important to most college members. They state that everyone in the organization should be actively engaged in personal mastery and felt that the time is right for fostering the development of this element.

Reasons given for its significance included personal mastery as a basic philosophy of: the college system, administration, and student-centred educational approaches. As well, it is a means of developing trust through modelling.

Issues of concern raised by the administrators included: commitment, organizational instability (which has led to low morale and cynicism), restructuring and downsizing (which have discouraged members from seeking out challenging opportunities), unclear organizational values (due to poorly communicated values resulting from the loss of organizational memory or lack of a sense of history), and benchmarking.

The administrators agreed that the philosophy of lifelong learning and continuous improvement must be supported by leaders at the top of the organization. In general, they felt the college system must do more to develop personal mastery through professional development, celebrating and acknowledging achievements, and encouraging members to seek out challenging opportunities.

### **Element B: Mental Models**

Senge's second discipline of the learning organization, Mental Models, was presented as Element B to the administrators. Administrators were introduced to the concept then asked to apply it to the community college setting in answering the questions to follow.

Eight of the sub-sections below present a complete analysis of the data per question on element B. These sub-sections describe the administrators' beliefs, perceptions, and opinions on the concept of mental models. Table 4 summarizes the responses from the administrators. The ninth sub-section briefly summarizes the results and draws conclusions on the feasibility of mental models for the college system.

#### **Question 1: The Importance of Challenging Mental Models**

Question 1 sought the administrators' personal beliefs on the importance of challenging the assumptions of college members:

- B1. How important do you believe challenging people to rethink their views of work is to the college system? Why is it (un)important?

All of the administrators agreed that challenging members' views of work was very important to the college system.

Administrator A felt that individual belief systems change much slower than the changes occurring in society, therefore, it is important to challenge people "up

front" in order to speed up the process.

Administrators B and D believe that challenging peoples' views is fundamental to the college system. According to Administrator B, "this is what we are all about"; college members prepare people for the world of work, therefore, they must be current, otherwise, the services they are providing quickly become irrelevant. In his opinion, the role of the organization is to challenge its members and provide them with good information on work practises in the corporate world.

Administrator D emphasized the tremendous impact of change and knowledge on the worker, on the students, and on those who prepare the students:

We can never teach a person enough anymore. I mean information is just so astounding - it's out there, that we cannot, in one or two years, teach a student what that person will need to know out in the workforce and then that is continuously changing so the person has to know how to learn. So considering all that, we have to re-think the way that we teach or instruct students. Our approach, our teaching methodology, even the whole way that we manage the organization, how we involve students, the whole collaboration, teamwork, how we even evaluate students. So we have to consider how the world is changing out there and what the expectations of our graduates are going to be. In order to prepare them for that, then we have to change.

Administrators B and C both point out that the college is often too inflexible and raises too many unnecessary road blocks. In Administrator B's view, the college needs a change in attitude:

I'm finding in some cases that you have individuals who are interested in doing that [challenging views], but sometimes the organization is not very flexible in making that particular accommodation. Like for example, the opportunity to Telework, now, is clearly an option... Lots of what we do can be done remotely. We have people teaching programs for us that don't live or work [nearby] and they're at some other location. But to do that in a more intense

way or to broaden your base of operations in that way, it would require that the organization start to rethink the way they're defining the job.

Administrator C explains that in the new college system, old policies and procedures do not work anymore since the college is now using a shared leadership approach: Therefore, the methods used to examine and evaluate decisions need to be changed so that the leadership teams can examine larger, more general issues on a more frequent and informal basis:

I think it's very, very important if we want to build shared leadership that the old paradigms be questioned and that every time that we implement decision-making, particularly on a broad basis, that we re-evaluate and say after the decision has been made and implemented, "how did that work? What was right about it and what was wrong about it and maybe even we should look at it in a different respect", and I think in a less formal way that it's healthy at times to put away the day to day management issues of the team table and say "Let's today examine a question of a larger nature and how do you feel about it", and have a mini professional development opportunity around the team table. That's sort of... like I said, away from the day to day activity.

## **Question 2: The Importance of Challenging Mental models to the College**

### **Members**

Question 2 sought the administrators' opinions on how important the general membership believe challenging people to re-evaluate their views of work is to the college system:

- B2. Do you believe that most people in the college system also see this concept as (un)important?

Administrators A and D agreed that most members of the college organization

would see this concept as important, whereas Administrators B and C were uncertain, or doubtful, as to whether college members also found mental models important.

Administrator A states that people recognize the need for change, when the change does not affect them:

People strongly recognize the need for change and the challenges to their assumptions where it doesn't involve them. So an individual would be open to change; be strongly influenced by efforts to change as long as it didn't effect the way they operated themselves. That's the transformation which has to occur.

Administrator D asserts that even though it would probably be more difficult for people who have been in the system for a number of years to change, a growing number of these individuals do see the need for change: "They're in contact with employers and business and industry when their students are on the job during work terms or whatever". He refers to the importance of professional development and general awareness for stimulating change in these individuals, as discussed in Element A.

Administrator B felt that the opinions held by college members depends firstly, on who you talk to and secondly, on the organization's ability to "deliver on something". He explained the second point by saying that there are a number of external constraints, both political and environmental, on the college:

It's easy to have a point of view, you know, but actually to be in a position where you can deliver on that is something entirely different and there seems to be constraints that reside in the external environment with respect to the college - there are some things that are really, really difficult to change because the control of these elements don't reside in the organization.

Administrator C was uncertain about the importance placed on mental models by members; her reason, "we have been taught not to be divergent thinkers". A point she made earlier in discussing question A5(4). As a result, she believes college members have kept the old paradigms in place and have probably made "the same mistakes over and over again". Therefore, she feels more accountability should be built into the system.

Administrator C also points out that students now question the system much more than in the past. A behaviour that often intimidates other college members:

The instructional modes are being questioned more and more by students who are older students, are more assertive students and more than we were before. Whereas before, maybe people were more of a mode that they were empty vessels being filled with knowledge. Now they're questioning the knowledge that is being extended to them and sometimes we don't know how to handle that. Sometimes we rebel as staff, as faculty, against the rebellion of students and now we've come to a new age and we've got to learn to look at things in a more varied, from a more varied point of view.

She believes the point of view we currently hold comes from the secondary and post secondary school systems. She states the post secondary system must change in order to help develop divergent thinking in its students:

A lot of things that were taught were of a management, administrative nature as to how to do class scheduling and those kind of mundane type of things, necessary things... and less concentration on learning to be enablers of people. So there are new paradigms that are needed in the university system and college system in terms of helping people towards that as well.

### Question 3: The Source of Leadership for Challenging Assumptions

Question 3 sought administrators' perceptions of the source of leadership for challenging members' views of work in the college setting:

B3. **Who** do you feel should be encouraging college members to re-examine their views of work? Should anyone take a **lead** role?

Administrator A asserts that the colleagues themselves should be encouraging a re-examination of beliefs. Administrators B and C felt it should be the local, campus or team leaders, whereas, Administrator D was of the opinion that the overall decision-makers should be encouraging this process.

Administrator A felt that colleagues should challenge themselves to identify areas of change: "These are the people that are in the industries, in the teaching profession, they deal with the students, they have the most up-front insight into what's happening". She felt the lead role should be taken by the head of the organization.

The leader's role is to influence and motivate individuals to think in this way:

Motivation has to occur. The leader, the head of the given organization, no matter what size it is, has to influence that and by influence, I do not mean direct it to occur. Influence would be to motivate individuals to think in that way and then themselves draw conclusions. Remember we are dealing with professionals here, people who are trained in a given area and also, should be trained to teach, so the melding of those two skills, the bodies of knowledge, into one individual and that individual is only one of a team, then they certainly have the wherewithal to challenge themselves, but it has to be influenced by the leader.

Administrator B believes that encouraging members to reassess their views is "an executive role, but it has to be a distributed responsibility". He felt the



organizational point of view had to be "put on the ground" with appropriate leadership at different campuses, at different locations, and in different groups. He also felt that the unions should become more involved:

I think that unions, too, should start to play more, you know, open-minded, kind of aggressive role here in helping their membership cope with change.

Administrator C was of the opinion that anyone in a leadership position should be responsible for encouraging college members to re-evaluate their assumptions about work:

Whoever is put in a leadership team, leadership position and there will be lot of people who will be put in that position. Some of the times, in a team approach to things, there is a rotating facilitator ... so everybody gets the opportunity.

She also states that the people put in leadership positions should be empowered by their leaders to do the job:

So anyone who is provided the opportunity to provide for leadership should also be enabled by their leadership to take a view to challenging people who they are put in the position to lead. It's an ongoing, but very comprehensive leadership enablement that's necessary.

With respect to the question of who should take the lead role, Administrator C felt that in general, it should be taken by the head of the organization:

Whoever is the overall leader I think...In the new structure, we have seven District Administrators, [they] definitely need to be... given that responsibility and held accountable that [it] will happen in their areas.

Administrator D states that encouraging members to re-evaluate assumptions must first come from the board and the President - the overall decision-makers of the

college - they must take the lead role. It is also their responsibility to ensure that resources, as well as opportunities for professional development, are made available to faculty and staff:

So again, it has to come... initially from the people making the decisions, that have the ability to do those things and then from there, at the middle management position and working then with the faculty themselves to initiate this change.

#### **Question 4: Developmental Stage of Mental Models in the College System**

Question 4 sought the administrators' opinions on whether the college currently challenges the assumptions of college member:

B4. Does the college system currently challenge people to re-examine their assumptions about work?

Administrators A, C, and D felt the college was challenging peoples' beliefs to a certain extent, whereas Administrator B was of the opinion that beliefs were not being challenged in any formal sense.

Administrator A believes that the system does challenge members at the administrative level, but not at the instructional level:

The unfortunate part about it is, that I think it is ongoing at the administrative levels and not enough is being done to cause that challenge to occur where it needs to occur - in the traditional instructional areas.

Administrator C was hopeful that the "seeds" of this are there in the new college system. In the past, she feels there were some elements of challenging the membership, but somewhere along the way this view was lost:

I think there has been elements of that throughout the college history. Maybe years ago when the community college system was developed in the States or whatever, the first elements in the province were in the Bay St. George area, there was an excitement created by the aspect of staff being more involved, being challenged and whatever. Sometimes along the road and some of it may be due to restructuring, instability, financial restraint and whatever, we've done the things that had to be done and forgotten about the aspect of doing the things, like challenging beliefs, of involving people, but I have new hope now that with what I'm seeing that there will be more of this challenging of beliefs in the new system.

She states that beliefs will have to be challenged in order for the new philosophies and structures to be implemented: "It's entrenched in various objectives that have been set".

Administrator D asserts that the college does challenge the beliefs of its membership especially given the changes in technology:

Oh, I think so, definitely. I mean we're getting more and more into distant learning, using information technology, video conferencing, cable, offering more courses through distance, more self-directed learning, more flexible scheduling, more putting the student in the centre as the learner with responsibilities for his or her own learning. So looking at that you have to... you are challenged to change with these new philosophies.

Administrator B was of the opinion that the college does not challenge members to re-examine their views of work in any formal sense, even though there are some isolated pockets of this occurring.

#### **Question 5: Strategies for the Implementation of Mental Models**

Question 5 sought administrators' opinions on strategies that are currently being used, or that should be used, to challenge beliefs in the college system. The question

was composed of an open-ended query, followed by a number of examples of strategies:

- B5. What sorts of things are being done or should be done to encourage people to re-examine their views or assumptions about work? Is it enough?**

I have several examples here which I am going to ask for your input and opinion on, example:

- (1) Does the college encourage people to seek out innovative ways to improve what they do in the organization? Should they?
- (2) Is risk-taking encouraged WITHOUT having to worry about negative consequences if things do not work out? Should it be?
- (3) Does the college set aside time for reflection by organizational members?
- (4) Does the college emphasize 'why' it is moving in a particular direction and not just 'how' it will change? Should it?

In response to the open-ended query, a number of strategies were identified including: changes in instructional methods, changes in instructor roles, changes to student services, increased membership involvement, more flexible scheduling, and a more student-centred approach.

Administrator A outlined a number of instructional modes which challenge "the normal methodology delivery", including: distance education, home study program, self-directed learning, competency-based individualized instruction, and semesterization. As well as, changes in instructor roles:

All of these sorts of things have challenged in the past five years, I would suggest to you, more so than ever before in post-secondary education, which was normally traditional chalk and talk lecture. Now the instructor's role has

changed to being that of both deliverer of instruction to the facilitator of learning.

Administrator B provided an example of challenges to the student services department that involves a number of college members:

They're talking about introducing an element of service that is critical to what students want and need so student councillors, student information officers and others will be challenged, I guess, to re-evaluate, you know, the kinds of their services and to start to look at it from the student's perspective and hopefully to realign then what it is they do more in keeping with what students expect, what they want.

Administrator C states that the college's commitment to involving faculty and staff to a greater extent, would create an environment that would naturally challenge beliefs:

I think the aspect of involving, commitment to involving faculty to a larger extent in curricular development, program review, program approval, policy review, policy development, involvement in the senior team, I guess which would be the academic council - there is a commitment to set up an academic council with a large percentage of that council being faculty and staff. I think all of those can't happen successfully unless challenges... there will be many challenges in that environment to current beliefs because the bottom line, the decisions will be made by consensus and so compromise, movement back and forth, will be an aspect, a necessary aspect of that whole involvement aspect.

Administrator C also discusses various instructional methodologies, such as distance education and open learning, as new philosophies that would challenge beliefs.

Previously in question B4, Administrator D had outlined a number of changes which are currently challenging the views of college members. The list included: instructional methodologies, more flexible scheduling, and a more student-centred

approach.

**Question 5: Mental Models Example 1**

- (1) Does the college encourage people to seek out innovative ways to improve what they do in the organization? Should they?

In response to example one, Administrators A and D both agreed that the college does encourage college members to be innovative by necessity, Administrator B felt it was situational, and Administrator C felt the college had not provided enough encouragement in the past, but she is hopeful for the future.

Administrator D believes that the college was probably forced to be innovative firstly, because of financial constraints; in order to do more with less, other methods of offering training had to be pursued. Secondly, because of increased competition from public and private organizations. He feels that the college has just started to be innovative:

I think we've just started actually. We've just opened the doors with regard to information technology and what can happen there and I'm sure, you feel as I do that there's going to come a time when probably buildings and facilities like this are going to be for very few programs where we need probably some little structure of labs and so forth, but many programs will be offered - the place won't matter and the time won't matter.

Administrator B felt that college support for innovative activities is situational: in some situations, it is possible and actively supported by the college; in other situations, the innovation is contained because the organization is not in a position to respond to or accommodate the change. He then states his belief that the college is

not a good learning organization:

To me the college is not a good learning organization in that respect because it keeps repeating historic problems that it's had for some time.

Well part of the problem too is continuity, I think, you know, if you continuously change something and then you continuously change the personnel associated or responsible for the organization, then there is no sense of history. You don't... you can't build on or bring forward those things which were good and so you end up reinventing the wheel, I guess. This is what I see happening quite a lot in our system.

Administrator B believes that the college should challenge the beliefs of members, but to do this correctly it needs a plan:

I think that they should do more of it, yes, but I guess it's like anything, if you throw seeds at a piece of ground kind of indiscriminately some will take and some won't and I think that is what you have now. You need a better plan.

Administrator C was of the opinion that the college did not support innovation enough in the past, but she is hopeful for the future. She points out that innovative ideas must be supported and "carried out" so that staff will believe the ideas are valuable.

#### **Question 5: Mental Models Example 2**

- (2) Is risk-taking encouraged WITHOUT having to worry about negative consequences if things do not work out? Should it be?

Administrators A and C both felt that risk-taking, without having to worry about the negative consequences, was not encouraged, whereas Administrators B and D thought it was situational.

Administrator A was of the opinion that people were "very risk adverse", for good reason:

When you're in a downsizing situation or right sizing situation you don't want to be caught out in "the tried and it has failed". It has been said, "it is better to have tried and failed then not to have tried at all", but if you don't try at all then you can't say you failed. Unfortunate as that may sound, that is the opinion I think that is held by a lot of people.

Administrator C felt that in the past, risk-taking without having to worry about the consequences was not supported to the extent that it should have been. In the future, she believes people will be risking more by being more involved, being asked for their opinions, and being asked to make decisions. She feels that college support will be demonstrated when resources are put into "activating that risk-taking".

Administrator B felt that support for risk-taking, without having to worry about the negative consequences, was situational. He was of the opinion that only the prepared factions should be strategically involved in entrepreneurial activities. The outcomes should then be transferred throughout the college. He suggests this mechanism so that the traditional services of the college are not put at risk and the students are not motivated to have a "damaging" point of view.

Administrator D felt that the support for risk-taking varied from campus to campus, department to department, college to college and administrator to administrator. He did feel that the college should be encouraging risk-taking and felt that someone, other than the individual pursuing the risky activity - the department chair or administrator - should be willing to assume the responsibility. He asserts that



the college must be willing to take risks given the current environment and in order to realize the potential of the college.

**Question 5: Mental Models Example 3**

- (3) Does the college set aside time for reflection by organizational members?

The researcher intended this example to refer to personal time for reflection by individual members. However, it is interesting to note that Administrators B, C, and D interpreted this example as time to get together with others and discuss college matters; an interpretation which is very similar to question D5(1).

Administrator A felt that some personal time was provided, Administrator B was of the opinion that there was plenty of time available, whereas Administrators C and D believed that not enough time was made available for reflection by members.

Administrator A felt that some time has been allocated for reflection by members. However, she feels that an analysis of its usefulness and its effect upon decision-making needs to be conducted by a professional organization:

This again begs the concept of a professional organization which would examine the issues that challenge the faculty and staff of a college. Groups exist which look at this in various campuses and various colleges, sure, and there has been time for reflection, however, it is not examined, I don't think, on a basis which can provide constructive criticism and influence the decision-making process as it currently exists.

Administrator A had previously discussed the role of a professional organization in question A3.

Administrator B felt that there are lots of opportunities for personal reflection; "that would be entirely up to the individual". He feels the problem lies in opportunities for collegiality and team work especially since the inception of the college system:

There was very little exchange between senior managers - somewhat isolated in many respects and usually when there are meetings and things like that there's a very tight agenda - in and out the same day.

However, he does feel that maybe this will change with the new structure.

Administrator C states that the college does not set aside enough time for reflection by members and points out that there is a lot of wasted opportunities for professional development:

[There] are indications that this will be enabled in the future, but in the past there has been a lot of wasted opportunities, particularly at the end of the traditional two-semester system. There was wasted staff potential and involvement in activities outside the classroom, for instance with faculty, but I think more and more there has been more professional development days, teams involved in developing weeks of professional development activities... All of the colleges I think did some things in the past few years with respect to that so, I would hope that that would continue maybe in a more general, more comprehensive way throughout the academic year and in various types of ways.

Administrator C also expresses the view that more "strategic planning" is needed, from an individual and a college perspective. She believes that participation in activities such as conferences and workshops should not be done on an ad hoc basis, but should be directly linked to an individual's personal development plan. Approval of such activities should be based on cost efficiency and effectiveness to the college. In the final analysis, she would like to see a better strategy and greater responsibility on the

part of staff, to give something back to the college system:

And a greater responsibility put on staff who there's money [being] spent on to effectively - because I think writing a report can be a very ineffective way - but making significant contribution of that knowledge at the institution after their involvement in whatever.

Administrator D felt that there was not much time "for everybody to get together and really reflect" and believes the college should be doing more of this by department, by campus, on so on. He also makes the point that college members are so caught up in their daily activities that "we don't really take time to reflect".

#### Question 5: Mental Models Example 4

- (4) Does the college emphasize 'why' it is moving in a particular direction and not just 'how' it will change? Should it?

Administrators A and B both agreed that the college does not explain why it is moving in a particular direction, Administrator C felt that not enough explanation is given, and Administrator D stated that the college did give explanations of "why" to a certain extent.

Administrator A felt explanations were not adequate - only financial considerations were given.

Administrator B felt the changes in the college system are "imperatives". He believes that the imperatives come mainly from a political source and have a lot to do with economics. He goes on to say that the question of effectiveness "gets poorly attended to, if at all" and that there is a lot of confusion concerning, "the relationship

between structure and efficiency and between structure and effectiveness”:

Generally what happens, those who make these kinds of decision rely on structural change to accomplish things which are not related at all to the structure.

Administrator C felt that in the past, not enough explanation was provided, people were just told how things would change, not why they would change.

However, she believes there is a commitment to communication and involvement in the new college structure:

My philosophy, I think that of others now, is tell staff what you don't know as well as what you do and then they know that you're not hiding things, that they have the full information or they don't have the information because you don't know it. There is a commitment there to continually communicate what is being done and again, going back to all the previous things we talked about, a commitment to involve them in decision making.

Administrator D was of the opinion that the college had explained, to a certain extent, why it was moving in a particular direction. Examples of reasons given included changes in the workplace (which in turn require changes in the college) and financial constraints. However, he does feel that the college has not done enough in terms of strategic planning:

I don't know if we've done enough with regard to really strategic planning and say... really, really letting it go and saying what are the possibilities. I don't know if we've really done that and saying this is where we'd like to be, but by doing the five year strategic plan which we have done as a college, I think it helps identify as to why certain things are happening and people can see that plan unfold.

**Question 6: The Practitioners of Mental Models in the college system**

Question 6 sought the administrators' opinions on the identity of the college members who should be engaged in challenging their beliefs about work:

B6. Who in the college system should be re-evaluating their assumptions about work?

All Administrators agreed that everyone in the college system should be engaged in challenging their assumptions about work.

Administrator A states that we all have a role to play. She believes if the organization is structured to allow for autonomy, then that autonomy should allow individuals to examine their roles and how they pursue their personal and organizational goals.

Administrator B felt that this question could be examined from two points of view; from a personal and a generic perspective: The personal perspective refers to an individual's particular job or work assignment - how it gets carried out, how it contributes to the organization, how it improves, etc.; the generic perspective refers to the general relationship that exists between the college members and the organization. In the past, people were very dependent on the organization and had a sense of security and permanence attached to their work. He believes that this type of relationship is generally gone now and individuals really need to look at "getting that independence" which he mentioned earlier. He believes the dependency relationship between the individual and the college was "really overdone" in the past:

That's no longer true, but again I think the message from the organization is clear. That the organization don't want that, but the individuals themselves have to get more proactive... And it's a lesson that's hard learned in some respects, but again, you know, they have to learn that aspect of it. That really they need to be independent of the organization.

Administrator C was of the opinion that no matter who you are in the college system, you must be able to re-evaluate your beliefs; this is your responsibility to the people to whom you are accountable:

I think whoever you are, whether you're an administrator or a faculty leader or faculty person or whoever, needs to always offer to those who he or she is responsible to, that ability to evaluate, that ability to be held... that openness to be held accountable and to make a commitment to do things and to say if [I] don't do this, will you please let me know if I should be doing it differently, please let me know. Keeping the doors of communication open so that there is a continuous dialogue that is growth producing, I guess.

**Question 7: Appropriateness of Fostering a Re-evaluation of Mental Models during the College Restructuring**

Question 7 solicited the administrators' beliefs on the timeliness of evaluating the mental models of members during the college restructuring:

- B7. Given the current **restructuring** of the college system, do you feel the **time is right** for fostering or continuing to foster a re-evaluation of our assumptions about work?

All administrators agreed that the time was right to foster a re-evaluation of our assumptions about work.

Administrator A states that there is no better time than a time of change, to re-evaluate one's role in an organization. She gives the following explanation:

The reason being is that once a change, for any reason, has been initiated, we have a momentum that is developing and the concept of change should be accepted by all those within the organization. That concept to change then can be translated into attitudes and aspirations regarding the structure, role, and future of the organization and the individual within it.

Administrator B believes that re-evaluating one's personal role in an organization undergoing a restructuring, is inevitable. However, he is skeptical about the impact such an evaluation would have upon the organization itself. He re-affirms his belief that the college is not a learning organization and claims that it is not necessarily true that if individuals learn the organization also learns. He argues that the college is a young organization that has never been given the opportunity to mature - it has no sense of history:

I don't see the organization in this context sort of learning from its mistakes or being systematic in that context because it never gets to be an organization long enough to actually do that. It takes a long time, you know, for an organization, decades really, over a period with some stability, especially in the colleges and things like that. We have people come from Scotland where there is a lot of tradition in their colleges and you look at the depth of what it is they do and the quality of the things they do. They have a lot of stability. They respond to change.

Administrator C believes it is a good time for members to reassess their views of work, that a period of change produces momentum. She suggests the college should try to learn from the past:

Look at things that have been brought forward before in terms of the way things haven't worked or could work better and go from there in terms of trying to improve the way the college goes about its business.

Administrator D considered this to be an especially good time for members to

re-assess their assumptions about work since a new system is being put in place that will take them into the year 2000. He feels the college should do a thorough job of gathering information from the five colleges, analyze what works well, and try to integrate those elements:

You're bringing five colleges together, each one is probably doing different things differently. Let's look at it, let's learn from them and let's look at the provincial picture and see what's been working best and let's try to integrate that into the provincial system. Again, you know, it's going to take a lot... lots of times we've made decisions without, I think, really doing any research, gathering any data. Let's stop doing that. Now is the time. We're doing it... let's do it right, I think.

A preliminary document outlining a proposed organizational structure as well as the mission and goal statements from the regional college system is provided in Appendix F.

#### **Question 8: Additional Comments on Mental models**

Question 8 sought additional comments from administrators:

B8. Are there any additional comments you would like to add on Element B?

The only additional comment made was by Administrator D who states that the only constant now is change - a change in views and a change in actions.

See Table 4 for a summary of responses.

#### **Mental Models: Conclusions**

The data collected in response to questions B1 to B8 show that there is no



Table 4

Summary of Administrators' Responses to Questions on Element B - Mental Models

Question #:	Administrator			
	A	B	C	D
B1: Importance-Administrator?	Very important	Very important	Very important	Very important
B2: Importance-members?	Yes, as long as it doesn't affect them	Don't know. Depends on members & college's ability to deliver	Dubious, members are not divergent thinkers. Students more assertive.	Yes, a growing # of people see the need for change
B3: Source of Leadership?	Colleagues themselves. Lead is the head of the organization	Executive role. Must be implemented by local leaders. More union involvement.	Anyone in a leadership position. Lead is overall leader.	Overall decision-makers then filter through the system. Lead is top
B4: Does college challenge peoples' beliefs?	Yes, at administrative level. Not enough instructional level	No, not in a formal sense. Are some pockets of this	Hopeful the seeds are there	Yes, new philosophies eg. technology challenge people
B5: Strategies?	Changes in instructional modes and instructor role	Challenges to student services	Increase in members' involvement & changes in instructional modes	Instructional methodologies, flexible scheduling & a more student-centred approach
B5(1): Innovation & Encouragement?	Yes, by necessity	Situational	Past, not enough. Future, hopeful	Yes, by necessity
B5(2): Risk-taking encouraged?	No, not in down-sizing climate	Some but is situational	Past, no Future, will increase	Situational but we must do this
B5(3): Time for reflection?	Some	Yes	No, not enough	Not enough
B5(4): why?	No	No	Not enough. Future, there is a commitment	Yes, to an extent
B6: Who?	Everyone	Everyone	Everyone	Everyone
B7: Is the time right?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

consensus regarding the feasibility of this discipline. Administrators had reservations about the feasibility of the element of Mental Models for the college system.

Administrators A and B believed that challenging assumptions is the responsibility of the individual not the college. Administrator B felt that the college is not a learning organization: He believes the college is pushing members to become independent from the college which means that the members, not the college, are responsible for challenging assumptions. Administrator C felt that members have not been taught to be divergent thinkers. However, she believes that the element of mental models will be promoted and developed in the college system through professional development and through the new shared leadership approach and structures being put in place. Administrator D felt that the element of mental models is feasible because change, in the form of new philosophies and technologies, is impacting on everyone in the college system; therefore, everyone has a responsibility and a role to play - a holistic view.

The four administrators agreed that they consider the challenging of assumptions within the organization as very important. However, several administrators were uncertain as to whether other college members would also consider it important. The four administrators felt that everyone in the organization should be actively challenging mental models and felt that the time is right for fostering the development of this element.

Reasons given for the significance of the element of mental models included:

its importance in challenging and changing attitudes, its fundamental importance in preparing students for the world of work, and its importance in dealing with the tremendous impact of change on workers and college members.

Issues of concern raised by the administrators included: inflexible attitudes and structures, unwillingness to change, outdated policies and procedures, external political and environmental constraints, lack of divergent thinking and accountability, innovation by necessity, suppressed risk-taking, and challenges to the system by students.

The administrators stated that the philosophy of challenging assumptions must be supported by leaders throughout the organization. In general, they felt the college system must do more to challenge mental models through professional development, increasing the awareness of members, encouraging innovation and risk-taking, and explaining decisions made by the college.

### **Element C: Building Shared Vision**

Senge's third discipline of the learning organization, Building Shared Vision, was presented as Element C to the administrators. Administrators were introduced to this concept then asked to apply it to the community college setting in answering the questions to follow.

Eight of the sub-sections below present a complete analysis of the data per question on element C. These sub-sections describe the administrators' beliefs,

perceptions, and opinions on the concept of building a shared vision. Table 5 summarizes the responses from the administrators. The ninth sub-section briefly summarizes the results and draws conclusions on the feasibility of building a shared vision for the college system.

### **Question 1: The Importance of Building Shared Vision to the Administrators**

Question 1 sought the administrators' personal beliefs on the importance of a shared vision in the college setting:

- C1. How **important** do you believe the development of a shared vision is to the college system? Why is it (un)important?

All of the administrators agreed that building a shared vision was important to the college system. Administrators B and C discussed the factor of control in shared vision; Administrators B, C, and D discussed ownership; and Administrators C and D discussed the involvement of college members in building a shared vision.

Administrator A felt that the shared vision must be held by all stakeholders that are impacted on by post-secondary education: the province, the college system, and the secondary system. Sub-groups within these stakeholder groups must share the vision: staff, faculty, support groups, secondary teachers, administrators, bureaucrats in the department of education, and government. She then describes her belief of shared vision as well as the Colleges Act:

A shared vision for the college system would be delivery of or the providing of opportunity for post-secondary education. What can get lost in this process is

the notion that the college system is merely a delivery agent for post-secondary education within the province. The Colleges Act is a provincial piece of legislation and has been designed to provide a vehicle through which post-secondary opportunities can be made available to people in the province and that is a societal function that is taken on by the provinces in Canada.

Administrator A states that if the vision is shared then the college has started to develop a common goal for the system. However, if any one of the players loses sight of the vision, then the college has a weak link in the chain:

I think that's the reason that shared vision has to be held by everybody. People make the system, the administrators within the system, the contiguous systems that exist, such as the school system, the university, and the government because they are contiguous to the college system. So we have to be an integral part of the post-secondary continuum.

Administrator B felt that it is important to build a shared vision, but questions the degree to which it is possible in a public organization. He is of the opinion that there is a significant difference between public and private organizations. Private organizations are more autonomous and have more control than public organizations. He states that the public college system could be changed overnight due to an election and change in government. He then outlines his experience with the restructuring of the provincial college system:

So, as I know, like as a college... we went through a protracted community consultation period. Involving community groups and people within the college to bring forward a mission and to have a vision of what the organization was, what it does in the community and these kinds of things. Lots of work with faculty and administration and people and the community groups and that kind of thing. Then just overnight, without any apparent warning at all, that was completely and totally erased... So, as an entity ...the College didn't exist anymore.

Administrator B believes that it takes time to build a shared vision and to create ownership among the people, especially in a province with such a dispersed population and a diverse geography. He also reiterates that, "the challenge in public service things are more difficult than they are in private organizations".

Administrator B discusses Total Quality Management and continuous improvement. He believes that in order for the college to improve, it must have some autonomy or control over its affairs. Without this autonomy, it is extremely difficult to learn and improve:

We talk a lot about quality and continuous improvement and things like that here and I believe there is a direct relationship between autonomy and control and effectiveness and improvement in quality... an organization can learn and improve continuously to the extent that it has some control over what it does. It has to be somewhat autonomous.

Administrator C is of the opinion that building a shared vision is very important for developing ownership and a sense of control in college members:

I believe that it is an extremely important aspect of building ownership by all staff of their 'raison d'etre'. I think people feel more in control if they're involved in their future, of their destinies, and of the destiny of the institution for which they work. I think the only way to go in terms of building a true feeling of involvement is to ensure that the staff are enabled to put forward their contribution as to what the district, the campus, the provincial college should look like and should work towards. Some of the elements of that that I've been involved with it helped develop a real enthusiasm about work and about going to work each day. When people feel that they're involved and they've had a role to play in that.

Administrator D believes it is very important for everyone including faculty, staff, and administration to be "all headed in the one direction" towards a common

outcome. Everyone has to feel a part of that vision in order to have a sense of ownership and to want to contribute to the formation of the vision.

**Question 2: The Importance of Building a Shared Vision to the College Members**

Question 2 sought the administrators' opinions on the importance of a shared vision to college members:

- C2. Do you believe that most people in the college system also see this concept as (un)important?

Administrators A, C, and D agreed that most college members would view the building of a shared vision as important, whereas Administrator B was skeptical that members would see this concept as important.

Administrator A believes that people in the college system would see the value in having a shared vision, "as long as it doesn't affect them". She feels this is where a transformational leader is needed:

That's where the motivation and influence of the transformation leader has to come in - has to identify the need for a vision, has to identify the common beliefs that currently exist before that vision can be identified or articulated.

Administrator C asserts that college members would see shared vision as important. In the past, members had complained that they were not included in the process. They have voiced the opinion that there was no point in putting their views forward because they were never taken into consideration. She states that college members are feeling cynical towards the restructuring process with layoffs, program

rationalization, etc.

Administrator D was of the opinion that members believe in the importance of shared vision now, more so than six or seven years ago when they started to develop mission statements, common goals, and objectives. He feels that in the past, there was a lot of speculation as to why it was being done. There was a lot of cynicism towards the outcome, towards how the input would be used. People felt it was a fad that would pass; initially, people were not even aware of what it meant or how it would guide the organization. Now he feels everyone is more aware of the importance of a shared vision.

Administrator D points out that members are impatient. They believe that when something is put on paper it should be implemented immediately:

I think, many times faculty expect things, not only faculty, but all people within organization, when something goes on paper they expect things to happen right away. Like with the quality movement, that takes a long time to initiate that, to really get people really involved in an organization, but it has to start somewhere and it has to start with the mission and, I think, sometimes people, as you say, were probably negative because something didn't happen right away. It takes times and commitment and it's a gradual... it evolves and it has to permeate through the organization, but very slowly, so I think that that would have undoubtedly been there.

Administrator B felt that college members are very skeptical at this time. He states that maybe over the next six to eight months, memories will fade and the members will be more positive towards developing a shared vision. He explains that it is difficult to get members involved now due to the eradication of all the work they had done in the recent past:



It's very difficult to get people back into the process again particularly, if there's not a good connection made between what was done previously and what's going to be done now... People become cynical... there's no sort of accumulated benefit from doing it, it becomes a waste of time for the people.

### **Question 3: The Source of Leadership for the Development of a Shared Vision**

Question 3 sought administrators' perceptions of the source of leadership for developing a shared vision in the college setting:

- C3. **Who** do you feel should be promoting the development of a shared vision in the college system? Should anyone take a **lead** role?

Administrators A and C felt that everyone should promote the development of a shared vision, Administrator B believed that all stakeholders should be involved, whereas Administrator D was of the opinion that the support should come from the President on behalf of the board.

Administrator A believes that it is not just an administrator's role to develop a shared vision. She points out that an administrator often comes into an organization with a vision that is different from that of organizational members. She feels the administrator's vision will change in response to the views put forward by other organizational members and the organization's culture:

So, to consider [it] an administrative function to develop a shared vision would be a step in the wrong direction. The vision has to be developed from the thought processes and history that currently exists and the impressions and influences of the society in which it operates. From that perspective the administrator cannot edict a vision. In actual fact, I feel strongly that the administrator's vision that was brought to the organization will change considerably as the interaction with the individuals that are in the system and familiarity with the system itself occurs.

Administrator C is of the opinion that everyone should promote the development of a shared vision. However, the ultimate responsibility resides with the President who must be held accountable for enabling others to develop a shared vision:

Developing a learning organization, in the specific sense a shared vision, are the ultimate responsibility of the head of the organization, the President, and his accountability, I guess, is to enable the rest of us who are involved in a leadership sense to have that viewpoint and to involve staff in developing that role for the institution.

Administrator B felt that all stakeholders including; the President, the board, community groups, and the department and minister of education should help develop a shared vision. He states that in spite of the skepticism that exists, the development of a shared vision must be pursued since it is pre-requisite to having a functioning organizational entity:

Generally, people need to know about the organization, what the organization stands for, what their role with respect to that and the like... What the college, any organization I guess, has to do that through its stakeholders. You have to understand who your stakeholders are and then to create that kind of vision among these people. So that they have a view that's somewhat the same as it relates to the organization.

Administrator B asserts that the ultimate responsibility is that of the President; Over the years, he claims he has learned that you can delegate efficiency, but you have to take personal responsibility for its effectiveness:

What the organization does relates to effectiveness and that relates to vision and the like. So, the President has to take the responsibility for that.

Administrator D felt that the President, on behalf of the board, should promote shared vision in the college system. He explains that if the faculty and staff do not

sense a commitment from within the college, they will not believe in the vision. He points out that faculty and staff must demonstrate, by their actions, what it is they want others to be committed to:

I mean, even with a commitment from the college, there are still those that question. So that has to be there and again, in everything I say, we have to put into actions what we're saying. We can't just say that we're going to develop this shared vision and this is what we going to live by but we have to also demonstrate it in all that we do and that's in all members of the organization.

Administrator D believes that the President and the board of directors should take the lead role:

To come out and meet with all faculty and staff everywhere, and say "This is what we're doing, we're supporting this" and then we can go to work and bang!

#### **Question 4: Developmental Stage of Shared Vision in the College System**

Question 4 sought the administrators' opinions on whether the college currently has a vision that is shared by college member:

C4. Does the college have a vision that is understood by most members now?

Administrators A, C, and D agreed that the college does have a shared vision, whereas Administrator B believes that it is too premature in the restructuring process to answer this question.

Administrator A states that the college does have a vision. However, it may not be clearly articulated and parts of it may not be understood by college members.

Administrator C believe that the college does have a shared vision, but it is not

complete. At this point, the college only has a framework for the vision since the college is young. She feels the membership will develop this vision over the next period of time:

As to what the vision is and will be, there has been a commitment, again, to involve staff in the building of the vision. So there's only yet a loose framework for that because if it was all written down and decided now, it would mean that staff wasn't going to be involved and with only a few months under our belt that assumption hasn't been made. It has been put forward that we will get involved, so I think that this is again hope for the future in that respect.

Administrator D points out that in the past, they had developed a shared vision and feels that they are attempting to develop it now. He believes that many faculty and staff may be critical, wondering "if we have arrived at where we wanted to be". He does not feel that the college has arrived at that point and believes it would take "many more years to do that".

Administrator D provides an example of actions taken in the past to help develop a shared vision:

The President and the directors came around and with the strategic planning, they got input from everybody within the organization. Everybody had an opportunity to have input into that... We developed a mission... which everybody had input into - developing that mission and goals. So there's been an attempt to do that, there undoubtedly has.

Administrator B felt the college does not have a vision "because the college is embryonic now... it's currently in its formative state and it's yet to be articulated".

**Question 5: Strategies for the Development of a Shared Vision**

Question 5 sought administrators' opinions on strategies that are currently being used, or that should be used, to develop a shared vision in the college system. The question was composed of an open-ended query followed by a number of examples of strategies:

- C5. **What** sorts of things are being done or should be done to create a shared vision for the college members?

I have several examples here which I am going to ask for your input and opinion on each, example:

- (1) Does the college have a systematic strategy for goal setting that involves college members? Should it?
- (2) Do members participate in goal setting? Should they?
- (3) Does the college vision foster faculty and staff commitment to professional learning? Should it?
- (4) Do college leaders show others how their long-term interests can be realized by enlisting in and helping to create a common vision? Should they?
- (5) Do college leaders clearly communicate a positive and hopeful outlook for the future of the organization? Should they?

In response to the open-ended query, several strategies were identified, including: viewing stakeholders as customers, using distributed teams, and demonstrating a commitment to shared vision through action from the top.

Administrator B points out that he prefers the term "stakeholder" to "college member" because it implies ownership. He asserts that colleges who view

stakeholders as customers will put more emphasize on communication and interaction with that group. Strategically, he feels this can only be done through distributed teams. He points out that the college has started to set up teams and distribute responsibility throughout the organization. However, he feels that it is too early to know if it actually works:

It's just starting, but there is a fair amount of emphasis on distributed teams and having areas of responsibility that are multi-functional, that span across the organization.

Administrator B believes that there is too much ambiguity in the administrative structure, at present:

How much consultation is too much and who eventually makes the decision with respect to getting stuff done. The question I have for this organization now is ambiguity. To me there is a fair amount of ambiguity because of the way the administrative setup is.

Administrator D feels that it is difficult for each individual member to have input into the decision-making process, but believes that teams, representing faculty and staff from various campuses, could be used to achieve this. He explains that when the colleges were initially formed, there were no teams and no TQM programs, thus, initial mission statements were developed without all members having input. However, he feels the new structure is different with its emphasis on teams.

Administrator D had provided an example of a strategy used to develop shared vision in question C4 - site visits by the President and the board to get member input.

**Question 5: Building Shared Vision Example 1**

- (1) Does the college have a systematic strategy for goal setting that involves college members? Should it?

In response to example one, Administrators B, C, and D agreed that the college does not have a strategy in place because it is too young. Administrators C and D agreed that the commitment is there. Administrator A stated that in the past, some strategies were in place.

Administrator B simply stated that at this point, the college does not have such a strategy, but feels it should have one.

Administrator C asserts that there is a commitment to develop a strategy for input by members, but the specifics have not yet been set down. She believes that it is a leadership responsibility to ensure that this happens as well as to ensure that members are given the opportunity to develop the specifics of such a strategy:

We all have, as the leadership, a responsibility for that to happen. I guess the specific activities around that aren't all built in yet or have been articulated because we will be given an opportunity to contribute to how that should be carried out, who should be involved, having representation come forward from the various elements of staff to be involved in whether it be building the provincial college strategic plan or, from a district perspective, putting forward the plans of the district of each of the seven districts to the provincial college. I think, again, the seeds are there.

Administrator D points out that in the past, the quality movement and TQM had put in place a number of teams to set goals and objectives. In the new structure, he believes the commitment is there to continue to have such a system for goal setting and member involvement.

Administrator A points out that in the past, the goal setting strategies were often no more than paper exercises. She felt that this was fine for self-starters who identify their own goals and measure their performance.

**Question 5: Building Shared Vision Example 2**

(2) Do members participate in goal setting? Should they?

Administrators A and D agreed that college members do participate, whereas Administrators B and C felt it was too early to make this judgement for the new college.

Administrator A was of the opinion that members do participate, to a certain extent. However, she points out that the final decisions are, unfortunately, dictated by fiscal restraints which may cause "significant adjustment" to the set goals. She disagrees with this strategy and believes priorities may be misplaced:

I don't think that [adjustment] is necessary. I think... priorities are established based on this vision that has been established for the college system, is shared by all, then the priorities should fall from that. When fiscal restraint and issues of a fiscal nature challenge the plan, then with priorities in place, those challenges can be met without impacting on the core vision of the organization.

Administrator D states that in the past, college members participated in goal setting through "the team approach". He believes this approach will be used even more so in the new structure:

I think it's [the team approach] emphasized even more so within the new structure. I mean, even the whole administration within the districts is all through team approach.



Administrator B felt it was too early to make a statement as to whether members are participating in goal setting, but he felt they should take part.

Administrator C also felt it was too premature to determine if members are participating, but felt the commitment is there. In the past, there were some pockets of this, especially when the colleges were directed to develop a five year strategic plan:

I think there have been philosophies of trying to do that. I guess from several years ago when the province put forward, particularly from each of its departments, and in our case from the Department of Education, that we had to do some five year planning and whatever. The elements, the wherewithal, how to carry those out, were put forward. It has been a learning mode since, I guess, sometimes that's been carried successfully, sometimes not.

She points out that the outcome of such a strategy should be examined to see if it was actually implemented and states that accountability mechanisms should be put in place:

The outcomes... whether or not the process has been undertaken of strategic planning, developing a shared vision, has actually been implemented or put on a shelf which in some cases I think it has been. It's no more than the exercise, of putting in place a written plan and then really not going back on a regular basis and re-evaluating whether or not things have been done or not done, or whether we are moving in the right direction. So I think less probably on the front end and more on the back end, in terms of indicators, accountability mechanisms and where the learning needs to happen now and actually putting things where the rubber hits the road.

### **Question 5: Building Shared Vision Example 3**

- (3) Does the college vision foster faculty and staff commitment to professional learning? Should it?

Administrators B, C, and D felt that it was premature to make a judgement for

the new college. However, they agreed that this was the intention. Administrator A did not answer this question, she felt she did not know enough about it.

Administrator B felt that this was an intention of the new college, however, one would have to wait and see.

Administrator C believes that the development of a vision to foster commitment on the part of college members is just being developed:

Again, in its elemental stages, I think it certainly does and I'm sure that involving staff and faculty in further developing that vision, there will definitely come forward the aspect of wanting to be involved, wanting to share in the vision.

Administrator D asserts that in the past, the college did involve members in the development of a strategic plan which fostered commitment. In the new college system, he feels this is being developed now:

I would say that's what's being developed right now and it's going to take input from many individuals through a team approach before that is really determined.

He concludes by commenting on the difficulty of discussing the new structure because of its newness and states that the only thing currently in place is the team approach to decision-making:

Talking with regard to the new structure [is difficult actually] because really the structure isn't in place yet, but what is in place, to this point in time certainly indicates a team approach, a collaborative approach to all decision making and give more autonomy to the teams in decision making while keeping it within a provincial framework, of course, that has to be there, along with the goals and objectives of the provincial system.

**Question 5: Building Shared Vision Example 4**

- (4) Do college leaders show others how their long-term interests can be realized by enlisting in and helping to create a common vision? Should they?

Administrators A felt that the leaders do not demonstrate how future gains can be achieved through a common vision, Administrator B was uncertain, Administrator C was doubtful, and Administrator D believed that the change to the college has demonstrated this.

Administrator A was of the opinion that unfortunately, most of the leader's time was spent "putting out fires".

Administrator B was uncertain as to whether this is happening now and feels one will have to wait and see. His position is he has been encouraging co-workers to keep their options open and to be independent from the organization. He points out that for some strange reason, when people become somewhat independent from the organization, they are valued more by that organization.

Administrator B does feel that the leaders should demonstrate how future gains can be achieved, but this means having a commitment to people and he has not seen much of this in the college system:

I find within the organization, leadership has a lot to do with working with people from that point of view and I guess it means taking some responsibility or having some commitment to people and to their well being and the like. If you don't do that and we haven't done that very well, it becomes an extremely cold environment in which to work, like the individual doesn't have a personality. You just deal with a position all the time and I've seen a lot of that over the last while. Personally, I don't like that. I don't think that's what

organizations are about.

Administrator C is doubtful that this strategy - leaders demonstrating how future gains can be achieved by member participation in the development of a vision - happens on a broad basis. There may be some pockets of this, but she believes it should be enhanced in order to contribute to personal and organizational long-term growth:

I think there needs to be an enhancement of that because sometimes, as I mentioned before, opportunities for growth and lifelong learning have been made on a very ad hoc basis without a plan as to how the specific activity enhances ones professionalism and how it can be contributed to the growth of others. So there hasn't been a continuum of learning that has been encouraged, just a specific activity, a specific learning opportunity, more so than a long term approach.

She does believe that accountability for enhancement of professional growth is clearly a role of the college administration:

I think that with planning and, again some formal mechanisms put in [place], a commitment to professional growth that has been made by appointments thus far, there will be accountabilities given to those particular individuals who have been thus far named to make sure that happens. That there is a plan to carry things out, that is an evaluation and a re-evaluation on a continuous basis.

Administrator D feels that, "change itself has done that" - demonstrated how future gains can be achieved by member participation in the development of a vision. He explains that in the old trade school system, the same programs were offered year after year, this is no longer true. He believes that faculty has to continuously evaluate their programs in order to determine, "how can I change this to meet the need that's out there now more"; In order to survive, faculty members have to look to the future

and to what changes are required:

It's almost like a survival that you have to do that now... that depends a lot on program change, and contracts and everything else. We're always looking at how can we change this program, how can we add a specialty area to it, what new programs can we bring in and anybody instructing in this environment is all about that mind set... it's not something that you can opt anymore to do or not to do, if you want to survive you have to because it's survival, you know.

**Question 5: Building Shared Vision Example 5**

- (5) Do college leaders clearly communicate a positive and hopeful outlook for the future of the organization? Should they?

Administrators A, C, and D agreed that communicating a positive outlook for the future is an administrative role; Administrators B felt that leaders should be cautious in projecting such an outlook. Both Administrators B and D point out that many decisions concerning the future of the college are out of their control.

Administrator A felt that the leaders should be able to envision "the challenge and the opportunity"; if they do not look at it in a positive light then they cannot expect followers to view it positively:

I think the more inspirational of the leaders are doing that. The less inspirational only see the doom and gloom. My person philosophy on that is that we don't, we never, ever, have a problem - we only have another challenge.

Administrator C views her role as mainly "to rebuild a positive attitude" and believes that any administrator who does not project a positive outlook for the future should be held accountable:

The number of changes that have occurred... the element of change being a

very traumatic one in and of itself. That is certainly our responsibility to ensure that in the future, we put aside past negative aspects of leadership or lack thereof and forge ahead with a new exciting approach to leadership through involvement.

Administrator D states that the role of the administrator is to project a positive outlook for the future and to keep morale up. However, he explains that it is extremely difficult to fulfil this responsibility when so many things are beyond their control:

It's been really, really difficult. You try to do that and keep morale up, but there are so many things of which you do not have control and in the last few years where it has been continuous budget restraint, cutbacks, program losses, campus closures, it has been really, really difficult. There certainly has been an attempt on behalf of the leadership of the college to maintain... morale and say, you know, that there's going to be stability again within the system. I think with the new provincial system now that's one of the things they're going to strive to try and achieve. To give some stability to the system and to those working within the system, some feeling at least OK, we got a plan in place for three years, we know we're going to be able to go by this plan, the government has said yes, these other finances we're going to have for the next three years. I think that's an opportunity to do that, to put the morale back in the system and some security and stability, but it has been difficult, even for leaders, to do that [in] the overall economy we're living in right now with all the restraints.

Administrator D points out that the college is trying to be optimistic and develop some stability, but it is doing so from a realistic perspective - only maintaining programs, faculty, and staff if they are relevant to a need that is present in the community now:

No more will it be like the district vocational school system where we keep a program for the sake of keeping it and to maintain staff and faculty. You can't do that either. It has to be something that is addressing a need, a relevant need, a need that's out there right now and not something that was there ten years ago. So even though, yes, they're trying to give positive morale and

trying to put stability there, but yet it's realistic that, look, we're not going to be like that, the program is here, but probably after three, four or five years, there's going to be no need for it anymore. So that realism is there as well.

He feels that the need to stay current also highlights the importance of the professional development manager:

That's where your professional development manager, retraining our faculty and everything is so important because then if you want to deploy them to other areas, we can do that, where the change is, but if people are reluctant to do that, they're going to get left behind because the change has to happen.

Administrator B believes that one must take a "cautious perspective" with regard to this matter since college leaders have very little control over the future of the organization.

#### **Question 6: The Participants in the Development of a Shared Vision**

Question 6 sought the administrators' opinions on the identity of the members who should help to create a shared vision for the college system:

C6. Who in the college should be participating in the creation of a shared vision?

All Administrators agreed that everyone in the college system should contribute to the creation of a shared vision. Administrators B and D both highlighted students, in particular, as contributors to the vision.

Administrator B felt that students, especially, should participate because they are primary stakeholders. However, he notes that it is too early to determine if members are participating.

Administrator C points out that there are very comprehensive ways to have the contributions of college members seen and felt:

You have, as a leader, to provide for the opportunities to realize the long-term importance in terms of morale and growth of having people sit around the table and provide their voices to decision making on an ongoing basis, not as a courtesy, but from the aspect of true involvement.

Administrator D states that everyone - support staff, faculty, management, and students - must be involved in the creation of a vision. He emphasizes the importance of having everyone and in particular, student representatives participate on the teams:

So on the teams that are established it's important when we say to all stakeholders that we not forget students because they're a very important stakeholders.

At present, he feels it is a little too early in the restructuring process to determine if students are having input, but hopes that through student services opportunities will be provided. At present, it has been mostly administrators who have had input.

#### **Question 7: Appropriateness of Developing a Shared Vision during the College**

##### **Restructuring**

Question 7 solicited the administrators' beliefs on the timeliness of developing a shared vision during the college restructuring:

C7. Given the current **restructuring**, do you feel the **time is right** for developing or continuing to develop a shared vision?

Administrators A, C, and D agreed that the time is right for developing a



shared vision, whereas Administrator B felt that we need to wait for a more positive college climate.

Administrator A felt that we must have a vision in order to restructure:

If we're restructuring without vision we have a major problem on our hands in so far as, it's a major waste of resources to try to establish an organization without vision.

Administrator C states that it is, in fact, "a very ripe opportunity" for building a shared vision. She believes that the administrators who are responsible for ensuring this is carried out, should be evaluated on the basis of whether they were successful in achieving this result.

Administrator B believes that this is not a good time to try and develop a shared vision because it is such a negative time for a large number of college members. He feels that developing a shared vision should occur in a relatively positive environment:

I think we have to get past this budget year first because that's still bit of a problem and I think you have to get past some of the negative stuff. You should be able to do that [develop a shared vision] in a relatively positive environment. If you start to do that now, where so many people have been negatively effected, if you go talking to these people about vision and the future and stuff like that, it's very tough for them to contribute in a positive way. There's a lot of that right at the moment. So, I think we kind of need to deal with that and get past it. Then start the process on a more positive note.

He does feel, however, that it is something that the college should do.

**Question 8: Additional Comments on Shared Vision**

Question 8 sought additional comments from administrators:

C8. Are there any additional comments you would like to add on Element C?

No additional comments were made.

See Table 5 for a summary of responses.

**Building Shared Vision: Conclusions**

The data collected in response to questions C1 to C8 show that administrators were uncertain as to whether the element of Building a Shared Vision is feasible for the college system. All administrators believed that building a shared vision is important to all college members, but certain factors are inhibiting the development and implementation of a shared vision: Factors such as a lack of autonomy and control due to external, and in particular political constraints; skepticism, especially with respect to the way past efforts at vision building have been abandoned; cynicism and negativity resulting from the current climate of layoffs and program cuts; impatience with respect to the time delays between developing and implementing a vision; and the interference of the frequent restructurings with the development of a vision and a sense of ownership.

The significance of shared vision included the development of ownership and control through involvement, enthusiasm, commitment, and the alignment of members to common outcomes or goals.

Table 5

Summary of Administrators' Responses to Questions on Element C - Building Shared Vision

Question #:	Administrator			
	A	B	C	D
C1: Importance-Administrator?	Important	Important	Very important	Very important
C2: Importance-Members?	Yes important, as long as it doesn't affect them	Skeptical because it was a waste of time in the past	Yes,important Want to be heard.Cynical now layoffs,etc.	Yes,more aware of its importance Are impatient now
C3:Source of Leadership?	Everyone	Stakeholders. Lead is the president	Everyone. Lead is the president	President. Lead is president & board
C4:Does the college have a shared vision?	Yes,may not be understood by all	No,too early.	Yes,early so framework is incomplete	Past,yes.Now currently being developed
C5:Strategies?	- - -	Stakeholders as customers . Use distributed teams	- - -	Teams.Action from the top.
C5(1):Goal setting involves members?	Past,yes. Often just paper exercises	No, too early	Not yet,the commitment is there	Commitment is there now.Did this in the past
C5(2):Member Participation?	Yes but fiscal impact often alters decisions	Too early	Too early. Commitment is there.	Yes, through teams
C5(3): commitment?	- - -	That is the intention.	Is being developed now	Past,yes.Now, being developed
C5(4):Show how interests realized?	No, crisis management	Not sure. He is Encouraging members to be independent	Doubtful. Have been some pockets of this	Feels change itself has done this.
C5(5):Leaders are optimistic?	They should	Have to be cautious. Often beyond their control	They should.Also should be held accountable	They should, but many things are beyond their control
C6:Who?	Everyone	Everyone, espec. students	Everyone	Everyone,espec. students
C7:Is the time right?	Yes	No, need a more positive climate	Yes, very ripe	Yes

All four administrators agreed that everyone in the organization should be participating in the creation of a shared vision, especially students. Three of the administrators agreed that the time is right for fostering the development of this element, whereas Administrator B felt that a more positive climate was needed.

The administrators stated that the philosophy of building a shared vision must be supported by everyone in the organization. In general, they felt the college system must do more to develop a shared vision by becoming more autonomous, enabling teams, establishing strategies to involve members in goal-setting, developing a vision that fosters commitment by members, and communicating a positive outlook for the organization.

#### **Element D: Team Learning**

Senge's fourth discipline of the learning organization, Team Learning, was presented as Element D to the administrators. Administrators were introduced to the concept then asked to apply it to the community college setting in answering the questions to follow.

Eight of the sub-sections below present a complete analysis of the data per question on element D. These sub-sections describe the administrators' beliefs, perceptions, and opinions on the concept of team learning. Table 6 summarizes the responses from the administrators. The ninth sub-section briefly summarizes the results and draws conclusions on the feasibility of team learning for the college

system.

**Question 1: The Importance of a Team Approach to the Administrators**

Question 1 sought the administrators' personal beliefs on the importance of developing a team approach to learning and problem-solving in the college system:

D1. How **important** do you believe a team approach is to learning and problem-solving in the college system? Why is it (un)important?

All of the administrators agreed that the development of a team approach to learning and problem solving was very important to the college system.

Administrator A felt that a team approach utilizing the broad pool of knowledge and skills available in the college membership would solve problems quickly. However, she points out that this pool of knowledge is under-utilized:

Individuals that work in the college system are our most valuable asset and, also, [our] most expensive asset, but they also come with knowledge, skills, and attitudes from a given industry sector and also knowledge, skills, and attitudes of a teacher. We combine these things and we combine individuals within a group and we have [a] large amount of expertise, which unfortunately, is not drawn on as much as it could be. So from a problem solving approach, a team effort would, I think, quickly and efficiently... allow us to resolve problems, or as I like to say, allows us to identify challenges and resolve them.

Administrator B felt that team learning is important, as long as leadership is provided - "it's not a substitute for leadership". He feels that this approach can get more people, with a wide variety of talents and resources, involved. However, someone still has to make the final decisions. He also points out that the team approach can be very time consuming:

It is not a substitute for leadership and it helps to bring people into the mix, use all the talents and resources that you have, that kind of thing. Eventually though, someone still has to make a decision, I suppose, about how this stuff gets implemented and the like. So I guess it's a question of extremes. There has to be balance. It's like everything, right, there has to be balance. I definitely see the need to have the benefit of work teams participating, working together like that, but you need to stay away from the group think kind of trap that you fall into and also, the other thing you have to watch is time. Very often this can be a very time consuming approach - using the team approach and that's a factor that needs to be considered - slow. But generally, yes.

Administrator C believes that a team approach is extremely important if the college is truly going to develop a shared vision. She feels that a lot of professional development work is needed to help people "become enabled to the process of cooperation". She points out that the process of consensus-building is to enable conflict in order to reach a general agreement. This process is very growth stimulating in and of itself:

We haven't always learned to be cooperative and to realize the whole process of consensus building is not just... but it's... to enable conflict to happen and to be worked out on a basis that builds consensus and to realize that everyone is not going to agree, but in the end we come to a general agreement of what we can live with in decision-making and that's very growth stimulating for a lot of people, not only those who are very opinionated, but for those who have in the past been afraid to bring their viewpoints forward. So building... the whole aspect of learning to cooperate is a large professional development job in itself.

Administrator D believes that for too long, the college was of the opinion that one person could make all of the decisions. Fortunately, it has now come to realize that the people closest to the problem can often make the best decisions.

**Question 2: The Importance of Team Learning to College Members**

Question 2 sought the administrators' opinions on the importance of team learning and problem-solving to the college membership:

D2. Do you believe that most people in the college system also see this concept as (un)important?

All Administrators agreed that the concept of a team approach to learning is important to college members.

Administrator A felt that the members see its importance, but they do not take advantage of the opportunities that are available:

Unfortunately, they don't recognize the opportunities to become part of such teams and influence the decision making that is taking place. [The] current restructuring is probably a good example.

Administrator B felt that college members considered team learning to be important because "most people like to be involved in it - in things that effect them".

Administrator C states that college members have expressed a desire to have more input, but many are impatient with the speed of the process:

Definitely, and again as with the other elements, they have articulated that many times in the past and do it on an ongoing basis. Sometimes we're very impatient with it because it takes time to build these things and as someone who's been involved, I know why the impatience is there right now, but helping people to see... showing them that things are going to be better and that they are going to be involved, [that] is where we are right now. I think it is an important thing.

Administrator D believes that college members have demonstrated their belief in the team approach through their acceptance, appreciation, and willingness to be

involved:

I remember back to first when I got this position, the very first thing I did... was I went in and I, at my very first meeting, I said, "I would like to setup and establish teams"... at the end of the day I felt so good about the first meeting. The only reason why is because everyone had really appreciated the fact they were going to have some opportunity to have some input into decisions and they all came forward and we had meetings after hours and everybody really seemed to enjoy it and have input into it. Since then of course we went with Total Quality Management within the college and again we have our management teams up and going. Never any problem getting anybody to work on a team, to have input on a team and they really seemed to have grasped it and enjoy it.

He believes this enthusiasm will continue into the new college structure.

### Question 3: The Source of Leadership for Team Learning

Question 3 sought administrators' perceptions of the source of leadership for a team approach to learning and problem solving in the college setting:

D3. **Who** do you feel should be encouraging people to work together as teams in the college system? Should anyone take a **lead** role?

Administrator A felt that the "New Leaders" of the college should be encouraging members to work in teams, Administrator B asserts that it is a unit or divisional responsibility, Administrator C stated that everyone, from the executive on, should take the responsibility, and Administrator D was of the opinion that the President and the campus administrators must encourage team work.

Administrator A felt that the new leaders of the organization should be encouraging the development of a team approach. She refers to leaders in a



traditional, top-down management sense. She states that leaders must "encourage individuals to become part of that process"; the challenge for the leaders is "to ensure that the individuals who participate, see the benefits of their participation".

Administrator B believes that anyone with a divisional or unit responsibility - whether that be an administrator or whoever - should be encouraging people to participate:

Whoever is in charge of that [responsibility] should be involving the people in that unit in areas that they can influence, change, and improve.

Administrator B believes that it is important for the teams to be focused in areas over which they have some control. The members should be educated from the beginning with respect to their role, the context, and what they can realistically expect:

Sometimes I've seen teams setup... they direct their energies towards stuff which they have no control over and subsequently end up getting frustrated and disenchanted with the process.

They need to be focused and they need to be focused on an area that's within their jurisdiction to improve and to change because otherwise... I've seen a lot of that, we've had teams... for example, they might decide... to solve this problem we got to build a \$500 extension on the classroom or something, or we got to rewire this. That's totally... just wasn't possible and then because that didn't happen... they get frustrated and then they just walk away from the entire process. So there has to be sort of an educational dimension attached to the up-front involvement so the people understand the context, and they understand the role, and to change the things that they know that they can... I mean there needs to be somebody there that defines reality.

By educating and operating the teams in this manner, he believes the people involved can feel successful, can build on the small wins, and can be involved in consensus building.

Administrator C was of the opinion that everyone in the college should be encouraging members to participate in teams; it must be demonstrated from the senior executive on, throughout the college:

That one person is not the be all and the end all. That decision making comes from the contribution of the whole and it needs to be demonstrated at that level to all of us and then subsequently we need to demonstrate... on a local level as well.

Administrator C points out that the President must take a lead role. He must demonstrate through information and, for example, through a case study approach how a decision was reached at the senior level using cooperative team work. She believes communication and openness on the part of leaders is important and feels the new President places a lot of importance on these strategies:

So often as leaders we feel that we've got to [be] seen as iron clad - that we're invincible. In my experience that doesn't work at all. It's when you show that you're human, when you show... that you're real, from the President on, then people understand you, are more empathetic to what you're trying to do as a leader. Like all of us, we're always trying to figure it all out. It's like teenagers... if you have experience as a parent you'd have to realize that the rebellion whatever happens in what is perceived as negative often times is just from the aspect of your kids trying to figure out. We, as leaders, have to try to figure it out too and some of that is shown through being human and saying... "I just don't know what to do here or I just did that wrong, I made a mistake there." This President has shown some of that already.

She asserts that the leaders must be visible in order to encourage members to participate in teams:

Being seen too is such an important part of cooperation. You know that you're not always housed in an office here doing paperwork, but that you're out around and that you're seen to be interested in people, in a real way. That all helps to build cooperation.

Administrator D believes that the President should encourage the development of a team approach and that it should be supported at the campus level by the administrators:

Again, it's important thought at the campus level that it also be, at that level, enforced and supported because even if it is... an initiative of the college, unless it is supported at that [campus] level then it won't happen. So, it's really, really important that it be supported at that level and that they be given the resources and the time to do the necessary work that's involved there.

He felt that the President should take the lead role for this initiative. It could start at the campus level, as it did in his area when the TQM management philosophy was adopted. However, if it is a college initiative, support should come from the President:

You can do a lot more when it becomes a college initiative. We were just doing it very small here, as a small campus, just looking at our little problems and issues and concerns and departments and improvements that we needed, but... when you look at it as a college initiative then you get into decisions affecting the whole college in the way that it's structured and its operations and so forth. So it really should be a college initiative and therefore, given support from the President because, then again, resources have to be put in place in order for this to work, but again, it's important that the campus area, that the Administrator there, support the groups.

Administrator D re-iterates the importance of support throughout the system and a willingness, on the part of administrators, to "give up some of that power or authority", or it will not be successful. He states that team members must be given the power to make decisions within given constraints:

It's no good either to say you got teams and let them go and dream up everything possible and realizing at the same time that it's not realistic, it's impossible to implement these things. So you have to give them their

guidelines and if you have a team looking at a certain thing and if it's fiscal restraint, or whatever the restraints are, they need to know what guidelines they're working within and then knowing that, then whatever decisions they come forward with, should be able to [be] implemented, should be able to go from there with it.

#### **Question 4: Utilization of Team Learning in the College System**

Question 4 sought the administrators' opinions on whether the college is currently using a team approach to learning and problem-solving:

D4. Does the college system **currently utilize** a team approach to problem-solving and professional development?

Administrators A and D agreed that the college system does use the team approach to learning and problem-solving, whereas Administrators B and C were of the opinion that the college intends to use this approach.

Administrator A discusses team learning and problem solving separately. She believes that the team approach to problem-solving is situational. She also states that simply posing questions to college members and inviting their participation is a strategy that is not often used to get more involvement:

Probably the most significance involvement technique which has not been used is simply to throw out the question to everybody in the organization. So, you invite responses and then from that, you will get a gauge of the interest and you will get an idea of the importance of it and also the ability of... the readiness of individuals to serve on the team and work towards a cooperative goal.

With respect to the learning aspect of the team approach, Administrator A believes the team approach is used to a limited extent for professional development:

There is a team in place that evaluates professional development, I should say,

educational leave committee that exists under the auspices of the collective agreement which in my estimation is a fairly limited scope of professional development. Education leave does not constitute professional development in its entirety. There are many, many more opportunities especially for people that have already gained sufficient education. It is still important in certain circumstances, but I think that there has to be a similar coordinated effort to identify professional development opportunities in order to encourage individuals to participate. That is not to contradict what I said earlier regarding individuals identifying their own... opportunities, but through a coordination of individuals that are involved then priorities can be established and available. Scarce resources can [be] utilized to maximum benefit.

Administrator D states that the team approach was used in his area and that it is being used in the new system; the new structure has already set up administrative and resource teams:

There's also resource teams, like for example student services, they've got a resource team now setup for student services. So there's going to be different resource teams for all the different areas within the college.

Administrator B was of the opinion that utilizing a team approach is "clearly what the intention is" and felt that they should be doing more of this in the future.

Administrator C stated simply that the college will utilize the team approach for learning and problem-solving because of what has already been "put forward" at the initial meetings:

I think that everybody came out of those meetings feeling very encouraged by the fact that through the case study approach, we have been involved in the aspect of figuring it all out, as to how we would handle certain situations, how we would share the aspect of leadership in terms of the District/Associate District Administrator relationships and responsibilities.

**Question 5: Strategies for the Development of a Team Approach to Professional Development and Problem-Solving**

Question 5 sought administrators' opinions on strategies that are currently being used, or that should be used, to develop a team approach in the college system. The question was composed of an open-ended query followed by a number of examples of strategies:

D5. **What** sorts of things are being done or should be done to develop a team approach to learning and problem-solving?

I have several examples here which I am going to ask for your input and opinion on each, example:

- (1) Does the college set aside time for discussion and dialogue among its members? Should it?
- (2) Are college members encouraged to share their expertise with colleagues? Should they?
- (3) Does the college provide resources to support these efforts? Should it?
- (4) Does the college gives team members lots of appreciation and support for their contributions? Should it?
- (5) Do college leaders develop cooperative relationships with the people they work with? Should they?

In response to the open-ended query, a number of strategies were identified including: canvassing college members, industry, and the general public for input; educating team members; providing general professional development; identifying techniques for learning in a cooperative mode; providing support and resources; and identifying guidelines and restraints in which teams must work.

Administrator A identified a number of stakeholders solicited for input by the college system: Administrators across the province were canvassed with respect to the reorganization of the college system; The colleges went to "excessive lengths" to canvass student perceptions; The general public was canvassed in terms of its perception of the college; Staff and management were canvassed on organizational climate; and industrial advisory committees were often used "to look at specific roles in specific areas".

Administrator A points out that "specific problem-solving teams" are not used as much as they could be and believes the problem is structure:

Specific problem-solving teams, I don't think are used as much as they possibly could be. I don't think in modern technology that that's an issue of distance or geography at all. It is a question of how we focus on the structure as a team. So, we focus on the task and the task doesn't mean that we have to meet face to face and deal with all the issues that are going to solve [the problems of] the world. I think we have to start small and face very simple, well defined challenges and use a team approach to develop responses to them.

Administrator B was of the opinion that groups of people were being put into place and called teams with very little education of the team members:

I think that largely what is happening now is putting teams in place or putting administrative groups of people and others in place and calling them teams. I don't think that there's much happening, at least now, in the way of educating the teams about process, about function, about role, that kind of thing.

Administrator C believes professional development is needed to develop a team approach to learning and problem-solving:

We haven't all learned how to be good problem-solvers and there's certainly techniques to doing that, it's both scientific and artistic, I guess, just like the

aspect of leadership. I think probably more an art than a science, but there are things that can be done through case study scenarios and whatever that can help people learn how to problem-solve in a cooperative mode and how to carry out the aspect of cooperative teamwork.

Administrator D felt that in order for the team approach to be developed; the support must be there, the resources and guidelines must be provided, and the restraints and parameters in which teams are working must be identified:

We expect these teams to work and sometimes we've found difficulty doing it. We've had to take time away from classes or we've had to meet after hours and that sort of thing. So resources are important if we really want to use a team approach because it's difficult to pull people out of programs for a period of time and you need somebody that you can put in there during that period of time. We don't always have those resources in place.

#### **Question 5: Team Learning Example 1**

- (1) Does the college set aside time for discussion and dialogue among its members? Should it?

In response to example one, Administrators A and D agreed that time was being made available for discussion and dialogue, whereas Administrators B and C felt that this was the intention.

Administrator A points out that it is not necessary for teams to meet face to face. With all the technology available, they can be just as effective by distance through E-mail, teleconference, or letter. However, the college still needs to give people time to converse. She believes that the college does provide that time to a limited extent, for example, through faculty meetings. However, she feels that study groups in specific areas have not been used to their fullest extent. She also states that



professionals have to take their personal, unpaid time to develop their skills:

Engineers, doctors, lawyers and accountants... all take personal time to reflect upon those things and also, take personal time unpaid to develop their own skills. So for those reasons, I think not only do we look to the college because we are the college. We're not looking to some ominous beings somewhere or some figure head - we are the college so, if we don't take the time to do it, then we can't say the college is not taking the time because that's us; we're talking about ourselves.

Administrator D states that time is being provided to members for example, through monthly department meetings. However, he believes that the faculty and staff must be willing to support each other in order for the approach to work:

They meet at least once monthly and since most programs, or a lot of them are self-directed and individualized, you can probably pull people out for one or two periods and it's not too drastic on the program and other times you have to look at other means to cover. Some programs you have two or three faculty involved, so while one is out attending a meeting then the others cover for them. There has to be that commitment from the whole faculty and staff to be willing to do that in order for it to work.

Administrator B states simply that the intention of the college is to set aside time for reflection by its members.

Administrator C believes that the new leadership approach of involving members will enable time:

Through the aspects of making decisions through cooperative teamwork, of building plans through shared vision, then I think as a natural mode of decision making that time is enabled... because not only is professional development and lifelong learning enabled through informal professional development settings, but through the whole aspect of being involved. So, I think there are inherent opportunities for professional growth in that aspect or that mode of leadership. Certainly the other more formal modes are necessary too. In the past, we haven't paid enough attention to professional development. That's a statement in a general sense, but I think that there will be more opportunities for that in

a more planned fashion.

**Question 5: Team Learning Example 2**

- (2) Are college members encouraged to share their expertise with colleagues? Should they?

Administrators A and D agreed that the college encourages members to share their expertise, Administrator B disagreed, and Administrator C felt we had not done enough of this in the past.

Administrator D states that they have been trying to encourage members to share their expertise. This can be seen in the college structure which utilizes departments:

I think, structuring the system around departments, having department chairs and having these meetings where hopefully the expertise can be recognized and shared and you can build upon the strength of people.

He believes that the new college will continue to use the same departmental structure.

Administrator B was of the opinion that on a broad scale, the college does not have the "venue" to enable members to share their expertise because of communication problems. However, he does believe that there is a fair amount of sharing that occurs at the campus level:

I don't think the venue is there for that. We're trying now through distribution list for E-Mail and these kinds of things. Communication is a problem in this type of organization, but in more specific locations like a campuses and that kind of thing, I think the answer would be, yes, that there's a fair amount of learning that goes [on] from one person to the next.

Administrator C believes that in the past, there were limited opportunities for sharing expertise and information, in general. She believes there is cause to be hopeful in the new college:

Often times in the past I've heard the comment, not only from an expertise point of view, but from an information point of view, that if you're in a fairly large campus, "I've been working here for ten years and I still haven't been up to the trades wing or I haven't been in that lab or I don't know what programs are going on" so, we haven't done enough in-house enablement from an information point of view. So, there's a lot more that can be done, I think, but again, I would have hope in the college system to enable more of that.

### **Question 5: Team Learning Example 3**

(3) Does the college provide resources to support these efforts? Should it?

Administrators A and D agreed that the resources and opportunities are there to a certain extent, to support the development of a team approach, whereas Administrators B and C believe the support has not been enough.

Administrator A believes the opportunity is there to work in a team:

Is there an instructor that doesn't have a desk? Is there an instructor that doesn't have an E-Mail account? Is there an instructor that doesn't have an interaction, on a daily basis, with somebody else within their own discipline, a colleague? For those reason I think opportunity is there.

However, she explains that member must take full advantage of the resources that are available, they must be proactive:

Whether it's enough or not, is a measure of how well we utilize what we currently have. If we don't utilize what we already have there is no point in throwing more resources away. That's the difference between being proactive and being reactive. Reactionary would be to provide another opportunity,

proactive would be take advantage of the opportunity you already have.

Administrator D points out that some time has been made available for department chairs. He explains that it is important that time be allocated, especially for team leaders. However, he questions whether the available time is sufficient. He feels that in the current climate, members will have to work with what is available and be willing to give up some personal time:

I think some resources have been put there, but whether we have had enough - we're looking at teams - is questionable, and to be truthful with you, I don't know in the environment we're working in, if will ever get to that place where we really would like to be in order to initiate a team approach the way it should be. So, I guess we're probably going to have to work with what we got and faculty and staff, in many instances, are going to have to be willing too, to give up a little of their time for meetings after work and so forth in order to make it work and for the betterment of themselves and the whole system.

Administrator C believes that college support has been "too concentrated on the regular daily activities", that members have been too narrow in their thinking:

[College members have not been] given enough opportunity to learn about one another... and to realize the value of other things besides the normal day to day routines of what you have to do, as per your job description. So, I would hope we'd be more holistic thinkers with that, in respect to that providing for those kinds of opportunities.

#### **Question 5: Team Learning Example 4**

- (4) Does the college give team members lots of appreciation and support for their contributions? Should it?

All Administrators agreed that the college does not provide enough appreciation

and support.

Administrator A points out that "recognition goes a long ways". She believes the college is quick to "recognize the negatives, but we don't do a lot to recognize the positives".

Administrator B states that the college does not provide appreciation and support, even though they should and feels, "we'll have to wait and see" if it will be provided in the future.

Administrator C felt that the college has not provided support and appreciation to college members in the past, but is hopeful that it will be inherent in the new structure:

I think probably not, again, as much as it should. Probably in a lot of instance unequivocally, no, but again, I would hope that with the aspect of shared leadership, teamwork, that that would be an inherent part of the whole process of teamwork. I've seen it happen in a good team environment that appropriate appreciations are given to the people involved.

Administrator D states that in the past, there have been some attempts to provide appreciation and support, but these efforts have been very limited:

At a meeting we might say, "thank you" or something, but that's about it. There's nothing... even if it was a certificate of appreciation presented and actually we've talked about that here because we're as guilty of that as anybody. We don't, you know. We go about and we do things, and we're really excited that something's happening, but sometimes we forget that somebody made this happen and gave up their time and... So there certainly, I think, needs to be some type of appreciation, but I have to say that that's one that we don't rate very high on that, in all honesty.

With respect to the new college system, Administrator D believes that

strategies for appreciation and support must be developed on a district basis, not on a college-wide basis:

I think that's going to have to be done on a district basis because if you look at a provincial system, that's very difficult to administer on a provincial system and it would have to be something really, really great to be acknowledged. We have a lot of people doing a lot of wonderful things on individual campuses and I think probably as a district, that's something that we need to think of - how can we do this, how can we really start acknowledging what's happening, because none of us, I think, at the campus level are really acknowledging the contributions as we should be.

He also points out that one of the problems associated with demonstrating support and appreciation is determining how to acknowledge members. He does not believe that financial support would be provided in the college and sees problems with support for professional development:

You can see support, probably for professional development and that sort of thing, which is there now anyway, but not really linked to any particular achievement. It's recognized that all employees have major contribution to an organization and therefore, professional development is for anybody at all. So you can't really link, I don't think, professional development, to a particular achievement unless it is something in a particular area and this professional development can even promote that even further, you know, a person's contribution. So probably there's something there you can link together, but you have to be cautious with it, that others don't look at it and say, professional development is there only for a very few that do these wonderful things.

He concludes this discussion by stating that managing the support and appreciation of members is difficult.

#### **Question 5: Team Learning Example 5**

((5) Do college leaders develop cooperative relationships with the people

they work with? Should they?

Administrators A stated that there is a structure in place that can be built upon by leaders to direct resources appropriately. Administrator B felt that the development of such relations depends on the leadership style. Administrator C was of the opinion that in the past, not enough had been done to develop cooperative relations, but she is hopeful for the future. Administrator D stated that there have been moves towards this type of cooperative relations and believes the opportunity is there in the college setting.

Administrator A is of the opinion that administration can build upon the cooperative relationship that already exists between faculty and staff. It is up to administration to recognize these existing relationships and make use of them:

For those persons that work in numbers, in close proximity to each other and support each other - We don't recognize that often enough. That support already exists and is being capitalized on in a lot of environments. Influenced correctly that sort of structure can be used to broaden the corridor of beliefs, shared vision, and allow administrators to redirect resources - put resources in the hands of those who can make the most use of them. We fail to recognize that quite often.

Administrator B believes that the development of cooperative relationships between leaders and other college member is situational:

It depends on the personalities involved and what the leadership style is of the individuals. There's definitely a variety of leadership styles.

However, he does feel that leaders should develop cooperative relations with their co-workers.

Administrator C felt that in the past, not enough attention had been given to cooperative relations between leaders and other members, however, she is hopeful for the future:

In the past there has not been enough attention given to the importance of comradeship, of social activity, of sharing of information about the programs, of celebrating special work, whatever - there hasn't been the degree of that that there should be, but again, I will give hope that there will be in the future.

Administrator D was of the opinion that in the past four to five years, there has been a "big move towards this" - towards the development of cooperative relations between leaders and co-workers. He also feels that more responsibility has been placed on faculty with respect to decision-making:

Very few decisions are made now without having input from those people that are involved in it. So I think certainly the opportunity has been put there.

He points out that in all likelihood an Academic Council will be put in place for the college system.

#### **Question 6: Team Members in the College System**

Question 6 sought the administrators' opinions on who they believed should be engaged in Team Learning and Problem-Solving in the college system:

D6. Who should participate in team learning and problem-solving in the college system?

All Administrators agreed that everyone in the college system should be engaged in team learning and problem-solving.



Administrator A states that a broad cross-section of those individuals impacted upon by the problem or challenge should be engaged in team learning. She believes that from an administrative point of view, "you have to look to the individuals that have the most expertise to deal with the given problem". However, she feels broad issues should be examined by teams composed of individuals from all levels of the organization. To do this an appropriate structure must be in place:

For broad issues of a policy nature should be done from all quote "levels" in the organization and this word "levels" is not going to go away because it exists, but from all operational elements within the organization whether that be from a regional, district, or local level, whether it be instructional support, student services - these things have to occur. That doesn't necessarily mean we have to bring everybody together every three weeks to sit down around a table to come up with a result. I think it just needs to have a structure or an opportunity for a structure that will allow the problem to be examined by those they impacted on - students, for example.

Administrator B believes that the leaders of the organization should start the process of team learning and problem-solving which hopefully, will lead to the involvement of everyone. He points out that this process will happen if there is an executive commitment.

Administrator C is of the opinion that it is "just inherent that everyone should be involved in it and demonstrate their ability to realize the importance of that" - of team learning and problem-solving.

Administrator D again felt that everyone, "not forgetting the students", should be involved in this process.

**Question 7: Appropriateness of Fostering Team Learning during the College Restructuring**

Question 7 solicited the administrators' beliefs on the timeliness of fostering team learning and problem-solving during the college restructuring:

- D7. Given the current **restructuring** of the college system, do you feel the **time is right** for fostering or continuing to foster team learning and problem-solving?

All administrators agreed that the time is right for fostering team learning and problem-solving in the college system.

Administrator A felt that such occurrences provide "the opportunity for change to occur".

Administrator B was of the opinion that this is a good time for fostering the team approach: "There's no better time than at the front end of the change process to start to do this".

Administrator C asserted that this is "definitely" a good time to promote team learning:

There's nothing like starting off on a new foot - fresh idea, fresh enthusiasm. To start all these things that are so important to the future of the college off on the right foot.

Administrator D felt that this was "perfect timing" for developing the team approach:

It's already there. I mean everything to this point in time has been done emphasizing that this is the approach that is going to be utilized, from the hiring of staffing on down. They're certainly going to be looking for people

that work in teams and work with people and can collaboratively make decisions.

### **Question 8: Additional Comments on Team Learning**

Question 8 sought additional comments from administrators:

D8. Are there any additional comments you would like to add on Element D?

Administrator A states that cooperative teamwork requires commitment throughout the system:

Commitment has to occur at all levels in the organization... whether that be the President or whether it be the local manager of Works, Services, and Transportation who is an integral part of the organization... commitment to teamwork has to be there. The resources of teamwork have to be communicated, articulated, recognized, supported and respected.

Administrator D reiterates the importance of team learning. He believes that it should be implemented at each campus and emphasizes the importance of student involvement in all teams.

See Table 6 for a summary of responses.

### **Team Learning: Conclusions**

The data collected in response to questions D1 to D8 show that administrators believe that the element of Team Learning is feasible for the college system. The administrators believe the philosophy of collaborative teamwork is important to most college members. They state that everyone in the organization should be actively engaged in team learning and felt that the time is right for fostering the development

Table 6

Summary of Administrators' Responses to Questions on Element D - Team Learning

Question #:	Administrator			
	A	B	C	D
D1: Importance-Administrator?	Important	Important	Very important	Very important
D2: Importance-Members?	Yes, important	Yes, important	Yes, important	Yes, important
D3:Source of Leadership?	New Leaders	Anyone with a unit/divisional responsibility	Everyone. Lead is the president	President & campus admin. Lead - President
D4:Is team approach used?	Yes,situational & limited	This is the intention	This is the intention	Yes
D5:Strategies?	Canvas members, public, & advisory groups	Educate the teams	General P.D. for cooperative learning	Support, guidelines, restraints,
D5(1):Dialogue & Discussion?	Yes, to a limited extent	That's the intention	New approach will do this	Yes,must support each other
D5(2):Share expertise?	Yes	No, collegewide. Yes,campus level	Past,not enough. Future-hopeful	Past,yes.Future is the intention
D5(3):College Provide Resources?	Opportunity is there.Members must be proactive	Partially	Past,not enough. Future-hopeful	Some resources provided but it is not enough
D5(4):Support & appreciation?	Not enough	Past,no.Future, wait & see	Past,not enough. Future-hopeful	Past,limited.Do on district basis
D5(5):cooperative relationships?	Is a structure that can be used	Its situational	Past,not enough. Future-hopeful	Moving towards this.
D6:Who?	Everyone impacted on & with expertise	Start with leaders.Everyone	Everyone	Everyone, incl. students
D7:Is the time right?	Yes,opportunity for change	Yes, good timing	Yes,definitely	Yes,perfect timing

of this element.

Reasons given for the significance of team learning included utilizing a wide variety of talents and resources available in the college system as well as increasing membership participation, collaboration, willingness, and enthusiasm.

One issue of concern raised by the administrators was that teams are not good decision-makers. A related concern was that shared decision-making leads to greater time demands.

The administrators stated that the philosophy of collaborative teamwork must be supported by the leaders and anyone with responsibility in the organization. In general, they felt the college system must do more to foster teamwork through professional development, support, appreciation, allotment of time for discussions and dialogue, and encouragement of colleagues to share their expertise.

#### **Element E: Systems Thinking**

Senge's fifth discipline of the learning organization, Systems Thinking, was presented as Element E to the administrators. Administrators were introduced to the concept then asked to apply it to the community college setting in answering the questions to follow.

Eight of the sub-sections below present a complete analysis of the data per question on element E. These sub-sections describe the administrators' beliefs, perceptions, and opinions on the concept of systems thinking. Table 7 summarizes the

responses from the administrators. The ninth sub-section briefly summarizes the results and draws conclusions on the feasibility of systems thinking for the college system.

### **Question 1: The Importance of Systems Thinking to the Administrators**

Question 1 sought the administrators' personal beliefs on the importance of systems thinking in the college system. The question was composed of two parts:

- E1(1) How important is it for college members to see the connections between their work and the work of others throughout the college system? Why is it (un)important?
- E1(2) How important is it for college members to see the connections between them (ie., the college) and the community they serve? Why is it (un)important?

In response to parts one, all of the administrators agreed that it was very important for members to see the impact of their work on the work of others in the college system.

Administrator A felt that it is very important for members to develop holistic views: "the successful individual is the person that looks beyond what it is they're doing now to see how it impacts upon others". She felt that the college was not doing enough of this development.

Administrator A was also of the opinion that members must understand the impact they have on the success of the college as well as why they are performing certain tasks - if people do not understand "why" then they do not have ownership and

the organization fails:

I think it's essential that an individual understand how their effort impacts on the overall success or failure of an organization achieving its goals... if you don't understand why you're doing something, don't expect somebody to do it. If you don't take the time to tell somebody how it fits into the organization, then they don't feel part of it. Once you start to move away and not feel part of something, then you start to fall... the organization starts to fall - not the individual. The individual just redirects their efforts elsewhere.

Administrator B was very interested in a holistic view of the college and particularly, in what he calls "unintended outcomes". He says that there is very little written on this topic, but feels that there are many instances where the stated intentions and the actual outcomes are quite different. In the case of the college, he was of the opinion that an unstated - though not necessarily unintended - outcome of the numerous restructurings is privatization of the college system:

We're in a situation now as a college, as a public college, where we have 47% of enrollment in post secondary in private schools.

He asserts that this decline in enrollment in the public system has led to excess capacity, provincially. This leaves the public college in a dilemma. On the one hand, they have an imperative from government to cut costs - Government's written intention was to cut excess administration. However, the college bureaucracy is reducing costs by cutting programs and front-line workers which has in effect, contributed to privatization:

In the public colleges you have a lot of excess capacity, a lot of infrastructure that is under-utilized, sometimes entire buildings or parts of buildings that are under-utilized. So, you [are] into ... somewhat of a dilemma, you have this kind of imperative from an economic point of view or from government's point

of view, to downsize and to try to be more cost effective, if you like. Very often that translates to eliminating, actually eliminating, programs. Now when that happens...one of the reasons given for changing the college this time was administration. There was a lot more administration than we needed... so, this change was made with that point of view in mind, to actually eliminate administration, but I think, if you check in probably three years time or so, you'll find that's not what happened at all. Actually what happened is that workers, front line services, programs, and that ended up getting cut. I think that's starting to become fairly obvious now, you'll see that starting to emerge because bureaucracies have a way of doing that. They have a way... they take on a life of their own.

Administrator B feels that the unstated provincial perspective is "privatization of post-secondary education". He believes, intentional or not, the public colleges have contributed to their own demise through their efficiency measures and through an unstated government preference:

Right now from a big picture perspective, what you have in Newfoundland, is you have privatization of post-secondary education - that is what you have and the colleges have contributed to that, either intentionally or unintentionally, by going about their effectiveness, certainly not effectiveness, but efficiency kinds of things that they've done.

There seems to be within government a preference for this particular outcome, although it has never been discussed from a social policy point of view, but that seems to be there, so these costs are significantly now getting transferred to the students. All these as well, there is a fair amount of public dollars going into the private school operation. In this organization here now you have this economic problem, I guess, and probably by solving the problem by not closing some campuses and keeping all campuses open and then gradually laying off administrators, laying off teachers, closing programs, you'll eventually... the post secondary system will eventually cost less to operate in Newfoundland, but the outcome of that, is that you will have privatization. You will have a lot of private schools is what you have now. So, is that an unintended outcome or is it an intended outcome? It's a question right. But systematically that's what's happened.

He also believes that government has a poor opinion of the public college



system:

Since 1980, there has been a point of view that developed about public post secondary education, it started with the Minister and based on his perceptions of what was going on at ... Institute and other places. That kind of filtered into the psychic of people who had points of view in government who had power so, public post-secondary education is kind of... it's not viewed very well, in my opinion.

Administrator B feels that the result of all the cost-cutting measures and its effect upon the quality of the college's services, will be a deterioration over time, "It becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy". He asserts that this is another example of how the lack of autonomy on the part of the college interferes with its operation:

You're left with all this infrastructure to support and then again, that's the situation of the college not being able to manage its own affairs entirely, so you... the college board just can't decide to go and close two or three campuses and say, "we can't afford to operate them but we'll have nine or ten that are going to be first class" because that's a political decision.

Administrator B briefly discusses the role and performance of the President in the college system. He points out that if the President does not perform well, the board's hands are tied since the President is not hired by the board, but is appointed by and reports directly to the minister:

In many cases, [the President] leads the agenda, establishes the agenda... what I'm saying, he has a lot of influence, but in terms of a power relationship and a reporting relationship it creates kind of a different situation. So if he doesn't perform very well, the board is a bit at a loss as to how they settle it.

Administrator B concludes by stating that unintended outcomes occur very subtly, before people realize what is happening:

It's the kind of thing that sneaks up on you after a while and then all of a

sudden, wow! You have this massive sort of situation and you wonder how did we ever get there - how did this ever happen? I've talked to a number of people about it and say, "Is that an intention?". They don't see it as an intention, but it is happening, definitely occurring.

Administrator C was of the opinion that members must be able to see "the bigger picture" in order for shared vision and team work - "those aspects of the learning organization" - to be successful. In the past, she states that the "weak leadership" did not want to provide all of the information to members. Thus, members could not see the connections between various problems and actions and they were not encouraged to develop divergent thinking. As a result, they could only solve very specific problems with short-term solutions. She believes this form of leadership must change in the new system. Leaders must be more open and human with other members:

The solutions that come from those problem-solving exercises are only short-term because the big picture isn't seen and the connections between them and divergent thinking hasn't... because the 'big picture' hasn't been put forward. So, I think it's extremely important to indicate that this is the 'big picture' or we don't know what the 'big picture' is - help us to paint it through the various problems that have to be solved. So again, referring to the fact or the issue, I brought up before about being human and showing people what you don't know as well as what you do. It is an important aspect of dealing with those 'big picture' situations, but again in terms of a new college and starting out with the new college, now, it is important that we start off on that aspect of enabling and providing for empowerment through putting all the information forward, giving the 'big picture', and having the problem solved in those contexts.

Administrator D strongly believes that it is very important for the college to use a "systems approach" in order to develop a "community of learning and commitment". He feels one of the "risks of teams" is they are broken down by

departments or specific areas, thus, they do not get to see "the total picture". This is why he believes it is extremely important to bring people together to share information and help develop the big picture. This is why the department chairs are very important; they must communicate across departments and areas to develop the big picture. This is why administration is important; one of the most important roles of administration is to develop the big picture, from a provincial perspective, for college members:

I think that's the one thing that is important for administration and as an administrator, that they be able to see the 'big picture' because they're the people that's going to [be] working with each of those department chairs and where everything comes through from the other departments and who can link it all together in a whole and make others see it in that way as well. So, I think that is one of the most important roles of an administrator, if you're utilizing a team approach in management, that you're the person who can see that total perspective and also can bring now the district perspective to it, not only a campus, but a district and provincial perspective, so that you don't get these separate little elements going in different directions, but that each complements the other and I think, if you're looking at the provincial system the way that they've got the districts set up, is the same thing. We have the Associate District Administrators at each campus, but there is a District Administrator and to me again the role of that District Administrator is a team leader and also, a person that can keep the whole perspective of the District and keep that within the framework of the provincial system.

In response to part two of question E1, Administrators B, C, and D agreed that it was very important for the college members to see the connections between them and the community they serve - a bigger picture. Administrator A appears to have misinterpreted the question and discussed the importance of college members.

Administrator A states that the importance of college members is indicated by

the fact that 87% of the college budget is spent on human resources. She asserts that these assets must be utilized to the fullest extent by the stakeholders - the community, government, students - "if you don't use it, it's your own fault".

Administrator B felt that it is critical for college members to understand their role in the community and believes that failure to do so is part of the problem with the college system:

You have to meet the needs and expectations of the people in the community because if you don't, then you don't... when the crunch comes, you don't get support which translates to political support and the like within the community. So, if you're not valued by the community, an example for us was our first year university program, we lost it because it really wasn't valued by the community.

Administrator C states that the college cannot be effective if it does not work from this perspective:

I think that we won't effectively do our work unless we move in both directions at once: from the community to the college, from the college to the community, in terms of... for instance, the specific challenge put forward to us now to develop partnerships. We will have to do that on a coordinated, cooperative basis and unless we know what is going on throughout the college, what problems there are... in building partnerships, what partnerships are being developed so we don't duplicate those kinds of things, then we won't be able to solve things effectively on a local basis.

Administrator C also points out that within the college system, the provincial perspective must be maintained by college members. It is up to the administrators as leaders, to continuously indicate this perspective to staff:

Within the college, as well, you've got seven districts, but we, as leaders, have to indicate to staff on a continuous basis that when they are dealing with things, for instance, in policy that, you know, "how do we implement this

policy? This policy doesn't work." We can't always solve policy. Probably not very often solve policy on a local basis, if we're going to build a college that serves students consistently then always we have to stay connected with the provincial scene. Ever more so now, we need to build those connections to the 'bigger picture' and from the 'bigger picture'.

Administrator D feels that it is very important for the college to form connections between it and the community. He states that for too long, the college has operated as a closed system; it is long overdue for the college to work more closely with the community to ensure that it is meeting the community needs.

Administrator D points out that the new college decided to organize itself along the same lines as the provincial economic zones in order to work more closely with the regional zoning boards. He is hopeful that the college will now form closer links with the zonal boards and work in cooperation with them:

They're the people who are trying to stimulate economic development in the area. We're the people providing training in the area, one can't operate without the other. If you have economic development, you have the people that are trained with the skills, knowledge that's required in order to be able to stimulate that initiative and let it grow. I really, really think that's really important that we be linked into the community. I think that all the campuses now are more and more closely involved with different organizations in the community

He does state that the college is becoming more involved in the community and provides a number of examples to support this statement.

To conclude, administrator D states that the college wants to be recognized as a resource that supports economic development in the community as well as a training institute:

Making the community, I guess, realize that we're not just a training institute. We're people who can come and do programs, that's our major thing, that's a really important component of what we do, but we're also here as a resource to help support the economic development of the area in whatever way we can do that and I think they're seeing us more and more for that now.

### **Question 2: The Importance of the "Big Picture" to College Members**

Question 2 sought the administrators' opinions on the importance the big picture view to the college membership:

E2. Do you believe that most people in the college system also see this concept as (un)important?

Administrators A and C agreed that most members would consider a holistic view of the college system to be important. Administrators B felt that in the past, members did not have the opportunity to develop such a view. Administrator D stated that members were so caught up in their own areas of work that they need others to keep them informed.

Administrator A states that part of the resistance to change is that people do not having a larger view of the problem. As a result, they do not understand the decisions that are made. She believes that part of the reason why members do not have the big picture is "we haven't broadened the bases of sharing the vision".

Administrator C felt that people "want to know what's going on in the larger sense"; they want to know the big picture. She refers to the fact that in the past, problems were solved on "a very short-term basis" because people were not aware of what was happening in the boarder sense.

Administrator B states that in the past, the five separate colleges did not have a provincial or big picture response. He does believe the opportunity is there in the new structure:

The opportunity for that is there, definitely, now with the new structure to have that kind of approach because there's some debate about programming in terms of the connectivity to employment... The other criterium is demand, if the public, students and the like, are asking for a particular program we should continue to offer because if you look now you'll find across the island that all the trades programs are heavily subscribed to. A lot of them have a lot of applications, but there almost none left in the college system right now and the reason, there was a decision taken earlier that there was no labour market for the people coming out of these programs, so the programs were reduced, but there's still an awful lot of demand for that. So, there's sort of a philosophical question I guess - should the college say... be telling people what they should or shouldn't do.

He points out that a number of the private schools are meeting the public's demand by offering the trades programs.

Administrator D is of the opinion that most people are so caught up in their own area that they do not see the big picture; this is why it is so important to have people to keep them informed of the big picture and to make the connections for them:

I have to say no, I don't think most people do take a look to see the big picture, that they mostly work within their areas and that's why it's so important that there's someone keeping this together.

### **Question 3: The Source of Leadership for Systems Thinking in the College System**

Question 3 sought administrators' perceptions of the source of leadership for developing an integrated, holistic view of the college system:

E3. **Who** do you feel should be promoting the development of an integrated, holistic view of the college system? Should anyone take a **lead** role?

Administrator A was of the opinion that the "Leaders" of the organization should promote the big picture view, Administrator B felt that this was a role of the stakeholders and the service providers, Administrator C believed that this role belonged mainly to the President, whereas Administrator D felt that the campus administrators should promote this view. Administrators B, C, and D believed that the President, or President and the board should take the lead role in the development of a holistic view of the college.

Administrator A felt that the big picture must be facilitated by the leadership of the organization. She points out that there needs to be obvious links between the holistic view and the vision of the college system.

Administrator B believes that the sponsoring stakeholders and the service providers are mainly responsible for promoting a holistic view. He states that the President, in particular, must have a very clear understanding of government's expectations. At present, he feels these expectations are not being communicated to college members; "that seems to be missing in most respects". He does note that the President and the board have to take a lead role in the promotion of a big picture view in the college system.

Administrator C believes that the President has started the process by informing members of the big picture, of what is happening, through the college newsletter. She



feels he has shown by his actions that he will keep members informed. Also, he has planted the seeds of this approach which she believes will hopefully, grow throughout the system.

Administrator D is of the opinion that the campus administrators must ensure that members keep the provincial perspective in mind by making them aware of the goals and objectives of the college. To do this, they must refer to the strategic plan which outlines "a picture of the college and also where the college plans to be".

Administrator D felt that the lead role should be taken by the President and the board, but was of the opinion that the "whole picture" will be developed by teams. Part of the responsibility of the teams is to keep members, who do not have direct input, informed:

I really feel that there's going to be a team approach in developing that whole picture of what we're going to look like in the end and then it's going to be important to us to pass it along to those who don't have the opportunity to have input into that at this level, but that they're aware of what's happening. I shouldn't say don't have an opportunity for input because if I'm going away to, as I will be in a couple of weeks time, for a meeting with the other Directors and District Administrators and Assistant District Administrators. I have the opportunity to meet with the faculty and staff here and have their input before I go, so when I go I should be representing them and their perspectives...it is also important for me to come back and say, OK, this is the 'big picture' and this the overall vision, this is the strategic plan and this is what's going to happen - this is the 'framework' and so that they can see where they fit into this.

#### **Question 4: Utilization of Systems Thinking in the College System**

Question 4 sought the administrators' opinions on whether an integrated,

holistic view was being fostered in the college system:

- E4. Does the college system **currently foster** an integrated, holistic view of the college system?

All the administrators agreed that the college is attempting to promote a holistic view of the college system.

Administrators A states that the college is trying to promote holistic views, but she is uncertain as to whether those views are shared:

Until... the information that's currently held somewhere along the way is communicated to everybody in the organization then it will be very, very difficult to create a shared vision and 'big picture' concept. When we all know what we're working towards, then it becomes quite a difference.

Administrator B states that the college is starting to develop holistic views of the college system. In the past, the five separate colleges were in competition with each other, as a result, the opportunity was not there to develop such a perspective.

Administrator C hopes that the information sharing that has been started by the President, will continue and filter throughout the system from the provincial to the campus level. She also hopes, "from a leadership point of view, that the big picture, holistic point of view will be encouraged".

Administrator D believes that the college is attempting to foster an integrated view of the college system, as indicated by the new structure. This structure takes care of the provincial needs. As well, it provides enough autonomy to the districts for local area needs to be addressed:

You're looking at bringing the whole provincial system together under one

structure, I think they're going to have centres of specialization. They're going to be rationalizing some other programs and then I think, they're going to be giving some autonomy to the districts to determine from there, where they go. So, I think by doing that, by setting up the province to make sure that the needs of the province are addressed through centres of specialization, to make sure programs such as what's going to be needed now in Placentia for the smelter, that those types of programs are offered, that that will give you a provincial framework and a certain provincial core of programs which will be there, but within that, then, I think you have at the district level, the opportunity to also influence the programs that's going to be for your district, working in cooperation with the zonal board.

#### **Question 5: Strategies for the Implementation of an Integrated View**

Question 5 sought administrators' opinions on strategies that are currently being used, or that should be used, to foster the development of an integrated, holistic view of the college system. The question was composed of an open-ended query followed by a number of examples of strategies:

- E5. **What** sorts of things are being done or should be done to foster an integrated view of the college system?

I have several examples here which I am going to ask for your input and opinion on each, example:

- (1) Are college members kept up-to-date on developments locally, regionally, and provincially? Should they be?
- (2) Do college members work with colleagues across program areas and departments locally, regionally, and provincially? Should they?
- (3) Is the community kept informed about developments in the college? Should it?
- (4) Is the community supportive of the campus/college? Should it?
- (5) Is the community an influential decision-maker in the college? Should

it?

- (6) Does the college make use of the community resources in their programming? Should it?
- (7) Do college goals change to meet the changing needs of students and the community? Should it?
- (8) Does the decision-making process in the board provide for input from the colleges? Should it?

In response to the open-ended query, a number of strategies were identified including: newsletters, teams, providing more information, setting up an academic council, and the new provincial structure.

Administrator A was of the opinion that the decision-makers should never ignore the question "why" and believes decision-makers should have "an honest, open, committed answer". If they cannot answer "why" then they should reconsider the problem.

Administrator B believes that the new college structure, with its district and distributed teams and its administrative setup, is being developed to foster an integrated view of the college system.

Administrator C identifies several strategies that are being used to promote a holistic view of the college: The President's Newsletter which was discussed earlier; an interim Academic Council is being setup which will bring the policies from the five colleges together to form the operations policy for the next year (there is a commitment to setup a permanent Academic Council); and various types of advisory

and working teams are being set up.

Administrator D refers to the new structure, as discussed in question E4. He believes it will ensure that the provincial needs are being addressed.

**Question 5: Systems Thinking Example 1**

- (1) Are college members kept up-to-date on developments locally, regionally, and provincially? Should they be?

In response to example one, Administrators B, C, and D agreed that college members are kept up-to-date, whereas Administrator A felt that the college is now attempting to inform members.

Administrator B stated that members are kept reasonably up-to-date through, for example, the President's Newsletter.

Administrator C feels initiatives are being taken to ensure members stay current and are connected using, for example, E-mail and other computer resources.

Administrator D points out that the college is attempting to keep members "in touch". However, it is not sufficient:

That came out in our organizational survey which we did ourselves, an Organizational Climate Survey. The one thing that everyone continuously said is that they don't get enough communication and I think you'll see that almost anywhere. So, I think even though we've attempted to improve it through departmental meetings, regular staff and faculty meetings, that we're still falling down somewhat and probably we need to have, every couple of weeks, some type of correspondence going out to all our faculty and staff as an update or something. I know I'm looking at that here now as to how, how can I improve communications better, what can I do and probably that's one thing through our E-Mail just give an update to everybody, or whatever, you know.

Administrator A notes that recently, more efforts have been made to keep members up-to-date. Traditionally, the colleges have used newsletters which require a lot of effort. She believes that an E-mail list for the entire college would be much easier.

Administrator A points out that networking is a key issue in this example:

If I had to work in isolation, I don't benefit from the expertise and experience that someone else currently has. I mean, why should I be attempting to reinvent the wheel if I have a strong network and I have the opportunity to do that? Also, networking allows me to retool my vision of the organization and allows me also to get a clearer view of that big picture.

#### **Question 5: Systems Thinking Example 2**

- (2) Do college members work with colleagues across program areas and departments locally, regionally, and provincially? Should they?

Administrators A, B, and D agreed that colleagues are working together, to a certain extent. Administrator C was of the opinion that this was developed in the past and is continuing to be developed in the new system.

Administrator A felt that members are "networking" both inside and outside the college, to a limited extent. She states that working, for example, with industry is very valuable for retraining people. However, members must be encouraged to network:

Retraining people within the area of process operations - we can't do that in isolation. We don't have the expertise. We have to go back to the industry and say, "What do we currently need? What are current demands? What's currently happening in this industry?"

Administrator D states that teams of representatives do work together on certain initiatives. However, for many departments, groups, or areas there is not enough opportunity for meetings - there is no real inter-disciplinary approach. He also feels that such gatherings are not sufficiently planned.

Administrator C asserts that colleagues worked together in the old system and will continue to do so in the new system: Sub-committees on programs, student services, etc. will continue, but with more faculty input. She states that the team approach is also encouraging members to work together.

**Question 5: Systems Thinking Example 3**

- (3) Is the community kept informed about developments in the college? Should it?

Administrators B, C, and D agreed that in the past, the community was not kept informed. However, the new college seems to be taking action to improve the situation. Administrator A felt the community was informed, to a certain extent.

Administrator B felt that in the past, the community was not kept informed even though it should have been. In the new system, there is an executive team, Marketing and International, with responsibility in this area:

I guess this is... a new role, I guess, in Marketing and International. The public awareness and knowledge of the college system from a marketing point of view was never something that's been done with any college very well. So there is a director now, with that specific responsibilities.

Administrator C asserts that the college has a lot of work to do in this area. In

the past, they have done a very poor job of selling themselves. She believes the new Marketing and International position will improve the college's image, build morale, and celebrate achievements:

I don't think we've sold ourselves well in terms of the great things that we have done, will be doing, are doing, in terms of the college system's services and programs and I think, it has been one of our greatest weaknesses in the past. I have great hope that, with the provision of leadership on the senior level for Marketing and International, that will go a long ways towards improving our image in the community. Not only from the aspect which is solely the aspect I hear from some sectors, of competing with the private sector which is becoming a larger one, but also from the aspect of just being proud of the way we do things. Building morale within our ranks by selling ourselves with the community and, as you stated before, celebrating our achievements.

Administrator D believes that in the past, the college has done a terrible job in public relations. He feels that the college is weak in the area of communications, both inside and outside the college, and states that this point has been raised at several recent meetings:

Everybody realizes that we've done such a terrible job at this and that we really... basically, we need someone looking at this in itself, marketing the college... helping us as individual campuses market ourselves, get communications out there.

Administrator D points out that the private colleges are much better at marketing than the public colleges:

Just look at the marketing... the difference in the marketing between the two... And even in promotional materials... not even your ads are getting out there and that sort of thing. Even in-house things, like flyers promoting our programs. If we're asked to go to a career day and if we setup next to a private, it's almost embarrassing with regard to what we really have to promote ourselves. I certainly hope some additional resources are put in that area.



Administrator A was of the opinion that the community is informed, to a certain extent. She felt that the college's ability to inform the community is partially determined by the public's interest:

There is some effort to keep the community informed, the college community both internal and external, be it students or the community we serve. Our ability to do that is limited, not necessarily limited, but is affected by the level of interest that exists in post-secondary education and in our role in post-secondary education. I think that we have to realize that we are not the only game in town when it comes to post-secondary education.

#### **Question 5: Systems Thinking Example 4**

(4) Is the community supportive of the campus/college? Should it?

All administrators agreed that the community is supportive of the college system.

Administrator B states that his particular campus is supported. Provincially, he states, "there is a fair amount of community support for the respective campuses in their various locations".

Administrator C asserts that both public and private sectors "are seeing the advantages of partnerships". She states that partnerships are a driving force, more so than ever, in building community relations. They enable resource sharing and greater benefits to the customers. She believes that the advantages of working together are being learned by all:

There's oodles of creative ideas that can come in terms of those types of partnerships and also forming partnership, of course, in terms of their advisement to our programs in specific areas so that, we know that the

programs we are offering are relative to the current labour market. I think we're all learning that putting all of our heads together, creating a shared vision, not only on a college level, but on a community level, is ever more important.

Administrator D believes that the community is supportive of the college, but feels that community support would grow if the college did a better job of promoting itself: "I think we would get much more support if we just made people more aware of what's happening".

#### **Question 5: Systems Thinking Example 5**

- (5) Is the community an influential decision-maker in the college? Should it be?

Administrator A was of the opinion that the community is an influential decision-maker. Administrator C felt that the community was occasionally an influential decision-maker. Administrators B and D believed that the community did not influence decision-making in the college system.

Administrator A states, "there are opportunities for the community to influence - yes, absolutely - as there is [with] any politically driven organization". She points out that formally, the community does influence the decision-making process of the college through the Board of Governors as well as, through various steering committees, focus groups, and advisory groups.

Administrator C is of the opinion that in the past, the community has sporadically been an influential decision-maker. She also believes that the college's

philosophy toward advisory committees is changing:

I think our philosophy of advisory committees is changing, has to change as well, because often times, I saw it in the past, that when we set up advisory committees for particular programs, we took their voices to be, the be all and end all, instead of a blended viewpoint in terms of blending the educational expertise that we have, with the voice of the labour market and the relevancy of our programs in that respect. But I think, we're learning to develop more effective partnerships in that respect and I think we have a lot to do and we have to expand on what we've been doing well in that area.

Administrator B does not believe that the community is an influential decision-maker and feels that the community should be one of the stakeholders.

Administrator D does not believe the community is an influential decision-maker. He points out that the community only gets involved in serious problems such as the threat of campus closures, not in the overall operations. He feels that the reasons for this may be a reflection on the college itself and notes that setting up a community advisory committee would probably be a good idea:

Again, it could be a reflection on us. Do we give them an opportunity to get involved? But I think... I know in our region, we find it difficult even attracting people sometimes for meetings... general meetings, that sort of thing. We have setup particular committees and we've personally invited people and we've had good results there. So it seems almost as if, you almost have to send a personal invitation for people to get involved, but if [you] just have a general open house or general meeting with regards to programs or anything like that, you don't get that many people involved.

#### **Question 5: Systems Thinking Example 6**

- (6) Does the college make use of the community resources in their programming? Should it?

Administrators A, B, and D agreed that the college does make use of community resources, to a certain extent. Administrator C was of the opinion that the college did not utilize these resources enough.

Administrator A felt that community resources are used, to an extent. She posed a number of questions which she felt needed to be answered prior to utilizing community resources: "Who are we hoping to benefit by using community resources? Why [do] we need to use it? Why should we bother with it?" If the college cannot answer these questions, she states, "We got to stop and rethink the decision - this gets back to this issue of shared vision again, seeing the big picture".

Administrator A points out that in the past, the use of community resources helped develop community relations. A point she raises in discussing the utilization of community resources during the initial development of the college system:

A lot more communities got to know about us at that time... when we changed from provincial/trade/vocational school system to a community college system and that change... the communication of that change to the public, while it still has not fully occurred, certainly was enhanced by our utilization of community resources because we managed to contact and interact with a lot of the individuals that had benefited directly or vicariously from the services we provide.

Administrator B felt the usage level of community resources is reasonable with some room for growth:

We use a lot of people in our evening programs, for example, to teach. We recruit people on a part-time basis to teach in full-time programs. We use community members on advisory committees, that kind of thing.

Administrator D believes that the college uses the community resources that it

is aware of. However, he feels the college does not have a proper inventory of the resources that exist in the community, especially the resources of private companies. He states that the campus has had discussions on developing such an inventory for the local area.

Administrator C was of the opinion that community resources are not utilized enough. She provides examples of partnerships that have recently been formed in her area and discusses the subject of initial meetings - sharing resources. She notes that discussions on sharing human resources raised the issue of barriers, which she discussed earlier. She believes that the college must ask some tough questions and not be afraid of conflict:

If we're not afraid to ask the questions, afraid of the conflict that comes because in the past, we've been afraid of conflict... conflict is healthy and creating shared vision, creating cooperative teamwork doesn't mean we create group think. Otherwise we've gone the other way and we've created a very stale environment, but instead we foster, within understood parameters, the aspect of healthy debate and divergent viewpoints and we bring together with an agreement for decision-making. In effect, if we put that forward, if we're not afraid to involve staff, if we're not afraid, like I said, of facing the conflicts that ultimately going to come in a healthy environment, then I think we've gone a long ways to getting more people involved in the process of decision-making and have better decisions in the end that help bind from all parties involved.

#### **Question 5: Systems Thinking Example 7**

- (7) Do college goals change to meet the changing needs of students and the community? Should it?

Administrator A stated that the goals may not change, but the strategies should.

Administrators B and C agreed that in the past, the goals had not changed, but felt that they should have. Administrator D felt that the college goals should change.

Administrator A was of the opinion that the broad-based goals may not change, but the strategies used to achieve them must change:

If that's [strategies are] not changing then we're stuck in traditional mode we've always been in. Individuals do not see change. If you don't see change, you don't feel change, you don't become motivated.

Administrator B does not believe that the college goals change, even though he feels they should. He states that the new structure does provide the regions with the autonomy to respond, in certain respects. However, the funding would have to be external and the program approval process is not yet in place:

One of the things now in our alliance with the economic zones means our capacity to be able to introduce programming, say for example, which may be specific to the zone, but not necessarily contributing in any direct or intended direct way to the provincial scene... We worked on a sort of a fixed budget arrangement, so if we got involved in that we would have to look at funding external to our setup in order to be able to do that and that may mean you could respond or not respond. You may not be able to respond at all. We really have not sorted out the program approval process for that either. Is that approved in the district? does it have to be approved at the provincial level? These kinds of things. There's... I think the autonomy is there to do it, some of the structure may not be as flexible as it needs to be.

Administrator C does not believe that college goals have changed in the past. She feels the college has not responded effectively to the labour market nor to the students. She raised concerns that she had not focused on the students, throughout the interview. She believes that the student voice must be heard if their needs are to be satisfied, even though the college is afraid of what it might hear:

I've concentrated on faculty, staff, administrators in the team work, but having been for many years now, providing leadership at student services and in liaison with student councils and student associations, realizing more than ever that we have to involve student voice, whether it has been direct representation, all the teams that we have throughout the college, or whether it's continuously soliciting their voice in various ways through satisfaction surveys or through asking them up-front what they want, is a very important aspect of the new college way, as well. Again, it probably will double the fear that we've felt with soliciting staff voice... we're afraid of what we're going to hear, but if we put those fears aside and ask, then we're going to be a continuously revitalized organization because we're changing [with] the changes of students. We're dealing with a different student population, different demographic than we have in the past, in many, many ways and a more assertive voice they've got because we have largely been passive individuals in terms of our own schooling and socialization, but we're learning and we're learning more and more from those who are coming now through a revised school system in a lot of ways; where they have taken... a new voice, had an opportunity to express themselves, and are very affirmative at voicing their discontent at times.

Administrator D believes that the goals of the college should change to meet the changing needs of the learner. He feels that the mission and goal statements should be re-examined at least every three years, in order to determine their relevancy.

#### **Question 5: Systems Thinking Example 8**

- (8) Does the decision-making process at the board level provide for input from the colleges? Should it?

All administrators agreed that the college does have some input into the decision-making process at the board level.

Administrator A simply states that the President sits on the Board of Governors: "He's an ex-officio member who reports to the Board of Governors on a periodic basis and seeks direction from them based on the duties of the board and the

powers of the board that exists under the Colleges Act”.

Administrator C points out the board has a faculty and student representative as well as the President of the college.

Administrator D believes that the team approach enables the college to have input at the board level. He states that a path is there for input. For example, faculty can have input through the Committee of Studies, who would bring their recommendations to the senior management team, who would bring it to the President, who would then take it to the board.

Administrator D notes that the Committee of Studies will probably be replaced by an Academic Council provincially:

When looking at the provincial system, I see the Academic Council replacing what was the Committee of Studies... So, hopefully there will still be opportunities and there will still be representation on that Academic Council from all the districts and the onus would be on that representative of the district, to make sure that others within the district have an opportunity to have input to that person, before he sits on the Academic Council.

#### **Question 6: The Practitioners of Systems Thinking in the College System**

Question 6 was intended to obtain the administrators' opinions on which members they felt should internalize a holistic view of the college system:

E6. Who should develop an integrated view of the college system?

It should be noted that a number of the administrators interpreted the question as "Who should implement this concept" as opposed to "who should personally develop and practice systems thinking".



All Administrators agreed that everyone in the college should develop this view, but the leaders of the organization should start the process.

Administrator A states that everyone has an impact on the big picture, but the leaders of the organization must facilitate this view and create linkages for college members. She believes that once people develop this view, they will have an improved sense of belonging, importance, and understanding. However, she questions how the college could get more participation in the decision-making process:

The aspect of it that gets a little bit more complicated is, how do we invite that same person who was just given the big picture... or now sees the big picture, to become part of the decision-making process?... What happens the minute the decision is made that effects the task that they do and they have no involvement in it? Yet, they understand vision, they understand the big picture and now you're going to change me for no reason. The question of asking, "why" - Who should respond to the why? Who should have impact on it? If you're going to affect me, I should be involved in that decision.

Administrator B was of the opinion that all stakeholder should internalize the holistic view of the college system and that the senior executive, in conjunction with the stakeholders, should facilitate its development.

Administrator C felt that everyone should develop an integrated view of the college system, but mainly the President along with his leadership team should facilitate its development.

Administrator D stated that everyone must internalize the big picture:

I guess we all have to internalize it and in the development of the 'big picture' there should be input again from everybody and opportunity for that process, a bottom/up process, where everybody has an opportunity to bring forward their input to somebody else who represents them and so on and so forth.

He believes that good communications is crucial for letting members know what is happening in the system. He points out that everyone is guilty, to a certain extent, of not making others aware of what is happening and suggests a communications policy be put in place to ensure information is shared. He believes that when people do not receive feedback, "they assume nothing happened" which can cause a lot of negativity and unnecessary concern among members.

**Question 7: Appropriateness of Fostering an Integrated View of the College System during a Restructuring Process**

Question 7 solicited the administrators' beliefs on the timeliness of fostering a holistic view of the college during the restructuring process:

- E7. Given the current **restructuring**, do you feel the **time is right** for fostering or continuing to foster an integrated, holistic view of the college system?

The Administrators unanimously agreed that the time is right for fostering a big picture view of the college system. Administrator B felt the timing is ideal.

Administrator C felt that the restructuring could provide a fresh start for building the new system:

It is a time now when we can start afresh and build a system that certainly builds in the aspect of sharing, involvement, and helping people to see and know of the 'big picture' and to incorporate that in the various [aspects] of teamwork that they're involved.

Administrator D was of the opinion that the college must develop a holistic

view of the college if it is to secure the support of its members for the cuts to programs, faculty, and staff:

If you expect people... within the districts in particular campuses to be supportive of what's happening... Let's say for example, at this campus we had to lose a program, then we have to know "why", what is the picture? How does this fit into the big picture? And so that we have to know that, in order to be able to accept it and to support it. So we have to have the big picture.

There's... happening right now with the program rationalization. We, at a district, we're having an opportunity to have the input into that and we have taken upon ourselves to visit those departments that's involved and let them have an opportunity to have input into it... at least they've had an opportunity to have input. Hopefully they had an opportunity to make a difference to what decision is being made and hopefully they'll be able to accept it better now, but they have to see what's happening out there, they have to see the big picture in order to see.

### **Question 8: Additional Comments on Systems Thinking**

Question 8 sought additional comments from administrators:

E8. Are there any additional comments you would like to add on Element E?

The only additional comments were made by Administrator C. She points out that people need to learn and to be taught techniques for ongoing learning, sharing, and involvement in a learning organization:

When we're talking about the aspect of ongoing learning of refreshment, of revitalization, that it's important to realize that everyone has not been by virtue of being involved in an organization that maybe didn't foster these types of elements, or be it that they haven't been educated in the formal sense or an informal sense, about the aspect of sharing, of involvement, that maybe there is some work that we need to teach and learn the various techniques of doing so.

She believes that there is much work to be done in the area of educating

members. Opportunities for improvement need to be nurtured, signs of regression must be dealt with by the leadership team, and accountability measures must be put in place:

We need both to realize that these things just don't happen, they need to be nurtured. That opportunities for education are necessary and that both in respect to our provision of leadership in this and for checking in to see whether we're being effective in that and whether the teams that are set in place are being effective... we need accountability measures. I think that's an aspect that we need to pay a lot of attention to in the future. Effective indicators of effectiveness.

See table 7 for a summary of responses.

#### **Systems Thinking: Conclusions**

The data collected in response to questions E1 to E8 show that administrators believe that the element of Systems Thinking is feasible for the college system. The administrators believe the philosophy of holistic thinking is important to most college members. They state that everyone in the organization should develop systems thinking and felt that the time is right for fostering the development of this element.

Reasons given for the significance of systems thinking include the following: improved understanding of decisions and events, including unintended outcomes; increased sense of ownership; enablement of the other elements; encouragement of divergent thinking; development of long-term solutions; development of more open, honest, and humane leadership; empowerment of others; development of a community of learning and commitment; indication of the big picture to the

Table 7  
Summary of Administrators' Responses to Questions on Element E - Systems Thinking

Question #:	Administrator			
	A	B	C	D
E1:Importance-Administrator? (1):Internal (2):External	Very important - - -	Very important Critical	Very important Very important	Very important Very important
E2: Importance-Members?	Yes,Important. Reduces resistance to change	Past,no had regional system.Future is opportunity there	Yes,Important. Want to know what's happening	Caught up in own area.Want to know what's happening
E3:Source of Leadership?	Leaders of the organization	Stakeholders. Lead is president & board	President on. Lead is president	Campus Admin. Lead is president & board
E4:Holistic view fostered?	Trying to promote it	Starting to do this	Hopes it will continue	Attempting to do this
E5:Strategies?	Never ignore 'why' questions	New structure with teams	Newsletter,teams academic council	New structure
E5(1):Up-to- date?	More efforts recently	Yes,reasonably well	Yes,initiatives are being taken	Yes,attempting to do this
E5(2):Work with others?	to a limited extent	Somewhat	Past,yes. Is growing	Yes, to an extent
E5(3):Communit y informed?	To a certain extent	Past,no. Future, looks promising	Past,no. Future, looks promising	Past,no. Future, is hopeful
E5(4):Supportive community?	Yes	Yes,Campuses are supported	Yes, advantages of partnerships	Yes,but need more promotion
E5(5):Communit y influential?	Yes,formally	No	Past, sporadic	No
E5(6):Communit y resources ?	Yes, to the extent required.	Yes,reasonably so.	Not enough	Yes,use what it knows about
E5(7):Goals change?	Broad goals-no. Strategies-yes	Doesn't think so. They should	Not in past.Work with students	They should
E5(8):Colleges have input?	Yes,president	Yes,somewhat. Not enough	Yes,president & representative	Yes,teams & president
E6:Who?	Everyone	All stakeholders	Everyone	Everyone
E7:Is the time right?	Yes	Yes,ideal	Yes,definitely	Yes,we have to

compartmentalized teams and others (a major role of the administrators); enablement of the college to meet the needs and expectations of the community; increased value of the college to the community; development of partnerships inside and outside the college; reduction of duplication; maintenance of the provincial perspective; increased involvement of the college with other community organizations; and increased recognition of the college as a community resource.

Issues of concern included the need for good communications, education, and accountability measures.

The administrators stated that the philosophy of holistic thinking must be supported by the leaders and stakeholders of the organization. In general, they felt the college system must do more to develop systems thinking through improved communications both internal and external to the college, the establishment of working teams composed of colleagues from different areas and from different regions of the province, the use of community resources, and the adjustment of goals to respond to the needs of students and the community.

### Concluding Questions

The interview was summarized with several concluding questions on the concept of a learning organization. The Administrators were asked to review the five elements of the learning organization, in order to answer each of the questions to follow.

Four of the sub-sections below present a complete analysis of the data per question on the concluding questions. These sub-sections describe the administrators' beliefs, perceptions, and opinions on the concept of a learning organization. Table 8 summarizes the responses from the administrators. The fifth sub-section briefly summarizes the results and draws conclusions on the feasibility of the concept of the learning organization for the college system.

### **Question 1: Feasibility of the Learning Organization for the College System**

Question 1 sought the administrators' personal beliefs on the feasibility of the concept of the learning organization in the college system:

1. Do you believe the five elements of a learning organization are **appropriate** or **feasible** for the college system? Which concepts should be included or omitted? Which concepts should be emphasized more or less? Ranking?

Administrators A, C, and D agreed that the five elements of the learning organization are appropriate and feasible for the college system. Administrator B felt that these elements were somewhat feasible for the college setting.

Administrator A asserts that the five elements are necessary if the college is going to set itself up as a learning organization. She feels very strongly about challenging the assumptions of college members (Element B):

I think there has to be a significant transformation in our views of ourselves, the ability to expand and mould the belief that currently exists has to be taken consciously by everybody within the organization.

She believes that once the college challenges these assumptions, it can develop a shared vision (Element C). She feels that potential problems in the development of a learning organization can occur if the membership's expertise (Element A) is not used to solve problems and to deal with challenges from a cooperative team effort (Element D). She cites TQM as an example of a concept that failed in the college system due to a lack of involvement on the part of members:

The potential risk of developing vision and challenging assumptions may be borne out in the concept of cooperative team work. In that, while we have relied on, been supported by, and encouraged all those within the organization to participate in the challenge of the assumptions... the developing of a shared vision. Unless we utilize that same body of resources, that expertise in problem solving and in dealing with these challenges from a cooperative team effort, then we will lose what we already started and unfortunately, from the efforts that have occurred to date in some areas that has already occurred. We've heard the concept TQM, that's a farce, you know. This is a nice concept to throw money at and it's stylistic, but it hasn't been implemented to its fullest. Hearing that is a signal of failure. People haven't bought it, they're not part of it, they [are] not for it.

Administrator A states that she likes the five elements of a learning organization because they are basic concepts, "they can occur without having to have a label":

Let's [keep] our feet on the ground when we talk about this stuff. The issue of shared vision, a big picture, cooperative team work - we all know that, but it's just a matter of putting the five facets of the diamond in front of us and saying "look, here we go, this is what we need to do", but every time we go to do something we have to look at them and say "OK, how does it impact on others?" and "What are we doing to support team work? What are we doing to support the vision? Is it part of what we're committed to doing?" These are the sorts of things that have to occur. You know, you got five facets of [a] learning organization there.



Administrator C believes that the five elements of a learning organization are "definitely" appropriate for the college system:

I think they all tie together to provide for an overall philosophy that, if carried out to the greatest extent possible, can help build an organization that is healthy and happy and progressive.

Administrator C considered shared vision (Element C), as the more encompassing element. She felt that the remaining elements were needed in order to develop a shared vision:

I think that if one must be the overall more encompassing element it probably would be the shared vision because I don't think you can build a shared vision without bringing the other elements into play. You can't build a shared vision without enabling people to do cooperative teamwork, you can't build a shared vision unless you help people see the big picture. You can't build a shared vision unless people are challenged in terms of assumptions, views about the world, and you can't build a shared vision unless you make a commitment that you're going to help people develop on a personal and professional level, so I think that one is more encompassing than the other elements.

Administrator D was of the opinion that the five elements of the learning organization are appropriate and feasible for the college system. He states that if the college is to become a learning organization, everyone in the system must give it their support and commitment, starting with the board, the President, and the administration; Faculty and staff must sense that the support is there.

Administrator D cautions that the college must ensure that the students are an equal partner in the process as well as the centre of the system. The college must be careful that it is not just a learning organization for all college members, except students. Some accountability mechanism is needed to ensure the college is what it

says it is - a learning organization. He points out that the restructuring is supposed to occur with the leadership and administration of the college, but he believes it has to go further than that - it has to go to the classroom:

I think we have to be careful. We're saying a learning organization, and again going back to the students, it's possible for us to say we have all of these things, to put these in an administrative structure to make sure there is an opportunity for a shared vision, that there's teamwork, that we make sure people see the 'big picture' and that we have a commitment to lifelong learning, but we have in the meantime, to make sure that it's not just by words that we have a learning organization - keep the student in mind.

Do we have a learning culture for the student? Do we really have a learning college because we have all these things, but then in our classrooms - we can still have a classroom that's very structured on a time basis, where students aren't part of that learning culture, where they are being told things and aren't being involved. So students... in order for this to be actually implemented, we have to make sure that students, too, are involved in teamwork, that they have an opportunity to be part of that learning culture, that they are looked on as a partner within the system, and that they're not just... somebody there to absorb knowledge that's given to them -, but they're part of that and they're an active learner and they're the centre of the system. So, I think that we have to be careful that, yes, we can put [all] of these things in place through Total Quality Management or whatever and say, OK, we got it made, we got a learning organization or learning college or whatever you want to call it, but, do we really? We have to look at our students, who should be the centre of all this, and realize why we're doing it because we can do it, and the faculty can feel good about it, and the staff can feel good about it, "Oh, I got input into all these things", and the administration feels good because they've done that, but the student could be out there in a classroom and still being dictated to or whatever.

Administrator D then ranks the elements of a learning organization as follows:

If I were to rank them, that's a difficult one, I guess we all have to start with our vision, that's really important, and then that everybody see the big picture. Then again, I guess teamwork would be next because I think that's really important that people feel involved and get ownership and then, our commitment to lifelong learning and then I think, as a result of all this, our

assumptions will naturally be challenged and we will see the significance of that and of lifelong learning.

Administrator B believes that the five elements are somewhat appropriate for the college system and reiterates the differences between public versus private organizations:

I think that the point that I made earlier, about public and private organizations needs to get considered here. That perhaps, that the conditions and circumstances and criterium, to be a learning organization which is also a public organization, may be somewhat different than these [five elements] or may include other things.

He emphasized challenging our assumptions (Element B) and seeing the big picture (Element E), as being important to the public college system, however, he was uncertain about the impact shared vision (Element C) would have on a public organization:

The shared vision thing, I'm not sure that has as much impact, or would have as much impact, in a public organization. It may, in some relatively small organizations that have a fair degree of control over what it does. To me, there is a relationship between autonomy and effectiveness. To me, how the organization functions, how well it does, is related to that and particularly [so] in public organizations.

### **Question 2: Feasibility of a Learning Organization for a Leadership Model in the College System**

Question 2 sought the administrators' personal beliefs on the feasibility of the concept of the learning organization as a framework for leadership in the college system:

2. Do you believe the five elements of a learning organization can provide

**a feasible model for leadership** in the college system? Which concepts should be included or omitted? Which concept should be emphasized more or less? Ranking?

Administrators A, C, and D agreed that the five elements of the learning organization are a feasible model for leadership, whereas Administrator B felt that the elements were "not entirely" feasible as a model for leadership because certain enabling elements were missing.

Administrator A was of the opinion that the learning organization is definitely a feasible model for leadership. She believes that there is nothing new in this concept; "what has occurred here is restatement of a lot of the obvious". However, she does consider the aspect of cooperative team work to be the significant difference between this model and traditional management models. The team approach involves more individuals in decision-making, reduces the risk for any single individual, increases the number of members impacted on by the decisions, and increases the awareness of members:

We have traditionally been trained as administrators to make decisions based on available information within the sphere of influence for which we are aware and to accept a certain amount of risk. What we've done here is to say that decision will be made, but we will reduce this risk by involving more individuals than currently are involved in the decision. And by doing that we will broaden the sphere of influence of the decision and presumably broaden our consciousness of the impact that that decision will have on the organization. All that is, is cooperative teamwork and that is the significant difference that is occurring here between the training that traditional managers received in decision making with limited information and an acceptance of risk.

Administrator A discusses what she considers to be, important issues of the

model which include: risk tolerance, autonomy, accountability, the time factor, and responsibility:

Risk tolerance is a big issue. Where is the risk tolerance in this? What have we done with risk tolerance? One of the other issues that come [out] of this... two issues that haven't been addressed here are autonomy and accountability. Who has the autonomy to do certain things if we're going to have such shared visions, such broad based team work? Okey. Are we ever going to get anything done? If we have autonomy, who has the accountability? If we share... everybody shares in a vision and everybody is involved in the decision then everybody sees the big picture, then who has responsibility - for our successes?

She does feel the model is needed and workable. She refers to it as "a heightened consciousness of what we already have, in a lot of cases". She explains this statement as follows:

We know lifelong learning and continuous improvement is good for us. That's our business. I mean, what do we do for the past five years only retrain from one industry to another... Challenging our assumptions? Sure, we're challenging our assumptions. We've seen people succeed tremendously in competency-based individualized instruction when we would have slowed down their creative progress and probably their benefit from a given program by having traditional means of teaching/learning. Shared vision? Sure we've started to talk about this a bit more. People know now what the college is about. These things are starting to occur, so it is a heightened consciousness of these elements that currently exists.

She concludes by stating that all five elements are needed for a workable model: "I don't think you can take any one part out and hope to do justice to the others. There is an interrelationship there".

Administrator C believes that the model is feasible for leadership in the college system at this time, even if some elements such as the "student voice" are omitted:

I think even if there are other elements out there that are missed at the present time, that if all of us made a commitment to utilizing and implementing these elements within our aspect of leadership and in terms of building a learning organization, then I think that we'd be well away, in terms of providing the type of leadership that is needed for this time and in the future.

With respect to ranking the elements, she felt that shared vision (Element C) was more comprehensive with the other elements built in as "sub-elements of the shared vision".

Administrator D felt that the five elements of the learning organization are all "do-able" as long as the commitment and willingness is there on the part of administration. He states that the most important individuals for implementing this model are the campus administrators:

It has to be the administration at the campus level really. That's going to be the important person, of whether or not this is going to happen because it could be somebody that's reluctant to share their authority or whatever, and they want to be a person making the decisions and don't want others to participate. So, I think that's really important and I think that's the most important person in whether or not this can happen, but it is do-able and I think it can work.

With respect to ranking, including or omitting elements, Administrator D stated,

Again, the only thing I would add, was our commitment to students and having them involved in the process...I don't think the ranking would change [from the ranking given for question 1]. I don't [think] that would change at all, but I certainly think it would make a good leadership model.

Administrator B is of the opinion that the five element model of a learning organization is incomplete. It does not include all the elements needed for a feasible leadership model in the college system. He states that the model does not emphasize the "stakeholder element" - building good relations with stakeholders by the President

or the board:

I believe one of the things that is not here, as much as it should be, is stakeholders and that's bringing in a more direct... like building the relationship with the stakeholders so that they value what it is the organization does. That would include employers, community in general, it would definitely include students, it would include faculty, but you have that larger... it would definitely include your sponsoring stakeholders, like government, for example. To me that would be the key for anyone like the President or the board, is to clearly build that relationship with them and have some mechanism so that, continuously you would get feedback on how well these stakeholders are satisfied with what the college does.

Two other elements identified by Administrator B as being needed to make the model feasible are the "autonomy element" and the "feedback element", both of which were discussed throughout the interview.

With respect to omitting or ranking the five elements of the learning organization, he felt that the elements should be given different weights and that some elements, such as the continuous improvement aspect of Element A, are impossible to achieve at the present time:

I'd put different weights on them. Some of them... learning and continuous improvement is like I said earlier, you have to be able to benchmark that stuff and the only way you can do that is you need to have information about where you are now and I don't see these elements providing that.

If you took just these five without the other considerations, you wouldn't be able to activate [element] 'A' very well, for example. You have to select what [it] is you want to learn. I mean there's an awful lot of stuff to learn about, so... is that self selecting or does it come from some sort of a process you know. My feeling is that it comes from some sort of a process and it's more than... it has to be experiential, too. It's more than just a knowledge thing, so if it's referenced to something which is a dedicated, conscientious, strategic attempt by the organization to learn about itself and how well it's doing with respect to its mandate and its effectiveness. Then if that gets internalized, then

I think the organization grows and it learns and it also improves. To me there's a couple of enabling things that are not there.

Administrator B then ranks the elements as follows:

Definitely, [element] 'B' would be one to me. [element] 'E' would be two, [element] 'A' would be three, [element] 'D' would be four and [element] 'C' would be five.

He ranks shared vision (Element C) last because he does not believe that shared vision can happen without the other elements being in place first. He also feels that the vision needs to be dynamic:

The vision... very often what happens here is you get into a static kind of thing that is not environmentally responsive and that needs to be a dynamic thing. Like to me Element C needs to be fairly dynamic.

I know like in the college here, they started with a vision "The College is built on excellence and quality". What a bunch of crap! What does it mean? It didn't mean anything. It didn't mean anything at all so, you're better off not saying these kinds of things at all.

### Question 3: Organizational Learning in the Restructured College System

Question 3 sought the administrators' personal beliefs on the likelihood that organizational learning would be inspired in the new college system:

3. Do you think the newly **restructured** college system will **stimulate organizational learning**? Explain.

Administrators A and B were non-committal, whereas Administrators C and D were of the opinion that the new college system would promote organizational learning.

Administrator A felt that this was a conclusion the researcher would have to



draw from her results.

Administrator B stated that he did not know and would not commit to a judgement at this time because of "the way it's being organized now". He does believe that the potential is there, however.

Administrator C is hopeful that the new college will stimulate organizational learning, that it has "started off on the right foot". However, she does feel that the "time element" has not been there to involve college members to the extent required:

It's expressing the right type of commitments to involvement, sharing, and communication. I think it augurs well for a refreshing organization for all of us. There are many hard decisions that have been already made, that are being made, in terms of fiscal restraint, and whatever. In some respects, I guess there hasn't been the time element available in the short term to involve staff to the extent that I think the college has committed to in the long term to make some of these hard decisions, but as much as possible, I think there's been some attempt at that and in the future, given time and given some opportunities for more development of staff, more involvement of staff, all those elements will be brought in.

Administrator D believes that the new college will stimulate organizational learning through the college leadership:

I think we have people that are genuinely committed to it. I think we have people that want to get others involved, they don't want to be the ones making the sole decisions. I think that it certainly is an organization that will promote organizational learning. I really do.

#### **Question 4: Additional Comments**

Question 4 sought additional comments from administrators:

4. Is there anything else that you would like to comment on?

Administrator B presented a model that he has developed which is based on stakeholder satisfaction. He believes the model is important for helping an organization become a learning organization because it integrates the learning back into the organization and then the organization can improve and learn.

Administrator C commented that she hopes the opportunity would be there, on a much broader basis, to discuss these issues for the professional development of the college leaders:

I think maybe the sharing of even these elements with leadership for their own professional development would be useful. On a personal level, I would attempt to do that, but maybe there will be an opportunity in a larger sense to concentrate on what a learning organization means and how to carry it out.

Administrator D stated that the interview was very stimulating and felt that it would be useful to spend time reflecting on some of the elements. He felt that he should have elaborated on the importance of students and of a learning culture. He stated that in a learning organization the emphasis is empowering people, but he believes that it is very important to re-organize at the classroom level:

In a learning organization, we look at giving people more control and having them have more input into what's happening to them and into the organization - but I think it's really, really important at the classroom level that, we organize things differently there, too. That we get away from our stringent structures that we had, the whole traditional approach, as we should be facilitators, but that's just not saying it. Like you can say, we're going to have that, but actually having students learning how to learn and that we put the processes in place that do that because lots of times we could say we're doing this, too, you see. We say we have self-directed learning and that the learners are at the centre and the learners are learning how to learn, but are we really doing that? And have we got the resources and support in place that's necessary to do that? These are questions that I think we have to keep asking ourselves all the time

and as I said, we could put all this in place and still not have that.

The discussion then turned to the instructional modes of lecturing versus facilitative problem-solving. Again, he re-iterates that the organizational structure must change at the classroom level in order to support the more time consuming, facilitative mode of instruction:

This is why the organization has to be organized around that and structured around that so that you don't feel like you're behind, but that it's there... it supports what you're doing because I think that that's what has to happen if we're going to meet the needs that's out there now in society. We just have to change the way we do things and we can change it at the management level and the way that we operate and how leadership is and everything else, but until we really change it at the classroom level, it doesn't make any difference.

See Table 8 for a summary of responses.

### **Conclusions from Concluding Questions**

The data collected in response to questions 1, 2, and 3 show that three of the four administrators (A, C, and D) believe that the concept of the learning organization is feasible for the college system. Administrator B felt that the model is not entirely feasible because (a) the college does not have an autonomy element - it is not autonomous therefore, it does not have the control needed to create a shared vision of the future; and (b) several enabling elements are missing, such as a stakeholder element - the college should build good relations with stakeholders, and a feedback element - the college needs to benchmark in order to improve. All administrators ranked mental models, shared vision, and systems thinking as the most important or

**Table 8**  
**Summary of Administrators' Responses to Concluding Questions on the Learning Organization**

Question #:	Administrator			
Label	A	B	C	D
Q1:Feasible for college system?	Yes	Somewhat. Uncertain about shared vision for a public organization	Yes	Yes
Q2:Feasible leadership model?	Yes	No,not complete. Certain elements are missing	Yes	Yes
Q3:Stimulate organizational learning?	- - -	Don't know.The potential is there	Yes	Yes

the most encompassing elements needed to implement the concept of a learning organization.

Reasons given for the significance of the learning organization in the college system included: it broadens the sphere of influence by involving more people, it heightens consciousness, and it reduces the risk to any one individual.

Issues of concern raised by administrators included: Everyone must support, and commit to, the development of a learning organization; students must be equal partners; accountability is needed to ensure that the college is what it says it is - a learning culture and a learning college (i.e., check the gap between reality and vision); the restructuring must go all the way to the classroom if it is to succeed; the criteria to be a learning organization may be different in a public organization as opposed to a private organization - private organizations have more autonomy and control, public organizations are very unstable due to political constraints; the time factor; responsibility; some elements such as the student voice may not be included in the model; administrators must be willing to share power; add the element of commitment to students; shared vision needs to be dynamic - environmentally responsive; the time element is not there now to involve members in the way that the college has committed to involving them; and professional development is needed for administrators on the concept of the learning organization.

### **Document Analysis: College Framework and Operational Model**

A valuable outcome of the interviews was the identification of several sources of information which included a number of references to unpublished, public and private documents. Half way through the study, the researcher was made aware of a newly created document (dated February 20, 1997) outlining the mandate, organizational framework, and operational mode for the new college system (Appendix F). This document states that the President and the Board of the College were mandated by the Minister of Education "to establish a College exemplifying cost efficiency with minimal organizational structure and with no duplication of leadership and administrative effort". In order to fulfil this mandate, the document states that a renewal of the college leadership is needed. In response to this need, "a shared leadership approach through a team process" and "systems thinking" was proposed:

The college, therefore, proposes the principles of a teamwork approach with open communications and shared responsibility and accountability as a model of operation.

The operational model proposed for the new College also endorses the concept of systems thinking - an ability to see the interdependence by which local decisions and actions effect others outside the local sphere.

The shift in the College leadership approach; i.e., concern for the system as a whole through participatory teamwork will require a new level of collaboration. The reality of an adjustment period and time delays must be expected (Senge, et. al., 1994 as cited in Provincial College of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1997, p.2,3)

**CHAPTER FIVE**  
**SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS**  
**FOR RESEARCH AND PRACTICE**

**Summary of Purpose and Procedures**

The purpose of this study was to determine the feasibility of the concept of the learning organization within the community college system. Specifically, this study sought to answer the question: Is the concept of a learning organization a viable framework for leadership within the college system?

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with four senior community college administrators in order to obtain their views on the feasibility of the concept of a learning organization for the college system. In particular, the researcher examined the importance of each of the five disciplines of the learning organization for the college system: Personal Mastery, Mental Models, Building Shared Vision, Team Learning, and Systems Thinking (Senge, 1990). There has been little application of this theory to college settings. The province's regional college system is presently undergoing restructuring and presents an opportunity for such research. It is hoped that the study will inform stakeholders as the regional college system reorganizes into one provincial college system.

The data collection instruments consisted of several field research forms and a tape-recorded interview with individual administrators. The primary research tools used in the study were the Interview Protocols. The instruments served to inform the

administrators about the research procedure and to assist the researcher in data collection and review.

All interviews were conducted on the island portion of Newfoundland and Labrador during a one month period from March 13, 1997 to April 2, 1997. On average, each interview took approximately one and one half hours to complete. Upon completion of all the interviews, the tapes were transcribed verbatim. Once all tapes were transcribed and checked, an in-depth analysis was conducted.

The study was limited to a sample of four administrators; it was not meant to be comprehensive, and was entirely qualitative in nature. All efforts were made to reduce any bias which may have influenced the collection of data and the interpretation of results.

### **Conclusions Concerning Research Questions**

The purpose of the study was to determine the feasibility of the concept of a learning organization within the college system. This objective was investigated through an analysis of the feasibility of the individual disciplines that together define a learning organization. A synthesis of the results was then used to determine the feasibility of the concept of a learning organization within the college system, and in particular to determine the feasibility of the concept of the learning organization as a framework for leadership in the college system. The following are conclusions reached on the feasibility of each of the five disciplines of the learning organization



and the purpose of the study.

### **Personal Mastery**

This analysis found that the administrators believe the element of Personal Mastery is feasible for the college system. They attest that the aspects of lifelong learning and continuous improvement are fundamental to the mission of the college as an educational institution.

Several issues of concern raised by the administrators with respect to personal mastery included the need for professional development of service providers such as administrators, faculty, and staff in the college system; the need for a demonstrated commitment by everyone in the organization in order to implement and practice personal mastery; and the need for strategies to acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of college members.

Several administrators also raised the issue of the college restructurings. They felt the frequent restructuring of the college system has produced a number of problems. Some of these problems include low morale, cynicism, and obscure college goals and values which have made it difficult for members to align themselves with the college's goals and values.

### **Mental Models**

This analysis found that there was no consensus between the administrators

regarding the feasibility of the element of Mental Models for the college system even though the challenging of assumptions was seen as significant by the administrators: It is fundamental to the preparation of students for the world of work and it is fundamental to the preparation of workers for dealing with the impact of change. Consensus was not reached due to reservations about inflexible attitudes, in particular the attitude of "this is not our responsibility" directed towards challenging the beliefs and values of members. As well, there were reservations about the lack of balance between the individual's roles and responsibilities versus the college's roles and responsibilities in challenging members' assumptions.

Other issues of concern raised by the administrators included: the need to change outdated policies and procedures which no longer work in the new system; the need for professional development of all members, especially in the areas of inquiry and divergent thinking; the need to encourage members to be innovative and to take small risks while sharing the responsibility for the consequences; and the need for the leaders of the college to explain decisions, especially decisions that affect the direction of the college and its members.

### **Building Shared Vision**

This analysis found that the administrators believe there are very significant, external constraints being placed on the public college system that, in many instances, interfere with the development, implementation, and maintenance of a shared vision in

the college system. The frequent restructuring of the college system was identified as the major factor inhibiting the building of a shared vision.

The public college system is a political entity. It lacks autonomy and control due to the external political constraints of government as well as economic constraints. The administrators state that it takes time and commitment to create a shared vision and a sense of ownership. However, they claim that the frequent restructuring of the college system interferences with the development of a shared vision and the creation of a sense of ownership. The restructurings create skepticism, especially when past efforts of vision-building are erased, as well as cynicism, resulting from the current climate of layoffs and program cuts. The impact of the restructurings and downsizing has also had a negative impact on the role of the administrators as "optimistic leaders". The administrators believe that they must be cautious in communicating a positive outlook since they often have no control over future events.

Other issues of concern raised by the administrators with respect to building a shared vision included the establishment of strategies and teams to involve members in goal-setting and the development of a vision that fosters commitment by members.

Some reasons given for the significance of building shared vision included the development of ownership, control, and enthusiasm through involvement; the development of commitment; and the alignment of members to common outcomes or goals.

### **Team Learning**

This analysis found that the administrators believe the element of Team Learning is feasible for the college system. They affirm that the aspect of collaborative team work is currently being implemented in the provincial college system.

Several reasons given for the significance of team learning included the utilization of a wide variety of talents and resources in problem-solving, increased participation, and increased collaboration.

Several issues of concern raised by the administrators with respect to team learning included: the perception that teams are not good decision-makers (who makes the final decision?), the increased time factor required to solve problems using teams, the unwillingness of some administrators to share power, the need for a demonstrated commitment on the part of the leaders towards team learning, the need for professional development in the area of cooperative learning and teamwork, the provision of resources to support team efforts, and the need for strategies to show appreciation and support for team member contributions.

### **Systems Thinking**

This analysis found that the administrators believe the element of Systems Thinking is feasible for the college system. They affirm that the aspect of holistic thinking is currently being developed in the provincial college system.

Several reasons given for the significance of systems thinking included the following: development of improved understanding of decisions and events, including unintended outcomes; enablement of the other disciplines of the learning organization; development of a community of learning and commitment; enablement of the college to meet the needs and expectations of the community; development of partnerships, inside and outside the college; maintenance of the provincial perspective; and increased recognition of the college as a community resource.

Several issues of concern raised by the administrators with respect to systems thinking included the need for: a good communications system, both internal and external to the college; professional development; the establishment of working teams composed of colleagues from different areas and from different regions of the province; improved use of community resources; and the adjustment of college goals to respond to the needs of students and the community.

#### **Feasibility of the Concept of the Learning Organization**

This analysis found that the majority of the administrators believe the concept of the learning organization is feasible within the community college system. Specifically, the concept of the learning organization can provide a viable framework for leadership in the community college system. However, examination of the data indicated that the lack of autonomy due to political constraints, and downsizing due to financial constraints have produced numerous reorganizations and restructuring of the

college system. The result of the restructurings has been organizational instability which has inhibited vision-building in the learning organization. The lack of stability has led to constrictive time limits; loss of organizational history and memory, especially due to layoffs; discouragement of risk-taking and innovation; and wasted efforts by members on the development of shared visions. All of these problems have led to frustration, low morale, cynicism, skepticism, pessimism, and obscure college goals which have resulted in the obstruction of learning.

Data analysis indicated that inflexible attitudes and loss of balance between the roles and responsibilities of the individual versus the college have inhibited learning and the development of a learning organization. In this instance, inflexible attitudes and lack of balance have impeded the challenging of the assumptions and beliefs of college members.

Analysis of data indicated that accountability and feedback mechanisms must be put in place for the following reasons: to benchmark and monitor personal and organizational learning in order to determine if the college is achieving its goals, to determine if members/leaders are fulfilling their roles and responsibilities in the learning organization, to determine the gap between current reality and the college vision - what we are versus what we say we are, and to manage the resulting gap or creative tension accordingly.

Data analysis also resulted in the identification of a number of themes. Each theme is briefly summarized below: Support and commitment are necessary for the

development of a learning organization; All the disciplines of the learning organization must be supported by the leaders and others in the organization, as well as, through the provision of support and resources in various forms; Professional development was identified as an important and enabling factor in all elements except shared vision; and appreciation of achievements by individuals and teams needs to be indicated through acknowledgments and celebrations. As well, the reciprocal nature of the relationship between shared vision and team learning was highlighted: teams should be used to build shared vision, and vision produces alignment of members to common outcomes.

Several reasons given for the significance of the learning organization in the college system included: It broadens the sphere of influence through involvement, it heightens consciousness, and it reduces risk.

Issues raised by the administrators included: students must be equal partners, there must be a commitment to students, the student voice must be included in the model, the classroom must be restructured, administrators must be willing to share power, shared vision needs to be dynamic - environmentally responsive, and professional development needs to be made available to administrators on the concept of the learning organization.

Overall, the study has provided an insight into the feasibility of the concept of the learning organization within the community college system. It is apparent that the concept of a learning organization is being recognized as having potential for the

college system. This study was indeed timely, and its findings can serve to make the college aware of challenges that need to be faced if they are to move towards becoming a learning organization.

### **Suggested Areas for Further Research**

Additional research is needed due to the very limited scope of this study. It would be enlightening to repeat the study on a much larger scale using additional methods of data collection such as shadowing and surveying. Suggested survey instruments include the LPI (Kouzes & Posner, 1989) and PLS (Leithwood, 1995).

A longitudinal research project would be useful to determine the long term effects of shared leadership, team learning, and holistic thinking on organizational learning and the college culture since the process of developing a shared leadership approach through team learning and systems thinking is ongoing in the college system.

A study on the leaders' understandings of leadership theories would be insightful since "the ability of administrators to make the shift [in leadership approach] is quite dependent upon their understanding of emerging leadership theories" (Sheppard and Brown, 1997, p.22).

Several other research possibilities that have surfaced as a result of questions raised by one or more administrators in the study include:

The study of observed outcomes of the college restructuring that, by all accounts, are "unintended outcomes". For example, efficiency cutbacks by public



colleges have allowed private colleges to flourish resulting in increased privatization of the college system. Was privatization government's intention? At present, it is not a stated intention. Is it an unstated intention or an unintended outcome? Such consequences have produced much frustration in college members who on the one hand, are dedicated people, committed to training and community development, but on the other hand, distrust government intentions.

The study of the impact of the restructuring on classroom practice in the college setting. Organizational learning involves all members. However, many educational restructurings have failed because they have not enabled change at the grass roots level of the organization - the classroom. Some studies have already been conducted on the impact of team learning on classroom practice at elementary and secondary schools (Sheppard & Brown, 1997). It would be interesting to study the impact of the restructuring by measuring the effects of team learning and systems thinking on classroom practice in the college system.

The study of reluctance and fear on the part of college members towards open discussions with students on the subject of meeting student needs. This issue was raised in discussions on changing the college goals in order to meet the changing student needs. Members in the college system, in particular administration and faculty, are often afraid of what they will hear if they open the doors of communication to the more assertive, often mature, students that are currently attending the public colleges.

### **Implications**

The findings suggested in this study have implications for professional development (leadership training) of all leaders, in particular administrators, who are entrusted with the restructuring of the college system through the effective implementation of shared leadership and systems thinking using teamwork. Administrators who are not equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to foster a climate of learning and inquiry, shared decision-making, shared vision building, and integrated views are not equipped with the leadership skills needed for the successful implementation of the new college system.

Through professional development and guided experiences in a "safe environment", administrators can learn the knowledge, develop the skills, and adopt new theories of leadership required for the successful development of a learning organization. Only then will they be prepared to foster effective, organizational learning.

The study established that administrators are concerned about the need for accountability and feedback mechanisms, firstly, in order to determine if roles and responsibilities are being met, and secondly, to monitor personal and organizational learning. Benchmarking will allow individuals and the organization to determine their current position on the continuum of learning. Feedback on learning processes can be used to monitor personal and organizational learning. Such feedback allows members/leaders to determine the gap between current reality and the vision - what we

are versus what we say we are - and to manage the resulting gap or creative tension accordingly.

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**APPENDIX A****Letter of Disclosure and Consent**

**DISCLOSURE AND CONSENT FORM**

Ms. Rosalind Osborne  
5 Lewisporte Pl.,  
St. John's, NF  
A1E 5T3  
Phone: (709)745-5407  
FAX: (709)-778-0693

Dear Administrator:

I am a graduate student presently pursuing a Masters degree in Education at Memorial University of Newfoundland. I am requesting your participation in a research study that will be conducted in the community college system. This study will be conducted under the guidance of my thesis supervisors, Dr. Jean Brown and Dr. Bruce Sheppard (Faculty of Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland).

The conceptual framework for this study is influenced by recent work on learning within organizations. The study seeks to examine the feasibility of the concept of the Learning Organization within the community college system. Specifically, this study seeks to explore the question, "Can this concept provide a viable framework for leadership within the college system?"

In order to obtain the data necessary for this study, I need your assistance. I realize this is another request in your already hectic schedule, but your input is critical.

The research procedure will involve a one-on-one, audiotaped interview which will take approximately 1-2 hours to complete. Arrangements will be made for a telephone follow-up as necessary. To ensure confidentiality, tape-recorded interviews will be stored in secure files and destroyed upon completion of the research. Data gathered through the interview will be CONFIDENTIAL and at no time will you, the college, the campus, or any individual be identified. I am interested in administrator's opinions of learning organizations, not in evaluating or judging you as an individual.

Your participation is completely voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time or to refrain from answering questions which you would prefer to omit, without incurring prejudice in any form.

This study has received the approval of the Faculty of Education Ethics Review Committee, Memorial University of Newfoundland.

For further information concerning this study, please do not hesitate to call me at (709)745-5407. Or if you wish to speak with someone not directly involved in the study please contact Dr. Patricia Canning, Associate Dean, Research and Development, Memorial University of Newfoundland, at (709)737-8587. The results of this research will be available to you upon request.

If you agree to participate in this study, please sign the consent form below, retain one copy for your files and return one copy to me.

Sincerely,

Rosalind Osborne

#### STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING AND CONSENT

I \_\_\_\_\_, hereby signify my willingness to participate in the research study on the feasibility of the concept of the Learning Organization within the community college system to be conducted by Rosalind Osborne. I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary, and that I can withdraw from the study or any part of the study at any time without prejudice. I understand the study has been approved by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland. I understand that confidentiality of all information relative to participants, campuses and the College is assured.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

**APPENDIX B****Administrator Personal Data Sheet**

Administrator Personal Data SheetData on Administrator:    A    B    C    D

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Education: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

# Students: \_\_\_\_\_ # Faculty: \_\_\_\_\_ # Staff: \_\_\_\_\_

# Administrators: \_\_\_\_\_ # Campuses: \_\_\_\_\_ # Programs: \_\_\_\_\_

Years in Current Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Years in College system: \_\_\_\_\_

Prior Experience (Location of campus/college(s), positions,  
years, size, # programs, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

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**APPENDIX C**  
**Administrator Information Sheet**

### Administrator Interview Information

As outlined in the Disclosure and Consent Form, this study seeks to determine the feasibility of the concept of the Learning Organization within the community college system. Specifically, this study seeks to explore the question, "Is the concept of a learning organization a viable framework for leadership within the college system?"

The purpose of this interview is to explore how feasible you, as an experienced college administrator, believe the concept of a learning organization is within the college setting.

As one of four college administrators involved in this study, your beliefs and opinions on the feasibility of this concept will assist the researcher in achieving her research objective.

The interview structure is composed of five selected topics. You will be provided with a lead-in statement for each topic, followed by a series of eight main questions to which you are invited to respond. To conclude the interview you will be asked several concluding questions. To assist you in focusing on the interview questions, you will be provided with a list of the lead-in statements for the topics.

Please feel free to add comments which would serve to clarify or explain any point explored in this interview. If you are clear on the purpose and procedures for this interview, we will proceed with questions on selected topics.

**APPENDIX D****Selected Topics, Lead-in Statements**



Selected Topics, Lead-in Statements**Element A**

A commitment to lifelong learning and continuous improvement for everyone in the organization.

.....

**Element B**

Challenging our assumptions or views about the world. For example, we should examine - and re-examine - the way we do things at work.

.....

**Element C**

A shared vision: An image or a road map - developed as a group - that guides members in their pursuits of a realistic and attractive future for the organization.

.....

**Element D**

Cooperative team work; people getting together on a regular basis to learn from each other and to solve problems together.

.....

**Element E**

Seeing the "big picture": We often solve problems by breaking problems down into smaller, solvable problems. As a result, we often fail to see the connections between problems and we fail to see how actions taken to solve one problem may affect or even cause another problem.

.....

**APPENDIX E**  
**Interview Protocols**

## INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

The concept of a learning organization is build upon five elements as outlined in the Selected Topics Lead-in Statements sheet which has been provided to you.

I will briefly introduce each of these elements to you and ask for your opinions and input on various aspects of each.

### **ELEMENT A**

One concept emphasized in the learning organization is a commitment to lifelong learning and continuous improvement for everyone in the organization.

If we apply this concept to the community college setting,

- A1. How important do you believe the pursuit of lifelong learning and continuous improvement is to people in the college system? Why is it (un)important?
- A2. Do you believe that most people in the college system also see this concept as (un)important?
- A3. Who should be promoting lifelong learning and continuous improvement in the college system? Should anyone take a lead role?
- A4. Does the college system currently foster the development of lifelong learning and continuous improvement?
- A5. What sorts of things are being done or should be done to foster the development of lifelong learning and continuous improvement in college members?

I have several example here which I am going to ask for your opinion and input on, example:

- (1) Is the college providing for professional development to college members? To whom? Is it enough?
- (2) Do college goals foster self-improvement in college members? Should they?
- (3) Does the college celebrate or acknowledge the achievements of college members? Should they?

- (4) Does the college encourage people to seek out challenging opportunities that test their skills and abilities? Should they?
- A6. Who in the college should be actively engaged in lifelong learning and continuous improvement?
- A7. Given the current restructuring of the college system, do you feel the time is right for fostering or continuing to foster continuous improvement and lifelong learning?
- A8. Are there any additional comments you would like to add on element A?
- 

#### ELEMENT B

A second concept emphasized in the learning organization is challenging our assumptions or views about the world. For example, we should examine - and re-examine - the way we do things at work.

If we apply this concept to the community college system,

- B1. How important do you believe challenging people to rethink their views of work is to the college system? Why is it (un)important?
- B2. Do you believe that most people in the college system also see this concept as (un)important?
- B3. Who do you feel should be encouraging college members to re-examine their views of work? Should anyone take a lead role?
- B4. Does the college system currently challenge people to re-examine their assumptions about work?
- B5. What sorts of things are being done or should be done to encourage people to re-examine their views or assumptions about work?

I have several example here which I am going to ask for your opinion and input on, example:

- (1) Does the college encourage people to seek out innovative ways to improve what they do in the organization? Should they? Is it enough?
- (2) Is risk-taking encouraged WITHOUT having to worry about negative

consequences if things do not work out? Examples? Should it be?

- (3) Does the college set aside time for reflection by organizational members?
- (4) Does the college emphasize 'why' it is moving in a particular direction and not just 'how' it will change? Examples? Should it?
- B6. Who in the college system should be re-evaluating their assumptions about work?
- B7. Given the current **restructuring** of the college system, do you feel the **time is right** for fostering or continuing to foster a re-evaluation of our assumptions about work?
- B8. Are there any additional comments you would like to add on element B?
- 

### ELEMENT C

A third concept emphasized in the learning organization is shared vision: An image or a road map - developed as a group - that guides members in their pursuit of a realistic and attractive future for the organization.

If we apply this concept to the community college system,

- C1. How **important** do you believe the development of a shared vision is to the college system? Why is it (un)important?
- C2. Do you believe that most people in the college system also see this concept as (un)important?
- C3. **Who** do you feel should be promoting the development of a shared vision in the college system? Should anyone take a **lead** role?
- C4. Does the **college have a vision** that is understood by most members now? What is it?
- C5. **What** sorts of things are being done or should be done to create a shared vision for college members?

I have several example here which I am going to ask for your opinion and

input on, example:

- (1) Does the college have a systematic strategy for goal setting that involves college members? Should it?
  - (2) Do college members participate in goal setting? Should they?
  - (3) Does the college vision foster faculty and staff commitment to professional learning? Should it?
  - (4) Do college leaders show others how their long-term interests can be realized by enlisting in and helping to create a common vision? Should they?
  - (5) Do college leaders clearly communicate a positive and hopeful outlook for the future of the organization? Should they?
- C6. Who in the college should be participating in the creation of a shared vision?  
A
- C7. Given the current **restructuring**, do you feel the **time is right** for developing or continuing to develop a shared vision?
- C8. Are there any additional comments you would like to add on element C?
- 

#### ELEMENT D

A fourth concept emphasized in the learning organization is cooperative team work: People getting together on a regular basis to learn from each other and to solve problems together.

If we apply this concept to the community college system,

- D1. How **important** do you believe a team approach is to learning and problem-solving in the college? Why is it (un)important?
- D2. Do you believe that most people in the college system also see this concept as (un)important?
- D3. **Who** do you feel should be encouraging people to work together as teams in the college system? Should anyone take a **lead** role?

- D4. Does the college system **currently utilize** a team approach to problem-solving and professional development?
- D5. **What** sorts of things are being done or should be done to develop a team approach to learning and problem-solving?

I have several example here which I am going to ask for your opinion and input on, example:

- (1) Does the college set aside time for discussion and dialogue among its members? Should it?
  - (2) Are college members encouraged to share their expertise with colleagues? Should they?
  - (3) Does the college provide resources to support these efforts? Should it?
  - (4) Does the college gives team members lots of appreciation and support for their contributions? Should it?
  - (5) Do college leaders develop cooperative relationships with the people they work with? Should they?
- D6. **Who** should participate in team learning and problem-solving in the college?
- D7. Given the current **restructuring** of the college system, do you feel the **time is right** for fostering or continuing to foster team learning and problem-solving?
- D8. Are there any additional comments you would like to add on element D?
- 

#### ELEMENT E

A fifth concept emphasized in the learning organization is seeing the "big picture". We often solve problems by breaking them down into smaller, solvable problems. As a result, we often fail to see the connections between problems and we fail to see how actions taken to solve one problem may affect or even cause another problem.

If we apply this concept to the community college setting,

- E1(1) How important is it for college members to see the connections between their work and the work of others throughout the college system? Why is it (un)important?

- E1(2) **How important** is it for the college to see the connections between them i.e., the college and the community they serve? **Why** is it important?
- E2. Do you believe that most people in the college system also see this concept as (un)important?
- E3. **Who** do you feel should be promoting the development of an integrated, holistic view of the college system? Should anyone take a **lead** role?
- E4. Does the college **currently foster** an integrated, holistic view of the college system?
- E5. **What** sorts of things are being done or should be done to foster an integrated view of the college system?

I have several example here which I am going to ask for your opinion and input on, example:

- (1) Are college members kept up-to-date on developments locally, regionally, and provincially? Should they be?
  - (2) Do college members work with colleagues across program areas and departments locally, regionally, and provincially? Should they?
  - (3) Is the community kept informed about developments in the college? Should it?
  - (4) Is the community supportive of the campus/college? How? Should it?
  - (5) Is the community an influential decision-maker in the college? Should it be?
  - (6) does the college make use of the community resources in their programming? Should it?
  - (7) Do college goals change to meet the changing needs of students and the community? How? Should it?
  - (8) Does the decision-making process at the board level provide for input from the colleges? Should it?
- E6. **Who** should develop an integrated view of the college system



E7. Given the current **restructuring**, do you feel the **time is right** for fostering or continuing to foster an integrated, holistic view of the college system?

E8. Are there any additional comments you would like to add on element E?

.....  
 .....

#### CONCLUDING QUESTIONS:

I want to summarize now by asking you several concluding questions on the learning organization. After having considered the five elements of a learning organization, Question:

1. Do you believe the five elements of a learning organization are **appropriate** or **feasible** for the college system? Which concepts should be included or omitted? Which concept should be emphasized more or less? Ranking?
2. Do you believe the five elements of a learning organization can provide a **feasible model for leadership** in the college system? Which concepts should be included or omitted? Which concept should be emphasized more or less? Ranking?
3. Do you think the newly **restructured** college system will **stimulate organizational learning**? Explain.
4. Is there anything else that you would like to comment on?

\*\*\*THANK-YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND COOPERATION\*\*\*

**APPENDIX F****Organizational Framework and Operational Model**

**PROVINCIAL COLLEGE OF NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR**

**ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK**

**and**

**OPERATIONAL MODEL**

**1997 02 20**

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## 1. COLLEGE'S STRATEGIC DIRECTION

### Mission/Goals/Values

Although the Board has not articulated in narrow terms a set of strategic statements, the Minister of Education, the Honourable Roger Grimes, has outlined the mandate of the College in his letter, dated August 6, 1996, to the President, Dr. Sparkes. Minister Grimes directed the Board and the CEO to merge the "five regional Colleges to provide a single, efficient yet provincially sensitive and effective Provincial College" in the following context:

- (1) A minimal organizational structure.
- (2) Program rationalization, utilizing economy of scale approaches and showcasing technological capability.
- (3) Concern for developmental opportunities (locally, nationally, and internationally)
- (4) Development of distance education leading toward the achievement of "virtual" college offerings.
- (5) Labour force development responding to local, regional and provincial need.
- (6) Development of sharing and cooperative efforts with other publicly funded education systems including the university and the secondary school system.
- (7) Open communication with all constituents.
- (8) Full accountability "as an agency of the Department of Education" for the efficient use of public resources "to ensure a competent and educated work force able to compete with and participate in the national and global labour market".

For comparative purposes the strategic statements of the previous five regional colleges are attached (Appendix A). The general directions are not different from those articulated by Minister Grimes but the concern for efficiency and avoidance of duplication of effort are noticeable references in the new mandate.

## 2. BASIC ASSUMPTIONS - A RENEWED COLLEGE LEADERSHIP

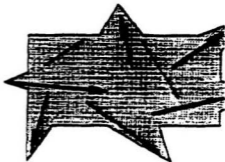
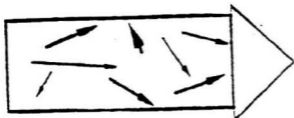
In his book, *Challenge and Opportunity, Canada's Community Colleges at the Crossroads* (1995), Dennison emphasizes that the two main challenges that Colleges must address are: (1) finding new styles of leadership and (2) changing an operating style which is no longer effective (P 275). The theme expressed by Dennison was reiterated in a presentation made to the ACCC conference in May 1996 by Geof Gale from the Directorate Office in West Australia as he posed the key question for community colleges — "How do we convert conservative and overly bureaucratic training institutions into lean, mean and very competitive enterprises?" The obvious answer to that question is "with great difficulty."

The Minister of Education, the Honourable Roger Grimes, has mandated the Board and the President to establish a College exemplifying cost efficiency with minimal organizational structure and with no duplication of leadership and administrative effort.

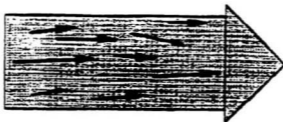
The task mandated is a daunting one. The question "how to?" is all pervasive. The reality of fewer resources and a diminished management pool with a focus on efficiency and excellence represents the stage for leading the drama of non-university, publicly funded post-secondary education into the new century.

Authors Kotter (1996), Senge (1990) and Youngblood (1994) reference the belief that the successful institutions/organizations in the future will move away from the hierarchical, multi-layered model of management and replace it with a shared leadership approach through a team process. These writers contend that teamwork provides for participation by all constituents in an environment where all employees can assist in devising the most efficient process to meet goals and objectives.

The College, therefore, proposes the principles of a teamwork approach with open communications and shared responsibility and accountability as a model of operation. Senge (1990) suggests that a true team demonstrates alignment of goals and directions. If individual members of a team are not in unison but are pulling in different directions, the picture might look like this one — an illustration of wasted energy (P. 234).



When there is commonality of purpose and an understanding of how each member complements each other's effort, the picture will change as illustrated below.



The critical dimension of all teams is the belief that tapping the potential of many minds will render a greater intelligence than that of any single member of the team. (Senge 1990, P. 236). Outstanding teams in organizations develop operational TRUST so that each team member can be counted on to act in ways that complement each others actions.

The discipline of team building like any discipline requires practice which implies a commitment to learning and applying a new set of skills, tools, and techniques. Contrary to the popular myth, great teams are not characterized by an absence of conflict. (Senge, 1990, P. 24). Instead, it has been argued that one of the most reliable indicators of an effective team is the visible conflict of ideas. Where there is an appearance of no conflict, team members generally feel they must suppress conflicting views. In fact, the distinguishing characteristic of a GOOD team is the evidence of conflict BUT the team deals with the conflict and through dialogue and discussion, consensus is achieved eventually.

The operational model proposed for the new College also endorses the concept of systems thinking — an ability to see the interdependence by which local decisions and actions affect others outside the local sphere. In other words what's right or seemingly logical for each part of the organization might be inappropriate or illogical for the whole (Senge, 1990, P. 290).

Davis McCamus, former chairman and CEO of Xerox Canada calls this concept "peripheral vision": the ability to pay attention to the world as if through a wide angle, not a telephoto lens. (Senge, et.al., 1994. P. 88)

The shift in the College leadership approach: i.e., concern for the system as a whole through participatory teamwork will require a new level of collaboration. The reality of an adjustment period and time delays must be expected (Senge, et.al., 1994. P. 88).

"Walking the talk" is a slow process that requires commitment to action and change in behaviour. The anticipated payback or return on this type of investment will be positive and will justify the time expended.

### 3. BASIC FRAMEWORK

The President's Senior Executive Team as approved by the Board (Appendix B-1) consists of:

- A. Six Directors with individual responsibilities for: Programs, Student Services, Finance/Administration, Human Resources, Marketing/International and Information Systems.
- B. An Executive Assistant to the President responsible for Policy and Planning

For administrative and operational purposes, the Province has been divided into seven (7) districts; each district consists of one or more campuses (Appendices B-2 and B-3).

Each District will be managed by an administrative team headed by a District Administrator who will serve as a Team Leader. There is no intent to establish separate district offices, rather, the District Administrator (DA) will be a campus based leader supported by one or more Associate District Administrators (ADA's) who will also be based at district campuses. The number of ADA's will be determined by geography, demographics, level of programming and other unique circumstances of the district operational environment. While the intent is to have a minimum of one DA or one ADA at each campus location, there will be extenuating circumstances which may make this goal impossible; in such instances non-management staff will be assigned to coordinate certain functions with management responsibilities being carried out from a distance.

The District Team will be responsible and accountable for the effective and efficient operation of the seven (7) key functions (Appendix B-4): Programs, Student Services, Finance and Administration, Marketing/International, Human Resources, Information Systems and Community/Corporate.

DA's and ADA's will operate applying a team approach and will mutually agree on the division of accountabilities so that in as far as possible the responsibilities are equally and equitably divided. In this way the District will be administered by drawing on the collective strengths and talents of each member of the management team.

Ultimately each DA and ADA is accountable to the President but functionally each is accountable to the Divisional Director for the quality and efficient



operation of all activities related to the specific functional area for which he/she has been assigned responsibility.

#### 4. FUNCTIONAL INTER-RELATIONSHIPS

The College's Operational Model, Appendix C, attempts to capture the team structure with the student as the client at the center and the direction provided through legislation and Board governance.

This illustration, using the Student Services Division as an example (Appendices D-1, D-2, & D-3), clarify the relationship as well as the roles of each interconnected loop. Appendix D-1 shows an add-on loop to the Student Services Division. This loop represents the chairs of the resource teams each of whom represents a sub-division of the total student services responsible. Appendix D-2 illustrates that the member of each team will be drawn from the student services specialists in the Districts. Both the team chairs and team membership, with few exceptions, will be non-management individuals who function primarily with campus/district assignments.

The Provincial Resource Team with 5 main sub-divisions provide direct input in the drafting of policies, procedures, and guidelines.

In the fully described linear model, Appendix D-3, the Divisional Director is connected on the right by the Provincial Administrative Team. This is the team (one member from each District) who will be accountable and responsible for ensuring the operationalization of all policies and procedures at the District/Campus level.

By having one member of each District's Administrative Team accountable for the function, in this case Student Services, the Divisional Director will be able to respond to seven (7) administrators who, as a group, will work together to ensure standardization of services. This team along with the Provincial Resource Team will share and learn from each others experiences in building a division that will embody best practices and quality services at a consistently high standard level throughout each district and campus. The basic objective is that every student, regardless of the district or campus, receives the same level of quality service.

This system of establishing a Provincial Resource Team and a Provincial Administration Team will provide a simple structure for the two-way flow of information and advice while establishing an ideal vehicle for collaboration and deliberation in formalizing operational direction for Student Services.

Linked into the Provincial Administration Team is the District Administration Team. In the sample provided, the hypothetical district is District 3 which is

administered by two ADA's and a DA. In the scenario presented, the ADA has assumed accountability for Student Services; hence, the link with the S.S. Provincial Administration Team. Members of this District Administrative Team are management staff who collectively assume full accountability for all functions within the District.

Full participation and involvement of all staff occurs in the District Operational Team which includes the members of the District Administration Team and a representative of staff from each of the seven (7) functional responsibility areas; i.e., Programs, Student Services, Marketing/International, Human Resources, Corporate/Community, Finance/Administration and Information Systems. Generally speaking, this will be a very active Team in the District; each member will bring to the table the perspective of the function he/she represents. It is this team which will work together to fine tune the details for operationalizing the policies and procedures which have been developed and approved by each Division and are ready for implementation.

Although the chart is linear, connectivity between both ends of the continuum does exist (shown by a solid line) as the faculty and staff constituent group on the left side of the continuum are in fact the same constituent group represented in the District Operational Team on the right end of the continuum.

The areas of focus for each of the Provincial Resource Teams are as follows:

Student Services:

1. Special Needs/Aboriginal Issues
2. Counselling
3. Learn Resource Centre
4. Transition/Placement
5. Student Affairs

Programs:

1. ABE/Academic
2. Applied Arts
3. Business
4. Engineering Technology/Industrial Education
5. Health Science
6. Information Technology
7. Natural Resources

Human Resources

1. Classification & Pay
2. Labour Relations
3. Professional Development
4. Human Resources Planning & Budgeting
5. Qualifications/Experience – Standard
6. Human Resources Data System

Marketing/International

Currently being developed

Information Systems

Currently being developed

Finance/Administration

Currently being developed

Membership on these teams, for the most part, are District staff/faculty. Under normal circumstances, members of these teams will also be established as an integral part of the District Operational Teams.

**5. DISTRICT/CAMPUS ADMINISTRATION**

In addition to the District functional responsibilities and accountabilities, each ADA and the DA will assume responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the campuses within the District. In Appendix E, the hypothetical district consists

of three campuses. A District Administrator (DA) and an ADA have been assigned to the larger campus and one ADA has been assigned at each of the other two campuses (we can assume these are smaller campuses with a smaller student body and fewer programs to be administered).

In this hypothetical district, the duties of operating the larger campus will be shared by the two administrators on site. The types of activities involved in the day-to-day operation of a campus need no extensive elaboration. Such demands as scheduling, faculty issues, student issues, faculty evaluation, fire drills, probationary staff documentation, attendance reports, etc., in essence, ensuring the accurate implementation of all Divisional policies represent the multi-dimensional responsibilities of a campus administrator.

In addition to the day-to-day campus administrative responsibilities, the accountabilities for each function has been decided through mutual contact by the Administrative Team as follows:

DA	Programs (Cluster A) Finance/Administration Community/Corporate
ADA "X"	Programs (Cluster B) Student Services Human Resources
ADA "Y"	Programs (Cluster C) Marketing/International
ADA "Z"	Programs (Cluster D) Information systems

#### Sample Operational Scenarios

1. In the hypothetical District, assume a student service issue, which is outside the norm and not clearly defined in the procedural guidelines, occurs in Campus 2 . Further assistance or clarification is needed. What does ADA "Y" do?

Since ADA "X" is the Administrator accountable in the District for Student Services, ADA "Y" should consult with ADA "X". ADA "X", after consulting with other members of the District Administration Team and, where appropriate, District Student Service specialists, concludes that the incident is a most unusual event and nobody in the District has previous experience to draw on. Since the Guidelines don't make reference to such a case, direction from the Divisional Director will be requested by ADA "X".

In other words, Divisional Directors will maintain the liaison and flow of direction and advice through the Provincial Administrative Team — seven (7) direct contacts only.

This process is not intended to curb or restrict leadership in the Districts. However, local decisions can easily become a basis for future reference for all other Districts; therefore, careful and wide consultation would be prudent.

2. How is the District Administrator's responsibilities different from the Associate District Administrators'?

Like the Associate District Administrators (ADA's), the District Administrator will share campus operation responsibilities and will assume accountability for one or more functions depending on the number of ADA's available. The major difference is that the DA will carry the responsibility of team leader and coordinator. In this capacity, the DA must exercise a great deal of insight and keen perception in facilitating the working of the team to ensure that cross functional issues are foreseen and dealt with to ensure the District as a whole operates smoothly. In essence the District, as a whole, must become more than the sum of the individual parts.

Community/Corporate

The Community/Corporate function is a major area of responsibility for each District. There is no Divisional Director assigned to this function as it is an integral component of the Programs Division and the Finance and Administration Division. In other words, the programs/courses that Districts package and offer to clients fall within the regulations and procedures determined by academic policy. Since these course/program offerings are funded outside the normal operation (Grant-in-Aid) and must be operated to recover cost plus a return, the Finance and Administration Division will be establishing policies and procedures to ensure quality standards for administering contracts which are consistent throughout the Province. Hiring of personnel, of course, falls under the direction of the Human Resources Office. Therefore, the establishment of a separate Division would, in essence, result in a duplication or overlap of efforts which already fall within the purview of the Programs Division, the Finance/Administration Division and the Human Resources Division.

The corporate function represents the entrepreneurial activities of each district. Workable protocols to ensure a harmonious relationship among Districts as each pursues a potential target market will need to be addressed. Your recommendations in the development of a mutually acceptable code of operation are solicited.

The role of the College in the community will continue to be the direct responsibility of each campus. The local campus leader will be expected to develop partnerships and working relationships with local agencies, such as the Regional Economic Boards, etc. Essentially, the official interface between the College and community must be established and maintained by the campus administrator.

## 6. RE-ORIENTATION TO A NEW CULTURE

All leadership within the new College structure will experience adjustments. The flattening of the organization and the sharing of accountabilities will require new approaches to doing business. While Districts and Campuses will be responsive to local needs; the commitment to the College as a single unit should be a priority. In other words, while responding locally, District leaders must be thinking provincially.

How can such major adjustments be made? How can a culture be changed? Through a commitment to change, all things are possible. The Senior Executive, in its commitment to the new style of leadership, is prepared to provide ongoing support, in-service and assistance to ensure that the newly re-engineered College develops to full potential. In the process, all College personnel, through the participatory model, will be given an opportunity to share in making the Provincial College of Newfoundland and Labrador (with an appropriate name!) one that is recognized for its progressiveness by counterparts across the country. With a dedicated, committed District leadership, staff and faculty, and building on the good work of the previous College system, the Senior Executive is very confident that this renewed College will become a significant contributor to the economic and social development of the Province.

### A Final Thought:

Change is not something that happens;  
 it's a way of life.  
 It's not a process;  
 it's a value.  
 It's not something you do;  
 it engulfs you.

Ronald E. Compton, CEO  
 Aetna Life & Casualty

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- Senge, P. M.; Kleiner, A.; Roberts, C; Ross, R. B.; Smith, B. J. *The Fifth Discipline. Fieldbook: Strategies & Tools for Building a Learning Organization*. New York: Doubleday, 1994
- Youngblood, Mark D. *Eating the Chocolate Elephant: Take Charge of Change Through Total Process Management*. Richardson, Texas. Universal Press Syndicate. 1993.

For your information attached is a copy of strategic direction statements which may prove helpful in considering the mission statement for the new college.

- **Previous Colleges of Newfoundland and Labrador**
  - **Mission Statements**
  - **Value Statements**
  - **Belief Statements**
  - **Goal Statements**
  - **Target Statements**
  
- **Department of Education & Training**
  - **Mission Statement**
  - **Goals**



## MISSION STATEMENTS

### CABOT

To provide a broad range of educational opportunities of consistently high quality in response to the changing educational needs of the community.

### CENTRAL

We are committed to responding to the human resource and technical development needs of the province through quality training and education. We believe that the learner is at the centre of this process, and that our resources should be aimed at helping all students reach their personal and educational goals through lifelong learning.

### EASTERN

Eastern College provides lifelong learning opportunities to the people of its region; and through meaningful partnerships, supports the social, cultural and economic development of the province. This mission is achieved through high quality innovative instructional programs and services; professional growth of college employees; an educational environment that promotes collegiality; and a participatory style of management and governance.

### LABRADOR

It is the mission of the Labrador College to promote, initiate, develop and deliver quality post secondary education programs and services, in accordance with the College's provincial mandate and appropriate to the geography of Labrador and its cultural and linguistic diversity. This thrust is intended to enhance the personal development of individuals as well as the social and economic development of Labrador and must be consistent with, and directed by the aspirations of the people of Labrador.

### WESTVIKING

To promote lifelong learning and to provide career-oriented education and training of the highest quality responsive to the needs of the learner and contributing to the economic and social development of a society in a global community.

## VALUE STATEMENTS

### CABOT

Cabot College believes .....

- Students come first in all we do
  - Employees are "key" to our success
  - Community is a partner in our goals
- 

## BELIEF STATEMENTS

### WESTVIKING

The College believes people and communities should strive to be self directed therefore, in so far as possible its programming must be in response to the needs and goals of the community-at-large as these have been identified and assessed by the community itself.

The College believes that learning is a lifelong process in which it is vital and necessary for people to engage both as a personal and social experience. This requires, by definition, that the College be committed to the principles of lifelong learning; namely, that programming should be student centred based upon the needs of the learner and delivered in a style appropriate to the learner's needs; comprehensive, so that all students will be able to appropriately educate themselves to be involved in gainful employment; and, accessible in that all persons, regardless of circumstances, will have an opportunity to avail of a program appropriate to their needs.

The College also believes it has an obligation to assist in the education of the community for economic and social development. This requires that the College offer programs and services directed at the creation of wealth generating employment and the economic and social development of the community.

And finally, the College believes that all its endeavours must be undertaken with a global vision, exhibiting the highest possible standards of quality, efficiency and utilization of available resources in order to prepare its students for a role in the international marketplace.

GOAL STATEMENTSCABOT

The following goals and objectives compliment the mission of Cabot collage.

1. Provide quality education and produce the most highly qualified graduates by the most efficient and effective means.
2. Provide quality life-long learning opportunities to meet individual and community needs.
3. Enhance awareness of the role of the College and its services in the community.
4. Contribute to the personal and professional development of the student.
5. To support individual, collective, and cooperative activities through educational leadership at local, provincial, national, and international levels.
6. Ensure that College activities are relevant and responsive to the needs of those it serves.

CENTRALInstitutional Goals

The Central Newfoundland Regional College considers the articulation of its overall goals as a necessary extension of its mission statement. Orderly long term planning must be carried out within the content of stated institutional goals in order to ensure that the focus and direction of college growth are maintained. The following section outlines the goals of the college.

Goal Statement

The Central Newfoundland Regional College, working within the broad goals of post-secondary education in the province, strives to meet the following goals:

1. In accordance with its fundamental commitment to the community, the college will continue to offer as wide a variety of educational services as possible, as dictated by the needs of the community.

2. In accordance with its open access policy, the college will attempt to accommodate all applicants, regardless of educational background or other obstacles that may prevent them from profiting from an educational experience.
3. As part of its open access policy, the college will strive to offer educational opportunities to physically and mentally disabled adults, through integration into regular programs, special course offerings, distance education, and other innovative methods, in conjunction with established support agencies.
4. The college will participate in community development and the enhancement of the quality of community life by offering a variety of educational services such as workshops, seminars, short courses, credit and non-credit courses, and ancillary educational services aimed at personal and economic development.
5. The college will ensure accountability to the public by ongoing self assessment and evaluation and by involving the community in needs assessment and the development and maintenance of programs and services.
6. In recognition of its unique nature, the college will strive to maintain a presence in all the communities in its area through community learning centres and distance education.
7. The college will strive to develop the whole person by offering opportunities for full personal growth and development in intellectual, physical, and social skills through career counselling, life skills training, job search training, assertiveness training and other courses aimed at personal development.
8. The college will strive to develop an identity as a cultural centre by contributing to the cultural development of the community through its facilities and equipment, which are available for appropriate activities, and by encouraging its faculty and staff to develop and promote such activities.
9. The college will strive to provide educational opportunities for international students by establishing ties with other institutions and agencies which have active programs in this area and by promoting its services in an international arena.
10. The college will promote and offer literacy training whenever the need is identified and will encourage students to maximize their educational potential through lifelong learning activities.
11. The college will strive to maintain quality and standards in program content and delivery through the establishment of advisory committees, instructor upgrading and retraining, and the acquisition of appropriate technology.

**EASTERN**

Based on the College's legislated mandate and the Mission, Eastern College has established the following goals:

1. To identify the learning needs of adults in the College region.
2. To provide programs in adult basic education, vocational and technical education, science and technology, business, applied arts, university/college transfer and personal development.
3. To assist the economic, social and cultural development of the province by providing applied research, technology transfer and continuing education in partnership with communities; community groups; business, industry and labour; government departments and agencies; and other educational institutions.
4. To design and deliver quality instruction in a manner that recognizes and meets the individual needs of students while fulfilling established educational standards and curriculum content requirements for occupational preparation, transfer to other institutions, personal development and external accreditation.
5. To provide and maintain a safe, comfortable and motivating learning environment.
6. To provide student services that enhance the learning experience and maximize the potential for student success and personal development.
7. To improve participation in post-secondary education by offering a comprehensive range of education and training opportunities in order to better serve all adults with special attention to improving the participation of those in society who have traditionally been under represented in post-secondary education.

**LABRADOR**

1. To market the regional College concept, services, and programs, in order to heighten public awareness.
2. To improve accessibility to and participation in all College programs and services.
3. To develop a formalized system for governance to ensure college policies and training initiatives are congruent with the *needs* of students of the region and the essence of the Strategic Economic Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador:

training that is responsive to the demands of a changing labour market for an enterprising, highly skilled, innovative and adaptable workforce.

4. To emphasize human and physical resource development in order to promote quality instruction, administration and support services.
5. To establish partnerships with various individuals and agencies within and beyond the College region including educational institutions, and public and private sector organizations in order to better assess needs and coordinate the delivery of programs and technology transfer.
6. To provide a comprehensive and balanced mix of *quality* credit, non-credit, certificate, and *diploma* programs within available resources.
7. To accord equal status and educational services for all and respect the dignity of every person regardless of individual differences, in accordance with human rights and principles.
8. To develop a College climate conducive to the adult learner.
9. To develop a management structure that ensures appropriate staff involvement and consultation.
10. To promote and integrate environmental education considerations in College decisions concerning global environmental issues and sustainable development.

### **TARGET STATEMENT**

#### **WESTVIKING**

The College seeks to bring about its mission in partnership with:

- individual adults who are seeking to increase their knowledge and skills, to improve their economic prospects or circumstances, to develop their social skills, to advance their cultural heritage, or to overcome or cope with special challenges,
- other institutions and agencies that offer educational programs and services,
- the industrial and business sectors.
- groups, agencies and associations which seek to promote economic, social and cultural development.

**APPENDIX A - 7****DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION & TRAINING****Mission Statement**

The mission of the Department of Education and Training is to enable and encourage every individual to acquire, through lifelong learning, the knowledge, skills and values necessary for personal growth and the development of society.

**Goals**

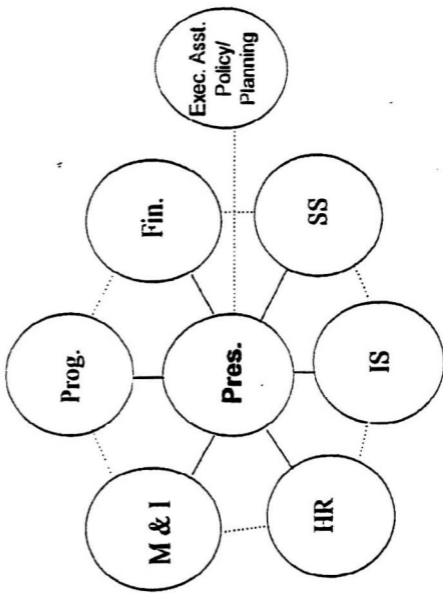
1. To develop a postsecondary education system that is capable of effectively delivering education and training programs that meet the needs of the people of the Province.
2. To improve accessibility to a comprehensive range of education and training opportunities on a geographical basis throughout the Province, and among special segments of the population such as women, the employment disadvantaged, the physically and mentally handicapped and the adult learner.
3. To increase participation in postsecondary education and training.
4. To ensure high quality and standards in the delivery of postsecondary education and training and to ensure that graduates of institutions are prepared, in terms of technical skills, problem-solving capabilities and job search and job holding skills, to pursue career opportunities.
5. To improve effectiveness, cost efficiency and accountability throughout the postsecondary education system.

# *Executive Management Organizational Structure*

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APPENDIX B-1

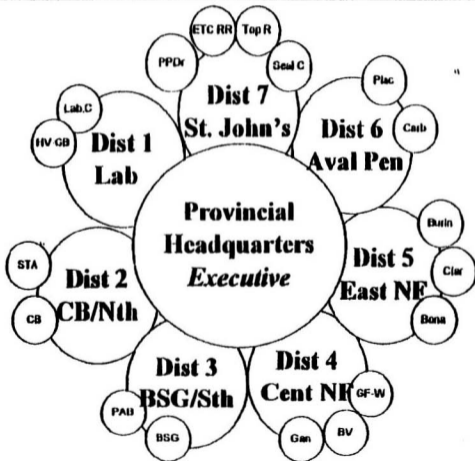




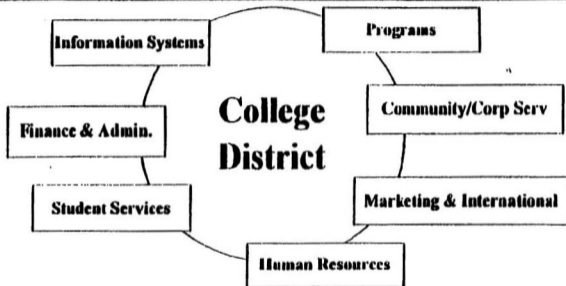
## **List of Districts & Campuses With Respective Economic Development Zones**

<b>College District</b>	<b>Economic Dev. Zones</b>	<b>Campuses</b>
<b>Labrador (#1)</b>	1,2,3,4,5	Happy Valley- Goose Bay Labrador City
<b>Corner Brook &amp; Northern Peninsula (#2)</b>	6,7,8	Corner Brook St. Anthony
<b>Bay St. George &amp; South Coast (#3)</b>	9,10	Bay St. George Port aux Basques
<b>Central NF (#4)</b>	11,12,13,14	Grand Falls - Windsor Baie Verte Gander
<b>Eastern (#5)</b>	15,16	Clareville Bonavista Burin
<b>Avalon Peninsula (#6)</b>	17,18	Carbonear Placentia
<b>St. John's (#7)</b>	19	Prince Philip Dr. ETC Ridge Road Topsail Road Seal Cove

# District Structure

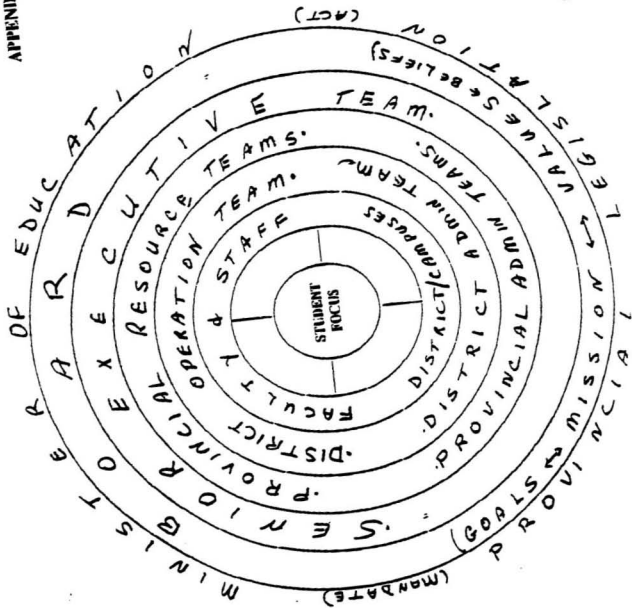


# *Functions of a College District*



**College Districts will be managed by District Administrators and Associate District Administrators (Number to be determined by geography, demographics etc.)**

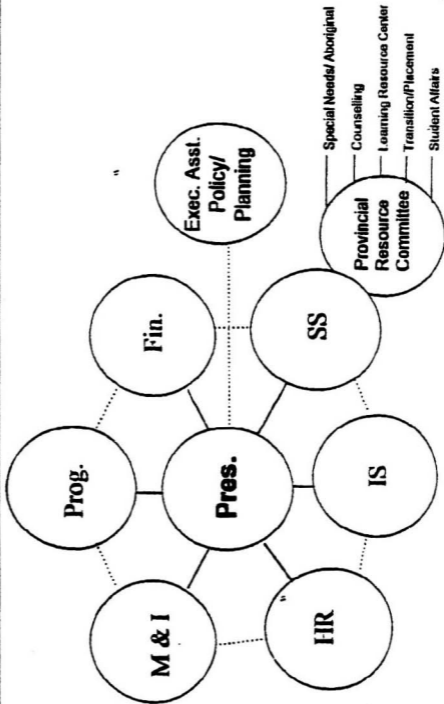
**College Districts will be operated by a District Team - Team will include representatives from all constituent groups.**



# Executive Management Organizational Structure

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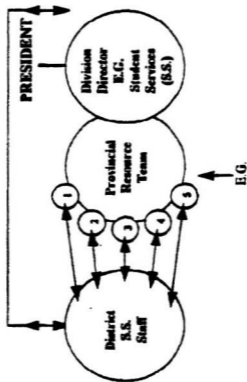
APPENDIX P-2

## DISTRICT & PROVINCIAL

### Functional Inter-Relationships & Teams - Responsibilities/Accountabilities

#### Extension of Structural Framework - Linear Model

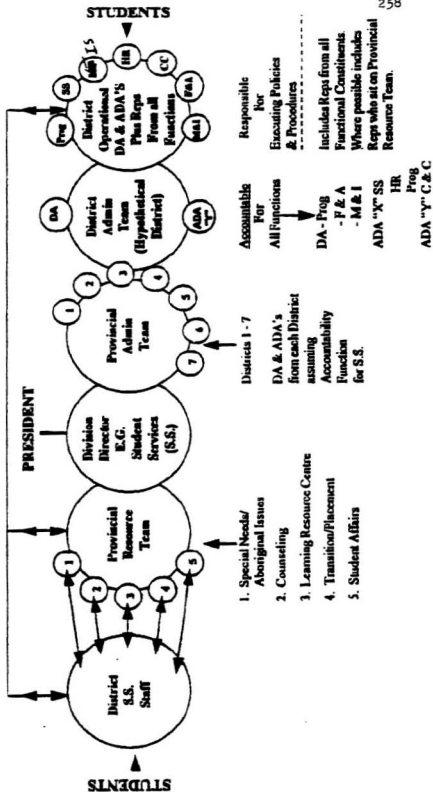
#### (Example - Student Services Division)



# DISTRICT & PROVINCIAL

## Functional Inter-Relationships & Teams - Responsibilities/Accountabilities Extension of Structural Framework - Linear Model

(Example - Student Services Division & Hypothetical District #3)

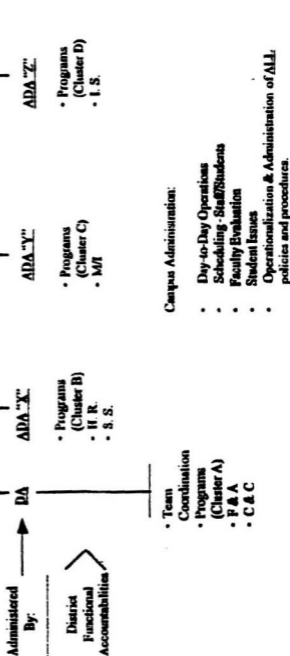


# HYPOTHETICAL EXAMPLE

## APPENDIX E

### DISTRICT/CAMPUS

#### (Campus Administrative & Functional Responsibilities)





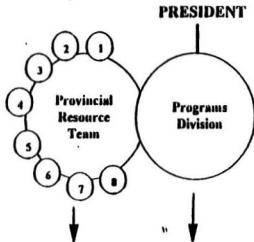
**Provincial Resource Teams  
&  
Headquarters Support  
by  
Division**

# DISTRICT & PROVINCIAL

## Functional Inter-Relationships & Teams - Responsibilities/Accountabilities

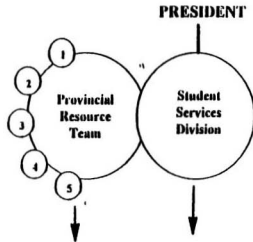
### Extension of Structural Framework - Linear Model

#### Resource Teams & IIQ Support by Division (Programs Division & Student Services Division)



1. ABE/Academic
2. Applied Arts
3. Business
4. Engineering technology/  
Industrial Trades
5. Health Science
6. Information Technology
7. Natural Resources

- 1 WPEO (II)<sup>1</sup>
- 3 Program Coordinators<sup>1</sup>
- 1 Program Coordinators<sup>1</sup>



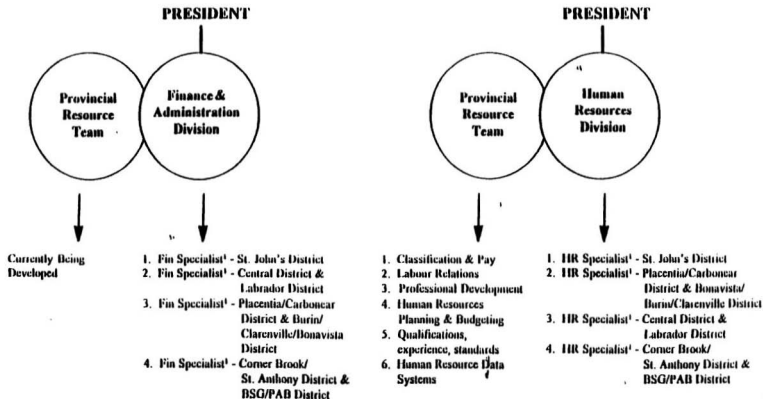
1. Special Needs/Aboriginal Issues
2. Counseling
3. Learning Resource Centre
4. Transition/Placement
5. Student Affairs

- 1 Secretary<sup>1</sup>
- 1 Registrar<sup>1</sup>
- 1 Associate Registrar<sup>1</sup>
- 1 Coordinator Student  
Development Resources<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Located in District, servicing the region.  
Reporting to Headquarters & IIQ Budget

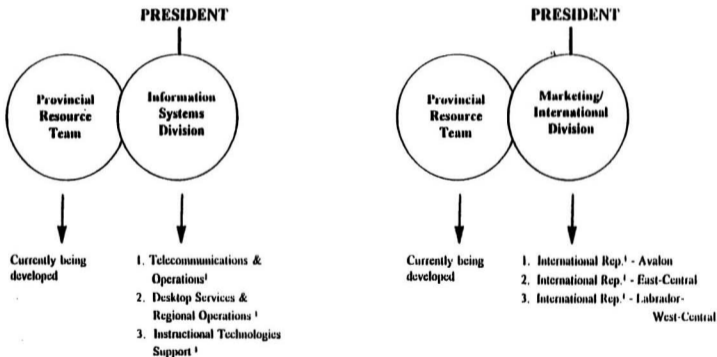
<sup>11</sup> - Located at Headquarters

**DISTRICT & PROVINCIAL**  
**Functional Inter-Relationships & Roles - Responsibilities/Accountabilities**  
**Extension of Structural Framework - Linear Model**  
**Resource Teams & HQ Support by Division**  
**(Finance/Administration Division, & Human Resources Division)**

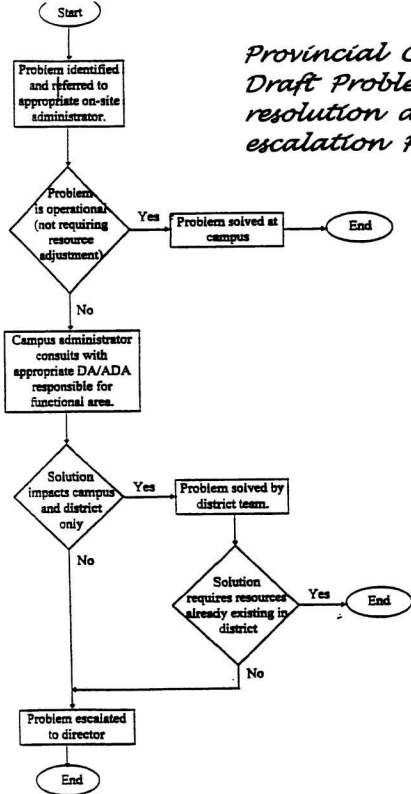


<sup>1</sup> Located in District, servicing the region

**DISTRICT & PROVINCIAL**  
**Functional Inter-Relationships & Teams - Responsibilities/Accountabilities**  
**Extension of Structural Framework - Linear Model**  
**Resource Teams & Support by Division**  
**(Information Systems Division & Marketing/International Division)**



*Provincial College  
Draft Problem  
resolution and  
escalation Plan*



**APPENDIX G**

**Permission Granted Letters: ERC,  
Kouzes Posner International,  
Dr. Ken Leithwood**



GOVERNMENT OF  
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Department of  
Development and  
Rural Renewal

November 26, 1996

Ms. Rosalind Osborne  
3 Lewisporte Place  
St. John's, NF  
A1E 5T3

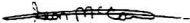
Dear Ms. Osborne:

RE: Reproduction of Figure Two of *At The Crossroads: The New Economy in Newfoundland and Labrador.*

Please accept this as permission to reproduce Figure Two: "*A Comparison of the Old and New Economies*" as found in the document *At The Crossroads: The New Economy in Newfoundland and Labrador.* This permission is conditional that the Figure will be properly sourced and the work in question is non-commercial in nature.

I hope this is acceptable. If you require additional information or assistance please contact me at 709-729-7259 (telephone) or 709-729-7002 (facsimile). Good luck with your thesis!

Sincerely,

  
Sean McCarthy  
Strategic Business Development  
Regional Economic Development Division

**KOUZES POSNER INTERNATIONAL**  
**15419 Banyan Lane**  
**Monte Sereno, California 95030**  
**Phone/FAX: (408) 354-9170**

267

November 21, 1996

Ms. Rosalind Osborne  
5 Lewisporte Pl.  
St. John's, NF  
Canada A1E 5T3


Dear Rosalind:

Thank you for your facsimile (dated November 20, 1996) requesting permission to use the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) in your masters thesis. We are willing to allow you to reproduce the instrument as outlined in your letter, at no charge, with the following understandings:

- (1) That the LPI is used only for research purposes and is not sold or used in conjunction with any compensated management development activities;
- (2) That copyright of the LPI is retained by Kouzes Posner International, and that the following copyright statement be included on each page of the instrument: "Copyright © 1993 Kouzes Posner International, Inc. All rights reserved.";
- (3) That one (1) **complete** copy of your masters thesis and one (1) copy of all papers, reports, articles, and the like which make use of the LPI data be sent promptly to our attention.

If the terms outlined above are acceptable, would you please so indicate by signing one (1) copy of this letter and returning it to the above address. Also enclosed is a report on the LPI's psychometric properties. Best wishes for every success with your research project. If we can be of any further assistance, please let us know.

Cordially,

  
Barry Z. Posner, Ph.D.  
Managing Partner

I understand and agree to abide by these conditions:

(Signed) \_\_\_\_\_

Date: Nov 30/96



---

Ken Leithwood, 01:45 PM 11/25/9, Re: Seeking Permission to use

---

Date: Mon, 25 Nov 1996 13:45:23 -0500 (EST)  
From: Ken Leithwood <kleithwood@oise.utoronto.ca>  
To: Ros Osborne <rosborne@admin.cabot.nf.ca>  
Subject: Re: Seeking Permission to use PLS

You should feel free to use this instrument. The only stipulation is that you let me know what you learned. My best to your supervisors.

On Mon, 25 Nov 1996, Ros Osborne wrote:

> Dear Dr. Leithwood:

>

> My name is Rosalind Osborne. I am a graduate student presently pursuing a  
> Masters degree in Education at Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN). I  
> am working with Dr. Jean Brown and Dr. Bruce Sheppard, faculty of Education,  
> MUN. I am requesting permission from you to use the "Process of  
> Professional Learning" Survey in my Masters thesis study.

>

> The study will attempt to identify the perceptions of community college  
> instructors with respect to leadership approach and organizational learning.  
> The study will utilize Kouzes and Posner's "Leadership Practises Inventory"  
> to examine leadership approach and Leithwood's "Process of Professional  
> Learning" Survey to examine organizational learning.

>

> I look forward to your response. If you require any additional information,  
> I can be reached by phone: (709)745-5407, by FAX:(709)778-0693 or by  
> E-Mail: rosborne@admin.cabot.nf.ca.

>

> Sincerely,

>

> Rosalind Osborne

>

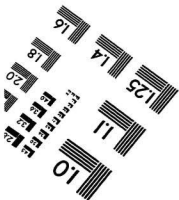
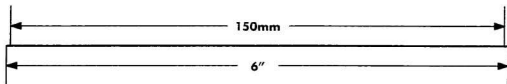
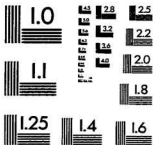
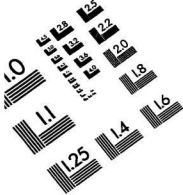
>

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Printed for rosborne@admin.cabot.nf.ca (Ros Osborne)

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# TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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1653 East Main Street  
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Fax: 716/286-5989

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