

## Chapter 5

# ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING AS RENEWAL

**W**hile a great deal of individual learning occurs within schools, this chapter indicates that without organizational learning, innovation and error detection/correction are likely to remain haphazard in school systems, leaving them less able to self-renew and transform themselves from within or to meet challenges from without. Without organizational learning focused on renewal, school systems risk losing their vitality, becoming complacent or rigid, or falling short of desired goals (Fullan, 1993; McLaughlin, 1993). By contrast, organizational renewal allows school systems to exploit what they have already learned while they innovate or learn new things. In this way, the organization takes a proactive role in influencing its environment rather than a reactive role to environmental influences (the proverbial “putting out fires” familiar to practitioners).

We begin this chapter by elaborating the concept of renewal for sustainability, a concept that involves a balance of continuity and change. Deutero learning (learning to learn) can help organizations find this balance but can be inhibited by organizational defensive routines that function as a sort of “organizational learning disability” (Senge, 1990). The chapter closes with an outline of six conditions that we have identified and that are described in depth in Part III. These six conditions appear to foster organizational learning and, taken together, represent a blueprint of deutero learning as a foundation for organizational renewal.

### RENEWAL FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Dewey (1916/1944) highlighted the importance of the concept of renewal as a chief concern in the educational enterprise: “The most notable distinction between living and inanimate things is that the former maintain themselves by renewal. . . . This renewal takes place by means of . . . educational growth. . . . The educational process is one of continual reorganizing, reconstructing, transforming” (pp. 1, 10, 50).<sup>1</sup> Within the broader society, Gardner (1963/1981) also emphasized renewal when he used the metaphor of a balanced ecological system to describe a self-renewing individual and organization: “Some things are being born,

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other things are flourishing, still other things are dying—but the system lives on” (p. 5; see also Goodlad, 1987).

The idea of renewal also has a foundation in the general organizations literature. The idea that renewal is *strategic* incorporates the dual ideas that organizations are goal oriented and open to their environments (Scott, 1998). Consistent with an open-system perspective on organizations, school systems have “reciprocal ties that bind and relate the organization with those elements that surround and penetrate it” (p. 100). As such, their strategic renewal can be expected to influence and be influenced by the external environment—namely the school community and a shifting parade of stakeholders. Because schools/systems are not sealed off from their environments,<sup>2</sup> “the environment is perceived to be the ultimate source of materials, energy, and information, all of which are vital to the continuation of the system” (p. 100). As organizational theorists who have focused on learning suggest (e.g., Daft & Weick, 1984), schools/systems vary in how active they are in processing information from the environment in their strategic decisions. The concept of organizational renewal implies a more proactive stance.

Crossan et al. (1999) developed a framework of organizational learning as strategic renewal, drawn from the general organizations literature. These authors synthesized organizational learning literature to classify the renewal of the organization as the underlying phenomenon of interest and organizational learning as the organization’s principal means to this end. The organizational learning framework they proposed incorporates many of the ideas described in Part I: specifically, that learning is multilevel and may involve the entire enterprise, the individual, or groups; that the “organization operates in an open system rather than having a solely internal focus” (p. 522); and that learning involves shared understandings. However, according to the authors, a conceptualization of organizational learning as strategic renewal also places new “demands on a theory of organizational learning” (p. 522). In particular, it incorporates the idea proposed by March (1991): that a tension exists between learning new ways of thinking and behaving while exploiting what has already been learned. Overemphasizing new ways of thinking can undermine renewal when organizational members become overwhelmed and confused. Both continuity and change are needed for organizational renewal. However, balancing the two can be a challenge.

### Challenges in Balancing Continuity and Change

Schools can be expected to face a continual barrage of new problems and demands that necessitate learning and innovation (Leithwood et al., 1995). Constant change and innovation are no strangers to school members. A veritable cottage industry of innovation exists in education, where “sophisticated, empirically grounded ideas” are often tried out by individual practitioners (Elmore, 1997, p. 248). Yet, there are problems translating these innovations to organizational learning and renewal. A first problem for school leaders is figuring out how to capitalize on individual insight by facilitating its progress to the institutional level. Currently, sophisticated innovations tend to remain in the schools that developed them. When innovations do spread to other schools, they tend to be weaker, watered-down versions of the original (p. 248). (Academics sometimes call this phenomenon “small change syndrome.”)

A second problem is that too much change can be overwhelming, leading to cynicism and closed-mindedness by organizational members. Double-loop learning is often particularly challenging because the process of reexamining basic assumptions “temporarily destabilizes our cognitive and interpersonal world” and can be time intensive and somewhat anxiety producing (Schein, 1992, p. 22). Fullan (1993) captured this phenomenon in examining

change processes in schools. He observed that in most educational change processes, there is an implementation dip in which things get worse before they get better. As educators question existing routines, learn new skills, or come to new shared understandings, they are likely to temporarily feel greater discomfort and uncertainty. This temporary loss of competence or comfort can be a barrier to change and may lead some educators to rely on lessons from the past. Similarly, when the demands of change are too great, educators may implement a change by rote without examining the theory or assumptions underlying it. A carefully designed policy can become just another item on their “to do” list.

A third problem in education, according to Elmore (1997), is not that there is not enough change and innovation, but that the wrong kinds of changes are tried. Changes are most often the result of mandates and inducements (such as tying teachers’ salaries to their school’s test scores), whereas the kinds of changes that are needed are “‘institution changing’ policies that alter the mission, incentives, and structures of education” (p. 267), presumably involving double-loop learning.

In organizations overwhelmed with innovation, it appears helpful to think of organizational learning not only as feeding forward from individual to group to system learning (emphasizing exploration and change) but also as a feedback process that provides the means to more fully exploit changes that have been tried and implemented (emphasizing continuity). Like healthy business organizations, schools/systems need to consider how to conserve the organization by encouraging enough innovation to stay vibrant and productive while seeking enough continuity to avoid overwhelming individuals with constant change and upheaval (Drucker, 1959).

## DEUTERO LEARNING

To balance continuity and change, organizations need to learn how to learn. The snapshot of selected organizational learning theories (Part I) and the idea that renewal of the organization is the underlying phenomenon of interest suggest that although it is people who actually learn, organizations also learn when they rely on the “combined experiences, perspectives, and capabilities of a variety of organization members” (Rait, 1995, p. 72). This learning can emerge in a haphazard or less than deliberate manner (Argyris & Schön, 1978).

However, organizations such as school systems can intentionally cultivate and assist multilevel learning, habits of inquiry, shared understandings, cognitive change, and the embedding of new knowledge so that the organization as a whole can benefit from and enjoy sustained renewal. To engage in organizational learning, Schön (1975) argued, organizations require a second kind of learning: deutero learning.

*Deutero* derives from the Greek *deuteros*, which means *second*; hence, a secondary kind of learning. Schön (1975), drawing on Bateson’s theory of behavioral learning and definition, described **deutero learning** as “learning to learn” and the capacity for deutero learning as “organizational capacity to set and solve problems and to design and redesign policies, structures, and techniques in the face of constantly changing assumptions about self and the environment” (pp. 8, 10). Schön (1975) suggested that aspects of deutero learning include:

- The ability to integrate members’ perceptions
- The use of shared inquiry rather than bargaining to respond to conflicts
- Experimentation with new structures and policies

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- Refusal to cover up errors or failures but instead, encouraging articulation and discussion of theories-in-use that run counter to espoused theories-of-action
- The ability to attribute disappointments or failures to shared misconceptions instead of individual guilt or blame
- Encouragement of new structures and policies that could remedy dysfunctional ones

Deutero learning can be thought of as a set of organizational learning abilities. It encourages conditions that allow organizational members to test individual, group, and organizational assumptions in order to realize double-loop learning (cognitive and behavioral change). Argyris and Schön (1974, 1978, 1996) argued that deutero learning requires a new set of behaviors, which they called Model II behaviors. A **Model II behavioral world** creates conditions for the “public testing of important assumptions about self and others, for double-loop learning about one’s own theory-in-use, and for the discovery, invention, and production of new behavior consistent with this learning” (Schön, 1975, p. 15). It is in contrast to the prevailing “**Model I behavioral world** of normal organizational life in which control of the task, win-lose dynamics, a form of rationality exclusive of feelings, and protection of self and others combine to prevent shared double-loop learning” (pp. 15–16). A key feature of the Model I behavioral world is organizational defensive routines, which are so widespread as to be second-nature (Argyris & Schön, 1996).

Argyris (1999) and Argyris and Schön (1996) have identified a host of behaviors or organizational defensive routines that act as organizational learning disabilities and block organizational learning. An **organizational defensive routine** is “a policy, practice, or action that prevents the participants (at any level of any organization) from experiencing embarrassment or threat” (Argyris & Schön, 1996, pp. xiii–xiv), but it “does so in ways that prevent discovery of the cause of the embarrassment or threat” (Argyris, 2004, p. 9). When an embarrassment or threat occurs, covering it up is a typical reaction. It is not unusual for an initial camouflage or cover-up to then require further cover-ups.

### Example of an Organizational Defensive Routine

Within the Catholic Church hierarchy, a small percentage of priests were sexually abusing children. Instead of confronting the issue, the Church hid it by quietly and routinely moving the perpetrators from parish to parish without parishioners being the wiser. In some cases, victims who came forward were secretly given monetary compensation, but the abuse continued in silence until the scale of the scandal was exposed internationally and became so public that the Vatican was forced to acknowledge the cover-up and change the organization’s behavioral response to deal with the problem.

Within school systems, a similar organizational defense occurs when poorly performing teachers are transferred from one school to the next rather than being denied tenure, fired, or put under review and given assistance. The danger of organizational defenses is that the protection from embarrassment or threat allows the issue to remain undiscussable (even though insiders know about it). A school system’s espoused theory (e.g., mission statement) may endorse

high-quality teaching for all students, but principals and teachers know the goal cannot be achieved as long as the system continues to overlook teacher incompetence, retain poorly performing teachers, and prevent discussion. Those who know what is happening have to pretend that it is not happening and publicly support the system's claim. Not only does the whole system weaken itself by retaining weak teachers, but in avoiding or ignoring confrontation of such a practice, the organization does not learn how to deal with poorly performing teachers.

Structural solutions (e.g., adding new oversight mechanisms, restructuring roles and responsibilities, or making cosmetic changes) do not necessarily reduce defensive theories-in-use for two reasons. First, structural changes generally address existing structures "rather than what needs to be invented to ensure future success" (Kikoski & Kikoski, 2004, p. 18). Modifications of existing structures represent single-loop learning, and members rarely examine or change existing norms in the process. Second, "when structural arrangements and policies are instituted to reduce defensive routines . . . and when the implementers do not have the Model II skills to implement them, the structural changes will be very limited" (Argyris, 2004, p. 103). Model II values and theories-in-use are distinctly different from Model I values and theories-in-use. Model II values include working from valid information, making informed choices, and carefully monitoring actions to assess their effectiveness. Argyris (2004) cautioned that merely doing the opposite of Model I—sharing control, working toward win-win solutions, expressing feelings, and downplaying rationality—is no guarantee of double-loop learning. New behaviors must include inquiry into claims, evidence for claims, and the testing of claims. Double-loop learning occurs when the new behaviors become embedded in the organization.

## DEFENSIVE ROUTINES IN SCHOOL CONTEXTS

We begin by examining how organizational defensive routines affect organizational learning, especially double-loop learning, in education institutions. Each organization has values and theories-in-use that tend to produce organizational defensive routines and inhibit double-loop learning. Human beings around the globe recognize these values and theories-in-use because they are so widespread and familiar: unilateral control over others, a desire to win (or at least to minimize losing), suppression of negative feedback, acting rational (not exposing feelings), and protecting oneself and others. Inquiry and testing are discouraged or not allowed.

When mismatches between espoused theories-of-action and theories-in-use surface, or when mismatches between expectations and outcomes (errors) occur, leaders or members may resort to cover-ups or simply make the issue undiscussable, usually in a seemingly rational and reasonable way (see Argyris, 2004). Organizational defensive routines also include "groups, intergroups, and interpersonal relationships" working in ways that prevent organizational learning and protect the status quo (Argyris, 1999, p. xiv). If members collude or become complicit in covering up a mismatch or make it undiscussable, they cannot inquire or test the issue.

School personnel are likely familiar with some of the most obvious defensive routines:

- Distracting from real issues by shifting attention to a much less serious issue
- Making attributions without supportive evidence ("You're always making a mountain out of a molehill")
- Offering an endless supply of explanations that have not been tested but have just enough truth to sound plausible

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- Making an issue undiscussable
- Maintaining myths
- Engaging in ad hominem attacks (e.g., “You’re such a negative influence!” or “You’re so inflexible!”)
- Claiming the opposite of what is true (e.g., if you are being dishonest, claim to be honest; say so often enough to convince others that the claim is true)
- Making tacit inferences (the unspoken subtext)
- Crafting conclusions in ways that make them difficult to test (e.g., “I’m trying to be as fair as possible” or “We need to present a strong show of unity to the community”)

“Organizational defensive routines feed back to reinforce Model I theories-in-use. This creates a circular causal process that produces self-fulfilling, self-sealing processes. These processes, in turn, produce an ultra-stable state that is anti-double-loop learning” (Argyris, 2004, p. 46). Without inquiry or feedback, members cannot explore new ways of improving the situation with new actions (feed forward). Members may know that repeating errors and not correcting them is counterproductive, but they may not know they are perpetrating (or they may not feel safe enough to challenge) the very behaviors that continue conditions they recognize as unproductive. It is quite possible that organizations may be so oblivious to their routines that only an outsider can help them raise their level of awareness and help them change.

### An Analysis of Defensive Routines in Context

The Model I behavioral world represents a cognitive and behavioral legacy of the modern industrial paradigm (Schön, 1975). This section indicates how pervasive and divisive that legacy is. Its very familiarity may make seemingly normal behaviors difficult to recognize as defensive routines, and because one behavior may elicit another in a sort of chain reaction, the defensive routines in context may be difficult to untangle. To assist readers, we present an exchange among teachers and a principal during a faculty meeting and follow it with an analysis of the numerous defensive routines used during the exchange.

#### Defensive Routines in Context

Gary, principal of a large school, announces to the faculty that the school budget has been severely reduced but adds that he will allocate funding as fairly as possible. Faculty, however, know from experience that Gary not only has favorites among the teachers, he also has a history of favoring certain disciplines, notably science and mathematics. When the music teacher mentions the appalling disrepair of musical instruments and suggests a needs assessment committee, a math teacher immediately jumps to Gary’s defense by saying, “You know, we’re all working so hard and we’re all ‘committee-d’ to death. I’m sure the last thing we need is another time-consuming committee.” A new teacher, unaware of school norms, mentions that she has not found enough materials to implement the new English curriculum properly and shocks the faculty by asking Gary what his allocation criteria are.

As several experienced teachers turn expectantly toward Gary, he says, “I’m not happy about the cuts either and I can tell you, doing the budget is no fun! It’s like doing our own

budgets and income tax at home. There are some really tough choices. Do we renovate the kitchen or get a new car? Maybe we have to give up our vacation. We hate it, but we have to do it. I've found that cutting a little bit everywhere is better than funding just one area and making everyone else unhappy. I'm sure that everyone here wants to be fair and also wants to save valuable time, so I'll certainly do my best to make everyone happy. What we could do for music this year is increase ticket prices for the spring musical and the end-of-the-year concert to try to help out."

In this example, the mismatch between the principal's espoused theory-of-action (fairness) and his theories-in-use is evident. At face value, his comparison of school and personal budget decisions sounds rational. What he does not admit is that science and math teachers have received the lion's share in years past and that "being fair" now means either continuing his past practice or admitting past unfairness by being fair now. Gary skillfully sidesteps making his criteria for decision making public; he keeps control and, by claiming to be fair, sets up a situation where any disagreement would be a personal attack or portray him as unfair or less than truthful.

Gary uses the "I'm being forced to do this" and "I don't like cuts either" to present himself as a victim—an "I share your pain" tactic for a faculty that already feels like victims. If parents complain to him about ticket prices, he can use an either/or threat to them: "We're strapped for money. It's either higher ticket prices or no instrumental program." He presents himself as helpful by suggesting a way to solve the problem for the music teacher. But the subtext might as well be, "You want to openly challenge my control? Fine, but you'll take the full force of the parents' wrath or the blame for lower attendance because of increased ticket prices. You make me look bad; I can make your life miserable."

Gary appears unfazed by the English teacher's question about allocation criteria although it has the potential to be an embarrassment or threat. (A familiar adage is, "Don't get mad; get even.") The experienced teachers who know Gary's routines also know that if they seize the opening and push to see the new budget or, worse, previous budgets, or if they expose Gary's lack of interest in the humanities and the arts, they are likely to reap punitive retribution (e.g., the most difficult assignments and students, the least desirable classroom or duty times). Any less experienced teachers hoping for a change will quickly realize that Gary's favorites and budget issues are undiscussable. Teachers who disagree with Gary's ethics feel coerced into complicit behavior.

The favorite teachers in the favorite disciplines practice a form of bargaining: They appear to protect Gary, but they are really protecting their own budgets. Playing the victim or pushing responsibility elsewhere is commonplace. Gary has to deliver a message that makes the teachers unhappy, and he can tell the teachers he's at the mercy of the trustees who passed the budget. In addition to habitually receiving less than others, some teachers may feel like victims because if they make waves, challenge Gary's authority, or refuse to play the game, their life can indeed be made miserable in subtle or not-so-subtle ways.

Readers may well ask how such daunting and entrenched defensive behaviors can possibly be changed. Part III elaborates, in practical terms, how the thinking and behaviors associated with organizational learning create an environment that uncovers defensive (Model I)

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behaviors and replaces them with healthy, supportive, professional (Model II) behaviors (elaborated in Chapter 10).

### FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

Argyris (1999) maintained that researchers should provide “actionable knowledge on how to reduce or lower” barriers to organizational learning (p. xiii). Because double-loop learning can destabilize members’ cognitive and interpersonal worlds (Argyris & Schön, 1978), it is important to identify organizational conditions that could overcome defensive reactions of individuals, groups, or organizations stemming from the “embarrassment or threat” that new learning exposes (Argyris, 1999, p. xiii). In addition, because “all change involves learning . . . conditions that support learning must be part and parcel of any change effort” (Fullan & Miles, 1992, p. 749). Our identification and elaboration of six conditions to support organizational learning (Part III) is an attempt to help organizations identify and overcome defensive routines, learn to learn (deutero learning), realize double-loop learning, and renew themselves by developing “the capacity for making experience-based changes in their theories-in-use” within schools and school systems (Schön, 1975, p. 10). Therefore, Part III draws on organizational learning literature (Parts I and II), education literature, sociology of teaching literature, and the social and moral aims of education to suggest potential conditions (or actionable knowledge) that may enhance the likelihood of organizational learning. Specifically, we draw on selected conceptual and empirical literature to elaborate conditions that may foster organizational learning in schools/systems, which we define primarily in terms of enhancing the strategic renewal of an enterprise.

### Conditions for Learning

The six conditions that we have identified as having the potential to support organizational learning in schools/systems are:

- Prioritizing learning for all members
- Fostering inquiry
- Facilitating the dissemination (sharing) of knowledge
- Practicing democratic principles
- Attending to human relationships
- Providing for members’ self-fulfillment

Each condition is necessary but insufficient for organizational learning, and all conditions are interrelated. The conditions are presented separately for ease of discussion, but they are not mutually exclusive and should be viewed holistically. Together, they can provide a hospitable environment for organizational learning: the deliberate use of individual, group, and systemwide learning to embed new thinking and practices that continuously renew and transform the organization in ways that support shared aims. Not only are these conditions compatible with the organizational learning theories described earlier, they appear to make a difference between “learning enriched” schools and “moving” school systems as compared to “learning impoverished” schools and “stuck” systems (Rosenholtz, 1989). By identifying



these conditions, we aim to suggest some directions for practice based on ideas about organizational learning and current literature about teacher and school effectiveness.

The following outline captures key arguments and ideas within each of the six conditions. The outline offers readers an overview of what will be elaborated in the next six chapters.

### **1. Prioritizing Learning for All Members**

In a rapidly changing and unpredictable environment, learning no longer depends on individual performance; it is stimulated by exposure to others' learning and is socially constructed to make sense of and respond to the environment.

- Without individual learning, organizational learning cannot occur.
- All members have explicit knowledge as well as implicit or tacit knowledge (e.g., ideas, insights, perceptions, intuitions, innovations, discoveries).
- Most teacher knowledge is tacit.
- Organizational members use tacit knowledge to scan or make sense of the environment and understand each other.
- Individual learning is necessary but not sufficient for organizational learning.
- Collective learning offers opportunities to examine assumptions, norms, errors, and practices—all of which represent ways to improve.
- Usually, collective learning occurs through friendships, networks, inquiry, teamwork, feedback, written information, meetings, and hiring new members.

### **2. Fostering Inquiry**

The inquiry process encourages organizational members to detect and correct errors and access tacit knowledge. Without inquiry, members cannot learn about or from their assumptions or actions.

- Direct inquiry can broaden perspectives and reduce ambiguity.
- Indirect inquiry surfaces tacit knowledge as ideas, insights, innovations, discoveries.
- Engagement in inquiry creates collateral learning—dispositions of curiosity, tolerance, respect for evidence, critical thinking, and willingness to suspend judgment, all of which reciprocally help people get better at inquiry.
- Indirect inquiry usually happens in conversations, meetings, relaxing in Nature, sometimes while reading.
- Inquiry involves more than a single cycle of error detection/correction; each cycle prompts further inquiry.

### **3. Facilitating Dissemination (Sharing) of Learning**

Without the free flow of ideas, innovations, and information among individuals and groups in the organization, organizational learning is unlikely.

- Dissemination helps create new shared understandings.
- Dissemination can occur in many ways, such as dialogue, observation, workshops, conferences, staff meetings, mentoring, and Web sites.
- Structures such as teams, common planning time, proximity to coworkers, interschool visits, and planned or unplanned time to talk help disseminate new learning.

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### **4. Practicing Democratic Principles**

Without the freedom to inquire (e.g., access information), think independently (e.g., question and critique), and speak as equals (e.g., dissent without fear of retribution), organizational learning is severely limited.

- Democratic principles—truth and transparency, representation, vigorous discussion, freedom of speech, and pluralism (of beliefs, sources of information, and intellectual positions)—act as cornerstones of democratic organizations and societies.
- These principles encourage free flows of communication, equality and participation in decision making, and checks and balances to protect the minority and to avoid abuses of power (e.g., control of knowledge and control over others).
- All members, and leaders in particular, have responsibilities to practice democratic principles in order to prompt and promote learning.

### **5. Attending to Human Relations**

Organizational learning depends on the social system in which human beings interact to construct their learning and learn from each other.

- Learning depends on interpersonal knowledge (e.g., communication skills, respect and compassion, optimism, conflict management, group process skills).
- These skills contribute to a supportive environment for organizational learning.
- Collaboration is vital to collective learning, inquiry, and dissemination.

### **6. Providing for Members' Self-Fulfillment**

Organizational memory (embedded past learning) and continuing opportunities for organizational learning (future learning) depend on socializing and retaining members in ways that value their well-being and promote self-fulfillment.

- Nurturing members' quest for meaningful values and goals (people want to belong to and contribute to an organization that reflects their values and gains their respect).
- Nurturing members' commitment and connections (e.g., encouraging networks across schools and contributions to the profession).
- Nurturing members' aspirations for growth (challenging all members and developing leadership while ensuring renewal by recruiting new talent).

Each school's/system's environment is constantly affected by societal changes, cultural changes, and changes within the individuals who make up the organization. This complex and dynamic fluidity in organizations is similar to patterns in a rotating kaleidoscope. Like the shifting patterns of the kaleidoscope under constant motion, the dynamics of organizations constantly change. It is almost impossible to repeat a combination in a kaleidoscope, and it is almost impossible to find similar environments in different organizations. There are, therefore, no prescriptive recipes for engaging in organizational learning, although the six conditions can act as a framework for change. Some conditions will require more attention in one organization than in another. In addition, as members of the organization come and go and dynamics continue to change, organizations will have to revisit and rethink members' needs and abilities within each condition.

We appreciate that the ways of thinking attached to the six conditions may represent new, relatively unexplored territory for some readers and that we may challenge some implicit assumptions. Many of these ways of thinking were known to ancient philosophers around the globe, yet in this new era of globalization, the ideas may seem unfamiliar or counterintuitive, especially to Western citizens whose thinking has been profoundly influenced by the assumptions and beliefs of the modern (industrial) era. Those ways of thinking still dominate Western education. Our hope is that in the same way that postmodern ways of thinking about learning, interdependence, and the human side of professional life have begun to penetrate business and industry, they will also generate serious conversations and questions in the field of education, not only to improve the organizations we call school systems, but also to improve the human condition of adults who are shaping the thinking, attitudes, and behavioral habits of the next generation. We believe that the six identified conditions can work together to support the creation of knowledge, to help organizational members deal with new issues, and to resolve new dilemmas in today's rapidly changing, turbulent, and unstable environment.

## NOTES

1. Bolin (1987) defined *renewal* as "making new again," "growing afresh," or "becoming new through growth" (pp. 13–14). We view renewal as intrinsic and continual, as opposed to *reform*, which is generally perceived as an external and one-shot change. Renewal and self-renewal are virtually interchangeable in the literature.

2. Other assumptions include the idea that relationships among organizational parts, both individual participants and subgroups, are problematic and cannot be taken for granted (Weick, 1969). "Parts are viewed as capable of semiautonomous action; many parts are viewed as, at best, loosely coupled to other parts. . . . Many heads are present to receive information, make decisions, direct action. Individuals and sub-groups form and leave coalitions. Coordination and control become problematic" (Scott, 1998, p. 99).

## Reflective Journal

Organizational learning is a primary means for a school/system to renew itself, thereby retaining its relevance and vitality. Organizational learning as renewal highlights the importance of working to create both an open, proactive stance toward the environment and a healthy balance between continuity and change. The questions in this section are designed to help you explore the concept of renewal in your organization, consider your organization's relationship to the environment, and reflect on the balance of continuity and change.

1. Organizational renewal is the central theme of this chapter. What does renewal mean to you at an individual level? How might that translate to an organizational level?
2. Renewal involves "continual reorganizing, reconstructing, transforming" (Dewey, 1916/1944, p. 50). How has your school/system renewed itself in the past? What current actions might contribute to renewal?
3. Earlier in this chapter, we suggested that "without organizational learning focused on renewal, school systems risk losing their vitality, becoming complacent or rigid, or

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falling short of desired goals.” Can you see ways that this might be true of your school/system?

4. Who is included in your school community? (Consider the broad array of internal and external stakeholders.) How does each group influence your school/system? How strong is each group’s influence? How does the school/system influence each group?
  5. In what ways is the environment a source of materials, energy, and information for your school/system? In what ways does your school/system take a reactive stance toward the environment? In what ways does it take a proactive stance?
  6. Think of some changes or innovations that are currently being tried in your school/system. Then for each change, consider the following:
    - Does the change appear helpful?
    - How was it chosen?
    - Who was involved in deciding to attempt the change?
    - Does the change contribute to organizational renewal? Is it likely to do so?
  7. In what ways, if any, might the change process in your school/system be overwhelming at this time? What signs do you see? What might be done to lessen organizational members’ anxiety or discomfort without undermining organizational learning and renewal?
  8. In order to learn while balancing continuity and change, organizations need to learn how to learn (deutero learning). Think about how well your school/system has learned how to learn. (Consider abilities to integrate members’ perceptions, use collective inquiry, experiment with new policies and structures, learn from mistakes, detect errors, and test assumptions.) What do you think are your school’s/system’s organizational learning abilities? What are its organizational learning disabilities?
  9. Would you say that your school/system is closer to a Model I behavioral world (control and protection oriented) or a Model II behavioral world (learning oriented)? Can you identify any organizational defensive routines in your school/system? If you have a Model I world, how do you think defensive routines restrain learning at the individual, group, or organizational level? Can you think of any specific examples of Model II behaviors in your school/system?
  10. What other thoughts did this chapter evoke?
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