PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN CORPORATE TRAINING THROUGH

LEARNING EXPERIENCES IN THE WORKPLACE

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Abstract

Canan Aratemur Çimen, "Professional Development in Corporate Training through

Learning Experiences in the Workplace"

The purpose of this study was to investigate learning experiences of corporate training practitioners in the workplace while acquiring necessary knowledge and skills for their professional development. More specifically, it explored the ways in which practitioners start to work in the profession, the kinds of knowledge and skills needed for professional expertise and the ways of professional development in corporate training.

By using a qualitative research method, the research was carried out with thirteen corporate training practitioners within three different private business organizations operating in the banking, retail and telecommunication sectors in İstanbul, Turkey. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants. The data was analyzed through content analysis method.

The analysis of data indicated that practitioners generally did not make informed decisions when they started to work in corporate training.

Corporate training practitioners defined their roles as consultants and strategic partners within the organization. They were mainly responsible for managing training activities within the organization as a process starting from training needs analysis to measurement and evaluation. To perform these roles and responsibilities, having conceptual knowledge in training and business knowledge together with communication and presentation skills were considered necessary.

The findings revealed that professional expertise in corporate training was mostly developed through informal learning experiences in the workplace where formal learning experiences were found as complimentary but insufficient.

In the study, there emerged two main categories of informal learning, "learning on their own" and "learning from others". The informal learning activities under "learning on their own category" included exploration, execution of the job, presenting and self-reflection. The informal learning activities under the "learning from others" category included questioning, consulting and working in projects.

The factors influencing practitioners' informal learning experiences were classified as contextual factors and individual factors. While attitude of managers and colleagues towards practitioners, structure of work, access to learning resources and management attitude towards training were classified under contextual factors, personality characteristics and educational backgrounds of practitioners were classified under individual factors.

Tez Özeti

Canan Aratemur Çimen, "İşyeri Öğrenme Deneyimleri ile Kurumsal Eğitimde

Mesleki Gelişim"

Bu çalışmanın amacı, kurumsal eğitim uzmanlarının mesleki gelişimleri için gereken bilgi ve becerileri kazanırken, işyerinde hangi öğrenme deneyimlerinden geçtiklerini araştırmaktır. Bu çalışmada özellikle, uzmanların bu mesleğe giriş şekli, kurumsal eğitimde mesleki uzmanlık için hangi tür bilgi ve beceriye ihtiyaç duyulduğu ve mesleki gelişim yollarının neler olduğu araştırılmıştır.

Bu araştırma, niteliksel araştırma yöntemi kullanılarak, İstanbul'da bankacılık, perakende ve telekomünikasyon sektörlerinde faaliyet gösteren üç özel kurumda çalışan on üç kurumsal eğitim uzmanı ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Katılımcılarla yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Veriler, içerik analizi yöntemi ile analiz edilmiştir.

Verilerin analizi sonucunda uzmanların, kurumsal eğitim alanında çalışmaya genellikle bilinçli olmayan kararlarla başladıkları görülmüştür.

Kurumsal eğitim uzmanları, organizasyon içindeki rollerini danışman ve stratejik ortak olarak tanımlamışlardır. Temel sorumlulukları ise, eğitim ihtiyacının analizinden başlayan ve ölçme ve değerlendirme ile son bulan bir süreçte eğitim faaliyetlerinin yönetilmesidir. Bu rol ve sorumlulukları yerine getirmek için eğitimle ilgili kavramsal bilgi ve iş bilgisi ile birlikte, iletişim ve sunum becerilerine sahip olmak gerekli görülmüştür.

Bulgular, kurumsal eğitimde mesleki uzmanlığın işyerinde kendiliğinden öğrenme deneyimleri ile geliştiğini, örgün öğrenme deneyimlerinin de tamamlayıcı ancak yetersiz olduğunu göstermiştir.

Çalışmada, "kendi başına öğrenme" ve "diğer insanlardan öğrenme", kendiliğinden öğrenmenin temel kategorileri olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. "Kendi başına öğrenme" kategorisi altındaki öğrenme faaliyetleri araştırma, işi yapma, sunma ve öğrenme deneyimleri üzerinde düşünmedir. "Başka insanlardan öğrenme" kategorisi altındaki öğrenme faaliyetleri ise soru sorma, danışma ve projelerde çalışma olarak belirlenmiştir.

Uzmanların kendiliğinden öğrenme deneyimlerini etkileyen faktörler, bağlamsal ve bireysel faktörler olarak sınıflandırılmıştır. Yöneticilerin ve çalışma arkadaşlarının uzmanlara karşı tutumu, iş yapısı, öğrenme kaynaklarına erişim ve yönetimin eğitime karşı tutumu bağlamsal faktörler; kişisel özellikler ve uzmanların öğrenim geçmişleri ise bireysel faktörler altında sınıflandırılmıştır.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my father…

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Corporate training is an interdisciplinary area of practice in adult education and human resources with its important role to provide diverse learning opportunities for employees in the workplace. Although its roots can be traced back to the Industrial Revolution, it was specifically during the 1940s that corporate training was recognized as a specific field (Marsick and Watkins, 1999, Walter, 2002). However, it has gained a greater significance in the last three decades mainly because of the emergence of global knowledge-based economy, information revolution and developments in technology where a new meaning and value has been attributed to corporate training (Bouchard, 1998). Because the nature of work has changed from that of production to knowledge work (Levin, 2005), corporate training has started being used as a way of equipping employees with the latest business requirements to increase productivity of the organization and remain competitive in the market (Fenwick, 2000). To serve this purpose, huge sums have started to be spent on training of the workforce (Daley, 1999, Walter, 2002). The American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) estimated that organizations spent nearly $134, 39 billion on employee learning and development activities in 2007 (State of the Industry Report, 2008). Yet, this number was $ 30 billion in 1986 (Akyıldız, 1991).

In Turkey, corporate training activities were started in the mid 1950s where the private sector began to be involved in the process of industrialization of the country (Akyıldız, 1991). However, as Aycan (2001) noted, the private sector has

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mainly developed after the 1980s with the establishment of new business organizations and their integration to global economy. This has also led to the development of corporate training in Turkey with increasing attention of business organizations for corporate training as one of the most important functions of human resources development practices.

While training has gained a strategic role within business organizations, the number of practitioners working in corporate training has also increased considerably. For instance, when the ASTD was established as the first association of corporate training professionals in 1942, there were fifteen individual members; this number increased to 24,500 at the end of the 1980s and to 34,000 in the beginning of 1990s (Walter, 1994). Currently it has more than 44,000 members worldwide (ASTD, 2009).

With respect to numbers of the ASTD, currently, there are substantial numbers of practitioners working in corporate training in different public and private sector business organizations. However, as Gauld and Miller (2004) proposed, corporate training has continued to be seen as a field of profession that anyone can perform if have some knowledge and interest in the field regardless of their educational backgrounds. Typically, practitioners have come from diverse educational backgrounds and their professional development has been formed with participation in short training courses and informally learned practices in the workplace. In that respect, professional expertise in corporate training is mostly expected to be developed through individual learning efforts and experiences.

In the present study, the interest of the researcher for professional development in corporate training is enhanced not only by the experiences of the researcher in different private sector organizations such as a corporate training

practitioner, but also by the lack of related studies in Turkey. With these experiences, it has been observed that most of the practitioners –including the researcher- begin to work in corporate training without prior education and knowledge in the field and generally acquire necessary knowledge and skills through individual learning experiences in the workplace.

For Valkevaara (2002), understanding practical experiences of practitioners in the workplace is very fundamental in understanding the construction of expertise within any profession. Therefore, the focal point of the present study is to explore practitioners' learning experiences in the workplace to gain a better understanding for professional development in corporate training.

Statement of the Problem

Corporate training has continued to evolve as a specific field of profession since the 1940s. However, due to lack of formal education opportunities, professional development in corporate training has still remained undefined for people who want to work in the profession (Daly, 1967, Akyıldız, 1991, O'Connor, 2004). Besides, practitioners in corporate training were very diverse in their educational backgrounds (Akyıldız, 1991, Kutay, 1996, O'Connor, 2004, Outschoorn, 2007). They were mostly graduates of administrative sciences and engineering faculties (Akyıldız, 1991, Kutay, 1996, Outschoorn, 2007).

These factors are the most driving forces behind conducting this study where practitioners generally "are called upon to perform tasks for which they have not been educated" (Schön, 1983, p.14). In that sense, exploring how and in which ways practitioners construct their professional expertise in corporate training has become important.

Research Questions

This study examines professional development in corporate training through exploring learning experiences of corporate training practitioners in the workplace. Following are the main questions of the study:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of corporate training practitioners?

2. How do corporate training practitioners enter into the corporate training profession?

3. What are the roles and responsibilities of corporate training practitioners?

4. What kinds of knowledge and skills are needed to perform the responsibilities of a corporate training practitioner?

5. How do corporate training practitioners acquire needed knowledge and skills in the workplace to develop their professional expertise both formally and informally?

6. What factors influence corporate training practitioners' informal learning experiences?

Significance of the Study

In the literature, there are many studies examining learning experiences of practitioners in different professions while developing their professional expertise. These studies were conducted with human resources practitioners (Garrick, 1998, Valkevaara, 2002, Revenko, 2003), with nurses (Daley, 1999), with dentists, accountants, the civil service, surveying and training employees (Cheetham and

Chivers, 2001), with attorneys (Hara, 2001), with engineers (Collin, 2002), with international adult educators (English, 2002), with teachers (Williams, 2003), with managers (Enos, Kehrhahn and Bell, 2003), with nurses, engineers and accountants (Eraut, 2007), and with senior managers in the cultural sector (Frei, 2007). In Turkey, except for the research conducted by Altay (2007) which examined informal learning experiences of software engineers in the workplace, no other research related to the subject of the study was found. Therefore, this study is expected to contribute to the adult education field by examining professional development in corporate training.

It is hoped that the results of this study will contribute to adult educators in developing preparatory programs for practitioners who would like to construct their own knowledge and skills in corporate training. This study is also expected to contribute to the literature about the corporate training profession and its practitioners.

Definitions of Terms

While trying to examine learning experiences of corporate training practitioners in the workplace, it is important to operationally define the following terms to be used in this study in order to avoid misconceptions and increase clarity:

Corporate training: In the literature, corporate training was found to be used interchangeably with workplace training, workplace learning, in-service training, industrial training, training and development. Within the study, as used by Meyer and Marsick (2003), "corporate training" was preferred for describing training activities in the workplace. It refers to organized activities of instructing and equipping

employees with the knowledge and skills they need while performing their jobs (Marsick and Volpe, 1999, Rothwell, et. al, 2003).

Practitioner: "anyone involved at whatever level in the planning and implementation of learning activities for adults (Merriam and Brockett, 2007, p.16.).

Formal learning: "typically institutionally sponsored, classroom-based and highly structured activities" (Marsick and Watkins, 1990, p.12).

Informal learning: "any activity involving the pursuit of understanding, knowledge and skill which occurs without the presence of externally imposed curricular criteria" (Livingstone, 2001, p.4).

Professional expertise: "the specific knowledge and skills needed in the practice of the profession" (Valkevaara, 2002, p.184).

Organization of the Study

Chapter II reviews the literature on adult learning and workplace learning together with the findings of the related studies in workplace learning. Chapter III provides information about the methodology including research design, research settings, research participants, data collection instrument, data collection procedures and data analysis. Chapter IV explains the findings of the data analysis including demographic information of the participants and their learning experiences in the workplace. Finally, Chapter V presents summary and discussion of the findings, conclusions, limitations and recommendations for further researches.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section provides a conceptual framework to understand adult learning and

workplace learning. In the first part, different theories and models of adult learning

are presented. In the second part, formal and informal learning together with factors

influencing informal learning in the workplace are investigated. Findings of the

related studies are also presented.

Adult Learning

In adult education, the basis of practice is shaped by theories and models

which try to explain adult learning. Different theories and models have emerged

since the foundation of adult education discipline in attempting to explain adult

learning. According to Engeström (2001), all theories of learning try to find answers

to four main questions: who are the subjects of learning, why do they learn, what do

they learn, and how do they learn.

Each theory and model have defined the learning differently and provided a

different perspective. However, it seems that a single theory or model is not

comprehensive enough to explain adult learning (Merriam, 2005). As stated by

Merriam, "adult learning is far too complex, too personal and at the same time too

context-bound for one theory" (2001, p.1). Therefore, rather than trying to define and

explain adult learning with a single theory or model, it is found much more helpful to

view different theories and models of adult learning.

In this part of the study, in order to provide a deeper explanation for the adult learning process, leading adult learning theories and models are taken into consideration. Theories and models namely experiential theory, andragogy, self-directed learning, reflection-in-action, transformative learning and situated learning are explained in detail.

<div align="center">Experiential Learning</div>

As a first theorist in adult learning, Lindeman (1926) identifies the experience as a main source for the learning process. He proposes five key assumptions about adult learners which serve as a base for not only experiential learning, but also for andragogy and self-directed learning. These assumptions are:

1. Adults are motivated to learn as they experience needs and interests that learning will satisfy,

2. Adults' orientation to learning is life-centered,

3. Experience is the richest source for adults' learning,

4. Adults have a deep need to be self-directing,

5. Individual differences among people increase with age (cited in Knowles, Holton and Swanson, 1998, p.40).

After Lindeman, the studies of Lewin, Dewey and Piaget provided the main framework for experiential theory. Lewin (1951) believes that learning is best facilitated with a process in which here-and-now concrete experience is turned into abstract concepts when a personal meaning is given to this concrete experience. Also for Dewey (1995), experience is a very important source for learning. He defines

learning as "a continuous process of reconstruction of experience" (p.30). Piaget also

emphasizes the importance of active experience of the individual as cited in Kolb

(1984):

> the key to learning lies in the mutual interaction of the process of
> accommodation of concepts or schemas to experience in the world and the
> process of assimilation of events and experiences from the world into existing
> concepts and schemas (p.23).

Deriving from the ideas of Dewey, Lewin and Piaget, Kolb (1984) developed

experiential learning theory by putting experience in the center. According to Kolb,

learning is defined as "the process whereby knowledge is created through the

transformation of experience" (p. 38). In that process, people learn from their

experiences within a continuous process. For Kolb, experiential theory is

characterized by propositions below:

1. learning is best conceived as a process, not in terms of outcomes,

2. learning is a continuous process grounded in experience,

3. the process of learning requires the resolution of conflicts between
   dialectically opposed modes of adaptation to the world,

4. learning is holistic process of adaptation to the world,

5. learning involves transactions between the person and the environment,

6. learning is the process of creating knowledge.

In the experiential learning model, there is a four-stage cycle in which learning

occurs as a result of transaction between four modes (see Figure 1):

1. Concrete experience: refers to the actual involvement of the learner in
   experiences.

2. Reflective observation: refers to the observation and reflection on the learner's experiences.

3. Abstract conceptualization: refers to the concepts that are created through the learner's observations.

4. Active experimentation: refers to the testing implications of concepts in new situations.

Concrete experience

Active experimentation

Reflective observation

Abstract conceptualization
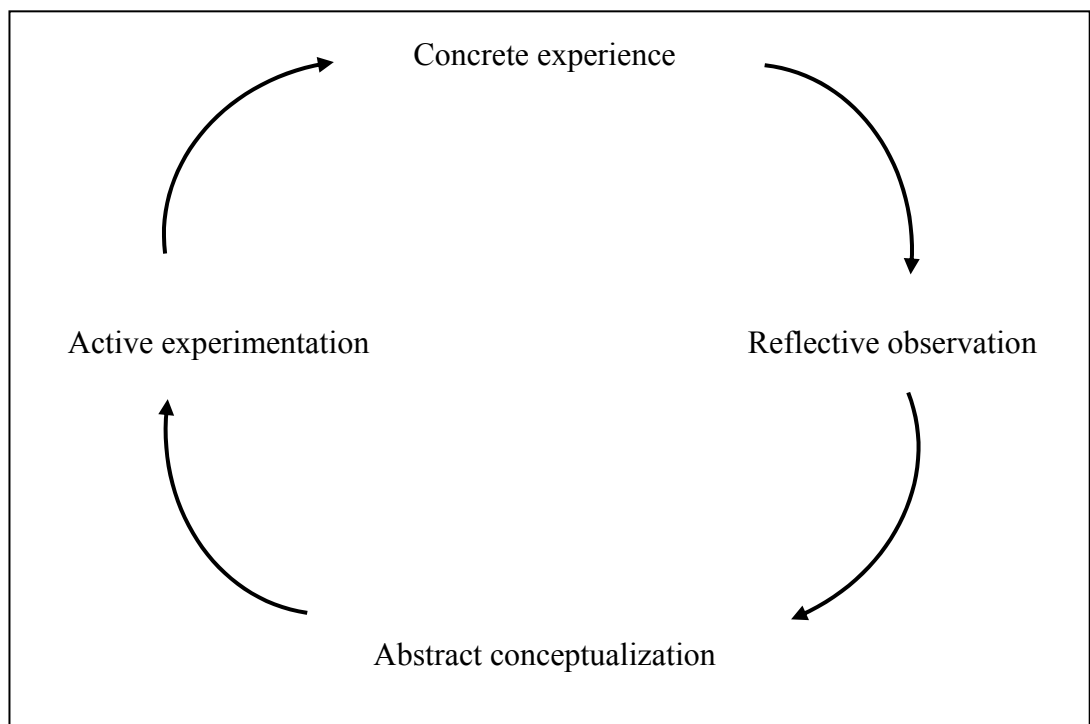
Figure 1. Kolb's experiential learning cycle

Source: Kolb, 1984, p.42.

In the process of learning, knowledge is created and transformed through the interaction between personal and social knowledge. In that sense, workplace is identified as an important site for this interaction. He believes that workplace has not only have a capacity for supplementing and enhancing formal education but also for developing people through meaningful work and development opportunities.

According to Kolb, within the workplace, there is a process of socialization into a profession through active experience. This experience:

> instills not only knowledge and skills but also fundamental reorientation of one's identity. This orientation is referred as a professional mentality and it is pervasive throughout all areas of the professional life; it includes standards and ethics, the appropriate ways to think and behave, the criteria by which one judges value, what is good or bad (p.182).

Kolb's theory provided a main framework for experiential theory. On the other hand, other points of views also emerged for the purpose of explaining the relationship between learning and experience. For instance, Usher (1993) differentiates concept of "learning from experience" from "experiential learning". While creating this distinction, experiential theory is perceived as a particular discourse. As it is shown in the below statement, main difference between "learning from experience" and "experiential learning" is that:

> The former happens in everyday context as part of day-to-day life, although it is rarely recognized as such. Experiential learning, on the other hand, is a key element of a discourse which has this everyday process as its "subject" and which constructs it in a certain way, although it appears to be merely a term which describes the process (1993, p.169).

Based on this distinction, Boud, Cohen and Walker (1993) who also prefer to use the concept of "learning from experience" add the importance of socio-cultural context in the learning process that was not mentioned in Kolb's experiential learning theory. They propose five key propositions for "learning from experience":

1. Experience is the foundation of, and the stimulus for learning,

2. Learners actively construct their experience,

3. Learning is a holistic process,

4. Learning is socially and culturally constructed,

5. Learning is influenced by the socio-emotional context in which it occurs.

<u>Andragogy</u>

In the late 1960s, based on Lindeman's assumptions about adult learners, the concept of andragogy was developed by the well-known adult education theorist, Malcolm Knowles. Andragogy is defined as "the art and science of helping adults to learn" (Knowles, 1980; p.43). It is defined in contrast to pedagogy which is defined as "the art and science of teaching children" (Knowles, 1980, p.40). According to Knowles (1980), andragogy is based on at least four crucial assumptions about the characteristics of adult learners who as individuals mature:

1. their self-concept moves from one of being a dependent personality toward being a self-directed human being.

2. they accumulate a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasingly rich resource for learning.

3. their readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly to the developmental tasks of their social roles.

4. their time perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application and accordingly, their orientation toward learning shifts from one of subject-centeredness to one of performance-centeredness (Knowles, 1980, pp. 44-45).

Although andragogy was influential in the adult education field during 1970s and 1980s, some criticisms were also developed for some of its assumptions (Tight, 2002, Merriam, 2005). According to these criticisms, andragogy is primarily evaluated as learning principles rather than as a theory. As it is stated by Merriam (2005), Knowles himself accepts that andragogy is less than a theory, but it is a model of assumptions about learning or a conceptual framework that serves as a basis for a theory. It is also indicated that some of its assumptions can be valid for children although only adult learners are characterized within andragogy. Its individualistic approach is also criticized by emphasizing that people are shaped by the culture and society that they belong to and they are not free from the social context. Finally, andragogy presents the individual as self-directed, autonomous and growth-oriented learner based in humanistic philosophy. However, it is emphasized that adults are not homogenous group of people as it is assumed by andragogy.

Taken criticisms into consideration, Knowles et. al. (1998) offered a new approach to adult learning named as "andragogy in practice" (see Figure 2). With this new approach, social context is also taken into consideration:

1. Goals and purposes of learning are related not only individual development, but also institutional and societal development.

2. Individual and situational differences take into account individual learner differences, subject matter differences and situational differences.

3. Core adult learning principles summarize andragogical principles within the context of practice.

Goals and Purposes for Learning

Individual and Situational Differences

ANDRAGOGY

Core Adult Learning Principles

1. Learner's Need to Know
   - Why?
   - What?
   - How?

2. Self-Concept of the Learner
   - Autonomous
   - Self-directing

3. Prior Experience of the Learner
   - Resource
   - Mental models

4. Prior Experience of the Learner
   - Life-related
   - Development task

5. Orientation to Learning
   - Problem-centered
   - Contextual

6. Motivation to Learning
   - Intrinsic value
   - Personal payoff

Individual Learner Differences

Subject Matter Differences

Situational Differences

Institutional Growth

Societal Growth

Individual Growth

Figure 2. Andragogy in practice

Source: Knowles, Holton III and Swanson, 1998, p.182.

<u>Self-Directed Learning</u>

In its effort to explain adult learning, self-directed learning also appeared as another model when andragogy became influential in adult education. Self-directed learning is based on the idea that learners are capable of directing their own learning. Tough (1966) was the first in describing the concept of self-directed learning in his study in which he focused on individuals engaged in a self-teaching project (cited in Brockett and Hiemstra, 1991). According to Brookfield (1995), "self-directed learning focuses on the process by which adults take control of their own learning, in particular how they set their own learning goals, locate appropriate resources, decide on which learning methods to use and evaluate their programs" (p.2).

Brockett and Hiemstra (1991) prefer to use the concept of "self-directed learning" differently from "self-direction in learning". They propose two distinct but related dimensions for self-direction in learning. First dimension is referred as self-directed learning which is based on taking responsibility for planning, implementing and evaluating the learning process, whereas second dimension is referred as learner self-direction which is based on the learner's desire or preference to assume responsibility for learning. So, both learner's internal characteristics and external characteristics are taken into consideration for learning. These two dimensions were illustrated in a model called "Personal Responsibility Orientation (PRO)" model of self-direction in adult learning (see Figure 3). In the model, personal responsibility refers to individual ownership for their thoughts and actions. Individuals may not have control over the circumstances, but they can choose the way to respond to these circumstances. For learning, ability and/or willingness of individuals play an important role in taking control over their own learning that determines potential of

self-direction. So, it is believed that personal responsibility refers to the learners'

choices about the directions that they would like to pursue. On the other hand,

learner self-direction refers to predispositions of individuals toward taking

responsibility for personal learning efforts. While self-direction is viewed as an

internal factor that facilitate learning, self-directed learning is viewed as an external

factor that defines personal responsibility of the individual for planning,

implementing and evaluating learning. In that model, self-direction in learning is

used as an umbrella concept that takes into account both internal and internal factors

of learning.
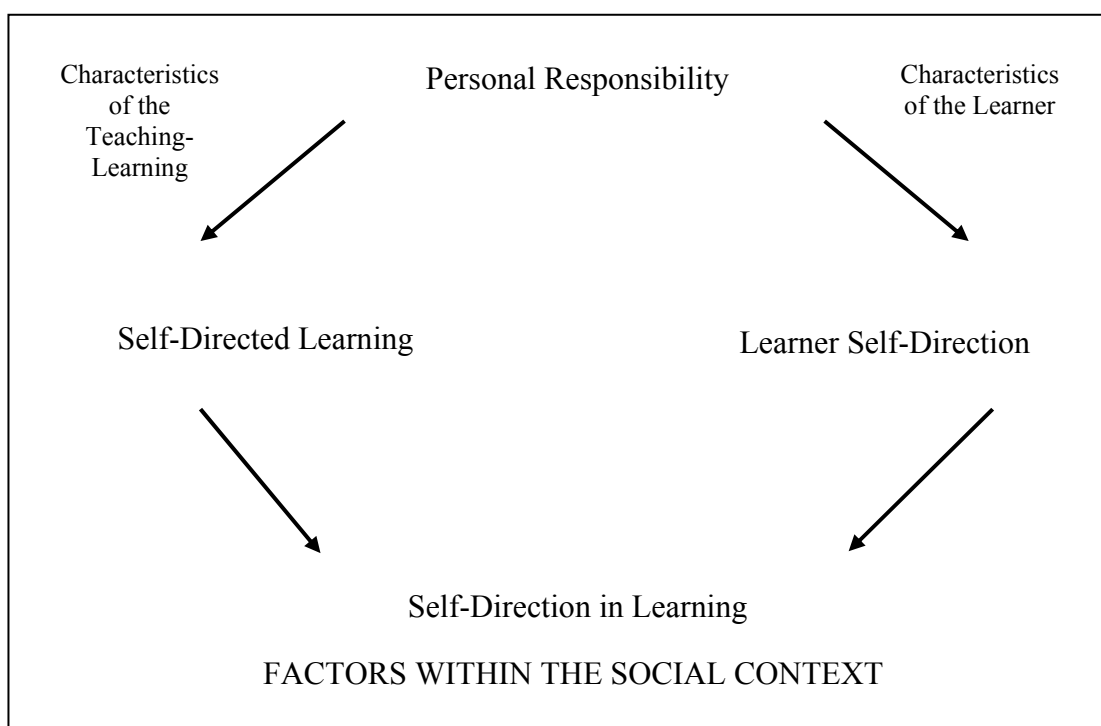
Figure 3. The "Personal responsibility orientation" (PRO) model

Source: Brockett and Hiemstra, 1991, p. 25.

Reflection-in-Action

According to Schön (1983), learning at work is developed through reflection in uncertain, ambiguous, contradictory dilemmas of practice. In order to transform the experience into knowledge, reflection is required during and after the practice. In that way, it is possible to generalize and transfer the knowledge to new contexts.

In the workplace context, a learner is believed to construct a personal meaning from his/her experience. He believes that in the workplace, "when a practitioner becomes aware of his frames, he also becomes aware of the possibility of alternative ways of framing the reality of his practice" (p.310). In other words, when practitioners think that they can actively construct their practices, they can also think of alternative ways of practicing through reflection-in-action.

In the process of learning in a profession, Schön (1987) also adds the importance of coaching and encouragement. He looks at the ways in which practitioners learn in the professions of architecture, music performance and psychotherapy and concludes that if practitioners are given real-time coaching and encouragement about what they do, their learning becomes more profound.

On the other hand, reflection-in-action is criticized by Usher, Bryant and Johnston (1997) who believe that Schön's work neglects the importance of situatedness of practitioners' experiences. Also, Boud, Keogh and Walker (2003) propose that there are limits to what individuals can do for themselves. Therefore, appropriate support is needed in the process of reflection to accelerate learning. In that process, what individuals bring to the situation determines the nature of experience. At the initial stage, individuals describe experience objectively. In the second stage, individuals are assisted to become aware of their positive and

obstructive feelings which are present during the experience. At the re-evaluation stage, outcomes are evaluated with new perspectives on experience.

Transformative Learning

Transformative learning theory developed by Mezirov (1991, 2000) is mainly interested in meaning making process through learning. According to Mezirov (2000), "learning is understood as the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience as a guide to future action" (p.5). He claims that learning occurs in four ways: "by elaborating existing frames of reference, by learning new frames of reference, by transforming points of view, or by transforming habits of mind" (p.19). He defines "frame of reference" as the meaning perspective that occurs as result of ways of interpreting experience.

Mezirov (2000) describes transformative learning with phases where critical reflection plays a central role. These phases are:

1. A disorienting dilemma

2. Self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt, or shame

3. A critical assessment of assumptions

4. Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared

5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions

6. Planning a course of actions

7. Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans

8. Provisional trying of new roles

9. Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships

10. A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's
new perspective (p.19).

In transformative learning theory, contextual factors are very important in formation of identity because they shape what adults know, believe, value and feel. So, in order to find answers to the questions of who, what, when, where, why and how learning occurs, cultural context should be taken into consideration. As Yorks and Marsick (2000) claims, learners are emancipated through transformative learning by becoming aware of the impact of psychological-socioeconomic-cultural forces on their personal choices. Through learning, it is expected that learners become critically aware of their own experiences to gain greater control over their lives. Transformative learning provides a way for adults to liberate themselves; otherwise, it is possible to be assimilated from others. So, critical reflection is in the centre of the theory.

On the other hand, Brookfield (2000) claims that "transformative learning cannot happen without critical reflection, but critical reflection can happen without an accompanying transformation in perspective or habit of mind" (p.125). He also argues that it is required to analyze power relations and hegemony for understanding critical reflection. For him, not every reflection is a critical reflection. For a reflection to be critical, it must include power analysis of the context or situation of learning.

Situated Learning

Situated learning is developed by those who focus on learning in everyday settings. It was first expounded by Brown, Collins and Duguid (1989) by arguing that

knowledge is situated as a part of an activity, context, and culture in which this knowledge is created. On the other hand, Lave and Wenger (1991) were the first in providing a comprehensive definition and explanation for situated learning. They propose that meaningful learning can only be taken place if it is embedded in the social and physical context. In that sense, they perceive learning as a situated activity where the interactions between people, the activity and the social context shape learning (Hansman, 2001).

This theory is developed due to the dissatisfaction with the traditional definition and explanation of learning which is identified as a process of internalization of knowledge. Traditional definition is criticized because it does not provide an explanation for how people learn new activities, knowledge and skills without being in formal educational and training processes (Fuller, Hodkinson, Hodkinson and Unwin, 2005).

According to Lave and Wenger (1991), learning occurs through process of participation in a community of practice. In that process, individuals acquire necessary knowledge and skills through actively involving in the process of legitimate peripheral participation. Legitimate peripheral participation enables the individual to learn the ways of being a member of the group and the culture of that group. They emphasize the social practice in which the production, transformation and change in the identities of people, knowledge and skills in practice are realized with engagement in everyday activity. They also claim that "learning, thinking and knowing are relations among people in activity in, with and arising form the socially and culturally structured world" (p.51). In that sense, informal networks acts as communities of practice where practitioners are supported for developing a shared meaning and engaging in knowledge building (Hara, 2001).

For Lave and Wenger (1991), development of identity through social practice at work is highly emphasized and seen as an inevitable part of the process for the newcomers; learning and identity are inseparable. Because situated learning theory identifies learning as a social practice in which new comers become a member of a profession, it has served as a useful theoretical understanding for workplace learning.

Workplace Learning

After presenting main adult learning theories and models, this part of the review provides a framework to understand workplace learning. In the literature, there are different definitions of workplace learning. According to Boud and Garrick (1999), workplace learning refers to both investment in the specific and technical capabilities of workforce and utilization of their knowledge and capabilities in the workplace. For Fenwick (2001), workplace learning is related to the globalized capitalism and the knowledge-based economy, and it is defined as "human change or growth that occurs primarily in activities and contexts of works" (p.4). Boud and Garrick indicate that literature on workplace learning is confusing in the sense that "there are many different accounts of what is encompassed by learning based in the workplace and there are also many different learning purposes" (1999, p.6). Therefore, for the purpose of the study, literature on workplace learning is explored on the basis of two predominant forms as formal and informal learning.

According to Malcolm, Hodkinson and Colley (2003), all learning situations in the workplace contains both formal and informal characteristics and they are interrelated in different ways in different learning situations. Besides, they influence the nature and effectiveness of learning. Barnett (1999) also points out that the relationship between learning and work occurs in different levels as personal and

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organizational levels and in different modes as formal and informal learning. This relationship is shown within the following grid (see Figure 4).

	Formal	Informal
Organizational		
Personal		

Figure 4. The relationship between learning and work

Source: Barnett, 1999, p.40.

Malcolm, et. al. (2003) suggest a heuristic approach for formal and informal learning. In their approach, there are four aspects of formality and informality:

1. Process: If everyday processes are incidental to everyday activity, they are defined as informal, while engagement in tasks structured by a trainer is regarded as formal.

2. Location and setting: Informal learning is identified as open-ended, without having specified curriculum, predetermined objectives and certification. Formal learning is seen as the opposite.

3. Purposes: While informal learning is learner determined and initiated, formal learning is designed to meet the externally determined needs.

4. Content: While informal learning focuses on development of everyday practice and workplace competence, formal learning focuses on the acquisition of established expertise knowledge.

According to Svenson and Ellström (2004), neither formal learning nor informal learning not alone guarantee acquisition of knowledge. Therefore, there is a need for

integrating formal and informal learning in the workplace while developing

sufficient knowledge. This view is shared by Malcolm, et. al. (2003) who criticize

dominant view in the literature that separately evaluates formal and informal learning

without trying to recognize, identify and understand their implications.

Even though workplace learning involves both formal and informal learning

experiences, this part of the review is mostly formed with informal learning literature

since all the relevant articles, studies and dissertations are found to be written on

workplace learning pointed out that the majority of learning occurs informally in the

workplace. In the next section, formal and informal learning in the workplace is

explored in more detail.

Formal Learning in the Workplace

As part of workplace learning, formal learning refers to learning activities where the

goal and process of learning is defined by the organization (Education Development

Center, 1998). It occurs in the work context and is organized by the business

organizations for the purpose of training the workforce -develop a skill or knowledge

related with the jobs and personal development-. In that sense, as Schön proposes,

formal learning generally provides what he calls "technical rationality" for necessary

knowledge to practice within a profession (1983).

Hager (1998) characterizes formal learning with the propositions below:

1. It is often intentional.

2. It has formal curriculum, competency standards and learning outcomes.

3. Its outcomes are largely predictable.

4. It is often explicit.

5. The emphasis is on the training and on the content and structure of what is trained.

6. It focuses on individual learning.

7. It uncontextualized.

8. It is seen in terms of theory and practice.

9. Learning knowledge typically is viewed as more difficult than learning skills.

In formal learning, learners follow a structured program or a series of experiences planned and directed by a trainer (Livingstone, 2001). They are engaged in lectures, discussions, simulations, role plays and other instructional activities outside of their work context (Enos, et. al., 2003). However, this is the main reason for raising criticisms against formal learning where it occurs outside of the context of daily practices (Brown and Duguid, 1996, cited in Hara, 2001).

Informal Learning in the Workplace

Informal learning in the workplace has the increasing attention of scholars and researchers in the last decades. According to two important scholars who predominantly wrote on the subject, namely Marsick and Watkins (2005), informal learning is the most prevalent form of learning in the workplace because it takes both the learner and the life experiences of the learner in the center of the learning process. Also for Eraut (2004), informal learning in the workplace is important, because it not only recognizes social side of learning by focusing on learning from other people, but also leaves a space for individual agency.

Although it is a relatively new subject of study, many articles have been written and many studies have been conducted for defining informal learning, for identifying factors influencing informal learning in the workplace and for exploring informal learning experiences of practitioners while developing their professional expertise.

In its broadest sense, "informal learning is a process of learning that occurs in everyday experience" (Cofer, 2000, p.1). On the other hand, informal learning in the workplace is defined as the "learning in which the learning process is not determined by the organization" (Education Development Center, 1998, p.35). According to Lohman, informal learning refers to activities of learning which are "initiated by people in work settings that result in the development of their professional knowledge and skills" (2000, p.84). In another definition of informal learning, Livingstone (2001) differentiates informal learning from informal education and informal training. For informal education and informal training, presence of some form of institutionally-recognized instructor is needed whereas for informal learning, there is a self-direction without direct reliance on a trainer or an externally-organized curriculum. For him, self-directed informal learning includes "intentional job-specific and general employment-related learning done on your own, collective learning with colleagues of other employment-related knowledge and skills, and tacit learning by doing" (2001, p.3).

Marsick and Watkins (1990) also emphasize on self-direction and provide a definition for informal learning together with incidental learning:

> Informal learning, a category that includes incidental learning, may occur in institutions, but it is not typically classroom-based or highly structured and control of learning rests primarily in the hands of the learner. Incidental learning is defined as a byproduct of some other activity, such as task

accomplishment, interpersonal interaction, sensing the organizational culture, trial-error experimentation or even formal learning. Informal learning can be deliberately encouraged by an organization or it can take place despite an environment not highly conducive to learning. Incidental learning, on the other hand, almost always takes place although people are not always conscious of it (p.12).

In their definition, informal learning consists of intentional but not highly structured activities. While informal learning occurs as a conscious activity, incidental learning is more tacit and unconscious as compared to informal learning.

Hager (1998) characterizes informal learning in the workplace as below:

1. It is often unintentional.

2. It has no formal curriculum or prescribed outcomes.

3. Its outcomes are much less predictable.

4. It is often implicit or tacit which means learners generally are not aware of the extent of their learning.

5. The emphasis is on the experiences of the learner as an employee.

6. It is more often collaborative.

7. It is highly contextualized and must include emotive, cognitive and social dimensions of employees' experiences in advancing their learning.

8. It occurs through practice.

9. Both knowledge and skills can be acquired through informal workplace learning.

According to Marsick and Volpe (1999), informal learning in the workplace is integrated with work and daily routines, triggered by an internal or external jolt, not highly conscious, haphazard and influenced by chance, an inductive process of reflection and action and linked to learning with others. Employees may use different

sources to learn informally in the workplace although they have different reasons to

learn. According to Conlon (2004), informal learning is used by the employees in the

workplace in order to:

> obtain help, information or support, learn from alternative viewpoints, gain
> ability to give greater feedback, consider alternative ways to think and behave
> (planned and unplanned), reflect on processes to assess learning experience
> outcomes and to make choices on where to focus their attention (p.287).

For the purpose of identifying the ways in which informal learning occurs in the

workplace, Marsick and Watkins (1990, 1999) developed a model (see Figure 5). In

this model, everyday activities give rise to learning while working and living in a

context. Every new experience may create challenging and problematic situations for

the individual. While individuals interpret their situation and decide between choices

and the actions, context of learning becomes very influential. After deciding between

choices and acting, an individual can evaluate the results in terms of whether it

reaches the intended goals. In other words, in the process of learning, there is a

progression of meaning making through questioning earlier understandings.

Although the model is explained in a circle, it is emphasized that the steps in the

model do not necessarily be linear and sequential. On the one hand, they provide a

framework to understand how informal learning occurs in the workplace; on the

other hand, they also identify the main sources of informal learning as self-directed

learning, networking, coaching, mentoring and performance planning.

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│                                                                        │
│   ┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐         │
│   │ Framing the  │  →   │   Triggers   │  →   │ Interpreting │         │
│   │ business     │      │              │      │ the          │         │
│   │ context      │      │              │      │ experience   │         │
│   └──────────────┘      └──────────────┘      └──────────────┘         │
│          ↑                  ╭─────────╮               ↓                 │
│   ┌──────────────┐         │ Context  │         ┌──────────────┐        │
│   │ Lessons      │         │          │         │ Examine      │        │
│   │ learned      │         ╰─────────╯         │ alternative  │        │
│   └──────────────┘                              │ solutions    │        │
│          ↑                                      └──────────────┘        │
│   ┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐               ↓                │
│   │ Assess       │  ←   │ Produce the  │  ←   ┌──────────────┐          │
│   │ intended and │      │ proposed     │      │ Learning     │          │
│   │ unintended   │      │ solutions    │      │ strategies   │          │
│   │ consequences │      └──────────────┘      └──────────────┘          │
│   └──────────────┘                                                      │
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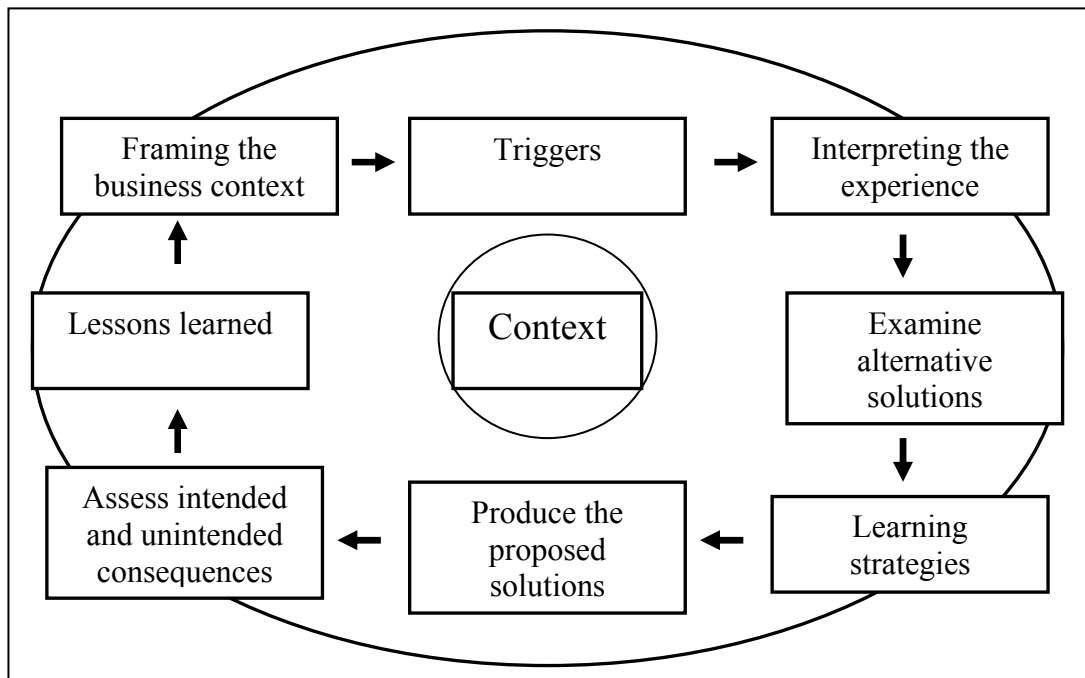
Figure 5. Informal and incidental learning model

Source: Marsick and Watkins, 2005, p. 155.

In the literature, much of the written papers and studies perceived informal learning as a neutral phenomenon. On the other hand, Garrick (1998) critically examines the definition of informal learning and identifies informal learning as a type of learning which is mostly influenced by the social positioning of the person at work. He makes a distinction between informal learning and learning informally. According to him, informal learning is being used as a discourse in the fields of management and human resources and mostly associated with the market economy and economic rationality. Whereas learning informally refers to individual's spontaneous experience in everyday life. According to Garrick (1998), informal learning in the workplace is used as a way of increasing efficiency and productivity and "the human capital view of informal learning is a feature of this discourse" (p.17). He criticizes this discourse which concentrates on how informal learning can be facilitated and

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enhanced or what can be done to make employees to learn more efficiently and effectively in their everyday work.

In addition to works of scholars to provide a theoretical framework for informal workplace learning, there has been found many studies exploring the subject. In line with the purpose of this study, researches on informal learning activities in the workplace and informal learning experiences of practitioners in different professions were explored.

The Education Development Center (1998) conducted a research project in seven work organizations operating in the manufacturing industry through observations, in-depth interviews, focus groups and a survey of 899 employees. In the research, thirteen work activities were identified where the majority of informal learning occurs. These were everyday work activities such as teaming, meetings, customer interactions, supervision, mentoring, shift change, peer-to-peer communication, cross-training, exploration, on-the-job training, documentation, execution of one's job and site visits. The above mentioned activities are in order of those that have the richest informal learning opportunities to those that have fewer opportunities for informal learning.

Garrick (1998) examined informal learning experiences of six Human Resources (HR) practitioners in the workplace by focusing on their professional roles, critical incidents that they experienced and workplace influences on their informal learning. It was found that individual notion of success, failure, the hidden agendas, emotional experiences at work and career motivations had an impact on their informal learning. Learning experiences were mostly associated with major successes, crises, jolts, perceived threats, fear of failure or change. Everyday events

shape the nature and extent of learning. At the same time, social structure of work also affects their view of reality.

Cheetham and Chivers (2001) investigated how professionals learn in practice through informal learning experiences. They selected dentistry, accountancy, the civil service, surveying, and training to study. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used and 452 practitioners participated in the research. In the survey, participants were asked to rate the importance of informal learning methods or experiences in helping them to become fully competent in their profession. On-the-job learning, working alongside more experienced colleagues and team work were found as major influences in professional development. They were followed by self analysis or reflection, learning from clients/customers/patients, etc., networking with others doing similar work, learning through teaching/training others. On the other hand, mentor support and the use of role models were rated as the least important factors. For the interview part of the study, they offered twelve types of learning mechanisms in accordance with the reported informal learning experiences of the participants: practice and repetition, reflection, observation and copying, feedback, extra-occupational transfer, stretching activities, perspective changing/switching, mentor/coach interaction, unconscious absorption, use of psychological devices, articulation and collaboration.

Hara (2001) conducted a qualitative study with seven attorneys in order to describe informal and formal learning found in organizations and to discuss the implications of informal and formal learning in communities of practice for professional development. The result indicated that formal and informal learning are complimentary for professional development.

Valkevaara (2002) examined the construction of professional expertise in Human Resources (HR) through examining the careers of HR practitioners. Twenty interviews were held with full-time experienced HR practitioners working in large companies and work organizations in Finland. It was found that development of professional expertise in HR was based on the interpretation of experiences in everyday situations at work as well as in other fields of life. The professional development was seen as an experiential and interpretative process.

English (2002) did qualitative life history research with thirteen women doing international adult education work. The main objective of the research was to generate knowledge about how international adult educators learn. The study examined informal and incidental learning in their lives together with the conditions that supported or limited their learning. There were found four themes as learning one's own limits, learning about hope, learning to negotiate the complex politics of identity, heightened awareness of injustice and lack of fit when they returned.

Collin (2002) explored learning experiences of development engineers on the job. The result indicated that learning in the workplace occurs through doing the job itself, cooperating and interacting with colleagues, evaluating work experiences - learning through one's own work experiences, learning from mistakes and learning through the accumulation of experiences and competencies-, taking over something new -learning through finding out, eureka-experiences from the subconscious, innovating/discovering/thinking, applying and connecting theoretical and practical knowledge, experimenting, creating-.

Revenko (2003) investigated the nature of workplace learning for human resources practitioners and interviewed twenty two practitioners at two sites ranging in roles from entry-level to executive. Informal learning was found necessary for

practitioners as their roles became more complex and strategic. While entry-level professionals described their best ways of learning as participating to formal learning events, coaching, and learning from experience; mid-level professionals described their best ways of learning as learning by doing and learning from working with others, reading, mistakes, and projects; strategic-level professionals described their best ways of learning as networking internally and externally.

Boud and Middleton (2003) did qualitative study with employees from four different workgroups in an organization to identify ways in which employees learn with and from others. They found two key findings. The first was the interaction between context and form of the learning that occurs and the second was the significance of informal networks for learning.

Enos, et. al. (2003) conducted research in which the extent of informal learning was investigated among 450 managers. The result indicated that informal learning was the result of giving meaning to the experiences in daily work lives. It was predominantly a social process where there was a continuous cycle of challenging experiences, action and reflection.

Frei (2007) made a study with cultural managers in Canada by using both quantitative and qualitative methods. In the quantitative part, eighty five cultural managers were participated to the study. In the qualitative part, five senior cultural managers who had no formal cultural management education were interviewed. The findings indicated that senior cultural managers' workplace learning was informal and formed by professional moment-by-moment judgement of the next step, the next right thing to do, support from caring co-workers, board members, and colleagues. It was also found that their informal learning was enhanced, in some cases by reflective practice.

Eraut (2007) made a longitudinal study of early career professional learning of forty newly qualified nurses, thirty eight graduate engineers and fourteen accountants. Participation in group processes, working alongside others, consultations, tackling challenging tasks and roles, problem solving, trying things out, consolidating, extending and refining skills, working with clients, asking questions and getting information, locating resource people, listening and observing, learning from mistakes, giving and receiving feedback, mediating artifacts were found as main informal learning activities.

Berg and Chyung (2008) explored the types of informal learning activities people engage at work. They did quantitative research with 125 learning and performance improvement professionals where they identified that participants gained new knowledge from informal learning activities more frequently than formal training programs. The most frequently used type of informal learning was found reflecting on their previous knowledge and actions.

For study only in Turkey, Altay (2007) explored informal learning in the workplace among a group of software engineers in a private bank in Istanbul. She interviewed 15 employees in order to understand employees' informal learning experiences in the workplace. Two main categories of informal learning experiences were found, "learning on their own" and "learning from other people". Under "learning on their own category"; informal learning activities were found such as execution of the job, exploration and trial-error. On the other hand, questioning, mentoring, personal interactions, working in teams, observation, listening, role modeling and on-the-job training were specified under the learning from other people category. She also analyzed the factors that lead to informal learning in the workplace and found two main factors, job related factors and personal related

factors. Job related factors were efficiency, promotion, salary increase, mastery of the job, security and career; personal factors were recognition/respect, personal development, joy of learning, self-esteem and socialization.

<div align="center">Factors Influencing Informal Learning in the Workplace</div>

When it is referred to influencing factors of informal learning in the workplace, there appear two main groups of factors in the literature, namely contextual factors and individual factors. These factors can influence learning experiences of employees positively or negatively. In other words, they can be facilitators or inhibitors of learning in the workplace.

Although both factors were identified as important, more studies which focused on contextual factors were found. For instance, Cseh (1998) conducted a review of literature on 143 dissertations between 1980 and 1998, whose subject of study was informal learning and found that context had an impact on learning (as cited in Marsick, Volpe and Watkins, 1999).

As learning is a socially constructed activity in the workplace, investigating contextual factors is important to understand how learning is shaped in the workplace context. At the same time, individual factors which focused on the way in which people behave, make decisions and communicate are also important for their engagement in informal learning (Gregorc, 1982, Hirsch and Kummerow, 1990, cited in Berg and Chyung, 2008).

Education Development Center (1998) defined contextual factors which "are not directly connected with informal learning but rather they are part of the environment in which informal learning occurs" (p.97). It was emphasized that these factors had an impact on the amount and quality of learning within the workplace.

According to Hager (1998) there were six different contextual factors influencing informal learning in the workplace as culture, work organization, career structure, strategic needs, technology and change. For Marsick and Watkins (2005), organizational context which has a capacity to produce different work assignments can lead to different opportunities and priorities for learning. They recognized three conditions for enhancing informal learning in the workplace. These conditions were identified as critical reflection, proactive actions and creativity. Critical reflection is needed to surface tacit knowledge, proactivity is needed to actively identify options and to learn new skills and creativity is needed to encourage more options. They also emphasized that while people learn in groups like in the workplaces, individuals' interpretations are highly influenced by the social and cultural norms of others and power dynamics.

In the research project of Education Development Center (1998), there identified two different types of factors influence informal learning in the workplace. Accordingly, three organizational factors were identified as industry of the organization, company/firm, and culture (organizational practices, social norms and values) of the organization. On the other hand, four individual factors were identified as internal motivation, personality, mental capacity and work experience.

Lohman (2000) examined environmental inhibitors to informal learning in the workplace. Twenty-two experienced teachers were interviewed and four main factors emerged: lack of time for learning, lack of proximity to learning resources, lack of meaningful rewards for learning and limited decision-making power in school management.

In the study of Revenko (2003), it was found that organizational factors influenced HR practitioners' ability to learn. These factors were identified as lack of

time to attend to formal training or lack of time to reflect on what they learned from their daily activities, heavy workload, communication gaps and continuous change within the organization.

Skule (2004) conducted interviews with various occupational groups in eleven enterprises and made a quantitative survey with 1300 employees. Seven learning conditions were identified which promote informal learning in the workplace, high degree of exposure to changes, a high degree of exposure to demands, managerial responsibilities, extensive professional contacts, superior feedback, management support for learning and rewarding of proficiency.

Ellinger (2005) looked at the contextual factors influencing informal learning in the workplace by conducting a qualitative case study with thirteen participants from a manufacturer company. It was found that learning-committed leadership and management, an internal culture committed to learning, work tools and resources and people who form webs of relationships for learning are positive contextual factors influencing informal learning in the workplace. On the other hand, leadership and management not committed to learning, an internal culture of entitlement that is slowly changing, work tools and resources, people who disrupt webs of relationships for learning, structural inhibitors, lack of time because of job pressures and responsibilities, too fast and too much change were found as negative organizational factors in influencing informal learning in the workplace.

Eraut (2007) also differentiated between individual learning and contextual factors. In his longitudinal study, allocation and structuring of work, relationships with people at work together with expectations of individual participation and expectations of their performance and progress were identified in the group of contextual factors. On the other hand, challenge and value of the work, feedback and

support together with confidence and commitment were identified in the group of individual learning factors.

Berg and Chyung (2008) found that personal and environmental factors had an impact on informal learning experiences of professionals. These factors were identified as interest in the current field, computer access, personality, professional capability, relationship with colleagues, job satisfaction, job itself, work environment, physical proximity and monetary rewards.

All the findings of the studies mentioned above that searched for factors influencing informal learning in the workplace were summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of the Findings of the Studies for Factors Influencing Informal
Learning in the Workplace

Study	Sample	Factors	
		Contextual Factors	Individual Factors
Education Development Center, 1998	899 employees	1) Industry of the organization 2) Company/firm 3) Culture (organizational practices, social norms and values) of the organization	1) Internal motivation 2) Personality 3) Mental capacity 4) Work experience
Lohman, 2000	22 experienced teachers	1) Lack of time for learning 2) Lack of proximity to learning resources 3) Lack of meaningful rewards for learning 4) Limited decision-making power in school management	
Revenko, 2003	22 human resources practitioners	1) Lack of time to attend to formal training 2) Lack of time to reflect on what they learned from their daily activities 2) Heavy workload 3) Communication gaps 4) Continuous change within the organization	
Skule, 2004	1300 employees	1) A high degree of exposure to changes 2) A high degree of exposure to demands 3) Managerial responsibilities 4) Extensive professional contacts 5) Superior feedback 6) Management support for learning 7) Rewarding of proficiency	
Ellinger, 2005	13 employees	1) Leadership and management committed/not committed to learning 2) An internal culture committed to learning 3) Work tools and resources 4) Webs of relationships for learning Structural inhibitors 5) Lack of time because of job pressures and responsibilities 6) Too much, too fast change	
Eraut, 2007	40 newly qualified nurses, 38 graduate engineers and 14 accountants	1) Allocation and structuring of work 2) Relationships with people at work 3) Individual participation and expectations of their performance and progress	1) Challenge and value of the work 2) Feedback and support together 3) Confidence and commitment
Berg and Chyung, 2008	125 learning and performance improvement professionals	1) Computer access 2) Relationship with colleagues 3) Job satisfaction 4) Job itself 5) Work environment 6) Physical proximity 7) Monetary rewards	1) Interest in the current field 2) Personality 3) Professional capability

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

In this section, the methodology of the study is presented. The methodology includes research design, research settings, research participants, data collection instrument, data collection procedures and data analysis.

Research Design

This is a descriptive qualitative study which investigates the professional development in corporate training through learning experiences in the workplace. The participants were interviewed with a semi-structured interview form developed by the researcher.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is a method of study that is grounded in the experiences of people (Marshall and Rossman, 2006). It tries to discover the ways in which people interpret their experiences, construct their worlds and attribute meaning to their experiences (Merriam and Simpson, 2000). The key concern here is to understand the perspectives of the participants (Merriam, 1998). And, the key assumption is that individuals construct their reality while interacting with others in their social contexts (Merriam and Simpson, 2000).

Therefore, qualitative research was found as the most appropriate method since it was aimed to discover the perceptions of corporate training practitioners for

their learning experiences in the workplace while developing their professional expertise. Because the main purpose was to understand participants' perspectives and explore the past experiences of the participants (Merriam, 1998, Cassell and Symon, 2004), semi-structured interviews were conducted for data collection.

Research Settings

Participants were interviewed in three different private business organizations operating in banking, retail and telecommunication sectors. On the basis of convenient sampling, the study was conducted within the organizations that have specific training departments and provide considerable amount of training opportunities for its employees.

For the purpose of confidentiality, organizations were referred with fictitious names. Organization in the banking sector was referred to as Company X, organization in the retail sector was referred to as Company Y and organization in the telecommunication sector was referred to as Company Z. In the next section, each research setting is explained in detail.

Company X

The first research setting selected for the study was the headquarters of a private bank. It has almost 16,000 employees and 850 branches all over Turkey. The bank has a good reputation in terms of providing a considerable amount of training of its employees. Training activities are organized under the corporate banking academy. There are four areas of training within the academy as banking, personal development, leadership and social responsibility. In 2008, the training department provided 55 man-hours training per employee.

The training department operates under the human resources group and is headed by a training director together with twenty three employees working with her. There is a high degree of division within the department in terms of allocation of responsibilities. There are three main divisions in the training department: Relations with business units, planning and implementation. There are two department heads and six training consultants who are responsible for managing relations with business units and meeting their training needs. They are the ones who design training programs in line with the training needs of the business units that they are responsible for. After training programs are designed, the planning unit organizes places, participants, trainers, dates, etc. and informs the implementation unit where logistic needs of training programs are organized and provided. Besides these divisions, there are also individual project managers who are responsible for execution of specific training projects within the bank.

Company Y

The second research setting selected for the study was the headquarters of a private business organization operating in the retail sector. It has almost 1,030 employees and 118 stores all over Turkey. Training department operates under the human resources group and organizes different training activities under the categories of personal development, basic training, technical training and managerial training. In 2008, the training department provided 61 man-hours training per employee.

The training department is headed by a training and development director with five employees working with her. There is one manager and four specialists working in the department. The learning manager and one learning specialist are responsible for training of managers in the field, one specialist is responsible for

training of the employees in the field, one specialist is responsible for training office employees and the other is responsible for training programs of the specific product they sell. All of the training practitioners are responsible for development and implementation of training programs that they are responsible for.

<u>Company Z</u>

The third research setting selected for the study was the headquarters of a private business organization that operates in the telecommunication sector. It has almost 2,500 employees all over Turkey. The training department operates under the human resources group and organizes different training activities in three main areas. There are basic trainings including orientation and organizational development programs; functional trainings which provide technical knowledge in line with the needs of each business unit and managerial trainings. In 2008, the training department provided 59 man-hours training per employee.

The training department is headed by a talent management and training manager with six employees working with her. There are three training and development supervisors, two specialists and one assistant. Training and development supervisors are mainly responsible for managing relations with business units and meeting their training needs. They are the ones who design training programs in line with the training needs of the business units that they are responsible for. Training and development specialists and the assistant help them to implement designed training programs.

Research Participants

Thirteen corporate training practitioners from three different business organizations
participated in the study. Six participants from Company X, three participants from
Company Y, and four participants from Company Z were interviewed (see Table 2).

Table 2. Participants Interviewed by Business Organization

Company	Number of Female Participants	Number of Male Participants	Total
X	6	-	6
Y	2	1	3
Z	2	2	4
Total	10	3	13

The main criteria for selection were that participants were currently working as a
corporate training practitioner, responsible for training development activities within
business organizations, and willing to be interviewed. Those who were mainly
responsible only for operational work in the training department were not included in
the study. Participants varied in their age, gender, educational backgrounds,
experience and position levels. All interviews took place during the workdays and in
the workplaces of participants. Again for the purpose of confidentiality, each
participant was referred to with a fictitious name.

Data Collection Instrument

For exploring learning experiences of corporate training practitioners in the
workplace, a semi-structured interview form was developed by the researcher. The
critical incident technique was also used. In this part, the development of the
interview form and the process of pilot study are explained.

Development of Interview Form

In this study, while developing the semi-structured interview form, the studies of Garrick (1998), Eraut, Alderton, Cole and Senker (2002), Revenko (2003), Billett (1994), Outschoorn (2007), Frei (2007), Altay (2007) and the knowledge derived from the literature review were benefited.

The interview form that was developed for testing included twelve questions for gathering demographic information and twelve open-ended questions for learning experiences of the participants. Participants were asked about their responsibilities, knowledge and skills they needed, training programs they participated, their learning experiences in the workplace, factors facilitating their learning experiences and their general strategies for situations that required acquisition of new knowledge and skills.

In the first place, it was checked with two colleagues of the researcher who were experienced in corporate training. Their comments helped the researcher to go over wordings of the some questions which were found directive and to revise some of the questions making them clearer and comprehensible for the participants.

In the second place, the interview form was piloted through the interviews with two corporate training practitioners in company X. During the pilot interviews, it was realized that participants experienced some difficulties in remembering and expressing their learning experiences. Also, it was observed that they preferred to use general statements rather than giving specific examples while describing their learning situations. For this reason, workplace learning literature was reviewed again to investigate whether there would be a possibility to help the participants during the interviews to make them remember easily their learning moments and to reveal their

responses on the basis of actual events and situations. The main purpose was to increase the validity of the study.

After the review of related literature, it was seen that critical incident technique was a widely used technique for data gathering in variety of professions while exploring what people do (Fivars and Fitzpatrick, 2009). Critical incident technique is a qualitative interview procedure developed first by Flanagan (1954) to collect behavioral information about people when they are solving their practical problems. It facilitates the investigation of significant events, incidents, etc. identified by participants and understanding the ways in which they are managed by the participants, enables the researcher to focus on discussion around the investigated issues and facilitates the revelation of the issues which were significant for the participants (Cassell and Symon, 2004).

Therefore, critical incident technique was also found appropriate to use for the purposes of the study. Accordingly, critical incident question was formulated by reviewing the studies of Billett (1994), Garrick (1998), Frei (2007) and Altay (2007). A new question was added into the interview form to collect information for learning experiences of practitioners in critical incidents. In the question, the participants were asked to recall a work situation where they thought that they did not have needed knowledge and skills. They were requested to define the situation, the ways in which they dealt with the situation, what they learned and how they felt.

After the pilot study, besides adding a new question related to learning experiences of practitioners in critical incidents, some other changes were also made in the interview form in order to increase clarity and comprehensiveness. First, questions in the demographic information part were re-organized and the numbers of questions were decreased to seven. Second, open-ended questions that explored

learning experiences of the participants were re-organized by subdividing some questions. New questions were also added to collect organizational information about the training unit that participants currently worked for, factors inhibiting learning experiences of the participants and perceived areas of improvements that the participants see for themselves. Finally, the question that asked whether the participants perceived themselves competent in the profession was excluded from the interview form.

The revised version of the form that was used in the actual interviews included seven questions for gathering demographic information and twelve open-ended questions for learning experiences of the participants (see Appendix A for Turkish version and Appendix B for English version of the interview form).

Pilot Study

Before the actual interviews, as was explained above, a pilot study was carried out in two steps. In the first step, the interview form was tested with two colleagues of the researcher who had experiences in corporate training. In the second place, it was piloted with two corporate training practitioners working in the training department of Company X. In both of the steps, the concern was to increase the validity of the interview form and to check whether questions are open, clear and understandable for the participants, the sequence of the questions are appropriate and the questions are comprehensive.

In the first step, two colleagues who have been working in the same company with the researcher responded to the interview questions. The first colleague was 37 years old, female, with thirteen years of work experience in human resources and corporate training. Currently, she has been working as a trainer. The second one was

a 50 year old female and had seventeen years of work experience in corporate training. Currently, she has been working as a training development manager.

In the second step, for gaining access to corporate training practitioners who participated in the pilot study, the training director of Company X was called to explain the purpose of the study and to ask which practitioners would be convenient for the interview. Two practitioners' names were given for the pilot study together with the permission to conduct actual interviews also. Two practitioners were called within the same day to explain the purpose of the study and to receive approval to participate in the pilot study. While the first person accepted to participate, the second person apologized for not being able to participate because of her business trip abroad. However, she stated her willingness to have an interview for a later time when actual interviews were held. So, a new name was called, and she accepted to participate to the pilot study.

The first interviewed practitioner was a 32 year old female with six years of experience in corporate training. This experience was gained within the current organization that she has worked for. In her current job, she has been working as a planning specialist. The second participant was a 30 year old female also with six years of experience in corporate training. She gained this experience within three different organizations. Currently, she has been working as a training consultant. During the interviews, it was planned to record the interviews with a tape recorder. However, because no meeting room was provided, the interviews were able to be conducted in the cafeteria with a lot of noise and people around. During the interviews, responses were to be written by hand. This unexpected situation caused the researcher some difficulties in writing responses of the participants.

The pilot study which was carried out in two steps helped the researcher to gain control over the form while interviewing the participants. At the same time, after the pilot study, it was realized that there was a need for a meeting room from participants for the actual interviews.

Data Collection Procedures

First of all, for each business organization, head of training departments were called to explain the purpose of the study, to obtain necessary permission to conduct the study and to ask the names of corporate training practitioners who had training development responsibilities within the department. It was emphasized that those who were doing mainly operational works were not included in the study. After having the names, participants were called to explain the purpose of the study and to receive their approvals to participate. All who were called accepted to participate. An interview date was decided with the participants according to their availability and interviews were conducted out in their workplaces.

The data was collected during February and March 2009. The interviews lasted about thirty five minutes in average. In the beginning of the interviews, permission to tape was requested. Only two of the participants did not give permission to record the interview. In that case, interviews were recorded through hand writing. Two participants in Company X and all three participants in company Z interviewed at the cafeteria where no meeting room was available. Their interviews required more careful data transcription due to other voices which interfered in the interviews.

Data Analysis

The data gathered in this study were analyzed using the content analysis method. The responses of the participants about the critical incidents were also analyzed together with the responses of other questions. It provided a way to get more accurate record of the participants' perceptions by comparing general opinions of the participants with critical incident responses.

All the interviews were transcribed and transcribed data was reviewed several times by the researcher. The first phase of analysis consisted of building a set of dimensions according to research questions. And then, interview data was coded under each dimension to construct a categorization framework. There emerged sixty codes within nine dimensions.

In the second phase of data analysis, all transcribed data were read and analyzed according to emerging codes. For each code, the frequency was calculated by counting the number of practitioners who mentioned the code in their responses. And, in the final phase of data analysis, the codes and dimensions were converged into three major themes.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This part of the study is organized to present information related to research

questions. First, demographic information of the participants and their short career

histories are presented. Then, major findings resulted from data analysis are

presented under three emerging themes in the study as becoming a corporate training

practitioner, the extent of professional expertise in corporate training and the ways of

professional development in corporate training. Emerging themes used in the

analysis are presented in Table 3.

The responses of the practitioners are quoted in English. To provide some

basic personal data of the participant quoted, the fictitious name of the participant,

the company that she/he work for and her/his title is provided in parenthesis after the

English translation. Original statements in Turkish are also presented in Appendix C.

Table 3. Emerging Themes for Learning Experiences of Corporate Training Practitioners in the Workplace

Themes	Dimensions	Codes
Becoming a Corporate Training Practitioner	The Ways and Reasons of Starting to Work in Corporate Training	1. Not planned 2. Planned 3. Not a deliberate choice 4. A deliberate choice 5. Not an informed decision 6. An informed decision 7. Coincidental
The Extent of Professional Expertise in Corporate Training	Roles	8. Managing relations with business units/account management 9. Being a strategic partner 10. Being a consultant
	Responsibilities	11. Training needs analysis 12. Planning 13. Training design and content development 14. Coordination of training programs with external companies and consultants 15. Implementation 16. Evaluation, measurement and follow-up 17. Budget management 18. Taking roles in different projects 19. Delivering training programs
	Knowledge	20. Knowledge in training management 21. Business knowledge 22. Knowledge in the training sector
	Skills	23. Communication skills 24. Presentation skills
The Ways of Professional Development in Corporate Training	Ways of Learning	25. Reading books & articles 26. Searching the internet 27. Asking questions 28. Consulting managers 29. On the job experience (learning by doing) 30. Exploration 31. Participating in training programs and conferences 32. Working within projects with external training consultants 33. Presenting 34. Reading existing data and documents 35. Reviewing previous data and documents 36. Self-reflection
	Learning Sources	37. Managers 38. Colleagues 39. External consultants 40. Internet 41. Books & articles 42. International memberships 43. Training programs & conferences 44. Existing data and documents 45. Previous data and documents
	Individual Factors Influencing Learning	46. Self-motivation to learn 47. Self-confidence 48. Individual effort 49. Being curious 50. Like to read 51. Having related educational background 52. Not having related educational background
	Contextual Factors Influencing Learning	53. Organizational/management commitment to training-positive 54. Organizational/management commitment to training-negative 55. Managers' attitude 56. Colleagues' attitude 57. Cooperation-The degree of willingness to share knowledge-high 58. Cooperation-The degree of willingness to share knowledge-low 59. Structure of work 60. Availability of learning resources

Demographic Information of the Participants

In the semi-structured interview form, the first part included questions concerning the following information about the participants: gender, age, educational background, total years of work experience, total years of experience in corporate training, number of companies they worked for and the reason they chose to work in corporate training.

Those who participated in the study were between 28 and 38 years old, and the average age of participants was 32. There were ten females and three males in the study. Accordingly, females constituted 77 % and males 23 % of the participants (see Table 4).

Table 4. Participants by Gender and Age

#	Company	Name	Gender	Age
1	X	Seda	Female	37
2		Lale	Female	29
3		Mine	Female	34
4		Fatma	Female	28
5		Deniz	Female	32
6		Dilek	Female	37
7	Y	Elif	Female	36
8		Serap	Female	28
9		Metehan	Male	28
10	Z	Selin	Female	38
11		Nehir	Female	30
12		Erkan	Male	32
13		Murat	Male	33

For work status of the participants, the most experienced participant had 15,5 years of total work experience while the least experienced one had 4 years of total experience. On the other hand, the most experienced participant in corporate training had 15,5 years of experience while the least experienced one had 1,5 years of experience.

Except three participants who have been working in the same company since the beginning of their careers, all practitioners have worked in two and more companies. Practitioners were called with different titles in each business organization as training division head, training consultant, learning manager, learning specialist, talent management and training manager, and training and development supervisor. Accordingly, there were four practitioners in management positions and nine practitioners in mid-level positions in the study (see Table 5).

Table 5. Participants by Work Status

#	Name	Total Years of Work Experience	Total Years of Experience in Corporate Training	Number of Companies Worked (including the current one)	Company	Sector	Title of the Person Interviewed
1	Seda	15	12	2	X	Banking	Training Division Head
2	Lale	9	9	2			Training Consultant
3	Mine	12	12	1			Training Consultant
4	Fatma	5	5	2			Training Consultant
5	Deniz	13	7	2			Training Division Head
6	Dilek	13	9	1			Training Consultant
7	Elif	18	9	6	Y	Retail	Learning Manager
8	Serap	4	2	2			Learning Specialist
9	Metehan	5	1,5	2			Learning Specialist
10	Selin	15,5	15,5	5	Z	Telecommunication	Talent Management and Training Manager
11	Nehir	6	3	5			Training and Development Supervisor
12	Erkan	9,5	1,5	2			Training and Development Supervisor
13	Murat	9,5	2,5	3			Training and Development Supervisor

When the practitioners' level of education was considered, it was found that eight

practitioners had an undergraduate degree and five practitioners had a masters

degree. One practitioner had a double major. On the other hand, three practitioners

currently have enrolled in a master program and two have enrolled in a Ph.D program.

As educational backgrounds were taken into consideration, it appeared that practitioners were very diverse in terms of their areas of study. For undergraduate degrees, there were five practitioners who were graduates of the faculty of arts and sciences, five graduates of the faculty of economics and administrative sciences, two graduates of the faculty of education, one graduate of the faculty of communication and one graduate of the faculty of engineering. In addition to this, eleven different areas of study emerged. Except psychology, sociology and economy which have two graduates, there was one graduate in guidance and psychological counseling, communication, German language and literature, educational sciences, business administration, public administration, labor economics and electronics engineering.

For master degrees, except one practitioner who was a graduate of the faculty of arts and sciences, remaining practitioners were from the faculty of economics and administrative sciences. There emerged four different areas of study among master degrees as business administration, human resources, organizational behaviour and psychology. For Ph.D degrees, two areas of study emerged, organizational behaviour and musicology.

All the details about the educational backgrounds of the participants are given on Table 6.

Table 6. Participants by Educational Backgrounds

#	Nickname	Undergraduate	Master	Ph.D
1	Seda	Guidance and Psychological Counseling	-	-
2	Lale	Communication	Human Resources (is continuing)	-
3	Mine	Sociology	Business Administration	-
4	Fatma	Economy / German Language and Literature	Business Administration (is continuing)	-
5	Deniz	Educational Sciences	-	-
6	Dilek	Economy	-	-
7	Elif	Business Administration	-	-
8	Serap	Psychology	Psychology	-
9	Metehan	Psychology	Organizational Behaviour	Organizational Behaviour (is continuing)
10	Selin	Public Administration	Human Resources (is continuing)	-
11	Nehir	Labor Economics	Business Administration	-
12	Erkan	Sociology	Business Administration	Musicology (is continuing)
13	Murat	Electronics Engineering	-	-

After reporting demographic information of the participants, below detailed information is provided for each participant to have a better understanding for the career development of the participants:

Seda: She was 37 years old. She had an undergraduate degree in Guidance and Psychological Counseling. She had fifteen years of work experience. Her first job was in the tourism sector. After three years of work in tourism, she started to work in the training department of the bank that she has been working for twelve years. She started to work as a training consultant and now she is a training division

head. She expressed that she made an informed decision when starting to work in corporate training.

Lale: She was 29 years old. She had an undergraduate degree in Communication. Currently, she is studying in Human Resources master program. She had nine years of experience in work and corporate training. The bank was her second workplace where she has been working for one and a half year. She has been working as a training consultant. She expressed that she did not make an informed decision when starting to work in corporate training.

Mine: She was 34 years old. She had an undergraduate degree in Sociology. She had twelve years of experience in working life and corporate training. She has been working in the same workplace since the beginning of her career. She expressed that she did not make an informed decision when starting to work in corporate training.

Fatma: She was 28 years old. She had an undergraduate degree both in Economy and German Language and Literature. Currently, she is studying in Business Administration master program. She had five years of experience in working life and corporate training. The bank was her second workplace where she has been working as a training consultant for nine months. She expressed that she did not make an informed decision when starting to work in corporate training.

Deniz: She was 32 years old. She had an undergraduate degree in Educational Sciences. She had thirteen years of work experience. Her first job was related to congress organization where she worked for six years. She has been working in the bank for seven years. She started as a training specialist and works as a training division head now. She expressed that she did not make an informed decision when choosing to study in Educational Sciences. After graduation, she did not think to

work in corporate training, but after six years of work experience, she thought that it could be suitable to work in corporate training as a related field of her education.

Dilek: She was 37 years old. She had an undergraduate degree in Economy. She had thirteen years of work experience. Her first job was in corporate banking department where she worked for four years. After, she was transferred to training department of the bank where she has still been working as training consultant for nine years. She emphasized that she made an informed decision when starting to work in corporate training after her first job in corporate banking.

Elif: She was 36 years old. She had an undergraduate degree in Business Administration. She had eighteen years of work experience. She worked in sales, import and export, human resources and training positions in different organizations. She had nine years of experience in corporate training. She has been working in Company Y as a learning manager for six years. She expressed that she did not make an informed decision when starting to work in corporate training, but after working in the field, she believed that corporate training was very suitable for her.

Serap: She was 28 years old. She had an undergraduate and master degree in Psychology. She had four years of work experience. She worked in a laboratory for two years while studying in the master program. She has been working in Company Y as a learning specialist for two years. She stated that she did not plan to work neither in corporate life nor corporate training. But due to monetary reasons, she had to work. She found corporate training as a suitable field to work.

Metehan: He was 28 years old. He had an undergraduate degree in Psychology and a masters degree in Organizational Behavior. Currently, he is studying Organizational Behavior Ph.D program. He had five years of work experience. He worked as a consultant in a consultancy company for three and a half

years. He has been working in Company Y as a learning specialist for one and half years. He stated that because he liked to teach people, he wanted to work in corporate training.

Selin: She was 38 years old. She had an undergraduate degree in Public Administration. Currently, she is studying in Human Resources master program. She had fifteen and a half years of work experience where she has mostly worked in human resources and training departments of different banks. She has been working in Company Z as a talent management and training manager for one and half years. She expressed that she made an informed decision when starting to work in human resources and corporate training.

Nehir: She was 30 years old. She had an undergraduate degree in Labor Economics and a degree in Business Administration. She had six years of work experience where she mostly worked in human resources and training departments of different business organizations. She has been working in Company Z as a training and development supervisor for one month. She expressed that she did not make an informed decision when starting to work in corporate training.

Erkan: He was 32 years old. He had an undergraduate degree in Sociology and masters degree in Business Administration. Currently, he is studying in the Musicology doctorate program. He had nine and a half years of work experience. He worked in the customer care department of a bank for one and a half years. After, he started to work in Company Z where he worked in customer care, sales and marketing, organizational development, and payroll and training departments for eight years. He has been working in training department as a training and development supervisor for one and a half years. He stated that after working in different departments of Company Z, he finally ended up in the training department.

Murat: He was 33 years old. He had an undergraduate degree in Electronics Engineering. He had nine and a half years of work experience. He worked as an engineer and trainer in another telecommunication company for seven years. He has been working in training department of Company Z as a training and development supervisor for two and a half years. He stated that he chose to work in training department after becoming a subject matter expert and trainer in his projects.

After describing demographic information and short career stories of the participants, next section presents the interview findings on learning experiences of practitioners under three main themes: becoming a corporate training practitioner, the extent of professional expertise in corporate training and the ways of professional development in corporate training.

<div align="center">Becoming a Corporate Training Practitioner</div>

Based on data analysis, this part of the study examined how practitioners enter into corporate training. Analysis of data revealed that there were differences among practitioners' ways and reasons to start working in corporate training. Nine practitioners stated that they did not make informed decisions when they started to work in the profession:

> It was not really a very conscious (decision), but without being aware, you know, I applied to such a job that searched for a person who speaks English and later I really liked this job (Lale, Company X, training consultant, see Appendix C.1.).

One practitioner indicated that she had an interest in corporate training but started to work in the profession without much planning:

Actually, I had an interest, but I did not make an informed decision…the training department was offered to me. And I accepted and started there. I liked the job (Fatma, Company X, training consultant, Appendix C.2.).

Although all nine practitioners expressed that they started to work in corporate training by coincidence, one practitioner also expressed that she even did not know what was done in corporate training when she was offered to work in that department:

It cannot be said that I chose it. I mean, I wanted (to work in) marketing, product management, something like that…Frankly I was not thinking of training…I was offered a position in training…a new project was started in the training department. I mean I accepted because there was an opportunity to work with foreign consultants. And after I could not leave. Actually, I did not know what was done in this area (Mine, Company X, training consultant, Appendix C.3.).

On the other hand, remaining four practitioners stated that they willingly and intentionally started to work in corporate training. Nonetheless, they had different reasons to work in the profession. One of them explained that she made an informed decision because she had both a related educational background for corporate training and a desire to work in corporate life:

I mean, I graduated from the Education Faculty. My job is also related to this. I could choose psychological guidance in schools or training. I was thinking training from the beginning. I wanted to work in a corporate setting. It started this way. I mean, my job is a continuation of my education, not a different sector (Seda, Company X, training division head, Appendix C.4.).

Another practitioner indicated that her decision was very intentional after four years of work experience in another department of the same organization. When she analyzed her expectations from a job, she decided to apply for a position in corporate training department:

First of all, because I was not satisfied with my current job in sales, it was the result of my search. I analyzed myself. I evaluated what I wanted to do in my life. I found suitable because there was the possibility of continuous self-renewal, learning new things and working to do something like that. And, I requested a change in my job in line with my needs and needs of the department, I was offered a position in training. And, I found it suitable (Dilek, Company X, training consultant, Appendix C.5.).

Another practitioner stated his reason to enter into corporate training because of his personal characteristics that suited for the profession:

I like to explain. Because of that, I like to give training as well (Metehan, company Y, learning specialist, Appendix C.6.).

The last practitioner perceived corporate training as one of the most important areas of human resources and stated her preference to work in corporate training because of increasing importance of that field as a profession:

When I was graduated, human resources was a shining star. I was influenced by the courses that I took related with human resources (Selin, Company Z, talent management and training manager, Appendix C.7.).

In short, when practitioners were asked to state their reasons to start working in corporate training, it appeared that practitioners' level of awareness was not very high for making informed decisions when they started their careers in the profession. Although all of them expressed that they liked their jobs after working within the profession, it appeared that they mostly entered into corporate training coincidentally.

The Extent of Professional Expertise in Corporate Training

As it was stated by Valkevaara (2002), in the practice of a profession, professional expertise is formed with the needed specific knowledge and skills. In this section, in order to understand the extent of professional expertise in corporate training, practitioners' responsibilities and their conception about the needed knowledge and skills while performing these responsibilities in corporate training were identified.

<u>Roles and Responsibilities of Corporate Training Practitioners</u>

Analysis of interview data showed that training needs analysis, training design, coordination of training activities with external consultants, planning, development of internal trainer system, implementation, measurement and evaluation, and budget management were generally shared responsibilities of the practitioners. While eight practitioners pointed out that they were sometimes given responsibilities in different projects, three practitioners also stated that they had a responsibility in delivering training programs.

As they were listing their responsibilities, it was also highly emphasized by practitioners that their role within the organization was very important in terms of managing relations with other business units. Nine stated that they were consultants and strategic partners within the organization in order to help business units to realize their business goals. One of the practitioners expressed that she had to be in a consultant role for providing necessary support to employees while determining their training needs in line with their business objectives:

Sometimes, people may not be clear about which training they want to take. They need to be directed, that is to say, you need to consult them. You need to

show them what they really want (Mine, company X, training consultant, Appendix C.8.).

Another practitioner stated their desire as a department to work as consultants in the organization by emphasizing their ability to look at training issues in a broader view when compared to other employees. This role made it possible to manage training activities in the most appropriate ways in accordance with the needs of business units:

> Here, we want to be a in a consultant concept. Because, not all requests coming to us can be related to training, there can be different things. We look more generally as we work very directly with top management. We can look in a different way, because we participate to different meetings with top management. Or, we can look training needs of the branches differently when we make a branch visit. Accordingly, it is important here to think the requests in every aspect using training knowledge and decide which solution is suitable (Seda, company X, training division head, Appendix C.9.).

When responsibilities of corporate training practitioners were considered, it appeared that they were mainly managing training activities within the organization as a process starting from training needs analysis to training evaluation. While they were performing these responsibilities, they stressed out that they were acting as a consultant and strategic partner within the organization.

<u>Conception of Practitioners for Professional Expertise</u>

In order to understand the extent of professional expertise in corporate training, practitioners were asked to list the needed knowledge and skills for working in corporate training. During the interviews, it was observed that practitioners generally experienced difficulty in identifying the types of knowledge they needed. On the other hand, they specified needed skills more easily and quickly.

After data analysis, conceptual knowledge in training and business knowledge emerged as two main categories of needed knowledge. On the other hand, communication skills and presentation skills were mentioned as the mostly required skills for practitioners.

<u>Knowledge</u>

In order to be able to perform within corporate training, conceptual knowledge in training and business knowledge were identified by practitioners as inseparable constituents of their professional expertise. While conceptual knowledge in training was needed to carry out main responsibilities within corporate training, business knowledge was found to be important for accomplishing roles of consulting and strategic partnership within the organization.

<u>Conceptual Knowledge in Training</u>

The considerations of practitioners during the interviews about the needed conceptual knowledge in training emerged as training needs analysis, training design, measurement and evaluation together with the knowledge in psychology and adult learning. Having conceptual knowledge in corporate training was identified by practitioners as a necessity to fulfill one's responsibilities within the profession. Twelve of them primarily emphasized the importance of conceptual knowledge in the profession. As one practitioner stated, being able to respond to training needs of employees required to have knowledge in training:

> When you are in the profession, you have to have the sufficient knowledge to be able to create solutions (Deniz, company X, training division head, Appendix C.10.).

Another one also believed that without conceptual knowledge in training, it was

difficult to decide among appropriate training methods to use:

> I think you need to have a good theoretical knowledge. If you do not know the
> methods, you can not decide which method can be used where (Metehan,
> company Y, learning specialist, Appendix C.11.).

While the significance of conceptual knowledge in corporate training was highly

emphasized, its extent was also described in detail by the practitioners. One

practitioner summarized that conceptual knowledge in training meant to have

knowledge in training management starting from training needs analysis to

implementation:

> First of all, you need to understand what training management is…When I say
> training management, I mean starting from training needs analysis to planning,
> to see the whole picture actually. That is to say, yes, I make consulting but I
> need to know what is done in planning, in implementation. When I say training
> management, I mean this (Lale, company X, training consultant, Appendix
> C.12.).

Besides knowledge in training management, another practitioner also emphasized

that they were required to know how training job was implemented within business

organizations:

> When we look at it in terms of knowledge, firstly, you need to have knowledge
> and the experience in how training job is done within the organizations in order
> to do this job. What kinds of needs do business units have, how are these needs
> analyzed, how training options are presented with suitable formats. What these
> training options are, where you can get them. After, how they are measured and
> followed in terms of transfer of learning to the business, such kind of
> knowledge is needed (Dilek, company X, training consultant, Appendix C.13.).

Apart from training specific knowledge, knowledge in psychology and adult learning

were also found valuable by some practitioners who especially did not have

knowledge in these areas. The main belief behind was that if they had theoretical

knowledge in psychology and adult learning, this knowledge could facilitate their

jobs. Five practitioners identified knowledge in psychology as an important subject

of learning. One of them stated that she would have preferred to study psychology:

> If I had studied in psychology, if my basic education had been in the field of
> psychology, it would have been better for me (Elif, company Y, learning
> manager, Appendix C.14.).

Besides its importance, one practitioner explained why they need this type of

knowledge in corporate training. Knowledge in psychology was important for them

to understand and evaluate the contents and tools used by training consulting

companies:

> I think there is a need for knowledge in psychology. Because, we play with the
> contents of the training programs. None of the training companies give their
> scales that they use. Of course, we have to evaluate them very carefully. I think
> this kind of background can be very beneficial (Nehir, company Z, training and
> development supervisor, Appendix C.15.).

In addition to knowledge in psychology, five practitioners indicated that knowledge

in adult learning could also assist them in their jobs because they were mainly

working with adults. They needed to understand how adults learn. As it was

emphasized by one practitioner, adults learn differently than children and

understanding this difference was significant:

> I think, the person who will do this job should know how an adult learns, how
> an adult learns differently from a child, how his /her cognition is structured
> with a taxonomic process. This is the most important point (Metehan, company
> Y, learning specialist, Appendix C.16.).

Another practitioner also added that because they were working with different adult

profiles, knowledge in adult learning could help them while they were adapting their

training contents according to levels of the employees:

> Of course, how an adult learns is the subject that we are interested in directly.
> Because, let me explain in this way, we are not working with children, we are
> working with adults, but their profiles are very different. We are working with
> various, very mixed profile. Those people who work in the field can be
> university graduates or graduates of primary school (Elif, company Y, learning
> manager, Appendix C.17.).

During the interviews, two practitioners thought differently than the ther practitioners

and did not mention any need for conceptual knowledge in training. Among them,

one practitioner believed that the most important knowledge was business related

knowledge. Another emphasized that the most important knowledge was the

knowledge that helped you to show the ways of presenting your work to others. This

knowledge was needed to improve the image of corporate training and could be

gained through developing a sales and marketing point of view:

> It seems to me that technical knowledge is not needed. I think relations
> management, that is to say, how this is done in other sectors, marketing, and in
> general, knowledge in sales and marketing can be necessary. For instance, how
> you present your work, it is the knowledge that we need more…You need to
> have a specific sales and marketing point of view. Because people think that
> training in technical meaning does not require any knowledge and there is a
> perception that it can be done by anybody else. Or, people sometimes think that
> we do nothing. You should be able to show what you are doing (Fatma,
> company X, training consultant, Appendix C.18.).

To conclude, having a good theoretical background in corporate training was

specified as a need for practitioners while performing their responsibilities. Except

one practitioner in the study, practitioners considered conceptual knowledge in

training as highly important. Also, knowledge in psychology and adult learning were

perceived as supplementary areas of conceptual knowledge for people who wanted to develop professional expertise in corporate training.

Business Knowledge

While conceptual knowledge was needed to perform responsibilities of corporate training, business knowledge was required to be a successful consultant and strategic partner within the organization. Business knowledge mainly included knowledge about the sector and the organization that they worked for, and the training sector. During the interviews, ten practitioners underlined the significance of business knowledge for professional expertise. Among them, six practitioners mainly emphasized the importance of sectoral and organizational knowledge. One practitioner realized that without having this type of knowledge, it was impossible for a practitioner to be accepted by other employees in the organization as a business partner:

> In training job, the person should know his/her organization's dynamics. Knowing the product, organization and sector. If she/he looks as coming from the outer space as a person working in training, employees also look training in that way. Becoming a business partner can be realized in this way (Deniz, company X, training division head, Appendix C.19).

As stated by one practitioner, experiences which helped to develop business knowledge were considered very helpful:

> In terms of knowledge, you need to have information about the sector that you work for. I had branch experiences in the bank. I had internships, I took many technical trainings. I see advantages of this here. Therefore, to have technical knowledge in banking, to know how things work in branches are important. Knowledge in banking is important not only for identifying training needs, but also for presenting and explaining yourself clearly (Fatma, company X, training consultant, Appendix C.20.).

Another practitioner also expressed that related business knowledge was very

important and her business knowledge was even equal to the knowledge of the

people who work in the business unit that she provided training consulting:

> I need to know the operation very well in my field of work…I mean, I can say
> that I'm the most knowledgeable person on the operation other than (people
> working in) operation unit (Elif, company Y, learning manager, Appendix
> C.21.).

Among practitioners who considered business knowledge as significant, five of them

mainly emphasized the importance of having up-to-date information in training

sector:

> (One should know)…what are the most well known consulting companies
> within the sector, it is important in terms of becoming familiar with the sector
> (Erkan, company Z, training and development supervisor, Appendix C.22.).

In summary, business knowledge was perceived as important as conceptual

knowledge in training while working in corporate training. Having related business

knowledge helped them to become more effective consultants and strategic partners

within the organizations.

Skills

For practitioners, training profession was very human-oriented profession where

there was a need for interacting with different people everyday. In order to be

successful in that profession, it was also necessary to possess some skills. Although

different range of skills was mentioned during the interviews, there emerged

predominantly two main set of skills. These were communication and presentation

skills. Communication skills were underlined by ten practitioners in the study as the

most important needed skill in corporate training. In general, communication skills

were used as a means of managing relations with people:

> Because we communicate with departments, communication skills are needed (Fatma, company X, training consultant, Appendix C.23.).

> I mean, there are generally a little bit communication, I mean difficult people, types of people, how should you behave them, a little bit negotiation in training (Mine, company X, training consultant, Appendix C.24.).

Communication skills was followed by presentation skills and mentioned by seven

practitioners in the study. One practitioner expressed the importance of presentation

skills together with communication skills in their jobs:

> Presentation skills is very important. Somewhat, people relations and being active, if you are passive, you can not be successful in that job. Satisfaction would be lower (Lale, company X, training consultant, Appendix C.25.).

As it was shared by practitioners in the study, there were two components of

development of professional expertise in corporate training. On the one hand,

conceptual knowledge in corporate training and business knowledge was needed. On

the other hand, it was required to possess good communication and presentation

skills while interacting with people in the workplace.

In the next section, the ways in which these identified knowledge and skills

were acquired by practitioners in order to understand professional development in

corporate training was investigated.

The Ways of Professional Development in Corporate Training

This part of the study describes formal and informal learning activities experienced

by corporate training practitioners in the workplace while developing their

professional expertise. Factors influencing their informal learning experiences are also presented.

Practitioners' Formal Learning Experiences in the Workplace

Practitioners who participated to the study recognized formal learning as one of the ways of learning in the profession, but not as the primary one. Except one practitioner, all of the practitioners mentioned that they participated to some daily training programs, short courses and conferences during their employment within a corporate training department. However, they were identified as very limited and insufficient.

The most frequently mentioned training program was the "Train the Trainer" program which was given to ten practitioners. It was mainly given to practitioners in order to develop their ability to present and deliver effective training programs. Practitioners in the study indicated that they participated to programs with different lengths as two-day, three-day and five-day. "Train the Trainer" was followed by five-day "Consulting Skills" program which was given to six practitioners. Two-day "Project Management", seven-day "Training Design", and two-day "Presentation Skills" were mentioned by only three practitioners. Practitioners also stated that they participated to some daily training programs to develop their related business knowledge.

Accordingly, result of the interviews obviously showed that practitioners did not participate to any systematic training courses for their preparation and development in the profession. Except for ten practitioners who participated in "Train the Trainer" program and three practitioners who were given a course on training design, none were provided with any specific training related knowledge

with their profession. "Train the Trainer" program was appeared in the study as the only program that was mentioned by most practitioners.

On the one hand, while it emerged that there were limited formal learning opportunities for practitioners; on the other hand, some of them were found irrelevant by practitioners for their learning needs. One of the practitioners expressed her ideas about training programs that she took during her employment:

> After I started to work, I took train the trainer. It was not directly related with training but I took modules related with banking. After, I took some training related with presentation skills. I took something like what are the basics of communication. Here, I took management relations training. I took training for preparing effective presentation in PowerPoint… Some part of them made a contribution. I mean, I was given some unnecessary technical training programs (Fatma, company X, training consultant, Appendix C.26.).

During the interviews, they also expressed their conceptions about the adequacy of existing formal training programs. It was believed that these programs might be helpful but not the primary source of constructing expertise in corporate training:

> Because I think there are rare training programs that provide really useful knowledge with a good trainer (…). But, apart from this, the most beneficial was – yes, anyway I still acquire useful information (from training)- but as I said, experience is the most important for me (Serap, company Y, learning specialist, Appendix C.27.).

To conclude, after starting to work, except for one practitioner, all practitioners in the study reported their participation in some training programs. However, these programs were identified as insufficient by practitioners in their development in corporate training.

Practitioners' Informal Learning Experiences in the Workplace

Within the study, informal learning emerged as the main way of learning for practitioners while they were developing their professional expertise within corporate training. All informal learning activities mentioned in the study were initiated by practitioners themselves. In that sense, they were found to be highly intentional and self-directed learners while trying to acquire needed knowledge and skills to perform their jobs.

It was also identified that informal learning experiences of practitioners were started with daily tasks and challenges on the job. When practitioners were faced with situations that required new knowledge, they passed through a self-directed learning process where they experienced different informal learning activities.

By drawing upon the literature review and data analysis, there emerged two main categories of informal learning within the process of practitioners' informal learning. These emerged as "learning on their own" and "learning from others". They were also identified by Eraut (2004) and Altay (2007). In this section, these categories were explained in more detail.

Learning on Their Own

"Learning on their own" refers to activities where practitioners learn individually without getting any help from the other people in the workplace. During the interviews, there emerged four different learning activities for "learning on their own". They were identified as exploration –reading books and articles, searching the internet, reviewing documents-, execution of the job, presenting and self-reflection.

While exploration was found as the mostly used learning activity, self-reflection emerged as the least mentioned learning activity among the practitioners in the study. Learning activities under "learning on their own" category were listed in order of frequency those that were mentioned by more practitioners to fewer practitioners.

<u>Exploration</u>

Exploration is defined as "the process through which individual employees initiate activities such as self-directed informal study, resource identification and use" (Education Development Center, 1998, p.81). When practitioners were asked to do a task without having the necessary knowledge, exploration was found as the first and the most frequently used learning activity by practitioners.

Reading books and articles, searching the internet and reviewing documents emerged as the main categories of exploration. They were also presented in order of frequency.

<u>Reading Books and Articles</u>

In the exploration process, books and articles emerged as the most preferred sources of learning for practitioners. There were eleven practitioners in the study who identified and used these types of sources to generate or deepen the required knowledge to carry out their tasks. One practitioner indicated that when she was transferred to her new position in corporate training, she needed to read related books and articles in order to complete her knowledge in corporate training:

> …I tried to close the gap myself. In that period, I tried to understand and learn by reading more (Dilek, company X, training consultant, Appendix C.28.).

Having memberships to international periodicals helped the practitioners to follow

related articles and up-to-date information on corporate training. Although business

organizations might have corporate memberships, practitioners had generally their

individual memberships. One practitioner expressed that because he was very much

interested in reading, he subscribed individually to electronic periodicals just after

starting to work in corporate training:

> When I started to work, I subscribed to ASTD and to some electronic periodicals. Also, I searched for the articles related with training and read by myself. Also, I searched for some resources for training evaluation and measurement. So…because I'm curios about reading (Erkan, company Z, training and development supervisor, Appendix C.29.).

Another practitioner explained that electronic sources for books and articles were

very effective in terms of providing easy access:

> I have a digital library. That is to say, thousands of books and articles…thousands of books and articles. When I enter two words in there, everything becomes available (Metehan, company Y, learning specialist, Appendix C.30.).

On the other hand, even though books and articles were identified as important

sources, they were also questioned by some of the practitioners in terms of their

adequacy:

> Actually, there is not adequate resource on training. I mean, the same things are written again and again. For instance, we had memberships in corporate universities as a resource; you are paying a yearly fee. Yes, there are good things, providing insights but you are reading some articles in it and there is nothing. That is to say, I read, what happened, there is no result (Fatma, company X, training consultant, Appendix C.31.).

Another practitioner criticized available books on personal development which were

thought to be helpful guides in their profession:

Personal development books, I am definitely reading these kinds of books. But, they become worthless. Every book is written by depending on different things. Therefore, they are not very academic but in general; I read these kinds of things (Nehir, company Z, training and development supervisor, Appendix C.32.).

As emphasized by practitioners, reading books and articles was the most used learning activity in the exploration process although there emerged some questions and critiques regarding their levels of adequacy.

Searching the Internet

In the exploration process, searching the internet was the second most preferred learning activity for practitioners when they need to explore new knowledge. Eight practitioners stated that they used internet very frequently as a source of exploration:

I try to understand the concepts through investigating on the internet (Fatma, company X, training consultant, Appendix C.33).

As it was expressed by one practitioner, internet was a commonly used source because there was easy access to almost all kinds of information through it:

Generally, I use internet. I can immediately search on internet if I have something that I do not know. It is not just only related with our area. I mean, I use internet as much as possible…If it is in internet, I mean I find. If I search something on internet, it is there in a detailed way. Learning to use internet, it is not just internet, there are some search engines; in Google, it is possible to find documents and videos. Reading and exploring as much as possible. It is possible to reach every kind of document (Nehir, company Z, training and development supervisor, Appendix C.34.).

As with books and articles, the internet was also found as a vital source for practitioners when they specifically try to get a new knowledge while doing their

jobs. Both books and articles, and internet were used mostly by practitioners because they were easily accessible.

<u>Reviewing Documents</u>

During the interviews, practitioners mentioned that they used different documents in the workplace while exploring. There emerged two different types of documents. In the first place, there were documents that included organization-specific information found in the correspondence system, process and procedures. These documents are called as codified knowledge (Eraut, 2004). Secondly, there were documents specific to corporate training department that included previous works, projects and statistical data of training activities. Both current and previous documents were utilized as a source of learning within the organization.

In the study, codified knowledge was mainly indicated as a source of business knowledge. Seven practitioners emphasized that these documents were important to gain a better understanding in up-to-date business knowledge. One practitioner found them significant and explained that in her previous job, reading what was written in correspondence system was helpful for her:

> For example, there was an internal correspondence system in there. I sometimes questioned this internal correspondence system. What kind of a response was given, etc. In terms of technical knowledge, for example, it is important to follow daily announcements or news for the sake of being up-to-date (Fatma, company X, training consultant, Appendix C.35.).

Documents were also the tools for understanding the previous works within the organization. Practitioners reviewed previous documents in order to understand what was done before and how it was done:

I tried to understand what's done until today. I tried to read documents related with the subject (Dilek, company X, training consultant, Appendix C.36.).

As much as possible, I try to understand from documents what comes from where (Nehir, company Z, training and development supervisor, Appendix C.37.).

Another practitioner also believed that reviewing previous documents made him think that he was able to do the work. It provided a way to increase his self-confidence:

Someone did this work before, okay. If someone did this before, there are some related resources. I mean, when I fall into darkness, I say in terms of a project, I asked myself a question that others also should have fallen into this darkness. Alright, and then I say they found their ways anyway (Metehan, company Y, learning specialist, Appendix C.38.).

Another practitioner stated that looking at previous examples was helpful but it was not mean that they can be applied in the same way:

I explore, look at examples and look at what was done by whom. But, when I say I look at what was done, it does not mean copying of course, but I think history is very important. You know you take lessons form history. I always look at history, and after, I develop my way (Lale, company X, training consultant, Appendix C.39.).

To summarize, reviewing documents was also found helpful by practitioners for acquiring needed business knowledge and understanding business practices within the organization.

Execution of the Job

Education Development Center defines execution of the job as "the repetition of specifically assigned tasks" (1998, p.89). In that respect, while participants were

engaged in execution of their daily responsibilities, they learned how to perform

within their jobs. During the interviews, seven practitioners emphasized the

importance of learning while executing the job. As stated by two practitioners below,

on the job learning experience was a source of learning:

> I think there is active learning, I think, learning by doing. The most effective
> learning method is learning by doing I think…I think it is required to have
> somewhat experience, live it and experience it (Lale, company X, training
> consultant, Appendix C.40.).

> Generally I learned the job by doing (Mine, company X, training consultant,
> Appendix C.41.).

On the other hand, one practitioner added that she had to learn individually while

doing the job because no one helped her:

> I mean, I learned the work on the job. No one taught me anything (Nehir,
> company Z, training and development supervisor, Appendix C.42).

As it was indicated by another practitioner, execution of the job made him to learn

not only how to do the job, but also how to behave while doing the job:

> I can say that we learned most of them through experiencing. When facing
> events, what should be done, how should be behaved, of course, habits coming
> from general work experience also help for what to do (Murat, company Z,
> training and development supervisor, Appendix C.43.).

However, another one believed that on the job experience was very vital for

professional development in corporate training if you were provided learning

opportunities within the organization:

> I learned the job by experiencing (…). Working with the right people, in the
> right place, in the right projects, finding many opportunities to experience made
> me learn. Training is learned on the job, while organizing training, you become

expert on the job (Selin, company Z, talent management and training manager, Appendix C.44.).

Presenting

Presenting refers to activities of sharing information with others or delivering training to them. Six practitioners emphasized that transferring information and knowledge to others was a significant learning experience. It required both subject matter expertise and good presentation skills. One practitioner indicated that making presentations provided an ongoing learning opportunity for practitioners. It was also emphasized that while sharing information, there emerged a reciprocal relationship between the presenter and other people which in turn provided a learning experience:

> You are transferring information, but at the same time, you continue to learn (Serap, company Y, learning specialist, Appendix C.45.).

Another practitioner indicated that delivering training after developing the content was very valuable learning experience:

> When you try to bring together all the sources and develop something and moreover, if you will also give this training, this becomes a very important learning process. This is the one of the most important things (Seda, company X, training division head, Appendix C.46.).

As was mentioned by the practitioners in the study, presenting provided a development opportunity for practitioners in terms of both increasing their knowledge and improving their presentation skills.

<u>Self-Reflection</u>

For Boud and Middleton (2003), reflection is the learner's response to the experience. It was one of the most important ways to enhance learning by evaluating the experience. It could be realized during the experience or after the experience. In this way, practitioners could construct their own meaning from their learning experiences. However, as a learning activity, self-reflection was the least mentioned activity among others. It was expressed by five practitioners. One practitioner emphasized that she made self-reflection while experiencing the situation:

> I evaluate the situation within itself. I decide how I will respond and how I will continue (Mine, company X, training consultant, Appendix C.47.).

Another practitioner stated that she reflected on her experiences after experiencing them:

> I questioned myself too much. What I am doing insufficiently and what I can do better (Elif, company Y, learning manager, Appendix C.48.).

While five practitioners mentioned that they were reflecting on their learning experiences, only one stressed the importance of critical reflection:

> You can see that, you may not know what you think you know or you may know wrong. There is nothing available to tell us what we know is wrong. But, as much as possible, as I said, I try to find the right think by exploring and questioning (Nehir, company Z, training and development supervisor, Appendix C.49.).

However, during the interviews, no data indicated that practitioners reflected on their experiences after every learning activity.

<u>Learning from Others</u>

Activities of "learning from others" refer to learning experiences of practitioners with people who help them in their professional development. Within the study, when practitioners learned from others, main sources of learning emerged as managers, colleagues and external consultants and main activities of learning were identified as questioning, consulting and working in projects. It appeared that while practitioners mostly asked questions and consulted their managers and colleagues, they generally worked in projects with external consultants.

Roles of people who were actively involved in learning experiences of practitioners were found significant by practitioners. One practitioner emphasized that when she started to work in corporate training, she learned together from external consultants, her manager and her colleagues:

> At most actually, this is for the first period (of my career), consulting company and one of my manager and my colleagues (Seda, company X, training division head, Appendix C.50.).

Another practitioner explained that she learned together from her manager and her colleague who were experienced in the job:

> When I first started to work in training department, my manager was already a trainer. He was experienced in corporate training and formal education. Also, my colleague whom I started to work with was also graduated from my university. But, because she directly started to work in training, she had 4-5 years of experience in that field. She helped me (Deniz, company X, training division head, Appendix C.51.).

Seven practitioners stated that their managers were the most important people in their professional development. One practitioner considered not only his current manager but also the previous one as important:

> For me, my manager's contribution was very high. Actually, there are two people in my life. One was my ex-manager related with measurement and evaluation, that is to say, I do not mean that teaching only some information. And, other one is my current manager. She is doing this job for eleven years and especially she has good insights in outsource management and she opens the horizons (Metehan, company Y, learning specialist, Appendix C.52.).

Another practitioner believed that her current manager was the main person who facilitated her learning experiences:

> Maybe, the probably the most important is what I took from my manager. I mean, because I saw her as the only and the most important mentor. What I took from her, it is not just thing, I mean, what she explained formally in the training; continuous conversations, -like, we made this morning when you came-, taken feedbacks, yet they are the things which develop the person (Serap, company Y, learning specialist, Appendix C.53.).

Seven practitioners also mentioned that their colleagues had a considerable place in their professional development. Among them, some emphasized the significance of getting help from more experienced colleagues while learning:

> Like in most jobs, I learned from my colleagues, from more experienced ones (Fatma, company X, training consultant, Appendix C.54.).

On the other hand, six practitioners working with external consultants found them valuable for their learning experiences. One practitioner expressed that working with external consulting firms was a trigger for her to explore new knowledge:

> Obviously, I learn a lot from the training companies that we are in communication. I mean, when we work with these companies or even meet with them, what they are doing, something is said, they are explaining one program and you realize that you do not know. Well, when you explore to take this, maybe you start to work with this company and I do not stop at that point, I mean. I look for and explore what I can add to this. I mean, I learn in this way; in this way, I develop my knowledge treasury obviously (Elif, company Y, learning manager, Appendix C.55.).

In short, while managers, colleagues and external consultants emerged as the main

sources of learning for practitioners in the study; questioning, consulting and

working in projects were appeared as the main activities of "learning from others".

Next, these activities were also presented in order of frequency those that were

mentioned by more practitioners to fewer practitioners.

<u>Questioning</u>

Within the study, practitioners mentioned that they were generally asked questions

by their managers and colleagues. Questioning was mentioned by nine practitioners

in the study as an important activity for getting information from other people when

they encountered a situation that they did not have the necessary knowledge. In the

workplace, managers and colleagues were generally asked questions because they

could easily be reached by practitioners and they were the ones who needed

conceptual or business knowledge. One practitioner stated that he asked questions

mostly to his colleague when he did not know what to do:

> If there is something that is not in my know-how, but others have, I mean, I'm
> asking them (Murat, company Z, training and development supervisor,
> Appendix C.56.).

Other practitioner explained that she was asking questions to her manager in order to

understand whether this knowledge was used before in the department:

> I generally ask. And of course, I ask and consult my manager in terms of what
> was done and if we have ever encountered something like that before (Mine,
> company X, training consultant, Appendix C.57.).

On the other hand, another practitioner expressed that she needed to ask questions to

her colleagues and her manager in order to understand the work flow within the

organization in the first days when she started to work. Also, she shared her

unhappiness in that situation where her previous experiences lost their importance.

Under these circumstances, she tried to learn by questioning:

> Every organization has its own dynamics. I mean, even if you know the organization very well, when you start to work in another organization, the person is re-evaluated completely like an alien (…). Now, it continues by asking ad consulting…when coming to a big organization, I try to find my way by asking questions to other account managers. On the other hand, my manager is also supporting (Nehir, company Z, training and development supervisor, Appendix C.58.).

While practitioners used questioning as a way of "learning from others", three

practitioners stated that in order to be able to ask questions, you need to find reliable

people around you. It was emphasized by one practitioner as below:

> I ask to people that I feel close. I do not trust everybody. If you find the right person, you need to ask (Deniz, company X, training consultant, Appendix C.59.).

In the study, questioning emerged as the most preferred informal learning activity of

learning from managers and colleagues.

Consulting

For Eraut (2007), consulting is used to coordinate activities or to get advice. In that

sense, nine practitioners in the study emphasized that they were consulting their

managers and more experienced colleagues. One practitioner expressed that she

consulted her manager because she was working and communicating directly with

her:

I am mostly in communication with my manager because I am directly working with her. I try to get information from her or the related knowledge that how it must be done (Serap, company Y, learning specialist, Appendix C.60.).

Another one explained that he consulted to his experienced colleague because he was the subject matter expert:

For instance, one of my colleagues was experienced in training firms, I always consulted him when I needed, always (Erkan, company Z, training and development supervisor, Appendix C.61.).

After questioning, consulting emerged as the second most preferred informal learning activity of "learning from others". As in the case of questioning, it was identified that practitioners were mainly consulting their managers and colleagues in the workplace when needed.

Working in Projects

Working in projects occurs when a group of people come together to complete a goal (Education Development Center, 1998). Accordingly, eight practitioners in the study mentioned that becoming a team member and taking responsibilities in a given project provided valuable learning experiences. Primarily, working in a project with external consultants during the first years of work turned into a considerable learning experience for practitioners. Its significance was expressed by one practitioner:

As I said, at the beginning, we made a project related with distant learning. It was not very commonly used method in Turkey, it was not used too much. We learned how it was developed and its system. We were working as teams, as divided into groups. There was a consultant in each group, I mean, coaching, transferring her/his knowledge. We were showing to them what we did, they were controlling. For example, they were giving feedbacks on what was needed to explain more, what we did wrong, etc. Therefore, it was very helpful (Mine, company X, training consultant, Appendix C.62.).

Another practitioner also added the significance of working with foreign consultants

during a project:

> The first year that I started, it was the biggest experience for me.
> For 1,5 years, we worked with A Consulting in a project. We worked there with
> very mixed ten consultants who were from both America and Spain. Actually,
> in every phase, we made improvements according to what we would like to do
> and they provided one-to-one feedback. Accordingly, actually this project with
> the consulting company was a good experience (Seda, company X, training
> division head, Appendix C.63.).

It also gave an opportunity to practitioners to share their ideas within the team while

working on a project:

> When you make a design, you make a brainstorming for a long time. Whether
> we do in this way or other, when you do these types of things, if you have your
> friends who share the same ideas and speak the same language, a subjects
> opens other subjects, this brainstorming moves along more easily (Seda,
> company X, training division head, Appendix C.64.).

In short, while practitioners learned from others, they mainly got help from the more

experienced people –managers and colleagues- in the workplace by questioning and

consulting. Furthermore, external consultants were also identified as important

sources of learning while primarily working in the projects.

<u>The Interrelation between Practitioners' Formal and Informal Learning Experiences</u>

Analysis of interview data obviously showed that practitioners mostly engaged in

informal learning activities in the workplace while developing their professional

expertise. Whether they learned on their own or learned from others, practitioners

were in a process of learning whenever they needed to acquire new knowledge. As it

was exemplified by one of the practitioners, different informal learning activities

could be used when a new project was given and no previous knowledge was existed on the subject:

> I sat in front of the internet. I reached people I know and have knowledge about the issue. By using right communication channels, it is important to find answers in such situations…I called the supplier I know, I took their ideas. I looked at the books (Selin, company Z, talent management and training manager, Appendix C.65.).

On the other hand, although practitioners' professional development was mostly shaped by informal learning experiences in the workplace, formal learning experiences were also found complementary to informal ones. In the process of learning, both formal and informal activities could follow each other. As was stated by one practitioner, this process could start with formal learning experiences and be followed by informal learning activities such as questioning, reading articles and consulting:

> I mean, generally participating in training programs, questioning our friends, if there are publications on this, following them, finding out good people in this subject and making benchmarks with them. I mean, after passing the core, after creating a basis, you can pass to different things while exchanging ideas (Deniz, company X, training division head, Appendix C.66.).

Learning through a process was also emphasized by another practitioner who started to learn with a formal learning activity and used questioning and exploring after:

> You are participating in training programs, you are questioning while analyzing contents. It develops automatically in a way; you are not making so much effort. Especially, it is needed to investigate training programs of the companies, to look at their contents, to debate with them. If you see a different thing, what's that, which competencies does it develop, what kinds of behavior changes it makes, our expectation is that, you learn by questioning. I mean, you need to read, to make some investigations (Nehir, company Z, training and development supervisor, Appendix C.67.).

As it was stated by practitioners in the study, practitioners passed through an ongoing learning process in their professional development where they had different formal and informal learning experiences in the workplace. However, these experiences were mostly shaped by informally learned practices.

While practitioners learning in a continuous process, since practitioners had their individual preferences for self-direction in learning and they learned their jobs in a social context, informal learning experiences of practitioners could not be evaluated independently from some factors facilitated or inhibited these experiences. Next section explained in detail the factors affecting practitioners' informal learning experiences in the workplace.

<u>Factors Affecting Informal Learning Experiences of Practitioners</u>

Based on data analysis and literature, two groups of influencing factors were identified in the study as contextual factors and individual factors. It was also found that all factors could have an impact on informal learning experiences of the practitioners in a positive or negative direction. In other words, they might facilitate or inhibit informal learning experiences of practitioners.

<u>Contextual Factors</u>

As it was stated by Education Development Center (1998), contextual factors are "part of the environment in which informal learning occurs" (p.97). In this study, there were identified four different contextual factors influencing informal learning. They were classified as attitude of managers and colleagues towards practitioners, structure of work, access to learning resources and attitude of management towards

training. They were in order of frequency those that were mentioned by more practitioners to those mentioned by fewer practitioners.

<u>Attitude of Managers and Colleagues towards Practitioners</u>

Within the study, nine practitioners pointed out that attitude of their managers and colleagues influenced their level of learning. As one practitioner expressed, managers and colleagues might act as facilitators in learning process if they did not hide any information from practitioners and shared their knowledge with them:

> Those people in front of me were really very strong. Also, my manager. I was lucky. If it was the opposite, because these kinds of things happen, I mean, to keep his or her stuff there, you understand what I mean, I might not be developed easily like this. But, this did not happen like this for us. Anyway, they transferred what they have already known. You know, keeping information is very common, if this does not happen, *alaylılık* is proved to be useful. But, if it will be opposite… (Lale, company X, training consultant, Appendix C.68.).

Another practitioner also believed that her learning was directly influenced by her colleagues' attitudes and it was also directly related with their degree of sharing knowledge:

> (Learning) is directly influenced by willingness of the people to share with others what they have done in their jobs (Dilek, company X, training consultant, Appendix C.69.).

Another practitioner also emphasized his manager role in terms of making him feel comfortable while he was learning and executing on the job:

> She understands my way of work; it is an advantage for me to hear from her that "Metehan, the task is in your hand." She makes me feel that she trusts me (Metehan, company Y, learning specialist, Appendix C.70.).

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Structure of Work

Structure of work refers to allocation of responsibilities and work load of the

practitioners within the work unit. Seven practitioners in the study mentioned that

due to the work structure, they generally experienced difficulty in finding enough

time to develop themselves. The reasons were found as insufficient number of people

working in the work unit and being overloaded with operational work. These were

stated by one practitioner in the study below:

> The factors that make it difficult (to learn) are few people working in the
> training department and having too much operational work (Deniz, company X,
> training division head, Appendix C.71.).

Another practitioner expressed her unhappiness about making too much operational

work as part of her responsibilities:

> Like in all departments, in terms of work load, data entry, etc. there are also
> secretarial sides. Of course, this will be, it's part of every job. But, they may
> affect negatively the process of highlighting or developing ourselves in terms
> of time (Serap, company Y, learning specialist, Appendix C.72.).

The second contextual factor that was identified by practitioners in the study was the

structure of work and it mainly influenced practitioners' time allocation for learning

activities. When they could not find enough time to develop themselves, their

engagement in learning was decreased.

Access to Learning Resources

Another contextual factor emerged from data analysis was related with the

practitioners' access to learning resources. Learning resources included documents

and databases used in the organization and subscription to different periodicals. As it

was identified by Education Development Center (1998), learning is enhanced for

employees when needed resources are available. Six practitioners in the study also

reflected that their learning experiences were enhanced when they were able to have

an access to the needed resources. One practitioner emphasized the importance of

resources for her learning experiences:

> My biggest chance here is having really too much resource. I mean, if I do
> nothing, I have too much resource. These resources are opening new doors and
> windows, of course (Elif, company Y, learning manager, Appendix C.73.).

Another practitioner also added the importance of easy access to resources for every

colleague. This situation made it possible for her to explore the needed information

individually rather than asking someone else in the work unit:

> I was in an organization where every one could access to information. Hence,
> there was no need to ask someone if you needed some information. Therefore,
> it was a factor that makes it is easy (Nehir, company Z, training and
> development supervisor, Appendix C.74.).

As indicated by practitioners in the study, availability of learning resources and easy

access to them influenced learning experiences of practitioners positively and

enhanced their learning.

<u>Management Attitude towards Training</u>

Practitioners believed that organizational commitment to training and management

support could be helpful for their learning process. One practitioner stated the

importance of positive attitude of management towards training:

> Organization's perspective is very important. If the organization and the
> managers that we work give importance, you also do your job easily. They give
> importance to training and believe in training. If they did not give importance,

for example, you see differences between units. You can not make partnerships with them. You can not meet their needs. The perspective in the organization is important. Of course, it is also important how you present yourself. Therefore, our managers here play important roles to make people perceived us positively and make them believed that we are needed (Fatma, company X, training consultant, Appendix C.75.).

For enhanced learning, another practitioner defined an ideal workplace where organization gave importance to training:

When I say to work in the right place, what I mean is that an organization which gives importance to training and provide resources (Selin, company Z, talent management and training manager, Appendix C.76.).

Together with the positive perspective of the management, providing learning opportunities for practitioners were again emphasized by one practitioner:

Facilitating actually is related with providing opportunities. I mean, if we feel that something is missing or we want to follow trends, they must be open, it must be given importance to training, for example, I have never seen reduction in training (budget) in any period of time. It was like that before and it is still the same with new management. It is given importance to training. It is a big advantage that organization is like that (Seda, company X, training division head, Appendix C.77.).

To sum up for contextual factors, attitude of managers and colleagues towards practitioners, structure of work, access to learning resources attitude of organization and management towards training were identified as important for practitioners while learning informally in the workplace. In addition to contextual factors, individual factors were presented in detail in the next section.

Individual Factors

Individual factors were found to be significant for informal learning experiences of practitioners in terms of influencing their engagement in learning. Under individual

factors, there were identified two factors. They were related with personality

characteristics and educational backgrounds of the practitioners.

Personality Characteristics

Preferences of practitioners to take responsibility for learning had an impact on their

engagement in learning. Having a desire to learn, curiosity and self-confidence were

viewed by practitioners as positive personality characteristics for increasing self-

direction in learning. They were emphasized by nine practitioners in the study. One

of the practitioner expressed that having a desire to learn was important:

> (Learning)… is somewhat related with the individual's desire to learn (Fatma,
> company X, training consultant, Appendix C.78.).

Another practitioner focused on the curiosity of the person to learn:

> I say, let no one work in this profession without knowing taxonomy of Bloom.
> If we ask a hundred people, I wonder how many know. At that point, because I
> think that the fundamental thing is to be curious, what they will do is to read.
> Learning Bloom takes 2-3 days (Metehan, company Y, learning specialist,
> Appendix C.79.).

Another one also stated that self-confidence was important to deal with challenging

situations on the job that required use of new knowledge:

> I mean, I say, I always think in my life that if others could do, I can do as well
> (…). If they do, I have a capacity, I can also do this. I mean, there is nothing to
> fear (Lale, company X, training consultant, Appendix, C. 80.).

During the study, practitioners identified that in the absence of desire to learn,

curiosity and self-confidence, engagement and self-direction in learning were

decreased.

<u>Educational Backgrounds</u>

Within the study, six practitioners emphasized the importance of having a university degree from a related area of study. These practitioners were graduates of guidance and psychological counseling, educational sciences, psychology and organizational behavior. The practitioner who had a degree in guidance and psychological counseling considered that related educational background in corporate training was significant:

> Of course, there was an impact of school. I mean, with respect to a friend who is a graduate of irrelevant department" (Seda, company X, training division head, Appendix C.81.).

The practitioner who had a degree in psychology thought that her educational background was helpful to her while learning to perform in corporate training:

> Subject basis, yes, I studied psychology, it provides a background at a certain point (Serap, company Y, learning specialist, Appendix C.82.).

On the other hand, two practitioners who were graduates of business administration and labor economics emphasized that if they would have graduated from a related field in the university, they could have learned more easily. One practitioner expressed her preference about studying psychology:

> If I had studied psychology, if my basic education had been in the field of psychology, it would have been better for me (Elif, company Y, learning manager, Appendix C.83.).

Another practitioner also stated that she had an individual objective to learn about psychology academically:

Of course, it is not enough. Of course, I would have preferred to take an academic education. One of my objective, okay, some time passed on it, but maybe to make something related with psychology. Hence, this is an objective for me. If I had thought that I was sufficient, I mean, I would have not started to investigate about it (Nehir, company Z, training and development supervisor, Appendix C.84.).

Consequently, practitioners who believed in the importance of having a related educational background identified related areas of study as psychology, adult education, education and social sciences. In the study, while a need for academic background in psychology was emphasized by three practitioners, a need for academic background in each area of adult education, education and social sciences were emphasized by one practitioner.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter, findings are summarized and discussed together with concluding remarks on the study. Limitations of the study and recommendations for further research are also provided.

Summary of the Findings and Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore learning experiences of corporate training practitioners in the workplace while they acquired necessary knowledge and skills to develop their professional expertise. It explored the ways in which practitioners enter corporate training, the extent of professional expertise and the ways of professional development in corporate training. By using a qualitative research method, the study was carried out with thirteen corporate training practitioners within three different private business organizations operating in banking, retail and telecommunication sectors in İstanbul.

As a data collection method, participants were interviewed by using a semi-structured interview form developed by the researcher. At the same time, the critical incident technique was also utilized. The data analysis was carried out through content analysis method.

This study was carried out with ten female and three male practitioners whose ages were between 28 and 38 years old. In terms of work experiences of the participants, the most experienced participant had 15,5 years of total work experience

while the least experienced one had 4 years of total experience. And, the most experienced participant in corporate training had 15,5 years of experience while the least experienced one had 1,5 years of experience. In the study, there were four practitioners in management positions and nine practitioners in mid-level positions. Practitioners were called with different titles as training division head, training consultant, learning manager, learning specialist, talent management and training manager and training and development supervisor.

Educational backgrounds of the practitioners revealed that they were highly educated. There were eight practitioners who had an undergraduate degree and five practitioners who had a masters degree in the study. Besides, one practitioner had a double major, three participants were currently enrolled in a masters program and two practitioners were currently enrolled in a Ph.D program. Furthermore, practitioners in the study were found to be very diversely educated. They were mostly graduates of economics and administrative sciences, and arts and sciences faculties. There were only two graduates of the faculty of education. Accordingly, the study revealed consistent results with the findings of Akyıldız (1991), Kutay (1996) and Outschoorn (2007) who also found that practitioners in corporate training were very diverse in terms of their educational backgrounds. However, in the previous studies, practitioners were mostly graduates of administrative sciences and engineering faculties. Whereas in the current study, only one practitioner was from engineering faculty.

The analysis of the interview data indicated that practitioners mostly entered into corporate training without making informed decisions and by some coincidence. However, they expressed that they liked their jobs after starting to work in corporate training.

Practitioners reported that they were mainly responsible for managing training activities in the organizations as a process including training needs analysis, training design, coordination of training activities with external consultants, planning, development of internal trainer system, implementation, measurement and evaluation, and budget management. While executing these responsibilities, they identified their roles as consultants and strategic partners within the organization to help business units to realize their business related goals.

It was identified in the study that professional expertise in corporate training is required to have good conceptual knowledge in training and business knowledge on the one hand, and good communication and presentation skills on the other. While conceptual knowledge in training was identified as a need for performing identified responsibilities of corporate training profession, business knowledge was identified as a requirement for becoming an effective consultant and strategic partner in the organization. Besides, knowledge in psychology and adult learning were perceived as supplementary areas of conceptual knowledge for people who wanted to develop professional expertise in corporate training. It seemed that business knowledge was perceived as significant as conceptual knowledge in training and more important than knowledge in adult learning and psychology (see Table 7).

Table 7. Conceptions of Practitioners for Professional Expertise in Corporate Training

Components of Professional Expertise	Types of Knowledge and Skills	# of Practitioners Mentioned the Activity
Knowledge	Conceptual Knowledge in Training	12
	Business Knowledge	10
	Knowledge in Psychology	5
	Knowledge in Adult Learning	5
Skills	Communication Skills	10
	Presentation Skills	7

The findings of the study verified the previous findings which stated that there has not been any defined professionalization route available for development in corporate training (Daly, 1967, Akyıldız, 1991, O'Connor, 2004). None of the practitioners in the study mentioned that they were provided with a defined systematic program for knowledge and skills acquisition in corporate training. Rather, it was appeared that practitioners mostly relied on their own learning experiences in the workplace in order to develop their professional expertise. This was also consistent with the findings of the previous studies in the literature suggesting that the majority of professional learning occur informally in the workplace (Garrick, 1998, Cheetham and Chivers, 2001, Valkevaara, 2002, Collin, 2002, Revenko, 2003, Boud and Middleton, 2003, Enos, et. al., 2003, Frei, 2007, Eraut, 2007, Altay, 2007). On the other hand, although formal learning was identified as complimentary to informal learning, available formal learning opportunities for practitioners seemed to be very limited and inadequate.

As stated by Kolb (1984), for practitioners, learning could be defined as a continuous process of creating knowledge, based on experience and involved interactions with their environment And, as it was proposed by Knowles (1980),

accumulated experiences of practitioners were turned into an increasingly rich resource for learning. In the process of accumulation of knowledge, practitioners' daily tasks and challenges on the job gave rise to their informal learning as it was identified in informal learning model by Marsick and Watkins (1990, 1999). They generally experienced challenges when they were faced with situations that required new knowledge. When this was the case, practitioners mostly passed through different informal learning activities in the workplace where they acted as highly intentional and self-directed learners. All the informal learning activities mentioned in the study were initiated by practitioners themselves.

While they actively constructed their knowledge mostly through informally learned practices, there emerged two main categories of informal learning as "learning on their own" and "learning from others". These emerging categories verified what Eraut (2004) proposed for the importance of informal learning, as there was a place for both individual agency and learning from others in a given social context.

The informal learning activities under "learning on their own" category included exploration, execution of the job, presenting and self-reflection. In that category, exploration was the most stated informal learning activity which included reading books and articles, searching the internet and reviewing documents. Whereas, self-reflection emerged as the least mentioned informal learning activity among others. It appeared that although some practitioners reflected on their experiences in the learning process, critical reflection was not applied. And, without critical reflection, it could be concluded that what was learned informally was taken for granted (see Table 8).

Table 8. Informal Learning Activities for "Learning on Their Own" Category

Informal Learning Category	Informal Learning Activities		# of Practitioners Mentioned the Activity
Learning on Their Own	1. Exploration	a) Reading Books and Articles	11
		b) Searching the Internet	8
		c) Reviewing Documents	7
	2. Execution of the Job		7
	3. Presenting		6
	4. Self-Reflection		5

The informal learning activities under "learning from others" category included

questioning, consulting and working in projects. In that category, questioning

emerged as the mostly used informal learning activity whereas working in projects

was mentioned as the least. While they mainly learned from others, their managers,

colleagues and external consultants played an important role in their development.

They were the main providers of conceptual knowledge in training and business

knowledge. For those practitioners who mentioned that their managers were

important sources of learning, having an opportunity to work directly with them

seemed to be important. Furthermore, learning from more experienced colleagues in

the work unit was also helpful. However, even though people source was identified

as significant, practitioners in the study did not report learning through networking

with other people who were in the profession. In other words, were found no

available communities of practice for practitioners in corporate training (see Table

9).

Table 9. Informal Learning Activities for "Learning from Others" Category

Informal Learning Category	Informal Learning Activities	# of Practitioners Mentioned the Activity
Learning from Others	1. Questioning	9
	2. Consulting	9
	3. Working in Projects	8

The findings of the current study had some variations from Altay's (2007) categories of "learning for their own" and "learning from others". First of all, in the study of Altay, under "learning on their own" category, execution of the job, exploration and trial-error were identified as informal learning activities. In the current study, besides execution of the job and exploration, presenting and self-reflection were also identified. However, trial-error was not found as a significant informal learning activity. Secondly, in the study of Altay, under "learning from other people" category, questioning, mentoring, personal interactions, working in teams, observation, listening, role modeling and on-the-job training were identified. In the current study, there emerged three activities of informal learning where questioning and working in projects were similar to findings of Altay. However, besides consulting, no other activities of informal learning as it was identified in the previous study emerged.

Since practitioners had their own individual preferences for degree of self-direction in learning and also they learned in a social context, their learning experiences were exposed to some influencing factors for informal learning. In the study, these factors were classified as contextual factors and individual factors. Attitude of managers and colleagues towards practitioners, structure of work, access

to learning resources and management attitude towards training were classified under contextual factors (see Table 10).

Table 10. Contextual Factors Affecting Informal Learning Experiences of the Practitioners

Main Categories of Factors Affecting Learning Experiences	Factors Affecting Learning Experiences	# of Practitioners Mentioned the Factor
Contextual Factors	1. Attitude of Managers and Colleagues towards Practitioners	9
	2. Structure of Work	7
	3. Access to Learning Resources	6
	4. Attitude of Management towards Training	5

On the other hand, personality characteristics and educational backgrounds of practitioners were classified under individual factors (see Table 11).

Table 11. Individual Factors Affecting Informal Learning Experiences of the Practitioners

Main Categories of Factors Affecting Learning Experiences	Factors Affecting Learning Experiences	# of Practitioners Mentioned the Factor
Individual Factors	1. Personality Characteristics	9
	2. Educational Backgrounds	6

All of the factors which had an impact on informal learning experiences of practitioners could act in a positive or negative direction. In other words, if practitioners were willing to learn, curious, and self-confident, if they had a related educational background, if there were positive attitudes of managers and colleagues towards practitioners, if the structure of work allowed practitioners to allocate time for learning, if there was access to learning resources and if management attitude

towards training was supportive, then all these factors became facilitators of informal learning. Otherwise, they turned into inhibitors of informal learning.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The main purpose of this study is to identify learning experiences or corporate training practitioners in the workplace while developing professional expertise. It can be concluded that majority of professional learning in corporate training occurring informally in the workplace. Even though informal learning is an integral part of learning process for every profession, it is appeared that practitioners in corporate training need more to rely on their informal learning experiences. One of the reasons is related with the unavailability of any institutionalized education programs for practitioners to acquire needed knowledge and skills before starting to work in corporate training or while working.

One of the most important implications of the study is related with the quality of learning while practitioners developing their professional expertise. As it obviously appeared in the study, there are no structurally organized learning opportunities for practitioners and practitioners mostly rely on their informal learning experiences, there emerge some concerns regarding the quality of professional development in corporate training. For developing qualified practitioners in corporate training, practitioners should have either a degree in related fields or attend at least a certificate program to acquire a theoretical background and creating possibility in critical awareness about existing applications in corporate training. Furthermore, it is also considered important to find a way to integrate both formal and informal learning activities in the workplace so that they can be provided with necessary knowledge and skills in a more sufficient way.

Another important implication is related with the identified roles of practitioners. Practitioners should not only be in the position to act as executors of corporate agenda. They should also act as educators of adults who help employees to develop both individually and socially in the workplace. This can contribute to larger issues of workplace context as equity, diversity and democracy.

It is also considered important to be aware of the contextual factors in the workplace for facilitating informal learning experiences of all employees. Providing a better learning environment by giving necessary recognition, guidance and support seems to be important for all employees for their professional developments.

Limitations of the Study

In the first place, one of the most important limitations of this study is its generalizability. This study is limited to the practitioners in three private business organizations who are selected on the basis of convenient sampling. In this way, only a small percentage of practitioners could be represented in the study. Therefore, further qualitative and quantitative researches are needed to understand the phenomenon.

Secondly, this study is limited by the degree of practitioners' willingness to share their workplace learning experiences. They may have answered the questions with a fear of saying something wrong or inappropriate. In other words, they may have answered the questions with social desirability bias to present themselves in the best possible and socially acceptable way.

And, final limitation of the research is caused by the data collection procedure. All interviews were planned to be made in a meeting room with using tape recording. However, five participants could be interviewed in the workplace

cafeteria where no meeting room was available. These interviews were required more careful data transcription due to interference of noise. Besides, two practitioners did not allow using tape recorder. Therefore, their responses during the interviews were written down. This may have caused loss of some information of two participants.

Suggestions for Further Research

This study examined the ways in which corporate training practitioners develop their professional expertise in the workplace. A quantitative research would be complimentary to the findings of this study for increasing the generalizability.

As practitioners' learning experiences are occurred in a social context through interacting with people, it would also be considerable to explore how cultural practices, norms and power relations in the workplace affect practitioners' learning experiences. Furthermore, it would also be beneficial to investigate the ways in which identities of practitioners are constructed and shaped through informal learning in the workplace.

Additional research seems to be needed to make a comparison between learning experiences of practitioners who are graduates of educational sciences and who do not. Examining deeply whether related educational background creates a difference for learning and performing in corporate training would be valuable.

Another research would be useful to assess the learning needs of practitioners more deeply in order to get a better understanding for their professional development.

A final suggestion for further research is for the investigation of learning experiences of practitioners in different professions while developing their

professional expertise in the workplace. In this way, it might be possible to develop a better understanding for workplace learning in Turkey which seems to have received little attention from researchers until now.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

The Interview Form in Turkish

İşyeri Öğrenme Deneyimleri ile Kurumsal Eğitimde Mesleki Gelişim

Bu çalışma, kurumsal eğitim uzmanlarının işlerini nasıl öğrendiklerini ve hangi faktörlerin bu öğrenme deneyimlerini etkilediğini belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Vereceğiniz bilgiler, Boğaziçi Üniversitesi, Yetişkin Eğitimi Bölümü'nde yürütülmekte olan yüksek lisans tezinin verilerini oluşturmak için kullanılacaktır. Bu bilgiler, sadece akademik amaçlarla kullanılacak olup, katılımcı gizliliği esastır.

Katılımınız için teşekkür ederim.
Canan Aratemur Çimen

Kişisel Bilgiler

1. Cinsiyet: . Kadın   . Erkek
2. Yaşınız:
3. Eğitim durumunuz ve mezun olduğunuz bölüm(ler):

    Doktora:

    Yüksek Lisans:

    Lisans:

    Diğer:

4. Kaç yıldır çalışıyorsunuz?
5. Bugüne kadar çalıştığınız kurum(lar), bölüm(ler), pozisyon(lar) ve süre(leri):

    -

    -

    -

    -

    -

    -

6. Eğitim alanındaki toplam çalışma deneyiminiz:
7. Bu alanda çalışmayı seçmenizin nedeni:

Görüşme Soruları

1. Çalıştığınız bölümle ilgili kısaca bilgi verebilir misiniz? (Organizasyon yapısı, çalışan sayısı, vb.)
2. İşinizdeki sorumluluklarınızı tanımlar mısınız?
3. İşiniz, hangi bilgi ve becerilere sahip olmanızı gerektirmektedir?
4. İşinizin gerektirdiği bilgi ve becerileri öğrenmek için <u>çalışmaya başlamadan önce</u> herhangi bir eğitim aldınız mı? Aldıysanız;
    a. Bu eğitimler nelerdir?
    b. Bu eğitimlerin, işinizi öğrenmenize katkısı olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz? Neden?
    c. Başka hangi eğitimleri almak işinizi öğrenmenize yardımcı olurdu? Neden?
5. İşinizin gerektirdiği bilgi ve becerileri öğrenmek için <u>çalışırken</u> herhangi bir eğitim aldınız mı? Aldıysanız;
    a. Bu eğitimler nelerdir?
    b. Bu eğitimlerin, işinizi öğrenmenize katkısı olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz? Neden?
    c. Başka hangi eğitimleri almak işinizi öğrenmenize yardımcı olurdu? Neden?

(Herhangi bir eğitim almamışsa 6. soruya; almışsa 7. soruya geçilecektir.)

6. Herhangi bir eğitim almadıysanız,
    a. Bu durum işinizi öğrenmenizi zorlaştırdı mı? Cevabınız evet ise, ne tür zorluklar yaşadınız, örnek verir misiniz?
    b. Hangi eğitimleri almak işinizi öğrenmenize yardımcı olurdu?
7. Eğitim alanında çalıştığınız süre boyunca;
    a. İşinizin gerektirdiği bilgi ve becerileri nasıl ve nereden öğrendiniz?
    b. Bunlar arasında etkililikleri açısından bir sıralama yapabilir misiniz?
    c. Bunların, işinizi öğrenmeniz için yeterli olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz? Neden?

      d. İşinizi öğrenmenizi kolaylaştıran faktörler oldu mu? Örnek verir misiniz?

      e. İşinizi öğrenmenizi zorlaştıran faktörler oldu mu? Örnek verir misiniz?

8. İşinizi yaparken, gereken bilgi ve beceriye sahip olmadığınızı düşündüğünüz karmaşık ve zor bir iş durumunu hatırlamaya çalışın.

      a. Bu durumu detaylı bir şekilde tanımlar mısınız?

      b. Bu durumla nasıl başa çıktınız? (Nasıl bir strateji izlediniz?)

      c. Bu sırada kimlerden ya da hangi kaynaklardan yardım aldınız?

      d. Bu durum sizde ne gibi değişikliklere yol açtı? Neler öğrendiniz? Neler hissettiniz?

9. İşinizle ilgili yeni bilgi ve beceriler gerektiren bir görev verildiğinde ne(ler) yaparsınız? Örnek verir misiniz?

10. İşinizle ilgili kendinizi geliştirmek istediğiniz alanlar var mı? Varsa nelerdir? Bunun için neler yapmayı düşünüyorsunuz?

11. Kurumsal eğitim alanda çalışacak bir kişinin ne tür eğitimler alması faydalı olur?

12. Kurumsal eğitim uzmanlarının öğrenme deneyimleri ile ilgili eklemek istedikleriniz var mı?

APPENDIX B

The Interview Form in English

Professional Development in Corporate Training through Learning Experiences

in the Workplace

This study aims to identify the ways in which corporate training practitioners learned their jobs and factors affecting these learning experiences.

The information you will provide is being collected as data for a master thesis to be submitted to Boğaziçi University, Adult Education Program. They will be used only for academic purposes and participants will be kept confidential.

Thank you for your contribution.

Canan Aratemur Çimen

Personal Information

1. Gender: ⸱ Female ⸱ Male
2. Age:
3. Education status and department(s) of graduation:

   Doctorate:

   Graduate:

   Undergraduate:

   Other:

4. How many years have you been working?
5. Business organization(s), department(s), position(s) and duration(s) that you have worked until now:

   -

   -

   -

   -

   -

   -

6. Total years of work experience in corporate training:
7. The reason for choosing to work in corporate training:

Interview Questions

1. Could you please give brief information about the work unit you work for (Organization structure, number of employees, etc.)?
2. What are your responsibilities in your job?
3. What kinds of knowledge and skills are required to perform your job?
4. Did you receive any training before starting to work in order to learn the required knowledge and skills to perform your job? If yes;
    a. What trainings?
    b. Did you think that the trainings contributed to learning your job?
    c. What other trainings would help you to learn your job? Why?
5. Did you receive any training while working in order to learn the required knowledge and skills to perform your job? If yes;
    a. What training programs?
    b. Did you think that the training programs contributed to learning your job?
    c. What other training programs would help you to learn your job? Why?

(If it was not received any trainings, question 6; otherwise, question 7 will be asked.)

6. If you did not get any trainings;
    a. Did this situation make it difficult to learn your job? If your answer is yes, what kind of difficulties did you experience, can you please give examples?
    b. What kind of training programs would help you to learn your job?
7. During your experience in corporate training;
    a. How and in which ways did you learn the required knowledge and skills to perform your job?
    b. Can you sort them in terms of their effectiveness?
    c. Do you think that they are sufficient for you to learn your job? Why?

> d. Were there any facilitating factors while learning your job? Can you give examples?
>
> e. Were there any inhibiting factors while learning your job? Can you give examples?

8. Try to remember a difficult work situation where you thought that you did not have necessary knowledge and skills while doing your job.

   a. Can you describe the situation in detail?

   b. How did you deal with this situation? (What was your strategy?)

   c. In the meantime, from whom or from what source did you get help?

   d. What kind of differences did this situation cause? What did you learn? How did you feel?

9. When you are given a new task that requires learning new knowledge and skills, what do you do?

10. Do you have any areas of improvement related with your job? If yes, what are they? What do you do about that?

11. What kind of training programs can be beneficial for people who will work in corporate training?

12. Is there anything you can add about learning experiences of corporate training practitioners?

APPENDIX C

Quotes in Turkish

1. Gerçekten de böyle çok bilinçli (bir karar) olmadı ama bilinçli olmadan işte öyle sadece İngilizce bilen bir öğrenci aranan böyle bir işe başvurdum ve ondan sonra hakikaten çok sevdim bu işi (Lale, X Şirketi, eğitim danışmanı).

2. Aslında ilgim vardı ama seçim çok birebir bilinçli olmadı...eğitim bölümü olarak bana teklif yapıldı. Ben de kabul ettim ve orda başladım. İşi sevdim (Fatma, X Şirketi, eğitim danışmanı).

3. Aslında şimdi şöyle hani çok seçtim denemez. Yani benim istediğim pazarlama, ürün yönetimi (nde çalışmak) gibi bir şeydi…böyle çok fazla eğitim aklımda olan bir bölüm değildi açıkçası…eğitimde bir pozisyon teklif edildi…yeni bir proje başlıyordu böyle eğitim bölümünde. Yani öyle yabancılarla çalışma fırsatı da olduğu için, onun için evet biraz kabul ettim. Sonra da kopamadım bir daha. Çok bilmiyordum açıkçası neler yapıldığını bu alanda (Mine, X Şirketi, eğitim danışmanı).

4. Yani hani zaten ben Eğitim Fakültesinde okudum. Sonuçta benim işim de bununla alakalı.Ya okullardaki rehberliği seçecektim ya da eğitim alanında. Hani eğitim benim baştan beri düşündüğüm bir şeydi. Kurumsal bir yerde de çalışmak istiyordum. Öyle başladı. Yani aslında benim eğitimimin devamı işim, çok farklı bir sektör değil (Seda, X Şirketi, eğitim bölüm başkanı).

5. Öncelikle satış işimden, mevcut işimden memnun olmadığım sonucu bir arayıştı. Biraz analiz ettim kendimi. Hayatım boyunca ne yapmak istiyorumu tarttım biraz. Sürekli kendini yenilemek, yeni şeyler öğrenmek ve bu tür çalışmalar yapmak diye uygun buldum. Ve görev değişikliği talep ettim ve ihtiyaçlarım ve bölümlerin ihtiyaçları doğrultusunda eğitim yönetimi teklifi geldi. Ben de uygun buldum (Dilek, X şirketi, eğitim danışmanı).

6. Ben anlatmayı çok severim. O yüzden eğitim vermeyi de çok severim (Metehan, Y şirketi, eğitim uzmanı).

7. Ben mezun olduğum zamanlarda İnsan Kaynakları parlayan yıldızdı. İK ile ilgili aldığım derslerden etkilendim (Selin, Z şirketi, eğitim ve gelişim müdürü).

8. Sonuçta insanların kafasında böyle çok net şeyler olmuyor bazen almak istedikleri eğitimlerle ilgili. Onları yönlendirmek gerekiyor, yani danışmanlık yapabiliyor olmanız gerekiyor. O istedikleri şeyin aslında ne olduğunu hani onlara gösterebiliyor olmanız gerekiyor (Mine, X şirketi, eğitim danışmanı).
9. Burada biz gerçekten hani danışman konseptinde olmak istiyoruz. Çünkü her gelen bize eğitimle ilgili olmayabilir, hani farklı şeyler de olabilir. Bizim

daha genel baktığımız, çünkü üst yönetimle de şu an çok yakın çalışıyoruz… üst yönetimle her türlü toplantılara da katıldığımız için farklı bir açıdan bakabiliyoruz. Ya da şube ziyaretlerinde, eğitim ihtiyaçlarına şubelere gittiğimizde farklı bir açıdan bakabiliyoruz. Dolayısıyla gelen talebi her açıyı düşünerek ama eğitim bilgisini de bunun içine katarak uygun çözümün ne olacağına karar vermek burda çok önemli (Seda, X şirketi, eğitim bölüm başkanı).

10. İşin içinde olduğunuzda, bilginizin kavramsal boyutta yeterli olması gerekiyor ki çözüm üretebilesiniz (Deniz, X şirketi, eğitim bölüm başkanı).

11. Teorik tarafa çok hakim olmak gerektiğini düşünüyorum. Yöntemleri bilmiyorsanız, hangi yöntemi nerde uygulayacağınızı da bilemeyeceksinizdir (Metehan, Z şirketi, eğitim uzmanı).

12. "Bir kere zaten eğitim yönetiminden anlamanız gerekiyor… Eğitim yönetimi derken aslında hani sonuçta bir eğitimin ihtiyaç analizinden tutun, planlamasına kadar biraz resmin bütününü görmek aslında. Hani evet ben danışmanlık yapıyorum ama planlamada ne yapılıyor, uygulamada neler dönüyor bilmeliyim. Eğitim yönetiminden kastım bu aslında" (Lale, X şirketi, eğitim danışmanı).

13. Bilgi diye baktığımızda ise bir kere, genel olarak kurumlardaki eğitim işinin nasıl yürüdüğü ile ilgili belli bir bilgi birikimine ve deneyime ihtiyaç var bu işi yapabilmek için. Kurumlarda yönetimlerin ihtiyaçları neler olabilir, bu ihtiyaçlar nasıl analiz edilir, nasıl uygun formatta eğitim seçenekleri sunulabilir. Bu eğitim seçenekleri nelerdir, nerelerden tedarik edilebilir. Ondan sonra, bunların işe, yönetimlerdeki işe yansıması nasıl ölçülebilir, takibi nasıl yapılır gibi bilgilere ihtiyaç var (Dilek, X şirketi, eğitim danışmanı).

14. Psikoloji okumuş olsaydım, temel eğitim psikoloji alanında olmuş olsaydı, benim için çok daha iyi olurdu (Elif, Y şirketi, eğitim müdürü).

15. Bence psikoloji bilgisi gerekiyor. Çünkü birtakım eğitim içerikleriyle oynuyoruz. Hiçbir eğitim firması bize kullandığı ölçekleri hiçbir şekilde vermiyor tabi ki. Bunları bizim tabi ki de iyi değerlendiriyor olmamız lazım. Öyle bir altyapı gerçekten faydalı olacaktır diye düşünüyorum (Nehir, Z şirketi, eğitim ve gelişim yönetmeni).

16. Bu işi yapacak adamın bir yetişkin, yani çocuktan farklı olarak bir yetişkin nasıl öğrenir, nasıl bir taksonomik bir süreçle zihin yapılanır, bunu bilmesi

gerektiğini düşünüyorum. En önemli noktası bu (Metehan, Y şirketi, eğitim uzmanı).

17. Tabi yani hani insan ve yetişkin insan nasıl öğrenir, o bizim birebir ilgilendiğimiz bir konu. Çünkü şöyle söyleyeyim sana, biz çocuklarla çalışmıyoruz, yetişkin insanlarla çalışıyoruz ama profil çok farklı. Çok değişken, çok karma bir profille çalışıyoruz. Sahada çalışan arkadaşlarımız üniversite mezunu da olabiliyor, ilkokul mezunu da olabiliyor (Elif, Y şirketi, eğitim müdürü).

18. Çok da bir teknik bilgi gerekli gibi gelmiyor. Ben biraz ilişki yönetimi, yani bunun diğer sektörlerde nasıl olduğu, ürün pazarlama, çok genel satış pazarlama gerekli bilgi olabilir. Yaptığınız şeyi nasıl sunacağınız mesela, bunlar daha ihtiyaç duyduğumuz bilgiler… Pazarlama ve satış anlamında belli bir bakış açısına sahip olmanız gerekiyor. Çünkü eğitim işi teknik anlamda, insanların gözünde çok bilgi gerektiren bir şey olmadığından her işin herkes tarafından yapılabileceği algısı var. Ya da çok bişey yapmadığımız düşünülüyor zaman zaman. Yaptıklarınızı gösterebilmeniz lazım (Fatma, X şirketi, eğitim uzmanı).

19. Eğitim işinde o kişinin kendi kurumunun dinamiklerini bilmesi lazım. Ürünü, firmayı, sektörü bilmek. Eğer uzaydan gelmiş gibi bakıyorsa eğitimde çalışan bir kişi, çalışanlar da eğitime öyle bakıyorlar. İş ortağı olmak ancak böyle sağlanıyor (Deniz, X şirketi, eğitim bölüm başkanı).

20. Bilgi anlamında da, çalıştığınız sektörle ilgili bilgiye ihtiyacınız var…Şube tecrübelerim olmuştu. Bankada, şubede yaptığım stajlar oldu. Teknik anlamda çok eğitim aldım, o yüzden burada çok yararını görüyorum. O nedenle, bankacılıktaki teknik bilgiler, şubecilikte iş nasıl yürür, bunları bilmeniz de önemli. Hem ihtiyaçları belirleyebilmek için, hem kendinizi ortaya koyabilmek, daha net ifade edebilmek için bankacılık bilgileri önemli (Fatma, X şirketi, eğitim danışmanı).

21. Benim çalıştığım alanda operasyonu çok iyi bilmem gerekiyor…hani operasyonla ilgili operasyon birimi (nde çalışan kişiler) haricinde en çok bilgiye sahip kişilerden biriyim diyebilirim (Elif, Y şirketi, eğitim müdürü).

22. Piyasadaki çok bilinen en etkin eğitim firmaları nelerdir, piyasaya, sektöre aşina olma bakımından önemli (Erkan, Z şirketi, eğitim ve gelişim yönetmeni).

23. Yönetimlerle iletişim kurduğumuz için iletişim becerilerine ihtiyaç var (Fatma, X şirketi, eğitim danışmanı).

24. Yani, genel olarak biraz iletişim, işte zor insanlar, insan tipleri, hani onlara karşı nasıl davranmanız gerekir, biraz müzakere tarzı şeyler oluyor eğitimde (Mine, X şirketi, eğitim danışmanı).

25. Sunum becerileri çok önemli. Biraz insan ilişkileri hani biraz da aktif olmak böyle çok pasif olduğunuz zaman bu işte çok başarılı olamayabiliyorsunuz. Memnuniyet düşük olabiliyor (Lale, X şirketi, eğitim danışmanı).

26. Eğitimle ilgili, eğitimcinin eğitimini aldım işe başladıktan sonra. Direkt eğitimle ilgili değil ama ortak modüller aldım bankacılıkla ilgili. Sonra sunum nasıl yapılır, iletişimle ilgili temeller nelerdir gibi bir takım eğitimler aldım. Burada ilişki yönetimi eğitimi aldım. Powerpoint'de etkili sunum hazırlama eğitimi aldım… Belli bir bölümü katkıda bulundu ama özellikle teknik bilgi anlamında daha çok işbaşında gördüklerim katkı sağladı. Yani, çok gereksiz aldığım teknik eğitimler oldu (Fatma, X şirketi, eğitim danışmanı).

27. Gerçekten iyi eğitmen ve gerçekten yararlı bilgiler alarak çıktığınız eğitimlerin çok nadir olduğunu, dünyada çok nadir olduğunu düşündüğüm için (…). Ama onun dışında benim için en faydalı olan –evet (eğitimden) teorik bilgileri yine de alıyorum- ama dediğim gibi deneyim benim için en önemlisi (Serap, Y şirketi, eğitim uzmanı).

28. …ben o açığı kendim kapatmaya çalıştım. Biraz o dönem fazla okuyarak o dönem anlamaya öğrenmeye çalıştım (Dilek, X şirketi, eğitim danışmanı).

29. İşe başlar başlamaz işte ASTD'ye, birkaç elektronik dergiye abone oldum, bunun dışında eğitimle ilgili makale araştırıp kendi kendime okudum. Bunun dışında eğitim ölçme değerlendirmeye ilişkin birkaç kaynak araştırdım. Böyle….Ben meraklı olduğum için çok okumaya (Erkan, 28, Z şirketi, eğitim ve gelişim yönetmeni).

30. Dijital bir kütüphanem var benim. Yani, binlerce makale, yüzlerce kitap…binlerce makale, yüzlerce kitap. Şu an ben oraya iki key word girdiğimde, çatır çatır çatır her şey dökülüyor falan (Metehan, 28, Y Şirketi, eğitim uzmanı).

31. Eğitim konusunda yeterince kaynak yok aslında. Yani aynı şeyler, tekrar tekrar yazılıyor. Mesela bir şeye üye olmuştuk, böyle kurumsal üniversitelere, kaynak için ve yıllık belli bir aidat ödüyorsun. Güzel şeyler var evet, bakış

açısı veren ama bazı makaleleri okuyorsun, hiçbir şey yok. Yani, okudum, ne çıktı, bir sonuç yok (Fatma, X şirketi, eğitim danışmanı).

32. Kişisel gelişim kitapları, muhakkak bu tarz kitapları okuyorum. Ama çok ayağa düştü. Her biri başka şeye dayandırarak yazıyor. Dolayısıyla çok akademik değil ama genel anlamda bakıldığında bu tarz şeyler okuyorum (Nehir, Z şirketi, eğitim ve gelişim yönetmeni).

33. Geçen temel kavramları internette araştırarak olsun anlamaya çalışıyorum (Fatma, X şirketi, eğitim danışmanı).

34. Genelde internetten faydalanıyorum. Anında, bilmediğin bir şey varsa girip internetten araştırabiliyorum. Sadece kendi alanımızla da ilgili değil. Yani mümkün mertebe interneti kullanıyorum… İnternette varsa bulurum yani. İnternette bir şey araştırıyorsam en ince ayrıntısına kadar vardır. İnterneti kullanmayı öğrenmek, sadece internet de değil, bir takım arama motorları var, google'da, dokümanların, videoların bulunabildiği. Mümkün mertebe okumak, araştırmak. Her türlü dokümana ulaşmak mümkün (Nehir, Z Şirketi, eğitim ve gelişim yönetmeni).

35. Kurum içi yazışma sistemi vardı orda mesela. O kurum içi yazışma sistemini zaman zaman sorgulardım. Ne gibi cevap verilmiş gibi. Teknik bilgi anlamında da kurumun mesela yayınladığı günlük duyuruların ya da haberlerin takip edilmesi çok önemli, güncel olmak adına (Fatma, X şirketi, eğitim danışmanı).

36. Bugüne kadar yapılmış olan şeyleri anlamaya çalıştım. Bu konudaki işte dokümanları okumaya çalıştım (Dilek, X Şirketi, eğitim danışmanı).

37. Mümkün mertebe dokümanlardan neyin nereden geldiğini anlamaya çalışıyorum (Nehir, Z Şirketi, eğitim ve gelişim yönetmeni).

38. Bu işi birileri daha önce yapmıştır, okey. Eğer bu işi birileri yapmışsa, bununla ilgili bir takım kaynaklar vardır. Benim, yani bir karanlığın içerisine düştüğümde, bir proje anlamında söylüyorum, bir karanlığın içine düştüğümde, başkaları da düşmüştür bu karanlığın içerisine, diye bir soru soruyorum kendime. Peki, ve bir şekilde yollarını bulmuşlardır diyorum (Metehan, Y şirketi, eğitim uzmanı).

39. Araştırırım, örneklere bakarım, kim ne yapmışa bakarım. Ama kim ne yapmış derken onları tabi kopyalamak anlamında değil ama bence tarih çok önemli.

Tarihten çok ders alınır biliyorsunuz. Hep tarihe bakarım, ondan sonra, işte kendi yolumu ortaya çıkartırım (Lale, X şirketi, eğitim danışmanı).

40. Bence aktif learning diye bir şey var, bence yaparak öğrenme. En etkili öğrenme yöntemi yaparak öğrenme, bence… Biraz deneyim, yaşamış olmak, deneyimlemiş olmak gerek bence (Lale, X şirketi, eğitim danışmanı).

41. Genelde işi yaparak öğrendim (Mine, X şirketi, eğitim danışmanı).

42. Yani işi işte öğrendim. Yani hiç kimse bana oturup da hiç bişey öğretmedi (Nehir, Z Şirketi, eğitim ve gelişim yönetmeni).

43. Çoğunu aslında yaşayarak öğrendik diyebilirim. Olaylarla karşılaştıkça, bir takım şeylere karşı ne yapılması gerektiği, nasıl davranılması gerektiği, mutlaka zamanla genel iş tecrübesinin getirdiği bir takım alışkanlıklar da zaten yardımcı oluyor ne yapılacağına (Murat, Z Şirketi, eğitim ve gelişim yönetmeni).

44. İlk çalıştığım yer, okul gibiydi (…). Doğru insanlarla doğru yerde, doğru projelerde çalışmak, bol bol deneyimleme fırsatı bulmak öğrenmemi sağladı. Eğitim, işbaşında öğrenilir, eğitim organize ettikçe pişersin işbaşında (Selin, Z Şirketi, yetenek yönetimi ve eğitim müdürü).

45. Bilgiyi aktarıyorsunuz ama aynı zamanda siz de öğrenmeye devam ediyorsunuz (Serap, Y şirketi, eğitim uzmanı).

46. Bütün bu kaynakları birleştirip, bir şey oluşturmaya çalışırken ve bir de o eğitimi vermeye başlarsanız eğer, bu çok önemli bir öğrenme süreci oluyor. En önemlilerinden biri bu (Seda, X şirketi, eğitim bölüm başkanı).

47. Durumu kendi içinde değerlendiririm. Nasıl yanıt vereceğime, ya da nasıl ilerleyeceğime karar veririm (Mine, X şirketi, eğitim danışmanı).

48. Neyi eksik yapıyorum, neyi daha iyi yapabilirim. Kendimi çok sorguladım (Elif, Y şirketi, eğitim müdürü).

49. Şu anda bildiğinizi düşündüğünüz şeyi bilmediğinizi veya yanlış bildiğinizi görebilirsiniz. Şu anda oturup da bize, önümüze işte bunu yanlış biliyorsun denebilecek herhangi bir şey yok. Ama mümkün mertebe dediğim gibi

araştırarak, sorarak doğruyu bulmaya çalışıyorum. Tabi ki yeterli değil, tabi ki çok daha akademik anlamda bir eğitim almayı tercih ederdim (Nehir, Z şirketi, eğitim ve gelişim yönetmeni).

50. En çok aslında, söylediğim (kariyerimdeki) ilk dönem için, danışmanlık firması, sonrasında da bir yöneticimiz ve çalışma arkadaşlarım (Seda, X şirketi, eğitim bölüm başkanı).

51. Eğitim bölümünde ilk çalışmaya başladığım yöneticim eğitimciydi zaten. Her türlü hizmet içi ve örgün eğitimler konularına hakimdi. Ayrıca birlikte çalıştığım arkadaşım da bizim okuldan mezundu ama o doğrudan eğitimle ilgili çalışmaya başladığı için bu alanda 4-5 yıllık tecrübesi vardı. Onun yardımı oldu (Deniz, X şirketi, eğitim bölüm başkanı).

52. Yöneticimin bana çok büyük bir katkısı oldu. Aslında bakacak olursanız iki kişi vardır benim hayatımda. Biri, ölçme-değerlendirmeyle ilgili olarak eski patronum, yani bir takım bilgilerin öğretilmesi anlamında söylemiyorum. Biri de burdaki yöneticim oldu. O yaklaşık 11 yıldır bu işi yapıyor ve özellikle outsource yönetiminde çok güzel insightları olan biri ve ufuk açıcı bir yapısı var (Metehan, Y şirketi, eğitim uzmanı).

53. En önemlisi de herhalde yöneticimden almış olduklarım. Yani, o da benim belki de şu andaki tek ve en önemli mentorum olarak gördüğüm kişi çünkü. Ondan aldıklarım, bu sadece şey değil, hani eğitimde bize formal olarak anlattıkları değil; sürekli konuşma, -bu sabah yaptığımız gibi siz geldiğinizde- aldığım feedbackler, geribildirimler, onlar bile insanı geliştiren şeyler (Serap, Y şirketi, eğitim uzmanı).

54. Çoğu işte olduğu gibi birlikte çalıştığım arkadaşlarımdan öğrendim, daha deneyimli olanlardan (Fatma, X şirketi, eğitim danışmanı).

55. İletişimde olduğumuz firmalardan çok şey öğreniyorum açıkçası. Yani hani işte firmalarla çalıştığımızda ya da görüşme yaptığımızda bile onlar neler yapıyorlar, bir şey söyleniyor, bir program anlatıyorlar ve o senin ilgini çekiyor ve bilmediğini farkediyorsun. Ee, peki ben bunu alsam nasıl olur diye araştırdığında, belki o firmayla çalışmaya başlıyorsun ve o noktada durmuyorum ama ben yani. Onun üzerine ben daha fazla neler ekleyebilirim, onu bakıyorum, araştırıyorum. Yani biraz o şekilde öğreniyorum, o şekilde kendi bilgi hazinemi geliştiriyorum açıkçası (Elif, Y şirketi, eğitim müdürü).

56. Eğer benim know-how'ımda olmayan fakat başkalarının know-how'ında olabilecek bir şeyse, diğer arkadaşlardan soruyorum yani (Murat, Z şirketi, eğitim ve gelişim yönetmeni).

57. Genelde sorarım. Tabi ki yöneticime de danıştığım, ona da danıştığım şeyler olur yani nasıl bir şey yapıldı, daha önce böyle bir şeyle karşılaştık mı diye sorarım (Mine, X şirketi, eğitim danışmanı).

58. Her firmanın kendine ait bir takım dinamikleri var. Yani ne kadar bir firmayı iyi bilirsen bil, öte taraftan başka bir firmaya geçtiğinde tamamen uzaylı kategorisinde yeniden değerlendirilmeye alınıyor insan (…). Sorarak ve danışarak yani genelde ilerliyor şu an…büyük bir yapının içerisine gelince tabi ki otomatik olarak diğer account managerlara sorarak bir şekilde yolumu bulmaya çalışıyorum. Bir taraftan yöneticim tabi ki bu anlamda destek veriyor (Nehir, Z şirketi, eğitim ve gelişim yönetmeni).

59. Yakınlık duyduğum kişilere sorarım. Herkese güvenmem ben. Doğru kişiyi bulursanız sormanız gerekir (Deniz, X şirketi, eğitim danışmanı).

60. Daha çok bire bir çalıştığım yöneticim olduğu için daha çok birebir onunla temas halinde oluyorum. Ondan bilgileri almaya çalışıyorum veya ondan nasıl yapılması gerektiği ile bazı şeyleri, ilgili bilgileri almaya çalışıyorum (Serap, Y şirketi, eğitim uzmanı).

61. Mesela eğitim firmaları konusunda bir arkadaşım tecrübeliydi, hep ihtiyacım olduğunda hep ona danıştım (Erkan, Z şirketi, eğitim ve gelişim yönetmeni).

62. Dediğim gibi o ilk baştaki yaptığımız o projede, o çalışmada bir kere içerik geliştirme yaptık uzaktan eğitimle ilgili. O zamanlar çok kullanılan bir yöntem değildi Türkiye'de, çok fazla yoktu. Onun nasıl geliştirildiğini, sistemini öğrendik. Ekipler halinde çalışıyorduk, gruplara ayrılmış şekilde. Her grubun başında da bir danışman vardı, yani bize koçluk yapan, bildiklerini aktaran. Yaptığımız şeyleri onlara gösterirdik, onlar kontrol ederlerdi. İşte burada neyi daha fazla anlatmak gerekir, neleri yanlış yapmışız falan gibi, öyle bize geribildirimde bulunurlardı. O yüzden çok faydalı oldu (Mine, X şirketi, eğitim danışmanı).

63. İlk başladığım sene aslında benim için en büyük deneyim bu olmuştu. 1,5 sene A Danışmanlık'la biz proje bazlı çalışmıştık… Biz orda hem Amerika'dan, hem de İspanya ofisinden böyle çok karışık, yaklaşık bir on kişilik bir danışman grupla çalıştık. Onlar aslında her aşamasında bize nasıl bir şey yapmak istediğimizi ve ona uygun geliştirmeleri yaptık ve bize birebir feedback verdiler. Dolayısıyla aslında o proje, hani danışmanlık şirketiyle birlikte güzel bir deneyim oldu (Seda, X şirketi, eğitim bölüm başkanı).

64. Sonuçta tasarım yaparken uzun bir süre ve zaten beyin fırtınası yapıyorsunuz. Şöyle mi yapsak, böyle mi yapsak, işte bu tarz şeyleri yaparken yanınızda hani aynı fikirde olan, sizinle aynı dili konuşan arkadaşlarınız olduğu zaman, o konu konuyu açıyor, o beyin fırtınası çok daha rahat ilerleyebiliyor (Seda, X şirketi, eğitim bölüm başkanı).

65. İnternetin başına geçtim. Tanıdığım, konuyla ilgili bilgi sahibi olabilecek insanlara ulaştım. İletişim kanallarını doğru kullanarak cevabı bulmak önemli bu durumlarda…Nazımın geçtiği tedarikçileri aradım, onların fikirlerini aldım. Kitaplar karıştırdım (Selin, Z şirketi, yetenek yönetimi ve eğitim müdürü).

66. Yani, genellikle işte eğitimlere katılma, çevremizdeki arkadaşlarımıza sorma, bu konuda işte yayınlar varsa onları takip etme, bu konuda gerçekten iyi olan kişileri bulup benchmark çalışmaları yapma şeklinde. Daha hani core şeyi geçtikten sonra o hani temel anlamda baz oluşturduktan sonra bu tarz fikir alış-verişleriyle farklı şeylere geçebiliyorsunuz (Deniz, X şirketi, eğitim bölüm başkanı).

67. Eğitimlere katılıyorsunuz, içerikleri inceliyorsunuz, içerikleri incelerken sorguluyoruz. Bir anlamda o otomatik olarak bir şekilde kendi kendine gelişiyor, çok ekstra bir çaba sarf etmiyorsunuz. Özel olarak oturup da, araştırmak gerekiyor firmaların eğitimlerini, içeriklerine bakmak, onlarla tartışmak gerekiyor. Bir şey gördün farklı, bu nedir, hangi yetkinlikleri geliştiriyor, ne tip davranış değişikliklerine neden oluyor, beklentimiz şudur, bunun karşılığı, sorgulama yoluyla öğreniyorsunuz. Yani yoksa oturup da hani biraz okumak gerekiyor, biraz araştırmak gerekiyor (Nehir, Z şirketi, eğitim ve gelişim yönetmeni).

68. Benim önümde olan arkadaşlarım hakikaten böyle çok güçlülerdi. Yöneticim de keza aynı şekilde. Ben çok şanslıydım. Eğer, tam tersi olsaydı, çünkü bu tip şeyler de insanların başına gelebiliyor, hani kendi şeyini korumak orda, anladınız ne olduğunu eğer öyle bir şey olsaydı belki böyle bu kadar hani kolay gelişemezdim. Ama bizde öyle olmadı. Zaten onlar bana ne biliyorlarsa aktardılar. Bilgi saklamak çok meşhurdur biliyorsunuz, öyle bir şey olmadığı sürece alaylılık çok iyi işe yarayabiliyor. Ama tam tersi olursa eğer…. (Lale, X şirketi, eğitim danışmanı).

69. (Öğrenme)…kişilerin kendi yaptıkları işi diğerleriyle paylaşma istekliliğinden doğrudan etkileniyor (Dilek, X şirketi, eğitim danışmanı).

70. Bir de, beni anlayıp, benim çalışma tarzımı anlayıp, "Metehan, şunu yapıyorsun, sende iş" deyip o güveni bana verebiliyor olması benim için en büyük avantaj (Metehan, Y şirketi, eğitim uzmanı).

71. Zorlaştıran faktör, eğitim bölümlerinin sayıca küçük kitlelerden oluşması, zamansızlık, operasyonel işin çok olması (Deniz, X şirketi, eğitim bölüm başkanı).

72. Her departmanda olduğu gibi iş yükü anlamında, data girişi, vs. daha sekreteryal tarafı da çok fazla. Ama bu da olacak tabi ki de, her işin bir parçası. Ama tabi onlar da bizim kendimizi öne çıkarma veya geliştirme sürecinde bazen zaman açısından negatif olarak tabi dönebiliyor (Serap, Y şirketi, eğitim uzmanı).

73. Benim burada en büyük şansım çok fazla kaynağa sahibim gerçekten. Yani hani, ben hiçbirşey yapmasam bile çok fazla kaynağım var. O çok fazla kaynak da sana yeni kapılar ve pencereler açıyor tabi ki (Elif, Y şirketi, eğitim müdürü).

74. Herkesin her bilgiye ulaşabileceği bir yapının içinde oldum. Dolayısıyla herhangi birinin bir şeye ihtiyacı olduğunda gidip bir başkasına sormasına gerek kalmıyordu. Dolayısıyla o, kolaylaştıran faktörlerden biriydi (Nehir, Z şirketi, eğitim ve gelişim yönetmeni).

75. Kurumun bakış açısı çok önemli. İçinde bulunduğunuz kurum ve yöneticileri, çok önem veriyorsa, siz de kolay yapıyorsunuz işleri. Eğitime önem veriyor, eğitimin gerekli olduğuna inanıyor. Olmadığını düşünüyorsa, mesela birimler arasında farkı görüyorsunuz. Çok böyle iş ortaklığı yapamıyorsunuz. İhtiyaçları tam olarak karşılayamıyorsunuz. Kurumdaki bakış açısı önemli. Tabi sizin kendinizi nasıl algılattığınız da önemli. O nedenle buradaki yöneticilerimiz bizim olumlu algılanmamız ya da gerekli olduğumuzun düşünülmesinde çok önemli bir rol oynuyor (Fatma, X şirketi, eğitim danışmanı).

76. Doğru yerde çalışmakla, eğitim konusuna önem veren, kaynak sağlayan kurumdan bahsediyorum (Selin, Z şirketi, eğitim ve gelişim yönetmeni).

77. Kolaylaştıran, aslında imkanların verilmesi. Hani her zaman bir konuda eksikliğini hissediyorsak ya da işte trendleri takip etmek istiyorsak, bunlar da açık olması lazım, her zaman eğitime önem vermesi, hiçbir döneminde mesela ben eğitim (bütçesinden) kısıntı yapıldığını görmedim. Eskiden de

öyleydi, yeni yönetimde de öyle. Eğitime önem veriliyor. Böyle bir kurum olması, tabi ki çok büyük avantaj (Seda, X şirketi, eğitim bölüm başkanı).

78. (Öğrenme)…biraz kişinin kendi öğrenme isteğine bağlı (Fatma, X şirketi, eğitim danışmanı).

79. Bloom'un taksanomisini bilmeden böyle bir işte kimse çalışmasın derim. Sorsak 100 kişiden kaçı bilir, şüpheliyim. Sayısını vermek istemiyorum ama çok çok azdır. Bu noktada ben en temel özelliklerden birinin meraklı olmak olduğunu düşündüğüm için, ne yapacak, okuyacak falan, Bloom'u öğrenmesi 2 gününü, 3 günün alır (Metehan, Y şirketi, eğitim uzmanı).

80. Yani şey derim, hep şey düşünürüm hayatımda başkaları yaptıysa ben de yaparım (…). Ama öyle, onlar yapıyorsa benim de kapasitem var, ben de bunu yaparım. Yani hiçbir şeyden korkmamak lazım (Lale, company X, training consultant, Appendix,).

81. Okulun tabi ki etkisi oldu. Yani çok alakasız bir bölümden mezun olan bir arkadaşa göre… (Seda, X şirketi, eğitim bölüm başkanı).

82. Konu bazında, evet psikoloji okumuşum, o bir alt yapı sağlıyor belli bir oranda (Serap, Y şirketi, eğitim uzmanı).

83. Psikoloji okumuş olsaydım, temel eğitim psikoloji alanında olmuş olsaydı, benim için çok daha iyi olurdu (Elif, Y şirketi, eğitim müdürü).

84. Tabi ki yeterli değil, tabi ki çok daha akademik anlamda bir eğitim almayı tercih ederdim. Hedeflerimden bir tanesi, tamam aradan biraz zaman geçti ama yeniden dönüp belki psikoloji üzerine özel bir şeyler yapmak. Dolayısıyla bu benim için bir hedef. Yeterli olduğumu düşünseydim, hani bununla ilgili araştırma yapmaya başlamazdım (Nehir, Z şirketi, eğitim ve gelişim yönetmeni).