Change of Learning Culture

Prof. Dr. Ingeborg Schüßler

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Brief Information on the Author

Ingeborg Schüßler, Diplom Pädagogin (MA Edu.), Dr. Phil, was born on December 6, 1967 and studied education and teaching in primary schools at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt from 1988 to 1993. After working as a contract staff at the universities of Frankfurt and Siegen, she worked as an academic staff in the Department of Education at the Technical University of Kaiserslautern (PhD 1999) from 1994 to 1999. Afterwards she worked as a research assistant in the Department of Education from 1999 to 2006, where she obtained her qualification as a university lecturer in 2006. Thereafter she worked as a senior researcher at the German Institute for Adult Education (DIE) in Bonn up until June 2007. From July 2007, she took up the appointment as a professor of adult education and education management at the Ludwigsburg University of Education.

Her areas of focus are professionalization and teaching of adult education, women's education, school and quality development as well as training and further education of teachers, adult educators and instructors. In addition, she works as a tutor of distance learning adult education at the Centre for Distance Learning and University Further Education at the University of Kaiserslautern. And since September 2008 she works as a senior researcher at the German Institute for Adult Education (DIE).

She has publications on the following subject and research areas: vocational and adult education, transformation of learning culture, interpretive learning, constructivist pedagogy, environmental education, women's education, reflexive coeducation, and self-organised and sustained learning as well as school and quality development.

Learning Objectives

The students should

- conceive school as a social system with its own internal and external changing mechanism,

- know the indicators of educational learning cultures and identify with them in their own learning reality,

- know why and in which direction our learning cultures could change today,

- understand when learning cultures may hinder development and when they are instrumental,

- be able to elaborate the principles of systemic-constructive thinking and their relevance for their own purposes,

- know and establish the indicators of innovational management and the derived requirements of managerial skills in schools,

- critically reflect upon and deal with emerging resistance in the educational developmental processes,

- be able to appraise the indicators of a project and the necessity for project management,

- know and be able to transfer the most important implementation strategies of project management to their own practice,

- know the most important implementation steps and phases of project management,

- analyse with the aid of the theoretical implementation model of educational reality as well as one's own and external behaviour and evaluate educational development processes that could lead to innovative educational learning cultures.

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Glossary of Terms

Acquisition logic

A concept frequently used in contrast to mediation, in order to emphasize that learning does not necessarily follow teaching, but rather - e.g. depending on the learning biography, personality structure and motivation – possesses its own logic.

Action orientation

A didactic concept, which rejects the dualism of thinking and action and frequently operates with authentic problem situations, through which learning takes place and whereby the entirety of planning, execution and monitoring are taken into account.

Competency

Frequently used in contrast to qualification, competency describes a rationally delineated, factual responsibility, as well as the knowledge behind a skill, without which, the action pattern cannot be implemented in a manner that is appropriate to the situation. In this respect, competency relates to the capability of being familiar with concrete action patterns, in the form of declarative and executive situative knowledge. In contrast, performance means also applying the action patterns successfully.

Competency development

Competency development is regarded as a goal of comprehensive, professional training and further education, i.e. in further education, which not only imparts technical knowledge and skill, but also systemically promotes the extra-technical competencies of the employees, i.e. their social competencies and methodological competencies.

Constructivism/constructivist

Constructivism describes a cognitive theoretical direction in science, which assumes that the person constructs the reality perceived by himself/herself in the act of cognition. The radical constructivism even goes so far as to assert that an objective view of circumstances is not possible for the person and everyone is a prisoner of his/her own constructions and interpretations, so to speak.

Delineation

This is a frequently chosen description of the importance of education within society. The term intends to make it clear that upbringing, learning and education delineate themselves from their traditional institutional context and there are virtually no social areas, which are "free" from educational ideas. While some representatives assess this positively in the sense of greater responsibility, others see the risk of loss of profile.

Enabling / facilitation didactics

The concept of enabling didactics makes it clear that with the planning and structuring of teaching/learning processes, it can only involve "enabling" subjective acquisitions by adults. This concept thereby delineates itself from the ideas of creation didactics.

Evaluation

Evaluation relates to the process of assessment, appraisal, in this case, specifically of teaching and learning processes and the associated materials. The learning process itself, direct learning success or learning transfer can be the desired evaluation goal. Frequently, the evaluation serves to provide principals, financiers, project implementers, affected parties, etc. with an effectiveness/efficiency assessment of various development, structuring or change measures. Evaluation can take place from the outside, by objective instances, or by the teams themselves (internal process evaluation), not only for the purpose of external justification, but also primarily for self-monitoring.

Gender mainstreaming

Describes the process and approach, in which everyone involved in (political) decision-making processes contribute a gender-related and differentiated point of view, for all decisions and on all levels - from planning to examination of the measures. The aim is the equality of the genders, i.e. to achieve equal involvement of women and men in political, social and economic processes.

Generative didactics

Generative didactics identifies all didactic approaches and theories, which arouse the impression that learning success would depend exclusively on the planning, the activities and the efforts of the teacher. Such didactic approaches find their most extreme expression in programmed tuition and instruction.

Hidden curriculum

Those real interactions taking place, in class and during break times, outside the institutional curricula and decrees and those messages transported "between the lines" in the teaching content together with the official topics and materials form the bulk and highly effective mesh of a hidden curriculum. Not only deliberately designed learning contents are learned, but also those "supplementary contents" transmitted alongside the official contents through the form of learning offers (implicit learning). In the school for example, punctuality is transmitted using bells (thus upbringing takes place functionally as opposed to intentional ?targeted? upbringing).

Interpretation patterns

Ways of orientation, explanation and views, which people have acquired so far in their personal history and have proven to guide their action. They form the more or less stable elements of daily awareness and the basis for thinking, perception and actions of the people.

Learning arrangement

A concept, which refers to the "liquidation" of didactic structures. According to this, professionals should no longer plan fixed, structured units, but rather, open, diversified learning environments, which facilitate access.

Learning cultures

Learning culture refers to the totality of the learning and development potentials that can be arranged through the interaction of members in interaction and communication processes on a teaching, collegial, and organisational level. Learning cultures offer those members living within it a sort of orientation for their learning actions, and thus also simultaneously constructs a social reality.

Learning organisation

A company can be described as a learning organisation, which is in a position of encountering constantly changing environmental requirements through suitable adaptations inside the organisation. In a learning organisation, the people are in a position of constantly developing themselves further. In particular, forms of work organisation are not rigid and final, but rather, so flexible, that the offered products or services can constantly be optimised.

Lifelong learning

Within the scope of the discussion regarding the programming defined by the knowledge society, according to which people are intended to con-

tinuously further educate themselves on the basis of the limited half-life time of technical knowledge. This is sometimes criticised as "life sentence learning" and deceptive packaging, which shifts the responsibility onto the individual.

Milestone

A clearly identifiable point in a project or set of activities that commonly denotes a reporting requirement or completion of a key component of a project. (http://www.maxwideman.com/pmglossary/PMG_P12.htm)

Mind mapping (Concept mapping)

This is a technique that makes it possible to graphically depict conceptual relationships ("cognitive maps"). In the process, individual terms are distributed e.g. on paper or spatially on a screen, joint with lines that represent certain relationships between the concepts. Mind mapping can be useful as a learning technique when learning independently with texts. It can also be used by teachers to illustrate conceptual structures and relationships (projector slides, blackboard sketches, etc.).

Organisational learning

The term underlines that it is not sufficient for individuals within an organisation to acquire content, but rather, that the benefit for the organisation only establishes itself, when acquired knowledge is communicated and e.g. also made available to other members of the organisation, through active knowledge management.

Paradigms

Greek derivation meaning: example, ideal, pattern or also delineation. Usually, a far-reaching change to a previously valid thinking pattern is referred to, e.g. the discoveries of Galileo Galilei, according to which the previously prevailing physics of Aristotle no longer had any validity. It is sometimes criticised that the term is used too frequently, only in order to emphasise the novelty value of an approach.

Project Leadership

Leadership in the context of a project, e.g. leading with a focus on the project's goals and objectives and the effectiveness and efficiency of the process.(http://www.maxwideman.com/pmglossary/PMG_P12.htm)

Project management

This is an umbrella term for all the planning, supervising, coordinating and controlling measures needed for the restructuring and redesigning of systems. In this case, it is not the solution itself that is in the foreground, but rather the approach to achieving the solution, the necessary

resources, their deployment and coordination. The project management includes the organisation of the following phases: a) definition and project preparation phase, b) project planning, c) project implementation and control, d) project completion.

Reflexive modernisation

Reflexive modernisation can be understood as self-confrontation with which the effects and consequences can no longer be managed using the previous modes of action and orientation. The perceived/actual lack of social management strategies, on the one hand, and the aspiration of people to manage problems, going hand-in-hand with the risk society, on the other hand, calls upon each individual to provide all defined performance himself/herself and accordingly structure his/her own actions.

Reflexive learning

With this learning (own learning motives, styles, habits and barriers), one's self becomes the learning subject matter. Through this learning position, the subject becomes aware of his/her own history, his/her cognitive possibilities and conditions and can thereby overcome cognitive barriers. In reflexive learning, the purpose of learning and thus, the social learning requirements are scrutinised (see also secondary observation).

Secondary observation

Our reality is the result of our observations. A primary observation registers the result of behaviour. A secondary observation asks how the behaviour arises and according to which principles (or central differences) reality is structured (e.g. dualistic, technological, economical, normative, etc.). Secondary observation also includes reflective self-observation, i.e. considering one's own thinking, which is described as metacognition (see also reflexive learning).

Self-managed learning

Within the context of the discussion regarding a new learning culture, the term functions as a catchword, which intends to sensitise on the notion that learners decide on various dimensions of the learning process under their own direction (learning goals, learning content, learning locations, learning times, learning methods, learning organisation, learning success).

Self-study competency

A set of competencies that are regarded as necessary, in order to be able to learn in a self-managed manner. The term also sensitises on the fact that these competencies cannot be assumed for all participants, but rather, they must first learn these themselves, in some cases.

Self-organised learning

This is in comparison with self-managed learning, the broader term. While self-organisation means to generally create an education opportunity, self-management relates to various dimensions within an existing education offer. In the figurative sense: Self-organisation means to build a road network, while self-management describes the use of a road network that has already been established (forward, backward, left, right, fast, slow).

Setting

See learning arrangement. The methodological setting denotes, e.g. all methodological structural features of a learning situation. These include, e.g. the time sequence of specific exercises, the issue of splitting the group into small groups, the issue of the presence of a teacher, the structuring of the space, etc.

Stakeholders

Stakeholders are the specific people or groups who have a stake, or an interest, in the outcome of the project. Normally stakeholders are from within the company, and could include internal clients, management, employees, administrators... etc. (http://www.visitask.com/stakeholder-g.asp)

Structure determinist

Thinking and learning are not determined from the outside, but by the existing (cognitive and emotional) structures. People interact with their own system states: What is learnt is what is compatible with existing knowledge structures, i.e. what fits into these cognitive frameworks.

Subjective theories

Cognitive structures, in which our daily knowledge is organised. For example, teachers have subjective theories about "the good/bad students" and the effectiveness of specific lesson measures. In this context, one speaks of theories, because these structures – analogous to scientific theories – are structured cohesively and coherently (see also interpretation patterns).

Support structures

This is complementary to the concept of learning counselling, for further education institutions, it is demanded that they should provide support structures during the course of a new learning culture, which go beyond the previous course and material structuring, e.g. including childcare or "learning-free" communication spaces.

Systems theory

According to Niklas Luhmann social systems are autopoietic, self-referential (relating itself to itself), operationally closed systems, which are based on the communication of individual psychic systems (human beings). The systems theory examines the self-organisation of systems and how the systems relate to the environment based on a "standardised difference".

1 Introduction and Overview: What are Learning Cultures?

This studytext is organised in two parts – Part A "Change of Learning Culture" and Part B "Project Management". In this part, the general idea of Learning culture is introduced. If we *take a look at the school learning culture* (Chapter 1), we must first ask what we really mean when we speak of "school". It becomes increasingly clear that we can no longer view school as a closed institution. The first chapter invites you to view your daily work from a distance and to perceive *school as a social system* (Chapter 1.1). From the educational policy and scientific side and from the public, there are demands that our school learning cultures be transformed, but neither among the critics nor among those affected in the school is there an agreed understanding of what the features of a learning culture in the school should be and through which factors, the learning should be significantly determined. We will therefore first deal with the question: *what are indicators of school learning cultures* (Chapter 1.2) and investigate the different notions from *school culture to learning culture.* In the second chapter, we will show what characteristic features innovative learning cultures should have (chapter 2.1) and how previous learning cultures were diagnosed (Chapter 2.2). Since changes first require a clarification of the status quo.

Developing the learning culture in schools is today a central task of a school development and the parties involved. It calls for innovative developments, to successfully cope with the diverse requirements. The third chapter is, therefore, dedicated to the indicators of educational innovation and their implementation. The concept of innovation and the characteristics of innovative projects will be clarified. Moreover, the most important dimensions of innovation management will be identified and the prerequisites for innovation projects outlined. It will also be shown that innovation can be perceived as a disturbance of the system by those affected in an organisation. Finally, potential difficulties in change processes are explained, but also ways of dealing with the system defence are presented and attention is drawn to the different stages in innovation processes.

Innovations at school are always achieved through large or also small projects. Therefore part B of this course material deals extensively with the fundamentals of *project management.* First of all, *indicators of school projects* (Chapter 4.1) will be presented, because not every problem or concern must be dealt with on a project basis. Sometimes decisions made among the teaching staff are sufficient or a task can be delegated, without needing a complex project management. Also in the centre point are *preparations for the project management* (Chapter 4.2), to clarify, for example, who should participate in the work. The project management itself is divided into four phases (Chapter 4.3). These phases are now described in detail. From the *definition phase and project preparation,* through the phase of the *project planning* to the actual implementation phase

of *project execution and control to completion of the project and the project balance.* These phases are illustrated with numerous examples and methods, with references in the appendix that are equivalent to a "tool box" that can support one's own project. Finally, some tips on effective time management are presented, which can be used both for the concrete project work and for this study (Chapter 5). In the *closing words* it will be reemphasised that learning cultures can only positively transform themselves, if the development work is understood as a common mission of all parties (Chapter 6).

1.1   School as a Social System

If we speak of school as a "social system" then it is also necessary to include the environment of this system in the consideration. It is therefore very interesting for you to consider what is currently developing in your country and what importance education, and especially the schools are assuming.

Education is as natural a right as the right to breathe. The literacy rate is re ported to be between 61.5 (female) and 79.1 (male) per cent (http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/pakistan_pakistan_statistics.html).

It has been realised that the country's most valuable asset is its people. Fur thermore, it is intended to produce a society that is equipped with the necess ary skills to function as a culture of self-reliance in the modern economy.

The education system is also designed to promote private sector school ing, eduacation equally accessible for all groups (i.e. prevent gender dis crimination, prevent ethnic discrimination, prevent class discrimination, etc.) and promote continuing education through formal and informal systems.

Barriers to education in Pakistan include: traditional taboos, school fees (for registration and materials), the opportunity cost for low income house holds, most institutions are still in the process of renovation and expansion and a lack of professionals to run the existing institutions properly is a serious setback in the country. It is apparent that, the important assets of a coun try are its human resources.

And this is precisely where its challenges lie: It has to do with further developing the schools and the learning cultures. They are namely the basis on which the human resources can only develop.

Many teaching staff are developing an increased awareness for the social changes and changes in work structure, which inevitably also affect the school. They recognise that the "system school" is not an entity closed to the outside, but rather interacts with other social systems such as family, university, businesses, (educational) policy, etc.

Changes in the private systems affect the organisation school quiet massively especially at the moment: upbringing problems and conflicts in families, violence and drug problems, as well as right-wing radicalism and sexual discriminations. The use of new technologies and expanding employment opportunities in the services sector increasingly demands personal and unspecialised skills. For an education in the future knowledge-based society, school leavers are however only moderately prepared. They often lack basic cultural techniques, such as reading, writing, arithmetic, and the increasingly important key skills such as independent learning. At the universities there is also a widespread dis-satisfaction on the studying skills of school leavers who are mostly lacking in methods and problem-solving skills. The current societal trends and social problems ultimately endanger the economic stability, which is why the policy of educational institutions promises preventive and compensatory aids. Hence the school is only part of a system related to society as a whole and highly interconnected with other subsystems.

School as a system can move between the open and closed poles. As a closed system it is fixed and rigid. Only as an open system is school adaptable, changeable and willing to learn.

To ensure that school can further develop, an open understanding of the system school with all its interaction processes is necessary. Only when school is grasped as an open system, will it be possible for the players in it to also respond appropriately to the profound and transformation processes affecting the school. In our post-modern societies "transformation" has become more or less normal (cf. Beck 1997) and "coping with uncertainty" has become a major key skills in successfully dealing with complex situations that can no longer be tackled with simple routines for dealing with demands. Hence Fullan (2001) comes to the conclusion that:

> *"Characterising instructional leadership as the principal's central role has been a valuable first step in increasing student learning, but it does not go far enough. Literacy and improvement in mathematics*

are only the beginning. To ensure deeper learning – to encourage problem solving and thinking skills and to develop and nurture highly motivated and engaged learners, for example – it requires mobilising the energy and capacities of teachers. In turn, to mobilise teachers, we must improve teachers' working conditions and morale. Thus, we need leaders who can create a fundamental transformation in the learning cultures of schools and of the teaching profession itself. The role of the principal as instructional leader is too narrow a concept to carry the weight of the kinds of reforms that will create the schools that we need for the future."

Often it is difficult for colleagues to take on a "bird's eye view" in everyday classroom events, so as to view problems from a distance, and thus also include the surrounding factors in the consideration, which are part causes of the occurring difficulties. In the routine of daily lesson planning and implementation, rating, conferences, parent meetings, etc., it is inevitably necessary to reduce school complexity, in order to remain functional. Through this however, simple linear cause-effect reasoning are often used to interpret everyday events in the school for oneself and to react quickly accordingly.

Activity 1:

John's readiness to use violence, which has increased in this school year, is on closer inspection, not only due to his declining school performance, as you originally suspected. Perhaps the bad grades are even more likely the trigger for John's aggressive behaviour towards his fellow students so that he threatens and even beats them. You learn from a colleague that John's father has been unemployed for the past year, which made him take to drinking again, which has led to family conflicts. The father often takes out his frustration on John, especially when he also comes home with poor grades. John's girlfriend has broken up with him, so he meets again with other guys from his gang, with whom he spends much time at the amusement arcade...

Remind yourself of a situation in which you realised – perhaps only afterwards – that your diagnosis of a cause and reaction to a school conflict situation (with a student or colleague) prove to be wrong, because the phenomenon represented itself in a more complex manner than you initially realised!

Try to describe a recent "problem" that you are currently faced with in school in one sentence. Now try to state the "cause" which you diagnosed at first sight as a reason for this problem. Write down "problem" and "cause" on a large sheet of paper. And think of what other factors that could be the cause which you did not think of at first, but which could possibly even influence the perceived problem. You can also ask someone else who is familiar with the problem, to compile a similar cause-effect diagnosis. Compare both "problem interpretations".

Process control   This example and your own reflections show that many causes could play a potential role when it comes to educational problems. The causes are in

mutually connected – no cause arises in isolation. Interaction processes take place – as we shall see – even within the school structure and ultimately play an important role in the "learning culture" of organisation schools. Hence school presents itself as a dynamic, complex system, "whereby it is impossible to ever capture all interactions" (Senge, 1994). Peter Senge has identified five elements of a learning culture that contribute to building a robust learning organisation. These elements are:

- **personal mastery** – create an environment that encourages personal and organisational goals to be developed and realised in partnership

- **mental models** – know that a person's 'internal' picture of their environment will shape their decisions and behaviour

- **shared vision** – build a sense of group commitment by developing shared images of the future

- **team learning** – transform conversational and collective thinking skills, so that a group's capacity to reliably develop intelligence and ability is greater than the sum of its individual member's talents

- **system thinking** – develop the ability to see the 'big picture' within an organisation and understand how changes in one area affect the whole system.

To control teaching and school processes – ultimately for the organisation of this learning culture – it is essential for teachers, but especially for the school administrative staff, to develop a *systemic understanding* of the organisation school (system thinking). If for example, you want to concretely stage and monitor school development projects in the role of a school headteacher, it is extremely helpful to know what intervention tools you can use to *sustainably* initiate change processes. Fullan (1999, p. 19ff.) mentions eight basic lessons that teachers – especially the educational leadership – must take into account for such a transformation process:

Systemic understanding

1. "You can't mandate what matters: complexity of change in skills, thinking and committed actions in educational enterprise. Fullan commented that "effective change agents neither embrace nor ignore mandates. They use them as catalysts to re-examine what they are doing." (Fullan 1999, p. 24)

2. Change is a journey not a blueprint: changes entails uncertainty with positive and negative forces of change.

3. Problems are our friends: problems are the route to deeper change and deeper satisfaction; conflict is essential to any successful change effort.

4. Vision and strategic planning come later: vision comes later because the process of merging personal and shared visions takes time. People learn about the innovation through their interactions with the innovation and others in the context of innovation. Deep ownership comes through the learning that arises from full engagement in solving problems.

5. Individualism and collectivism must have equal power: Stacy's concept of "dynamic system" helps clarify Fullan's ideas of innovation collaboration:"The dynamic systems perspective leads to a view of culture as emergent. What a group comes to share in the way of culture and philosophy emerges from individual personal beliefs through a learning process that builds up over years." (Stacy, 1992, p. 145)

6. Neither centralization nor decentralization works: the centre and local units need each other. Successful changes require a dynamic two-way relationship of pressure, support and continuous negotiation.

7. Connection with the wider environment is critical for success: change should recognise a broader context, to which change asserts its constant action.

8. Every person is a change agent: "It is only by individuals taking action to alter their own environments will there be any chance for deep change" (Fullan 1999, p. 40).

1.2 Indicators of School Learning Cultures

By "culture" we generally mean a system of values, behavioural norms, ways of thinking and acting which has been learned and accepted by a collective of people and has the effect that this social group significantly differs from other groups. Another concept more frequently in use than "learning culture" is the concept of "school culture". It stands as a collective term for all behavioural configurations, symbols, ideas and values that can be identified in the coexistence of school members, specifically, for example for:

- the social manners and manner of interaction

- the agreement on educational and upbringing goals

- the content mediated in teaching-learning processes

- the applied teaching and upbringing methods

- the provided learning and experiencing opportunities

- the contact with the school environment

- the result of group dynamics processes of a core teaching staff

The school culture is marked both by its history and the already completed development, as well as by the subjective attitudes and acting patterns of the parties involved: These basic patterns consisting of no longer questioned, naturally accepted behavioural and acting requirements in school, ultimately lead to a collective notion of normality, which is made visible and communicated through a system of symbols, myths, ceremonies, rituals and narrations. **School culture**

It is however not easy to expose the "deep-rooted structure" of a cultural character of schools. Even if significant differences emerge between different schools, it is however hardly possible to grasp the underlying values, norms and basic assumptions. It is so difficult, because the parties usually take it for granted and this makes it only available as tacit knowledge. In spite of numerous definitions school cultures are mainly characterised by the following factors: **Deep-rooted structure**

They are **Indicators of school cultures**

- an implicit, non-specific, intangible phenomenon that comprises of common values, beliefs, orientation patterns, cognitive abilities and thinking patterns of members of an organisation and which shapes the way they see themselves,

- accepted, supported and taken as a matter of fact by the majority of the members,

- the result of social learning in group processes in coping with external problems,

- an important concept that mediates meaning and orientation, creates motivation potential and brings about consensus and gives identity,

- not consciously learned, but principally changeable.

In pedagogic literature the expression school culture and learning culture are often used synonymously or learning culture is seen as part of the school culture – in addition to upbringing and organisation culture – or even entirely used in **Learning culture**

place of the concept of school culture. A learning culture focuses primarily on the teaching perspective and is characterised by the following aspects:

- the forms of learning arrangements and learning organisation,

- the totality of the learning material on offer and the learning opportunities,

- the quality of the educational foundation and methodical differentiation.

While the school culture relates to the whole organisational action, the learning culture focuses on all *learning actions* associated with the cognitive, communicative and social-structural activities. Following the basic assumption that a culture operates in a manner that creates sense and **orientation**, a learning culture creates orientation for one's teaching/learning activity. Learning cultures are ultimately based on their individual and collective images of teaching and learning. These basic assumptions of learning theory and biographically acquired/historically organisationally developed **learning routines** influence goals, visions and the norm structure of the individual persons, as well as the respective institution/organisation.

We assume that the "matter-of-fact attitude to things" acquired biographically through one's personal learning process is always reapplied. Thus they subtly shape the teaching-learning process. Hence it is not obvious to the parties involved if their own actions are actually optimal and appropriate or merely a ritualized continuation of traditional patterns.

If one views the school as a "learning organisation" (cf. Fullan 1999, Senge 1994), the notion of learning culture therefore includes both the internal structure of the school and the entire school environment.

Mnemonic sentence

> "Learning culture is the entirety of learning and development potential, which is arranged through the interaction of the members in interactional and communication processes, on a lesson, collegial and organisational level" (Arnold/Schüßler 1998, p. 4).

"Development framework" Learning cultures are therefore *frameworks* repeatedly recreated in and through teaching-learning as well as cooperation and communication processes, which offer its group members very specific development opportunities, while simultaneously withholding specific development opportunities from others. A teacher, who holds on to his authority role will provide only very little self-study opportunities for the learners and in a college where everyone teaches behind closed doors and immediately leaves the school grounds at the sound of the bells, there will be very little opportunity to exchange ideas on teaching problems or to plan the lessons together on the basis of a pedagogical conception. Also a school administration that demands personal initiative and experimentation amongst its teachers in the classroom, but insists on the observance of all formalities, and does not even want to be bothered nor relax its control role will have to wait in vain for the commitment of the teachers.

Members organise learning culture by themselves Those involved are rarely aware of the fact that the existing learning culture

is created to a large extent by themselves. Many teachers complain about the rigid learning structures, but continue to follow a traditional learning logic and perpetuate them anew, when for example, they do not approach colleagues to develop realisable solutions for project ideas together or when they only "preach" lively learning, rather than experiment it with the learners. Learning cultures are however also shaped by the acquisition activities of the learners who for example are contented with "instructive teaching" and even "expect" it for reasons of convenience and are rather opposed to self-directed methods. They are also partly not in a position to work independently because the teaching structure up till now has not given them the opportunity to learn and acquire the appropriate method skills.

The familiar, offers all parties involved a confident action and stabilisation of the identity, without them being conscious of the social traditions and the changeable nature of its forms. Rather they ascribed a de facto value to it and it is done as *if* this was the only way possible. Teachers usually do as if the students (can) learn, what they are taught.

The "collective myth" *knowledge mediation* ultimately shapes didactics and methods, and sanctions and legitimises the division of labour as well as certain practices in teaching-learning processes. Even the actions of students are directed towards the "as-if category" *knowledge mediation*, that awards specific tasks and roles to them as learners. In their learning biography, they have internalised this learning culture as supposedly "natural" without realising that by the assumption of their expected role as learners they also contribute to the construction of the *as-if learning culture*. All what they perceive is that they somehow pass through school or fail. Students not only learn maths or biology, rather they also learn what kind of attitude to school learning culture that leads to success.

Internship

As if learning culture

This "hidden curriculum" of school learning culture was overlooked over a long period of time. As a result, many school leavers are not capable of independent problem solving because they were accustomed to leaving the responsibility of their learning process entirely in the hands of the teachers. A similar attitude can also be observed among the teaching staff. The experience gained over the years, that dedication and commitment is desired, but rarely encouraged and "rewarded", leads to the forming of the thinking pattern that "commitment is not worthwhile". Originally used for self protection against overworking, many colleagues can no longer free themselves from the familiar and routine patterns of action, even though in the meantime the school has changed.

Hidden curriculum

By discussing learning cultures, obvious certainties and recognisable patterns of action only become apparent and thus can be questioned. Rolf Arnold reveals in this context, for example, some of the "traditional and internalised" **"matter-of-fact issues"** in dealing with teaching and learning" (Arnold 2005, p. 2):

- **Teaching and learning are viewed separately from each other** with the meaning that learners do not teach and teachers do not learn.

This leads to the saying that teaching is a necessary requirement for learning, in other words learning only takes place when taught. The guiding rule for pedagogical action therefore lies in the motivation of the learners. This assumption however overlooks the fact that it is only the learner that can motivate himself. He succeeds in doing this if he can pursue his own learning interest.

- Adult learning is organised in institutionalised form through a **synchronisation of the learning** of the individual learners. This "learning at the same pace" implies that from the teacher's perspective, the individual learning process of a group has to be adapted so that only a uniform process is carried out. This idea overlooks the diversity of differentiation and distribution forms, which are possible today mainly through elaborate forms of e-learning.

- The **teacher dominance** is also expressed in the fact that the knowledge and the decision on the use of methods tend to be reserved exclusively for the teachers. They decide which method is applicable and when, which neither necessitates nor promotes the self-study skills of the learners.

- **Learning content and learning subject matter are often handed down.** They are chosen because a general or cultural significance is attributed to them. However, this idea follows an "intellectualistic illusion", namely the belief that knowledge and the acquisition of knowledge from a particular canon of subjects would be decisive for the development of skills. However, this neither takes the change in knowledge in the knowledge-based society into account nor the high rates of forgetting during knowledge transfer.

- **The education system pursues an illusion of equality**, which rather turns out to be a promise that cannot be kept due to the selection and allocation function of educational institutions. Teaching-learning processes are often presented as power relationships, in which prevailing social inequalities are reproduced and learning reduced to the context of coercion and duress.

Orientation function of learning culture It can be summed up by saying that learning cultures offer members living within the culture a guide for their teaching and learning activities. It thus constructs a social reality at the same time. This orientation function only lasts as long as the teachers and students share the same views about underlying norms, values and interpretation patterns of the learning culture handed down. This is, however, becoming less the case. It is becoming apparent that changes in the environment and learning requirements can no longer be tackled with the familiar presented here, in the orientation patterns acquired through the traditional school learning culture. Today, it is important to constantly cope with changing demands for action whereby the problem solving solutions of the older generation no longer often seem appropriate. If previously one could assume that a profession once learnt, would be practised for a lifetime, today however unemployment has hit all classes of the population and it is demanded

of them that they reorientate themselves now and again in the course of life and solve problems independently.

For this reason, school subcultures and alternative cultures have already emerged in many places, in which pedagogic demands find their expression. An alternative culture, however, can only be sustainably established, if it is not immediately sanctioned, but shared by other communication partners and is further developed next to or under prevailing values.

School program

Activity 2:

Try to describe in your own words what you understand by learning culture.

Now if you think of the learning culture of your school, spontaneously try to summarise your overall impression in a metaphor, e.g.: "I find the learning culture in our school – when I think of the teaching staff – similar to an orchestra. Everyone plays his own instrument and as the school director, I give the rhythm. Some play very loudly and other only very silently.

But all eyes are on me. I am conducting everyone so that a harmonious unified sound can emerge from the individual sounds. However, I feel tired out at the end; I give everything, while the elegant harp does not play sometimes. Sometimes I wonder who wrote the notes and made it a prerequisite for us?" or: "I find the learning culture ... like a Jazz group. Everyone improvises on an instrument to achieve a previously agreed melody. Only while playing does a harmonious whole arise, whereby everyone has the possibility of giving the rhythm. I experience the commitment of everyone, the constant surprises and the participation in a cause as highly satisfactory. It is also fun and I have the feeling that everyone bears the responsibility for the success of our piece – not just me."

Now develop a mind map or a table, in which you present the indicators of learning culture either as branches or as columns of a table. Based on these indicators, now develop a first diagnosis of learning culture at your school: how do you find the communication between the colleagues at your school ("aggressive", "closed," "collegial," "open", etc.)? What rituals are practised at your school (celebrations at the end of a school year, joint celebration of birthday parties of colleagues, etc.?...)

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2 Development of Innovative Learning Cultures

If we look at the criticisms made by the institutions, organisations and firms that our graduates will end up in, we will find that our graduates are insufficiently prepared at the moment for the complex requirements demanded of them and that they are lacking in basic skills. The ability to independently acquire new knowledge for example, has increasingly become a necessity, due to the knowledge explosion and rapid rate at which our present knowledge becomes outdated. For this reason, the traditional models of an anticipatory, future-related selective education and qualification have to be gradually discarded. Since today, we know to a lesser extent what our world would be like in five years and with what challenges our learners and or participants will be faced. Hence, it should not be a question of preparing the single individual to adapt to change (– we no longer know what this change looks like), it must be increasingly a matter of preparing the individuals for a self-adaption to these changes and support them in the acquisition of self-study skills. In other professional fields, it is also becoming increasingly obvious that the self is shifting more and more into the centre of focus. Individuals must manage themselves, market themselves and further educate themselves a live long so as not to miss the boat. On the one hand this sounds perhaps negative and like a pressure weighing on individuals to achieve self-organisation, but on the other hand it gives more creative leeway. Hence to be able to use this, we must prepare the individuals for it and enable them acquire personality-related, in particular, reflexive skills. This gives rise to the challenge to innovate our traditional learning cultures.

2.1 From Traditional to Innovative Learning Cultures

Arnold sees the **sustainability** – i.e. "the question of the context with which teaching/learning organisation, competencies can really be initiated / promoted permanently, sustainably and with further development capability" (Arnold 2001, P. 102) as a higher-ranking criterion with the change of learning cultures. As a result, the required independent activity by the learners should be supported by teaching, which provides structure. This means that in the school a suitable presentation of knowledge is still important, which inspires and supports self-learning. The resulting bundle of central questions is portrayed in Figure 2.1 (cf. Arnold 2001, P. 102 ff.). *Sustainability of learning*

Many of these central questions relate to the issue of the suitable setting. It not only involves the content, but rather, very significantly, also questions issues relating to the **environment** and the staging of the measures, such that they promote learning. The question "how" is not an end in itself, but rather supports the establishment of competencies for self-organised learning and independent action, on the one hand. The "what" on the other hand forms a more conceptual link with this, through a suitable setting, which in turn,
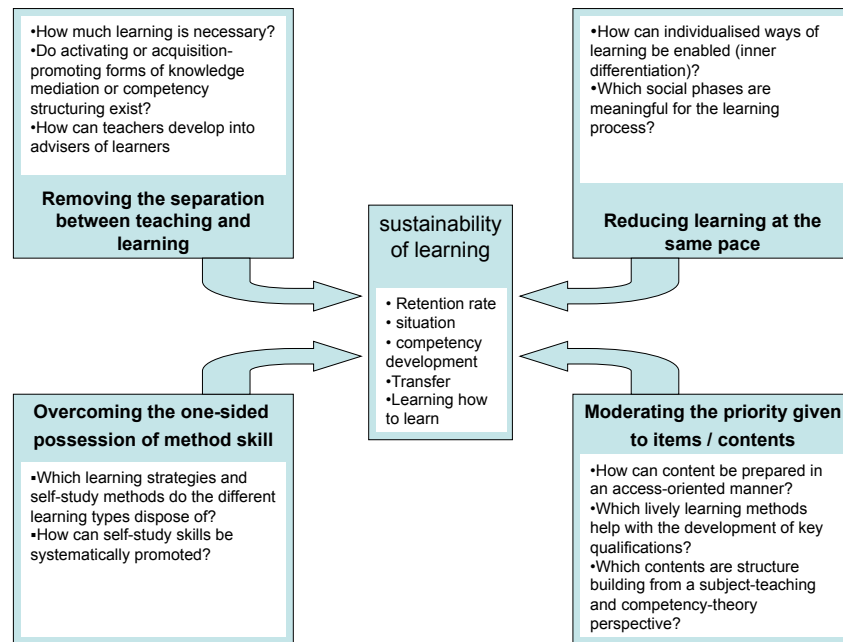
Figure 2.1: *Central questions on structuring a learning culture for sustainable learning*

results in more sustainable learning. It appears significant that the methods of learning processes can be reflected based on what effect they intend to have. An exaggerated example of this is as follows: It is highly questionable, whether a strictly frontal teaching followed by a multiple-choice test on the topic of self-organisation promotes the establishment of respective competencies among the participants. If this circumstance is projected onto the level of school leadership, it quickly becomes clear that self-activity by learners cannot be expected if they are not permitted to familiarise themselves with, or try these out, in the settings, which they experience. Ultimately, students have learned how to conduct themselves and which methods to apply – in short: how they need to learn. At the same time, the false conclusion that students would not learn anything from the frontal lesson learning arrangement should not be drawn from this. Ultimately, the learner decides which method of acquiring knowledge and which forms of support promote his/her learning. With the demand for self organised learning, the same mistake should at least not be made, as in traditional didactic theories, whereby learning is only regarded as a dependent variable of teaching and learning activities are put on the same level with teaching activities.

Individuals or social groups (seminar, course, as well as departments and operations) can learn through external triggers, however they can also be motivated through impulses taking place internally, which are results of the triggered learning processes that are strongly defined by their already existing and developed **own cognitive structures**. System research describes this process with the indication that interventions (e.g. teaching inputs) coming from the outside, trigger structural changes in the brain, in the form of learning. However these can neither be fixed nor prescribed. What actually comes out

as a result of the learning process is therefore the result of extremely complex cause-effect relationships, which has not been triggered – and probably not even primarily – as an output of teaching input alone. Our ideas therefore need to change from a generative structure toward an **enabling structure** (cf. Arnold/Schüßler 2003, cf. Table 2.1).

Generative didactics Instructive theory of learning		**Facilitation didactics** Acquisition theory of learning
Linear process of understanding: Learning input = learning output	⇔	**non-linear process of understanding:** Learning output is interlinked with a wide range of environmental conditions.
Scheduled lesson planning: Implementation of planned lesson steps (planning thinking)	⇔	**Situational-flexible lesson planning:** Implementation of student-learning projects (operational thinking)
Representative access to educational content using teacher methods: externally organised knowledge acquisition	⇔	**Self access** to educational content using student methods: Self-organised knowledge acquisition
Professional action as: • **Teaching** • **Mediation** • **Leading**	⇔	… as promotion of: • **Learning** • **Acquisition** • **Self-activity**
Pessimistic conception of man: Learners cannot be entrusted with the responsibility for their own learning.	⇔	**Optimistic conception of man:** Learners have - like everyone else - a natural potential for learning, which can be promoted and unfolded through a better organisation of education.
Aim of the lesson: **Mediation of required knowledge**	⇔	Aim of the lesson: **Development of methods and self-action oriented learning skills**

Table 2.1: *From the generative to the facilitation didactics (according to Arnold/ Schüßler 1998; p. 125)*

The creating of development-promoting learning cultures in further education must as a result proceed with an awareness of the existing learning culture (see in further education and schools). They must also see ways of supporting teaching / learning actions in such a way that a new learning culture can develop. This requires the development and implementation of a variety of project ideas (see chapter 4). On closer examination, organisation possibilities exist on the following levels:

Subjective theories

Readiness to change

- **Spatial flexibility**: Learning locations are not bound to teaching places. Learning can take place anywhere, not just in training or seminar rooms, but also by means of excursions with privately organised learning groups or at any private location. Methods of distance learning including e-learning techniques permit, in many cases, a most extensive flexibility of the learning arrangement in contrast to a learning location. The effect that a learning location has on the learning process should always be kept in mind.

- **emporal flexibility**: Particularly in the case of a more self-organised learning process, the timing of the learning can be planned and controlled by the students themselves. However, this presupposes the fact that they can deal with this flexibility, i.e. they can manage their time and learning effectively themselves. Learning counselling also has an important task in this case just as with the assistance in dealing with spatial flexibility.

- **Process−openness, group dynamics, situational learning**: In the learning forms, special emphasis is laid on action orientation. Even learning within open, learner-controlled processes and the situational learning are organisational features in this case. This also presupposes a positive conception of man that reposes confidence in the self-organisational potential of the learners.

- **Process-supporting and process-stabilising framework**: Due to the comparatively higher standards of organisation, facilities, equipment, materials, etc. required, a higher planning, implementation and follow-up effort results. These increased demands result from both the more sophisticated methodology as well as rising demands of target groups to be addressed individually. The framework must therefore support these diverse processes and ensure stability in the work despite the flexibility.

- **Enhanced competencies of teachers**: The competencies of "teachers" are changing, as a result the form given to counselling in teaching also necessitates moderation and conflict resolution skills. Further requirements include the animation and motivation of learners, counselling and monitoring their learning process as well as organising and handling digital media.

- **Method diversity**: learning arrangements can be achieved using many different methods and forms of learning. The classroom learning phase and the distance learning phase can be combined in the sense of blended learning. Various media can be made available to be used for compilation by the learners. The learners themselves can participate in the shaping of the media content (e.g. Web 2.0).

- **Individual learning counselling**: Many of the already mentioned aspects refer to a counselling of the learners. It cannot be assumed that learners are capable of intensive self-controlled or self-organised learning or that they possess all necessary information or strategies. Counselling can also help learners identify means and forms of learning and learning content to suit their individual cognitive level.

- **Developing learning projects from everyday (working) life**: Learning potentials are not only drawn from the classical teaching offers. The school is freed of "bureaucracy". In addition to defined school offers, learning potentials can be developed from everyday life.

- **Transparency and verifiability**: The access to learning opportunities must be available to all participants and transparent. Learning processes

should be evaluated and their benefit should possibly also be verifiable.

- **Learning from mistakes and successes**: learning opportunities result from reflecting on the work. In the process mistakes are seen as essential learning opportunities and are used to initiate learning rather than to apportion blame. However, learning from experience, is not only limited to mistakes – successes also offer learning opportunities.

- **Situational and action-oriented examinations**: Also the examination culture should change. It should be less based on testing existing knowledge but more on ascertaining acquired skills. Examinations are therefore based on practical situations, in which the learner has to deal with concrete situations requiring action or case situations. The examination then becomes rather similar to an assessment procedure. Skill ascertainment also involves the documentation and reflection on the experienced actions, hence the portfolio approaches or learning diaries can also be used in this case.

When using new media, it is however important to ensure that one does not return to generative didactics principles, concealed only by a media-based editing and entertaining presentation or visualisation.

2.2 Diagnosis of Learning Cultures

Innovations and changes initially require the clarification of the actual situation or conversely: Only the diagnosis of one's learning cultures permits a recognition of what should logically be further developed. The view should be extended to all school-related dimensions. Only if school administrations develop such a systemic understanding, would it be easier for them to identify factors influencing learning culture. They then become researchers of their own school reality (see Altrichter / Posch 1990). To be able to achieve this, they need diagnostic skills that help to detect, "differences" and ask questions. Which questions that have which relevance to the advancement of the learning culture, can therefore only be answered by each school themselves. Below are a number of such questions that help to exemplary reveal possible development needs:

Activity 3:

- *What are the teachers' expectations regarding the capabilities and the advancement of the pupils*: more optimistic or pessimistic?

- *How interested are the teachers in the performance of their pupils*: is there a kind of confidence or indifference?

- *What characterizes the interaction behaviour of all participants*: does a human communication and interaction style predominate or does conflicting structures predominate?

- *How do the teachers reach a consensus on didactic-methodological issues*: is there a consensus on didactic-methodological questions among the teaching staff or does each teacher carry out his or her lesson according to his or her own ideas. Do teachers assist each other in the preparation and implementation of the lessons and do they mutually agree on the organisation of their lessons or is there a kind of "competition mentality"?

- *How are decisions taken among the teaching staff*: are rules / agreements jointly discussed and decided on among the teaching staff or are there individual decisions which are binding for all?

- *How do the teachers and students identify with their school*: can a "sense of community" be felt, which is expressed, for example, in the form of working groups or does a "fun-generation" mentality predominate which is noticeable in the form of vandalism at school among others?

- *How are the questions / interests of the pupils concerning the school and classroom events considered*: active participation in decision making, or "pseudo-participation" through a student representative without rights?

- *How is participation of the pupils in school and classroom work ensured and encouraged*: are there forms of organisation that enable independent learning or does frontal classroom teaching methods predominate?

- *What opportunities do the pupils have to actively engage themselves with a learning object and acquire interdisciplinary skills in the classroom*: can they make their own discoveries and work on projects, do they learn to correct their own work themselves and evaluate them, or are they only sporadically given the opportunity to work in groups?

- *What specific learning, support and guidance and counselling offers does the school dispose of*: are there special offers, e.g. support possibilities for pupils with learning difficulties, a mediator system for conflict-resolving or are the consultations restricted to discussion on the basic school facilities with a "teacher consultant"?

- *How high is the turnover of the teaching staff as well as the cancellation of classes and deputising for colleagues*: is there a good climate and do the teachers feel healthy, or are there frequent cases of illness and do many teachers apply for another job after a short time?

- *What interests exist and what efforts are made towards school internal further training and developments*: are the teaching staff interested in a systemic further development of the school work or do teachers individually pursue further training interests, without relating the outcomes to the overall school work?

- *How are the criteria and stipulated guidelines and curricula implemented*: are guidelines and curricula adapted to suit one's school or are the stipulations interpreted on a one to one basis even in one's own school work?

- *What self-understanding or "management model", does the school administration dispose of*: is the school administration an initiator of goal clarification, agreement and assurance in a cooperative manner, or does it delegate from top-down?

- *What characterizes the public relations of the school administration*: does it portray itself outwardly in an open manner, i.e. is the school administration in contact with parents, other schools, institutions and does it have a home page, etc., or does the public know nothing about the activities of the school – except the school name?

- *How do the parents work with the teachers*: is the active cooperation with the parents sought after or is the exchange limited to the mandatory parents' evening?

- What other questions can you think of?

To examine a learning culture, it is useful to remind oneself that a learning culture always has mostly unconsciously embedded basic assumptions about teaching and learning that express themselves in the objectives of the lessons and in the living values and norms. These norms and values can also be read from the history of an institution as well as from their visions (cf. Figure 2.2).

When following the understanding of learning culture as a framework for organisational learning, questions must be asked about the basic assumptions and values of the employees, the leadership levels, those responsible for human resource development, etc. The following catalogue of questions is an example of this:
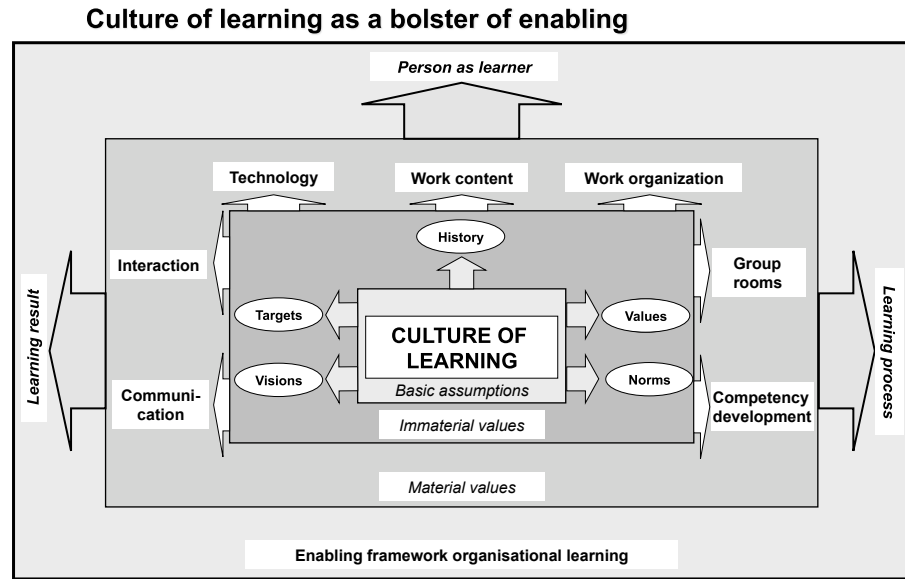
Culture of learning as a bolster of enabling

Figure 2.2: *Learning culture as an enabling framework for organisational learning*

Questions for the diagnosis of organisational structures

Questions on the basic assumptions:

- Which understanding of **management and leadership** is expressed (is the manager regarded as an assurer and enabler of the learning of employees? Does he/she make an effort to find, recognise and promote potential?

- To what extent is learning integrated into **daily activity** (do the employees regard themselves as learners in continuing individual and collective learning processes)?

- Which **image of "teaching and learning"** underlies the judgement and action of the organisation members?

- How is learning in **daily organisational life** promoted or at least supported? With which attribution of value is learning embedded in the company (and thus also in the heads of the leadership and teachers)?

Questions on the immaterial values:

- Is **learning** accepted and lived **as a regular and integral component** of daily work by all members of the organisation? And conversely, are they also simultaneously prepared to support, coach and advise others?

- Which **learning-oriented models**/visions does the organisation possess, which does its members have? Are these identical?

- What are the interrelationships between (professional) biographical **experiences** of the employees, school history and the learning culture of the organisation?

- How open is the learning culture with respect to **explicit structuring** on the basis of visions, goals, values and norms?

> **Questions on the material values:**
>
> - To what extent are services, cooperation and networks used, in order to obtain access to **external sources of learning?**
>
> - How is the significance of learning reflected in organisational **working and promotion conditions** for the members of the organisation? Is there a transparent interrelationship between career planning and **competency development?**
>
> - How are the further development of employees and the organisation integrated into the corporate planning and **personnel development**? How does human resource management actively support the individual further development of the organisation members, in the sense of personnel development?
>
> - How are collective learning processes and **reflection processes** integrated into the workflows, in order to inspire learning by organisational units, beyond individual learning?

With the help of these questions, the organisational framework in which learning cultures develop can be analysed. However, under certain circumstances, obtaining answers to these questions can be difficult. The material values tend to be ascertained more easily and with more certainty than immaterial values. Approaches to the basic assumptions, in turn, tend to be more difficult than investigating the immaterial values. How can answers therefore be obtained in practice – with standardised questionnaires, with interviews? Such instruments are certainly very helpful and can determine a portrayed learning culture – i.e. the self-image of those surveyed. As already mentioned, it is not intended that a specification or "best method" be illustrated here. However, it must be considered that aspects such as attitudes, norms or values can usually not be directly asked about. However, they are reflected in reality, i.e. in the actually lived workflows, routines, rituals, communication styles, etc. Therefore, beyond the scope of questionnaires and interviews. Hence methods that come into question as **diagnostic tools**, should be those that observe and analyse reality in the company, such as:

- **Observing discussion situations**: Are meetings and conferences structured (e.g. by means of moderation, goals, procedure, results)? Are results processed, made accessible and usable for further meeting and working situations? <small>Diagnostic tools</small>

- **Analysis of the learning content of everyday working life**: Everyday working life is generally defined by the solving of work tasks at workplaces, in the existing working structures. With this, e.g. it can then be asked, whether the tasks to be carried out follow the concept of complete activity – i.e. satisfy planning, management, execution and correction requirements. Do the tasks offer potential and scope for individual development and support the independence and self-reflection of the organisation members? Do the tasks support the expansion of existing

qualifications and inspire the acquisition of new qualifications – and thus: Do problem-solving tasks exist, in addition to routine tasks?

- **Analysis of procedures**: Particularly with the work that is frequently encountered in projects, being structured, delimiting responsibilities and responsibilities and communication culture can be easily analysed. Standard tools of project management (see chapter 4), e.g. securing experience with project conclusion, can then be investigated in respect of whether they are practiced at all and if this is the case, whether it is only routinely "reeled off" or actually lived.

- **Analysis of determining requirements and forms of learning**: Are learning requirements of the organisation members determined, translated into corresponding forms of learning and systemically covered? Are learning and further education opportunities structured in a participant-oriented manner and does learning include not only technical competencies, but also methodological, social and self-competencies? If further education measures also take place alongside learning during the working process, in addition to classic frontal training, are these also based on other forms of learning (e.g. interactive forms of learning, such as simulation games, case studies or also electronic learning media)?

This non-exhaustive list shows that concrete processes in the organisation can be the object of the diagnosis on all organisational levels. Characteristic attributes of innovative learning cultures can also be identified and drawn upon for a diagnosis on the level of the learning arrangements. From these descriptions, the following questions can be derived for a diagnosis of one's learning cultures.

Question for diagnosing teaching/ learning arrangements

- Are learning arrangements based on a targeted combination of different learning locations, times, methods and media?

- Is a high degree of **flexibility** given with respect to the learning times?

- Are both **distance learning** and **classroom learning elements** meaningful? If so, are these linked, such that the suitable combination can be individually selected? What degree of spatial learning flexibility is possible and to what extent can the learners individually structure it?

- Does **modularisation** provide the opportunity to individually determine methods of learning and/or content, without dissecting down the topic too much by doing so and breaking away from the application contexts?

- In the **structuring** of the learning arrangement, do learners sufficiently recognise degrees of freedom for individually structuring the learning processes and do they receive sufficient support in handling these?

- With which "**motivating elements**" are learning arrangements enriched? Can edutainment elements actually be arranged in a supporting and learning-promoting manner?

- To what extent do the learning arrangements allow **open learning processes**, which can be co-developed and controlled by the learners? Is self-organised learning supported by the learning arrangements or is the capability for self-organised learning promoted?

- Does the learning arrangement have a **situative** character and can the learners link them to their reality and their own perspectives?

- Are the educators in a position of being able to handle the **organisational and media technology requirements** of the above mentioned aspects?

- To what extent do the educators succeed in combining the aspects of **individualisation** and **subject orientation** described above with the practical limitations of the chosen forms of offers?

- Which forms of **learning counselling**, learning accompaniment or the motivation for self-organised learning exist, can this support be provided to all employees?

Perhaps schools are of the opinion that a committed diagnosis of their own learning culture is superfluous, since evaluation and reflection already belong to routine activity. However, the question here would also be what these routines precisely look like and whether they may possibly be indirectly involved in influencing the learning culture in their non-scrutinised manner. For this reason, it is also helpful to become aware of one's own routine activities in a **secondary observation**. Targeted questioning also provides support with this.

Questions for diagnosing evaluation routines

- **Are the rules of the game well-known?**: Are the routine procedures scrutinised and cognisant with the underlying approaches, values and motives, as well as institutional myths? It not only has to do with whether one's structure of learning culture has become well-known, but has a comparison also taken place with the structures of participants, institution members, principals, politics and other participants?

- **Is the diagnosis sufficiently self-reflective?**: It is not just about awareness of one's learning culture structure, but does reflection also take place about the structure? That is, are changes of perspective consciously carried out, in order to also recognise how those diagnosing structure help their diagnosis and the associated image of learning culture? For this purpose, the following questions are helpful:
    - Which observer perspectives are there and how are they linked to one another?
    - What are the respective resulting action orientations and expectations?
    - Which participants support which observer perspectives/reject them?
    - From which perspectives do requirements for change result, from which, do opposition or persistence result?

- **Is the diagnosis sufficiently extensive?**: How is learning culture understood and which elements are investigated for this purpose? Who and what are included in the diagnosis – can blind spots be discovered, i.e. actors and subject matter, which has not previously been recognised as being relevant to the system? Which networking exists?

- **How does communication take place?**: How does the learning culture support the learning culture of differences and use these for learning? Are different structures of learning culture communicated and exchanged by the participants?

In terms of approach, the diagnosis of these aspects links to what has already been mentioned. Observation and document analysis also lend themselves as instruments, alongside surveys and interviews.

The following exercise is just a first attempt at diagnosing one's own learning culture. It is designed to give you a first, systemic and reflective access to a potential project (see in detail chapter 4) with the objective of initiating the further development of learning culture at your school.

Activity 4:

You should earmark <u>at least</u> 2 hours for this task, (or carry it out jointly with some colleagues as part of a team meeting. Then use the moderation method for a better visualisation of your results). You can also breakdown this assignment into several parts: Part 1:

1. Engage yourself with the following question – without thinking of your school *"What are indicators of a good school and good teaching for me?"*

2. Take a stack of note pads or cards (in A4 format) and jot down a characteristic on each sheet. Give yourself sufficient time for this question and write down everything that occurs to you. Divide the back of your note pad into four equal sections.

3. Take all the cards again, look at your notes and now write on the backside of each card in the upper left-hand column a reason why this feature is for you an indicator of a "good school".

4. Now take your stack of cards a second time, and sort your characteristics, e.g. according to "teaching arrangement", "communication behaviour", "role of the school administration," etc. Then write down each of the characteristics under which you sorted out the cards, on a coloured card and place it next to your stack.

5. You can record the result of your "brainstorming", either in the form of a mind map or as a table. Now summarise your results with the "self-confession" using the form: "For me, the indicator of a good school ... because . . . .".

6. This first step serves the purpose of making you become aware of your own ideas of a good school, but also to reveal your personal reasoning structure at the same time. Are these ideas based on subjective experiences, opinions of colleagues, empirical evidence, scientific theories ...? Now the reconciliation with the practical situation follows.

Part 2:

1. Now take the stack of your note pads again. Go through each characteristic and think about whether this practice has already been carried out in your school. If so, note it down on the backside in the upper right-hand column with a "+" and write down at least 2 indicators showing you that it has already been achieved in your school. If no, then write down a "-" accordingly in this column and write examples that show that this indicator has not yet been put into practice at your school.

2. First concentrate on all "indicator of good schools", which you noted as having been achieved in your school. Make a note now in the lower left-hand column of what your school is doing so that this element of their learning culture can or may unfold.

3. Fill the remaining lower right-hand column with what you yourself can contribute (every day anew) to ensure that this positive element of school learning culture continues to unfold.

4. Now concentrate on each of the note pads where you wrote down "indicators of good schools" that have not yet been achieved at your school. Now make a note in the lower left-hand column, the reason why the learning culture at your school could not develop in this way. Compile all the challenges and obstacles. Also reflect on how you have contributed towards making it so or what personal benefit certain people may have, if it stays as it is.

5. Now seek possible solutions, so that your learning culture can develop further. Think of the advantages and disadvantages and how you can communicate your ideas to the other colleagues so that working to achieve a good school does not simply remain a waste of paper. Write down these solution ideas in the remaining lower right-hand column.

6. Now select an item that you think a) will awaken the interest of other colleagues, b) encompasses an aspect of school reality, needing urgent improvement or further development in your opinion and c) are most likely to be successfully implemented in a short period of time.

7. Now think of how best to proceed in order to work on the factors you have identified as being relevant (e.g. discussion with some interested colleagues, needs assessment in the college, etc.). Remember that your work can only be successful if you tackle the issues together with those affected!

The number of fields of innovation for schools is huge. Below the concept of innovation will be explained and the resulting challenges for educational leadership presented. Certain conditions must be in place for an innovation project to be successfully planned and implemented at all. The second part of this course material is on developing project ideas and concretely implementing them. For this purpose, project management tools are helpful.

3 Indicators of Educational Innovations and their Implementation

International performance tests, introduction of new forms of learning, development of school programs and mission statements, higher personal responsibility for schools, quality assurance and evaluation, increasing the method competence of teachers and students, integration of the disabled and socially weak, cooperation and networking between schools, companies and other education providers in the Region: The number of innovation fields for school development is substantial, and one can almost get the impression that the school is in a permanent reform process. Schools are now under considerable pressure to innovate, which not only leads to growing demands, but also enables new creative leeway arise for the school. This creative leeway is primarily characterised by five general trends: Creative leeway

- Pluralisation of lifestyles, changing family structures, individualisation of personal life, multiculturalism, etc. lead to a fundamental change in societal beliefs and guiding principles in the areas of upbringing, education, teaching and learning.

- Financial shortages in public budgets and a resulting savings course in the school system debates on privatisation, calls for controlling education require a financial adjustment.

- The call for a simplification of a school and education system now differentiated, and the extension of the tasks of the school (to include social services: care and social and intercultural skills development) and the change in the self-understanding of schools as a modern non-profit institution that is service-orientated require a functional reorientation.

- A differentiation between forms of schools and types of schools, competition between public schools and private schools, discussion on more market economy in the school system – that leads to schools canvassing for their own pupils, teachers and resources – force the schools to become competitive and to independently form their own profile.

- Orientation towards the market and competition also requires improved customer-orientation, (including orientation towards the needs of pupils and the needs of companies as "customers" of the school) and an associated quality development and quality assurance at all levels of education and school system.

These suggested five trends lead to serious changes in requirements, which mainly involve the school administration. They can be divided into the following five areas summarised as follows:

1. Development of the school as a learning organisation

2. Creating more leeway for manoeuvre by making it autonomous

3. Promoting quality development in schools

4. Conscious further development of learning and school culture

5. Change from school administration system to school management

But what exactly is meant by the term innovation, and what challenges arise here for the pedagogic leadership?

Activity 5:

In what areas in your school do you feel a "pressure to innovate"? What requirements are specifically very significant for you and where do you experience (new) creative leeway? Balance them out for yourself: What do you experience as a burden – and why? What do you experience as a liberation – and why?

3.1   The Concept of "Innovation"

The engine of school development can only be the individual school, i.e. each school must find answers to the challenges from outside by itself. This explains the difference between reform strategies and innovations: While reforms in the education sector rarely succeed because they come from outside and possess "top-down" characteristics, and also have to go through a variety of committees and participants who mostly fail to transform reform strategies into grassroots movements, innovations on the other hand is characterised by "bottom-up" activities, which emerge from the actual practice in a school and is built up from the bottom.

Educational innovations (lat. innovatio = innovation) do not arise from completely new inventions, but rather from the composition of known or elsewhere predefined elements. Already, the UNESCO Institute for Education points out that there is no universal form of innovation, but that it can vary from society to society, even from school to school and is thus above all dependent on context (e.g. city – country, local – regional). For many "project makers", innovation means "to make something different", that is something that stands out from what previously exists – in relation to its structures. In so doing, innovation points out, in language usage, to a turn for the better, and in the field of education, it is especially against encrustations, institutionalisation, monotony, lack of orientation towards the practice and practical needs, seclusion of individual areas of education, rigid curricula, low variation learning methods and lack of cooperation among the teaching staff. Innovations often emerge from a pincer grip that integrates the top-down guidelines (e.g. from the school

administration, by the legislature) and bottom-up processes (ideas from the teaching staff, and suggestions from students and parents). Typical examples from the recent past are, for example, measures for "sustainable development".

Indicators of educational innovations

There is always the question of for whom is innovation new, because while the objective novelty is new for every viewer (in the sense of something new in the world), the achievement of subjective novelty merely requires that the object in question be new for a particular viewer (cf. Figure 3.1).
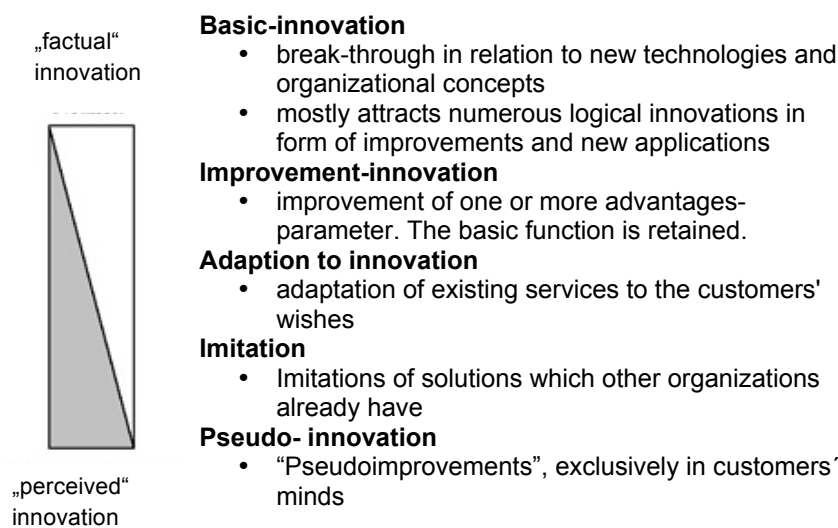
„factual" innovation

Basic-innovation
* break-through in relation to new technologies and organizational concepts
* mostly attracts numerous logical innovations in form of improvements and new applications

Improvement-innovation
* improvement of one or more advantages-parameter. The basic function is retained.

Adaption to innovation
* adaptation of existing services to the customers' wishes

Imitation
* Imitations of solutions which other organizations already have

Pseudo- innovation
* "Pseudoimprovements", exclusively in customers´ minds

„perceived" innovation

Figure 3.1: *Innovation perspectives (Lippold 2007, p. 17)*

In schools we are often confronted with adjustment and improvement innovations. Sometimes, however efforts are made to merely imitate concepts of other schools, which however often do not bring the desired results because the conditions at the schools are different and therefore ideas that have worked well elsewhere cannot simply be transferred. It therefore ultimately depends on the importance and benefits of innovations for the development and learning of the people. If we look more closely at educational innovations, we will find that they relate mainly to the following areas:

Fields of innovation

- Teaching-learning culture (the development of educational institutions in their pedagogical self-understanding);

- Content (the work on new, socially and politically important issues relevant for the future);

- Interdisciplinarity (an interdisciplinary approach to the subject matter);

- Transfer possibilities (the generalisation and anchorage in the existing practice);

- Work modes (working with new resources, media and methods);

- Target groups (taking account of specific groups of people, such as those with learning difficulties, girls, boys and their questions and interests);

- Subject and participation orientation in the implementation (involving learners in decision-making processes in the learning process);

- Quality assurance (self-)evaluations of schools, revision of examination and assessment systems);

- Range (the work with cooperative and networked models, such as removing the boundaries of learning by learning at different learning sites);

- Public relations (involvement and information of everyone directly and indirectly involved);

Best practice models

- In the meantime, there are many innovative projects in the school (see, for example: Cuttans 2001[1] , Educational Resource Unit 2006[2]) or even aids for school development (e.g. School improvement network: http://www.schoolimprovement.com/index.cfm)

Readiness for innovation requires awareness of alternatives

Innovations in organisations are also always associated with structural changes that will enable other decisions in the future. Innovation creates alternatives to the existing and so changes expectations, which is why readiness for innovation is coupled with an awareness of the alternatives. Innovative decision-making breaks organisational routines, disappoints expectations and therefore has to reckon with resistance. More far-reaching are mainly those innovations, which not only understand the social needs, but recognise them in advance and therefore actively engage in modernisation.

We would want to point out, however, that innovation does not mean a complete modification of existing structures, but can also exist in smaller changes carried out one after the other.

3.2   Innovation Management

Conditions for sustainable innovations

Certain requirements are, however, linked with innovative ways. We can only speak of innovation, if the attempts at innovation is basically preceded by a plan and a temporary evaluation, related to the plan, and if a critical monitoring of the process is planned and also carried out. For this reason, an offhanded suggestion "Let us try this out ..." cannot be regarded as an innovation, because the conditions of a clarified planning and subsequent monitoring are lacking, which therefore makes it impossible to ascertained whether the change for the system school really brought an improvement. From this we can already see

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1   http://www.dest.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/02A63A32-B977-485C-A814-ECD9C043690A/ 4510/report.pdf

2   http://www.eruindia.org/Inventory%20of%20Innovative%20Practices%20May20%2006. pdf

that an innovation management is footed on the pillars of quality assurance and project management. Projects can only be successfully handled, if there is a schedule setting out what steps that must be completed within what time frames, which is why a good time management is also relevant. Finally, a successful innovation management does not only comprise of proven roadmaps, but also of functional teams, that implement these schedules, which is why the aspect of team development must also be taken into account, just as the question of how projects innovate organisational structures, on one hand, and how they can be meaningfully linked with existing structures on the other hand. The management of innovation is thus always also a question of organisation development. We will hereafter (in Chapter 4) discuss project management in detail (with a short digression to time management), because this is an essential basis for the introduction of innovations, and because changes can only take place in projects with a manageable staffing and resources, which can be meaningfully and responsibly tested and evaluated (cf. Figure 3.2).

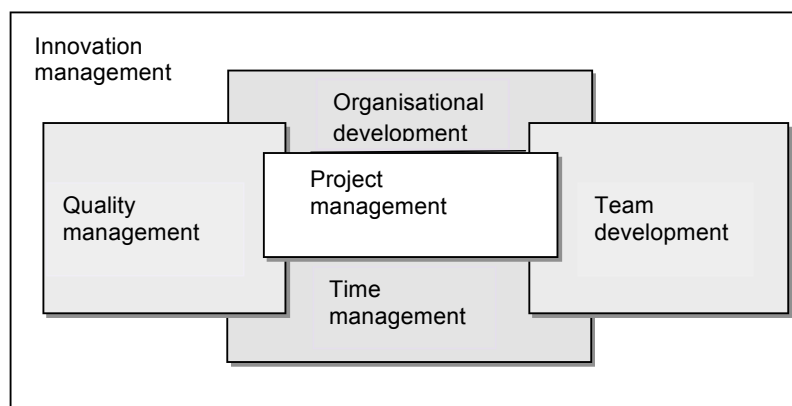*Innovation management implies organisation development*

Figure 3.2: *Project management and its intersections*

Preparing the environment for innovations Innovation is a central task of the school administrator, although this does not mean that only the school administration should suggest innovative ideas, but it is primarily responsible for creating an environment in which innovative approaches can develop. This can be enhanced if the executive personnel concerned:

Preparing the environment for innovations

- *"potentially know the field of innovation in question very well and therefore have an idea of what actions and changes that are to be made;*

- *are convinced of the innovation task in question and are in a position to clearly convey this conviction to the teaching staff;*

- *search for and win over experienced supporters – including executive teams, class teams and professional teams – that can take charge of the agreed process of innovation;*

- *initiate / support relevant general and team meetings and pay particular attention to a productive execution of these meetings;*

- *let the teaching staff clearly know what is expected of them and specifically encourage and support teachers open to innovation;*

- *insist on binding agreements / arrangements, and ensure the necessary follow-up meetings and evaluation processes;*

- *(help) obtain the required resources and occasionally praise and show recognition – if justified – to those involved;*

- *are generally determined and encouraging coordinators, who permit unconventional ideas and are willing to seek and use unconventional ways"(Klippert 2000, p. 76f.).*

3.2.1 Prerequisites for Innovation Projects

Prerequisites for successful innovation

Certain general conditions must be existent for it to be possible to even successfully deal with an innovation project. Rolf Dubs (1994, p. 278), proposes the following seven requirements:

1. *"Manageability"*: Is the proposed innovation project manageable and understandable for the teaching staff? Once it becomes too complex and the consequences cannot be correctly predicted or if it is so extensive that a very complex project management becomes necessary, the chances of success are reduced. The planned innovation must be in conjunction with the experience and the skills of the teachers, so that they do not be regarded as unrealistic.

2. *Significance*: The teaching staff needs to perceive the sectors of the school to be innovated as an important and somewhat urgent necessity. Moreover, it should suit the needs of the teachers.

3. *Commensurability*: The benefits of the innovation for the school must be commensurate with the expenses and efforts required for their achievement.

4. *Situation-related*: The situation and the ambiance in the school must be favourable for the innovation. Above all, the school administration must be sure that sufficient driving forces exist. Also the school administration should be well informed of the world of ideas of the inhibitory forces so that they can have direct influence on the situation by means of information and further training.

5. *Learning ability*: To be able to deal with the inhibitory forces, the school administration requires information on their ability and willingness to learn so as to be able to use information in a targeted manner and compile adequate further training programs.

6. *Feasibility*: It is of paramount importance that the academic staff be convinced that the school administration will "cope with" difficulties arising from the innovation project and will carry it out under the given circumstances.

7. *Durability*: The teaching staff must be convinced that what will result, will be something that is permanent and of long-term benefit for the school."

As regards the point "significance", it is therefore necessary to understand why most of the innovation projects should at best start at the level of *teaching development*. If one asks teachers what development tasks they see as a priority for themselves and their school, and in which area of their work they primarily desire support, one finds that the desire for a change in the teaching work tops the list.

<div style="text-align: right">Innovations in teaching</div>

If one also takes the factors "commensurability" and "learning ability", into account, it then also explains why it is better to start with manageable projects in small steps relating to specific issues, because this can, to a greater extent, build on an immediate concern and so can hope for a realistic readiness to learn and change, in contrast to measures which seek to change the entire organisation school all at once.

Likewise, the following "reflections on innovations" can be read as ethical self-commitments, which members of school administration should reflect on when implementing change projects:

<div style="text-align: right">Ethical self-commitment</div>

> "Start building the new from existing structures and expand it, it is usually very difficult to build something completely new, it often deters more than it encourages.
>
> Start in good times and not only at times of need. Times of need, they say, makes inventive, but in the rule, it allows only little or no time to experiment, which permits errors. Errors motivate, if they are not – like in an emergency – immediately 'deadly'.
>
> Start with small steps. Small steps have the great advantage that one can generally not make a big mistake. Small mistakes encourage, while big ones discourage.
>
> Do not wait until everyone is in favour of it or do not even want to participate. If you do, you may have to wait for a fairly long time. Innovations are the desire of initiatives. If initiatives increase desire, those who no longer want to stand aside and watch will also increase.
>
> Do not imagine that you have to do everything alone. Whoever does, will be blind to those who will be happy to assist. If you really do not find anyone, who nurses the same or similar aspirations as you do, then check yourself and your project again, and ask yourself whether it is really very important and necessary.
>
> Do not give those who do not have the same aspirations as you do the impression that they are already so bad or incompetent or outmoded or otherwise incapable contemporaries. If they notice that you are putting up this attitude, they will want to show you that you are on the wrong track. – Try to give them the impression that you want to realise something for yourself that seems meaningful to you. And they are the protection you have, to possibly prevent you from 'taking far too drastic measures'.
>
> Ask yourself again and again, whether you feel better – even in spite of (the initial) additional work – generally in the course of your innovation. If you do not feel better, why should others follow you? If you feel worse, do not expect that the others are so stupid that they will also want to feel worse...
>
> Do not be shy, to let others see that you feel better, that you're happier, even if you are only encouraged and cheered by small successes to take the next steps. But do this with a self-conscious modesty, not with an immodest attitude. Self-conscious modesty attracts while an immodest attitude dissuades."

Activity 6:

List the conditions that have to be existent in a school for innovation projects to be successfully tackled. Transfer these conditions to your current school situation and identify the areas that still need to be prepared accordingly. Think of what you can contribute to this preparation.

3.2.2 Innovations as a Disturbance to the System

Innovations are always associated with transformation and changes, thus they act as a disturbance to the system. For, change means the loss of routines, of the familiar and this often gives rise to insecurity and fears. These fundamental issues in change processes will be briefly touched upon in the following paragraphs.

Changes occur in every area of life. It is not seldom that connections exist between the personal and professional levels. Significant changes in the private sector lead to changes in behaviour at work. Similarly, drastic changes in the professional life often cause disturbances in the private life.

Activity 7:

Take your time (perhaps while drinking a glass of wine) and go back in thought to the past and reflect on the most important changes in your personal and professional life. Jot down the first emotions that well up in you as keywords for the respective change. Then reflect on how the change has affected your life in the long run.
Examples of possible reflection schemes can be found in the appendix. This reflection is entirely for you. However, we hope that you can come to the following conclusion: 'There have been repeated changes in my life' and – more importantly – 'I have so far coped with all of them – even the negative ones.'

Impetus for reflection

Even organisations also change. Change management deals with the dynamics of processes and structures. This dynamism is in contrast to the static dimension of the existing structures. The task of an executive in change management is to set the pace, to initiate the start and to be the visionary of this change.

Change management

Even without actively doing anything, changes take place. The change may happen due to external influences (in the environment of the system), such as change in teaching staff, change in school administration, expansion of the school to include new fields, the introduction of a new curriculum or structural changes in the school building. However, changes also take place internally, without the reason being obvious, e.g. a colleague changes his conduct towards the others, or a hitherto relatively homogeneous teaching staff split into camps.

System resistance

Changes not only take place on a property, but especially also on a relationship level. They lead to insecurity and fear since the parties are face with new, unfamiliar patterns of action to manage tasks. Changes may also trigger conflicts. We can therefore expect that in all measures of organisational learning, as is strived for within the framework of school development, resistance and learning hindrances will always have to be reckoned with. These include, for example:

Resistance

- The problem of forgetting due to lack of (learning) time and resources, as well as due to lack of confidential and support systems in the orientation and transition phases (e.g. lack of further training and supervision offers).

- Organisational defensive patterns and routines, such as:

  - Face-saving tactics by using skilful explanations, distortions, inaccuracies, omissions, excuses etc. used to retain the existing.

  - "Imaginative distortions", which serves as a protective, defensive evidence, as well as a denial or cover-up for mistakes committed by authorities and those responsible. This can be observed for example

in groups that are dealing with a precarious topic and who work ineffectively, because a cycle of hideous and negating mechanisms are at work, which the participants are unconscious of, but which spreads discomfort.

- Norms, privileges and taboos, that serve as learning barriers, this includes the so-called killer phrases ("It will never work!", "After all I still have other things to do!", "That's not the issue here!" etc.).

- Information pathologies, which either prevent decision-makers, for example through hierarchical structures, from gaining insight into the relevant information or even information distorted by slogans, paroles, and a desire for harmony.

Organisations can also use the existing structure to hinder the learning of their members, depending on whether the management is traditionally or innovatively oriented (cf. Table 3.1).

Traditional and innovative management

Traditional management in comparison to innovative management		
Traditional management		Innovative management
• Orientation towards rules and conventions	⇔	• Questioning rules and conventions
• Comprehensive analysis	⇔	• Experimenting
• Questioning new ideas	⇔	• Actively looking for ideas
• Reducing insecurity	⇔	• Tolerating insecurity
• Avoiding errors	⇔	• Tolerating errors
• Creating order	⇔	• Tolerating chaos
• Security through comprehensive analysis	⇔	• Security through capable staff

Table 3.1: *Characteristics of traditional and innovative management*

It should be recalled that: Hidden resistance arises when conflicts are "swept under the carpet." Only when conflicts are openly discussed can they be constructively dealt with. The condition for this is that the rather invisible parameters on the relationship level are brought to the "surface" through the communication and feedback processes so as to take them into account in the common process of change.

Open communication channels

What is important is to *open communication channels*. The requirement for this of course, is to review one's stance in discussions and to communicate in such a way that the other party is given an opportunity to follow. For example you can do this by using the following discussion techniques (cf. Table 3.2):

If...	... you could say...
... strong convictions are uttered without arguments or examples...	"Perhaps you are right, but I would like to understand it better. What leads you to the opinion, that ...?"
... the discussion clearly deviates from the topic...	"I do not quite understand how this is connected to your previous statement. Could you explain to me why you think this point is relevant?"
... you have doubts on the relevance of your own considerations...	"This is perhaps not relevant at the moment. If it is, please tell me, and I will come back to it."
... several positions are being defended at the same time...	"We now have three proposals on the table (name the three). I suggest that we discuss them one by one."
... you notice a negative reaction from others...	"When you said (give an example) ... I got the impression that you were feeling (describe the emotion). If my impression is right, I would like to understand what has upset you. Have I contributed in any way through my words or my behaviour?"
... you notice a negative reaction welling up in you...	"This is probably only a problem for me, but as you said (example) ... I got the impression ... Have I misunderstood your comment or your intention?"
... the others are apparently in no way to be influenced...	"Is there something I could do or say to convince you otherwise?"

Table 3.2: *Discussion techniques*

Communicating about changes therefore includes communicating about feelings as well. To be able to achieve this, it is necessary that you reflect after discussions or team meetings. The following questions are suggestions that might help with the reflection:

- What do I feel at the moment when I recall the situation?

- What physical expressions, did I notice in me and in others?

- What aspects of me or my behaviour in the situation do I criticise, and why?

- What aspects of the group or the conduct of individual members do I criticise and why?

- What kind of (un-)typical patterns of thought could I observe in me and in others?

- What assumptions have I adopted with regard to the group or individual members?

- What are my expectations of the group or individual members?

- How do I react to suggestions or feedback from members, rather defensive or do I welcome it?

- How do I react to criticism regardless of the topics under discussion?

- Which voices influence my behaviour (e.g., "Be perfect!", "Exert yourself!", "Please everybody!", "Hurry up!", "Be strong!" see Berne 2004) and what triggers anxiety in me?

- Do I encourage myself to express my feelings or vice versa?

- In what area do I tend to rationalisations?

It is also helpful to clearly define the roles within the change process even among the teaching staff. Through the clear distribution of responsibility, anxiety is got rid of and the willingness to make a headway is increased. It turns out that even in the innovation process it is worthwhile to strive for a balance between the topic, person and group which is why the topic-centred interaction offers essential work references.

3.2.3 Dealing with System Resistance

School as a social system is also characterised by the fact that it reacts to change impetus from outside with a specific system resistance to preserve its internal logic (cf. Heintel / Krainz 1988):

> "The system resistance is more than just a (still fairly rational) scepticism toward an unpredictable innovation, it is an intensive, emotional and 'instinctive' reaction of the organisation, which is expressed by specific – one or more – components of its parts (...)" (ibid., p. 4).

Forms of system resistance The system resistance thrives on the deadlocked structures (static dimension) of the system. Common mechanisms of this system resistance are the "denial", the "everything-is-destiny" position, the "doing things for the sake of doing things" attitude as well as forms of "making things complicated" with which those involved trying to justify their actions.

To overcome the system resistance, it is necessary to understand one's own learning culture and thus the inner logic of the system, that is, of one's school, which requires a reflexive access. The elements of the system are and remain human beings, in whose consciousness the need for change must be awakened. The responsibility falls upon the executives to specifically apply the reflection processes, i.e. to create possibilities and opportunities for strategic thinking and communication. On this basis, it is important to consider different views, but when deciding, a common consensus should be reached, since the greatest willingness to participate can then be expected in contrast to delegated or instructed changes.

Tool A "The Left-Hand Column"

It is only when we become aware of the interpretation patterns that dictate our reaction in certain situations and determine how we process what we have lived through to experiences, will we also succeed in changing our own action.

Ross and Kleiner (1994) recommend the method of "The left-hand column", for this purpose which dates back to Agyris and Schön. To use this method, for example, select an interpersonal problem (for example, you cannot come to an agreement with one of your closest colleagues, a teacher is not participating fully, you want to set a change in motion, and the rest of the teaching staff are resisting – or would do so in your own opinion). Describe this situation in a few sentences. Now imagine a concrete conversation situation in your mind, or you can imagine how the conversation went or would go. Take several sheets of paper and draw a vertical line in the middle. In the right-hand column, enter the dialogue, which has taken place or – you think – would take place. When you have finished, write down in the left-hand column, what you thought and felt, but did not say. At the end of this reflection process, you can perhaps recognise what your actual intention was during the conversation which you did not communicate, why you did not express what you really thought, what conjectures of the other person you had, how you contributed to the difficulties through your comments and what you can do differently at the next discussion.

Though you can reflect on your own behaviour with these methods, you cannot, however, force your colleagues to do the same. What is helpful here is the use of organisational diagnostic procedures with which the teaching staff can cautiously step into the process of self-reflection. For these intervention steps that basically affect personal attitudes and beliefs, it is advisable to seek professional advice, e.g. from a school development moderator, an organisation developer or also a supervisor drawn from outside.

Without external help the first step could consist of a metaphorical exercise as part of a teaching day (e.g. as a "warm-up exercise" at the beginning of the event) through which the "inner pictures" and "subjective theories" of the teachers about their school is transported to the surface. By working with pictures things can be expressed, which up till then could not yet be put into words.

For example, you can choose the following picture painting exercise: "Our school as a landscape".

Tool B "Painting Exercise"

The group / the teaching staff is requested to draw their school, first as a landscape, and secondly to draw a weather chart over the "school landscape". This gives rise to e.g. landscapes with mountains, valleys and lakes, in some parts of the landscape the sun shines, in others it rains or there is a thunderstorm etc.. The pictures can be displayed on panels and all participants should first be given the opportunity to reflect on the pictures nonverbally / without comments. It is then in the next step that the "interpretation work" can be initiated

using questions such as "Why does the sun shine in this area, why does it rain here?". This exercise can be supported with other W-questions (What happened? Where did it happen? When did it happen? Who is affected?). (More reflection methods can be found in e.g. Senge, 1994 among others).

Logical flaws in change processes System resistance is particularly likely to be expected, when executives try to implement changes or innovations against the self-organisation forces of the system (cf. Stacey 2007). If the intended interventions fail, they could mainly be due to the following "logical flaws" (mistakes in reasoning) (cf. Table 3.3):

Logical flaws	Counter position
1. Problems are objectively given and must only be clearly formulated.	Problems are dependent on perspective views and is linked with the interpretation.
2. Every problem is the direct consequence of a cause.	The problem factors are interrelated and linked with each other
3. In order to understand a situation, a "picture" of the actual state alone suffices.	A situation can only be understood, when one understands their dynamics, i.e. the behaviour of the problem factors within the period of examination.
4. Behaviour is predictable, what is only needed, is a sufficient information base.	Behaviour is not predictable enough, but is principally uncertain.
5. Problem situations can be "mastered" it is merely a question of exertion.	There are limits to the ability to control which one can find out and towards which one must orientate himself.
6. A "doer" can put any solution to problems into practice.	The changing conditions show self-activity and is opposed to the controls.
7. With the introduction of a solution, the problem can finally be shelved.	Problems persist on even after they have been "solved" and they are only postponed through their "solution".

Table 3.3: *Logical flaws in dealing with complex problems and counter-positions*

Polarisation towards a goal The executive as a visionary should direct or polarise the interest of the teaching staff towards a goal. The imagined pole can be the management itself as a person, or the pole can be the fictive change. In addition a mental exercise, that can serve to identify the individual subsystems or positions of the teaching staff.

Activity 8:

Imagine a circular room. In this room place the leader (or yourself) at the centre. Now try to group the teaching staff around the leader. Who is standing close to the leader, and who is standing faraway and which colleagues would like to be grouped together?
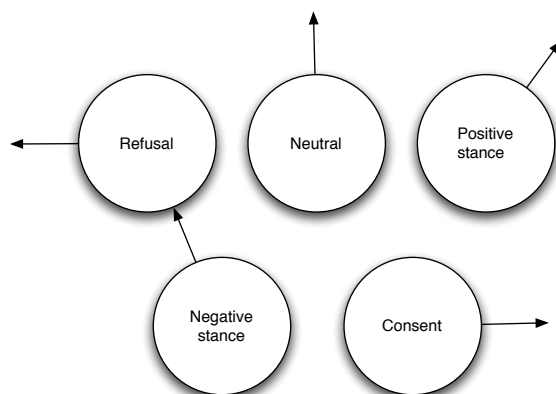
Figure 3.3: *Reflection Task 6*

This mental exercise serves the purpose of making you become aware of your own position. It would be interesting to carry out this mental exercise with the teaching staff, so as to make the different stances and perceptions on the topic clearer.

The consensus decision should serve the purpose of turning the gaze of most of the groups / colleagues towards the pole. If you do not succeed in making the negative group or individual colleagues part of the consensus, the pragmatic message to these colleagues should be: "I accept your refusal, but I ask that you take a neutral stance and not hinder us."

Consensus decision

3.2.4 Phases of the Innovation Process

With the above-described mental exercise alone, you can already sense what stance the teaching staff has taken towards innovation ideas and the related change measures and how they are coming to terms with it. Schley (1998, p. 47) identifies four different processing phases, which can be observed in humans during change processes. There is the processing mechanism of suppression and denial, which protects on the one hand, from jumping at every fad, but which on the other hand makes insensitive to signals and stimuli from outside. Some people react to change with anger and aggression and are looking for the responsible and guilty one, without perceiving their own share of blame in the process. A third group feels helpless in the face of changes and reacts with withdrawal and resignation. However there are still people, who see changes less as a crisis, but rather as an opportunity. These are the people that should be sought after, because they are also prepared to actively take on tasks. As a manager, therefore, a helpful question is: "What time is it in our change and processing process?" (ibid.) The picture of the "clock" chosen by Schley (cf. Figure 3.4), refers to the fact that changes characterise a process, which

Processing mechanisms

Suppression, aggression, resignation, development opportunity

dynamically proceeds and in which not everyone is at the same place at the same time.

New start as a chance
/"I had not expected so many possibilities of improvement."
/ "New perspectives and chances."
/"I can see things differently and as a challenge."
/"De- ceptions just make you more realistic."

/"I can see my responsibility and faults now."
/"We now have the possibility of a future-oriented new start."
/...

Withdrawal, resignation
/"It´s already decided."
/"Anyway, they do what they like."

/" I am deeply disappointed"
/"I don´t care anymore."
/"I just do my job and don´t attract attention."
/"Do they still need me at all?"
/...

Reorientation impetus

IV. New start as a chance

I. Suppression/ Denial

III. Withdrawal/ resignation

II. Anger/ Aggression

Suppression/ Denial
/"Everything continues as usual."
/"Still having things under control"
/" I have weathered many storms"
/ "A lot of fuss about nothing"
/"…that nothing can be which is not allowed to be."
/…

Anger/ Aggression
/"Damn it, that can´t be true - without me."

/"Where are the guilty ones?"
/"It´s the fault of those responsible - it is *the others*."
/"I don't agree."
/"Always at our expense - We will not accept that."
/…

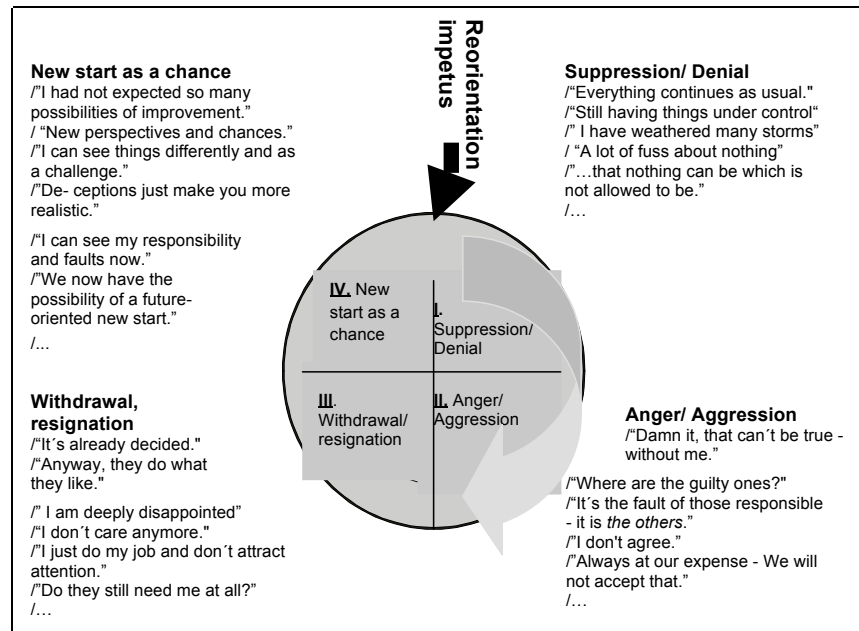**Figure 3.4:** *"What time is it in your change process" (Schley 1998, p. 47)*

John Kotter's highly regarded books: 'Leading Change' (1995) and the follow-up 'The Heart Of Change' (2002) describe a helpful model for understanding and managing change. Each stage acknowledges a key principle identified by Kotter relating to people's response and approach to change, in which people **see, feel** and then **change**. Kotter's eight-step change model can be summarised as follows[3]:

1. **Increase urgency** – inspire people to move, make objectives real and relevant.

2. **Build the guiding team** – get the right people in place with the right emotional commitment, and the right mix of skills and levels.

3. **Get the vision right** – get the team to establish a simple vision and strategy, focus on emotional and creative aspects necessary to drive service and efficiency.

4. **Communicate for Buy-In** – Involve as many people as possible, communicate the essentials, simply, and appeal to and respond to people's needs. De-clutter communications – make technology work for you rather than against you.

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3 http://www.businessballs.com/changemanagement.htm

5. **Empower action** – Remove obstacles, enable constructive feedback and lots of support from leaders – reward and recognise progress and achievements.

6. **Create short-term wins** – Set aims that are easy to achieve – in bite-size chunks. Manageable numbers of initiatives. Finish current stages before starting new ones.

7. **Don't give up** – Foster and encourage determination and persistence - ongoing change – encourage ongoing progress reporting – highlight achieved and future milestones.

8. **Make change stick** – Reinforce the value of successful change via recruitment, promotion, and new change leaders. Weave change into culture.

In addition to the familiar structure of everyday life in the school, a change process requires, for a certain period of time, a second structure, which is that of project management. For this reason a successful implementation of change measures requires the establishment of an internal school planning, project, concept, initiative, development and / or control group.

The experiences of these control groups in the context of school development processes show that the tasks of the control group clearly lies in the field of project management. Hence teachers without further education in project management, would hardly be in a position to 'manage' complicated development processes likewise an unprepared school administration.

For this reason, we will present the most important tools of project management in part B of this course material.

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