## ARTICLE

# Identifying the stage of growth in the organisational learning capacity of universities

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### Recommended citation

### Abstract

In order to improve university government and management, in this article we propose a tool for identifying the stage of growth in the organisational learning capacity of a university. It consists of a questionnaire about the main factors affecting learning in a university as a whole, or in any of its units (faculties, departments, etc.). An analysis of the results will enable us to act upon them and make improvements.

### Keywords

organisational learning, stages of learning capacity, learning universities

RUSC VOL. 10 No 2 | Universitat Oberta de Catalunya and University of New England | Barcelona, July 2013 | ISSN 1698-580X

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## Cómo conocer el estado del aprendizaje organizativo en las universidades

### Resumen

*Para mejorar el gobierno y la gestión de las universidades, en este artículo proponemos un instrumento para conocer el estado del aprendizaje organizativo en una universidad. Se trata de un cuestionario en torno a los principales factores que influyen en el aprendizaje de la universidad en su conjunto, o de cualquiera de sus unidades (facultades, departamentos). El estudio de los resultados nos permitirá actuar sobre ellos y mejorarlos.*

### Palabras clave

*aprendizaje organizativo, estadio de aprendizaje, universidades que aprenden*

## 1. Introduction

For any innovation or improvements in the government of an organisation to be brought about, first it is necessary to identify the stage that the institution is at in order to be able to take the correct measures. In this article we propose a tool for identifying the stage of growth in the organisational learning capacity of a university, based on a study of each of the faculties or of the institution as a whole.

It consists of a questionnaire about the main factors affecting learning in a university, thus this study is framed within the topic of organisations that learn or 'learning organisations'.

## 2. How can a university become a learning organisation?

For an educational institution to become a learning organisation, firstly there needs to be an analysis of the current stage of growth in the organisational learning capacity. Any barriers to learning need to be identified, and the level of development of factors that facilitate learning must be measured, especially organisational culture, leadership and teamwork. It is also necessary to establish the situation of the organisation's members with regard to learning, and the extent to which the vision and mission of the organisation encourages the organisation to become a learning organisation.

Secondly, we must draw up a plan in order to overcome the barriers that are blocking learning on an individual, group and organisational level. Thirdly, or concurrently with the second phase, the factors that facilitate learning will need to be maximised. The institution will need to put a learning support structure in place, not so much with formal training, but more by means of its day-to-day activities by bringing theory and practice closer together (Bolívar, 2000).

It is a matter of creating learning at all levels of the organisation: from individual learning to learning from other organisations, including the different groups within the organisation and the organisation as a whole (see Figure 1). Thus, universities can become what Elaine Martin (1999) calls 'learning universities'.

The image that probably best encapsulates a learning university is that of a professional learning community with a common vision and mission, a commitment among professionals and a well-established culture of collaboration and shared leadership. In order to achieve that objective, we may need to go through a series of steps or stages (Gairín, 2000, 2007; Leithwood, 2000). This is what we have to aim for and therefore it is important to start by finding out about the current situation of each faculty or university.

## 3. Deciding what tool to use to identify the stage of growth in the organisational learning capacity of a university

At the risk of oversimplification, and based on an extensive literature review,[1] the minimum requirements for an educational institution to become a learning organisation are shown in Figure 1.

The question is, how can we find out whether factors that ensure learning are present?

We chose to use a questionnaire to find out about those factors, as we considered it to be a tool that lends itself to widespread use while enabling results to be compared. Furthermore, questionnaires are a relatively economical tool, the questions are the same for all the respondents, they ensure anonymity, are usually easy to score and give the respondents time to think about their answers.

However, drafting this questionnaire was no easy task, not only because of the complexity of evaluating the stage of growth in the organisational learning capacity in terms of teamwork, leadership or culture, but also because of the added difficulty of measuring intangible factors such as commitment, reliability or trust among the members of an institution.

The questionnaire had to be designed in such a way as to identify how developed the learning facilitators in a specific institution are and what kind of barriers exist, in order to determine the disposition towards learning in that institution and the level of development of the people within the organisation and of the organisation itself.***

The responses to the questionnaire have to allow for descriptions of the current situation of learning in a specific educational institution, that is to say, to obtain a clear picture of what has already taken place with a view to taking action in the future and making improvements.

## 4. Questionnaire drafting process

Firstly, we looked for other questionnaires that might be able to satisfy our requirements, and although we found three very good examples, from which we took many good ideas,[2] we decided

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1. For the literature review, see Tintoré (2010).

2. A questionnaire presented by Dibbon (1999); a questionnaire produced by Rodríguez Antón and Trujillo Reyes (2007) for the Faculty of Economics and Business Sciences at the Autonomous University of Madrid (UAM); and a questionnaire presented in the *Harvard Business Review* by Garvin, Edmondson and Gino (2008).

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that it would be better to draft our own questionnaire based on those factors that facilitate or impede organisational learning in a university.

The overall aim is to analyse the stage of growth in the organisational learning capacity in a specific faculty or university, at a particular moment in time, with a view to establishing actions that will lead to improvements.

The questionnaire is divided into two main parts: the first one concerns individual learning and the second one concerns organisational learning. The following aspects were selected: first, personal and professional details; second, individual learning; and third, in the organisational learning section, a set of seven aspects or factors, as shown in Figure 1. The different items or variables were then drafted to correspond to each aspect.

**Figure 1.** Factors that facilitate or impede organisational learning
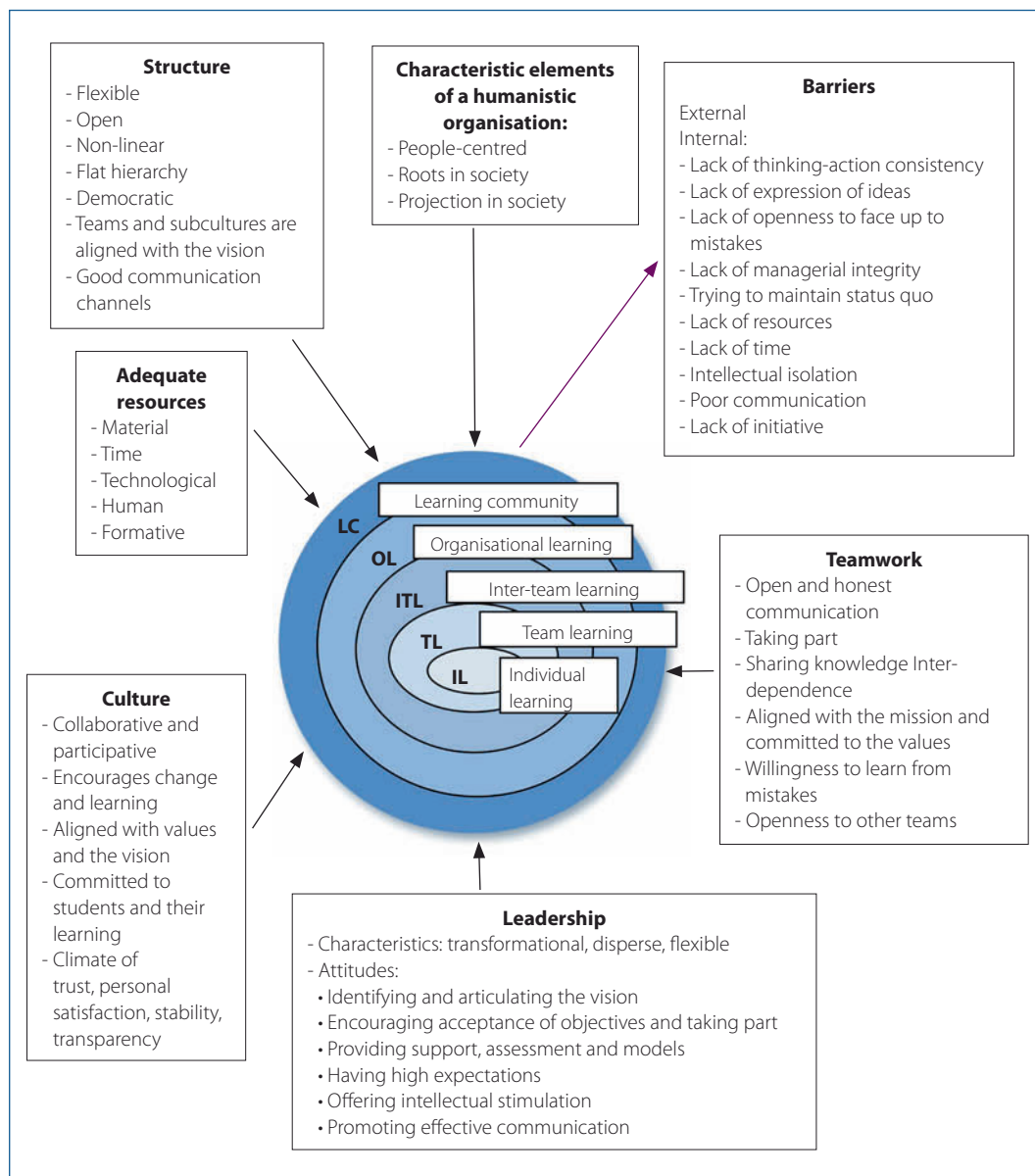


Source: Own elaboration

The overall format of the items is based on a Likert-type scale scoring from one to four to prevent respondents from giving a middle response of three. This makes the answers as meaningful as possible and avoids central tendency bias.

After drafting the questionnaire, the content was validated by a panel of experts, who assessed its capacity to effectively measure all the aspects that we wanted to measure.

The eight external experts were Dr Joaquim Pèlach (University of Girona), Dr José Tejada (Autonomous University of Barcelona), Dr José Daniel Barquero (ESERP Business School), Dr Isabel Parés and Dr Claudia Ortega (Panamerican University of Mexico), Dr Pere Puig (University of Istmo, Guatemala), Dr José Antonio Liébana (University of Granada) and Dr Juan Milá (University of the Republic, Montevideo).

The validation consisted in asking the experts whether they thought that there were any missing or superfluous items, and whether the drafting of the items was correct. After all the data had been collected, the questionnaire was revised to take into account the suggestions made by the panel of experts.

The definitive questionnaire, translated from its original in Spanish, is shown below. In our view, one advantage of this questionnaire is that it can be used to analyse the stage of growth in the learning capacity of both a faculty and a university. It can also be used to analyse departments and to carry out comparative studies between different units.

# QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING IN UNIVERSITIES

## General information about the respondent

1. Higher education courses completed

2. Master's degrees or other lifelong learning courses completed

3. University, faculty and department where you work

4. Age
    4.1. 24 - 30
    4.2. 31 - 40
    4.3. 41 - 50
    4.4. 51 - 60
    4.5. over 60

5. Sex :

6. Number of years worked
    6.1. Of these, how many in teaching?
    6.2. Of these, how many in the university/faculty?

7. Job category

    7.1. Tenured lecturer

    7.2. Associate lecturer

    7.3. Administrative and service staff

8. Hours worked per week in the centre

    8.1. More than 12

    8.2. Fewer than 12

**Questions relating to individual learning**

These questions intend to find out how individual learning takes place in the faculty. Please select the response that most accurately applies to your individual case.

Score the following statements from 1 to 4 (1 = Disagree completely, never, none/nothing; 2 = Partly agree, sometimes, not much; 3 = Quite agree, almost always, quite a lot; 4 = Agree completely, always, a lot).

|       |                                                                             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| AI 0  | As a result of my work in this centre, I have improved on a professional level |   |   |   |   |
| AI 00 | As a result of my work in this centre, I have improved on a personal level  |   |   |   |   |
|       | Observations                                                                |   |   |   |   |

**1.- How has learning taken place? (evaluate each item by scoring 1-4, where 1 is the least significant for you and 4 is the most significant for you)**

|       |                                                                                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| AI 1  | Teamwork in the department                                                           |   |   |   |   |
| AI 2  | Attending seminars, conferences                                                      |   |   |   |   |
| AI 3  | Writing presentations for conferences and seminars                                   |   |   |   |   |
| AI 4  | Writing and publishing articles in specialist journals                               |   |   |   |   |
| AI 5  | Reading professional literature                                                      |   |   |   |   |
| AI 6  | Preparing classes individually                                                       |   |   |   |   |
| AI 7  | Preparing classes with colleagues in the department                                  |   |   |   |   |
| AI 8  | Learning at work, which takes place with students in class                           |   |   |   |   |
| AI 9  | Interacting with students in tutorials                                               |   |   |   |   |
| AI 10 | Mentoring (personal advice to help with settling into the workplace)                 |   |   |   |   |
| AI 11 | Coaching (personal training to improve positive aspects and overcome less positive aspects) |   |   |   |   |

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|  |  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| AI 12 | Conversations with colleagues |  |  |  |  |
| AI 13 | Interviews with directors of the faculty |  |  |  |  |
| AI 14 | Interviews with my direct boss (head of department) |  |  |  |  |
| AI 15 | Attending a colleague's classes |  |  |  |  |
| AI 16 | Having colleagues attend my classes |  |  |  |  |
| AI 17 | Taking part in in-house training programmes |  |  |  |  |
| AI 18 | Taking part in external training programmes |  |  |  |  |
| AI 19 | Taking part in in-house evaluation programmes |  |  |  |  |
| AI 20 | Taking part in external evaluation programmes |  |  |  |  |
| AI 21 | Self-assessment |  |  |  |  |
| AI 22 | Studying |  |  |  |  |
| AI 23 | Other ways (indicate which ones) |  |  |  |  |

**Please briefly answer the following open questions.**

1. Indicate which five elements, from the previous list, have most encouraged your sustained growth on a personal and professional level (even though you may not usually use them).

   a.
   b.
   c.
   d.
   e.

2. What is a distinguishing characteristic of your centre in relation to professional learning?
3. What is missing from the faculty in relation to professional learning?
4. What kind of training would you suggest for the faculty in general?
5. What professional aspect would you like to improve on a personal level?
6. Who have you learnt most from in your work at this university?
7. Who has helped you most in this university?
8. Have you taken part in any professional development activities in the last three years?
9. Have you received support from the faculty to carry out those activities?

**Questions relating to organisational learning**

The following questions are aimed at evaluating the stage of growth in the organisational learning capacity in the Faculty of Education. Please select the response that most accurately applies to your

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perception of the situation of this organisation in general. This is not an evaluation of your personal experience, but rather an analysis of the institution.

Organisational learning is understood to be the ability of organisations to learn new skills and gain knowledge which leads to ongoing improvements, together with the ongoing development of the people that work in them.

Firstly, score the items in Section 0 from 1-4, where 1 is the lowest score and 4 is the highest score.

## Section 0

|    |                                                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|----|------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| 0  | The level of organisational learning in the university |   |   |   |   |
| 00 | The level of organisational learning in the faculty    |   |   |   |   |

Score the next set of statements from 1 to 4 (1 = Disagree completely, never, none/nothing; 2 = Partly agree, sometimes, not much; 3 = Quite agree, almost always, quite a lot; 4 = Agree completely, always, a lot).

## Section 1
## Teamwork

**In this faculty/university…**

|     |                                                                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| B1  | Teams in the department hold regular meetings                      |   |   |   |   |
| B2  | In the teams, ideas can be expressed freely                        |   |   |   |   |
| B3  | Mistakes are more easily detected thanks to the teams              |   |   |   |   |
| B4  | In the teams, mistakes are corrected                               |   |   |   |   |
| B5  | Working in a team creates knowledge                                |   |   |   |   |
| B6  | In the teams, topics are studied in depth                          |   |   |   |   |
| B7  | In the teams, innovative ideas are put into practice               |   |   |   |   |
| B8  | In the teams, problems are sorted out jointly                      |   |   |   |   |
| B9  | The teams usually make good decisions                              |   |   |   |   |
| B10 | The team leaders have autonomy to work and make decisions          |   |   |   |   |
| B11 | In the teams, everybody takes part                                 |   |   |   |   |
| B12 | In the teams, the opinions of all the members are taken into account |   |   |   |   |
| B13 | In the teams, tasks are assigned                                   |   |   |   |   |
| B14 | In the teams, results are usually produced                         |   |   |   |   |

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| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| B15 | Work meetings are organised between different departments | | | | |
| B16 | Everybody receives training about how to work in a team | | | | |
| B17 | Decisions made by the teams are taken into account | | | | |
| B18 | Knowledge is shared between different work teams | | | | |
| B19 | There is a climate of collaboration in the work teams | | | | |
| B20 | Teamwork is regarded as important because it generates greater organisational learning | | | | |
| B21 | Individually acquired knowledge is shared with the teams | | | | |
| B22 | Individually acquired knowledge is shared with the faculty | | | | |

# Section 2
# Leadership and vision

**In this faculty/university…**

| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| B23 | The faculty board (FB) sets up participatory processes to shape the future of the faculty | | | | |
| B24 | The FB transmits its vision[3] | | | | |
| B25 | The FB gives full support to the middle managers (heads of department) | | | | |
| B26 | The heads of department provide adequate leadership | | | | |
| B27 | The heads of department have a spirit of service | | | | |
| B28 | The heads of department encourage open and continuous communication | | | | |
| B29 | Leadership is spread across the faculty | | | | |
| B30 | The leaders share their experiences (successes and failures) with the others | | | | |
| B31 | The bosses are trainers and contribute to the learning of their colleagues | | | | |
| B32 | Innovation emerges from a process of reflection and discussion | | | | |
| B33 | The teaching staff leads new initiatives | | | | |
| B34 | Performance is evaluated at different levels (teaching, tutorials, research, management, etc.) | | | | |
| B35 | There are adequate channels for giving feedback for all the members of the organisation | | | | |
| B36 | The successes of the teaching staff and of the administration and services staff are recognised and valued | | | | |
| B37 | Decision-making is adequately decentralised | | | | |

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3. The vision is about situating the firm in future situations. It is more than a dream, since it must be viable, realistic and measurable in time. It is a clear image of the desired state, which motivates the members of the organisation to make it a reality. ("Nociones básicas de planificación empresarial". [Accessed: 1 June 2009]). <http: //www.coninpyme.org>

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## Section 3
## Culture and values

**In this faculty/university…**

| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| B38 | There is a culture favourable to learning | | | | |
| B39 | The mission[4] of the university is known and it is taken into account in day-to-day practice | | | | |
| B40 | Everybody shares the same mission and vision of the university and feels responsible for them | | | | |
| B41 | The annual objectives of the faculty are known | | | | |
| B42 | People are motivated to meet the faculty's objectives | | | | |
| B43 | Collaboration is encouraged | | | | |
| B44 | Innovative experiences are carried out | | | | |
| B45 | Members of the teaching staff support each other | | | | |
| B46 | Relationships are trusting | | | | |
| B47 | There are high expectations of the people | | | | |
| B48 | There is great commitment to the students' learning | | | | |
| B49 | Reflection upon learning itself is encouraged | | | | |
| B50 | When a better practice is identified in one department, it is shared and used in the rest of the faculty | | | | |
| B51 | People who take risks and fail are encouraged to try again | | | | |
| B52 | Professional dialogues are based on how to do things better and how to better share knowledge | | | | |
| B53 | Professional dialogues are open to discussing contentious issues | | | | |

## Section 4
## Structures

**In this faculty/university…**

| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| B54 | The structures are flexible | | | | |
| B55 | The teams and departments are aligned with the mission and vision of the university | | | | |
| B56 | The structures are democratic and encourage people to take part and collaborate | | | | |

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4. Mission: the real needs of the students and the professionals that the organisation strives to satisfy by means of the service it provides to society (Pérez López, 1997). In this case, it may be the same as an ideology.

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| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| B57 | The organisational structure aids the sharing of knowledge gained by the members | | | | |
| B58 | Effective communication channels are set up with the students to find out their needs and expectations | | | | |
| B59 | The opinions of students are taken into account when decisions are made in the faculty | | | | |
| B60 | The channels for sharing information are adequate | | | | |
| B61 | There is sufficient exchange of information | | | | |
| B62 | Lecturers are encouraged to attend courses or seminars for ongoing training | | | | |
| B63 | Strategies for development and learning are based on individual learning | | | | |
| B64 | Strategies for development and learning are based on team learning | | | | |
| B65 | Strategies for development and learning are based on whole organisation learning | | | | |

## Section 5
## Resources

**In this faculty/university…**

| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| B66 | Meetings are held to share experiences and information | | | | |
| B67 | When innovation or new initiatives are introduced, they are backed up by all the necessary time, material and human resources | | | | |
| B68 | New technologies have driven the development of new forms of learning | | | | |
| B69 | Members of the organisation are continuously looking for new ways to apply technologies to their teaching and learning | | | | |
| B70 | Members are encouraged to use computer applications to work more effectively | | | | |
| B71 | Information found on the internal website is continuously updated | | | | |
| B72 | The resources necessary to implement new initiatives are always sought | | | | |
| B73 | Services are quickly adapted to the new needs of students | | | | |
| B74 | Material resources for teaching-learning are adequate | | | | |
| B75 | Material resources for teaching-learning are used efficiently | | | | |
| B76 | When someone leaves the organisation, their experiences and knowledge are still available to the rest of the members | | | | |
| B77 | The faculty has mechanisms in place to gather, store and transfer knowledge | | | | |

# Section 6
## Openness to the environment

**In this faculty/university…**

|     |                                                                                                                          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| B78 | Relationships exist with other teaching institutions of a similar level as a means for learning                          |   |   |   |   |
| B79 | Relationships exist with other infant and primary schools as a means for learning                                        |   |   |   |   |
| B80 | Solid relationships are created with the university community                                                            |   |   |   |   |
| B81 | Opportunities offered by the environment (new laws, new needs, social change, etc.) are used as stimuli for making improvements |   |   |   |   |
| B82 | Relationships are kept up with former students to evaluate the quality of the education given                            |   |   |   |   |
| B83 | Changes in the environment are an opportunity for organisational learning                                                |   |   |   |   |
| B84 | The faculty is proactive, that is to say, it anticipates changes in the environment                                      |   |   |   |   |
| B85 | The students are satisfied                                                                                                |   |   |   |   |
| B86 | The employers that take on students from the faculty are satisfied                                                       |   |   |   |   |

# Section 7
## Barriers to learning

**In this faculty/university…**

|     |                                                                                                                          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| B87 | There is great resistance to change and a tendency to maintain the status quo ('better the devil you know than the devil you don't') |   |   |   |   |
| B88 | Failure is not considered to be part of learning                                                                         |   |   |   |   |
| B89 | Risk-taking and experimentation are not encouraged                                                                       |   |   |   |   |
| B90 | People only defend their own interests and personal benefit                                                              |   |   |   |   |
| B91 | The time scales and pace are not appropriate for learning                                                                |   |   |   |   |
| B92 | EThere is too much competition between members of the teaching staff                                                     |   |   |   |   |
| B93 | Bosses do not want any problems and always avoid confrontations; they do not tell staff about things that are being done badly |   |   |   |   |
| B94 | Planning is only short term                                                                                              |   |   |   |   |
| B95 | The same old solutions are always applied                                                                                |   |   |   |   |
| B96 | Communication between individuals is poor                                                                                |   |   |   |   |
| B97 | Communication between different units in the organisation is poor                                                        |   |   |   |   |
| B98 | The FB does not keep people sufficiently informed                                                                        |   |   |   |   |

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| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| B99 | Decision-making is slow, tending towards a situation of 'analysis paralysis' | | | | |
| B100 | People display defensive behaviour and find it hard to recognise their mistakes | | | | |
| B101 | Changes are brought in too slowly | | | | |
| B102 | There are no opportunities to pursue ongoing training | | | | |
| B103 | Usually the decisions made are wrong | | | | |
| B104 | Learning is accidental, organisational learning is not planned | | | | |
| B105 | There is a lack of transparency | | | | |
| B106 | There is a lack of solidarity | | | | |
| B107 | There is a lack of self-assessment | | | | |
| B108 | There is a lack of job security | | | | |

**For the final section, score your university and faculty in terms of a 'learning organisation'. Score from 1-4, where 1 is the lowest score and 4 is the highest score.**

| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| C01 | Level of organised learning in your university | | | | |
| C001 | Level of organised learning in your faculty | | | | |

Thank you very much for taking part. Please feel free to make any observations or suggestions; we would be delighted to receive them.

# 5. Selecting the resources and the population

The material resources needed to implement this questionnaire are photocopies of the question-naires, and stamped envelopes to facilitate a response – they can also be hand-delivered or sent by e-mail, but these methods do not guarantee anonymity. A software package to handle the statistical analysis is also required (we recommend SPSS), as is enough time to spend on analysing the results.

In terms of time, 30 minutes is estimated to be enough to gather the data from each questionnaire. On top of this, time for studying and processing the results is required.

With regard to the population, the questionnaire has been designed to be sent to the teaching staff in a particular faculty or university, though it could also be sent to the administrative and services staff and/or the students in the same institution. These decisions will, of course, be taken by the team conducting the study. The greater the number and levels of categories in the sample population, the better; this will enable the study to be more complete and comparisons to be made.

# 6. Questionnaire results and proposals for improvements

Once all the questionnaires have been collected, the next step is the systematisation and analysis of the data collected. For this purpose, we recommend creating a template with all the data from the scaled items (a double-entry table that includes the variables or items from the questionnaire in the columns and the respondents in the rows, differentiating between faculties and universities, as necessary). A summary of the responses to the open questions will also need to be written.

Statistical processing of the data can be carried out using the latest version of the software package SPSS. We recommend that the following tests be carried out:

a. Reliability analysis using Cronbach's[5] alpha
b. Frequency analysis
c. Correlation analysis
d. Mean analysis

This choice of tests serves a dual purpose. Cronbach's alpha is applied to test the reliability of the questionnaire. The other three tests are applied to describe the results.

Once the results have been analysed, we can get an indication of the current situation of a specific faculty, department or university. We suggest using graphics to show the attitude towards individual learning and also to indicate the stage of growth in the organisational learning capacity with regard to the main indicators of learning in a specific institution. This final snapshot of the organisation (see Figure 2) will enable proposals to be made for improvements and conclusions to be reached, based on the stage of growth in the organisational learning capacity at a particular moment in time.

The example shown in Figure 2 is based on research by Dibbon (1999) and Brian Hall (2000, 2001). Dibbon identifies four stages of growth in organisational learning: from coping (level 1) to learning (level 4). According to Hall, the four stages of growth range from an autocratic organisation based on control and self-interest, where the management of knowledge is merely a transmission of data, to a global collaborative organisation based on truth, wisdom, ecology and human dignity, where knowledge is created through collaboration. In relation to these models and the results obtained, every assessor should be able to place the assessed unit in one of these levels.

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5. As the questionnaire is very long, we calculated its consistency in parts, taking into account each section. A greater number of items gives a greater variety of scores and so the alpha value is overinflated. The questionnaire has demonstrated a good level of internal consistency with an alpha value between 0.726 and 0.949. Most of the items give a value of around 0.8; this is considered acceptable and consistent. The average value of alpha is 0.857. These data are more realistic for a questionnaire of this size, rather than obtaining a Cronbach alpha value for the whole questionnaire, which comes out very high (0.953).

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Figure 2. Level of organisational learning in a specific educational organisation

| Level of organisational learning | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Description according to Dibbon | | Coping | Emerging | Developing | Learning | |
| Description according to Hall | | Autocratic Org | Bureaucratic Org | Learning Org | Partnering Org. | |
| Extent of learning | From | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | To |
| 1. Individual learning | Involuntary | | | | | Intentional |
| 2. Team learning | Group thinking | | | | | Team thinking |
| 3. Leadership | Concentrated | | | | | Dispersed |
| 4. Culture | Individualist | | | | | Collaborative |
| 5. Values | Control, self-interest | | | | | Truth, wisdom, dignity |
| 6. Structure | Rigid | | | | | Flexible |
| 7. Resources for learning | Scarce | | | | | Abundant |
| 8. Openness to environment | Independence | | | | | Interdependence |
| a. Speed of learning | Slow | | | | | Fast |
| b. Level of learning | Adaptive | | | | | Generative |
| c. Intensity of learning | Knowledge | | | | | Behaviours |
| d. Knowledge creation | Data sharing | | | | | Knowledge created by collaboration |

Source: Own elaboration based on Dibbon (1999) and Hall (2000)

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# 7. Possibility of bias in the questionnaire

As with all questionnaires, and especially ones that directly affect the work of the respondents, we are aware that there may be a certain degree of subjectivity and desirability in the responses. In effect, a respondent will very often not answer the question by stating how things are, but rather by stating how he/she thinks they are or how he/she would like them to be. If the responses are relatively similar among the respondents, then we can assume that the responses are reasonably realistic or at least that that is what the teaching staff wants for the faculty. If that is how it is perceived, then the desired learning may be achieved as a consequence of the Pygmalion effect.

As a result of the lengthiness of the questionnaire, proximity bias may also occur, which is when a respondent is more inclined to answer questions in a similar way as the previous. Logical errors can also occur, which is when a respondent considers that all related items should be scored equally. However, it is true that each section of questions is closely related and it would seem logical to expect responses be similar.

Furthermore, some respondents have commented that the questionnaire is too long, or that they do not have all the information to be able to respond because they have been working for a short time or work few hours in the organisation.

All of these comments, for which we are grateful, are valid. We can only add that the length of the questionnaire has resulted from our need to check very diverse aspects and that only one of our experts suggested shortening the questionnaire.

With regard to the other observations, it is worth mentioning that neither the length of service nor number of hours worked in the organisation are determining factors in the questionnaire; first impressions are valuable, as are those from people who spend few hours in the university.

# 8. Conclusions

When applied to higher education institutions, the 'learning organisation' model can be a good model for change, survival and renovation.

However, although nobody will doubt the importance of an organisation where learning is produced, it is far more difficult to evaluate its current organisational learning capacity and to help it develop in that respect. In order to govern, it is essential for us to know what to do and where we are going. That is the purpose of the questionnaire that we have produced.

Our questionnaire is not designed to attain the ideal organisation that includes all the characteristics that have been mentioned, but rather to study the process of learning in a specific organisation, to observe how far it has developed as a learning organisation at a particular moment in time, and to help it become a learning community.

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RUSC VOL. 10 No 2 | Universitat Oberta de Catalunya and University of New England | Barcelona, July 2013 | ISSN 1698-580X

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