

The t-process for assessing quality culture at schools

The t-process is based on a model developed by Glasl to assess school culture as an organisational culture for schools¹.

The process has been modified so as to focus on the aspects of school culture which are deemed definitive for a quality culture. It has also been designed in order to primarily assess the status quo. At the end, discussions are held with the working group to consider whether or not changes need to be made to fundamental assumptions and beliefs. Process stages requiring a debate about a possibly desired change are **not** included in the process outlined here.

Process description

There should be 4 groups of approx. 5 teaching staff.

The (approx.) 20 people should collectively be the best possible representatives of the school's teaching staff. Each individual group should then be quite homogenous (e.g. groups based on department, role in terms of leadership or quality management, years of service, etc.)

Half a day (approx. 5 hours) should be allowed for the process.

The work should take place as a 'test' in a suitable, quiet environment. 4 group workrooms are required. Each group should be moderated by someone (external, who is familiar with the process).

It begins with point 1 and the stated question

The participants initially write their answers individually on **cards**, which the moderator then groups for all to see. The individual people explain their statements if necessary. The statements are then jointly reviewed to see whether they describe the **ACTUAL** situation or a desired **TARGET** state. The cards are re-sorted accordingly, and then clustered separately into ACTUAL and TARGET. A heading is formulated for each cluster.

Point 2 follows the same method as point 1

For the rest of the process, **only the statements/clusters** relating to the **ACTUAL** situation are used. The statements relating to a TARGET situation are collected separately, and may serve as the basis for a desired change.

Point 3 asks for reasons

The moderator asks the participants to state reasons for each statement/the cluster, explaining why such approaches are adopted, how they were noted/why exactly the stated structures were introduced. The statements are then recorded on a **flip chart**.

Point 4 involves thinking about what lies behind the actions and justifications

The moderator asks the participants to think about the

- **Fundamental beliefs:** Assumptions about how people are the way they are (e.g. "natural egotists" / "basically curious"), how people behave in institutions (e.g. "it's a human thing to only do what is absolutely necessary" / "everyone needs a

¹ U-process: cf. e.g. Glasl 2012: Schule im Aufbruch. Auf dem Weg zu einer kooperativen Arbeitskultur. <http://www.schulqualitaet-bs.ch/veranstaltungen/jahresfachtagungen/ws-1-glasl-u-prozedur-methodische-anleitung-fg-x.pdf> (Retrieved on 30/4/2014)

social environment they feel comfortable in”), how learning works (e.g. “it doesn’t work without pressure” / “people learn if their efforts are rewarded”), how people get along with each other (“it doesn’t work without rules” / “everyone is responsible for themselves”),

- **Mottos:** Sayings (e.g. “you can’t teach an old dog...” / “life is what you make it”), symbol-based statements (“the summit of creation”), summaries of assumed applicable principles (e.g. “don’t ask too much, that only creates annoyance”) or
- **Secret rules:** Assumed principles according to which people and their actions are assessed (e.g. “those who criticise must expect to be disadvantaged” / “there are important subjects and subjects which are always inferior”)

on which the actions, structures or stated reasons are based. The participants initially write their responses individually on different coloured cards, which are then sorted for everyone to see.

The sub-groups come together for point 5

The completed cards detailing basic beliefs, mottos and secret rules are assigned to suitable **theme areas** (e.g. interaction between teachers and students; actions by school directors; school organisation; teaching staff interactions and team work, etc.). The allocated statements are placed visibly on partitions (one partition per theme area).

Each participant receives 3 adhesive dots per theme area, which they give to the statements they believe are **most prevalent amongst teaching staff**.

For each theme area, only the **3 statements with the most points** are examined.

As one big group, the participants then jointly consider whether and where any **contradictions** arise between the statements. The responses are recorded on a flip chart.

In a final stage, they consider which statements are **beneficial/disadvantageous** to an **academic discussion about quality**. The statements are once again recorded in a flip chart.

Once the work is complete, the results are suitably processed and provided to the teaching staff.

The t-process at a glance

