

# QUALITÄTSKULTUR IN BERUFSBILDENDEN SCHULEN



## Using the OCAI Instrument to Analyse the Quality Culture in Schools - GUIDE -

540168-LLP-1-2013-1-AT-LEONARDO-LMP

[www.q-kult.eu](http://www.q-kult.eu)

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## 1 Introduction

Within the framework of the Leonardo da Vinci project "Quality Culture (Q-KULT)"<sup>1</sup>, an instrument has been developed in order to help vocational schools to assess their organizational culture. The instrument was developed in line with the assumption that every school has some kind of specific individual 'culture' that can also be assessed in terms of its own specific characteristics and is related (in a way that has yet to be defined) to the quality management system (and/or the quality procedure) used by the school in question.

The main question is: What influence does the specific culture of a school have on the implementation and/or further development of a quality management system? It is conceivable that a school's quality management system benefits from the school's own culture but also that this culture limits the implementation of the system. It therefore may be helpful to be able to use an instrument that can diagnose the concrete culture of a school.

The instrument developed within the scope of the project is an adaptation of the OCAI (Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument).<sup>2</sup>

This guide aims to provide a concrete description of the OCAI for use in different potential applications in schools. In order to do so, it initially classifies the concept of "culture". The guide also contains a number of considerations as to the situations in which the instrument can be used in schools and factors that need to be taken into consideration when using the instrument. The final part of the guide provides various information on interpreting the results provided by the instrument in the form of examples that may help schools to orient themselves when dealing with these results.

The instrument itself is attached to this guide.

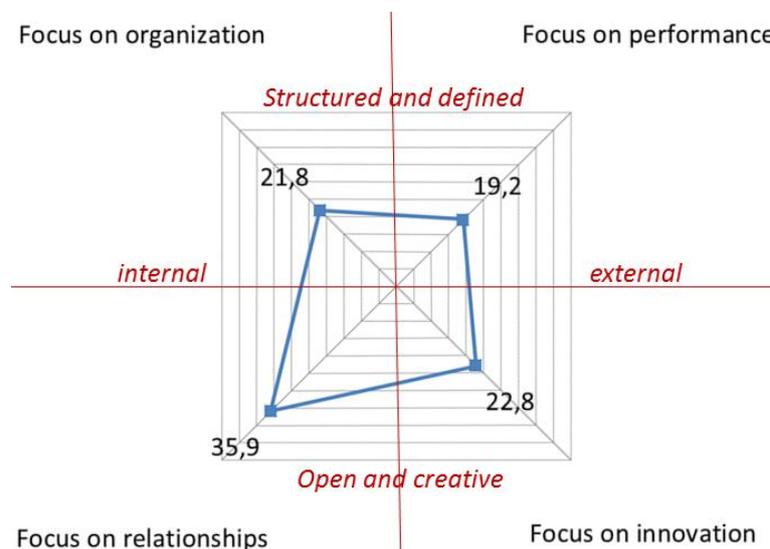


Figure 1: OCAI (Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument)

<sup>1</sup> Cf. [www.q-kult.eu](http://www.q-kult.eu)

<sup>2</sup> Originally developed by Cameron/Quinn for assessing organizational culture (cf Cameron, K.S. & Quinn, R.E. (2006). Diagnosing and changing organizational culture: based on the competing values framework. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass)

## 2 Background Information on the Tool

### 2.1 The underlying cultural understanding

In this guide, the assumption is made that, on the one hand, the culture of a school develops as a result of dealing with different internal and external requirements (e.g. the demands of pupils, the ministry and companies providing vocational training) and that, on the other hand, the culture of a school is characterized by factors that have proven successful when it comes to overcoming everyday challenges and reasonably reconciling interests. It is quite commonplace for culture to reveal itself as a result of systems, language, manners, rituals, status features, etc. (artefacts) but also in a discursive manner by means of strategies, moral and normative rules and/or statements, etc., as well as on a meaningful yet unconscious level through convictions, basic perspectives, secret rules, guiding principles, etc. On the whole, the assumption needs to be made that culture has (a certain) stability, which characterizes the school and also contributes towards its internal solidarity.

This view follows the so-called 3-level model proposed by Edgar Schein, who defines culture as: *"A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems".*<sup>3</sup>

The OCAI instrument itself does not, however, derive from a theoretical model but is instead based on the "Competing Values Framework", a collection produced from empirical studies on the effectiveness of organizations.

### 2.2 Types of culture

The leading principle behind the further development of the OCAI was the fact that the cultures that can be found in different contexts in organizations can be described in reference to different types of culture. In this case, the assumption is made that a type of culture always develops functionally: on the one hand, with regard to managing external demands and internal problems and managing clashes of interests and, on the other hand, by tackling (internal or external) demands in a more or less structured manner. There is therefore no such thing (!) as better or worse cultures but instead a number of varied, yet clearly distinguishable, types of culture. When using the OCAI, these types are given different positions on the basis of the dimensions of "external versus internal orientation" and "structured and defined versus open and creative".

These dimensions are used as a basis for the classification of four types of culture, which are closely linked to the four types of organizational culture of the original OCAI instrument:

**Type 1:** Focus on organization <=> Hierarchy (internal, structured/defined)

**Type 2:** Focus on performance <=> Market (external, structured/defined)

**Type 3:** Focus on relationships <=> Clan (internal, open/creative)

**Type 4:** Focus on innovation <=> Adhocracy (external, open/creative)

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<sup>3</sup> cf. Schein, E.H. (1992); *"Organizational Culture and Leadership"*; San Francisco: Jossey Bass and: Müthing, Kathrin (2013): *"Organisationskultur im schulischen Kontext - theoriebasierter Einsatz eines Instrumentes zur Erfassung der Schulkultur"* (*Organizational Culture in an Academic Context - the Theory-Based Use of an Instrument for Assessing School Culture*)

When further developing the OCAI, a special focus was placed on trying to adapt these four positions and the specifications on which they are based so that they are able to successfully deal with the peculiarities of academic institutions:

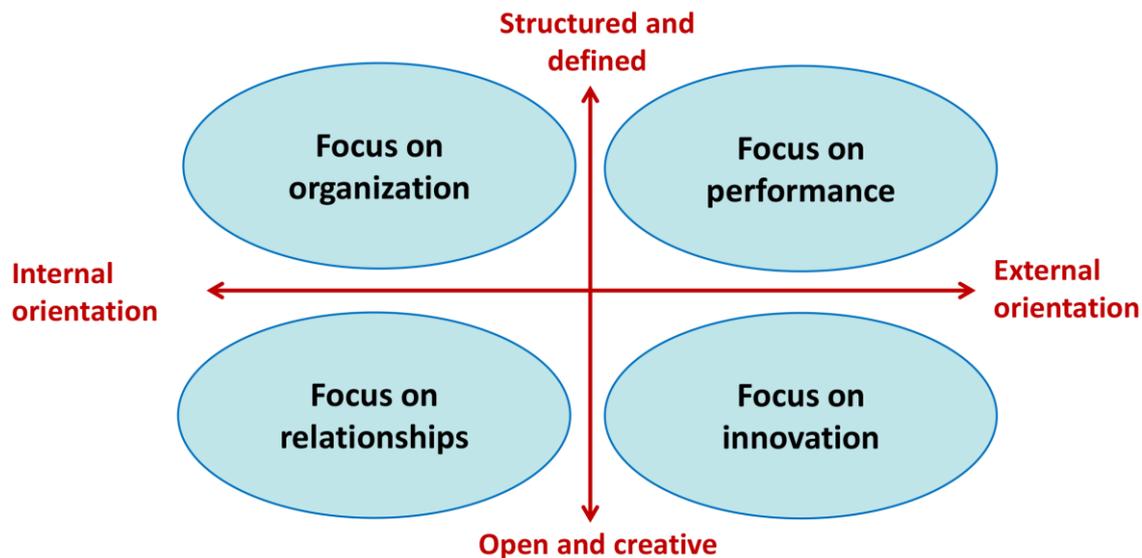


Figure 2: Types of school culture

An initial approach towards defining the types involved the assignment of slogans/mottos such as:

Focus on organization – "Reliability is our strength!", "Everything is going really well!"

Focus on performance – "Ambition helps us to progress", "We did it!"

Focus on innovations – "We are driven by enthusiasm", "Great idea, let's do it!"

Focus on relationships – "Harmony keeps us together", "That's good for all of us!"

### 2.3 Categories of analysis

The original version of the OCAI contains six aspects that have proven to be relevant categories of analysis (original names specified in brackets):

- Significant characteristics of the institution (Dominant characteristics)
- The leadership style of the institution's management team (Organizational leadership)
- Human resources management (Management of employees)
- What keeps the institution together (Organization glue)
- Strategic focuses (Strategic emphases)
- Success factors (Criteria of success)

These six categories of analysis were retained and a seventh, namely the category of "Quality understanding", was added. The categories refer to the properties of the organization that are significantly characterized by culture. A description of the specific characteristics of these

properties enables conclusions to be drawn with regard to the culture that forms the basis of the organization.

The way in which the individuals involved in the analysis evaluate these aspects provides information on the characteristics of the organization with regard to the four types of culture. This is then used to determine an overall result that reveals the school's specific type of culture.

## 2.4 Quality culture

In its original form, the use of the OCAI instrument initially has no direct or explicit reference to the topic of "quality". The original intention of the instrument was to determine and present the profile of an organization in line with the two underlying dimensions of "Internal vs. external orientation" and "High vs. low structural preference" and according to the properties typical of its own individual culture. This general analysis of a school's culture can now be used with regard to the question concerning the extent to which the forms, tools or structures of an academic quality management system suit the specific culture of the school in question. This is based on the assumption that the desired effects of a quality management system (the quality assurance procedure and tools) are more likely to be achieved if the system suits the school's own specific culture. Use of the OCAI therefore focuses in finding out whether the quality management system (or the quality assurance procedure and tools) of the school is suitable for its culture or not. When used for this purpose, the OCAI culture assessment instrument becomes a tool that can be helpful in providing a more detailed insight into the requirements of a functional quality management system with regard to the culture of a school.

If one takes the view that cultures are, at least in the medium-term, extremely stable and can only be changed moderately and/or on a long-term basis, the following options are possible as a result of a culture analysis using the OCAI: The quality management system could be adapted in order to ensure that the procedure and tools are optimally tailored to suit the existing culture. In line with the basic idea of the concept, this adaptation could help a school to achieve higher acceptance of its quality management system among its teaching staff. It is presumed that improved acceptance of the system also results in a higher level of effectiveness of the school's quality management activities.

## 3 In what situations should the OCAI be used?

The OCAI is basically suitable for use as a helpful tool when a school is facing the following challenges:

- Introducing a quality management system
- Developing its quality management system (e.g. amending its mission statement, revising its rules of implementation, exploring the results of an internal or external evaluation, etc.)
- Appointing a new headteacher
- Dealing with incomprehensible conflicts at the school
- Merging schools

In order to be able to use the instrument, a significant number of teaching staff must agree to the implementation of the OCAI assessment and expect the results to provide important findings.

The instrument can be used throughout the entire school (standard version with one result for the whole school). It is also possible to only use the instrument for individual areas (standard version with one result relating to an area such as a faculty or location). The OCAI ultimately enables the assessment of an entire school including the differentiation of a maximum of four different areas, for example courses, faculties or similar areas (extended version with up to four individual results and one overall result). The generation of more than four individual results is not possible for technical reasons.

## 4 How is the culture analysis conducted with the OCAI?

The use of the OCAI involves a minimum of three steps:

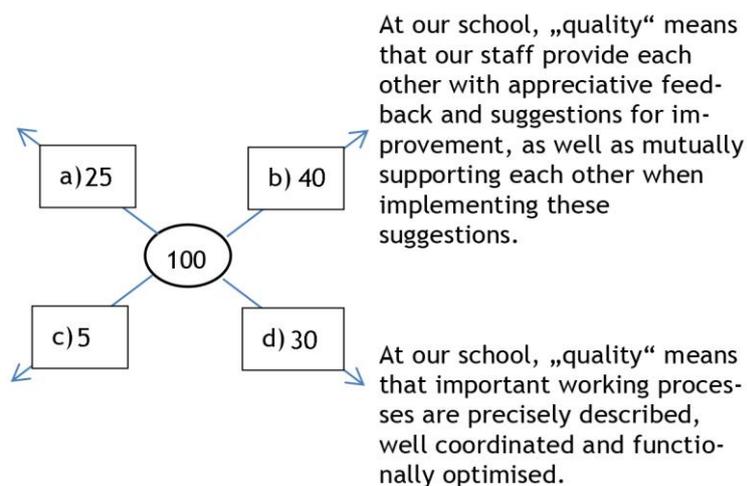
- Evaluating the culture-related statements of the analysis questionnaire (100 points are distributed among four statements for each category of analysis; see appendix)
- Entering the results into an assessment tool
- Determining and presenting the results

The evaluation of the culture-related statements should ideally be carried out as a dialogue-based process. In our experience, carrying out the evaluation phase in two steps has proven to be successful. In this phase, groups of 2 to 3 members of staff should work together to discuss the given statements in relation to the question of which of these statements applies to their school and to what extent before deciding on how to distribute the 100 points among the four answer boxes. When doing so, we recommend that a paper-and-pencil version of the questionnaire be used and that the participants be initially asked to individually distribute their points before deciding on the final allocation of points as a small group. Given that culture also always concerns fundamental perspectives, values and convictions of which individuals are often unaware in their everyday actions, the discourse-based stage of the procedure helps to encourage participants to consider fundamental evaluations and to challenge the partners in their small work groups to provide reasons that explicate their convictions and perspectives.

### 7) Quality understanding

At our school, „quality“ means that we dynamically respond to changing demands and requirements in our social environment and constantly implement further development measures.

At our school, „quality“ means that we fully achieve our set learning objectives and that we successfully bring out the best in our pupils (i.e., fully unlocking their potential).



**Figure 3: An example of the distribution of points among four culture-related statements in a category of analysis**

From this point onwards, an online tool<sup>4</sup> can be used to support the implementation of the culture analysis. When using such a tool, two different options are conceivable:

#### Option 1

The small groups enter the results directly into the online tool at a time individually chosen by each group. Once all results have been entered, a person responsible for the analysis produces the overall result and discusses it with the participants at a later point in time (but soon after the analysis).

#### Option 2

The small groups all complete the procedure described above at the same time (as part of the workshop). A person responsible for the analysis ensures that the results are produced immediately so that the discussion about the overall result can directly follow the evaluation phase.

Regardless of which option is chosen, the instrument can either be used to diagnose the current situation only, the target situation only or both situations at the same time. The online tool offers a corresponding selection function for these different types of assessment. In the case of the paper-and-pencil version, two questionnaires must be used if an assessment of both the current and target situation is required.

## 5 Analysis and interpretation

The results relating to the seven categories of analysis are calculated by using an Excel table or the online tool provided. The calculation uses the following method: 4 point values are awarded per category. These values add up to a total of 100. The values awarded for each type of culture (a-d) are added up and divided by 7 (the number of categories of analysis) and the number of participants (groups or individuals), so that at the end, a total of 100 points are distributed among the four types of culture (Organization, Performance, Relationships and Innovation). The number of points allocated to each type of culture therefore represents a calculated mean value (average).

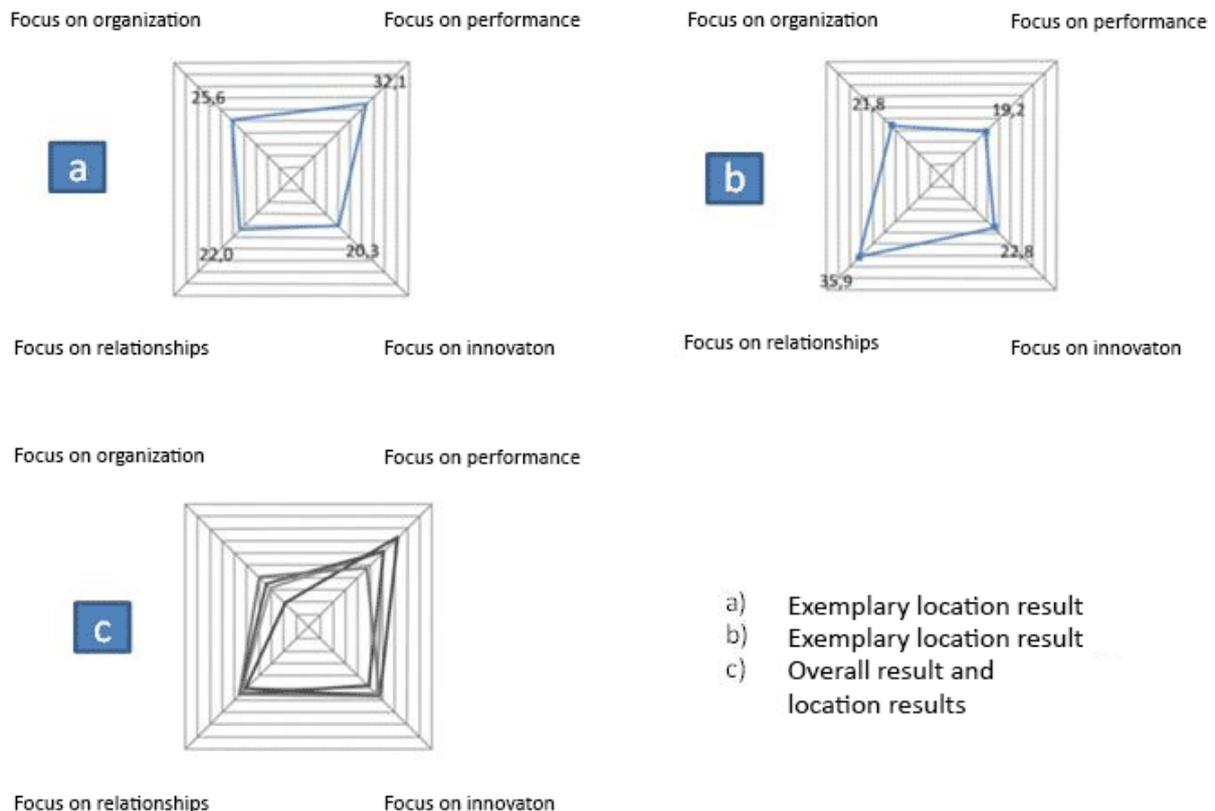
If possible differences are assessed within a school, for example with regard to areas such as locations or faculties, a separate analysis of each area and an analysis of the results of all participants must be carried out.

The results are presented in a diagram (see below) that clearly displays the characteristics.

To a certain extent, the types of culture shown below represent idealizations. In reality, the results will always reveal hybrid forms of the types of culture because no school can be run without any external (or internal) orientation whatsoever and/or without any openness (or structure) whatsoever. The analysis therefore focuses on whether a dominant type of culture can be identified or a hybrid form emerges.

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<sup>4</sup> A separate technical specification for this tool can be found at [www.q-kult.eu/instrument](http://www.q-kult.eu/instrument).



**Figure 4: Example results**

It is recommended that the result is examined in a group discussion involving all individuals who participated in the assessment. This discussion can initially tackle the question of whether the result is surprising or corresponds with the participants' own perception. This step may, after the dialogue-based assessment, lead to more in-depth reflection on the specific cultural hypotheses of the school in question that have developed as a result of the OCAI procedure.

Another aspect that can be discussed as part of a group analysis is whether the type of culture identified from the results corresponds with the desires, views and intentions of the individuals involved in the assessment. When discussing this aspect, it is advisable to make a note of the answers given in which the diagnosed current culture does not correspond with a formulated desired culture. This step could also be used to initiate a conscious examination of culture of the school at which the participants work and which is only perceived as more of a 'background noise', if perceived at all, in their day-to-day working lives.

## 6 How can the results be used and explored? Preferred and critical characteristics of the quality management system

The cost analysis can help to answer the question as to which aspects of quality management system correspond well with the diagnosed culture of the school in question and which aspects reveal a discrepancy with this culture. In order to answer this question, the statements presented below can be used in reference to the preferences of each type of culture (with regard to the specific characteristics of a quality management system).

As described above, when using the adapted OCAI instrument, the assumption is made that there is not one single type of culture that is beneficial to the introduction and/or effective use of a quality management system, but that instead, every type of culture is justified in a certain way and that particular forms, characteristics and school-specific properties of a quality management system suit this type of culture to a greater or lesser degree.

The preferred and/or critical values of a quality management system for each type of culture primarily result from the orientation of the school (more internal or more external and/or more structured or more open). The following overview is based on inferred considerations and concrete experiences, especially those resulting from processes involved in the implementation of quality management systems at schools and/or from the external evaluations of schools.

The paragraphs below present examples of both preferred and critical characteristics for each type of culture. These examples are by no means complete but based on experiences and plausibility considerations. The information presented below is provided for reference only and may offer users ideas and incentives for their own considerations.

## 6.1 Focus on organization

### Preferred characteristics:

This focus is beneficial to a quality management system that relies on concise structures such as clear descriptions of responsibility or process descriptions and rules, as well as checks in order to ensure that these descriptions and rules are being observed. At the same time, and in contrast to the focus on performance, the focus on organization tends to benefit a quality management system that concentrates on an internal orientation that serves the interests of the teachers and management staff in terms of smooth processes.

In accordance with this, a mission statement that above all sets high standards with regard to resources, equipment and processes would, for example, also attract a positive response. A complaint management system would be accepted if it were also to serve the interests of employees with regard to protection. This would then provide a good opportunity for self-evaluations if they were to explore issues concerning functional organization or successful educational processes.

### Examples of critical characteristics, where applicable:

Acceptance problems may arise in the case of a quality management system that primarily focuses on the interests of pupils and/or external partners. A quality management system that tends to be based on an ideational consensus and rely on the creativity of individuals, for example in the case of individual feedback and/or the continuous further development of a quality-based approach, would also be more likely to have a weak foundation in a well-organized school.

## 6.2 Focus on performance

### Preferred characteristics:

On the whole, an affinity for structural elements would provide good opportunities for a quality management system that relies on formalized process descriptions and clear rules. A clearly structured complaint management system or a regular cycle of target statements and checks to ensure that targets are being achieved would therefore, for example, have a good chance of functioning on a cultural basis.

An external orientation would benefit a mission statement that, for example, focuses on achieving a good public image. Self-evaluations relating to the results achieved by pupils or the satisfaction of partners could develop on the basis of general acceptance. The results of school inspections, external evaluations or certification processes would also have a good chance of attracting interest.

#### Examples of critical characteristics, where applicable:

A quality management system that tends to rely on people taking individual responsibility on the basis of internal understanding and granted trust is unlikely to suit the culture of a performance-oriented school. This would, for example, apply to a quality mission statement that is above all designed to provide internal orientation (which to some extent also meets conflicting demands). A feedback model that strongly relies on a basic idea of reflective assurance yet avoids using rules and requirements could be equally problematic. It would also be difficult to implement a quality management system that relies on constant renewal by means of ideas and incentives from day-to-day educational work.

### 6.3 Focus on innovation

#### Preferred characteristics:

At a school focusing on innovation, a quality management system that relies on more informal creative approaches towards securing and developing quality would above all have a good chance of success. The mission statement of such a school would have to strongly rely on orientation towards social changes and the appreciation of individual contributions, for example, meaning that self-evaluations would above all be supported and used when connected with ongoing plans for development or school development projects with regard to renewal and change.

A feedback concept that not only focuses on the views of pupils but also those of external partners with regard to change and development in the school would also be consistent with the culture of the school. On the whole, a quality management system that (instead of using clear detailed rules) tends to represent a framework that is roughly oriented towards development and demands creative implementation would gain high acceptance.

#### Examples of critical characteristics, where applicable:

Any quality management system that is strongly formalized and relies on continuous procedures would, on the other hand, experience problems when it comes to acceptance. The results of external evaluations or certification processes that above all focus on compliance with (narrowly) defined criteria would barely be accepted by such a school and would definitely not be considered to be a form of constructive motivation.

### 6.4 Focus on relationships

#### Preferred characteristics:

Every type of quality management system that relies on negotiation processes that factor in the interests of employees, including all of their differences, to the furthest possible extent has a good chance of being accepted and actively implemented at this school. If this system is able to establish an understanding of quality that is accepted by every member of the school, for example by using a quality mission statement, the system has a good chance of also being integrated into day-to-day life at the school.

A feedback concept that relies on connections between colleagues, rather vague shared views on individual reflection on educational processes and an associated need for personal responsibility and creativity when using these processes would also have a chance of being used and accepted, as would self-evaluations that aim to establish understanding between colleagues and/or a complaint management system that relies on personal mediation efforts that are 'close to the problem' or investigations with results that can be obtained in a communicative manner (interviews, rating conferences, etc.).

**Examples of critical characteristics, where applicable:**

A quality management system that mainly focuses on successful processes, results or the demands of external partners would gain little acceptance. The idea that quality means continuous improvement and renewal in line with the demands of a changing environment is also more likely to be met with opposition and or refusal at such a school. Process descriptions or systematic self-evaluations carried out in accordance with strict guidelines would also make a quality management system rather fragile when used as its defining elements.

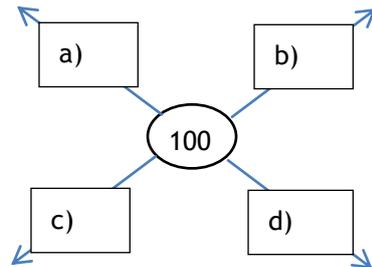


## ANNEX: OCAI-Tool - Cultural analysis form

### 1) Key characteristics of the institution

Our school is a clearly regulated and structured place. Formal rules and regulations are important points of reference for us; great emphasis is also placed on functional processes.

Our school is an extremely performance-oriented place. It is important for us that students learn a lot and achieve good results.



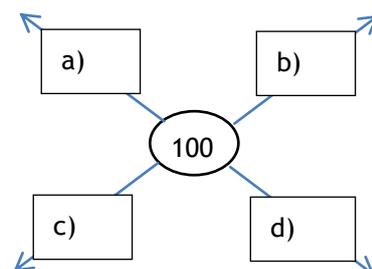
Our school is a very personal place. It's like one big family. We are in close contact with one another, and share a lot with one another.

Our school is a very dynamic place which is constantly changing. We are prepared to break new ground, and risk making mistakes.

### 2) Leadership style of institution directors

Our school's directors are generally perceived as caring, supportive and encouraging. They focus on trusting staff and a school which operates based on sympathetic co-operation.

Our school's directors are generally perceived as innovative and prepared to take risks. They have a specific vision, can convey this convincingly - and thus acquire the staff to participate in change processes.



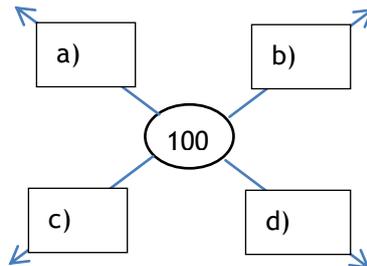
Our school's directors are generally perceived as organised and co-ordinating. They are interested in smooth processes. They monitor whether requirements are being met and rules upheld.

Our school's directors are generally perceived as performance and results-oriented, with high standards. Good results and demonstrable successes capable of being communicated internally and externally are what count for them.

### 3) HR management

HR management at our school is geared around a high level of performance-oriented commitment. We feel obliged to achieve a high level of performance, and receive recognition and appreciation for this from the school's directors.

Our school's HR management places emphasis on co-operation, consensus and co-determination. Our school's directors strive to ensure staff members participate actively in school life. They make sure co-operation and social exchange aren't left out.



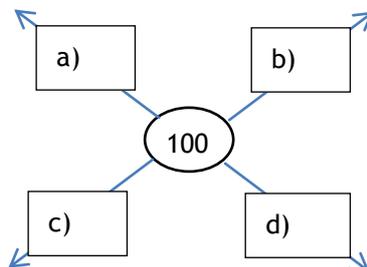
Our school's HR management encourages staff innovativeness. The directors pay heed to the staff members' scope for individual creativity, and support initiatives for change and creative solutions.

Our school's HR management is characterised by transparency, reliability and stable work relationships. The directors place emphasis on clear roles and hierarchical structures.

### 4) What binds the institution

What binds our school is the collective pursuit of innovation, the shared commitment to creative developments, and the tackling of new challenges. We are proud of being part of important changes at the school.

What binds our school is an orderly structure, as well as a high level of reliability and continuity. Formal rules and precisely regulated processes create transparency, provide security, and ensure smooth work.



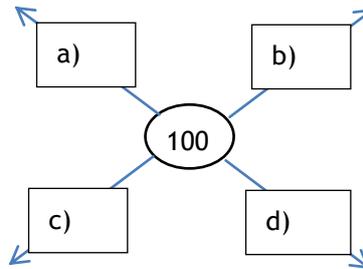
What binds our school is the pursuit of success and target achievement (e.g. academic performances, enrolment numbers, graduates). This is associated with pride in the performance achieved and the externally perceived successes.

What binds our school is loyalty, mutual trust and a good sense of unity. There is a very high level of personal commitment to the institution, particularly to a good social environment, at our school.

### 5) Strategic focuses

Our school places emphasis on consistency, stability, continuity and efficiency. Innovations are approached with caution and reservation; unrest, disturbances, turbulence and uncertainty associated with changes are avoided wherever possible.

Our school strives to always be up with the times. It seeks to adopt the role of trailblazer and pioneer. We're consistently trying out new things, and keeping an eye out for other options.



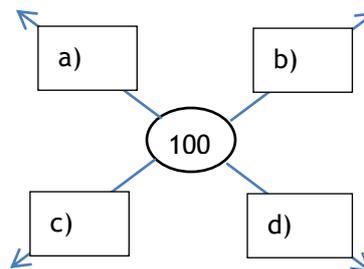
Our school places emphasis on social dealings. Personal development is encouraged - particularly if this serves the community and takes us further as a team.

It is important for our school to be one of the best and strongest performers. Achieving ambitious goals and visible success compared to others is important (e.g. good test results, high graduation rates).

### 6) Success criteria

Our school measures success in terms of good co-operations amongst the teaching staff, and good relationships with one another, based on mutual understanding, trust and openness.

Our school measures success in terms of a high performance level, good graduation numbers, successful school and professional careers, and a positive reputation.



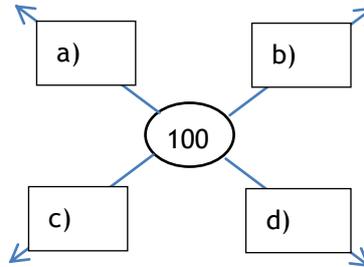
Our school measures success in terms of efficiency and reliability, good planning, and careful handling of available resources.

Our school measures success in terms of careful implementation of the latest developments, methods and techniques, and successfully completed development projects.

### 7) Quality concept

At our school, we understand “quality” as meaning that we respond dynamically to the changing social requirements, and constantly develop.

At our school, we understand “quality” as meaning that the staff members provide each other with respectful feedback and suggestions for improvement, and help each other to implement these.



At our school, we understand “quality” as meaning that important work processes are thoroughly explained, well-coordinated, and functionally optimised.

At our school, we understand “quality” as meaning that the set learning objectives have been fully achieved and that we are able to get the best out of students (i.e. fulfil their potential).