



Worksheet 2b.A1

Competency: Developing Others— Creating a Learning Organization

Definition of a Learning Organization

“A learning organization is an organization skilled at creating, acquiring, interpreting, transferring, and retaining knowledge, and at purposefully modifying its behavior to reflect new knowledge and insights.”
(Garvin, 2000, p. 11)

Four Necessary Conditions of a Learning Organization

1. Pursuing new ways of thinking and untapped sources of information;
2. Providing timely, clear feedback;
3. Recognizing and accepting differences; and
4. Accepting errors, mistakes, and occasional failures as the price of improvement.

(Garvin, 2000)



Learning Culture Assessment

Review each of the following statements, and check the column that most closely describes your organization.

PRO-LEARNING CULTURE	✓	ANTI-LEARNING CULTURE	✓
1. People at all levels ask questions and share stories about successes, failures, and what they have learned.		1. Managers share information on a need-to-know basis. People keep secrets and don't describe how events really happened.	
2. Everyone creates, keeps, and propagates stories of individuals who have improved their own processes.		2. Everyone believes they know what to do, and they proceed on that assumption.	
3. People take at least some time to reflect on what has happened and what may happen.		3. Little time or attention is given to understanding lessons learned from projects.	
4. People are treated as complex individuals.		4. People are treated like objects or resources without attention to their individuality.	
5. Managers encourage continuous experimentation.		5. Employees proceed with work only when they feel certain of the outcome.	
6. People are hired and promoted on the basis of their capacity for learning and adapting to new situations.		6. People are hired and promoted on the basis of their technical expertise as demonstrated by credentials.	
7. Performance reviews include and pay attention to what people have learned.		7. Performance reviews focus almost exclusively on what people have done.	
8. Senior managers participate in training programs designed for new or high-potential employees.		8. Senior managers appear only to "kick off" management training programs.	
9. Senior managers are willing to explore their underlying values, assumptions, beliefs, and expectations.		9. Senior managers are defensive and unwilling to explore their underlying values, assumptions, beliefs, and expectations.	



PRO-LEARNING CULTURE	✓	ANTI-LEARNING CULTURE	✓
10. Conversations in management meetings constantly explore the values, assumptions, beliefs, and expectations underlying proposals and problems.		10. Conversations tend to move quickly to blaming and scapegoating with little attention to the process that led to a problem or how to avoid it in the future.	
11. Customer feedback is solicited, actively examined, and included in the next operational or planning cycle.		11. Customer feedback is not solicited and is often ignored when it comes in over the transom.	
12. Managers presume that energy comes in large part from learning and growing.		12. Managers presume that energy comes from “making the numbers,” meaning meeting numerical targets.	
13. Managers think about their learning quotient, that is, their interest in and capacity for learning new things, and the learning quotient of their employees.		13. Managers think that they know all they need to know and that their employees do not have the capacity to learn much.	
Total for pro-learning culture		Total for anti-learning culture	

Reference

Conner, M. L., & Clawson, J. G. (Eds.). (2004). *Creating a learning culture: Strategy, technology, and practice*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
Retrieved from <http://marciaconner.com/books/creating-learning-culture/>

