

Special issue “Levels of learning: hither and whither”*The Learning Organization*

Over the past five decades, there has been a growing research interest in learning in and by organizations, reflected in both quantity of publications (counted in Bapuji and Crossan, 2004) and reviews of the field (Argote, 2011; Easterby-Smith and Lyles, 2011; Örténblad, 2002; Shipton, 2006). Yet, despite this activity, this field is still seen as characterized by conceptual confusion and terminological ambiguity, even as an “organizational learning jungle” (Huysman, 2000, p. 81; Lipshitz *et al.*, 2007).

This conceptual confusion and ambiguity appears to be particularly pertinent in the case of conceptualizations of so-called higher levels of learning, despite a few recent attempts to impose a degree of theoretical order and coherence on some of these conceptualizations (Chiva *et al.*, 2010; Tosey *et al.*, 2012; Visser, 2007). Not only the differences in number of levels and in the terminology-in-use are striking but also the fact that the main conceptualizations and their theoretical antecedents all appear to have been firmly established in the 1960s and 1970s (Argyris and Schön, 1974; Bateson, 1972; Cyert and March, 1963). Furthermore, this is a field that is rich in conceptualizations, but rather poor in operationalization and empirical research.

The purpose of this Special Issue is to fill these voids in organizational learning research and make higher-order learning more amenable to empirical research and more workable to organizational practice. We therefore invite contributions of the following types:

- theoretical papers that critically review, integrate or synthesize conceptualizations of higher level learning;
- operationalizations and measurements of higher levels of learning; and
- concrete empirical research, either quantitative or qualitative.

Deadlines

The submission deadline for full papers is 30 June 2017. The Special Issue is scheduled to appear as the first issue of *The Learning Organization* in 2018.

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About the Theme Editors

Max Visser is an Associate Professor of Management, Accounting and Organization at the Institute for Management Research, Radboud University, Nijmegen, The Netherlands. His research interests include the relations between organizational learning, management control and performance, in particular in governmental and non-profit organizations. Further, he is interested in the relations between governance, performance and behavior in organizations, increasingly from a critical perspective. His publications have appeared in journals like *Academy of Management Review*, *Management Learning*, *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, *The Learning Organization*, among others. Max Visser is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: m.visser@fm.ru.nl

Ricardo Chiva is a Professor of Management and Organizations at the Universitat Jaume I, Castellón, Spain. He is working on the development of a new vision of organizations as sites where innovation, learning and humanism are essential elements. His research interests are mainly focused on organizational learning, innovation and on the human aspects of organizations, including organizational and human development. His publications have appeared in journals like *British Journal of Management*, *Personnel Review*, *International Journal of Management Reviews*, *Journal of Business Ethics*, among others.

Paul Tosey is an Independent Consultant and a Visiting Fellow at Surrey Business School, University of Surrey, Guildford, UK. His consultancy and research interests include organizational and transformative learning, coaching, NLP and clean language. His publications have appeared in journals like *British Journal of Management*, *Management Learning*, *Human Resource Development International*, among others.