

## **Language Centre Matrix Management Structure: Developments in Teacher Training**

Key words: matrix structure, staff training, special interest groups

Masaryk University (MU) Language Centre (LC) has recently changed its organizational structure in order to enhance quality of co-operation and communication at various levels of the LC both in terms of simplifying its management and exploiting LC pedagogical expertise. A matrix organizational structure model was chosen for this purpose. The article describes the methods and processes of the structure development and explains in detail its individual layers. It concentrates especially on means that help to develop both internal and external teacher training and to support research via various LC sections and special interest groups. LC staff members' feedback on the change in LC structure is used to illustrate how these novelties help the teachers in personal and professional development and how sharing know how, pedagogical expertise as well as hands on classroom experience is perceived as crucial in case any pedagogical innovation should be established.

### ***Organisation matricielle du Centre de langues : les avantages pour la formation des enseignants***

*Mots clefs : structure matricielle, formation des enseignants, groupes d'intérêt spéciaux*

*Le Centre de langues de l'Université Masaryk a récemment adopté un nouvel organigramme basé sur l'organisation matricielle afin d'améliorer la qualité de la collaboration et de la communication entre ses employés à différents niveaux. L'objectif premier de ce changement est de simplifier la gestion du Centre et de profiter du savoir-faire pédagogique de son personnel. Le présent article décrit les méthodes et les procédés du développement de la structure et explique en détail ses niveaux individuels. Il se concentre en particulier sur les moyens qui aident à développer à la fois la formation des enseignants et à soutenir la recherche par le biais de différentes sections du Centre et des groupes d'intérêt spéciaux. Les commentaires des membres du personnel portant sur la modification de la structure du Centre sont utilisés pour illustrer comment ces nouveautés aident les enseignants dans leur développement personnel et professionnel et comment le partage du savoir-faire, des compétences pédagogiques ainsi que le partage des expériences en salle de classe sont perçus comme cruciaux pour l'introduction d'une innovation pédagogique.*

## **1 Introduction**

### **1.1 Masaryk University Language Centre Background**

Masaryk University (MU) Language Centre (LC) is, with its one hundred staff members and over ten thousand students every year, the largest language centre in the Czech Republic. It provides language training for non-specialists in seven languages, namely English, German, French, Spanish, Latin, Russian and Czech as a foreign language for either academic or specific purposes at eight MU faculties. These are the Faculties of Law, Medicine, Natural Sciences, Arts, Social Sciences, Education, Sports and the Faculty of Informatics. Its main role is to provide non-specialist language provisions as understood by Byrne (2014):

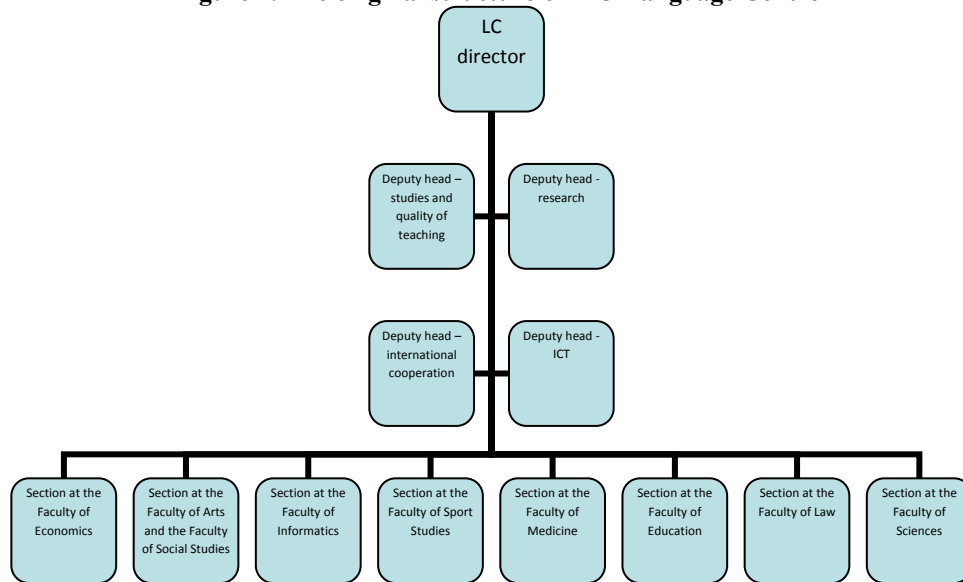
on the one hand it simply refers to the language provision provided for students who are not doing a full language degree; on the other it encompasses a wide range of courses that often link to official university policies on employability, mobility, internationalization and even income generation (14).

Masaryk University's long-term plan was set up to emphasise, among other issues, the importance of language education during both undergraduate and postgraduate studies, and to set a standard by which it is compulsory for every MU graduate to master at least one foreign language at the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) B2 level during master studies and CEFR C1 level during PhD studies. The deans, together with LC specialists, decided on this language policy. As it was defined to such a high standard, MU LC eventually substantially expanded both in the number of students and staff. It thus became necessary to adjust the organizational structure of the Language Centre in order to enhance the quality of cooperation and communication at various levels of the structure in terms of both simplifying LC management and exploiting LC pedagogical expertise.

### **1.2 Masaryk University Language Centre Structure**

A traditional pyramid structure had been applied for many years. The LC director topped the hierarchy, having one deputy, then two and finally four, as the agenda kept being delegated continually from the University management downwards. Eight faculty section heads coordinated work at individual faculties (see Figure 1). Subsequently, as all the financial, human resources (HR), pedagogical as well as scientific research decisions and responsibilities were shifted to the level of the Language Centre, the pyramid structure did not prove flexible, and it gave few opportunities to develop the Centre according to its plans and needs. The Language Centre was in need of dynamic cooperation among staff on various levels, revealing hidden talents, mutual sharing and staff training, and flexible communication strategies that would have made it possible to transmit important information where it was urgently necessary.

**Figure 1. The original structure of MU Language Centre**



The article describes the methods and processes of the structure development and explains in detail its individual layers. It presents a time plan for introducing the structure, stages and strategies which were used in presenting the system to all members of the Centre and strategies to involve the staff within the newly developed structure.

As the baseline study and needs analyses was carried out with the help of external experts (HR specialists and Masaryk University sociologists), the text concentrates especially on the description of the process and means that help to develop both internal and external teacher training and to support research via various LC sections and special interest groups. With this help, LC teachers can meet either according to the languages they teach, their language specialisations, interest in teaching methodologies they share or according to their needs as researchers. The system enables teachers to find colleagues with such similar interests and to start networking, either with LC support or individually.

LC staff members' feedback on the change in LC structure is used to illustrate how these novelties help the teachers in personal and professional development and how sharing know how, pedagogical expertise as well as hands-on classroom experience are perceived as crucial in case any pedagogical innovation should be established

### **1.3 Organizational Structures**

The structure of an organization can be understood as a framework which describes the operating principles of the organization, namely procedures within the organization, its leadership, decision-making, roles of its members, processing

information and ties between its members. The organizational structure is usually chosen according to the goal of the organization and to the type of human resources (e.g. Belbin, MTBI) within the organization. This is the definition developed and agreed on by the LC management team.

Common organizational structures include the linear, headquarters hierarchy; the division organization; the flexible ad-hoc organization; the decentralized organization and the matrix organization. Masaryk University Language Centre officially operated on the basis of the linear top – down model as shown in Figure 1. The baseline study, however, revealed principles of other organizational structures within.

It was partly becoming decentralized as the individual sections' staff members at the faculties shared the closest common goals, values and LSP specializations. They sought more autonomy and did not network with other sections at other faculties. Thus, some faculty sections became oriented towards faculty rather than towards the Language Centre. Another part of the LC staff worked according to the principles of an ad-hoc organization. This team consisted of creative employees who looked for new ideas and project opportunities. The team created an organizational layer that cut across the faculty sections and became oriented towards the university and the Language Centre, rather than towards the faculties. These creative concepts, however, did not always fully correspond to standard LC procedures and the wishes of the stakeholders (some of the faculty sections).

## **2. Methods**

The process began according to the principles of “action research” as introduced by Burns (1999: 30). This was considered appropriate as it is:

contextual, small-scale and localised – it identifies and investigates problem within a specific situation; it is evaluative and reflective as it aims at bringing about change and improvement in practice; it is participatory as it provides for collaborative investigation by teams of colleagues, practitioners and researchers; changes in practice are based on the collection of information or data which provides the impetus for change.

All the necessary phases that Burns (2005: 6) mentions (exploring, identifying, planning, collecting data, analysing, hypothesising, intervening, observing, reporting, writing and presenting) were explored and accomplished.

In 2011, a baseline study was carried out by external HR specialists and a team was set up in order to perform a needs analysis of the LC management. As the finding revealed a mixture of various principles of organizational structures within the official linear model (as mentioned in section 1.3 above), it became obvious that the structure as such needed the most attention. The HR specialists also interviewed LC management and performed needs analyses. It identified the main reasons why change was perceived as necessary, namely better effectiveness of the structure, encouragement of development and mutual respect among layers of the LC structure.

The first meetings of the team aimed at exploring the basic questions the team brainstormed at the beginning of the process and identifying problems, needs and solutions. The team started simulating various possible LC structures considering whether a looser or tighter, less or more formal, less rule or more rule bound structure would be appropriate both for the purpose the structure should serve, and based on the people it consists of (Sporn 1996; Cameron & Quinn 2011; Kreitner & Kinicki 1992).

The following set of meetings was devoted to discussions that revised the outcomes of previous meetings and introduced new strategies. Critiques from among LC staff reminded the team of the fact that a university centre cannot be run according to business principles because of specificities of university culture. “Universities are complex organizations with a unique set of features. Unlike many profit-making organizations, universities have certain characteristics that need to be understood (Birnbaum 1988; Baldrige *et al.* 1977) and that dominate the culture of academic institutions “ (Sporn 1996: 42). According to her, due to the “lack of agreement on guidelines” (Sporn 1996: 42) and setting common goals, decision-making processes are slow and not clear. The human factor also plays a role as universities, unlike many companies, work especially with people. Professors demand a high standard of autonomy and that is why any processes and routines are viewed with disapproval.

It is, however, also important to note that the traditional Humboltian Czech type of tertiary education has been criticised for its governance system, where the “institutions are inwardly-focussed and do not engage productively with the needs” of stakeholders (File *et al.* 2006: 23).

The team then started to make accounts of what had been found and a presentation of the methods, procedures and findings was prepared. The structure was first presented to the faculty sections heads and offered for their comments. The final, adjusted matrix model was then presented in June 2012, at the annual LC meeting to all the LC staff.

The whole process continued and after a two-year testing period, LC management needed to justify the choice of the matrix system and needed to know how LC staff perceived its function and relevance. LC management consulted Masaryk University sociologists and developed a questionnaire which was designed as a qualitative study consisting mainly of open questions. Respondents are usually interviewed rather than asked to complete a questionnaire when qualitative studies are carried out. It was, however, decided that, in order to receive honest answers, the staff should be given the possibility to respond anonymously, hence the form of a questionnaire.

The aim of the questionnaire was to find out if LC staff knew what the structure was and why it was chosen, where they saw their role within the structure, if they saw any positive or negative influence the new structure had on staff development, if they gained from the changes and how they felt about possible future adjustments of the system. The key questions and sample answers are presented in chapter 3.3 of this text.

As we received 46 replies (61 % of internal and external teaching staff), it was obvious that the traditional counting of replies and making graphs would not have been very relevant. The numbers representing various types of answers were relatively small. MU sociologists, therefore, suggested that we find similar and common answers and try to group the questionnaires according to their overall tenor. This way, we created (and proposed) a set of LC staff typology. We identified 6 types of LC employees according to their level of satisfaction with LC organization, and added one more for those who did not fill in the questionnaire. The typology was presented at the 2014 annual LC meeting where another test was run – the teachers were asked to identify themselves with one of the types in order to find out if the results corresponded with what had been found in the original questionnaires.

### **3 Results**

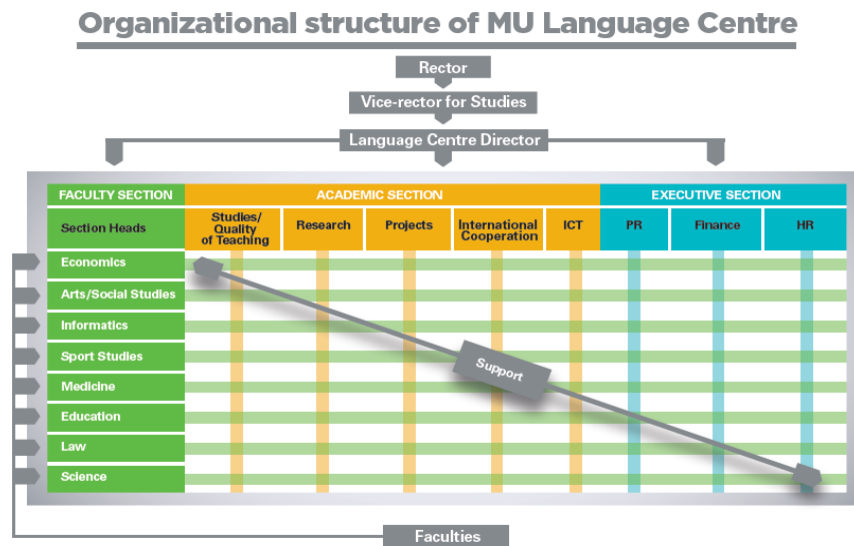
#### **3.1. Masaryk University Language Centre Matrix Structure**

In the past, the linear hierarchy proved to be inflexible and rigid. The team did not opt for a decentralized organization model either, as it would most probably lead to little networking among the faculty sections and would cause problems in project work where cooperation of all the staff is necessary. The ad-hoc model is more appropriate for educational subjects which must react flexibly to the needs of the market. A university Language Centre where the majority of language courses are a part of stable study programs of the individual faculties cannot operate entirely on the ad-hoc principle. Some features of this flexible system are, however, necessary in case any innovation should take place.

This is why it was decided that the LC would be structured on a pattern of an adjusted matrix model where powers and responsibilities are more evenly and justly distributed, and communication both inwards but also outwards the LC is more effective. The faculty sections (the horizontal part of the matrix in Figure 2) cater for the educational program stability while the academic special interest sections (the vertical part of the matrix in Figure 2) can work more flexibly, dynamically and according to the latest trends in language education.

The Matrix structure provides for communication across the various levels of the LC and enables information to reach the intended audience via several avenues, thus making cooperation of various staff members possible. It gives enough autonomy to the individual departments without risking it going astray, and it provides space and numerous opportunities to creative teams who wish to and are encouraged to look for innovations in language learning around the organizational framework, its goals and needs. Moreover, the structure, via networking between departments and other interest groups, encourages sharing as well as both internal and external staff training.

Figure 2. Organizational structure of MU Language Centre – the Matrix



MU LC team (2012): Hana Reichova, Hana Katrnakova, Libor Stepanek, Alena Hradilova, Marta Rybickova and Rostya Gordon Smith

The main responsibilities of the LC staff were identified as follows: responsibility for the faculty sections, entrusted to the section heads; responsibilities for the special areas of quality of education, research, international cooperation and ICT, bestowed on the deputy directors; responsibility for running the LC conferred to the non-academic executive section; and providing support for running the organization operated by the non-academic support section. Later on, a project department was set up to facilitate LC projects (Katrnakova 2012: 9).

The structure was implemented in 2012. LC teachers and lecturers were invited to join the structure either actively or in a rather passive way (one of the most important principles underlying the structure is its voluntary nature). The active employees joined one or more of the special areas and started working with other colleagues from the LC, meeting with the groups, networking, undergoing specialized training and sharing information. Apart from working in the groups, it is their duty to inform their colleagues at the faculty sections about the latest events and developments in the special areas. This means that even the rather passive LC employees receive all the information they need. Most of the teachers decided to join the structure actively.

### **3.1.1 Studies and Quality of Teaching**

As could have been predicted, the area of teaching quality immediately became the greatest in the number of members. During the first two years, its activities consisted mainly of standardization of testing at the Language Centre (in accordance with CEFR and European Association for Quality Assurance (ENQA) 2005). With the help of the Ministry of Education and EU funding, all LC academic staff was massively trained in this area, test specifications were created and new tests have been introduced for most of the languages and all the Masaryk University faculties. This activity is still in progress.

Another broad area was devoted to training LC teachers in soft skills methodologies, as Masaryk University survey among graduates (<http://strategie.rect.muni.cz/cs/institucionalni-vyzkum/sociologicke-pruzkumy>) revealed that these skills were perceived as crucial and their implementation into study programmes as unsatisfactory. The Language Centre also started bringing international experts to train the staff in other teaching methods and organizing internal staff training with the help of its own experts. In 2013, over thirty such seminars were offered to LC staff. Topics generally covered testing and assessment, alternative teaching methods, soft skills in language teaching, languages for academic and languages for specific purposes teaching and the use of language corpora for teachers and researchers. As this area and its agenda became extremely broad, it was decided, at the beginning of 2014, to divide this special area more finely into special interest groups that would be more focused (part 3.2. of this article).

### **3.1.2 Research**

Language Centre staff who, apart from teaching, also specialize in research, meet regularly in order to keep up-to-date in the area, share tips on publishing and conference opportunities, peer review each other's writing and communicate, coordinate and bring research results to the whole University research infrastructure. The fact that MU LC and its matrix structure systematically supports its employees in their regular academic career, that is, it enables them to engage in doing research, means an obvious shift from the position of a mere service centre towards a proper and academically acknowledged university unit. This way, the Language Centre newly became a partner to Masaryk University Board of Editors (LC staff member is one of MU press editors) and a part of university research results statistics as the Language Centre was acknowledged as a separate research university unit.

### **3.1.3 International Cooperation**

Masaryk University's Language Centre has always supported international cooperation. This was mostly accomplished through Erasmus teacher exchanges,



project partnerships, membership in CercleS (European Confederation of Language Centres in Higher Education) and attending international conferences. Pro-active staff members have always known how to exploit these opportunities and it is the goal of the international cooperation special area to introduce and bring these possibilities to everyone and to search various possibilities of funding. MU LC cooperates with seven foreign universities. In 2013, fifty five staff members were able to travel to universities, conferences, meetings and courses abroad with LC support.

Moreover, as the whole Czech tertiary educational system has been influenced by the process of internationalization and the fact that Masaryk University goals are connected in this respect with the Bologna Process, international networking is considered indisputably crucial for innovation in teaching and research (Sebkova 2006: 92). Staff training, in this area, eventually crossed borders of the Language Centre; the LC started providing methodology training for non-linguist teachers and doctoral students who teach in international programmes through other than their native languages.

#### **3.1.4 ICT**

The ICT special area covers aspects that differ in their types, purposes, users and importance. However, support for LC staff and language teacher training can be seen as the main fields of activities. The support for LC staff consists of expertise assistance in the application and use of information, communication and computing technologies at the LC and ensuring that all the facilities and applications are fully functional. The ICT support team collects and transfers expert knowledge, develops new software, and provides consultancy services. The teacher training section consists of LC internal, intra-university as well as national and international sharing in the area of ICT enhanced teaching methods. Academic members of the team have initiated sharing sessions focusing on areas, such as peer-review software use and development; in-class camera use; interactive whiteboard, webquests, blended learning; ICT enhanced learning; videoconferencing use; video feedback; use of tablets in class; use of Moodle and Facebook use. This area has been newly shifted among special interest groups (SIGs) within the Quality of Teaching special area. For organisational purposes, the team meets twice a year to discuss management of ICT support in the whole LC and in its departments at each faculty.

#### **3.2. Teacher Training within the Matrix Structure – Special Interest Groups**

As mentioned above, the area of quality of education is the broadest one, and, over time, it started becoming less efficient. The numbers of staff present at the meetings were too high to maintain a proper work atmosphere, and the meetings became rather formal, lacking relevant and effective outcomes. Thus, it was decided that the area should be more finely divided into special interest groups

(SIGs) where teachers could freely and voluntarily associate and cooperate according to their special interests and needs.

Some of the groups were already looming from the existing system; other SIGs were proposed after team brainstorming and according to interviews with the staff, some were proposed and set up later by active LC teachers. This way, strong and already well-working groups were established for testing, academic writing and autonomous learning. Other SIGs cover cross-cultural communication, presentation skills, videoconferencing, ICT in language learning, short activities in teaching LSP and soft skills. LC teachers sign up for these groups according to the level of commitment they plan. They can either plan to be proactive members of the group (the SIGs should operate as informally as possible) or be only informed and invited to the events of the groups and participate according to their momentary will. As expected, the majority of the LC staff opted for the second option.

The list of group members can be made up-to-date any time as teachers can freely access it and sign up or resign from any of the SIGs. It is, however, only a table where LC staff members need to put down their names and e-mail addresses. So far, 51 out of 75 staff members signed up for the groups, most of them for more than one SIG. However, as the lists of SIG members lengthen, the table becomes less user-friendly and demanding on anyone who wishes to contact a particular group of LC staff.

This leads us to a thought that the whole system should be supported by a “corporate” social network, i.e. a space where staff members can meet virtually in order to share, plan and discuss burning issues. Members of such virtual space would be able sign up for or leave any of the groups any time they like and when they wish to contact a particular group of LC staff they would simply enter their space. This would make the whole system of collaboration even more flexible and effective.

### **3.3. Functionality, Credibility and Relevance of the Structure**

At the beginning of 2014, we carried out qualitative research via an anonymous questionnaire with open questions. Here, I would like to sum up answers to the most relevant questions concerning staff satisfaction with the organization’s new structure and the possible benefits it brings. The full version of the questionnaire is presented in annex 1.

I would like to share some of the responses (see Table 1). The questionnaire was sent to all the teaching staff (75 internal and external teachers) and we received 46 replies, which constitutes 61 %. Most of the reactions were positive. Here are some of the questions and reactions:

**Table 1. Sample answers from the questionnaire**

Questions	Distribution of answers	Examples of comments
Question 5: I am (not) satisfied with developments in my special area because...	40 respondents expressed their satisfaction with the developments in their special areas, three of them with some reservation, four did not want to judge and two expressed dissatisfaction.	There is more going on; it seeks good quality; we get information, support, good conditions for work; I can do what I am interested in and be only informed about the rest; and inform others; it is not functional...
Question 6: Do you consider the number and content of events within your special area (meetings, staff training seminars and workshops) adequate?	36 respondents were positive, seven positive with reservation and three did not know about any meetings or seminars.	I value them; incredible number of events; it is impossible to manage everything; there should be more seminars – meetings – informal discussion groups; more methodology, less testing; workshops mostly held in English...
Question 7: Please, name your gains from the matrix system	We received 39 positive comments, two negative ones and the rest of the respondents did not mention anything.	Meeting others and sharing; I get the information I need; I develop my personal skills; I don't waste time on things I'm not interested in; I know whom to approach when I need something; I get inspired; I don't feel isolated from LC management; coordination; strategic planning; workshops; it leads only to gossip and bad personal relationships...
Question 8: Has the system changed communication within the Language Centre? If so, how?	This question brought eight negative, twelve "do not wish to judge" or "don't know" and twenty six positive comments.	Effective system of information; transparent communication channels; information goes straight to the intended receiver without unnecessary mediators; the communication channels are not clear; it is more complicated, it was easier to go straight to the LC director...
Question 10: How do you perceive the introduction of special interest groups (SIGs) in the area of pedagogy?	We gained 34 positive responses, six answers which show concerns or reservation and one negative response. The others did not answer this question.	Ten of the respondents think it was necessary; eighteen think it is a very good idea; some say that the time will tell; one respondent thinks it will not work.

Altogether, there were thirteen questions and generally speaking, the responses were positive. The negative or “do not wish to judge” responses, however, indicate that there are staff members who are dissatisfied with the changes and distressed with the new organizational structure. It also indicates that some are not fully informed about how the structure functions. These issues need a great deal of attention.

The respondents were also invited to provide extra comments and advice on how the structure could work better. Most of the comments considered the necessity of better communication and cooperation between LC management and faculty sections heads.

The questionnaires were grouped according to their common features (replies regarding satisfaction with LC organization) and a language centre typology of teaching staff was proposed. Each of the types was given a Czech name which conveys the meaning of their typical attitude and an LC teacher and artist Barbora Chovancová provided illustrations (see Illustration 1.).

The typology was presented on individual posters at the 2014 annual meeting (an informal event) and LC teachers were given a set of stickers with all the individual illustrations. They were asked to read the posters and try to identify themselves with one of the types. In order to maintain anonymity and confidentiality, they were asked to put the sticker that most corresponded with their attitude towards LC organization into a voting box. At the end of the informal annual meeting, the stickers were drawn from the box and stuck to the corresponding posters. This way, the distribution of staff within the typology was visualized. The stickers were then counted and the results were compared with the original numbers derived from the questionnaires, and presented to the staff. 42 members of the teaching staff took part in this activity.

#### Illustration 1. Language Centre Typology



Illustrations of LC typology by Barbora Chovancová, 2014: Gracious Critical, Angry Disgusted, Would-love-to-No-timer, Unknowing Newman, Couldn't-care Less, Not-sure Sceptical, Blissful Happy

The names are literal translations from Czech.

Gracious Critical is generally very satisfied. She can, however, name certain problematic areas that need addressing. Her typical remarks towards the organization are: I get all the relevant information but let's not forget that everything must be voluntary; it is excellent that we can specialize, on the other

hand, gossip is spreading faster; we meet more often but relationships sometimes suffer; I know whom to approach when I need something but do we really respect each other?

Gracious Critical scored 11 out of 46 respondents (24%) in the questionnaires and 12 out of 42 respondents (28.5%) on the poster.

Angry Disgusted is dissatisfied with the function of the organization, she feels very disillusioned. Her typical remarks are: the matrix is just a name for something that does not exist; the matrix only makes people feel like they do not do enough work if they are not active within its structure; the matrix creates gaps between people.

She scored 4 out of 46 (8.5%) in the questionnaire but nobody identified themselves with her at the poster session.

Would-love-to No-timer is happy, would love to be more active but has no time to do it. Her typical remarks are: it is impossible to manage to go to all the seminars; I am so busy at work, I cannot be more active; these are all good ideas but I have my limits, maybe later...

She scored 6 out of 46 (13%) in the questionnaire and 8 out of 42 (19%) on the poster.

Unknowing Newman is new to the Language Centre. His typical remarks are: I cannot judge, I have not been here long enough; I am not a part of it quite yet but I am planning to; what meetings? seminars? workshops?; I am sorry, I am not able to answer this question.

He scored 6 out of 46 (13%) in the questionnaires and only 1 out of 42 (2.5 %) on the poster.

Not-sure Sceptical is not sure what to think. His typical remarks include: it is not a bad idea, we will see; I will wait and see if there are any gains; I am not sure, maybe people do it all because they think they must.

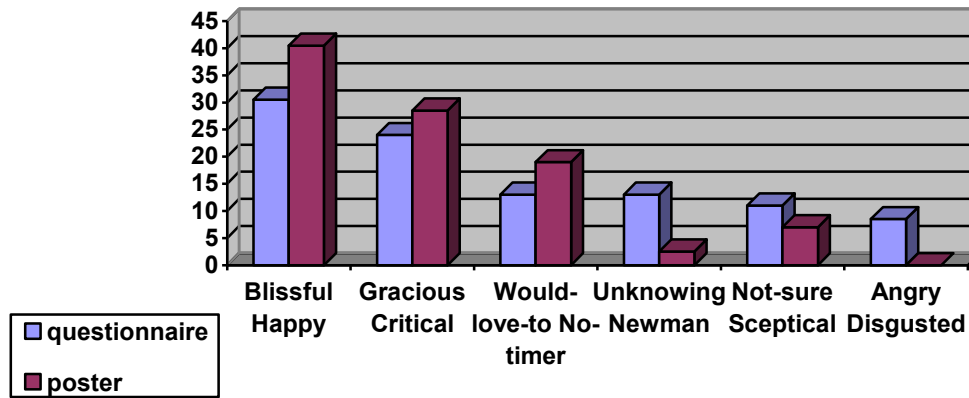
He scored 5 out of 46 (11 %) in the questionnaires and 3 out of 42 (7 %) on the poster.

Blissful Happy is simply satisfied. Her remarks are only positive: to be able to choose freely feels great; I don't have to do everything on my own; I get so much information; I do not lose time, I can specialize; I love the sharing, cooperation and communication; the number of seminars and workshop is amazing. She scored 14 out of 46 (30.5%) in the questionnaire and 17 out of 42 (40.5%) on the posters.

Couldn't-care Less is a type we added for those who did not fill in the questionnaire. We do not know what they think. One person out of 42 at the annual LC meeting identified with this type of an employee.

Generally speaking, there is a shift towards the more positive types in the poster session (see Figure 3.) and although the numbers are relatively too small to provide for any real statistics, it is obvious that LC staff members generally claim their satisfaction with the new organizational structure and the staff training it provides.

**Figure 3. Distribution of types of teachers in questionnaires and at the poster session – comparison.**



#### 4 Conclusions

The feedback, as well as other indicators, suggests that the organizational structure was well chosen and that LC staff can profit from the opportunities it facilitates. In the history of the LC, there have never been so many teacher training opportunities, teachers have never had so much technical support and research was considered a secondary issue. There are, however, still problems that need to be addressed and dealt with.

LC management and the faculty sections heads should make an effort to cooperate and communicate with each other in a more effective way. More professional support has already been offered to the section heads and together, we started working on strengthening their position within the matrix. The whole team (LC management and faculty section heads) take the respondents' comments very seriously.

LC management and the faculty sections heads should also make effort to communicate with individual staff members patiently and continuously in order to explain the potential of the matrix structure and the staff training as well as personal development it offers. We must continually revise the system and systematically encourage staff members to join it and exploit the advantages and opportunities it offers.

MU LC is a large living organism and its structure is still changing and developing within the boundaries that the relatively loose model of the matrix provides. More feedback from the staff needs to be drawn and a questionnaire for LC students must be developed in order to understand whether and how these changes influence the process of learning and teaching. Professionals in this field need to be consulted in order to receive relevant and sound results. Nevertheless,

the partial feedback from LC staff indicates that outcomes of the changes are perceived as examples of good practice.

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## Annex 1. The questionnaire

*The matrix organizational structure is one of the types of formal organizational structures. The structure is based on the combination of bigger and smaller teams that function vertically or horizontally under various leaders. Staff members play various roles depending on the teams they belong to. The first set of questions concerns your role in the matrix:*

1. Do you know that the Language Centre operates on the basis of this structure?
2. If so, do you know why this structure has been chosen? Please, specify.
3. Are you a member of any team within the matrix system?
4. If so, why? (e.g. own interest, somebody must do it, I was asked to do it, I was instructed to do it...)

*The next part of the questionnaire deals with benefits the structure brings.*

5. I am (not) satisfied with developments in my special area because...
6. Do you consider the number and content of events within your special area (meetings, staff training seminars and workshops) adequate?
7. Please, name your gains from the matrix system

*The last part of the questionnaire deals with the communication style at the Language Centre.*

8. Has the system changed communication within the Language Centre? If so, how?
9. Is the possibility to choose your place in the structure of benefit to you? If so, how?
10. How do you perceive the introduction of special interest groups (SIGs) in the area of pedagogy?
11. Are you or are you planning to be a member of a SIG?
12. Your ideas to improve the matrix structure function:

*Thank you for filling in the questionnaire.*

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