

- **“Doing” strategy at the Language Centre:
targeting, collaborating and communicating**



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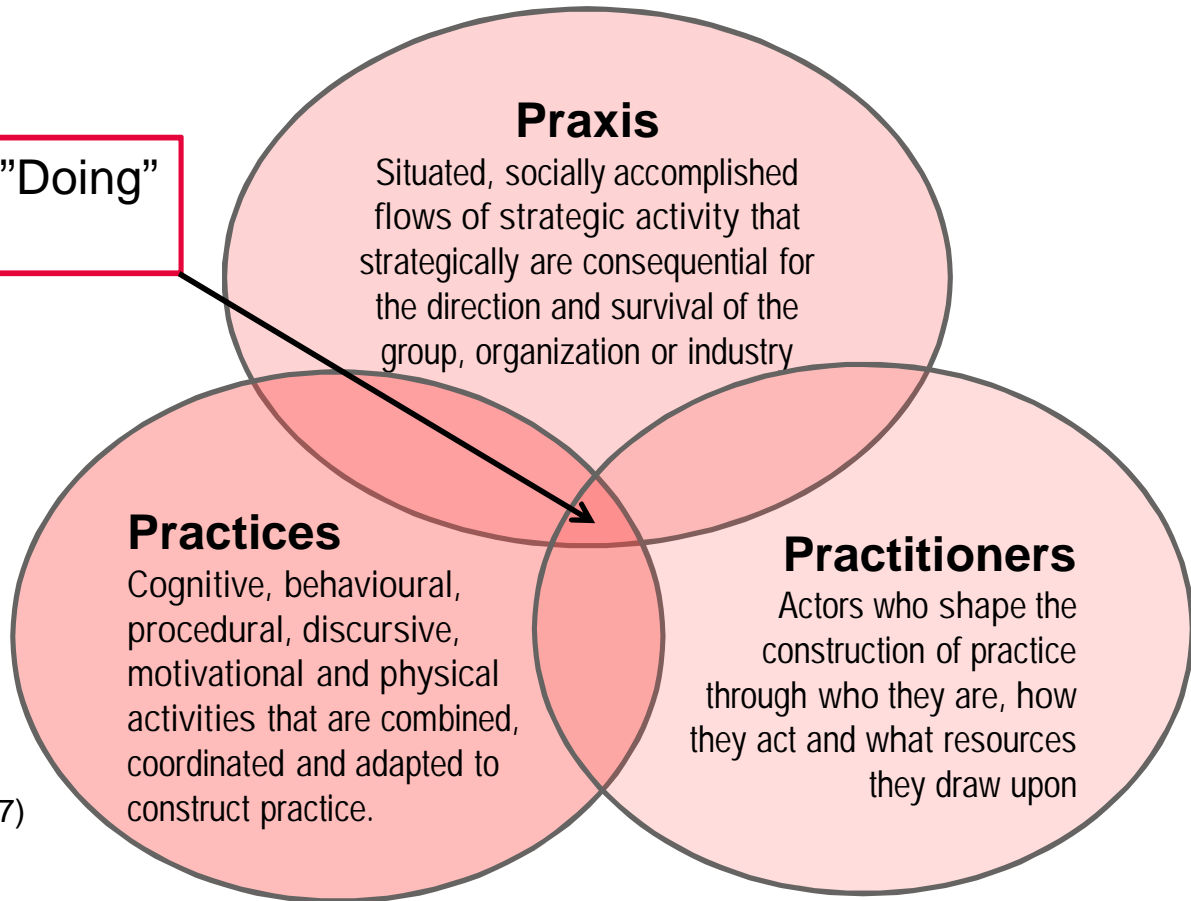
Introduction

- In this presentation we will enlighten the process of **transforming the strategy** of the University of Helsinki into **the target programme** of the Language Centre (LC) and further explain how the LC target programme is implemented within the Unit of Academic Affairs.
- We will look at the strategy-making process in the light of the theory of '**Strategy as Practice**', emphasizing that the LC target programme is not a planning document reviewed only every four years but something *people do and develop in collaboration constantly*.
- The process includes both top-down and bottom-up approaches. The way it is *communicated* within the LC is crucial when creating a target programme that serves as a tool for practice for the whole organisation.



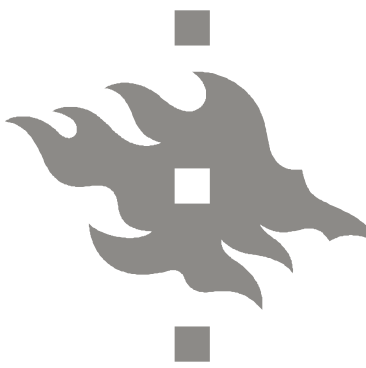
Strategy as Practice = socially accomplished **activity**, constructed through the **actions, interactions** and **negotiations** of multiple **actors** and the **situated practices** upon which they draw (Jarzabkowski, 2005)

Strategizing = "Doing" strategy



Jarzabkowski et al. (2007)
Whittington (2006)

LC strategic objectives for 2020 and key areas of development until 2016



VISION 2020
Excellence for society

HU Language Centre

The University of Helsinki

- ...ranks among the 50 leading universities in the world
- ... is a responsible social force
- ... is a thriving and inspiring community
- ... keeps its finances on a sustainable footing

...supports the university in ranking among the 50 leading universities in the world

- The visible and audible presence of multiculturalism and multilingualism
- A high standard of teaching and multidisciplinary development
- Language courses and services fully meet needs

...is a responsible social force

- Expertise for the benefit of society
- Development of contacts with working life

...is a thriving and inspiring community

- Interactive community in support of collegiality
- Careful human resources planning

...keeps its finances on a sustainable footing

- Long-term view in operational planning
- Stabilisation of the ratio of facility costs to total costs

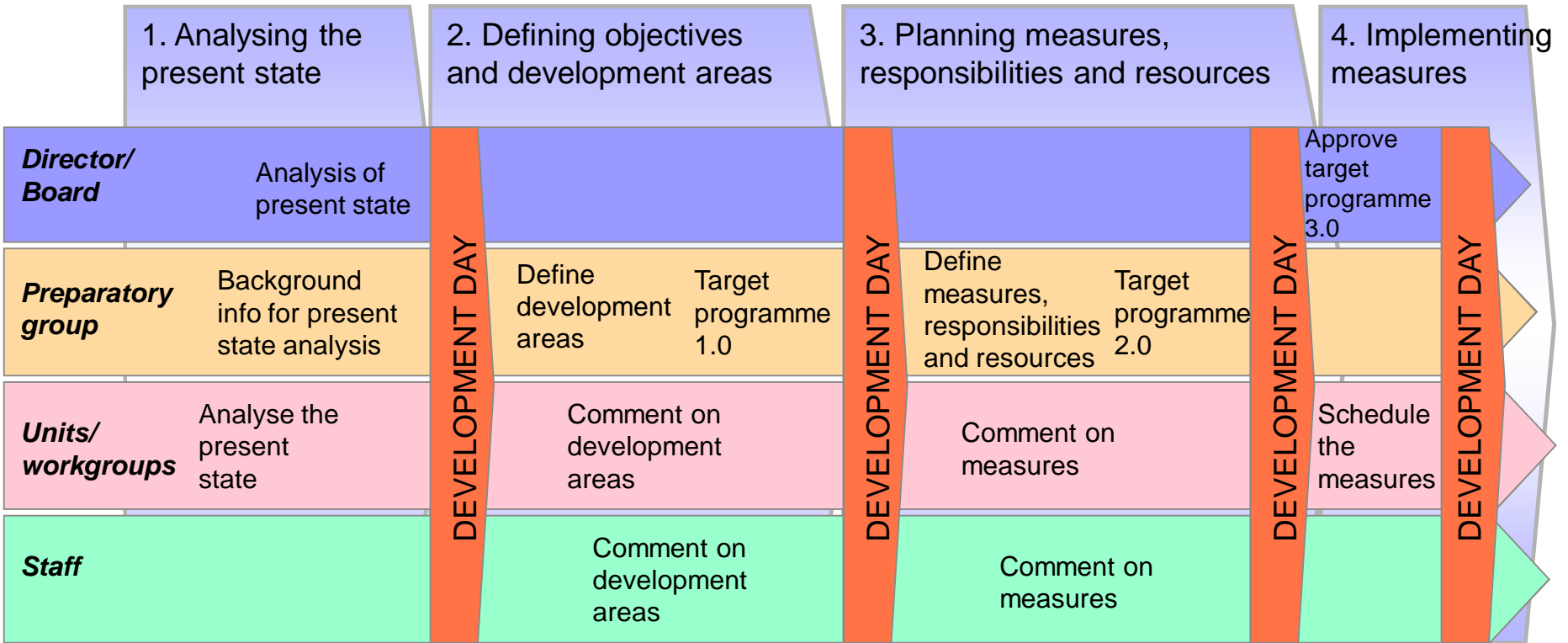


Strategy process at the HU Language Centre

Praxis

Practitioners

Practices



DEVELOPMENT DAY

DEVELOPMENT DAY

DEVELOPMENT DAY

DEVELOPMENT DAY

W I K I & Participatory methods

FOLLOW UP



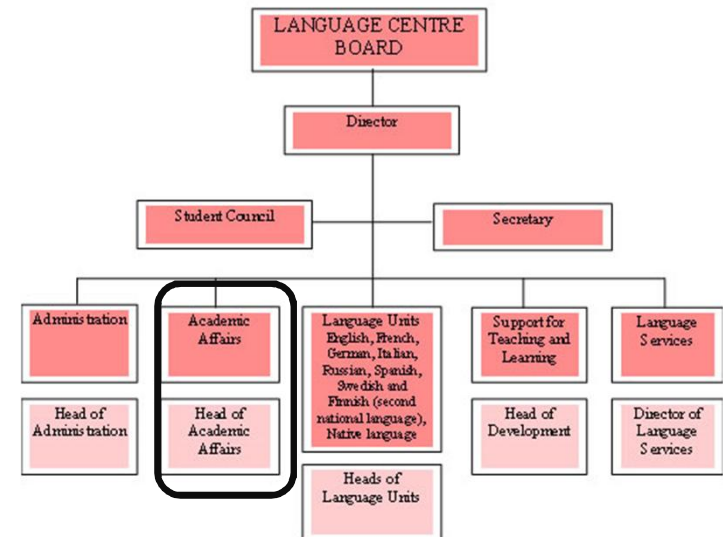
Doing strategy at the unit of Academic Affairs unit

- This presentation will explain how the LC target programme is implemented in the Unit of Academic Affairs, i.e. how 'Strategy as Practice' approach is materialized in day-to day work of our unit.
- Content
 - ❖ Role and tasks of the Unit
 - ❖ Doing Strategy at the Unit and how we do it
 - ❖ Doing Strategy at the Unit: what we have learnt



Role and tasks of the Unit of Academic Affairs

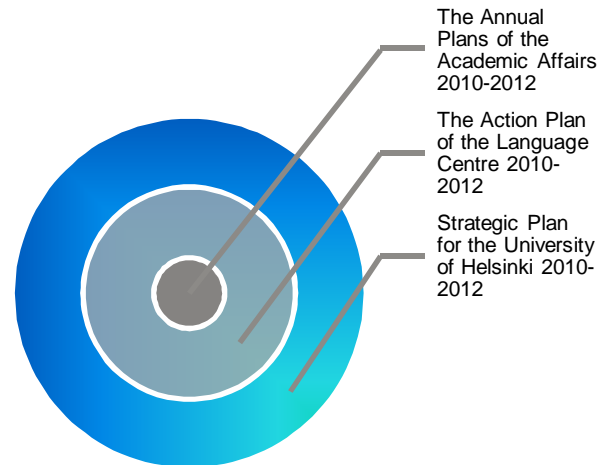
- Academic Affairs is one of 11 units in the LC.
- 4 employees: Head of Academic Affairs, Planning Officer and two Study Advisers.
- Academic Affairs gives academic advice for **students** in the Student Affairs Office, registers completed credits, handles the recognition of previously completed language studies and coordinates the signing-up for language courses and examinations.
- Academic Affairs supports the **teaching staff** e.g. by booking the teaching facilities, by publishing the annual study guide and by compiling various statistics needed in curriculum planning.





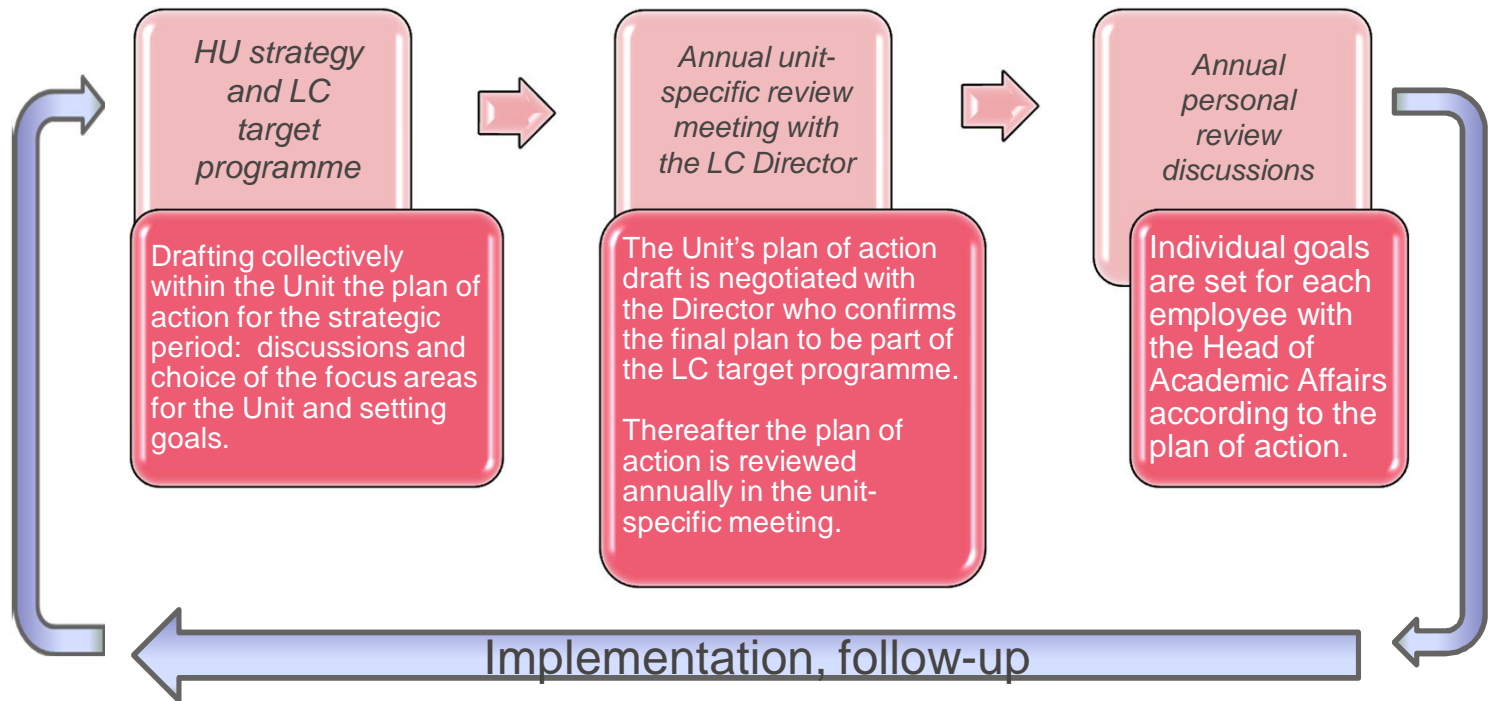
Doing strategy at the Unit of Academic Affairs

- First annual plan of action for the Unit of Academic Affairs was composed in 2007.
- In 2009 the plan of action covered the whole strategic period 2010-2012.
- The Unit's plan of action is based on the Strategic Plan for the University of Helsinki and the Language Centre (LC) target programme.
- The plan of action is a six-page document containing a description of the Unit's tasks and operational principles, focus areas and goals for the strategic period, cooperative partners, responsibilities and follow-up.





Doing strategy at the Unit of Academic Affairs: how we do it





Doing Strategy at the Unit of Academic Affairs: what we have learnt



- The University and Language Centre strategic goals will be concretized into unit- and individual-level goals. This helps the implementation and provides purpose for each employee's work.
- Collective preparation of the plan of action ensures that all employees are aware of the common goals i.e. "the bigger picture".
- A plan of action calms down work: the employees know what is expected from their unit and from them individually during the planning period. This enables each and everyone to concentrate in the "real things" >> increases work welfare.
- Prioritization and resource allocation become more effective.
- Preparing the first plan of action demands more time than the following ones.
- To achieve its goals the Unit of Academic Affairs cooperates with various partners and networks. This requires communication and mutual understanding of the goals.



Challenges for the future

Praxis

- Create a roadmap, based on good practices of the Unit of Academic Affairs for other LC units

Practices

- How do we communicate? -> Create opportunities for open communication and a common language (forums, wikis, active communication)
- How do we collaborate and take responsibility? -> Common decisions on responsibilities, monitoring process

Practitioners

- How do we involve the whole staff? Who should be involved and who else do we need?

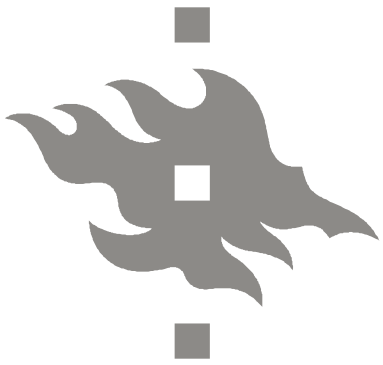
Strategy as Practice

- Deeper analysis of the framework and evaluation of the strategy process



References

- Jarzabkowski, P., Balogun, J., Seidl, D. (2007) Strategizing: The challenges of a practice perspective. *Human Relations*, 2007, 60.1: 5-27.
- Pugh, J.L., Bourgeois III, Jay (2011) "Doing" strategy, *Journal of Strategy and Management*, 4.2: 172-179.
- Whittington, R. (2006) Completing the Practice Turn in Strategy Research. *Organization Studies*, 2006, 27:613.
- The Best for the World. Strategic Plan for the University of Helsinki 2013-2016.



KIITOS!

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Excellence for society

The University of Helsinki

...ranks among the 50 leading universities in the world

World-class research and teaching infrastructure

Sufficient time for research

The visible and audible presence of multiculturalism and multilingualism

Recognition and support of top-quality research

Active recruitment of top students and staff

A high standard of degrees and teaching as well as committed students

...is a responsible social force

Research and expertise for the benefit of society

An inclusive community: from interaction to solutions

Important partners to be included in the University's sphere of influence

... is a thriving and inspiring community

Interactive leadership in support of collegiality

Effective structures and clear practices

Careful human resources planning

... keeps its finances on a sustainable footing

Operational focus and structural development

The stabilisation of the ratio of facility costs to total costs

The expanded use of funding models