

Advise on the development of a
Learning Technologies Strategy at
the

Leopold-Franzens-Universität

Innsbruck

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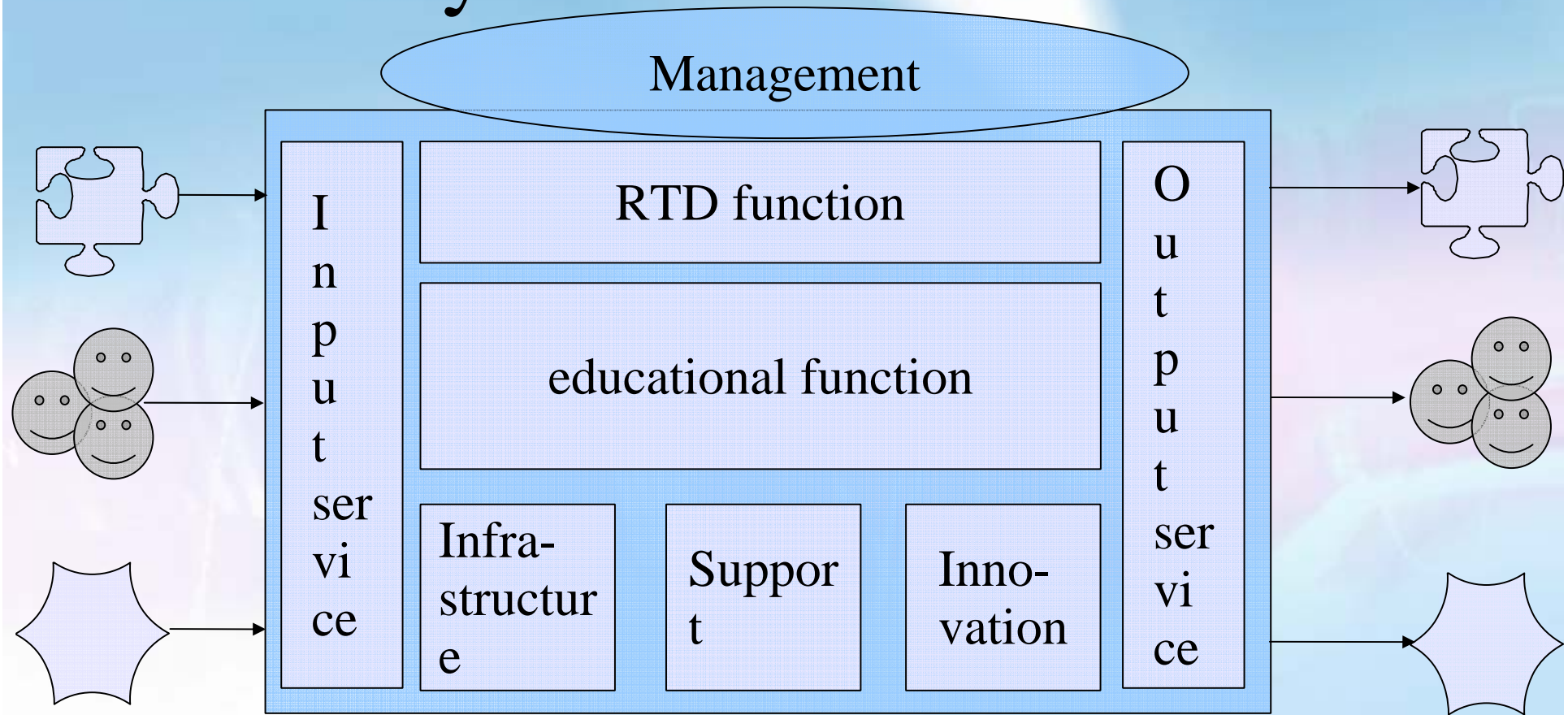
Context

- Period of change:
 - a. BaMa
 - b. Reorganisation
 - c. e-Learning/e-Teaching agenda
- Uni Innsbruck is an early campus-wide user of an LMS (blackboard)
- However: 'times they are a-changing': new educational approaches, new demands, new technological possibilities, new organisation, new structure of the curriculum, ...
- Need for a strategy on 'e-learning'

Approach

1. Desk study on learning technologies describing the European context: state-of-the-art, trends and critical issues, including analysis of other universities strategic plans
2. Consultation with top-management
3. Interviews with academic staff

University as a 'Knowledge Factory'



ICT effect all these functions!!

Major Conclusions

- Majority of staff applies e-learning at rather basic level (course info, share lecture notes/powerpoints)
- Large gap between strategic opportunities for e-learning as identified by a relatively small group of staff and neutrality or indifference towards e-learning by a larger group.
- Deployment of e-learning depends largely on enthusiastic individuals instead of institutional policy (incl. reward mechanisms)

Conclusions (continued)

- Deployment of e-learning differs considerably between faculties, departments and individual lecturers (opportunity for peer-learning)
- Widespread apprehension about management's motives (cost reduction instead of improvement of quality of teaching and learning) for e-learning
- There is ample room to experiment with the use of new technologies to innovate teaching and learning

Consequence

- e-learning is still perceived and organised as something separate from teaching and learning
- The major driver for European Universities to invest in e-learning:
to make their education more accessible, more effective, more efficient and more attractive and to explore new markets (lifelong learning, integration of learning in the workplace, ...)
- In the current context of the UI, it will be problematic to realise this massive step forward to innovate teaching and learning and to explore new markets.

Recommendations

1

e-Learning at UI should move beyond its present logistical support focus and should start adding substantial value to the teaching and learning process, including blended learning and (a limited number of) distance learning courses

2

First successes come from intrinsically motivated individuals, but further expansion of e-learning will require *incentive mechanisms* for staff to promote the effective use of new technologies in teaching

Rewards initiatives based on proven success; define such success criteria (eg effective use of e-learning in foundational courses with large number of students)

3

Within the university there is a strong need to establish *common ground on e-learning*:

Need for a structured assessment and transfer of good practices and experience throughout the university, complemented with the advise of external experts (define criteria for good practices, an assessment procedure and a funding mechanism)

4

Establish a *support facility* to help faculty to use and design effective, efficient and attractive e-learning courses

(supplement to the current support on the use of the technical infrastructure)

5

For the time being Blackboard should remain the preferred LMS at UI.

At the same time the Uni should start to explore and experiment with the use of future e-learning infrastructures that will replace Blackboard in a few years

(mainly standards based, interoperable e-learning infrastructures based on Service Oriented Architectures)

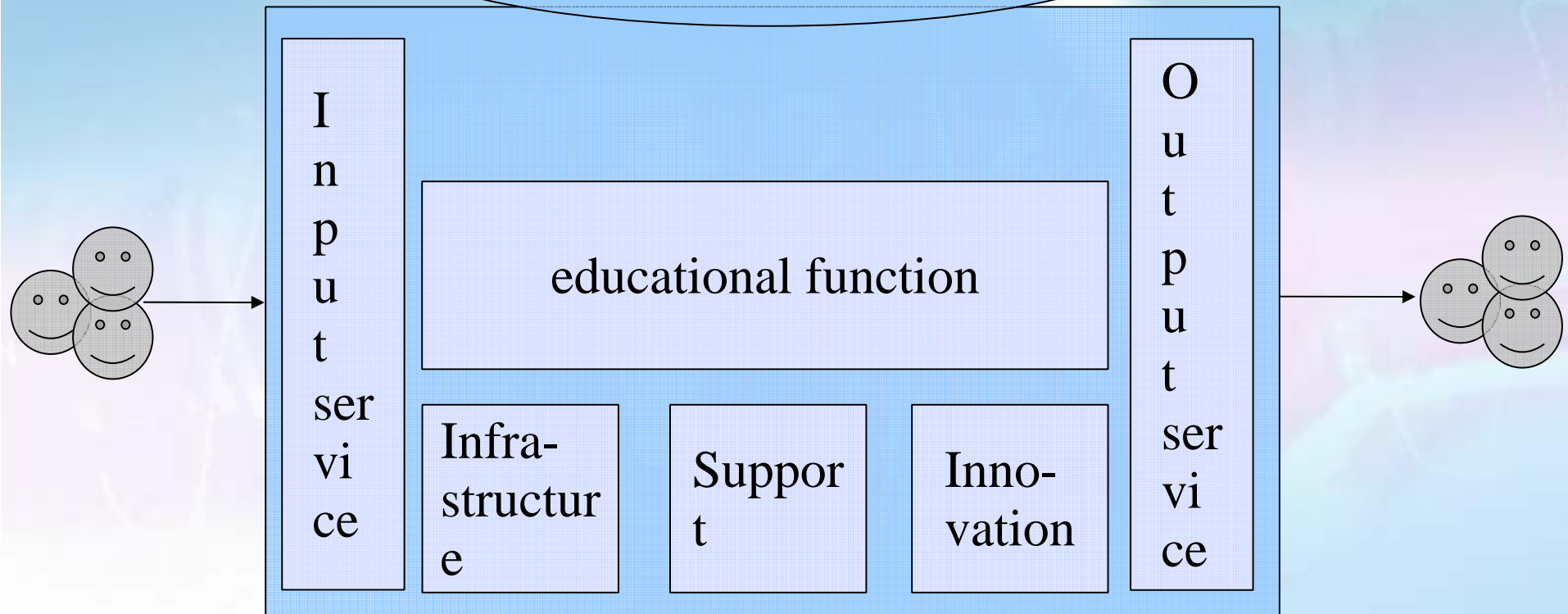
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Operational e-learning use and Innovation and RTD work in e-Learning should be distinguished as much as possible: separate infrastructures, separate management, support and funding (regular versus innovation funds)

Also, stimulate high-quality experiments with new technologies in education, but be clear about its experimental status to staff and students, and use regular assessment criteria for the quality of RTD (e.g. peer-reviewed publications, impact and dissemination measures)

University as a 'Knowledge Factory'

Management



Thank You!

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