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## Police Café EFLE

Police Café is an innovative dialogue between citizens and police officers for safe and liveable communities. The method was developed by Katalin Molnár, one of the authors of the study. Café EFLE is an educational and methodological innovation that supports learning English for Law Enforcement, developed by Erna Uricska. Our pedagogical approach and the fact that we have been working in higher education for law enforcement led us to explore methods to improve communication between police and citizens in both mother tongue (Hungarian) and English, either in person, or on digital platforms. How is traditional communication changing, especially with the emergence of the online space? What can be transferred there? How does it work in a foreign language? How can different methods work in harmony without competing with each other? And finally, as for teachers, the main question is what methods can and should be used to motivate and train police officers to communicate in a way that is appropriate for their job.

**Keywords:** Police Café, Café EFLE, Responsible Police, higher education for Law Enforcement, methodological innovation

### Introduction

The question may arise: What do two linguists do among police officers? As passionate teachers, we work on how to improve the communication of law enforcement students, and through them, Hungarian police officers. One of the authors has been teaching police communication in her mother tongue, Hungarian, for twenty-five years, the other has been teaching English for Law Enforcement for eight years. They have expanded their teaching repertoire in a pleasant way since they opened a Café in the classroom. Although this may sound a little strange at first, their experience suggests that others should try it. This article is what the Café method is all about and why we recommend it to others.

### Responsible linguistics – responsible policing

Recently, we have been investigating how the study and development of linguistics in the field of policing, and more specifically the study of offline and online external communication of the police organisation, can contribute to the effective and responsible functioning of the organisation. We use the term ‘policing’ because it rhymes better with the word ‘linguistics’ in Hungarian, but in fact, we are talking about the (Hungarian) police in a narrower sense.

The English term ‘*Public Relations*’ means a strategic communication process between organizations and their audiences with the aim of building mutually beneficial relationships. Edwards (2012) proposed a new definition of public relations, as ‘*flow rather than organizational function, that can accommodate the range of research encompassed by these continua, thereby facilitating greater unity, inclusivity*’ as he hoped: dialogue in the field (Edwards, 2012:7). The term still has no Hungarian equivalent that accurately expresses its meaning. The words ‘public relations’ or ‘relations with the community’ are valid translations, but somehow, they are not accurate enough and have not managed to take root in the Hungarian language. When we talk about it, we prefer to use the universally known abbreviation ‘PR’ as well as the approach and the perspective of Edwards (2012).

Since we have been working on the modernisation of the external communication of the police (Molnár, 2018a; Molnár, 2019a, 2019b; Molnár & Uricska, 2019, Uricska 2020abc, 2021), we have been searching for the right method and activities to ensure that the police as an organisation communicate properly, and at the same time, effectively with the communities and individuals living there. The goal is for the police and community members to work together to create, protect, guarantee and restore safety. This role concept adopts the so-called service model of modern, 21<sup>st</sup>-century policing, including the activities that focus on the community and its problems. It also requires a different quality of relationship and communication from police officers as these elements are key ‘*to the way in which law enforcement organisations operate in a given society and, consequently, to their effectiveness and the extent in which they can contribute to security*’ (Molnár, 2018a: 16).

If the purpose of an organisation is ‘*to provide service such as law enforcement organisations provide security to civilians (not without them and independently of them) in continuous cooperation with them, the organisation has to care about how its external communication is perceived*’ (Molnár, 2018a: 14–15). This undoubtedly requires a high degree of social responsibility from the authorities.

The Police Café ‘*can be seen as a valuable manifestation of a cultural development and as a good practice of social responsibility of individuals and organisations. It can also be considered as a major social innovation, in so far as it is a very valuable and spectacular example of the Public Social Responsibility (PSR)...*’ (Gáspár, 2021: 7).

So, instead of police PR, we prefer to talk about Responsible Police. In other words, RP instead of PR. To begin with, we observe how to train professionals, especially police officers, who are in line with this role concept, and therefore communicate responsibly.

## **Cafés in and out of the classroom**

In 1995, Juanita Brown (2001) developed the World Café technique, originally for community building and organisational development purposes in the United States (Löhr et al., 2020). This communication technique provides an excellent framework for working in larger communities, and it is clearly suitable for coordinating the work of smaller communities (e.g., a classroom of learners).

The creators of the World Café format describe seven integrated design principles that have guided World Café in this article:

- (1) set the context;*
- (2) create hospitable space;*
- (3) explore questions that matter;*
- (4) encourage everyone's contribution;*
- (5) cross-pollinate and connect diverse perspectives;*
- (6) listen together for patterns, insights, and deeper questions; and*
- (7) harvest and share collective discoveries' (Brown & Isaacs, 2005: 40).*

The Café method is used as a methodological approach to collect qualitative data (Löhr et al., 2020), and there are international initiatives to improve the relationship between police and communities<sup>1</sup>. In Hungary, the Police Café method, an adapted version of the World Café, is used (Gaál & Molnár, 2014, 2015; Molnár & Uricska, 2018). The methodological manual of the Hungarian developer of the method was published in 2021 (Molnár, 2021). In the original method, *'at each table, one host is selected by the group to remain at the table in order to convey the preceding discussion to subsequent discussants. After each round, the participants move from their table to a new one, where they continue their discussion with a new group of people'* (Löhr et al., 2020: 2).

When the first Police Café was organised in the Zsolnay Quarter in Pécs in 2014, a slight change in method was needed. Compared to Hungary, the culture of discussion and debate was much more developed in America, where Brown developed this method in 1995. For Americans, it was natural to move among tables and topics, and to express their opinions freely. In Hungary, a slightly stricter and more controlled version of the Café technique is easier to accept and follow for the Hungarian participants, who are still used to frontal, one-way communication. Therefore, at Hungarian Cafés, after the discussion, group members stay at the table and the hosts, chosen by the moderator of the event, move to the next table and relay the previous discussion to the new group of participants.

The table hosts in the initial groups, briefly introduce the topic to be discussed and the initial questions. If the group members do not know each other, it is important to allow a few minutes for an introductory discussion, as the members

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<sup>1</sup> Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/34AC69y> (Date of access 13 Feb, 2022)

of the table work together during the Café, and they need to know the perspectives of the participants. The Café method is also an excellent way for beginner groups to get to know each other, and it helps to build personal relationships (Fouché & Light, 2010).

The table hosts try to work through the topic in a structured way with each table within the time frame set for each round, and record what is said on the flipchart sheets. They moderate the table discussion and ensure that balance is maintained and focus kept on the topic. At the next table, they either start the discussion from the beginning or continue from the last point of the previous table, at their discretion. It is worth trying both.

Care must be taken to ensure that the planned material can be processed within the time available. A minimum of 20 minutes should be enough time for discussions, but this will always depend on the topics. The moderator (who is the instructor) monitors and marks the time and encourages the participants to conclude the discussion within the time allowed. When the moderator gives the signal, the table hosts move on to the next table, and this is repeated depending on the number of topics and tables. Depending on the number of participants and the number of topics, it is recommended to set up at least two, but no more than six tables. In our experience, the ideal number of people per table is 4–6. The usual duration of a Café with four topics (including the introductory session, 25-minute rounds, formal break, presentations by the table hosts and the summary) is approximately three hours, albeit we recommend four hours, because the atmosphere of a Café can be more relaxed and comfortable.

During the break, the table hosts can reflect on the content of their 6 -7-minute presentation. They can summarise the ideas they have collected with the groups, and reflect briefly on the dynamics of the groups and the process. It is important to be discreet about sensitive topics, issues, opinions, or individuals unless they are of particular importance. They can add their personal observations, summaries, comments, highlighting what was new or interesting. The presentation by the table hosts and the summary by the moderator are crucial elements of a Café for all participants and cannot be omitted. As each table receives the topics in a different order, it is at the latest here that it becomes clear how the individual subtopics are connected, how they form a whole, and what the logical and chronological order is between each subtopic. The power of collective wisdom should be revealed; what ideas were generated, what questions and dilemmas were raised, what differences or similarities existed among the different table groups, and what experiences were shared. It becomes obvious who has convinced whom, and what has been added to the conversations. After the presentations of the table hosts, the audience should be given the opportunity to ask brief questions and reflect on what they have heard. It is always the right of the moderator to give a closing speech, in which they

should make the participants aware of the outcome and unveil the link to the whole learning process.

### The results for the target group of the survey

The proportion of participants in the 27 Café events in Hungary, the number of people surveyed and the number of respondents are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** The proportion of the participants in Police Cafés, the people surveyed, and the respondents, respectively

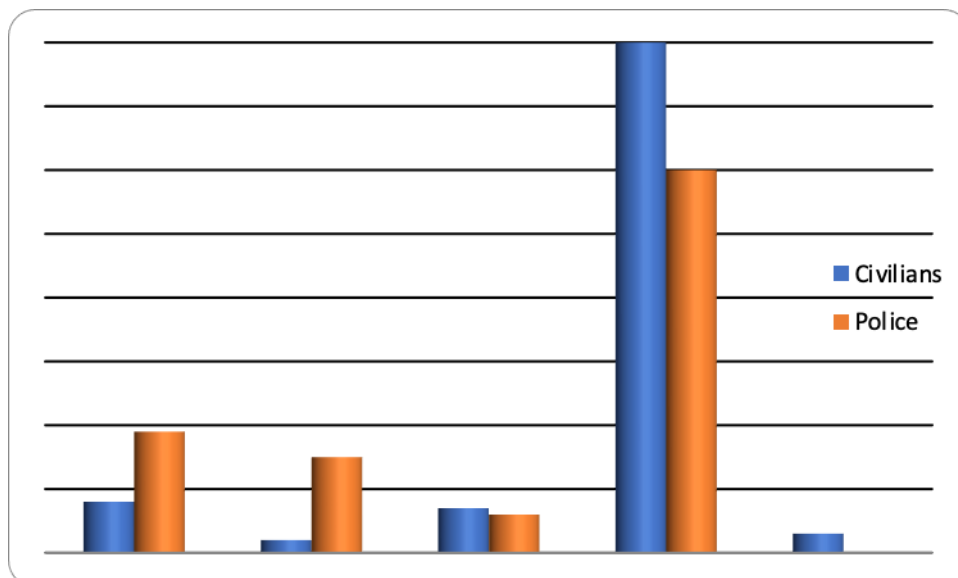
	Civilians (number)			Police personnel (number)	
	Participants	Surveyed	Respondents	Participants	Respondents
<b>Zugló</b>	150	150	38	22	11
<b>Bács</b>	170	78	32	26	9
<b>Baranya</b>	90	90	10	21	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>80 (25%)</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>31 (45%)</b>

### Assessment of the Professional Benefits of Police Cafés

The police personnel were satisfied with the method, the organization, and the conduct of the events, and everything went much better than they had anticipated. 20% of them saw further possibilities in the given areas, 30% believed that other police departments should follow suit and try out the method, and 50% said that not only the police but also civilians should use this method of dialogue.

Probably one of the most exciting questions is whether the civilians participating in the Police Café dialogues have changed their views on the safety of their communities as a result of the Café activities. Chart 1 illustrates the comparisons of responses.

**Chart 1.** The Views of the Civilians on the Safety of the Communities



The good news (valuable feedback and information) is that 92% of responding civilians and 81% of responding police personnel experienced some change in their perception (see the responses in rows 2-5, Chart 1). From these figures, we might conclude that the Police Café is an effective method to raise awareness for functional communities.

### **Impact on police and community relations**

Police officers using this method can expect the following effects in their future work:

- Their use of language becomes more sophisticated, even in a foreign language.
- Participants become equal partners in communication.
- Reduced power distance (PDI) between the police and civilians.
- They become more open towards each other.
- Information can flow quickly and efficiently.
- They better understand each other's problems.
- Mutual trust increases.
- Improved cooperation between parties.
- Parties become interested in finding common solutions.
- More effective problem solving.
- More information is exchanged in a unit of time.
- Policing becomes more efficient.
- The *social responsibility of the police*, and the commitment and safety awareness of civilians can become clearer.
- Increased public acceptance and appreciation of the police.

### **Applying the Café method in higher education for law enforcement**

One might ask why teachers should use this method when there are so many other methods for organising learning in pedagogy. Why is it different, and above all, why do we claim that the Café method is significantly better than the classical group work? We will try to highlight the difference.

In typical group work, either the same topic is worked on in several smaller groups, or a larger topic is divided into smaller subtopics, each group working separately. At the end of both, presentations are made, during which the results of each group are presented in public and the similarities and differences between them are highlighted. However, there is no interaction *between* the topics and the groups. In mosaic group work (Nagy & Zágón, 2008), there is migration and mixing between the groups but the learners work with ready-made materials and texts rather than creating knowledge themselves. The Café method does not work with ready-made curricula and pre-written texts, but rather the table members of the Cafés, under the supervision of a moderator,

collect together information knowledge, experiences, opinions, and insights on the topics.

The Café method also involves group work, but with an *inter-group transfer*, as topic hosts move information from one table to another, from group to group (not to mention the original ‘roving’ method, when each participant carries the information back and forth). The topics are circulated around the tables by the topic hosts, and the information and ideas keep accumulating, building on each other and converging, thus making the learning process a rounded whole. This process enables a complex approach to the content of the topics covered. As only the table hosts talk to the participants present, the full picture exists only in the minds of the table hosts, but by sharing it publicly, the whole community can access it.

No matter how well teachers prepare for the lesson, think through, and plan the process and methods they use to work through the lesson, students may respond differently than expected. We believe that facilitators are able to work through the topics, and incorporate the knowledge of all the table members into their presentations, therefore the Café method can be a good tool not only for structuring but also for making the learners aware of the learning process.

Everyone works through the subtopics with the same intensity in the classroom, but at different points and levels, and the summaries by the table hosts give a good overview of the topics as a whole. Each participant has a contribution to the final outcome, as these are recorded and sometimes concretised, and even made visible in shared notes. In other words, the work of the product is truly shared, the flow of information spirals deeper and deeper, and finally, the topics come together, forming a unique and concrete whole. In other words, the creation of the curriculum happens in the way constructivist pedagogy advocates (Einhorn, 2015).

### **Why the Café method?**

The following list shows what we found when we tested the Café method in the classroom. The findings are based on our own participant observations and facilitator experiences, but several researchers expressed similar views on the method internationally (Brown & Isaacs, 2005; Kennedy et al., 2001; Kitlinger, 1995; Löhr et al., 2020).

#### *The Café method*

- *increases student activity.* If students are not actively involved in the learning process, the result is less effective. In frontal work, where one person speaks for a long time, or even exclusively, and others have to listen, attention is quickly lost and it is not likely to be retained what is said. The Café is a busy place, where everyone can speak according to

their own mood, intentions and interests. We speak not because we have to, but because we have something to say, and everyone can join in the dialogue. After a while, this triggers activity almost automatically or with very little moderator intervention. In very extreme cases, a participant who does not want to participate in the discussion can be left out, but there are no negative consequences.

- *develops communication and cooperation skills.* The Café provides an opportunity to express opinions and ideas, and to develop expression. At the same time, listening to each other, finding common solutions, and agreeing despite differences of opinions increase the ability to work together.
- *maintains and trains concentration for a long time.* As each participant can be activated at any time during the Café, a collective level of concentration can be achieved, while working very effectively. The desire to participate, to create, to listen to others, to share and to understand can activate the mental capacity of participants, allowing space for ideas to flow.
- *teaches empathy.* Smaller tables provide discretion, and the table hosts pass information from table to table discreetly, so participants quickly become talkative and honest. Personal stories and experiences bring an emotional richness, active listening liberates the speaker, and empathy can develop in the listener.
- *develops creativity, gives mutual inspiration to the participants.* The imaginative visuals of the ‘tablecloths’, illustrating the presentations of the table hosts are clear manifestations of shared ideas. The multi-round discussions are also serious creative processes, where it is clear that participants can inspire each other.
- *develops self-confidence, self-assurance, autonomy, and responsibility.* By allowing everyone to be heard, the participants can speak, stand up for their arguments, and because they are respected, expressing their views becomes natural. Table members can exercise the responsibility of speaking in front of a smaller audience, and of participating in collective thinking and decision-making in a comfortable environment.
- *reduces stage fright.* The participants who are initially strangers to each other get to know each other in small group discussions, sitting at eye level and in a comfortable position to talk as partners. Any tensions that may arise during the performance are quickly resolved, and the hosts receive direct and meaningful feedback on their performance.
- *teaches a civilised way to exchange opinions.* As the whole Café is moderated and smaller discussions are supervised by the hosts, any controversial issues that arise can be discussed calmly and without conflict. Surprisingly, there were never any loud arguments or



confrontations in any of the Cafés, even when the most serious counter-arguments were raised. The exchange of ideas can be experienced in a relaxed and unmanipulated manner.

### **MA(ster) Café and the others**

In February and March 2017, the first participants were students from the 2015-2017 Master programme. At the end of a three-semester course series (Integrated Social Studies; Communication, Leadership Competences; Leadership Development), the end of a year-long learning process was an excellent opportunity to test the method. We spent sixty minutes in an all-encompassing professional summary. The lessons learnt during the three courses, the exercises, the experiences that the students liked and disliked, the practical applications, and the personal and methodological feedback to the teacher were collected by students as table hosts.

World Café was not applied in the classical format, as the hosts moved from group to group. The novelty of the method was *'so successful that one of the students tested the method in his own working environment, in the institute of corrections in Gyula less than a month later, creating a separate genre called Reintegration Café'* (Molnár, 2017).

Since then, the Café method has become an integral part of training master students (Molnár, 2019a), under the name *'M(A)ster Café'*. The method makes the course material easier to understand and remembered, as evidenced by the students' high performance in exams. The Café method is also successfully used in other courses, including the original version of World Café, where participants must switch tables after a unit of time. The original version is regularly used to summarise longer courses that build on one another over several semesters. A selection of student feedback, opinions, ideas, and suggestions can also be found on the Police Café website (Molnár, 2018b).

### **Switching to a foreign language – Café EFLE (English for Law Enforcement)**

In September 2017, the Café method was introduced to full-time students at the Faculty of Law Enforcement and named *'Café EFLE'*. The acronym *'EFLE'* was taken from the title of a book *'English for Law Enforcement'*, published in 2009 (Boyle & Chersan, 2009). The title alone was appealing because acronyms are often used in law enforcement jargon, and the term can be used as an acronym. EFLE also fits the sound of the word 'Café'. The book was an excellent starting point for teaching English for Law Enforcement, useful for classroom education as it covers the most important topics, includes grammar reviews at the end of the lessons, and the answer key offers instant feedback between teachers and students. It is therefore in line with the basic idea of the Café, where there is also direct feedback, continuous yet discreet correction and

the possibility of discussion. As all this is done through oral interaction, the method directly develops the speaking skills of foreign language learners.

After the 2017 M(A)ster Café, it took two years to test the method in language classes in 2019. The primary aim was to motivate students, reduce frontal classroom work and develop foreign language communication skills. We were pleased to see that students who had previously been quieter also joined in the group work and listened to each other. There was a healthy competitive spirit to provide as much information and word structure as possible on a given topic.

The Café method is also an excellent way for teachers to introduce new professional topics. The flipcharts can be returned to the students when the topic is summarised, and the knowledge gained can be added to the flipcharts. The use of different colours allows them to see how much they have learnt. The topic presentations of the table hosts (the role rotates throughout the semester) are a great opportunity for all students to demonstrate that they can speak independently for five minutes in a foreign language on a professional topic, and provide a good basis for preparing for the oral part of the C1 level language exam. Experience has shown that this is the part of the exam that people are most worried about.

The method was also used during ESP classes to improve students' oral skills, and prepare future law enforcement professionals for their future jobs and the C1 level language exam. Regular corrections, feedback, and joint evaluation of the results after presenting the content of flipcharts to the class helped to reduce the number of grammatical mistakes when talking about the topics. Although the World Café is primarily a method to generate and share ideas rather than support individual learning (Slocum, 2003), the use of the Police Café in ESP classes has been shown to be effective in improving individual results, e.g., developing speaking skills (Uricska & Suták, 2022). As a result of the communication exercises, students became more confident, and it was gratifying to see their self-image change due to the improvement of their speaking skills in a foreign language. The Café method encourages language learners as communication in a relaxed and informal atmosphere quickly becomes automatic. Grammatical and stylistic corrections are naturally integrated into the speech process, and there is no shame in asking questions, adding, helping out, and clarification.

Finally, the Café motivates teachers, who expect more from a lesson than silent students and sometimes closed eyes. Most of the time, teachers are enthusiastic and feel proud to collect the flipcharts to see the immediate results of their work. Feedback is constant, teachers can sit with the participants during groupwork and do not have to wait for individual tests to be written to be accountable. Working through the topics can identify gaps, provide rich and immediate feedback, re-explain grammatical rules, words or phrases, and help student memorize them.

In our experience as trainers and language teachers in law enforcement higher education, the Café method is suitable for, but not limited to, the following:

- getting to know new members in beginner groups;
- introducing new professional topics;
- sharing experiences of professional practice;
- stress-free preparation for examinations and oral presentations (e.g., Language for Services [LforS] exams);
- expanding vocabulary;
- developing intercultural skills;
- revision of what has been learned;
- summarising;
- self-monitoring, feedback;
- evaluation.

### **Pedagogical impact**

In fact, the Café method is inspired by a great pedagogical discovery of the 20th century, the constructivist approach, which unfortunately is still not given enough emphasis in either public or higher education in Hungary. *'The learning process is more successful if the learners do not receive the ready-made knowledge, but create it themselves'* (Einhorn, 2015). According to this theory of learning, it is particularly important to treat the learner as a partner and as an *'active participant'* rather than a *'sufferer'* of the learning process (Einhorn, 2015; Barnucz & Uricska, 2021). By giving students the opportunity to make decisions, they learn to take responsibility for their choices and their consequences.

Based on our experience, the Café method has the following pedagogical effects on the learning process of law enforcement practitioners:

- Students participate as equal partners in the classroom.
- They can practice self-discipline and self-reflection.
- Fast and efficient flow of information is facilitated.
- Their communication activity increases.
- A relaxed atmosphere makes learning a pleasant experience.

### **Results**

It is often said that one of the most serious obstacles to effective learning is the passive presence of students in class. If the participants in the learning process are not equal partners (the instructor or the teacher, and the students), and the burden of motivation falls exclusively on the shoulders of the instructor, student passivity is almost guaranteed. It does not work for long if the focus is on one person. Discipline is not a desirable classroom phenomenon, but self-regulation

and self-reflection are necessary, particularly in the case of future police officers, for whom these behaviour elements will be crucial in their work. These elements can be developed in the classroom without much effort, almost effortlessly. If learning takes place in an interdependent way, it is easier to motivate and activate each other (Molnár, 2019c; Löhr et al., 2020), and the results are spectacular.

Time spent on classroom education is almost never enough for any form of training. This is also the case in higher education for law enforcement, and it is therefore often challenging to maximise the time available. The key question is how to achieve the fastest, yet effective flow of information in a unit of time. How to increase the communicative activity of passive students?

Student activity alone does not lead to learning outcomes or progress, only if the whole learning process is carefully thought through and prepared by the teacher. This preparation includes the selection of topics and their division into thematic groups, minimum preparation of the table hosts and explanation of the Café method. However, the latter only needs to be done once. It is an obvious pedagogical certainty that

- a relaxed atmosphere is conducive for experiential learning;
- a better atmosphere can be created in the group by involving students who often only listen to the teacher;
- students create and construct knowledge together, therefore they learn from each other;
- more input and information can be expressed and exchanged in the same amount of time (Löhr et al., 2020);
- consequently, understanding becomes deeper and more thorough;
- learning is more effective and
- retention lasts longer.

## **Conclusions**

We believe that teachers should take the first step in the teaching and learning processes in the classroom. Teaching should not be unilateral, but bilateral, and there should be mutual interaction between teachers and students (Gowder, 2016). Students' interactions also depend on teachers' attitudes (Barnucz, 2021). It is also clear to us that the teachers' attitude determines students' relationships first directly with the instructor (Gowder, 2016), with the course material, with other students, and later with future colleagues. If the learners are given attention and quality time, this is reflected, first in the classroom, then in tests and exams, and later with colleagues and clients.

The main outcome of the method is that everyone at the Cafés is involved, and the goal is not to win but to learn effectively. The inevitable product is an increase in knowledge, and this is reflected in a rise in professional standards.

Last but not least, classroom 'Cafés' are also a methodological refreshment for teachers.

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