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EMILE “à la finlandaise”

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EMILE “à la finlandaise” : **English-Medium Master’s programmes** **at the University of Jyväskylä**

L’Université de Jyväskylä offre plusieurs Masters enseignés en anglais dans les facultés des Arts, des Sciences et des Sciences sociales. Les programmes sont coordonnés par le *Language Centre*, dont la politique, décrite ci-dessous, définit clairement la vision et les objectifs. Une présentation Powerpoint (A. Räsänen, Directrice du *Language Centre*, juin 2008) résume ensuite le processus d’opérationnalisation de ces programmes — critères d’assurance qualité, politique linguistique, cadre et méthodologie d’évaluation formative, résultats et défis pour l’avenir. Pour conclure, deux tableaux issus de la réflexion collaborative des acteurs impliqués récapitulent les compétences langagières et communicatives nécessaires aux études supérieures et schématisent l’ensemble des éléments pris en compte par l’Université dans l’approche intégrée du soutien à l’apprentissage et à l’enseignement qui constitue EMILE “à la finlandaise”.

A. University of Jyväskylä Language Centre

<<http://www.kielikeskus.jyu.fi/>>

English version → Welcome visitors → Policies and approaches

Policies and approaches (last modified 2008-08-07)

All language centres at Finnish universities operate separately from the faculties and they are responsible for the professional and discipline-specific language instruction of all non-language students, because language studies in the domestic languages (Finnish and Swedish) + 1-2 foreign languages are compulsory components of all higher education degrees in Finland.

Our teaching and activities at the University of Jyväskylä Language Centre are based on continuous, collegial action research and jointly agreed strategies and values. We actually don’t think that there would be academic expertise without knowing how to communicate and share that expertise with others. Thus, our vision is that the academic graduates and postgraduates of our university be confident and multilingual communicators, as well as informed about how they can continue their language learning on a life-long basis.

Our aim is to offer our learners a language learning environment which is characterised by:

- a favourable atmosphere which challenges the learners to develop their knowledge and skills
- negotiated, meaningful, and relevant curriculum contents
- authentic, real-life learning tasks and assessment forms
- versatile and multimedia teaching approaches

- opportunities to build cultural understanding and tolerance
- support and tools to focus, direct, and monitor own learning
- opportunities to grow as a member of one's own academic and professional discourse community and to understand the relevance of communication skills as part of expertise

B. Presentation June 2008 : Internal evaluation of English-medium Master's programmes (EMM) at JYU, Anne Räsänen, University of Jyväskylä Language Centre, rasanen@ulc.jyu.fi

1. Content of presentation

- Background information and policies
- Evaluation process and elements
- Programme documentation analysed
- Survey findings on student challenges
- Interview topics
- General findings
- Student challenges and problems
- Quality development issues

2. 12 evaluated EMMs in 2007

- Master of Arts programmes: Digital Culture, Intercultural communication, Music, Mind and Technology
- Master of Science programmes: Corporate Environmental Management, Entrepreneurship in Family Business, Financial Economics, Biology of Physical Activity, Sport Science and Management, Sustainable Management of Inland Aquatic Resources, Nanoscience
- Master of Social Sciences/Science programmes: Development and International Cooperation, Renewable Energy

3. JYU quality assurance criteria for launching EMMs (as of 2005)

- Programme aims and implementation (e.g. mission, objectives, pedagogical framework, expected learning outcomes, networking & co-operation, student recruitment)
- Rationale for launching (e.g. regional, national, international needs, connection with university strategies, innovativeness, etc.)
- Eligibility provided for PhD study (e.g. main subject, evaluation criteria for thesis, etc.)
- Resources (e.g. 4-year financial plan, staff & its recruitment, teacher competence criteria, etc.)
- Study counselling and evaluation systems (e.g. student counselling and assessment systems, feedback systems, quality enhancement and assurance methods)

4. University of Jyväskylä language policy (regarding EMMs (as of 2004))

- Teachers to have sufficient language mastery for the use of flexible interactive methods and opportunities for professional development
- Students' skills monitored at admission
- Programmes to include development of language & communication skills
- Content relevant for both Finnish and international students
- Good briefing of international staff and students about academic practices
- Finnish students' command of content in the Finnish language to be catered for
- International students to have opportunities to learn Finnish and Finnish culture (full Language Policy in English at <http://www.jyu.fi/hallinto/strategia/politiikat>)

5. Evaluation

- Internal, institution-wide evaluation conducted in spring 2007 and commissioned by Rector
- Purpose: a checkpoint to identify elements for the quality assurance system, to share examples of good practice, and to readjust established criteria for evaluation and further development
- Collaborative, action-research type approach with many actors; *i.e.* combination of information gathered within programmes, from students, and on the basis of established criteria through an interview

6. Elements of evaluation

- Evaluation of written documentation:
 - university-level documents
 - faculty-level documents
 - programme documents
- Interview of programme coordinators and other actors
- Survey of student opinions and problems

7. Programme documentation analysed

- Study guides
- Thesis guides
- Teacher guides/briefings
- Student instructions for writing assignments
- Policy on plagiarism
- Feedback and evaluation forms
- Student and staff qualification requirements at recruitment
- Pedagogical approaches

8. Interview topics

- Degree of integration and networking

- Actor profiles and responsibilities
- Aims and content
- Pedagogical staff profile
- Student profile
- Language-related issues
- Resources
- Connection to working life
- Programme strengths and future

9. General findings and issues for development

- All programmes represent the University's areas of strength and have development potential

BUT

- Much variation in programme implementation and documentation (e.g. multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and inter-faculty programmes) → difficulty in ownership and main responsibility
- Student challenges in several areas
- Lack of joint policies needed for quality assurance and for a good institutional image

10. Student challenges and problems

- Learning skills: e.g. information management, critical evaluation, ICT skills, plagiarism, self-directiveness, time management (concerning written assignments)
- Language skills: oral and written communication and presentation at the required conceptual level and in appropriate rhetorical style, field-specific concepts
- Research skills: understanding the research process and paradigms, focussing of research plan, methodology, synthesising and integration of source materials
- Intercultural issues: understanding academic practices and “unwritten” rules, understanding teacher instructions, evaluation criteria, and concept of plagiarism

11. General development issues

Joint policies and infra-structure needed for quality assurance at institutional level concern the following:

- documentation and student rights
- policy on plagiarism (including intercultural issues)
- language requirements and learning outcomes
- comparability of assessment and evaluation
- staff development in pedagogical issues
- degree certificates

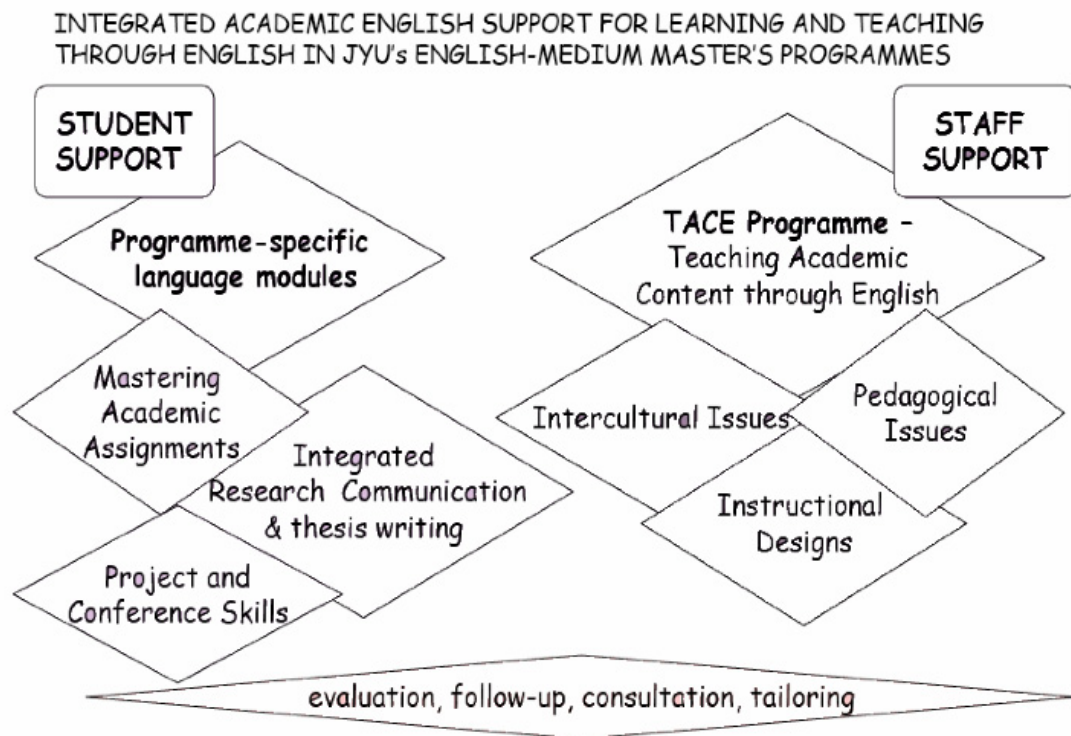
- co-operation and sharing of good practices within programme and between programmes

12. Academic competences related to language and communication

Räsänen, A. 2005 : Pursuing quality through institutional policies,
<http://www.Palmenia.helsinki.fi/congress/bilingual2005/prograp.asp>

Specific competences/ Expertise	General competences			
	Scientific & critical thinking skills	Problem-solving skills	Communication & social skills	Life-long learning skills (i.e. enabling/ transferable skills)
Academic/ Discipline-specific expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mastering terminology • and discourse & cultural conventions of the field • analysing & reporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • using own expertise to identify, analyse and evaluate problems and solutions • making team decisions, negotiating 	receptive and productive communication skills and strategies + discourse competence for language use in academic and social contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • language learning & metacognitive strategies • self-assessment skills • academic study skills for task management
Research and information management skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • searching & evaluating materials and information • classifying & note-taking • interpreting, synthesising & reporting on research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analysing & evaluating problems and solutions • sharing knowledge, networking & team working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICT-mediated communication and collaboration • documentation & presentation skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • media literacy • cultural literacy • use of new learning environments • peer reviewing
Professional skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acting in the profession – professional practice (e.g. as a doctor, psychologist, engineer, programmer, marketing manager, teacher, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • solving problems related to profession • collaborating, networking and decision-making with other professionals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • intercultural presentation & communication skills • strategic communication skills for e.g. working in multidisciplinary teams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cultural sensitivity & tolerance of uncertainty • self-directed learning for continuous updating of professional skills
Job/company specific skills -developed in the workplace	In-house policies, systems & focuses e.g. value systems, applying knowledge	In-house policies, systems & focuses e.g. managing critical intercultural incidents	In-house policies, systems & focuses e.g. client encounters, image building	In-house policies, systems & focuses e.g. assessment skills, continuous learning

13. The integration of academic English support in JYU's English-medium master's programmes



Anne Räsänen 2008