

English-Medium Instruction in Multilingual Universities: The Case of Finland. Challenges and requisites for success

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Overview

- The Internationalization Process in Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in Europe
 - The case of Finland: International Master's Programmes at Jyväskylä University
1. Essentials for Success and Challenges

Bologna Process

- To create a common European Higher Education Area by 2010
- Easily comparable and transferable degrees
ECTS
- Degree structure based on a two-cycle model
- Increased mobility
- Promotion of European cooperation in quality assurance in Higher Education

The Internationalization of HE

The rationales behind...

- Mobility for students & teachers
- Collaboration in teaching & research
- Academic standards & quality
- Research networks
- Support structure for international cooperation
- Input for curriculum development
- Intercultural understanding
- Promotion & profile of institution
- Internationalization of staff & students
- Academic quality
- Strengthen research
- Curriculum innovation
- International solidarity
- Diversity of programs
- National & international citizenship
- Profitability
- Brain Gain

Source: IAU Survey Reports 2003 & 2005

The Emergence of Multilingual and Multicultural Student groups

Effects on teachers and teaching:

- To master an additional language of instruction
- Increase of heterogeneous student groups
- New pedagogical skills for classroom management
- Intercultural communication competence
- New forms of collaboration

The Emergence of Multilingual and Multicultural Student Groups

Effects on students and learning:

- New academic skills and competences
- New academic practices
- More tolerance of uncertainty required
- Intercultural communication competence required
- Distance education
- ICT literacy

English-Medium Instruction - Benefits

- A new multilingual and multicultural resource for developing intercultural communication competence in an authentic way
- A new resource for developing skills in learning and teaching
- A new potential for "shaking" routines and developing institutional activities
- Brain gain vs. Brain drain

The case of Finland

Native languages spoken in Finland

- Finnish: 5 Mio.
- Swedish (Finland Swedish variant): 269,000
- Saami Languages: 6,000 - 7,000
- Finnish Sign Language: 4,000 – 5,000
- Finnish Romani: 10,000 (estimate)

The Case of Jyväskylä University

- A multidisciplinary university with some 16,000 students in seven faculties; second largest in Finland in terms of Master's degrees; c. 900 international students from 85 countries (half Erasmus, half degree students, MA/PhD)
- Degree education in Finnish, English, and sign language
- University Language Policy names language & communicative competences and language awareness as requisite components of academic expertise and all education

Language Requirements for University Degrees in Finland

- After the first degree the graduates must have "adequate" and after the second degree "good" language and communication skills
- All HE degrees in Finland must include studies in the mother tongue and in the second national language as well as in one or two foreign languages (National Policy since 1979)
- Faculties (& departments) can decide on the extent of language and communication studies according to what is needed in the academic professions of their fields

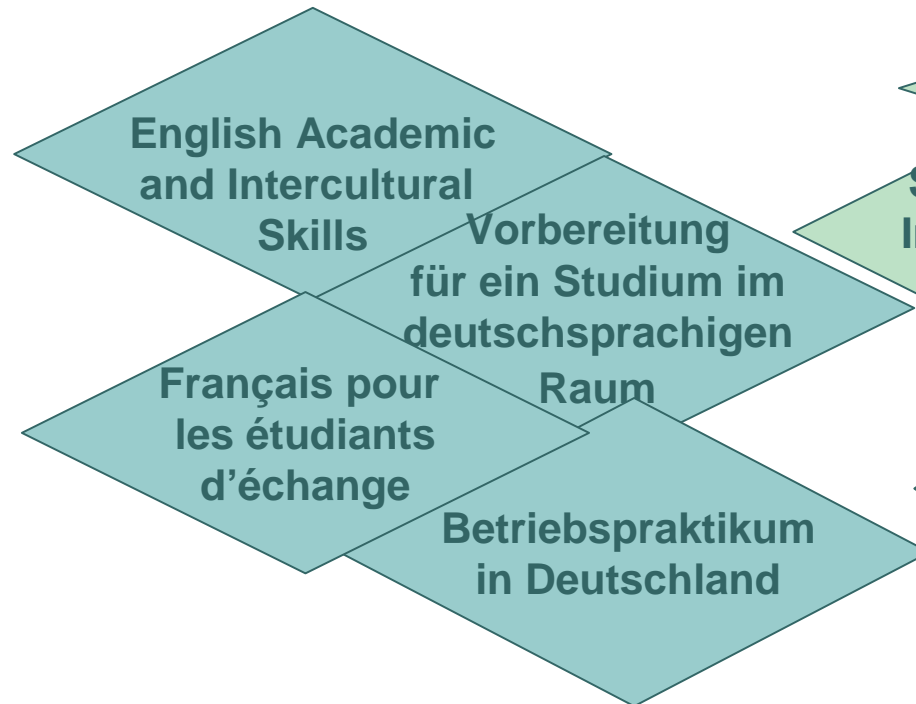
JyU Language Policy

(regarding English-Medium Instruction)

- Teachers to have sufficient language mastery for the use of flexible interactive methods and opportunities for professional development
- Students' skills to be monitored at admission (TOEFL & IELTS)
- Programmes to include development of language & communication skills
- Good briefing of international staff and students about academic practices necessary
- Finnish students' command of content in the Finnish language to be catered for
- International students to have opportunities to learn Finnish and Finnish culture

SUPPORT FOR STUDENT MOBILITY

OUTGOING STUDENTS



INCOMING STUDENTS



STUDY MODULES (10-15 ECTS): Deutsche Kulturstudien, Etudes françaises, AEFIN Programme – Advanced English for International Networking, Slovak language and culture

16 English-medium Master's Programmes at Jyväskylä University

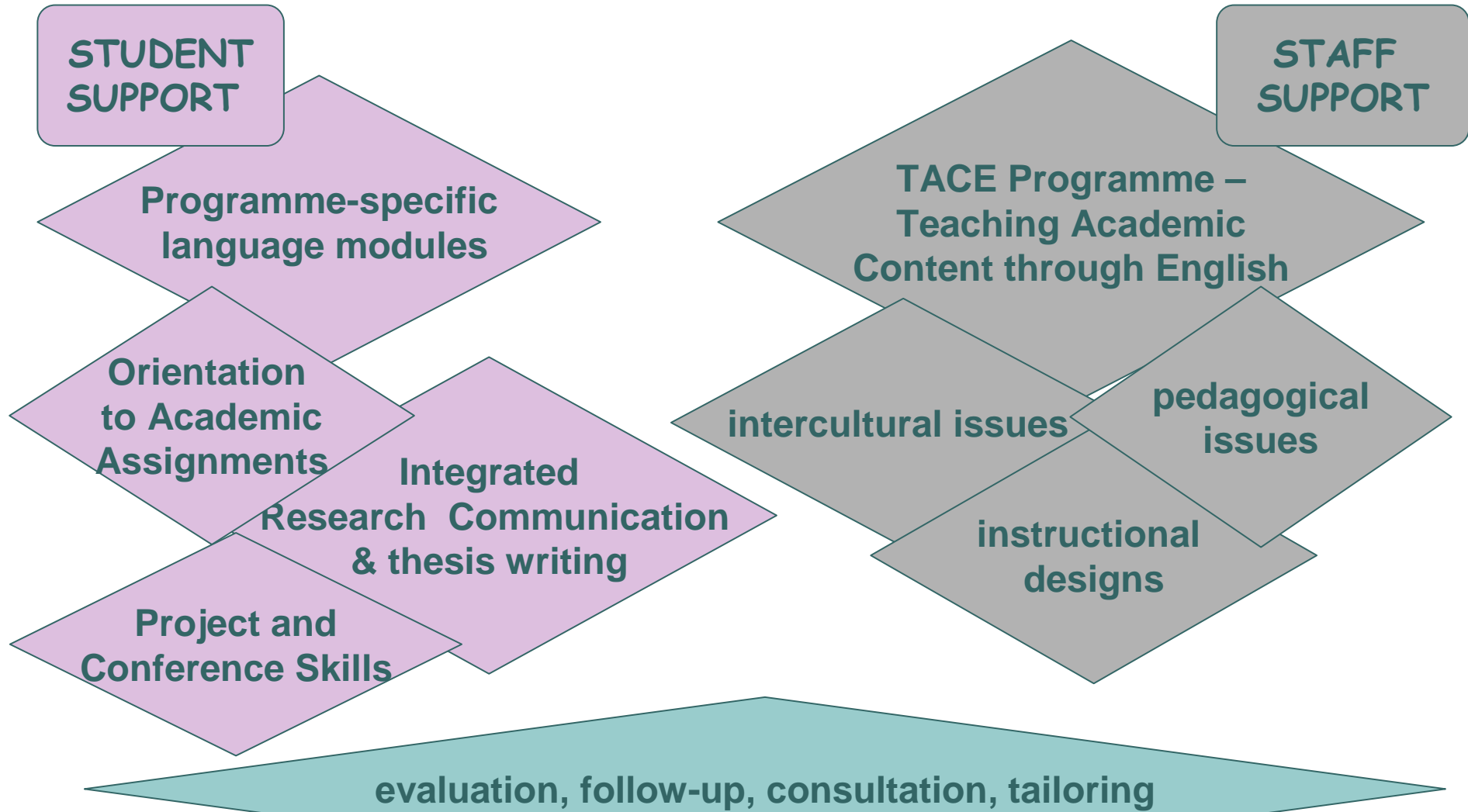
- **Master of Arts** programmes: Digital Culture, Intercultural communication, Music, Mind & Technology
 - **Master of Science** programmes: Corporate Environmental Management, Entrepreneurship in Family Business, Financial Economics, Biology of Physical Activity, Sport Science and Management, Sport and Exercise Psychology, Gerontology, Educational Leadership, Mobile Technology and Business, Sustainable Management of Inland Aquatic Resources, Nanoscience
 - **Master of Social Sciences/Science** programmes: Development and International Cooperation, Renewable Energy
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Quality assurance criteria for launching & monitoring EMM's programmes

- Programme aims and implementation
- Rationale for launching the programme
- Eligibility provided for PhD study
- Resources
- Study counselling and evaluation systems

Two internal evaluations of English-medium education have been conducted (in 2000 and 2007)

INTEGRATED ACADEMIC ENGLISH SUPPORT FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING THROUGH ENGLISH IN ENGLISH-MEDIUM MASTER'S PROGRAMMES



Ministry of Justice, Finland: Act on the Knowledge of Languages Required of Personnel in Public Bodies

Section 3 — Ensuring knowledge of languages on recruitment

- When a person is being recruited for an official position or otherwise for service, it shall be verified that his or her knowledge of languages meets the linguistic requirements for the work assignments.

Section 4 — Announcement of the required knowledge of languages

- An announcement of an official position or other service position that is subject to application or vacant shall include a reference to possible language requirements and to the knowledge of languages required for the work assignments or considered a merit on recruitment.

Essentials for success and challenges

- Clarified, specified and mutually accepted aims at both institutional and individual level
- Programme overtly promoted by institutional policies, including infrastructure, incentives, and systematic staff development in both educational communication and pedagogical skills
- Role of regional language and target language development acknowledged as an integral part of instructional design and content delivery
- Creating and strengthening contacts with programme coordinators and professors; international networking

Essentials for Success and Challenges (2)

- Mapping structure of programmes and discipline specific practices
- Mapping student performances and developing common guidelines and language evaluation criteria
- Development of programme specific, tailor made, integrated courses
- Instructional approach to offer rich and authentic language input and practice in appropriate language use, as well as multiple opportunities to process information and construct knowledge
- Establishing and maintaining support systems for teachers and students

...and Challenges (3)

- Differences in the attitudes towards language support: some programmes less active, some really active and enthusiastic
- Intake of students confirmed relatively late or varying in student numbers, which is problematic for programme external support systems
- Programme coordinators may change which is problematic for designing programme specific language support
- Structures of the programmes are still partly open, possible to add language components later on
- Programmes vary greatly in their structure, with different types of students, different degrees of heterogeneity

Achievements

- Positive experiences of integrated teaching
- Increased collaboration and interactive relationships with teachers, thesis supervisors and students
- Multicultural and international student group is a special resource, enriching the classroom experience
- Adapting to the academic, linguistic and social milieu of the host environment, the culture of individual departments and institutions

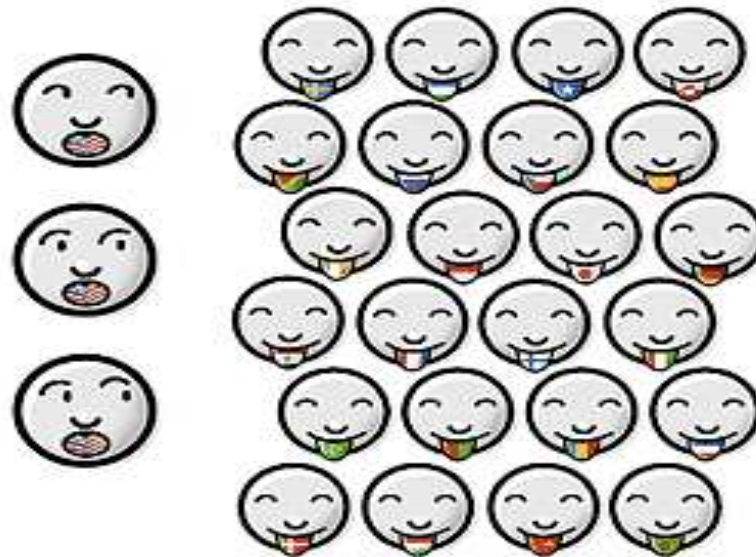
International Academic Expertise:

Points to consider

- What is the role and significance of international networking at your department/university and in your field?
- What kinds of language and communication skills would you like your graduates to have when they leave your department and programme?
- What are the most typical professional profiles of your ex-graduates? What communication skills and languages do they need to become successful in their professions?
- How might your graduates' language and communication skills reflect on the image of your department or programme?

Gràcies! - Thank you! - Kiitos!

What Global Language?



English isn't managing to sweep all else before it -- and if it ever does become the universal language, many of those who speak it won't understand one another

Wallraff, B. (2000)

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