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JULIET 2022: Continuing to prepare class teachers as language educators

In 1995 JULIET programme was established in the Department of Teacher Education at the University of Jyväskylä and 27 years on, JULIET continues to prepare class teachers specialised in foreign language pedagogy. Each year a 'home group' of students join the 35ECTS programme that continues across the four-five years of class teacher education. Over the years, however, significant developments have taken place in the Finnish National Curriculum for Basic Education, in the diversity of students and school communities, and in the JULIET programme itself. This article outlines how JULIET has developed and continues to prepare class teachers specialised in foreign language education today.

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The original vision for JULIET was to prepare class teachers specialised in teaching English as a foreign language to young learners. Although foreign languages are taught by subject teachers in the lower and upper grades of basic education in Finland, an increasing number of class teachers are responsible for introducing foreign language learning in the early grades. Indeed, the official introduction of foreign languages into the first grade of basic education in 2020, (EDUFI (<https://www.oph.fi/fi/koulutus-ja-tutkinnot/a1-kielen-opetus-luokilla-1-2>), 2022) complements the original JULIET vision. JULIET was also established when Finnish educational policy was promoting the greater pedagogical freedom of teachers (Simola, 2005). At the time, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) was developing as a grassroots initiative in Finland and as a significant innovation on a European level (Nikula, 2016). Innovation in language education remains an important part of the current national curriculum (EDUFI, 2014) with the emphasis on 'joy, playfulness and creativity' in language education (ibid. p.218), language awareness across the curriculum and options for bilingual education outlined for the first time as part of the national curriculum. This article briefly outlines how JULIET has responded to pedagogical, societal and policy developments.



Figure 1. The JULIET logo

From the outset JULIET has encouraged class teacher students to use their understanding of younger learners and interest in language as the foundation for their work as foreign language educators. The earliest versions of the JULIET programme included grammar and vocabulary, language pedagogy and cultural studies as distinct areas of study and provided concrete support for pre- and in-service teachers (Hughes et al., 2004 & 2007). As outlined by Pihko and Bursiewicz (2012), JULIET students completed language studies in their first and second years of university studies, moved on to the theory and practice of language education in the third year and focused on the integration of content and language learning during their final years of teacher education. While the amount and focus of cultural studies varied depending on the changing teacher education curriculum, the presence of exchange students on JULIET courses has enabled internationalization at home since JULIET was established.

JULIET I: Foreign language, pedagogy and culture

Today JULIET seeks to combine pedagogical understanding with language development and cultural engagement. The current JULIET curriculum begins with a course in *Creative and Intercultural Language Development* (5 ECTS, 1st year, spring). This course explicitly explores the 'plentiful space for joy, playfulness and creativity' of language education (EDUFI, 2014, p.125), and introduces students to key characteristics of young language learners (Ruohotie-Lyhty & Moate, 2016a & b) and different ways of building relationships through a foreign language. This course aims to strengthen student teachers' relationship with their 'English-speaking self' so that they can create a safe and inviting environment for young language learners. Moreover, this course aims to avoid introducing foreign language learning as merely relabelling the familiar world, instead using foreign language(s) to actively participate in the world (Biesta, 2021).

The second-year courses include *The Language and Modalities of Education and Pedagogy* (5 ECTS) and *English as an International Language* (5 ECTS). The Language and Modalities course pursues the notion that every teacher is a language teacher (EDUFI, 2014) and explores different ways in which language is present in education (Heikkola et al., 2022; Moate, 2017). *English as an International Language* takes a more sociological turn and considers English as a lingua franca, a language that can bring people together as well as foster power imbalances (Rose et

al., 2021). Exploring English as an International Language is intended to support reflection on the role and presence of English within the Finnish curriculum, the value of multilingual repertoires and additional language learning.

The third-year courses address *The Pedagogy and Methodologies of Foreign Language Education* (5 ECTS) and *Formal Language Development* (5 ECTS). As in earlier iterations of JULIET, the third year focuses on the theory and practice of language education, building understanding of why and how different approaches can be used, what this means in terms of teacher and student roles and activities, as well as the significance of relationships and experiences fostered through language education. These courses often coincide with the second teaching practice when the student teachers can use and test these ideas and their understanding in a school environment. The five courses comprise JULIET I – *Foreign language, Pedagogy and Culture* – and provide the pedagogical basis for JULIETs to teach foreign languages^[1] in the lower grades and contribute to the pedagogical expertise needed by teachers working in bilingual education, the focus of JULIET II.

JULIET II: Bilingual education

JULIET II – *Bilingual Education* – includes four courses offering different perspectives on language education. JULIET students need to complete two Master's level courses to gain the JULIET certificate. The *CLIL and Bilingual Education* (5 ECTS) course introduces students to the theory and practice of integrating foreign language learning with subject studies. Initially student teachers explore dual-focused approaches 'from the outside' learning about different curriculum-planning tools, research and observing lessons in a valued local partner school. Students then expand their understanding 'from the inside' with a short teaching practice in which they prepare a series of three lessons taught in two different classes. This format enables students to revisit their lesson plans and to modify activities in response to the needs of different classes. Exploring CLIL and bilingual education from the outside and inside is intended to support ongoing dialogue around bilingual education as an approach that benefits from collegial collaborations (Pappa, et al. 2017), the investment of different partners (Dalton-Puffer, et al., 2022) and the creativity of students (Cross, 2016).

The *Key Considerations in International and Intercultural Education* (5 ECTS) course was initially established to prepare students for teaching overseas and to consider what it means to encounter different educational cultures. With the significant sociocultural changes currently taking place within and beyond Finland, this course aims to prepare teachers that better understand what it means to enter different educational communities and to work well with students from different backgrounds and with different experiences. This course highlights the role of the teacher in the formation of educational communities and has become increasingly relevant for teachers working in Finland (Mustonen, 2021; Kaukko & Wernesjö, 2017). The *Literature and Culture in Language Education* course takes a different approach using stories as avenues to express and explore experience (Le Hunte & Golembiewski, 2014). This course

considers the role of imagination, the importance of narrative ways of thinking, and the affordances of bilingual repertoires (IKI-TARU (<https://sites.utu.fi/iki-taru/>), Cummins & Early, 2010).

The fourth Master's level course, *Language in Learning Environments*, focuses on the importance of the sociomaterial environment of language education (Laihonen & Szabó, 2016). The research-based design of this course promotes systematic reflection on the relationship between linguistic landscapes and pedagogical practices. In autumn 2022, this course was offered for the first time as part of the Multilingualism in School and Higher Education Lab launched through the FORTHEM European University Alliance (Szabó, et al. 2022) (<https://www.forthem-alliance.eu/en/blog/the-course-multilingual-learning-environments-welcomes-its-first-students-in-this-semester/>). As with other JULIET courses, this course brings Finnish students together with international students and diversifies participation further through the involvement of students from partner universities.

As JULIET courses run across several years of teacher education, important pedagogical issues can be explored from different perspectives and integrated with student teachers' pedagogical development. Through action research, JULIET teachers have been able to carefully reflect on the programme and student development (e.g. Ruohotie-Lyhty & Moate, 2014; Moate & Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2015, 2020a & 2020b). Research by JULIET student teachers also contributes to up-to-date knowledge of language education, with Master's theses, for example, on leadership in language education (Pekkarinen, 2019; Nenonen, 2021), pedagogical innovations (Happonen & Niininen, 2020; Tiihonen, 2020; Oksanen, 2016), language awareness (Gök & Rajala, 2017), language teaching materials (Lehtinen & Jokinen, 2020), teacher experiences (Rintala & Muhonen, 2022), collaborations (Horelli, 2019) and young students' attitudes towards English as a global language (Kamunen, 2022).

Students that complete the 35 ECTS JULIET programme receive a JULIET certificate. For teachers working in bilingual school environments, JULIET helps to ground their pedagogical practice in an understanding of language education, the challenges and opportunities of integrating language with subject learning, and the demands and affordances of bi- and multilingual learning environments^[2]. For class teachers, JULIET contributes to their pedagogical expertise to teach languages in the lower grades and to creatively invest in pedagogical development.

The JULIET programme has greatly benefitted from the contributions of innovative teachers, as well as field-based and international partnerships. JULIET courses are also available as part of the Language Education specialisation in the JYU International Master's Programme in Educational Sciences (<https://www.jyu.fi/en/apply/masters-programmes/masters-degree-programmes/educational-sciences/programme-description>). The international Master's students that participate in JULIET courses connect JULIET with the wider world of language education. Moreover, with an increase in language aware and multilingual pedagogy (KIMO) specialisations at JYU, JULIET has gained welcome 'sibling' initiatives. As part of the current re-envisaging of

teacher education in Finland, JULIET will continue to develop as a programme that seeks to address the needs and to develop opportunities for different forms of language education in the lower school. Educators and researchers working in language education are welcome to send suggestions for the ongoing development of JULIET to josephine.moate@jyu.fi (<mailto:josephine.moate@jyu.fi>), the current coordinator of the JULIET programme.

[1] Although the JULIET courses are run through English, the pedagogical knowhow fostered through the courses is not dependent on English. Indeed, students that study other languages have regularly reported the value of JULIET when teaching other languages to children, including French and Swedish.

[2] The National Agency for Education (EDUFI) recently announced the revised language requirements for bilingual teachers in Finland. According to current guidelines there are several ways to qualify as a bilingual teacher, such as completing language subject studies, passing the higher level of the national language test (YKI) or completing 80ECTS of university studies in the target language. JULIET contributes to the completion of credits in the target language of English and provides the pedagogical grounding for working as a bilingual educator.

<https://www.oph.fi/fi/uutiset/2022/opetushallitus-paivitti-maaraystaan-hakijalle-useampia-tapoja-osoittaa-riittava-kielen> (<https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.oph.fi%2Ffi%2Fuutiset%2F2022%2Fopetushallitus-paivitti-maaraystaan-hakijalle-useampia-tapoja-osoittaa-riittava-kielen&data=05%7C01%7C%7C00897d6437484074432d08dad10c8eca%7Ce9662d58caa44bc1b138c8b1acab5a11%7C1%7C0%7C638052149106349013%7CUnknown%7CTWFPbGZsb3d8eyJWljojMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjojV2luMzliLCJBTil6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=JxU1TpXrAIDJTN5RYNhpNAbJCcXwIYeODP0fHJzZ%2FtM%3D&reserved=0>)

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