



# Great expectations – A Finnish perspective on international students' choice of university-level craft courses

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# Introduction

- Students go on exchange with different motives and expectations
- Exchange students choose craft courses in Finland
  - Craft as a school subject something new and unknown

## Finnish school subject Craft (Sloyd), focus:

- Pupils learn to master the whole craft process
- Gain knowledge and skills useful for everyday life
- Planning and working with various materials and techniques

Definition:

- **International students**, includes:
  - **exchange students**, who study in another country for a shorter period
  - **international degree students**, who study in another country to get a degree.

# Research questions

*The aim of this study was to investigate the rationales that impact international students' decisions to take craft courses during their studies at Åbo Akademi University (ÅAU) and their expectations from the course.*

- Why do international students choose craft courses?
- What expectations do international students have from a craft course?

# Literature review

## Motives for going on exchange

- Professional and personal growth (Lesjak et al., 2015)
- Three motivational drivers, *discovery*, *change* and *curiosity* (Sova, 2017)
- Four areas of motivation, *academic*, *linguistic*, *cultural*, and *personal* (Krzaklewska, 2008)

## Expectations from exchange studies

- Personal and academic (Hietaluoma, 2001; Nilsson, 2015)
- More focus on personal expectations than academic expectations (Nilsson, 2015)
  - Having fun and adventure
- Improving self-confidence (Costas & Singco, 2016; Hietaluoma, 2001)
- Learning local language (Kalocsai, 2009)

# Empirical data material

- Questionnaires to students attending the craft course *Craft in natural materials*, 5 ECTS
  - Basic studies in craft science at ÅAU
  - Minor subject or optional course for other students at ÅAU
- At the beginning of the course
  - Craft background, motives for choosing the course and expectations
- At the end of the course
  - How the expectations were met and interaction with others

Table 1. Overview of empirical data

Year	Course participants		Answers to questionnaire, international (Int)	
	Total	International (Int)	Beginning (first)	End (second)
2019	28	10	9	-
2021	25	13	6	7
2022	31	15	11	8
Total	84	38	26	15

# Methods

- Qualitative
- Reflexive thematic analysis
  - 4 themes for motives for course choice
  - 4 themes for expectations from the course
- Using theoretical model for “Motivation for going abroad” (Krzaklewska, 2008) when identifying themes

# Results

## Motives

- **Cultural motivation**
  - experience Finnish craft and nature education
- **Personal motivation**
  - interest in the subject, own learning and knowing, something new, fun and interesting
- **Career motivation**
  - to learn craft and other things for the future, for the future work as a teacher/with kids
- **Academic motivation**
  - recommendations about the course, course being validated, motivations connected to the specific craft course

## Expectations

- **Cultural expectations**
  - overall picture of Finnish education and craft, attitude towards nature, own and other cultures
- **Personal expectations**
  - own development, learning and skills. having fun, interesting but also challenging, trying, experiencing, and learning new things, interaction and contact with classmates
- **Career expectations**
  - doing and learning things useful in the future, knowledge about teaching craft and getting didactical thoughts or insights
- **Academic expectations**
  - about the specific craft course, course arrangement and content

# Discussion

- Academic and career motivations and expectations are clearly discernible in the results
- Wanting to have fun and experience new things can also be found
- Language learning is seen very little in students' motivations and expectations compared to previous research
- The impact of the course name on motivations and expectations
- Least focus and emphasis on cultural motivation and expectations



Source: Pia Brännkärr



# Conclusions

- Craft as a subject appealing for students even though they don't have such type of subject in their home country
  - The unknown
  - Practical studio work
  - Own interest in craft and doing things with their hands
- The subject and its content relevant for students, both personally and in consider of their future work
- Students' might have hard to define motivation and expectation if it's about something novel for them



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# Thanks!

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