STUDYING NORDIC PHILOLOGY FOR THE FIRST YEAR

Ambitions and Expectations
ABOUT US

• University of Oulu, northern Finland
• 9 faculties, 16 000 students and 3 000 employees
• Nordic Philology is one of the main subjects in the Faculty of Humanities
• 24 majoring students, some 10 minoring students per year
• Teaching is in Swedish, which is a foreign language to most of the students
• Entering students have B1-level in the Swedish language according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
CHALLENGES

Academic proficiency and literacy

LINGUISTIC: Acquiring advanced language proficiency

COGNITIVE: Acquiring specialized content knowledge

SOCIAL AND PRACTICAL: Coping with the new life situation as a university student
MEASURES TAKEN

• Each new student at the University of Oulu gets a study advisor/tutor teacher, who helps the student to prepare a personal study plan (PSP) for Bachelor's and/or Master's degree.

• In Nordic philology, 4 lecturers work as tutor teachers and take care of the study guidance of 6 new students per year.

• Every tutor teacher in Nordic philology also teaches her own tutor group in oral and written communication.
QUESTIONS

• What kind of expectations do first year students of Nordic Philology at the University of Oulu have of their studies in the very beginning of the autumn semester?

• How are these expectations and the studies in Nordic philology evaluated later in the year?
MATERIAL AND METHODS

33 student essays, written in the beginning of autumn semester 2013
• “I as a University Student - Expectations and Ambitions”
• What kind of rationality and values lie behind the students’ wordings of their ambitions and expectations?

A questionnaire to the same student group in the beginning of spring semester
• 2 ranking questions on a scale from 1 to 5 about the students’ priorities in their studies (inspired by the 5 discourse types found in the essays)
• 4 rating questions on a scale from 1 to 5 about the students’ motivation and persistence
• 2 open questions about the courses in oral and written communication
DISCOURSE TYPES IN THE ESSAYS

1. Interest in language and language learning
   "I like to study languages, and my aim is to acquire fluent oral and writing skills in both Swedish and English.
   "During my studies I want to get a grip of the [Swedish] language and unveil all its secrets.

2. Degree & profession
   "I want to become a qualified language teacher and enter working life.
   "My goal at the university is, of course, to take Master’s degree.

3. Self-cultivation
   "I think university is about growing up. You don’t study only to gain information, but also to learn about yourself and your strengths.
   "Studying languages also gives you a broader perspective on the world.
... DISCOURSE TYPES

4. Identity

"For me it’s all about finding yourself at your best. My vision and my dream - to become a Swedish teacher - grows stronger day by day.

"In my opinion, every Finnish citizen has a small portion of Swedish identity inside of them. So, studying Swedish not only makes me better in the language, but also develops my identity.

5. Friends, social life

"I want to get new friends who are interested in the same kind of things that I am, and I also want to have some fun.

"One important reason why I moved such a long way from home was to meet new, different kind of people. Social relationships play an important part in my life.
WHY DO YOU STUDY SWEDISH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OULU?

- Degree & prof.
- Self cultivation
- Linguistics
- Identity
- Social reasons

[Bar chart showing percentages for each category]
WHAT EXPECTATIONS DO YOU HAVE OF YOUR STUDIES?

Options:
- Linguistics
- Degree & prof.
- self cultivation
- Social reasons
- Identity

Responses:
- 4
- 5

Percentage distribution:
- Linguistics: 10%
- Degree & prof.: 30%
- self cultivation: 60%
- Social reasons: 20%
- Identity: 10%
ABOUT MOTIVATION, PLANS FOR THE FUTURE AND THE RELEVANCY OF THE COURSES

Motivation
Bachelor of Arts
Master of Arts
Relavancy

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor of Arts</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of Arts</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relavancy</td>
<td>50%</td>
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Language proficiency

Identity

Professional accountability

Self-cultivation
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

"Good job, good salary, good life"