



Sustainable Management of Boreal Forests SG0245, 40004.2021

15 Hp

Pace of study = 100%

Education cycle = Advanced -

Course leader = Göran Hallsby

Evaluation report

Evaluation period: 2021-05-30 - 2021-06-20

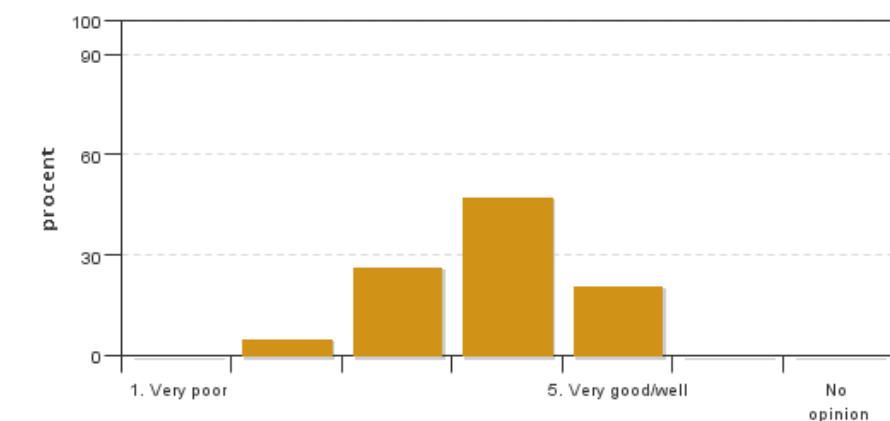
Answers 19

Number of students 32

Answer frequency 59 %

Mandatory standard questions

1. My overall impression of the course is:



Answers: 19

Medel: 3,8

Median: 4

1: 0

2: 1

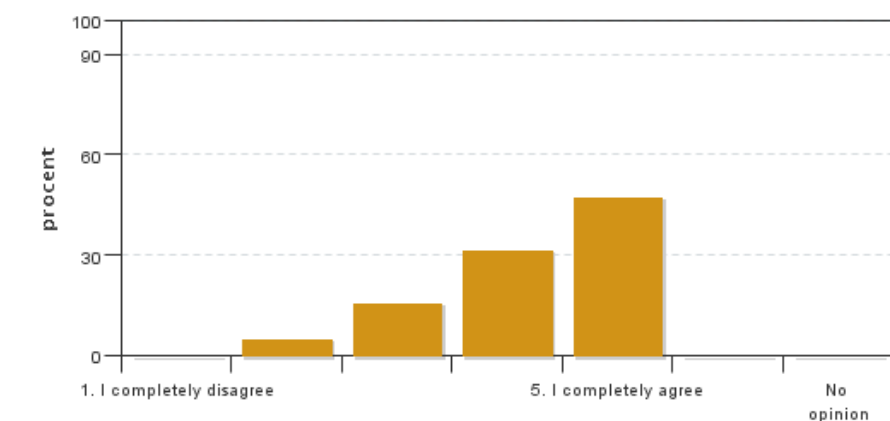
3: 5

4: 9

5: 4

No opinion: 0

2. I found the course content to have clear links to the learning objectives of the course.



Answers: 19

Medel: 4,2

Median: 4

1: 0

2: 1

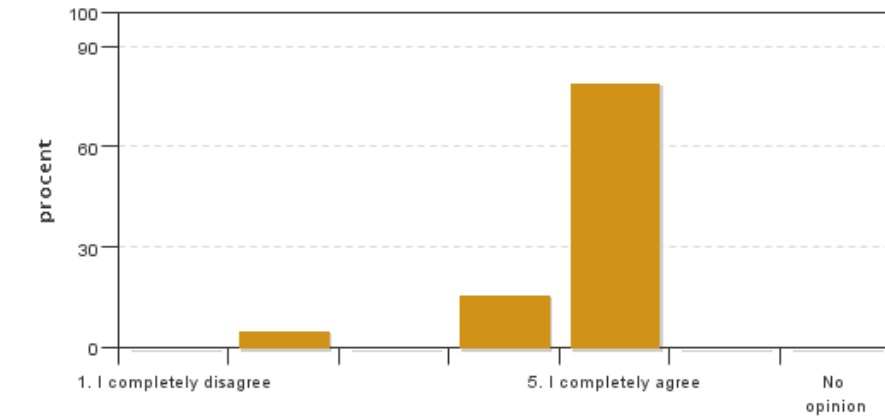
3: 3

4: 6

5: 9

No opinion: 0

3. My prior knowledge was sufficient for me to benefit from the course.

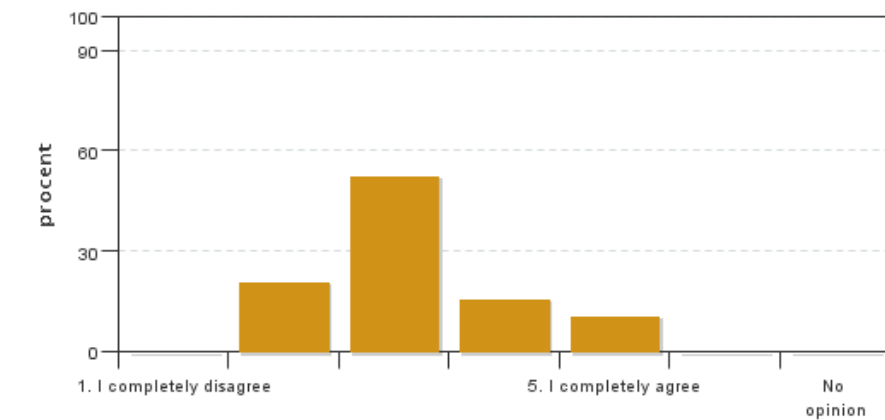


Answers: 19
 Medel: 4,7
 Median: 5

1: 0
 2: 1
 3: 0
 4: 3
 5: 15

No opinion: 0

4. The information about the course was easily accessible.

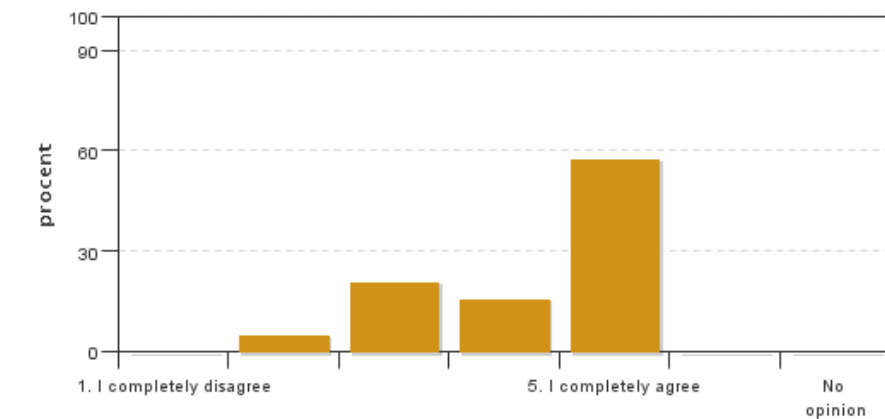


Answers: 19
 Medel: 3,2
 Median: 3

1: 0
 2: 4
 3: 10
 4: 3
 5: 2

No opinion: 0

5. The various course components (lectures, course literature, exercises etc.) have supported my learning.

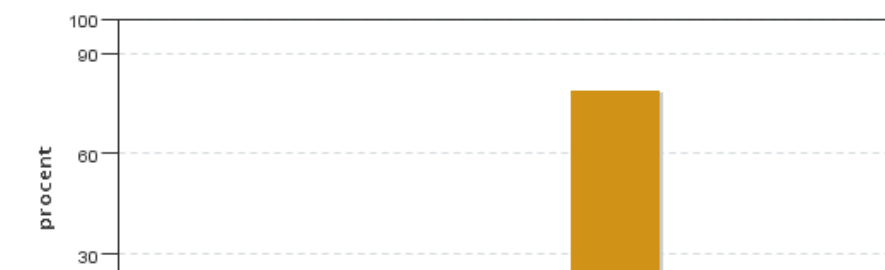


Answers: 19
 Medel: 4,3
 Median: 5

1: 0
 2: 1
 3: 4
 4: 3
 5: 11

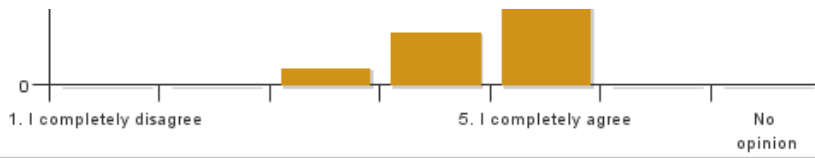
No opinion: 0

6. The social learning environment has been inclusive, respecting differences of opinion.



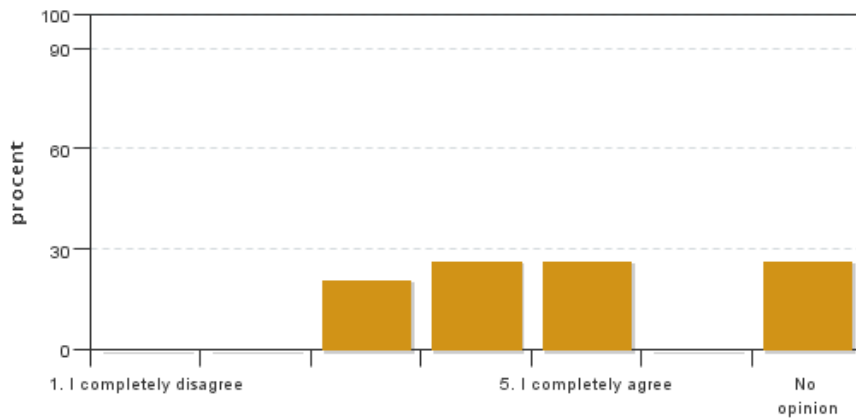
Answers: 19
 Medel: 4,7
 Median: 5

1: 0
 2: 0
 3: 1
 4: 3
 5: 15



No opinion: 0

7. The physical learning environment (facilities, equipment etc.) has been satisfactory.



Answers: 19

Medel: 4,1

Median: 4

1: 0

2: 0

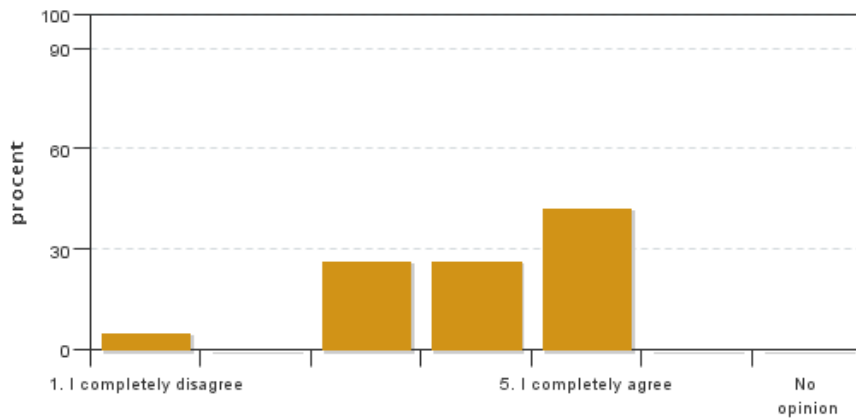
3: 4

4: 5

5: 5

No opinion: 5

8. The examination(s) provided opportunity to demonstrate what I had learnt during the course (see the learning objectives).



Answers: 19

Medel: 4,0

Median: 4

1: 1

2: 0

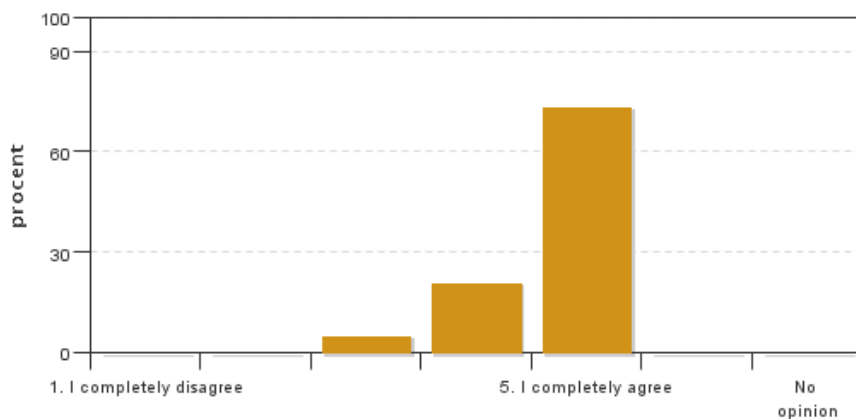
3: 5

4: 5

5: 8

No opinion: 0

9. The course covered the sustainable development aspect (environmental, social and/or financial sustainability).



Answers: 19

Medel: 4,7

Median: 5

1: 0

2: 0

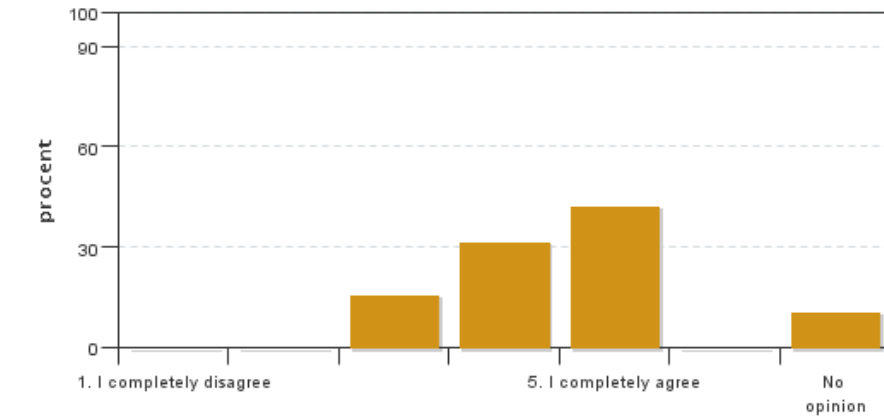
3: 1

4: 4

5: 14

No opinion: 0

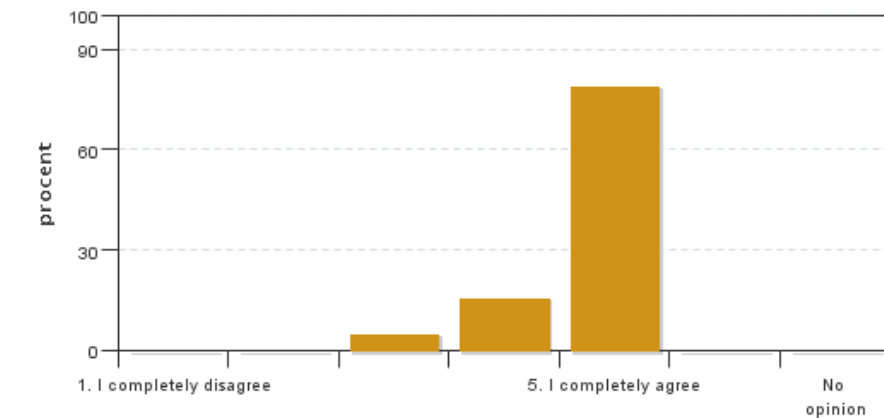
10. I believe the course has included a gender and equality aspect, regarding content as well as teaching practices (e.g. perspective on the subject, reading list, allocation of speaking time and the use of master suppression techniques).



Answers: 19
 Medel: 4,3
 Median: 4

1: 0
 2: 0
 3: 3
 4: 6
 5: 8
 No opinion: 2

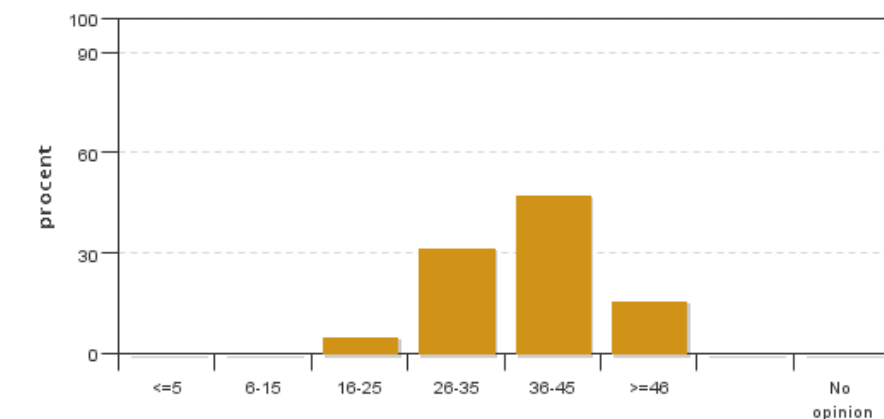
11. The course covered international perspectives.



Answers: 19
 Medel: 4,7
 Median: 5

1: 0
 2: 0
 3: 1
 4: 3
 5: 15
 No opinion: 0

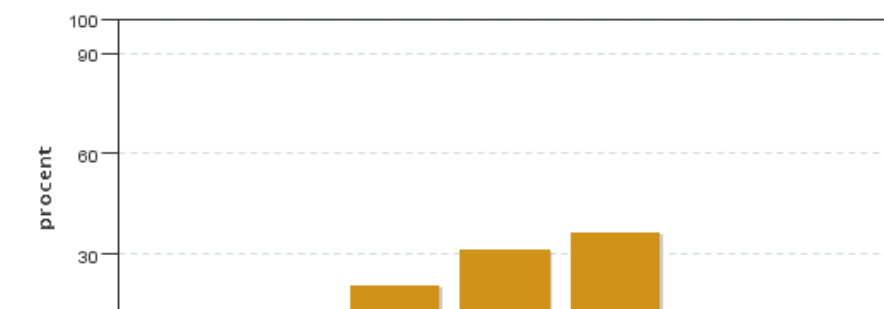
12. On average, I have spent ... hours/week on the course (including timetabled hours).



Answers: 19
 Medel: 36,7
 Median: 36-45

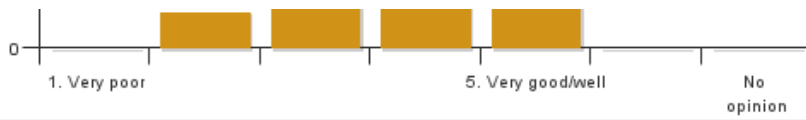
≤5: 0
 6-15: 0
 16-25: 1
 26-35: 6
 36-45: 9
 ≥46: 3
 No opinion: 0

13. What is your overall experience of participating in all or part of your course online?



Answers: 19
 Medel: 3,9
 Median: 4

1: 0
 2: 2
 3: 4
 4: 6
 5: 7
 No opinion: 0



14. Please share what worked well when participating in teaching on distance

15. Please share what worked less well when participating in teaching on distance

Course leaders comments

Course evaluation 2020/2021 - SG0245

A total of 59% of the students (19 out of 32) have completed the course evaluation form which is slightly higher than in the previous year (53%). While the importance of feedback was already repeatedly communicated to the students throughout the course, we will further encourage student evaluations in the future by demonstrating its value more clearly, e.g. by discussing at the beginning of the course what kind of improvements have been made based on last years' student evaluations.

The general impression of the course among students was overall positive (median grade '4'). Nevertheless, we received some critical comments which we will address carefully to further improve the course in the coming year. Below follows a summary of the main student comments as well as our intended measures for the identified problem areas:

- The course contents were generally well received (median grade '4'). Nevertheless, some students (primarily from *Jägmästarprogrammet*) commented about overlaps with previous SLU courses. This is, however, in contrast to others stating that they very much appreciated the assembly of modules and covered topics. This apparent discrepancy might be due to the wide-ranging backgrounds (from local to international) and varying levels of previous knowledge among our students. We will re-evaluate the course contents and look for ways for improvement.
- The organization of course materials under some of the modules on the Canvas course page was considered confusing and not well-enough organized. We regret this and acknowledge the difficulty in streamlining a large number of teachers, each with their own individual styles for structuring information under their respective modules (a total of 10) on the Canvas page. We will work to improve this in the coming year by providing a general structure guideline to be followed by all module leaders. For that purpose, we will adopt some aspects from module 8 that was positively highlighted by the students as being well-organized and easy to follow.
- The variety of pedagogic course components was highly appreciated by the students. This includes the very positive feedback on the replacement field days developed as a substitute for the canceled one-week field excursion. Likewise, online group discussions and group work held in Zoom breakout rooms as well as in the newly introduced Wonder space were also positively highlighted and worked well to bring some social interaction aspect into the otherwise isolated and distance-based study environment.
- It was appreciated by the students that there was no written final examinations at the end of the course and that instead the final grade was based on mandatory assignments completed within each module. However, some students perceived the overall assignment load as too extensive. Specific references were made e.g. to the annotated bibliography that appears to have been especially time-consuming for some of them. We will take these comments into account and together with the module leaders revisit the assignments, both with regards to quantity as well as quality/content.
- Some students felt a lack of feedback on their assignments. We take this comment seriously and will further increase our efforts to provide more feedback in a timely manner so that the students have the opportunity to improve throughout the course.
- We recognize that the restrictions brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic may also have negatively affected some elements of the course as commented on by the students. Specifically, the one main limitation for this years' course was the cancellation of the one-week field excursion which was greatly missed by the students. We hope that we will be able to add the field excursion back into our course program next year.

Student representatives comments

1. My overall impression of the course is:

Overall, 59% (19/32) students answered the course evaluation. The overall impression of the course was good, still some students commented that a lot of content was redundant to those who already had studied forestry before, still it was liked a lot that different perspectives were brought up with many different interesting lecturers, it was as well commented that not enough feedback for the assignments was given.

2. I found the course content to have clear links to the learning objectives of the course

Water module (Module 8) was stated as best organized, other modules had lot of assignments keeping students busy and lacked depth. It could be good to take out some assignments and improve the ones that are left.

3. My prior knowledge was sufficient for me to benefit from the course.

Mostly repetition for jägmästare students, repetition of former courses, alternative silvicultural management part was liked a lot and could be improved.

4. The information about the course was easily accessible.

Most students stated that the canvas site was not clear structured and messy, information sometimes difficult to find, different teachers posted information in a different way, the water module (Module 8) was mentioned to have been the best structured, sometimes confusing where to find the right files, sometimes the information was hidden with links in announcements and in comments, which made it difficult to find.

5. The various course components (lectures, course literature, exercises etc.) have supported my learning.

The very diverse groups of teachers were liked a lot, as well the different components of the course, it was liked that there was a variety of course components and that two alternative field days were provided. The annotated bibliography was criticized as it did not have a high learning effect for some students. The large amount of reading was as well criticized but other students liked the readings on the other hand a lot.

6. The social learning environment has been inclusive, respecting differences of opinion.

For being an online course it was stated that the discussions were very good, especially in smaller groups, which made it easier for everyone to participate. All ideas and opinions were accepted and seriously evaluated.

7. The physical learning environment (facilities, equipment etc.) has been satisfactory.

As it was online it should be rather named "digital learning environment". It depended a lot on the individual internet connection at home. Being always at home was for some students a struggle, therefore the two excursion days were liked a lot as finally some personal interaction was possible. Wonder and Zoom worked well as digital classrooms. Improvements could be made on how individual lecturers can use interactive tools e.g. more pictures with questions, more breakout rooms, using Menti for questions.

8. The examination(s) provided opportunity to demonstrate what I had learnt during the course (see the learning objectives).

Most students complained about too many assignments and that the time spent on different assignments was not equal. Some weeks had a very high workload, whilst other weeks had very low workload. Some individual assignments were a repetition of group assignments and felt redundant. Little feedback was given and at a quite late point, better and sooner feedback could help students to improve during the course. It was liked that there was no exam, but instead more individual assignments.

9. The course covered the sustainable development aspect (environmental, social and/or financial sustainability).

Overall, it seems to have covered the aspects well. One student stated that the financial part was a bit lacking, it could be interesting to simulate in Heureka how scenarios of biodiversity measures can impact the financial sustainability and compare different scenarios.

10. The course covered international perspectives.

Was covered very well. The week where different countries/regions were analyzed was liked (Module 2).

11. On average, I have spent ... hours/week on the course (including timetabled hours).

Most students spent around 36-45 hours/week on the course, which is the desirable amount of time spent for this course. The annotated bibliography was stated as being very time consuming while not contributing to the final grade a lot, it was as well stated by two students that they felt very stressed by the reading for the annotated bibliography.

More evenly distributed workload across the weeks would have been better.

12. I believe the course has included a gender and equality aspect, regarding content as well as teaching practices (e.g. perspective on the subject, reading list, allocation of speaking time and the use of master suppression techniques).

Sami perspectives were not represented in this course, Sami representants could be invited for lectures. It could also be interesting in seeing how different countries work together with indigenous peoples in circumboreal forest management.

It was liked that there were many female lecturers in this course.

13. What is your overall experience of participating in all or part of your course online?

It was ok and it worked well online, the water module (Module 8) was liked a lot as the lecturers made very good interactive lectures. Wonder and Zoom worked well, doing the group work online was easier than to do it person. There was a good balance between assignments, group work and lectures. The field days were a good replacement for the field trip, but having had the field trip could have given more insights to the students.

14. Please share what worked well when participating in teaching on distance

Wonder rooms worked very well and gave opportunity to discuss with other groups, teachers were available for questions, lectures were liked a lot and recorded lectures gave possibility to study at ones own pace, having everybody with cameras switched on was nice, Zoom worked very well, group work and structuring of groups was good, break out rooms were very good to interact and discuss.

15. Please share what worked less well when participating in teaching on distance

Group work sometimes difficult, depending on the people, some were not motivated. Difficulties when people have different levels of experiences with computers in groupwork. Online courses make it difficult to focus, more breaks could have been useful. More clear instructions on assignments, better and faster feedback. Some students stated that it was sometimes quite boring to not work together in person. Layout of canvas was difficult to understand and changed from teacher to teacher, the overview could be improved. A lot of time spent in front of a computer was straining for some. Some students were low on energy and the interaction with other students was lacking, being at home all the time was a struggle for some students. The discussions were limited to few students and not everyone felt comfortable discussing online, some lecturers facilitated a better discussion climate. Sometimes not having enough information about the background of the lecturers made it more difficult to ask good questions.

Main critique

- Less assignments, more evenly distributed work load over the course
- Annotated bibliography was criticized a lot
- Better structured modules and leave some parts out that are repetition from earlier courses

Positive aspects

- Module 8 (water module) was appreciated a lot
- Forest health and participatory processes module was liked a lot
- Alternative to the field trip was liked and a good compensation and appreciated a lot
- Zoom and Wonder, and the break out rooms worked very well

Possible improvement

- Module 4 could be changed, private forest owner perspective could be included here as well, could be interesting to do modeling on economical evaluation of biodiversity measures
- There could be more content on participatory processes, inclusion of Sami perspectives, more on alternative silvicultural methods
- Watching and reviewing professional debates on the topic of "sustainable management" could be an interesting task for future courses