



Place, Activity and Human Development MP0001, 10183.2021

15 Hp

Pace of study = 50%

Education cycle = Advanced

Course leader = Anna Litsmark (Co-course leader), Elisabeth von Essen

Evaluation report

Evaluation period: 2021-01-10 - 2021-01-31

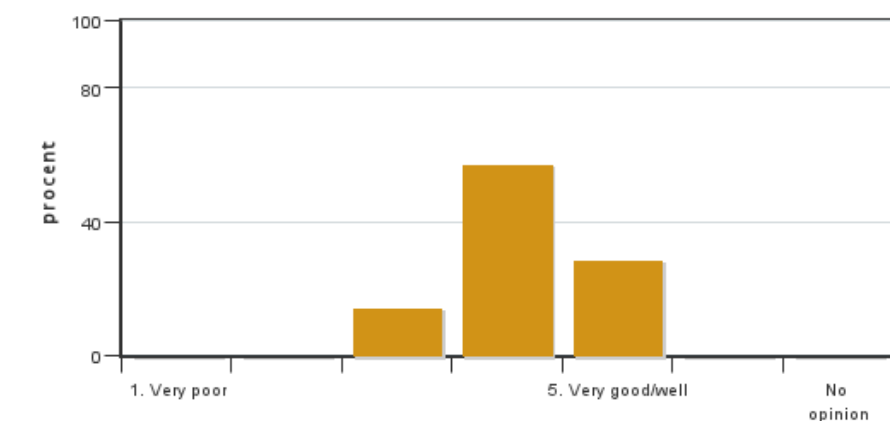
Answers 14

Number of students 29

Answer frequency 48 %

Mandatory standard questions

1. My overall impression of the course is:

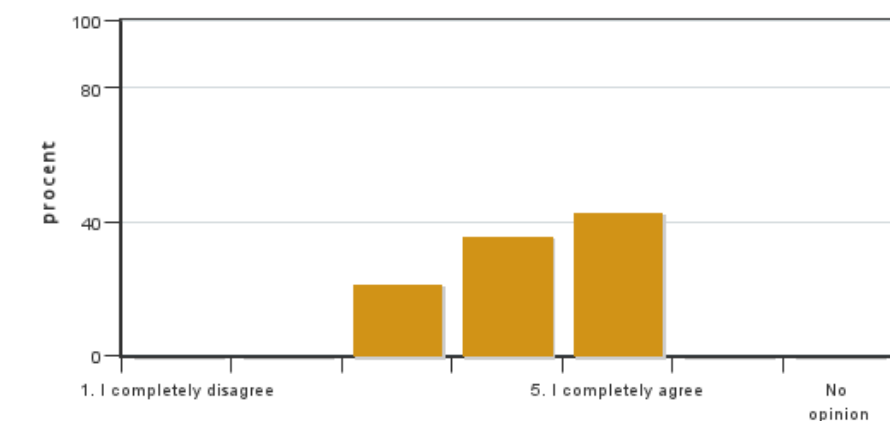


Answers: 14
Medel: 4,1
Median: 4

1: 0
2: 0
3: 2
4: 8
5: 4

No opinion: 0

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

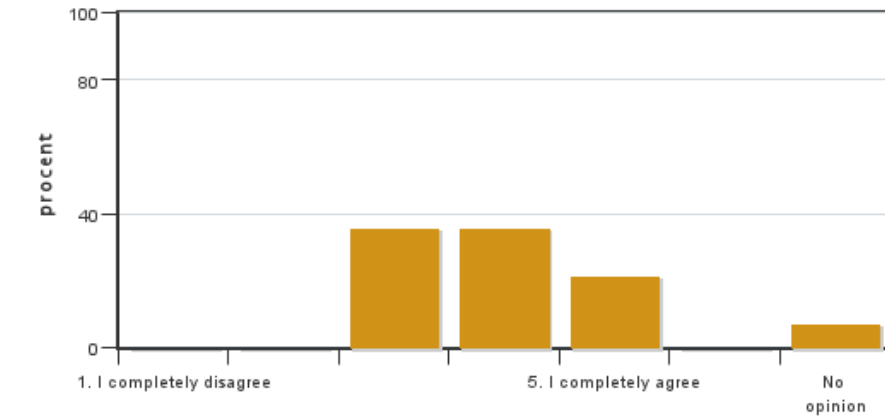


Answers: 14
Medel: 4,2
Median: 4

1: 0
2: 0
3: 3
4: 5
5: 6

No opinion: 0

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

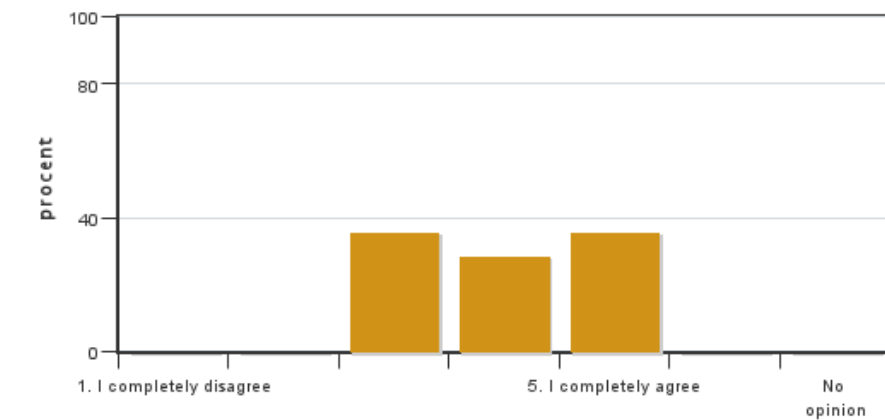


Answers: 14
 Medel: 3,8
 Median: 4

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

No opinion: 1

4. The information about the course was easily accessible.

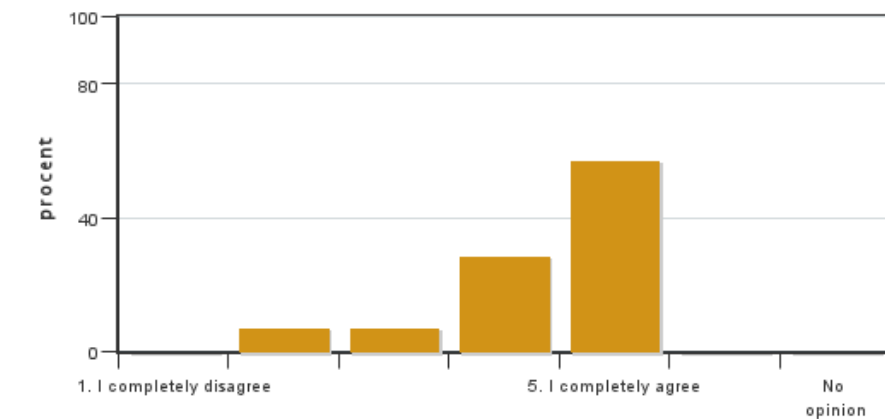


Answers: 14
 Medel: 4,0
 Median: 4

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

No opinion: 0

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

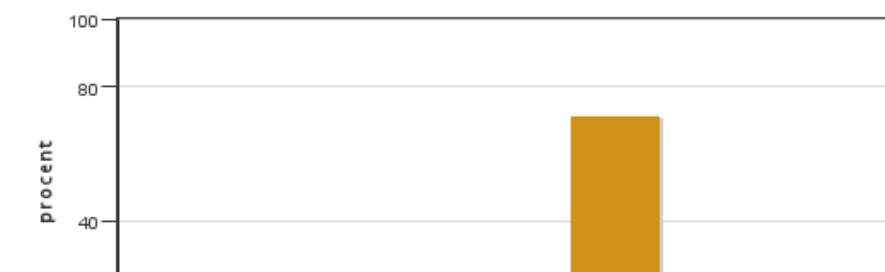


Answers: 14
 Medel: 4,4
 Median: 5

1: 0
 2: 1
 3: 1
 4: 4
 5: 8

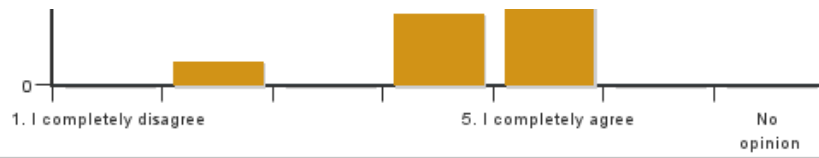
No opinion: 0

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



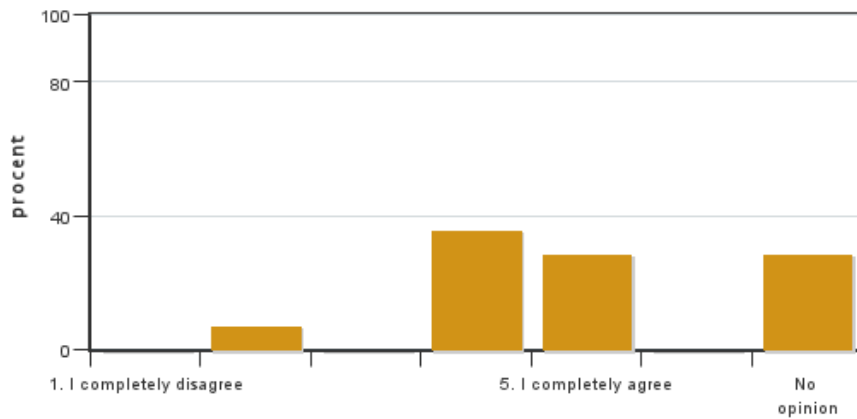
Answers: 14
 Medel: 4,6
 Median: 5

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



No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 14

Medel: 4,2

Median: 4

1: 0

2: 1

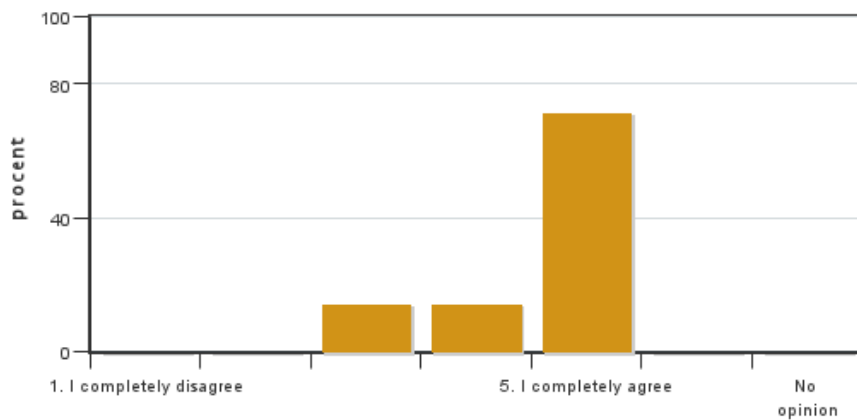
3: 0

4: 5

5: 4

No opinion: 4

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



Answers: 14

Medel: 4,6

Median: 5

1: 0

2: 0

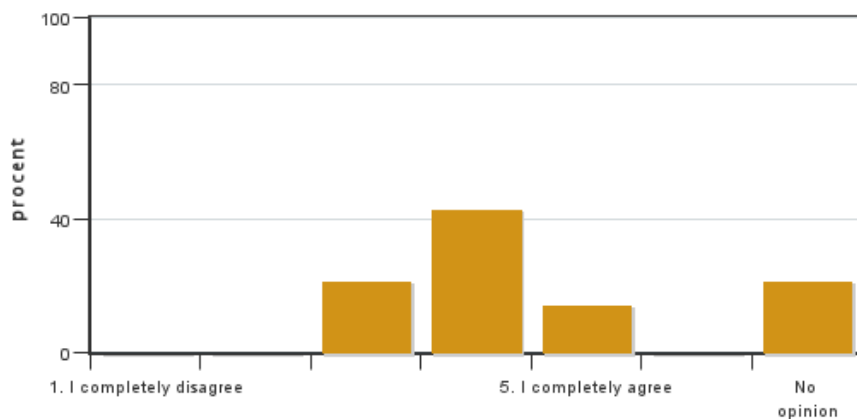
3: 2

4: 2

5: 10

No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 14

Medel: 3,9

Median: 4

1: 0

2: 0

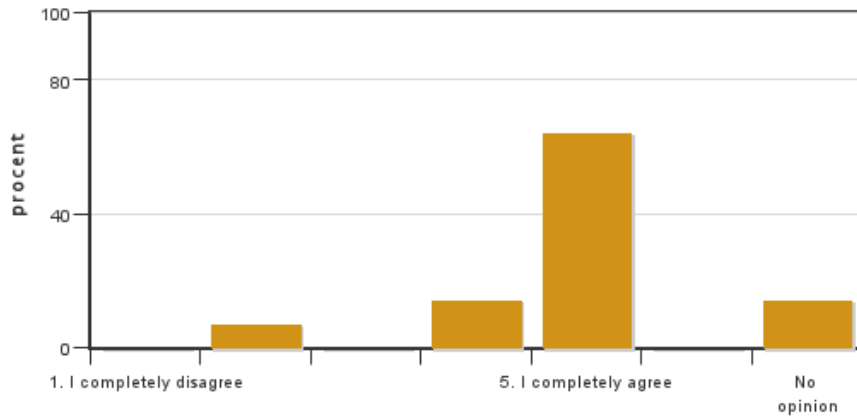
3: 3

4: 6

5: 2

No opinion: 3

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).

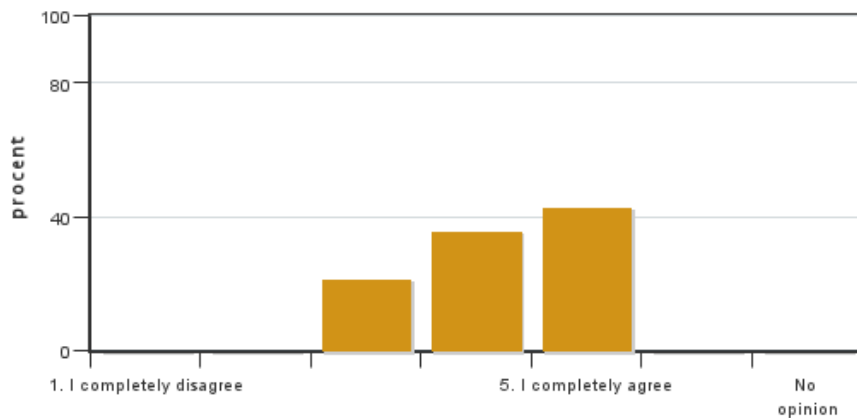


Answers: 14
 Medel: 4,6
 Median: 5

1: 0
 2: 1
 3: 0
 4: 2
 5: 9

No opinion: 2

11. The course covered international perspectives.

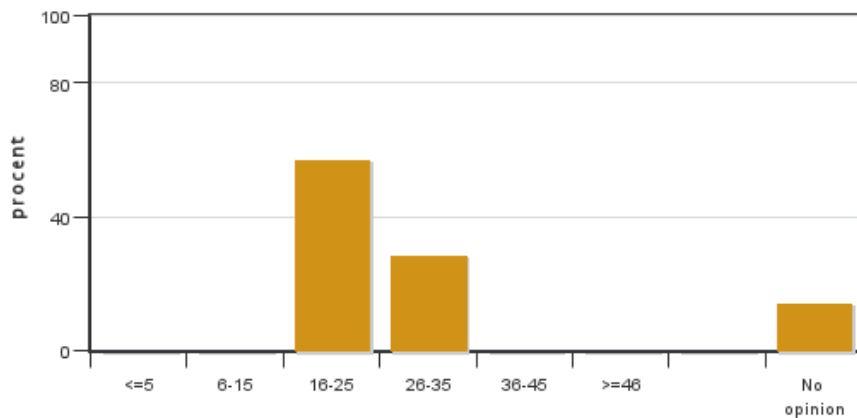


Answers: 14
 Medel: 4,2
 Median: 4

1: 0
 2: 0
 3: 3
 4: 5
 5: 6

No opinion: 0

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

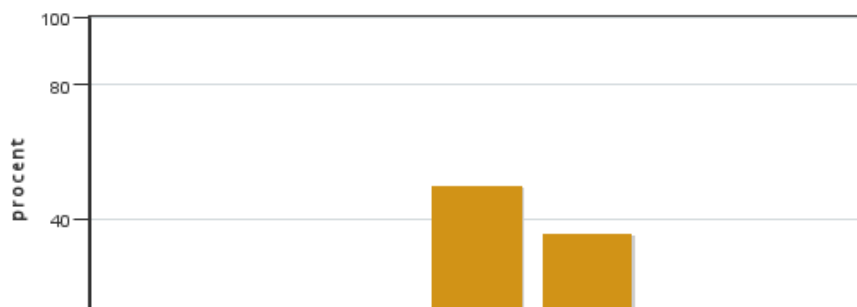


Answers: 14
 Medel: 23,3
 Median: 16-25

≤5: 0
 6-15: 0
 16-25: 8
 26-35: 4
 36-45: 0
 ≥46: 0

No opinion: 2

13. If relevant, what is your overall experience of participating in all or part of your course online?



Answers: 14
 Medel: 4,1
 Median: 4

1: 0
 2: 1
 3: 1
 4: 7
 5: 5

No opinion: 0



14. If relevant, please share what worked well when participating in teaching on distance

15. If relevant, please share what worked less well when participating in teaching on distance

Course leaders comments

No comments from the teacher

Student representatives comments

Summary of students' evaluations based on the questionnaire

14 out of 30 students responded to the course evaluation, which translates to a 46% response rate. The majority of students who responded to the course evaluation have a good overall impression of the course.

11 out of 14 respondents assess that the course content has clear links to the learning objectives of the course, while the rest to some extent.

8 respondents answered that their prior knowledge was sufficient for them to benefit from the course. 36% of the respondents, however, revealed that it took some efforts for them to follow the course as they had no previous knowledge in the disciplines of behavioural science, nor environmental science. 1 respondent opted for "no opinion".

9 respondents had no difficulty in accessing most of the information about the course, while the remaining 36% experienced some issues such as technical problems accessing the university's course webpages, the library webpage, and Canvas.

12 respondents confirmed that the various course components (e.g. lectures, course literature, exercises) have supported their learning to a high or very high degree, while 1 to some extent and another 1 disagree.

13 respondents experienced that the social learning environment is inclusive and respects differences of opinion. 1 student, however, did not experience so.

9 respondents answered that they were to a high or very high degree satisfied with the physical learning environment (e.g. facilities, equipment). There is, nonetheless, a clear contrast with other response criteria. 1 student kept having some troubles with her/his internet connection, and 4 opted for "no opinion".

12 respondents acknowledged that the examinations provided an opportunity to demonstrate what they had learnt during the course, while the rest felt it was a very demanding course.

8 respondents are in the opinion that the course covers one or more aspects of sustainable development (environmental, social, or financial sustainability) to a high or very high degree, while 3 students feel neutral and another 3 opted for "no opinion".

11 respondents concur that the course covers international perspectives, and 3 to some extent.

11 respondents reckon the course to have included aspects of gender and equality, both in content and teaching practices (e.g. perspectives on the subject, reading list, allocation of speaking time), while 1 disagree and 2 opted for "no opinion".

12 respondents rated good or very good in their experience of participating in distance teaching, while 1 student felt somewhat neutral and another 1 had a poor experience.

Additionally, the respondents spent an average of 23.3 hours per week on the course (e.g. scheduled hours, self-study).

Summary of students' evaluations based on the open-ended survey and various discussions

What has emerged in the open-ended survey in this course evaluation and other evaluation occasions is, above all, the clear structure of the content. Most students also highly value that all the mandatory examinations had been identified since the course introduction. This has helped students familiarise themselves with what to expect for the final grade.

A clear majority of the students are positive about the MP0001 Place, Activity, and Human Development course at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU), and many have explicitly referred to the course as an eye-opening course. These students particularly appreciate that there was a great variety in the examinations, starting from being creative in the exercises, to being highly academic in the final assignment. A few students, nevertheless, consider the course being overly demanding for a 15-credit one. These students suggest lessening the number of mandatory assignments to make the course be more of an appropriate 15-credit course. Some others also recommend having more optional exercises that are involving outdoor environments. In addition to this, some wish there were lesser mandatory literature so they could have the opportunity to find other relevant readings that are more applicable with their own expertise or interests (e.g. implementation of the main concepts to specific target groups from their previous field).

Most emphasize the benefits of distance learning, such as how they feel very safe not having to travel to a physical location due to the ongoing pandemic situation, and how online learning helps them adapt to their individual learning environments which have contributed to the improvement of their own learning process. Some even highlighted that they would not be able to take the course if it was not held entirely online. Many appreciate the lecturers and course leaders who seemed to be trying their best to adapt to online learning due to the ongoing pandemic situation. Some have also strongly encouraged the Department of People and Society to make the course entirely available on the distance even after the pandemic has ended. These students argue, if that is the case, the course will be accessible to more international students around the world.

A clear majority of the students consider Zoom and Canvas to be user-friendly platforms that have provided excellent opportunities to learn, regardless of the ongoing pandemic situation. They also revealed that group discussions in Zoom's breakout rooms worked very well, although some hoped they could have various opportunities to discuss their individual assignments with the course leaders instead of only discussing these with fellow classmates who were also still learning. These students feel they could have learnt much more effectively by obtaining such valuable feedback from the professionals. Additionally, a few students wish there were more contacts with classmates during breaks between lectures.

Most also pointed out that sometimes there were excessive explanations on how to use the technology (e.g. Canvas, Zoom) during the lectures. They felt that these times could have been used to focus on improving their knowledge related to the course content. There are, however, a few students who still struggle with this issue despite the information provided by the course leaders.

All students also experience difficulties in gaining access to some of the mandatory readings as these are not available in the library, neither in physical nor electronic version.

The majority of the students consider the course name is not at all suitable for the course objectives. They clarify further that place attachment, for example, is not even listed in any of the objectives, while the entire course is strongly focused on this concept. All students also highly recommend the course not only to focus on the Western world, especially Sweden. These students feel that there should be a wider perspective within the field of Environmental Psychology, including in this course. A few also prefer to have the main theories within the field of psychology (such as Identity Process Theory (IPT), Self-Categorization Theory (SCT), Social Identity Theory (SIT)) to be combined with the mandatory literature when relevant.

While many cherish a compact schedule (e.g. full 2.5-day lectures/seminars per module rather than spreading them out over several weeks), some students recommend having more breaks from one lecture to another as well as more short breaks within a lecture. They argue that it is truly a challenge to focus during the tightly scheduled lectures and look at the computer screen all day.

Most felt inclusivity in the social learning environment, although a few disagreed. These students further clarified that some lecturers were not well-prepared such as by not having presentation slides nor giving lectures that were completely in English, and that they felt forced to learn the Swedish language as they received individual feedback from course leaders in Swedish – despite that the official language of the course is English.

A clear majority of the students are satisfied with the course content itself, although they also wish to receive prompt and meaningful responses from course leaders via email, as well as constructive feedback delivered within the promised time from course leaders for each examination (including the final grade for the course). Some also wish the course leaders made it possible for completely anonymous evaluation by not having a discussion led by the course leaders at the end of the course.

There were many attitudes that were highly appreciated by the students, including that the course was very well-organised with a clear time frame, the specific instructions for all mandatory assignments were presented since the course introduction, and the literature seminars during Block II and III were very helpful for the students to be more focused on the 5 selected readings in each Block and to exchange the knowledge with the group members. The students also highlighted the possibilities to explore their individual creative side through various exercises and workshops.

Suggestions for improvements

Provide course literature, lectures, and examples that do not only focus on the Western world. Since this course is one of the mandatory courses within the international Master's programme *Outdoor Environments for Health and Well-Being*, there should be a balance of learning material from broader international perspectives.

Offer optional relevant readings that touch on more aspects of sustainable development. One of the university's environmental policies states, "SLU contributes to ecologically, socially, and financially sustainable development", and therefore, more students will be particularly interested in delving deeper into these aspects related to course content. Also, provide some optional readings on more basic knowledge of course content for students with no previous knowledge in the disciplines of behavioural science, healthcare, education, design, environmental science, landscape architecture, gardening, nor forestry. Additionally, suggest optional relevant readings that connect the main concepts (e.g. place attachment) to some main theories within the field of psychology (e.g. IPT, SCT, SIT).

Present optional exercises where students can voluntarily write their own individual reflection in connection to the literature. Such practice may help them to train themselves on how to generate possible practical implementations from the theories that they have read. These exercises should be made available via Canvas discussions so that fellow classmates may have the alternative to comment if they want to.

Coordinate with the library to ensure all mandatory readings are made available for the students. If the electronic version is impossible to obtain, there should be a reasonable number of copies of the physical books (i.e. the number of physical books should be well-balanced with the number of students).

After the course introduction meeting, send a link to students with multiple options (e.g. via a Doodle poll) if some of them want to be in a certain Zoom's breakout room between one lecture to another where they can have the possibility to socialise with classmates who have the same desire.

As soon as the evaluation link is available, remind students regularly (e.g. once a week) to help respond to the course evaluation. The student representative has already reminded the students through at least 3 different occasions on her own initiative, such as by announcing it at the last course meeting and via Canvas inbox to each student. The course leaders have also sent out one reminder a few days before the last day to access the link. Yet, the response rate is still low. When sending out the reminders, it should be mentioned that the course evaluation is anonymous and that more responses are needed to improve the course even though it is not mandatory. More students appear to be participating in course evaluations when anonymity is guaranteed and the students may feel they are contributing even though they are not obliged to.

Allow students to have a longer deadline for completing the course evaluation, at least a few days after they have received final grades and feedback on examinations. Examinations are part of the course. Those, consequently, should be included in the course evaluation (e.g. whether the students feel they have received constructive feedback or not).

Discuss with the Department of People and Society the possibility of changing the course name to be more relatable to the course content and making the course available completely online even after the pandemic has ended.

Set up optional drop-ins via Zoom with the IT department for students who need help acquainting themselves with technical matters (e.g. Canvas, Zoom, VPN). Although detailed instructions have been provided via the SLU webpage, it can be more helpful for these students to video chat with the IT staff (e.g. via Zoom's sharing screen).

Present the summary of the information guiding to various types of help offered by the university (e.g. study and career guidance, student health counselling). Even though detailed information is available via the SLU webpage, many students are not aware of these (e.g. drop-in sessions via Zoom with the study and career guidance are already made available by the university, telephone hours with the student health counselling for Alnarp students are also available and offered via the collaboration with Lund University).

Kei Nilsson

Student Representative for MP0001 Course
Autumn semester of 2020