



Urban Ecology for the Development of Sustainable Living BI1380, 40153.2122

15 Hp
Pace of study = 100%
Education cycle = Advanced
Course leader = Kristina Karlsson Green, Åsa Lankinen

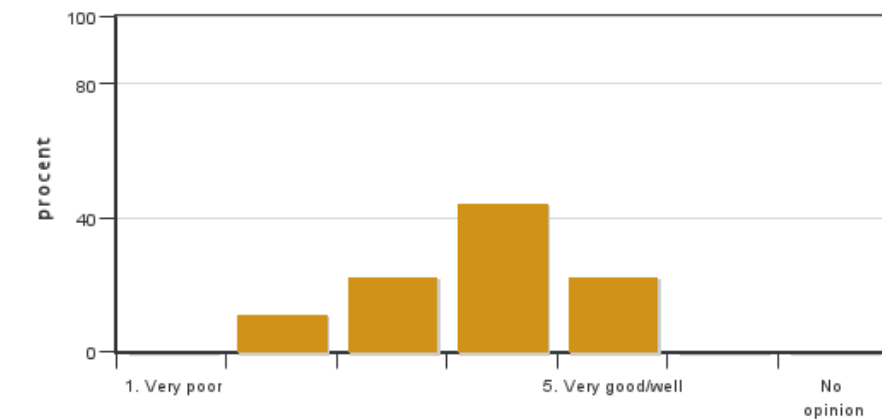
Evaluation report

Evaluation period: 2022-05-29 - 2022-06-19

Answers 9
Number of students 25
Answer frequency 36 %

Mandatory standard questions

1. My overall impression of the course is:

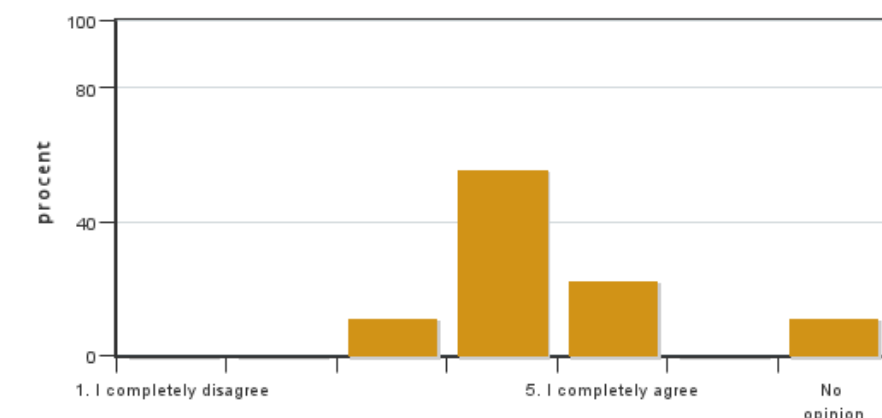


Answers: 9
Medel: 3,8
Median: 4

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

No opinion: 0

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

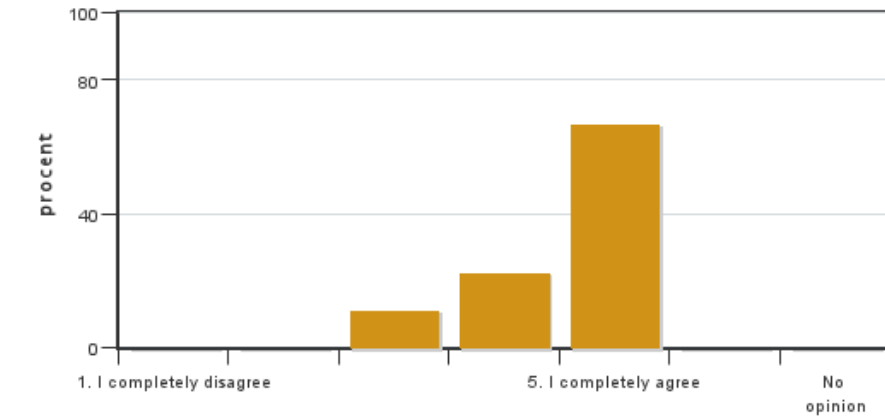


Answers: 9
Medel: 4,1
Median: 4

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

No opinion: 1

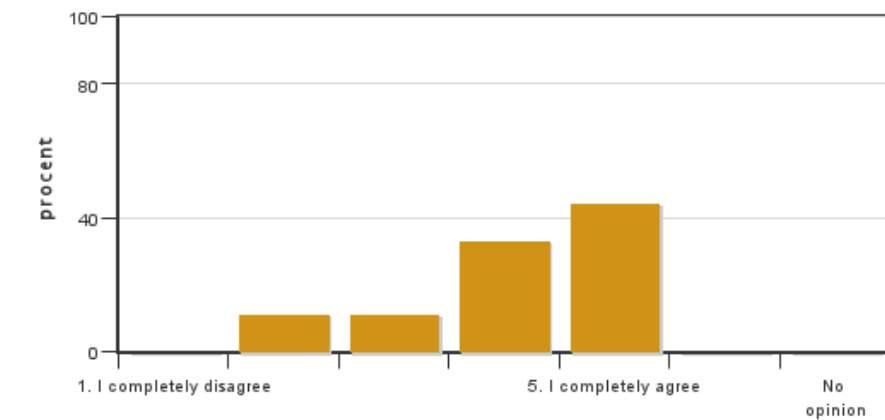
3. My prior knowledge was sufficient for me to benefit from the course.



Answers: 9
 Medel: 4,6
 Median: 5

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

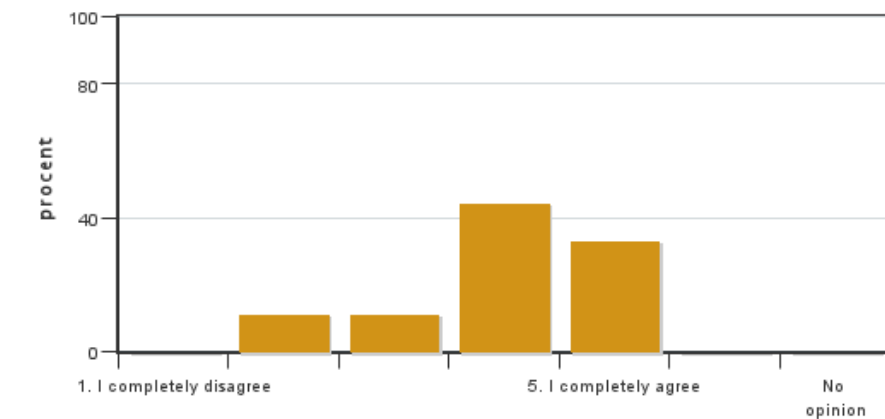
4. The information about the course was easily accessible.



Answers: 9
 Medel: 4,1
 Median: 4

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

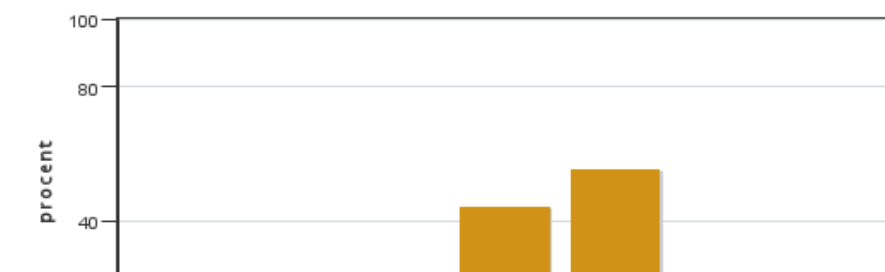
5. The various course components (lectures, course literature, exercises etc.) have supported my learning.



Answers: 9
 Medel: 4,0
 Median: 4

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

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



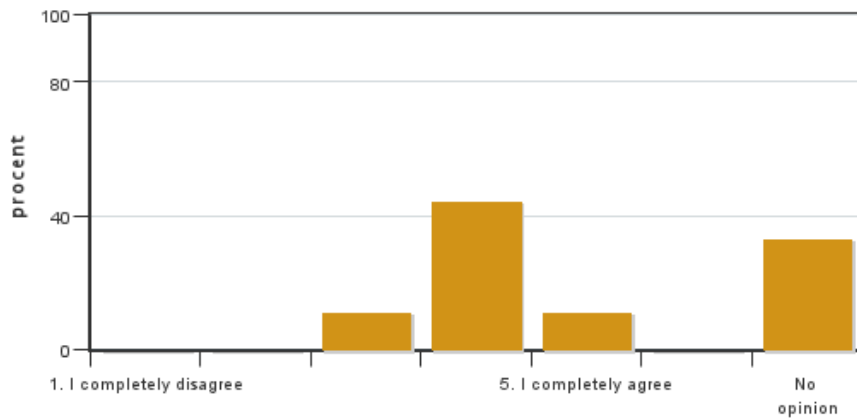
Answers: 9
 Medel: 4,6
 Median: 5

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



No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 9

Medel: 4,0

Median: 4

1: 0

2: 0

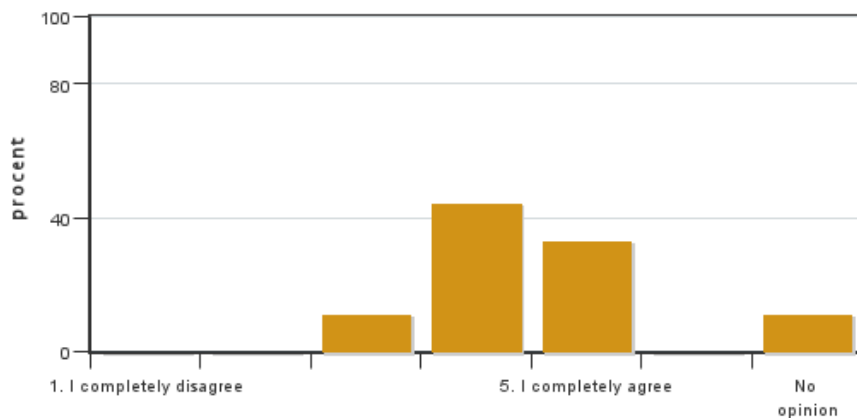
3: 1

4: 4

5: 1

No opinion: 3

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



Answers: 9

Medel: 4,3

Median: 4

1: 0

2: 0

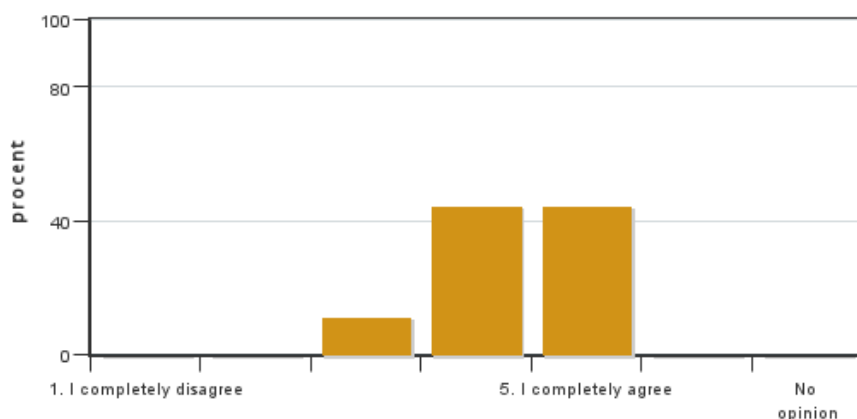
3: 1

4: 4

5: 3

No opinion: 1

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



Answers: 9

Medel: 4,3

Median: 4

1: 0

2: 0

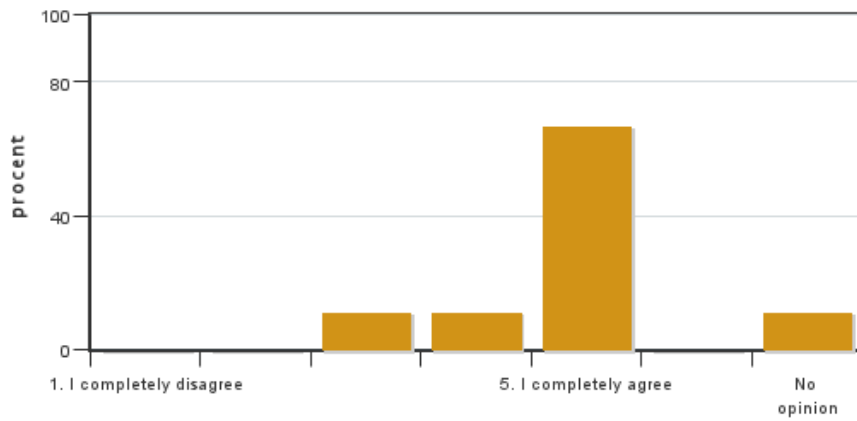
3: 1

4: 4

5: 4

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).

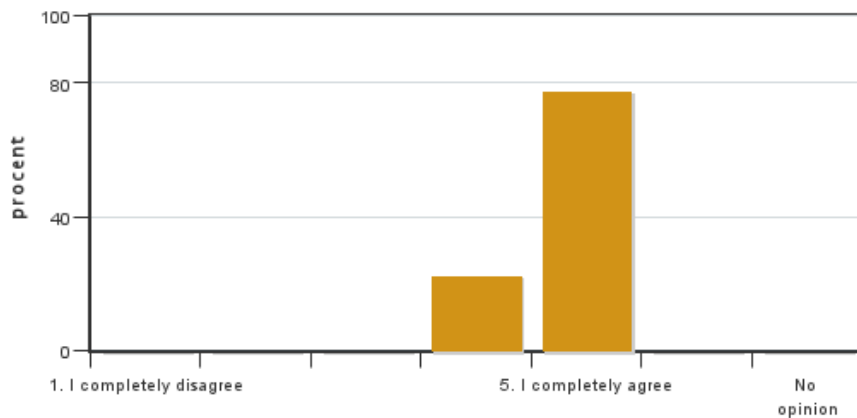


Answers: 9
 Medel: 4,6
 Median: 5

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

No opinion: 1

11. The course covered international perspectives.

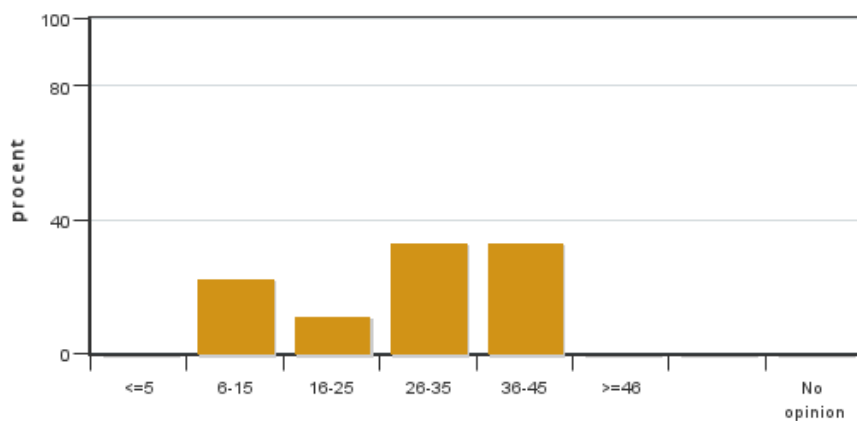


Answers: 9
 Medel: 4,8
 Median: 5

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

No opinion: 0

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

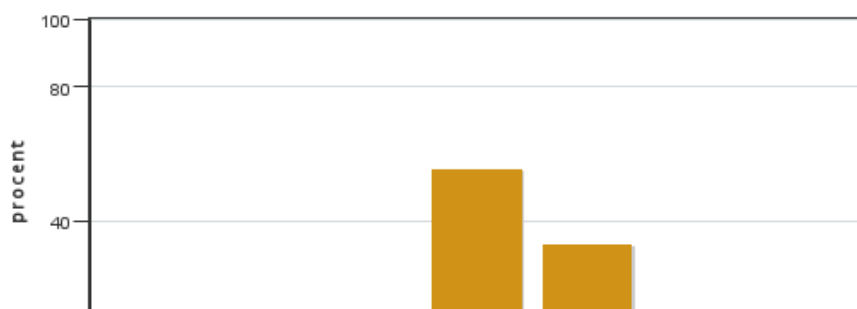


Answers: 9
 Medel: 27,8
 Median: 26-35

≤5: 0
 6-15: 2
 16-25: 1
 26-35: 3
 36-45: 3
 ≥46: 0

No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 9
 Medel: 4,2
 Median: 4

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

No opinion: 0

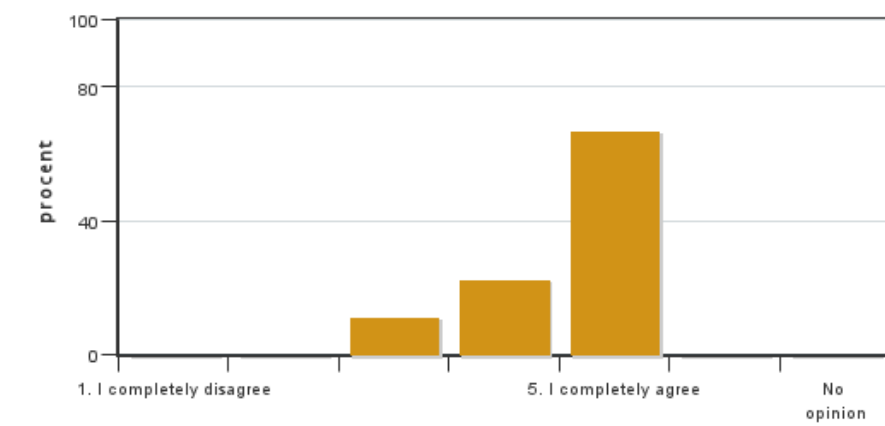


14. If relevant, please share what worked well when participating in teaching on distance

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

Additional own questions

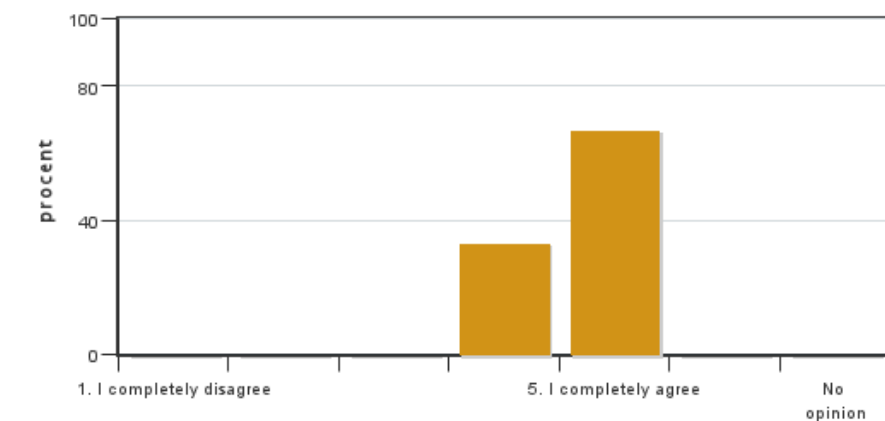
16. I have learnt a lot about urban ecology and sustainable development in the course.



Answers: 9
 Medel: 4,6
 Median: 5

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

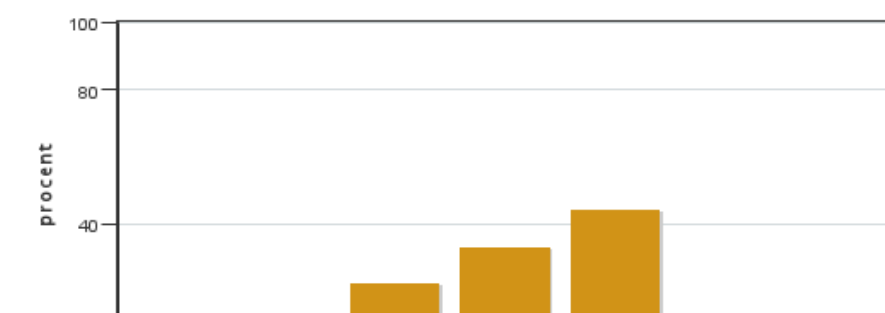
17. I have a deeper understanding of interdisciplinarity and working with people with a different background.



Answers: 9
 Medel: 4,7
 Median: 5

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

18. The structure of the course with different course modules worked well (introductory days, theme weeks, seminars, project work).

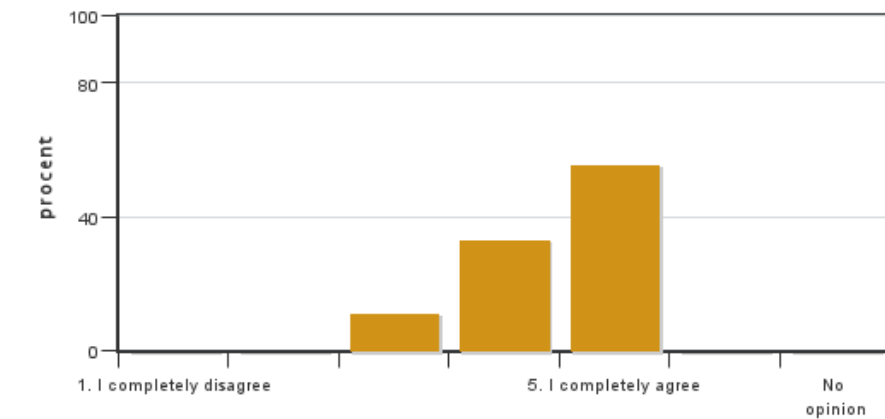


Answers: 9
 Medel: 4,2
 Median: 4

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



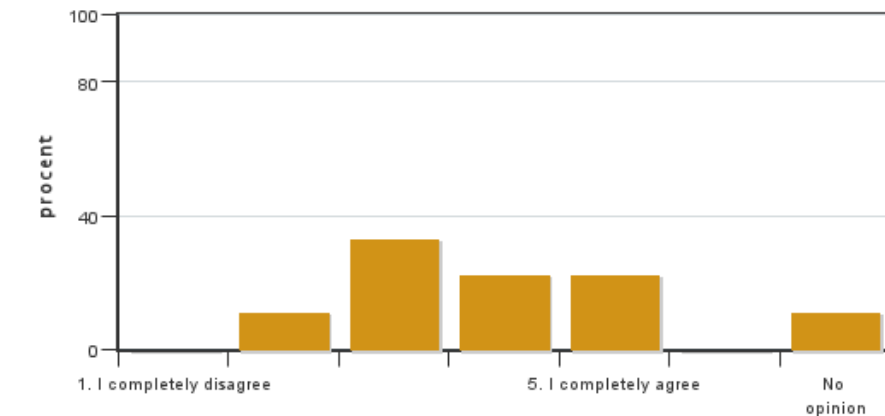
19. The format of this online course facilitated social interactions with teachers and students.



Answers: 9
 Medel: 4,4
 Median: 5

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

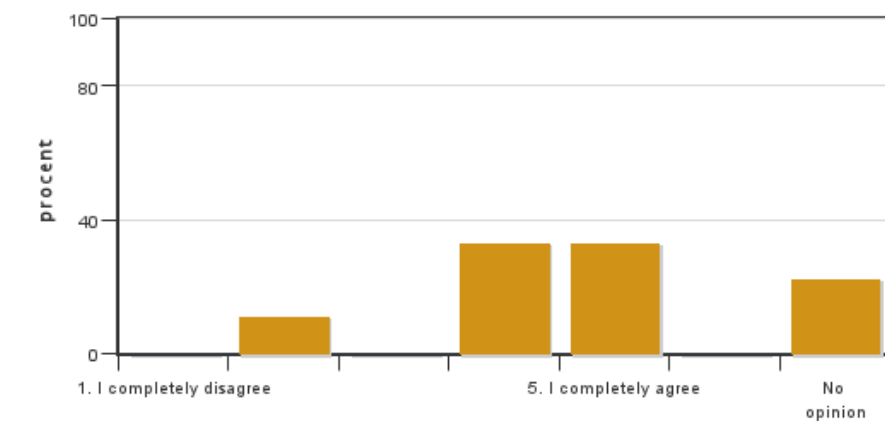
20. Check-in time with course leaders was an important resource during the course.



Answers: 9
 Medel: 3,6
 Median: 3.5

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

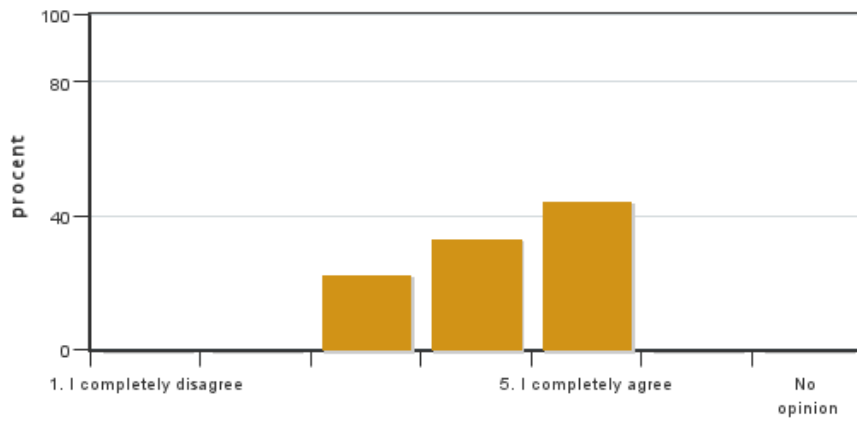
21. I found the introductory days useful for getting an overview of the course and getting started on interdisciplinary work.



Answers: 9
 Medel: 4,1
 Median: 4

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

22. The lectures during the theme weeks assisted my learning.

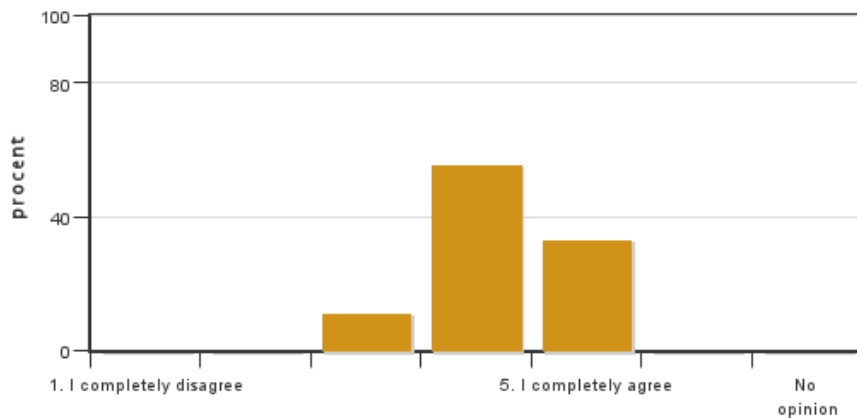


Answers: 9
 Medel: 4,2
 Median: 4

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

No opinion: 0

23. The assignments during the theme weeks contributed to my learning and understanding.

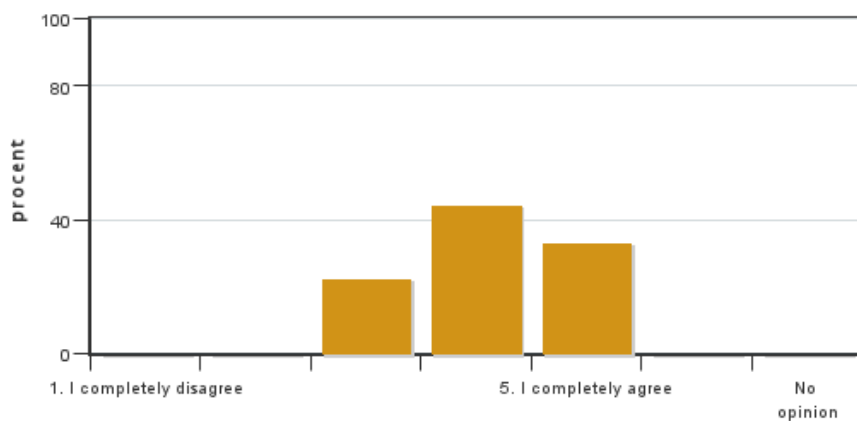


Answers: 9
 Medel: 4,2
 Median: 4

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

No opinion: 0

24. The seminars assisted my learning.

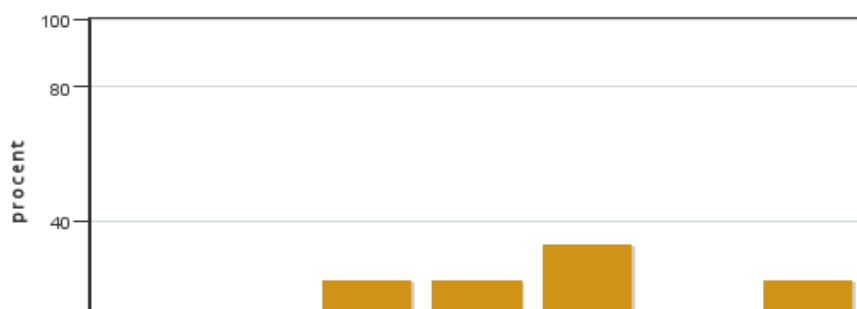


Answers: 9
 Medel: 4,1
 Median: 4

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

No opinion: 0

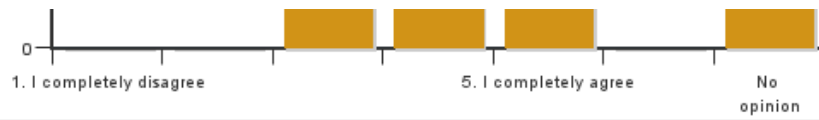
25. The course literature was relevant and covered the topics of the course.



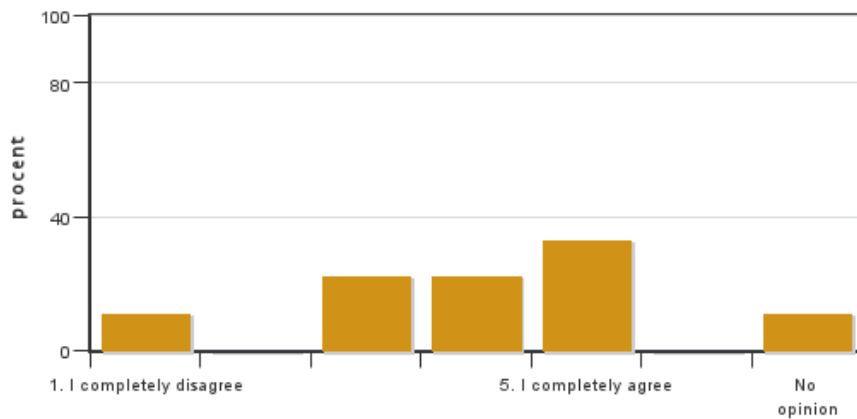
Answers: 9
 Medel: 4,1
 Median: 4

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

No opinion: 2



26. The methodology lectures were useful for my project work.

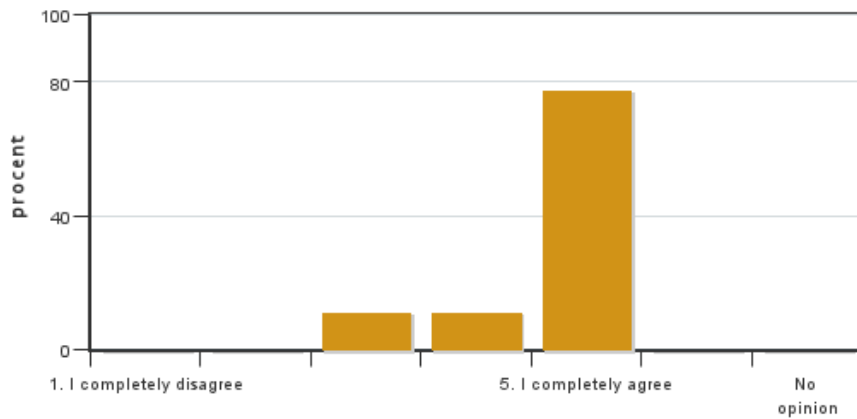


Answers: 9
 Medel: 3,8
 Median: 4

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

No opinion: 1

27. The in-depth project work contributed to my learning within a subject area.

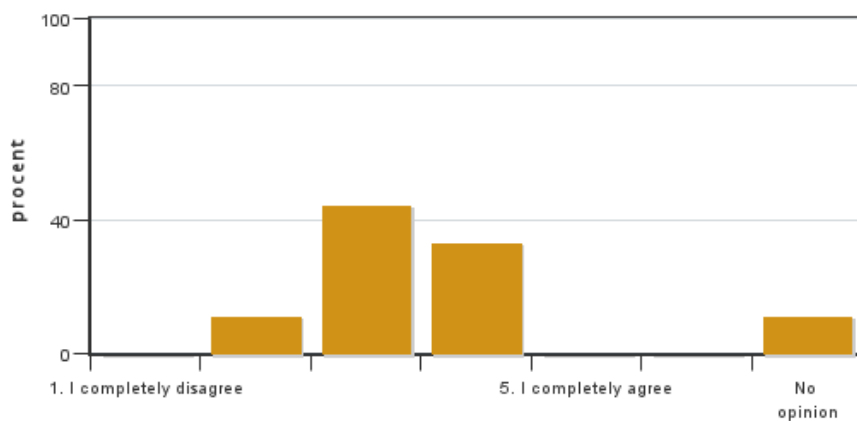


Answers: 9
 Medel: 4,7
 Median: 5

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

No opinion: 0

28. The jigsaw project work aided my interdisciplinary discussions and my training in formulating interdisciplinary problems.

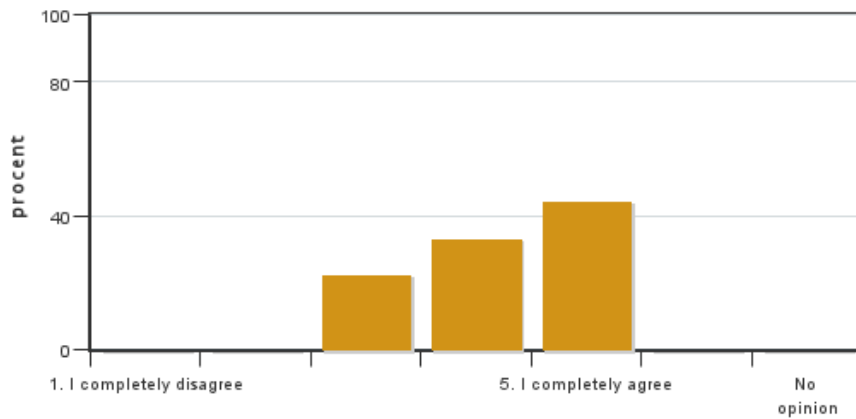


Answers: 9
 Medel: 3,3
 Median: 3

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

No opinion: 1

29. The popular science assignment aided my learning about explaining a problem to the general public.

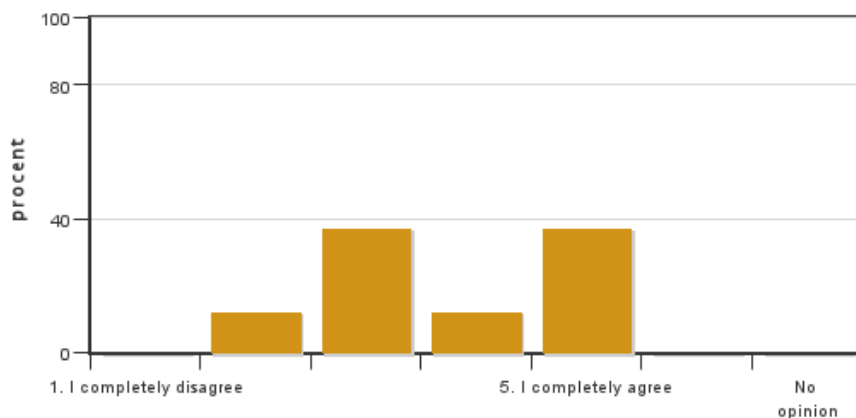


Answers: 9
 Medel: 4,2
 Median: 4

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

No opinion: 0

30. Examinations involving group presentations or group reports worked well.



Answers: 8
 Medel: 3,8
 Median: 3.5

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

No opinion: 0

31. What were the three best things about the course?

31. What were the three things you would strongly recommend to be changed in the course?

31. What would be your advice for developing the course in the future?

Course leaders comments

This was the very first time the course was given. 17 students followed this online course. These students had a background in either biology, landscape architecture or environmental science. Eight additional students were registered and said that they intended to attend, but only appeared unregularly or never appeared. This caused confusion for both teachers and students regarding group assignments. We realized that some of these students, and also some of the students that followed the course, assumed that because this is an online course they could have other engagements, such as a full time job. For the next time, we need to communicate more clearly that most of this course involves synchronous teaching and that the group work and seminars are vital parts for student learning through discussions between students with different backgrounds.

Overall, students seemed satisfied with the course, though there was some variation among students. Students expressed that they learnt a lot about urban ecology, sustainable development and working in an interdisciplinary way. The overall structure of the course seems to work. Students particularly enjoyed the in-depth group project. The jigsaw group project was less valued, but one student pointed out it was a good learning experience as the group had the same type of problems that the task was about. Moreover, it was pointed out that there were too many group examinations that contributed to the final grade. Group examination worked less well for the jigsaw project were groups were slightly larger and teachers had less insight in the contribution of each of the students. We should rethink examination for the next time, and which tasks are graded. One student pointed out that we could improve the quiz so that it better facilitates learning. It would be good to look into some other more flexible tool for this than Canvas.

Time spent on the course was in general a little lower than expected for a full time course (median 26-35). As this

was the first time the course was given, the amount of work for the students was hard for us to judge before hand. It seems that we could increase the work load slightly for the next time. Students also pointed out that the work load could be more evenly spread throughout the course, as the work load was generally higher towards the end of the course. We think that when developing the jigsaw group project, which worked less well, we could plan it so that students start working on it earlier in the course. Also making it more concrete may help students getting started earlier.

In general, students enjoyed the lectures, but the two methodology lectures (one on natural science and one on social science) were of less importance to some students. As the course is intended for students with a diverse background, we feel that some insights into methodology in another discipline is important to keep. Some students said that they wanted recorded lectures. However, as we think it is valuable with synchronous teaching for student learning, and we want the students to meet over lectures, we think it is better to keep the synchronous format of the lectures. The literature list connected with the lectures could be better prepared at the start of the course. This was challenging when the course was given for the first time as teachers had not had time to prepare all lectures beforehand. We should also review the content of the literature list and potentially only use scientific articles and book chapters rather than whole books.

Students liked the online format in general, though it was expressed that group work could be challenging, groups were in some instances too large and instructions could sometimes be clearer. In particular, it seemed that we could have supported students better about how they could connect to perform the group work on their own, such as setting up a group communication platform on Canvas or recommended the use of social media. We could also think about using fewer different groups in general. We do feel, however, that it can benefit student learning to belong to a few groups where the background of the students varies. In general, however, students felt that social interactions were supported. Not all students valued the check-in time with the teachers, but some students did, and we feel this helped us to reach students that had questions.

Only nine out of the 17 students filled out the course evaluation (ca 52%). To increase the answer rate, we could schedule a time for filling out the course evaluation. We did schedule a time when the students could give us feedback on zoom. The comments were similar to what was said in the evaluation, particularly that group work was sometimes challenging.

Student representatives comments

Overall, the students had a very positive experience with the course; most of them think it was a good course they would recommend to others. Despite being an online course, the professors created an atmosphere where everyone could express themselves and exchange ideas. The learning environment was open, inclusive, respectful and accessible to all students; the lecturers' encouragement facilitated this to participate in discussion throughout the course and their enthusiasm, all positively affecting the learning process. The course included different aspects of sustainable development, with one student stating that the focus was on environmental sustainability. The course also covered international elements. Some students indicated that one of the most interesting aspects of the course was learning about urban cities from different parts of the world and the contribution of knowledge from international student

Most students expressed that their prior knowledge was sufficient to benefit from the course. During discussions, some students emphasised that having an academic background in social sciences was positive because they could expand their knowledge into new disciplines. Most students considered the course content to be clearly linked to the learning objectives, especially the lectures and the assignments. According to most students, the course components (lectures, course literature, exercises, etc.) supported the learning process. Some students expressed that the literature list could be improved because the books were not used as much as they expected; on the other hand, the scientific articles were central and supported the learning process the most. Most students thought that the information about the course was easily accessible; other students indicated the information could be improved. During discussions, some students expressed that the information available was overwhelming at times; however, this was closely related to the design of the Canvas learning platform. Most students deemed the physical environment of the course satisfactory; other students expressed that the physical environment could not be assessed because this was an online course. A student said it would have been helpful to record the lectures, making it possible for students to revise the information; a few other students shared this sentiment during discussions.

Some students agreed that the examination allowed them to demonstrate what they learnt from the course. Other students, however, think that the grade was primarily based on group work and did not accurately represent what they learnt individually. A student stated that some individual assignments should have been counted as part of the final grade rather than being a pass or fail task and that the larger group project should have been a pass or fail task instead (not graded).

On average, students spent 27,8 hours a week on the course. Some students stated that reading the literature was easy because of their prior knowledge. Other students indicated that course literature was time-consuming and challenging because of new terminology and concepts. Different students stated that the course's workload started slow and became too time-consuming towards the end of the course because of assignments happening simultaneously (jigsaw project, in-depth project and popular science assignment). Some students indicated that it would have been better to spread out the assignments throughout the course to balance the workload better. Another student claimed that there was a good balance between lectures, seminars, group work and individual work.

Students generally appreciate the online course because of its convenience and accessibility. The break-out rooms were also valuable for communication between students, discussion and teamwork. Moreover, the students appreciated the commitment of Åsa and Tina to the course. Some things that the students think could be improved in the future are technical problems with connections and having access to lectures (recordings) when students can't attend class. Additionally, the quiz could improve by showing which answers were wrong, making it less time-consuming. The majority of students stated that group work was the most difficult part of the course. Students agree that group projects are more challenging when all communication is done online. The difficulty of group work was exacerbated by having different groups for the seminars, the jigsaw project and the in-depth projects. Some assistance in coordinating communication between group members could alleviate the issue. Another alternative is to create fewer groups. Students also expressed that the workload was often not adequately distributed among group members, especially the larger group project (jigsaw project). Some students felt this was unfair because the grading was done per group and not individually. Another discussed aspect was that the jigsaw project could be more enlightening if the in-depth project had a more interdisciplinary approach providing first-hand experience with interdisciplinary cooperation.

Kontakta support: support@slu.se - 018-67 6600