



Plant-microbe interactions BI1354, 20184.2223

15 Hp

Pace of study = 100%

Education cycle = Advanced

Evaluation report

Evaluation period: 2023-01-08 - 2023-01-29

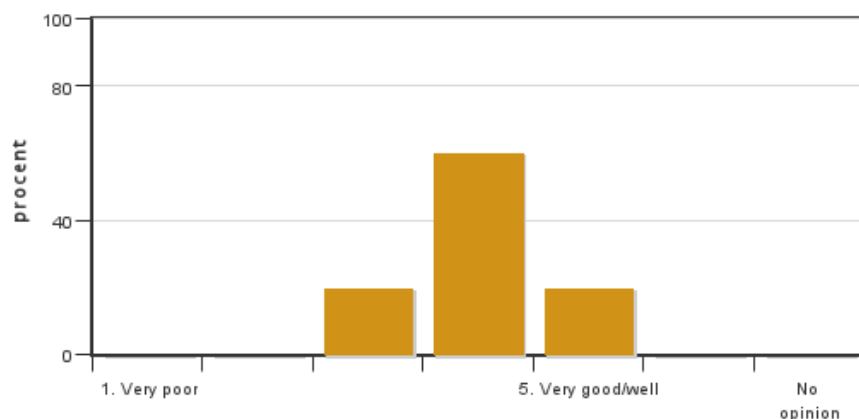
Answers 5

Number of students 6

Answer frequency 83 %

Mandatory standard questions

1. My overall impression of the course is:

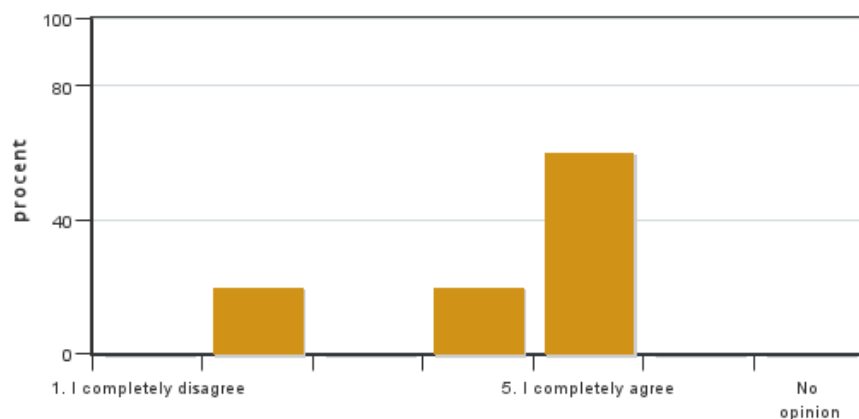


Answers: 5
Medel: 4,0
Median: 4

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

No opinion: 0

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

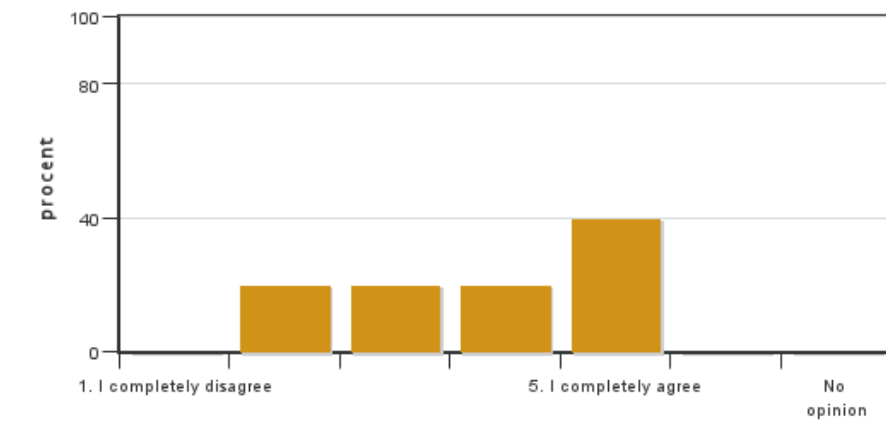


Answers: 5
Medel: 4,2
Median: 5

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

No opinion: 0

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

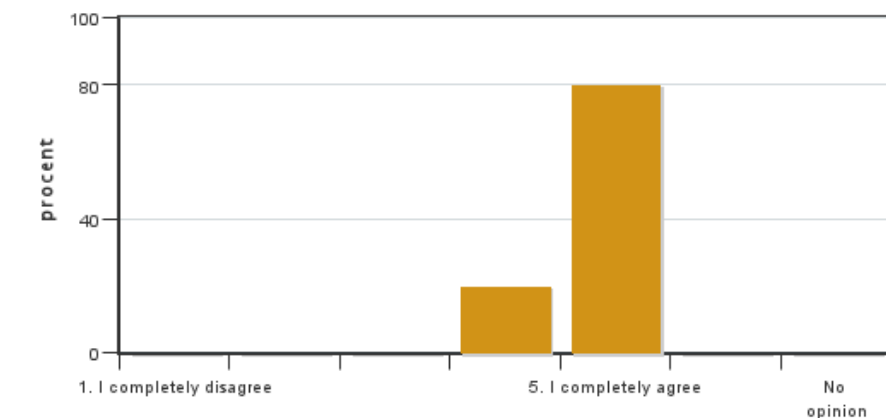


Answers: 5
Medel: 3,8
Median: 4

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

No opinion: 0

4. The information about the course was easily accessible.

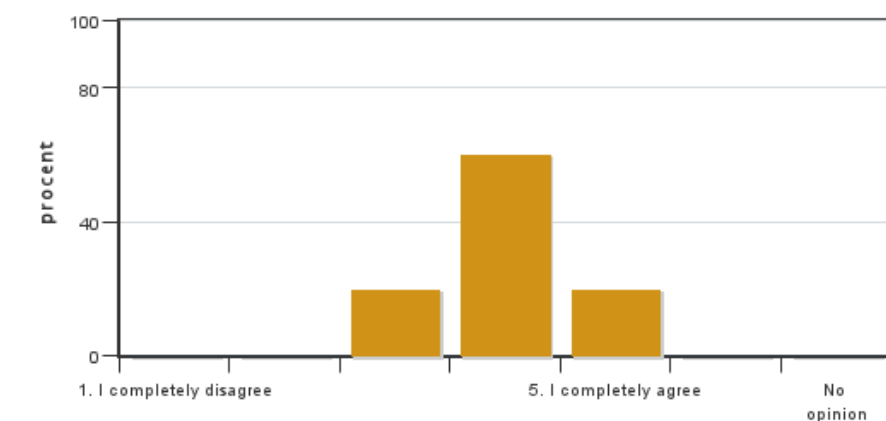


Answers: 5
Medel: 4,8
Median: 5

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

No opinion: 0

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

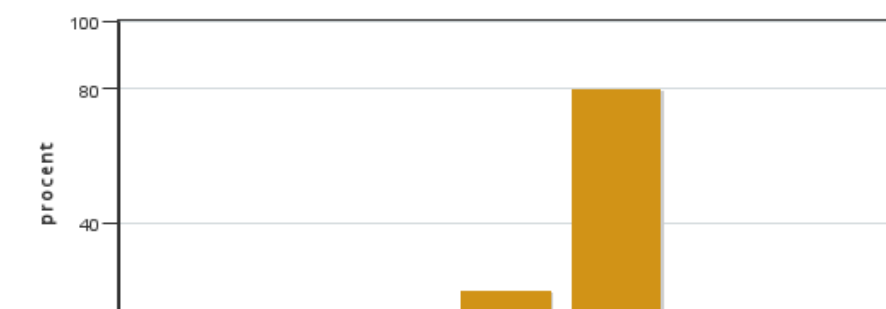


Answers: 5
Medel: 4,0
Median: 4

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

No opinion: 0

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



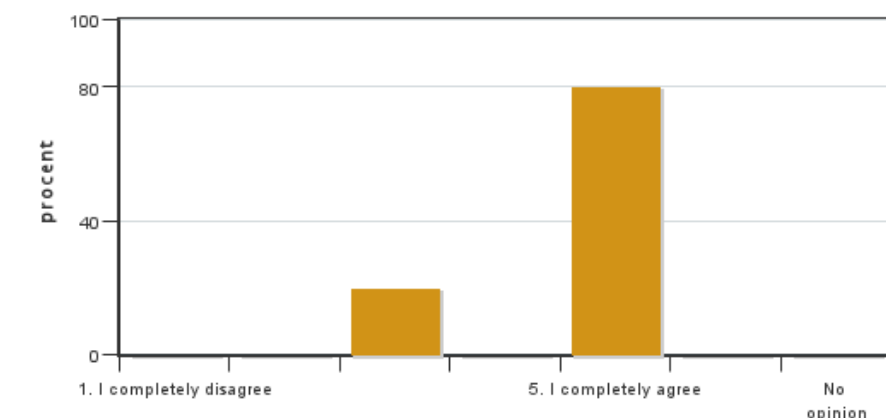
Answers: 5
Medel: 4,8
Median: 5

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

No opinion: 0



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

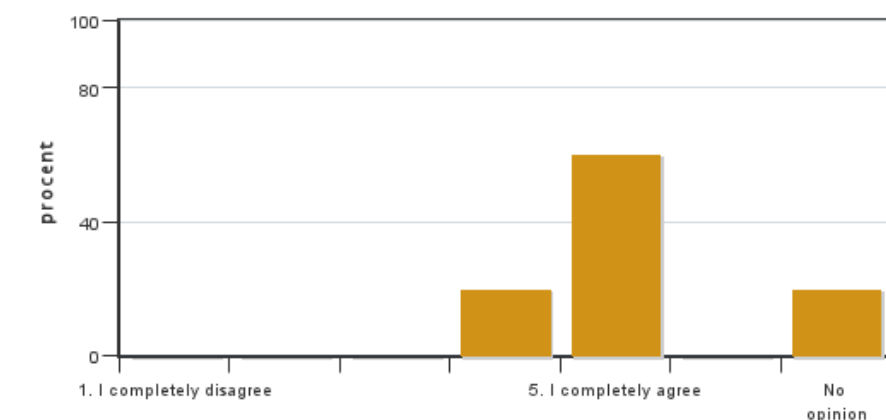


Answers: 5
Medel: 4,6
Median: 5

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

No opinion: 0

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

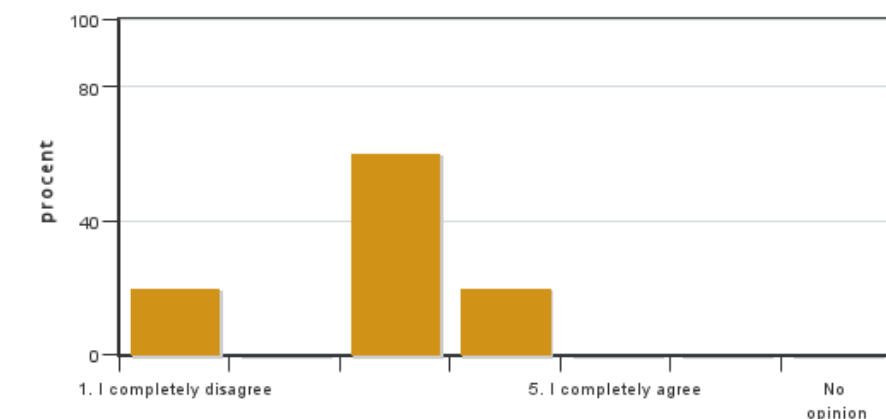


Answers: 5
Medel: 4,8
Median: 5

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

No opinion: 1

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

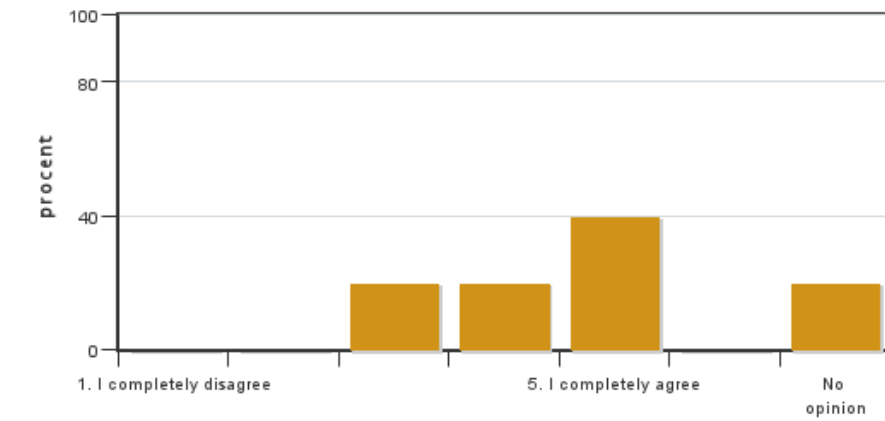


Answers: 5
Medel: 2,8
Median: 3

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

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).

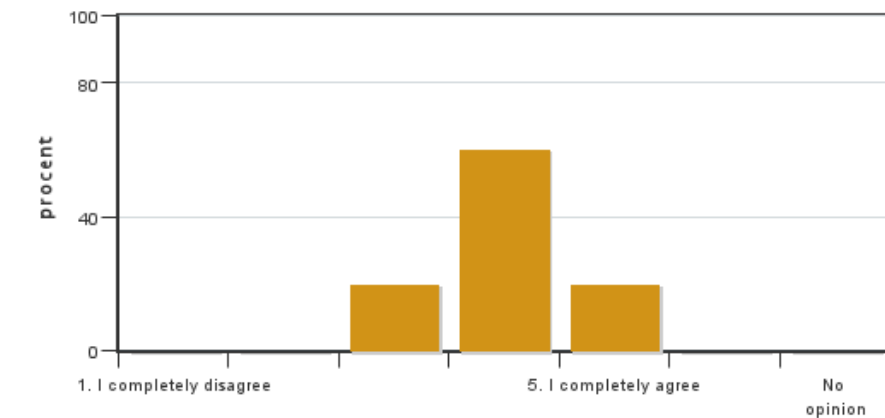


Answers: 5
Medel: 4,3
Median: 4

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

No opinion: 1

11. The course covered international perspectives.

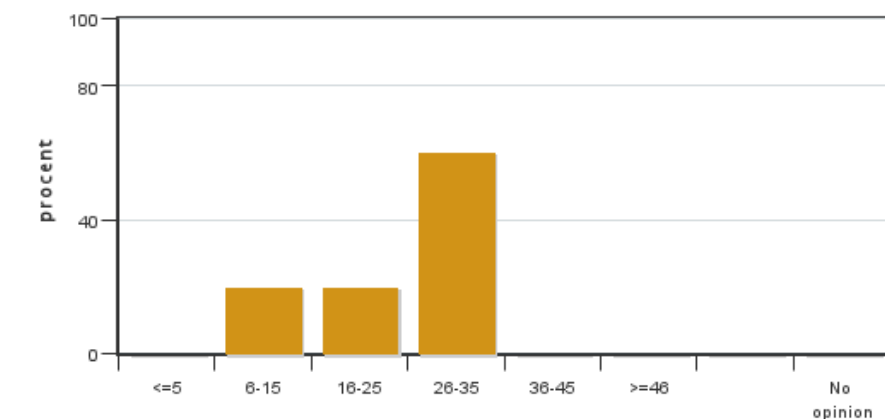


Answers: 5
Medel: 4,0
Median: 4

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

No opinion: 0

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

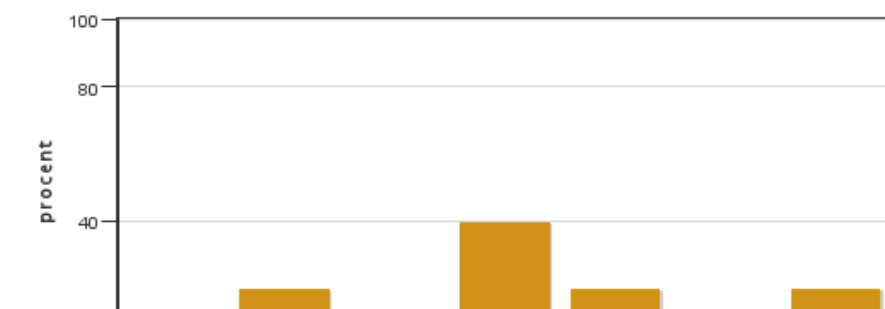


Answers: 5
Medel: 24,0
Median: 26-35

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

No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 5
Medel: 3,8
Median: 4

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

No opinion: 1



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

As in previous years, the course comprises different parts, including lectures, discussion of study questions, a research-based lab practical in research groups, a computer exercise, and a literature project. The lectures are intended to be largely research-anchored and thus are given by experts in the respective subjects/fields. The lecture part is traditionally organized in collaboration with the plant-microbe interaction course at the University of Helsinki, which limits the possibility to arrange the lectures differently (e.g. with two lectures per days as favored by the Swedish students, see below). The course continues to have relatively few students, who are mainly Erasmus exchange students (4 of 6 in 2022/23) with an agricultural and food science background and thus, are connected only to a minor proportion to the Master program "Plant Biology for sustainable production" (specialization "Abiotic and biotic interactions of cultivated plants"), in which the course was previously integrated to increase the number of participants. Due to this composition, the background knowledge in molecular biology and genetics remains to be rather diverse and represents a major challenge to be considered for the lectures and discussions.

In general, the course was perceived as very positive which is, besides the oral feedback, reflected in the scores from the questionnaire in relation to overall impression, course components, alignment with learning objectives and examination, information accessibility, social and physical environment, as well as gender and equality aspects. From both the questionnaire and oral evaluation, it became clear that sustainability development aspects need to be further highlighted during the course. This should be done relatively easily in the upcoming years as the content of the course in the area of plant-microbe interactions is directly connected to plant health and sustainable plant disease protection. We will encourage the lecturers to integrate these aspects more clearly in their lectures.

The students made some suggestions to change the structure of the course by moving the lab practical to the last two weeks before the Christmas break. This altered layout has already been considered by the organizers to increase the chances of finding research groups for supervision of the lab projects. We made the experience that many postdocs and PhD students are still on vacation when the course re-starts immediately in the New Year. There was a split view on whether the written exam should be kept before Christmas to have it in close connection with the lecture part or to move it to the end of the course to have more time to study. There were also wishes to condense the lectures to two lectures per day to facilitate more interaction between the students while being on the campus. As mentioned above, this arrangement is difficult to implement due to the co-organization with the course in Helsinki. However, as an alternative format, we consider to arrange literature study groups in the afternoons as wished/suggested by some of the students.

We have discussed with the students in the beginning of the course the option to attend the lectures only via ZOOM as this is already the format to connect to the lecturers and students in Finland. However, all students favored the on-campus assembly in videoconference rooms to physically meet their peers and also the lecturers. Unfortunately, while the attendance of lectures by students was very good in the first week(s), it decreased significantly over time and in many cases there were only 1-2 students present.

The students felt that the computer exercise appeared a bit disconnected from the rest of the course content, in particular due to the cancellation of the on-campus work in the computer room with the presence of the teacher. However, the cancellation was necessary due to the participation of the exchange students in a trip to Lapland. The student union has organised this trip without informing us teachers beforehand, and it was scheduled during a normal study week where compulsory exercises in courses take place. Due to the short notice, it was not possible to re-organize the computer lab, yet the teacher was available for discussion and help on the computer exercises upon student request. We will encourage the student union to consider this for future planning and also will emphasize to the exchange students that the trip to Lapland is not an "official" event and it may not always be possible to adjust the compulsory parts accordingly.

We also noticed the student's suggestions with regard to the literature project and the comment about an "uneven" distribution of tasks over the course period. In fact, we have made the students aware that the work-load may not appear overly heavy in the beginning while attending the lectures and discussions of study questions. Thus, we had

encouraged them to work on the literature project from the beginning of the course to avoid an accumulation of tasks towards the end.

Despite these concerns brought up by the students, they expressed during the oral evaluation their overall satisfaction with the course and the nice and constructive learning atmosphere, for instance during the weekly discussions of study questions. Furthermore, as already experienced in previous years, the hands-on lab practical in research groups was particularly enjoyed and appreciated by the students.

Student representatives comments

The course consisted of lectures, literature project, computer exercise, lab report and presentation and then a final exam. Overall, the feedback was mixed particularly when discussing the general layout of the course. Some were in favour of the exam being before Christmas to allow for a break over the Christmas holidays, whereas, others would prefer to have the exam in January to allow for a longer study time.

It was agreed by all participants that the lectures could be increased to two a day instead of one. This would increase the social aspect of the course too as the students and staff would be together on campus for longer, allowing for discussions about the course to take place. Furthermore, there did seem to be a slow start to the course and then became very busy in late December and January when there were multiple things to be working on, perhaps the workload could be more evenly spaced out.

A few students suggested that certain parameters should be set for the literature project to help choose a topic with the correct scope and depth. Perhaps it would be advantageous to have. Few pre-chosen topics by the course leader and the option of creating a project title individually, with approval of the course leader.

It was discussed how the number of different lecturers involved with the course created some instability and confusion. Firstly, because students were unable to build a good connection with each lecturer so were less inclined to engage and ask questions. Secondly, some professors gave contradicting information which led to student's confusion.

There was a call for more inclusion of sustainable development within the course.

The lab project was appreciated by most and found that it was useful to gain experience in the lab. However, it was also proposed that the labs could be moved to before Christmas, to allow more focus on the computer report, literature report and exam.

Furthermore, the computer lab was overall perceived to be out of place. It wasn't related to any previous lecture content and those without experience with the programmes found it more difficult to work with. Particularly this year, because the session was cancelled due to the majority of students being away for when it was scheduled, it was harder to receive support without having to set up a zoom meeting.

Overall, the content was deemed interesting and relevant to the course and all of the lecturers were knowledgeable and helpful in their topics. In relation to moving to two lectures a day, this would allow more time for discussions or seminars to engage students and more free time to work on assignments.