Prospects and challenges for sustainable food systems
LV0103, 10209.2122

15 Hp
Pace of study = 100%
Education cycle = Advanced
Course leader = Pernilla Tidåker

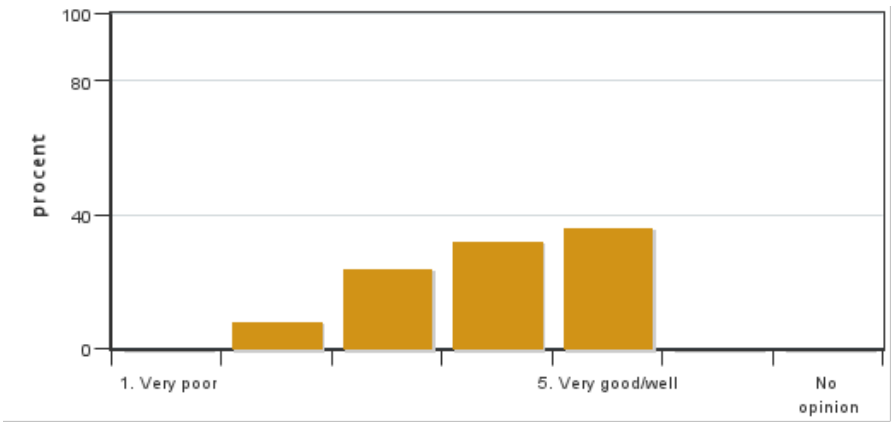
Evaluation report

Evaluation period: 2021-10-25 - 2021-11-15

Answers	25
Number of students	37
Answer frequency	67 %

Mandatory standard questions

1. My overall impression of the course is:

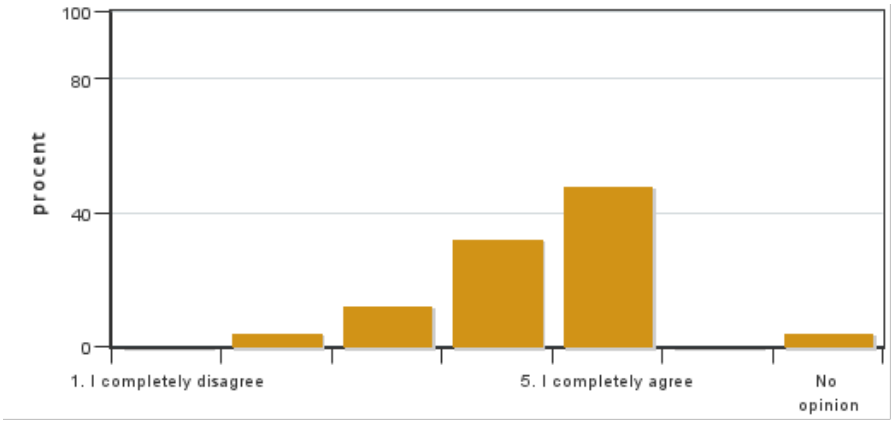


Answers: 25
Medel: 4,0
Median: 4

1: 0
2: 2
3: 6
4: 8
5: 9

No opinion: 0

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

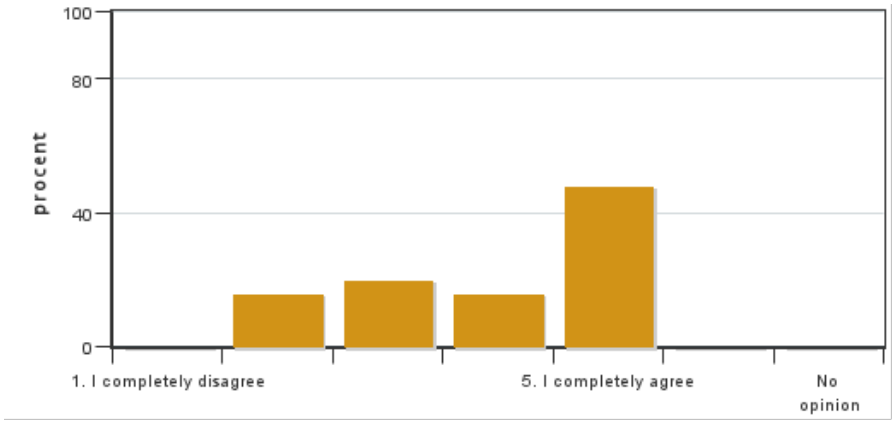


Answers: 25
Medel: 4,3
Median: 4

1: 0
2: 1
3: 3
4: 8
5: 12

No opinion: 1

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

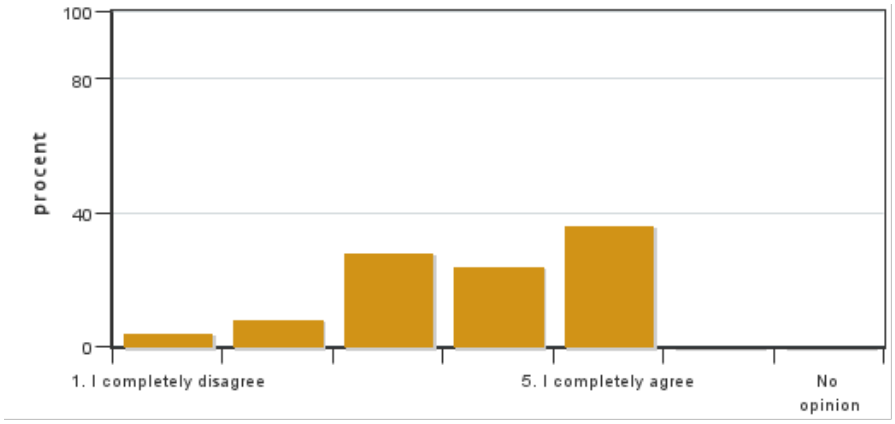


Answers: 25
Medel: 4,0
Median: 4

1: 0
2: 4
3: 5
4: 4
5: 12

No opinion: 0

4. The information about the course was easily accessible.

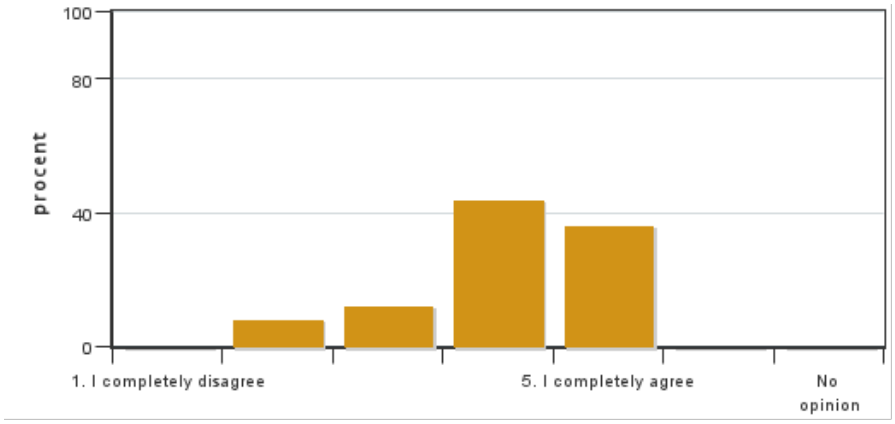


Answers: 25
Medel: 3,8
Median: 4

1: 1
2: 2
3: 7
4: 6
5: 9

No opinion: 0

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

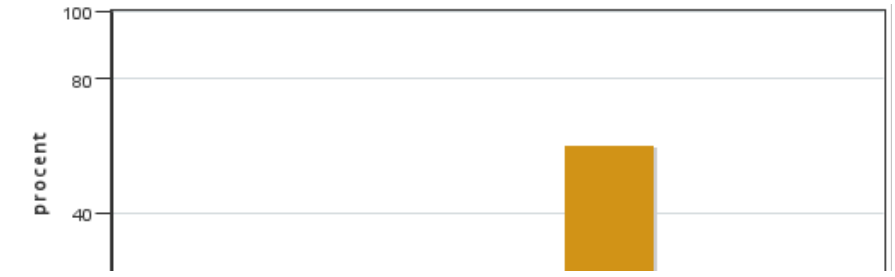


Answers: 25
Medel: 4,1
Median: 4

1: 0
2: 2
3: 3
4: 11
5: 9

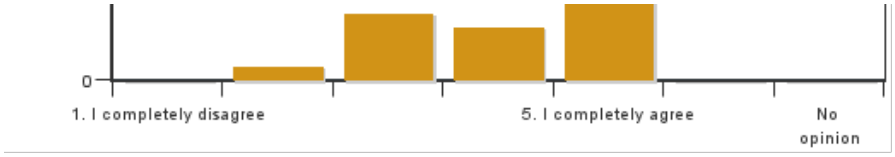
No opinion: 0

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



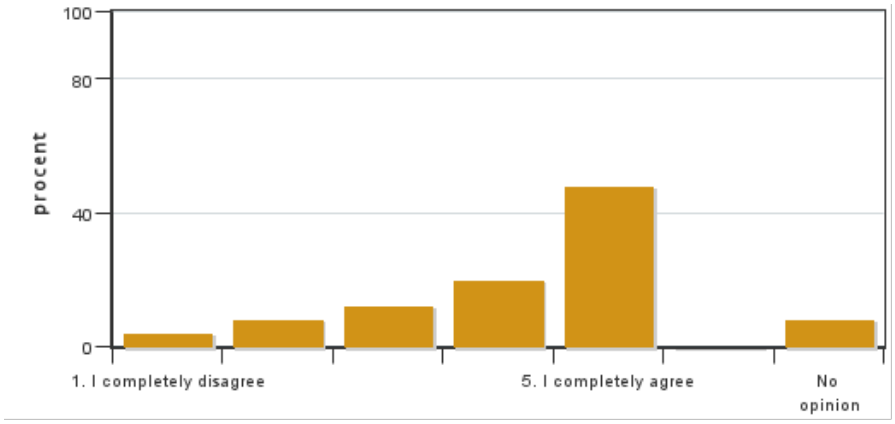
Answers: 25
Medel: 4,3
Median: 5

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



No opinion: 0

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

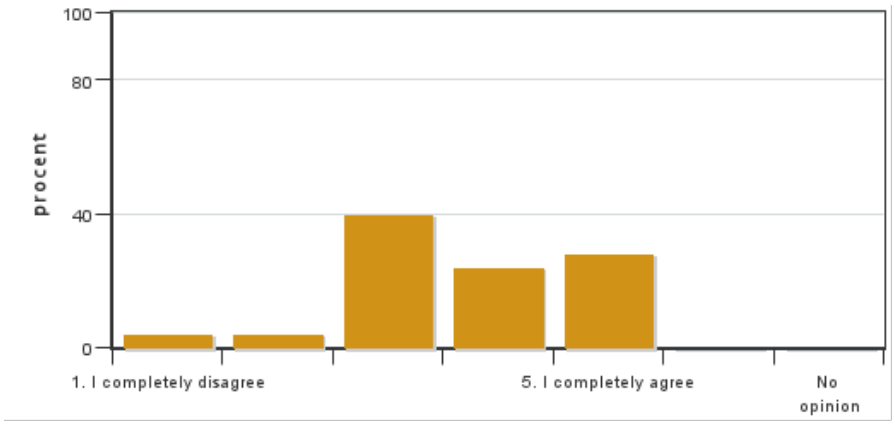


Answers: 25
Medel: 4,1
Median: 5

1: 1
2: 2
3: 3
4: 5
5: 12

No opinion: 2

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

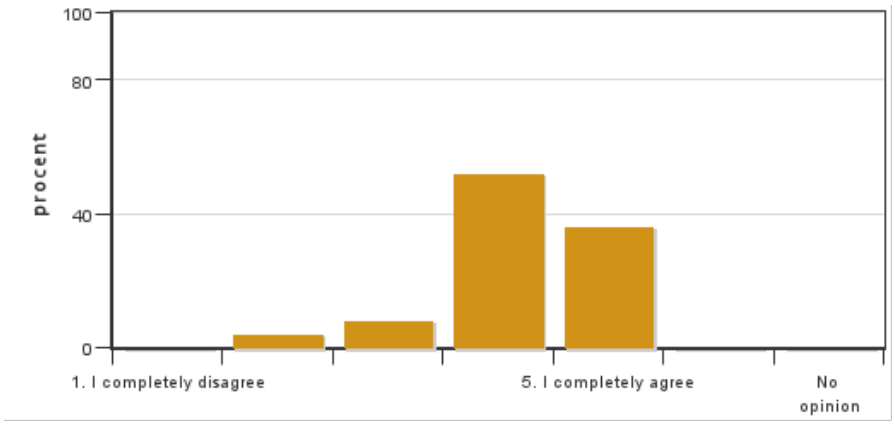


Answers: 25
Medel: 3,7
Median: 4

1: 1
2: 1
3: 10
4: 6
5: 7

No opinion: 0

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

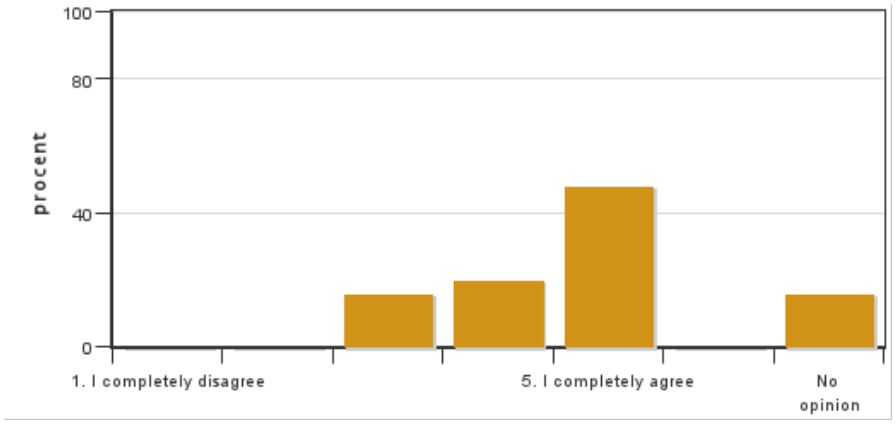


Answers: 25
Medel: 4,2
Median: 4

1: 0
2: 1
3: 2
4: 13
5: 9

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).

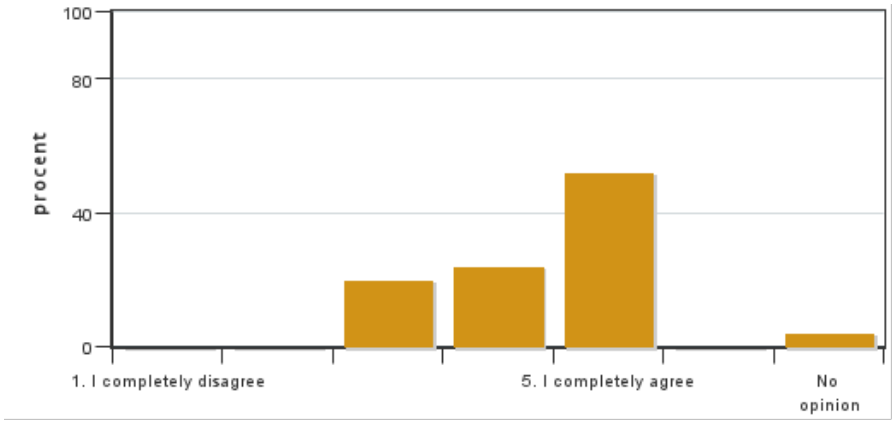


Answers: 25
Medel: 4,4
Median: 5

1: 0
2: 0
3: 4
4: 5
5: 12

No opinion: 4

11. The course covered international perspectives.

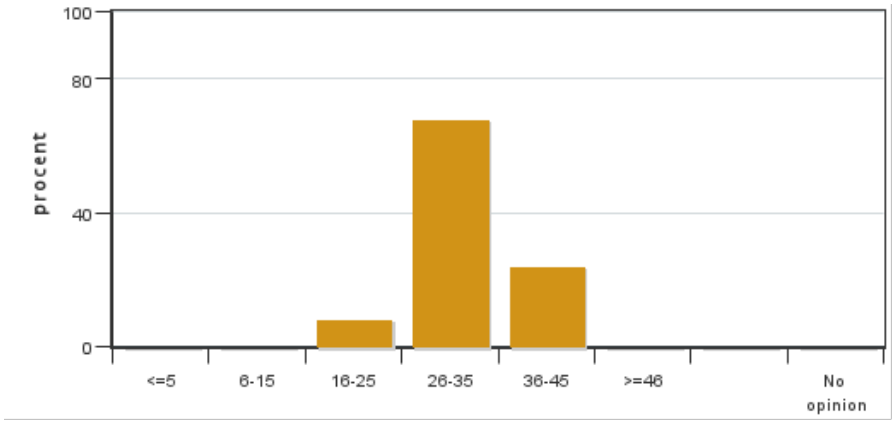


Answers: 25
Medel: 4,3
Median: 5

1: 0
2: 0
3: 5
4: 6
5: 13

No opinion: 1

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

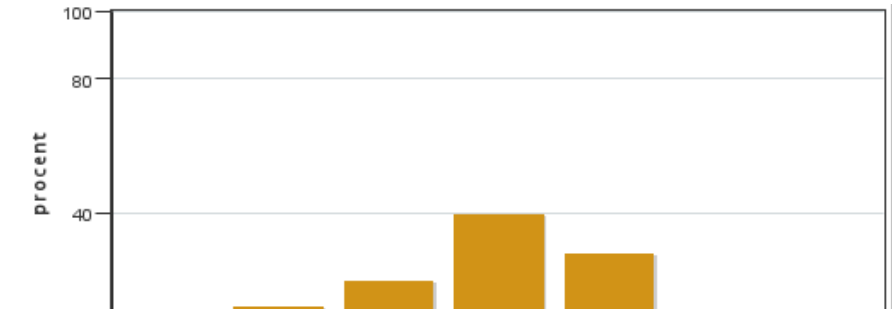


Answers: 25
Medel: 31,6
Median: 26-35

≤5: 0
6-15: 0
16-25: 2
26-35: 17
36-45: 6
≥46: 0

No opinion: 0

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



Answers: 25
Medel: 3,8
Median: 4

1: 0
2: 3
3: 5
4: 10
5: 7

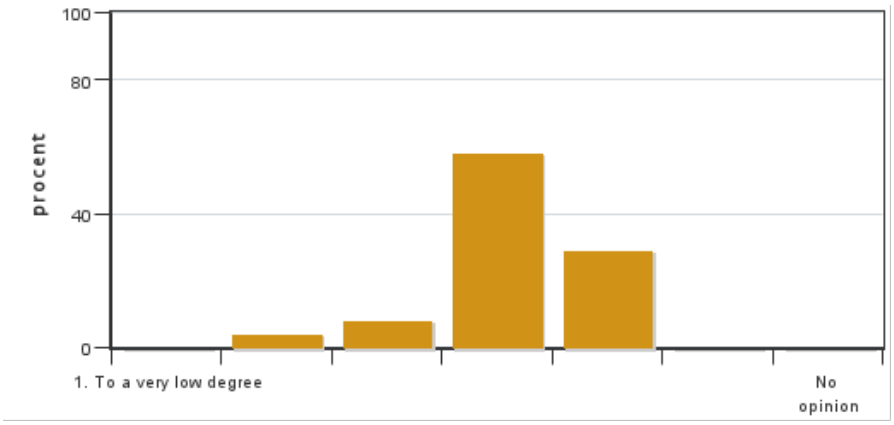
No opinion: 0

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. To what extent did the lectures contribute to your learning about sustainable food systems?

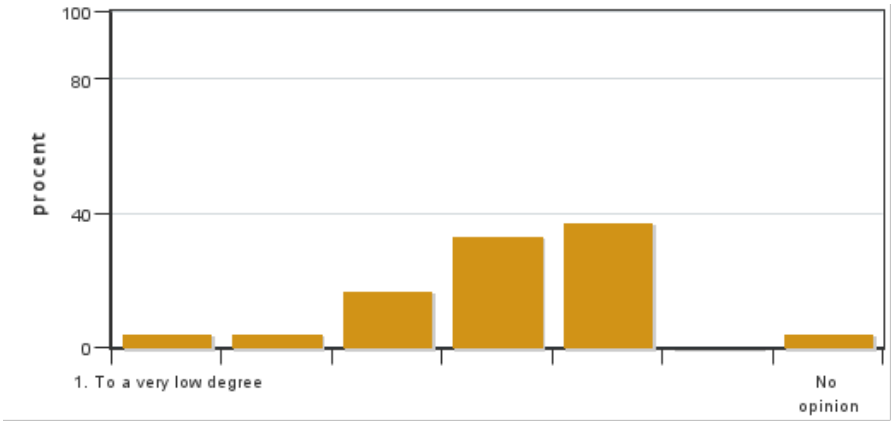


Answers: 24
Medel: 4,1
Median: 4

1: 0
2: 1
3: 2
4: 14
5: 7

No opinion: 0

17. To what extent did the course literature contribute to your learning about sustainable food systems?

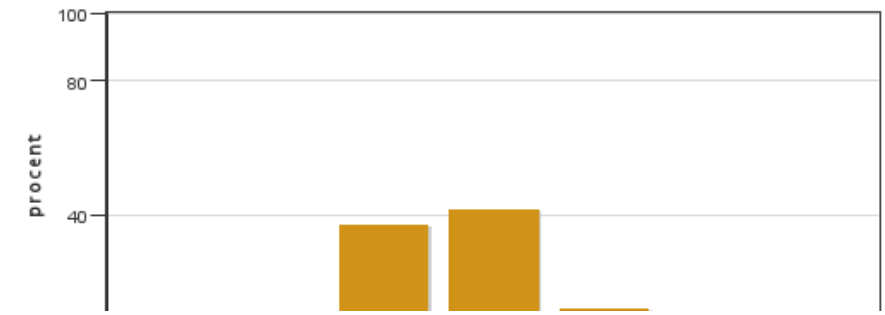


Answers: 24
Medel: 4,0
Median: 4

1: 1
2: 1
3: 4
4: 8
5: 9

No opinion: 1

18. To what extent did the presentation "Local food systems around the world" (the first week) contribute to new insights about food systems in different settings and give you an opportunity to learn from each other?

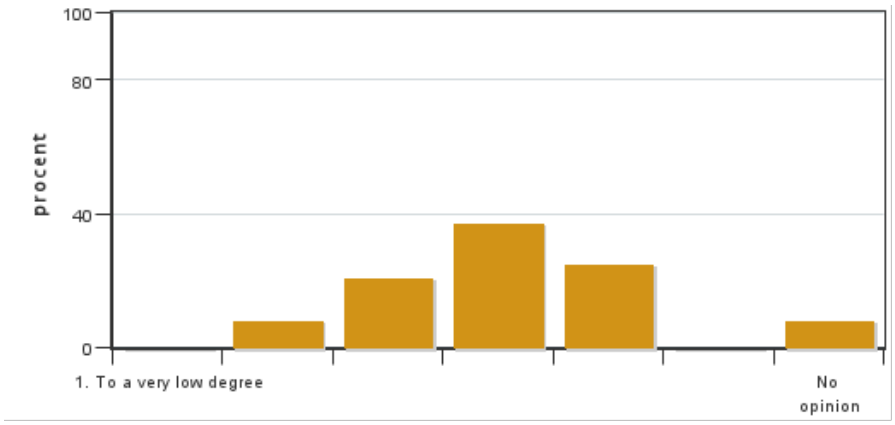


Answers: 24
Medel: 3,5
Median: 4

1: 1
2: 1
3: 9
4: 10
5: 3

No opinion: 0

19. To what extent did the assignment and the seminar "Narratives and scenarios for future food systems" contribute to your understanding of challenges and solutions of future food systems?

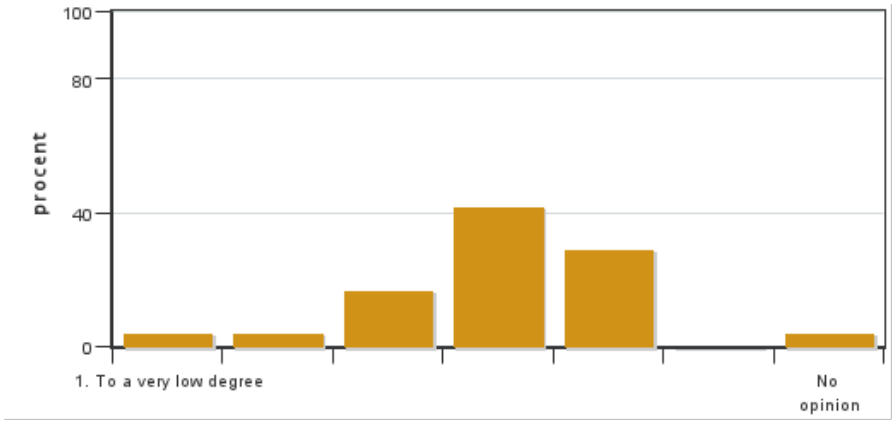


Answers: 24
Medel: 3,9
Median: 4

1: 0
2: 2
3: 5
4: 9
5: 6

No opinion: 2

20. To what extent did the field visit to the crop trials and the demonstration of innovative solutions for recycling of nutrients in waste contribute to new knowledge and insights?

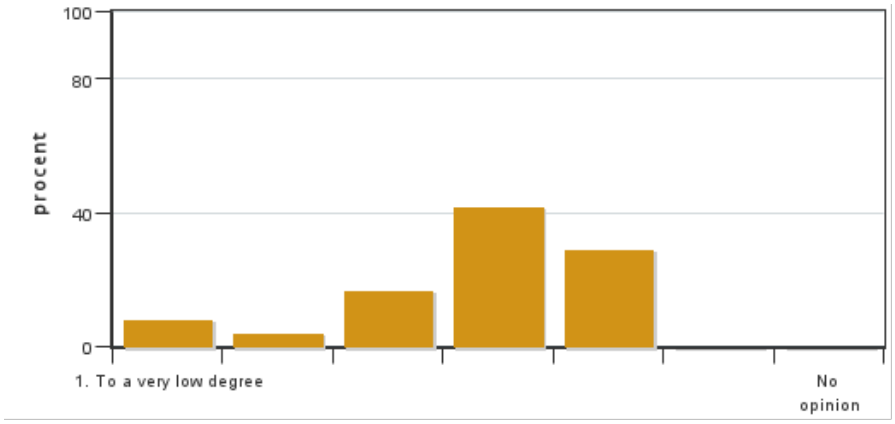


Answers: 24
Medel: 3,9
Median: 4

1: 1
2: 1
3: 4
4: 10
5: 7

No opinion: 1

21. To what extent did the group work on food production chains contribute to your learning about sustainability challenges and improvement options for different food products?

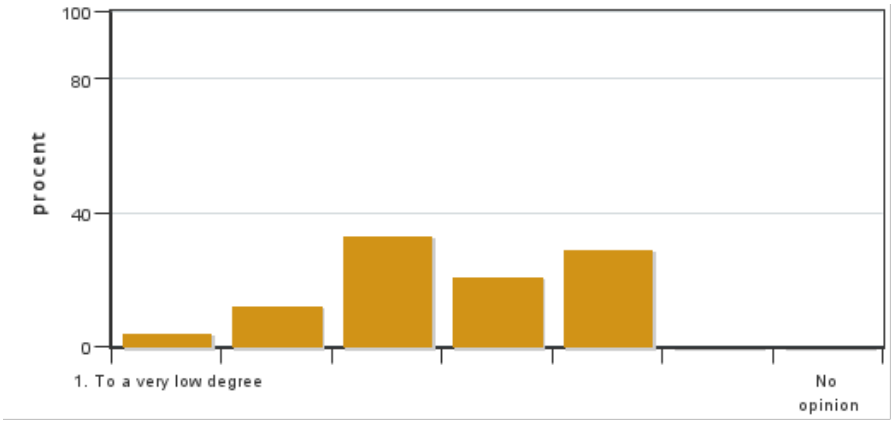


Answers: 24
Medel: 3,8
Median: 4

1: 2
2: 1
3: 4
4: 10
5: 7

No opinion: 0

22. To what extent did the LCA exercise (on tomato or wheat) contribute to your learning how LCA is done and how to account for environmental impact in LCA?

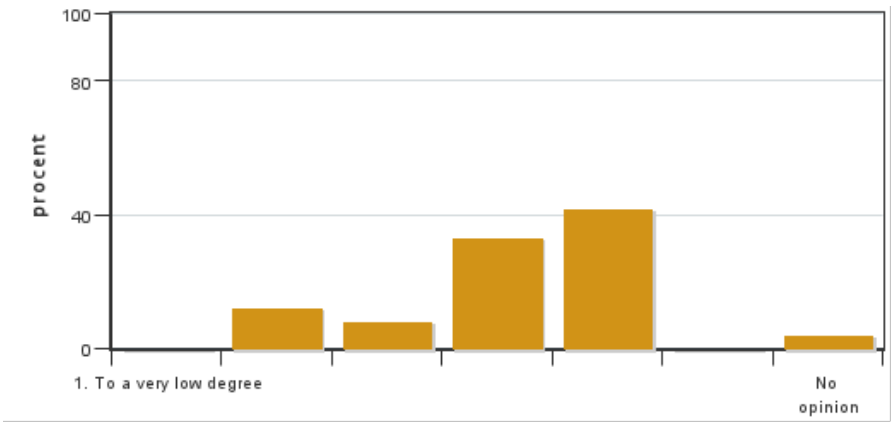


Answers: 24
Medel: 3,6
Median: 3.5

1: 1
2: 3
3: 8
4: 5
5: 7

No opinion: 0

23. To what extent did the individual LCA review contribute to your understanding about sustainability challenges in livestock production and how to assess different systems?

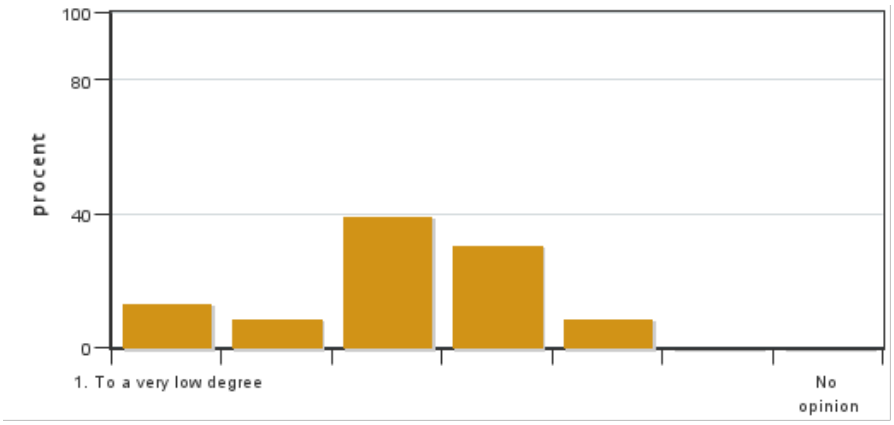


Answers: 24
Medel: 4,1
Median: 4

1: 0
2: 3
3: 2
4: 8
5: 10

No opinion: 1

24. To what extent did the last project (Innovative food products and systems) contribute to your learning about food systems?



Answers: 23
Medel: 3,1
Median: 3

1: 3
2: 2
3: 9
4: 7
5: 2

No opinion: 0

25. Do you have suggestions to improve the course? Please write them down here.

Course leaders comments

The course evaluation demonstrated that most students were overall satisfied with the course (average and median score:4) and considered the course to have clear links to the learning objectives (4.3). The variety in the course components seems to have been appreciated as well as the social and physical learning environment.

The time spent on the course was in the range 26-35 hours by most students, indicating that the extent of the

different assignments and tasks is not too heavy.

The students highlighted both pros and cons with the course being executed mainly online but with at least one activity on campus/week (in accordance to the general SLU guidelines). The plan, however, is to go back to a campus-based course next year.

The students also gave many good suggestions how to further improve the course. Based on the experiences from this year, we will for next year in particular ensure that the descriptions of the different assignments are published well in advance to facilitate the students' long-term planning, and that the scheduling in canvas is made in a consistent way to avoid confusion. We will also make sure that the instructions for the different assignments are clear, concise and follow a uniform structure on Canvas. Regarding the LCA-group work, which was perceived difficult by many, we will make sure there are scheduled times when students can work on their calculations in campus computer rooms with teachers present. This was also available this year but few students showed up. For next year with an all-on-campus course, we think that this will not be a problem.

We are thankful for the many engaged students during the course which also gave us valuable feedback in the course evaluations. We also appreciate the thorough compilation of the course evaluation and improvement suggestions given by the course representative, to which we also refer for more details.

Student representatives comments

General information
In the course evaluation for the academic year 2021/2022, the answer frequency was 67% with 25 students out of 37 contributing to the evaluation. On average, the students spent 31,6 hours per week on the course.

The overall impression of the course was high (average: 4). Students appreciated the engaged teachers, the variety of subjects and topics, and the great balance between depth and width within course content. Students' prior knowledge was sufficient (average: 4) for the course, but several students experienced difficulties with the LCA task (more information further down). The various course components with lectures, course literature, and exercises supported the students learning (average: 4,1), and were highly appreciated.

The information about the course was slightly difficult to access (average: 3,8). Several students highlighted that they wanted information about all the assignments and tasks in advance, in order to plan further ahead. There was also some confusion in how the information was structured on Canvas, for example regarding the instructions for assignments. Students also experienced some miscommunications from teachers regarding the scheduled date, or that classrooms or directions of a task could differ between the schedule and a presentation.

Covid pandemic and distance teaching
Since the course was affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, the lectures were held over Zoom. Students stated that they wanted more education on campus and were happy with the physical learning environments (average: 4,1). The overall experience of participating online as well (average: 3,8). What worked less well in teaching on distance is the technical difficulties regarding the lecturer's sound setup, where some students suggested better headphones. Several students experienced troubles with group work and good discussions online. There were also comments that lectures could have been more interactive. However, other students highlighted the breakout-rooms discussion as an example of what worked well. Other positive effects are the flexibility and time-efficiency when participating online. Some experienced that the learning process was more effective when saving time on not commuting to campus.

Course content
The students liked the course literature and thought that it contributed well to their learning (average: 4). However, some students thought that it was too much literature, and suggested a summary of the long reports. The lectures were satisfactory and contributed well to the learning (average: 4,1). To improve, the students would like more clarity on what is important and not so important to learn from the lectures and how the lectures were connected to the learning outcomes. Some students also would have liked more focus on social and economic sustainability, since the focus was on natural sciences.

The examinations provided some opportunity to demonstrate what the student had learned during the course (average: 3,7). However, some students felt very stressed during the exam quiz and would like more time to show their learnings, the exam was especially difficult with those with a non-English speaking background. There were also difficulties in understanding how the exam would be graded, with points and qualitative/quantitative learning outcomes. The individual LCA review was highly appreciated and was contributing well to learning about food systems around the world and LCA as a method (avarage: 4,1).

Group work, assignments, seminars, and field trips
The overall experience from group work, assignments and seminars was good, with the field visit to the crop trials and the demonstration of innovative solutions for the recycling of nutrients in waste being especially appreciated. The assignment “Local food systems around the world” were appreciated for the chance to get to know other students and get a glimpse of how the food system can look like. The last project “Innovative food products and systems” got an average of 3,1. Many students were tired after the exam, and a suggestion would be bigger groups, in order to

really deepen and develop the project idea more. The LCA exercise (on tomato and wheat) was difficult for many (avarage: 3,6), since they did not have former knowledge about LCA, excel, math or calculations and felt like they could not contribute to the exercise. Suggestions for increased learning for students with no former knowledge to improve their methodological and practical understanding would be an “LCA workshop” or other LCA activities on campus before the group work.

Suggestions for the future
Overall, the students were happy with the course and enjoyed the diversity of insights into the food system. Suggestions for improvements in the future would be to hand all information about the schedule, assignments, exercises, etc. in advance since many students felt stressed about not being able to plan the weeks ahead. Students also suggested clearer instructions, and not changing them after they have been given out (for example, not leaving a blank space in the schedule when something actually is planned).

Thanks to Pernilla, Bojana, Jennifer and the other lecturers for an interesting and joyful course!

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