Nature Based Interventions
MP0007, 10293.2122

15 Hp
Pace of study = 50%
Education cycle = Advanced
Course leader = Anna Maria Palsdottir

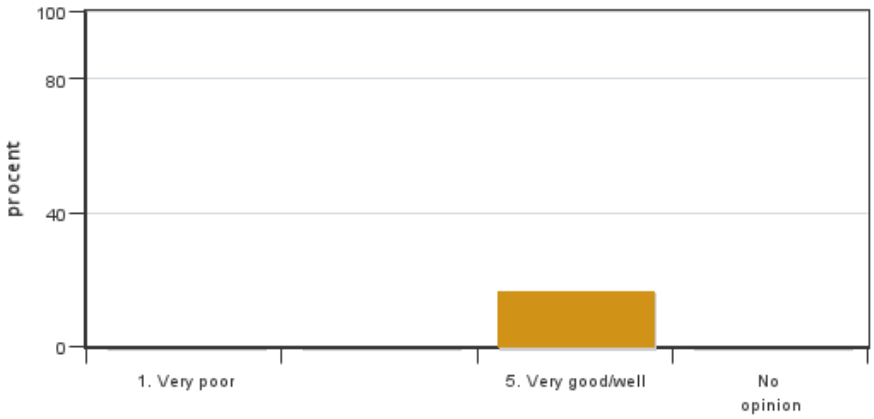
Evaluation report

Evaluation period: 2022-01-09 - 2022-01-30

Answers	6
Number of students	33
Answer frequency	18 %

Mandatory standard questions

1. My overall impression of the course is:

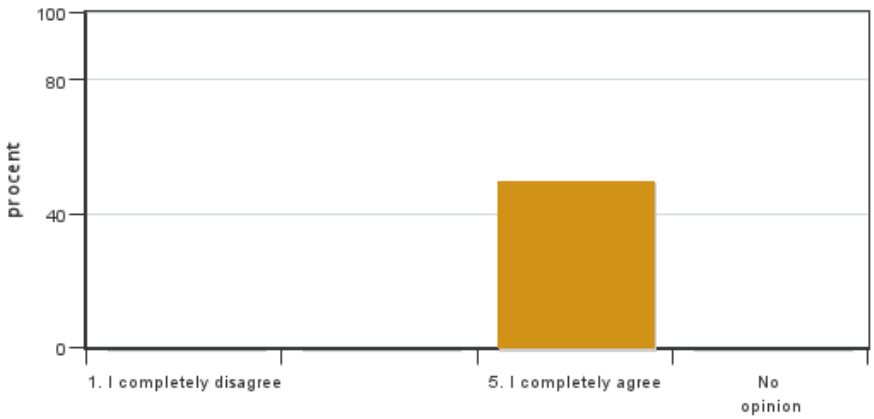


Answers: 6
Medel: 3,5
Median: 3

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

No opinion: 0

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

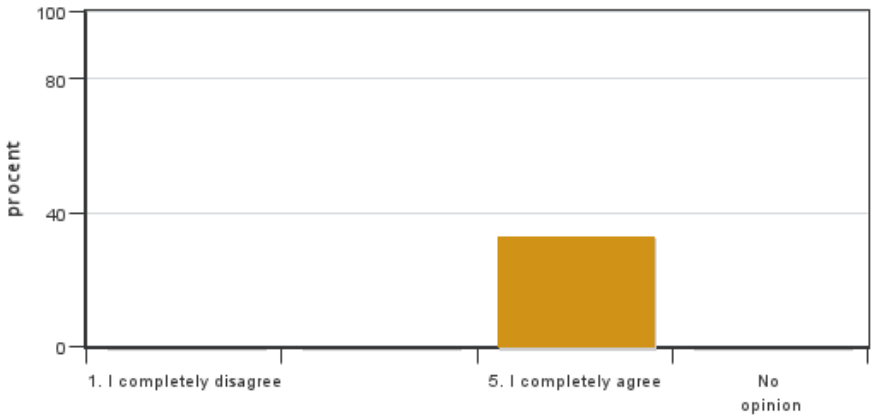


Answers: 6
Medel: 4,0
Median: 4

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

No opinion: 0

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

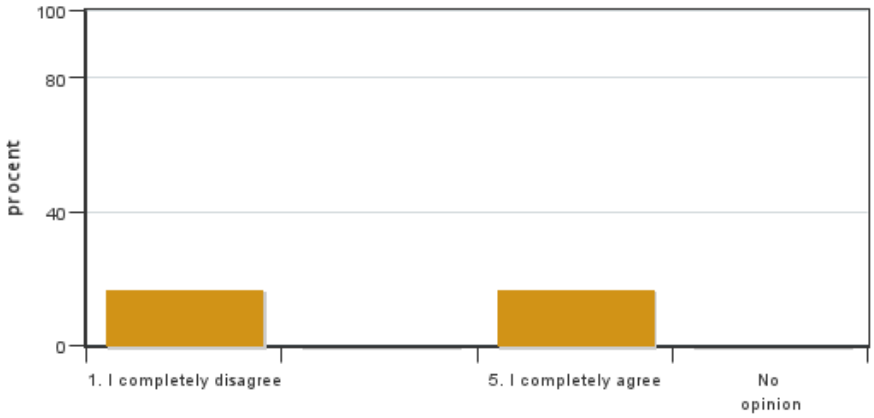


Answers: 6
Medel: 3,7
Median: 4

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

No opinion: 0

4. The information about the course was easily accessible.

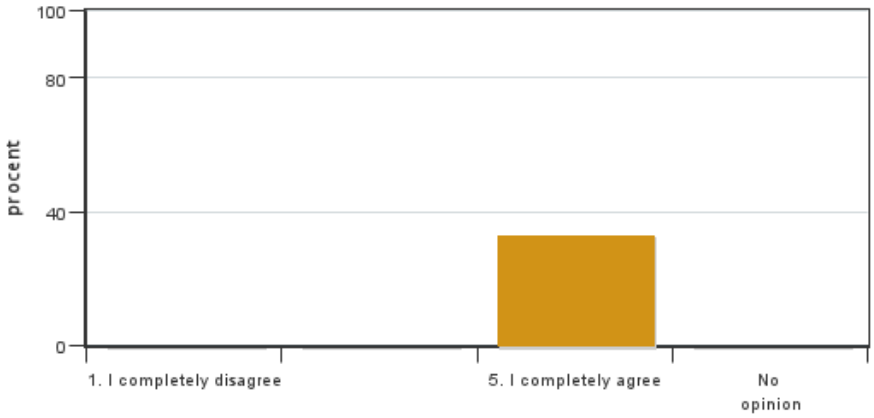


Answers: 6
Medel: 3,2
Median: 3

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

No opinion: 0

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

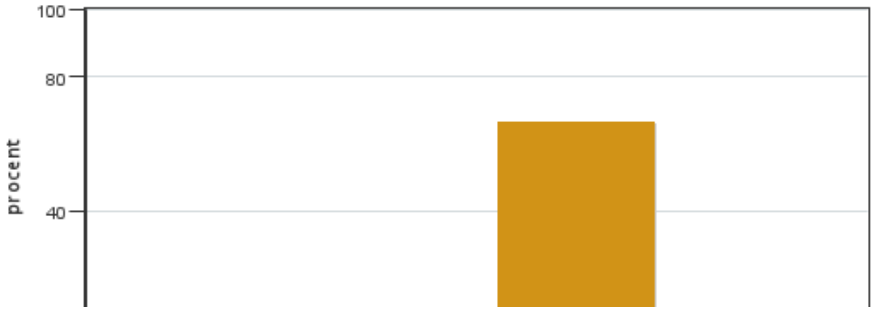


Answers: 6
Medel: 3,5
Median: 3

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

No opinion: 0

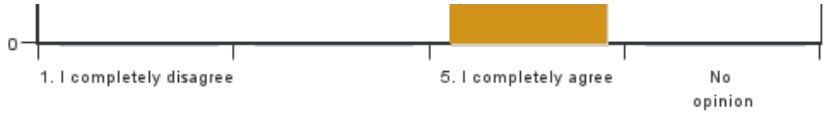
6. The social learning environment has been inclusive, respecting differences of opinion.



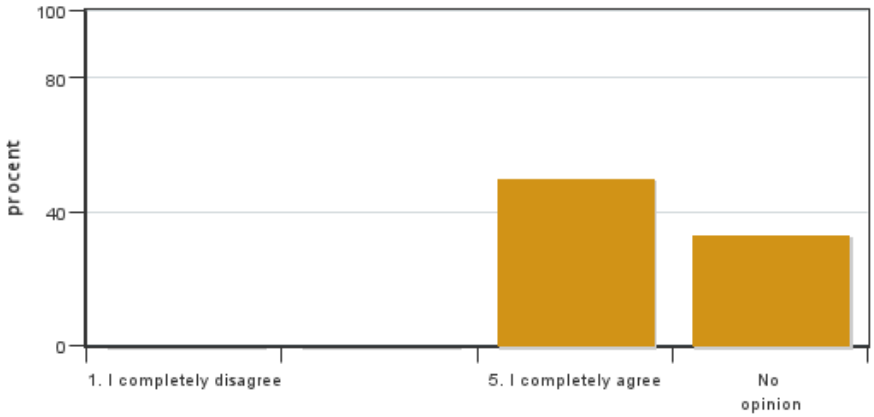
Answers: 6
Medel: 4,5
Median: 5

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

No opinion: 0



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

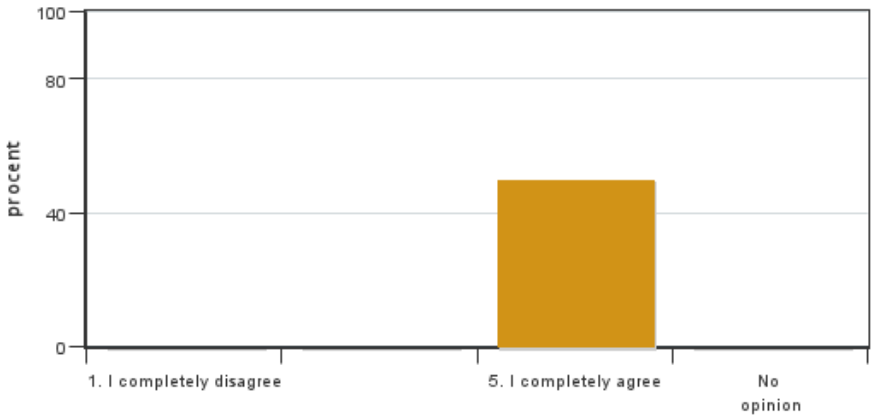


Answers: 6
Medel: 4,8
Median: 5

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

No opinion: 2

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

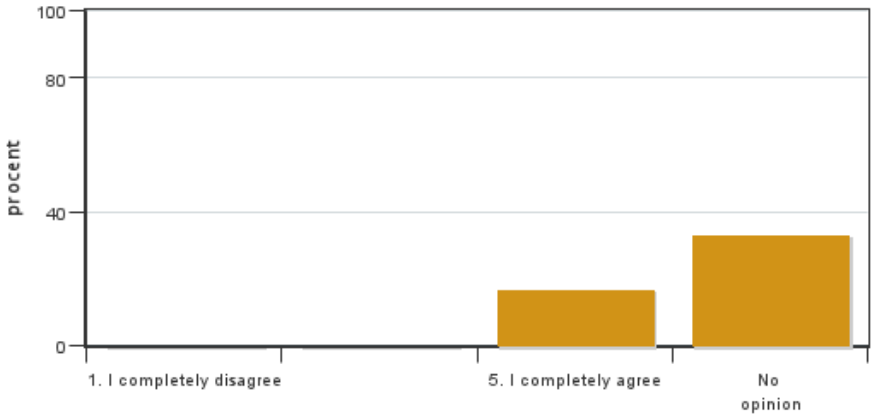


Answers: 6
Medel: 4,2
Median: 4

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

No opinion: 0

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

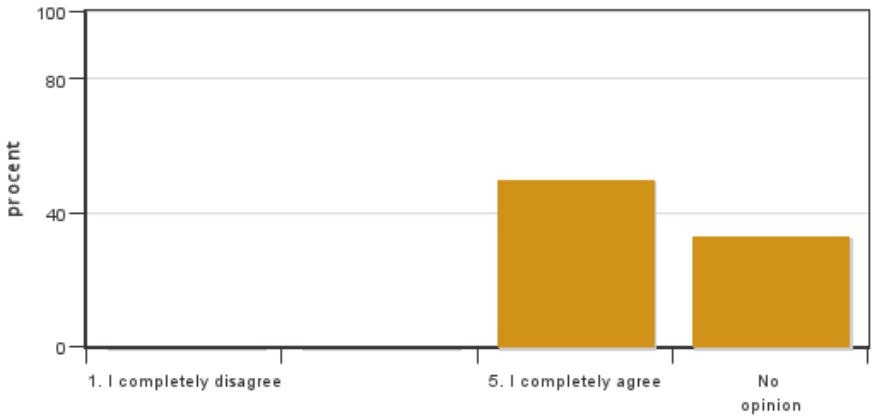


Answers: 6
Medel: 4,0
Median: 4

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

No opinion: 2

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).

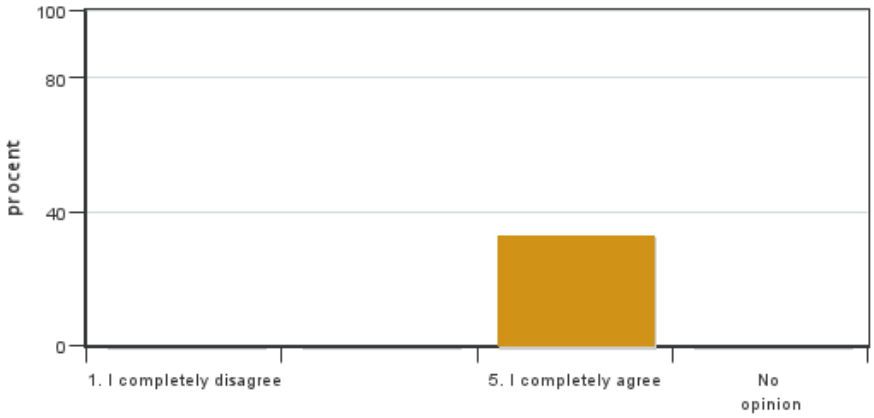


Answers: 6
Medel: 4,5
Median: 5

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

No opinion: 2

11. The course covered international perspectives.

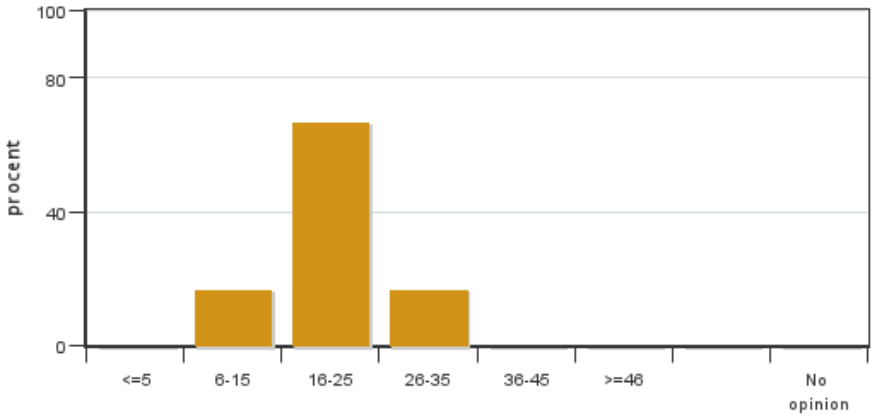


Answers: 6
Medel: 3,5
Median: 3

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

No opinion: 0

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

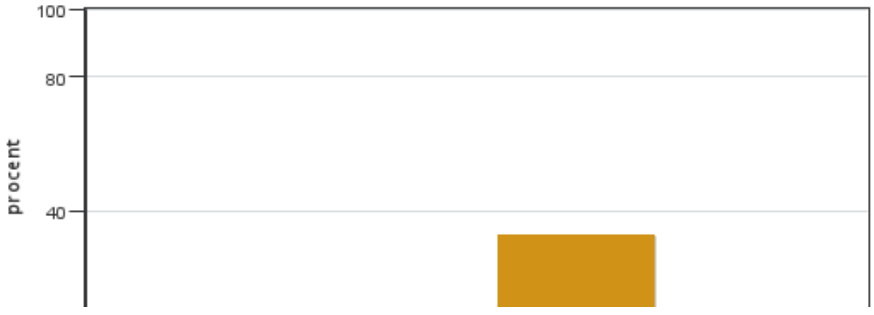


Answers: 6
Medel: 20,0
Median: 16-25

≤5: 0
6-15: 1
16-25: 4
26-35: 1
36-45: 0
≥46: 0

No opinion: 0

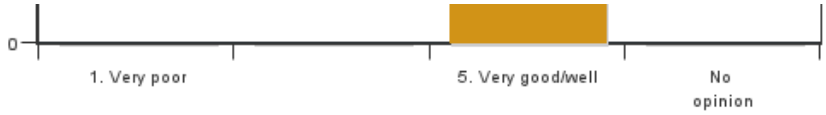
13. If relevant, what is your overall experience of participating in all or part of your course online?



Answers: 6
Medel: 4,0
Median: 4

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

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

6 out of 31 students responded to the course evaluation, which translates to a 19% response rate. The majority of students who responded to the course evaluation had a rather good overall impression of the course.

4 out of 6 respondents assessed that the course content to a high or very high degree has clear links to the course's learning objectives. One respondent opted for neutral and another one disagreed.

4 respondents highly or very highly agreed that their prior knowledge was sufficient for them to benefit from the course. Two respondents disagreed.

1 respondent had no difficulty in accessing the information about the course, while the remaining 83.33% experienced issues regarding the clarity of the assignments' instructions.

2 respondents confirmed that the various course components (e.g. lectures, course literature, exercises) had supported their learning to a very high degree, while the remaining 66.67% wished there were better chances to grow as a student through the course components (e.g. exercises, assignments, lectures, literature).

5 respondents experienced to a high or very high degree that the social learning environment was inclusive and respected differences of opinion. One respondent opted for neutral.

4 respondents answered that they were to a high or very high degree satisfied with the physical learning environment (e.g. facilities, equipment). Two respondents, however, opted for “no opinion”.

3 respondents acknowledged that the examinations provided an opportunity to demonstrate what they had learnt during the course, while 1 respondent opted for agree to a certain degree and another 2 felt neutral.

3 respondents were 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 1 student felt neutral and 2 opted for “no opinion”.

2 respondents fully concurred that the course covers international perspectives. This is in clear contrast with 3 students who opted for neutral and 1 who disagreed.

3 respondents reckoned 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 felt neutral and 2 opted for “no opinion”.

4 respondents rated well or very well in their experience of participating in distance teaching, while 2 felt somewhat neutral.

Additionally, the respondents spent an average of 20 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 had emerged in the open-ended survey in this course evaluation and other evaluation occasions were, above all, the content of the course itself, the prompt and meaningful responses from lecturers and course leaders on Canvas and via email, as well as the very highly knowledgeable lecturers especially the course leader and Module II's leaders.

All students were quite positive about the MP0007 Nature-Based Interventions course at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU). All students particularly appreciated the good course structure and the delightful course contents with easily accessible materials on the Canvas platform.

Nearly all of the students, nonetheless, underlined how disorganised and unclear the information that had been put together, especially on the assignments, which caused a lot of misunderstandings throughout the assignments, particularly for Assignment 3 – Individual Case Study. Although there was a lot of explanation in the instructions, these students feel that the way this was formulated made it very difficult for them to understand what was expected of each assignment. These students strongly highlighted the need to consider writing instructions from the students' perspectives – whether the instructions were easy to understand and clear enough for students. In addition, many students also wished there was clear planning of the assignments since the beginning of the course so that they could plan their schedule better. However, some students felt that the optional supervision sessions were fundamental to understanding what was required from them.

All students emphasized the need for all the exercises and nearly all the assignments in the course, particularly Assignment 3 and a part of Assignment 2b – Planning the Forest for Different Values where the students had to develop a health trail. These students highly valued the exercises as ways to help them understand some of the assignments. These students also highly appreciated the learning process during Assignment 3 as they felt they gained more useful knowledge, especially in relation to Assignment 4a – Individual Case Study Presentation and Assignment 4b – Group Abstract & Poster as well as from the feedback they received in the middle of Assignment 3. Nevertheless, many students felt they did not have the opportunity to develop as students because of the way the other assignments were being graded (from grade “3” to “5”). These students reasoned that, unlike Assignment 3, the remainder of the assignments were designed in which they could not get feedback from the examiner(s) before being graded, so there was no opportunity to improve on these assignments. In addition, many students found the part of Assignment 2b where they had to create a forest planning was very difficult and utterly irrelevant to the course (i.e. that it was more relevant to other students in the Forest Ecology programme). These students asserted that it was indeed a very challenging task as most of them had no prior knowledge of how forest ecosystems work.

The majority of the students were satisfied with the course content itself due to its fun and inspiring material with a reasonable level of difficulty. Although, they also wished more international perspectives were covered throughout the course. Though many lecturers provided the students with various perspectives, nearly all are from Sweden and very few from other countries (i.e. usually from other Nordic countries). These students felt that there should be a wider perspective within the field of Environmental Psychology, including in this course.

A clear majority of the students were of the opinion that the course content had clear links to the learning objectives of the course. A few, however, noticed that was not the case, especially for these two objectives: “describe and discuss how different target groups can benefit from nature-based interventions” and “develop nature-based interventions suited for rest and recovery, as well as more demanding physical and cognitive activity”. These students believed the assignments should be designed with more variety of target groups. They added that, while there was overweight on recovery and rehabilitation perspectives during the course, too little attention was given to preventative works as well as physical and cognitive limitations.

Some students liked the flexibility of the literature list as this gave them the freedom to explore topics within their interests when doing the assignments. However, some others wished for the course to have a structured literature list that could be found in one single document (i.e. instead of keeping getting more suggested readings throughout the course). In addition, some students highlighted how much they liked the video recordings during Module II as these helped them to understand easily the concept of the Swedish forest.

All students highly appreciated all three main lecturers (i.e. the course leader and the leaders of Module II). They emphasized that these lecturers were highly knowledgeable and managed to create a vibrant and enjoyable atmosphere despite the cons of having a digital classroom. Many students, however, highlighted their frustration when some of the other lecturers only presented the same or nearly the same lectures they had given in the other courses within the *Outdoor Environments for Health and Well-Being* (OHW) programme. On the contrary, a few other students felt there was too much new information for them.

The majority of the students really enjoyed the flexible deadlines from the course leader as they claimed it helped with their mental health and better scheduling with their other activities (e.g. work schedule).

All students assessed that they received constructive feedback from the examiners, although most of this feedback was not delivered within a reasonable amount of time from the examiner for each examination.

A clear majority of the students felt inclusivity in the social learning environment. However, a few students disagreed as some Swedish-speaking students kept asking lots of questions in the Swedish language during the English-taught class.

Nearly all students considered 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 leader and Module II's leaders before each assignment was submitted for being graded. These students felt they could have learnt much more effectively by obtaining such valuable feedback from the professionals.

The majority of the students emphasized the benefits of distance learning, such as how they felt very safe not having to travel to a physical location due to the ongoing pandemic situation, and how online learning helped 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 appreciated the lecturers and course leaders who seemed to be trying their best to adapt to online learning due to the ongoing pandemic situation, such as via the live streaming from Lomma Beach and the filming from the Stadsparken in Umeå. 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 argued that the course will be accessible to more international students around the world if that is the case. Most students – who were mainly Swedish – also noticed that it was indeed the international students who could weigh on international perspectives for the field of Environmental Psychology during the course.

Some also pointed out how uncomfortable it was to write their names on the attendance list while the course leader had said the lectures were non-mandatory to attend. Such contradictory raised questions amongst the students as they felt that it was their own responsibility as Master's level students to be able to fully grasp the lectures and discussions.

Some proposed to have the course evaluation link available until the students have received the final grade and feedback. They reasoned that the final grade and feedback are also parts of the course and should be included in the evaluation.

There were many attitudes that were highly appreciated by the students, including that the course had a good structure, delightful contents, all three main lecturers who managed to create a vibrant and enjoyable atmosphere, and a challenging but inspiring learning process through Assignment 2's developing a health trail and Assignment 3.

Suggestions for improvements

Provide course literature, lectures, and examples that do not only focus on the Swedish or Nordic perspectives. Since this course is one of the optional courses within the international OHW Master's programme, there should be a balance of learning material from broader international perspectives.

Compile a structured mandatory literature list for each module. With a clear reading list, students have more individual time to digest every process and information they receive, and therefore, it would be more helpful to direct them from the very beginning which readings will guide them to the skills they are expected to have from the course. Relevant video recordings should also be included in this list for a better structure.

Offer 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. Suggest optional relevant readings that connect the main theories within the field of environmental psychology (e.g. Kaplan's Attention Restoration Theory). Additionally, provide 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.

Identify all the mandatory assignments and examinations during the course introduction (first day of the course). This can help students familiarise themselves with what to expect for the final grade. Further details (e.g. citation style, font size) can be added as the course progresses.

Simplify and organise the instructions for the assignments. Sometimes more sentences in various different files only create more confusion. It might work better when the instructions are simplified and organised in one file.

Either erase or make Assignment 2b's forest planning part to be optional. Those who are interested in doing this part of the assignment should be able to discuss the process in the presence of Module II's leaders and receive feedback from them. If this part is to be kept mandatory and graded, a lecture regarding the basics of forest ecology should be included in the course.

Recommend students to explore different target groups in their assignments. Although a limitation on this was never mentioned by the course leader and Module II's leaders, recommending students to try on a different target group in each assignment might challenge them in a good way. Some students were aware that they could do so, but this was not clear enough for some other students.

On the schedule, mark the lecturers with the same or nearly the same content as what they had presented in the other courses within the OHW programme. This way, the students who had already attended those lectures could use their time more effectively.

Keep the flexible deadlines. Create clear deadlines for students who prefer so, but making these flexible helped other students who needed more time to do their assignments.

Stay accessible for the students. Many students felt puzzled especially by the examination parts, but they highlighted the easy access to and fast response from the course leader and Module II's leaders had helped them greatly in understanding the course content and the exams. It could also be a good idea to set up more optional supervision sessions via Zoom for students who need help acquainting themselves with all the assignments (i.e. not only for Assignment 3).

Request students who kept asking questions in the Swedish language during the class to either ask the question in English or schedule an individual session with the course leader afterwards. This is to ensure inclusivity in the social learning environment.

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 had already reminded the students on at least 2 different occasions on her own initiative. However, there was no reminder sent from the course. 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 making the course available completely online even after the pandemic has ended.

Kei Nilsson
Student Representative for MP0007 Course
Autumn semester of 2021