

Course report, *Users and activities in digital environments*, 7,5 credits and *Användare och informationspraktiker*, 7, 5 hp – spring term, 2016

The course runs in two programs: the *Master's study programme in Library and Information Science: Digital Libraries and Information Services*, and *Masterprogrammet i biblioteks- och informationsvetenskap*. It has been going on during the first half of the spring term 2016, from January to March. When the course started, altogether 69 students were registered. 58 students have been active throughout the course (of which 24 follow the international program).

In contrast to last year's version of the course, which contained a campus-based meeting, teaching has been conducted solely over a distance. Interaction between students and between students and the teacher was primarily enabled by one web-based seminar and by a set of literature discussions in Ping Pong.

Course content and teaching was structured in accordance with the following three themes:

- Perspectives, contexts, and concepts
- Three focus areas: The position of digital resources in people's communication and learning; Relations between digital resources and various information practices; and Evaluation of digital services with focus on digital libraries.
- Literature review on an area of relevance of the course

The above mentioned parts of the course were examined one at the time. The first part was designed as a task in two steps where the first step had each student writing a reflective summary of a couple of assigned texts. In step two, students formed groups of three (or four) and collectively wrote a piece emanating from the individual contributions; this latter step also involved a web-based seminar where the students discussed their text and related course literature. The second part involved active participation in a literature discussion in Ping Pong. The most demanding task appeared in part three, where each student individually wrote a short paper in the shape of a literature review.

At the time of writing, these are the study results:

Part 1) – 56 students have passed (pass or fail)

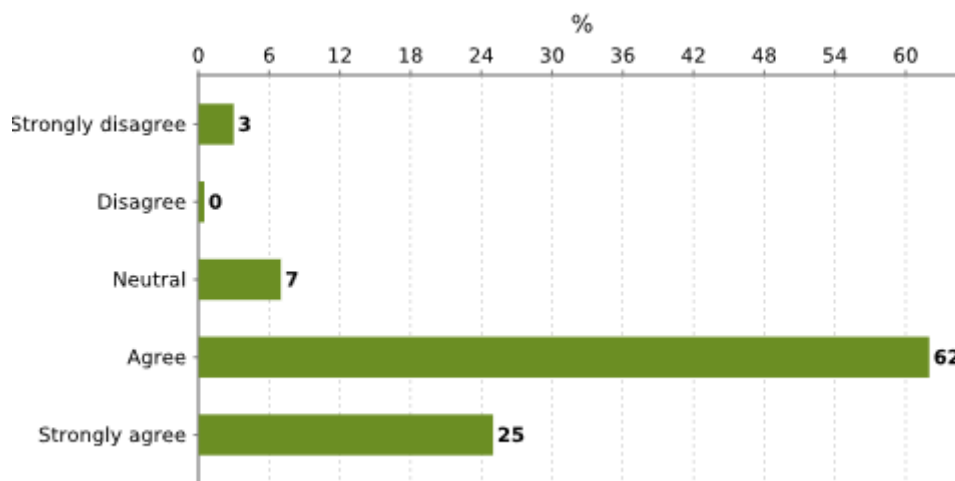
Part 2) – 54 students have passed (pass or fail)

Part 3) – 42 students submitted: 1 U (fail), 41 pass (5 A; 5 B; 6 C; 1 D; 14 G; 10 VG)

The course evaluation was conducted through a digital questionnaire published in Ping Pong at the end of the course. Now, six weeks later, 27 students have filled in the questionnaire. Diagrams and percentages generated by the questionnaire are presented below:

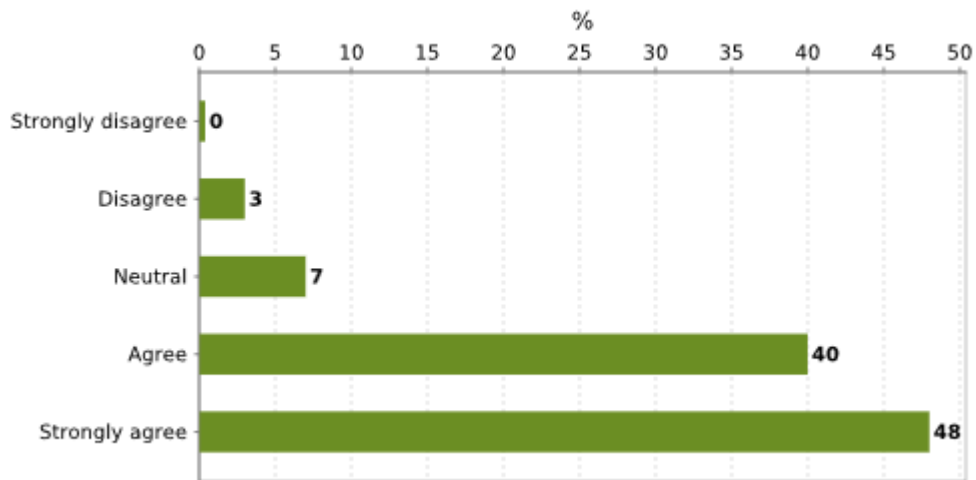
1) According to the goals for this course the students should, after completion of the course, be able to:

- Account for the position of different digital resources in communication and learning processes
- Explain how people in various information practices seek and use information in physical and virtual environments, and of the basis of this understanding be able to plan for development of digital resources and services
- Identify, describe and analyse the potential of digital resources concerning their benefit for library users
- From a user perspective as well as professional perspective evaluate the quality and usability of digital services



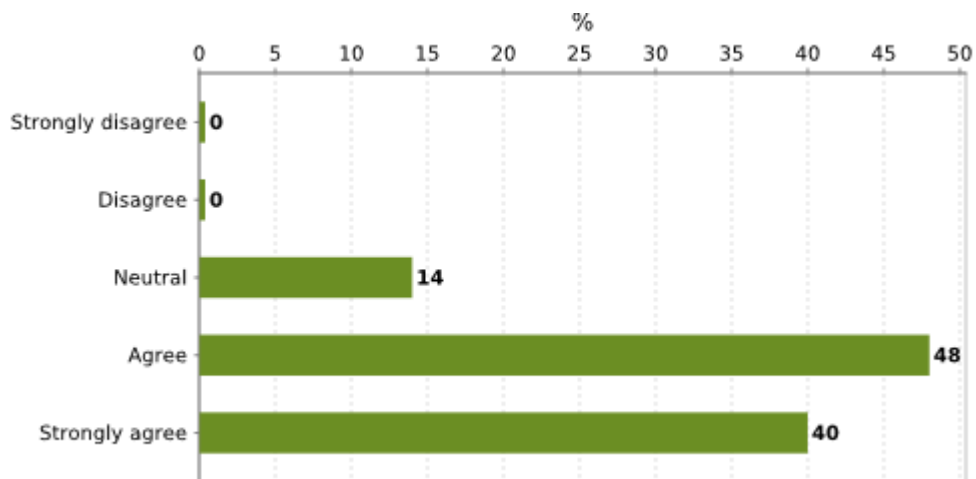
Number	Distribution	Answer choice
1	3,7%	Strongly disagree
0	0%	Disagree
2	7,4%	Neutral
17	63%	Agree
7	25,9%	Strongly agree

2) Teaching has been carried out through discussions in Ping Pong. The teaching has contributed to my learning and helped me reach the learning goals.



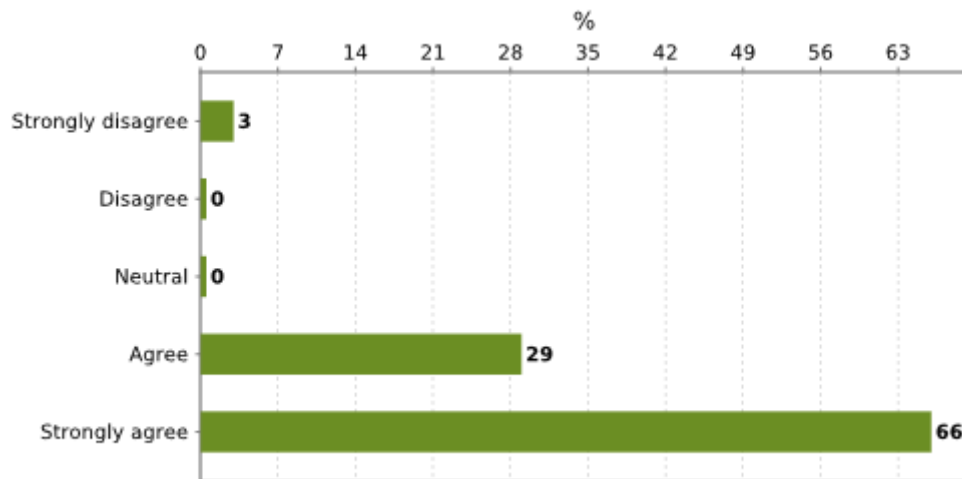
Number	Distribution	Answer choice
0	0%	Strongly disagree
1	3,7%	Disagree
2	7,4%	Neutral
11	40,7%	Agree
13	48,1%	Strongly agree

3) The course literature has been helpful for my learning.



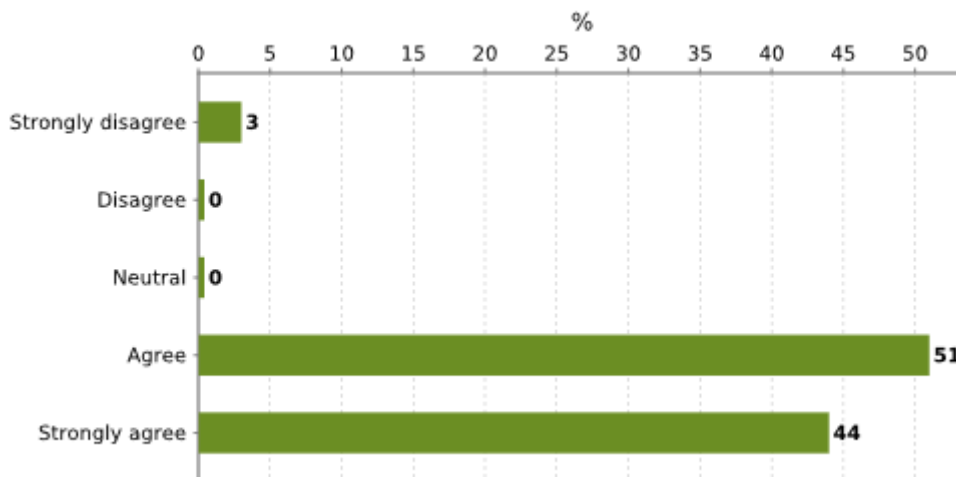
Number	Distribution	Answer choice
0	0%	Strongly disagree
0	0%	Disagree
4	14,8%	Neutral
13	48,1%	Agree
11	40,7%	Strongly agree

4) The teacher has been helpful and has contributed to my learning.



Number	Distribution	Answer choice
1	3,7%	Strongly disagree
0	0%	Disagree
0	0%	Neutral
8	29,6%	Agree
18	66,7%	Strongly agree

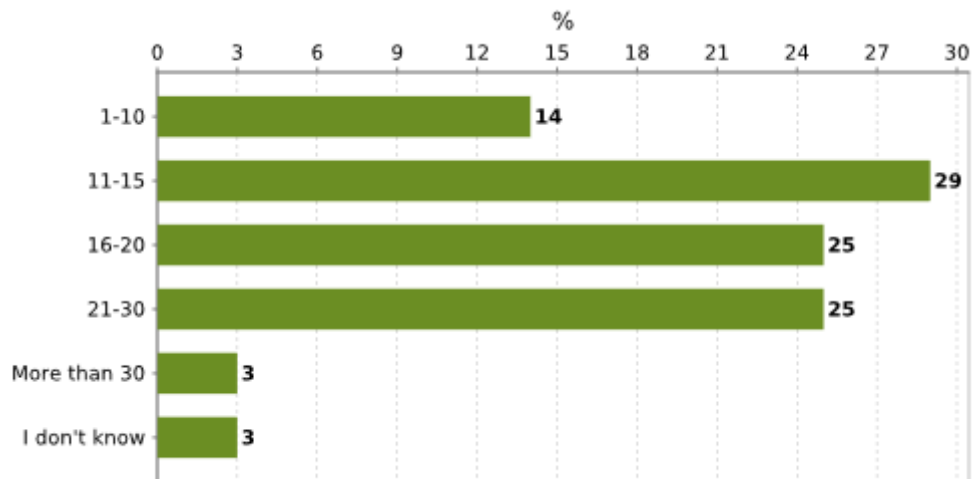
5) There has been a clear connection between the course content and illustrative examples from the research field.



Number	Distribution	Answer choice
1	3,7%	Strongly disagree
0	0%	Disagree

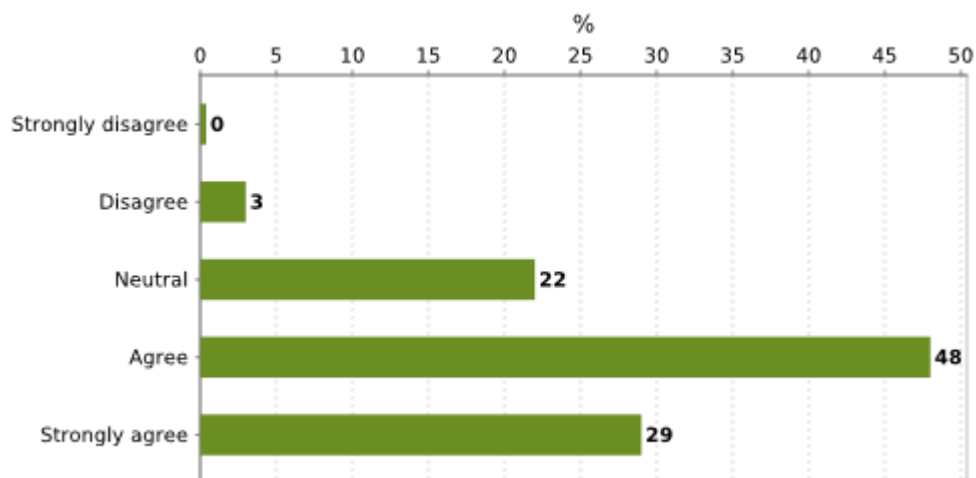
0	0%	Neutral
14	51,9%	Agree
12	44,4%	Strongly agree

6) In average, how many hours per week have you used for course work?



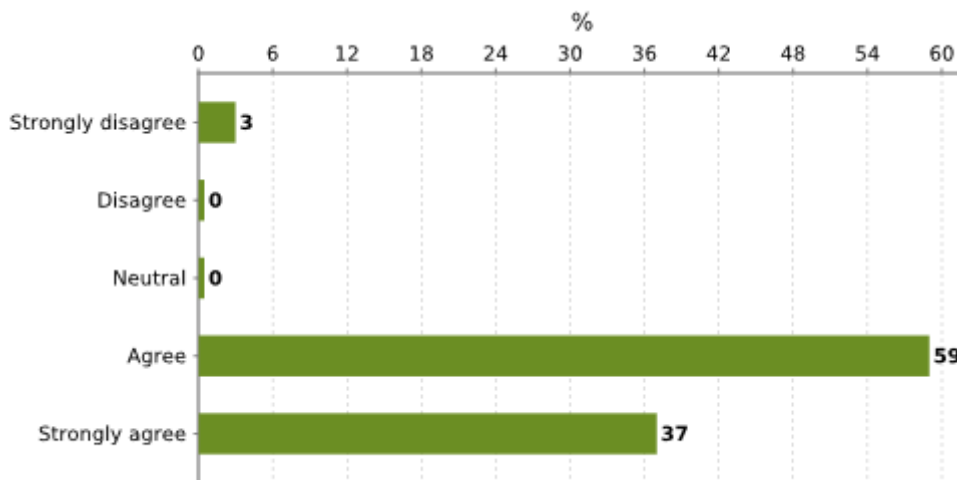
Number	Distribution	Answer choice
4	14,8%	1-10
8	29,6%	11-15
7	25,9%	16-20
7	25,9%	21-30
1	3,7%	More than 30
1	3,7%	I don't know

7) The workload has been evenly distributed over the course.



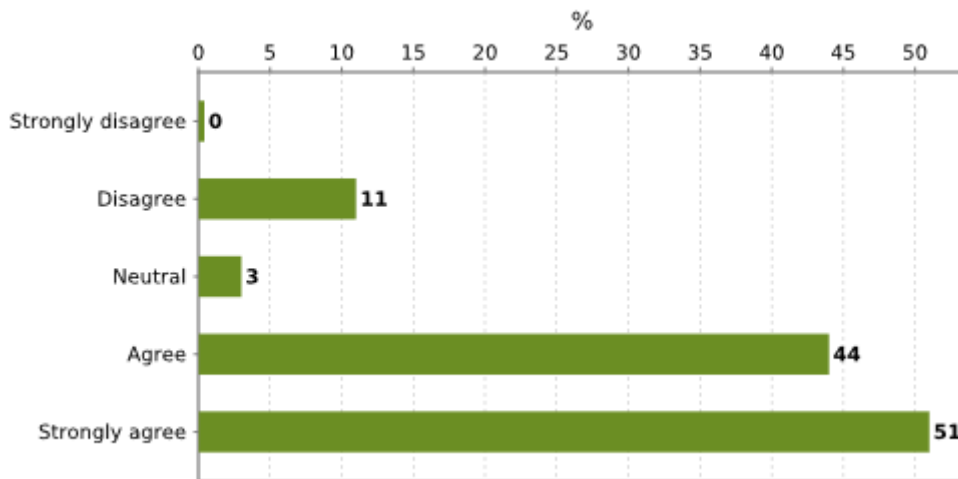
Number	Distribution	Answer choice
0	0%	Strongly disagree
1	3,7%	Disagree
6	22,2%	Neutral
13	48,1%	Agree
8	29,6%	Strongly agree

8) Examination has been conducted through written assignments, an online seminar, and a course paper. The assignments correspond well with the course goals.



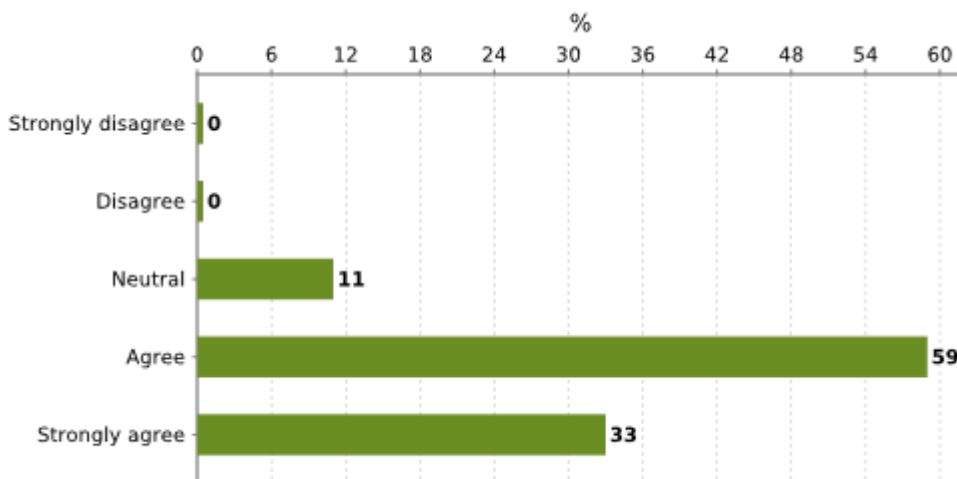
Number	Distribution	Answer choice
1	3,7%	Strongly disagree
0	0%	Disagree
0	0%	Neutral
16	59,3%	Agree
10	37%	Strongly agree

9) I have read all or most of the course literature.



Number	Distribution	Answer choice
0	0%	Strongly disagree
3	11,1%	Disagree
1	3,7%	Neutral
12	44,4%	Agree
14	51,9%	Strongly agree

10) There is a clear connection between the course and the professional activities the course serves as a preparation for.



Number	Distribution	Answer choice
0	0%	Strongly disagree
0	0%	Disagree
3	11,1%	Neutral

16	59,3%	Agree
9	33,3%	Strongly agree

Apart from one rather constant divergent opinion, the great majority of the 27 students that have filled in the questionnaire generally seem very happy with the course. It is, for example, gratifying to note that 24 students either agree or strongly agree with the proposition that the course goals have been reached. In addition to the questions accounted for above, there were also two questions that offered the opportunity to express opinions on how the course can be improved and if it was perceived as lacking something of importance. Altogether 9 students have taken the opportunity to address these questions. Two main themes are discernible in these answers. One regards the issue of group work; even though one individual says that (s)he “didn't like the group assignment that much”, a clear majority of the comments express a wish for more work of that kind, e.g. “I would have liked more group work”. However, even if the collectively oriented assignments were seen as positive, there seems to be room for future improvement regarding the structure of these assignments. This is, for example, expressed in the following comment: “The 2nd task was very good as it allowed me to focus on the areas I found most interesting while still giving some focus to the rest of the material. However it was very hard work trying to keep track of all the discussions”.

The other theme is characterized by a positive attitude to the course, expressed, for example, in comments like this: “I really liked this course, it was very well paced and it also encouraged a lot of interaction between students”.

From my teacher perspective, I think the course has worked out well. For future versions of this course, however, I believe it will be necessary to more carefully structure the group discussions in Ping Pong; perhaps by reducing the amount of questions and answers that the students were supposed to post during these discussions.

Finally, I would like to thank all of you who have responded to the questionnaire. Your opinions are of great value.

Borås, 2016-05-08

Ola Pilerot, teacher.