

Course report – Users and activities in digital environments, 7,5 credits, spring 2015

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 2015, from January to March. When the course started, altogether 45 students were registered. 33 students have been active throughout the course.

Apart from one meeting in Borås (12-13th of February), teaching has mainly been conducted over a distance. The course meeting was of an introductory character and contained four lectures and a literature discussion in the shape of a credit-bearing seminar. Some 15 students participated in the meeting.

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. 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) – 30 students have passed (pass or fail)

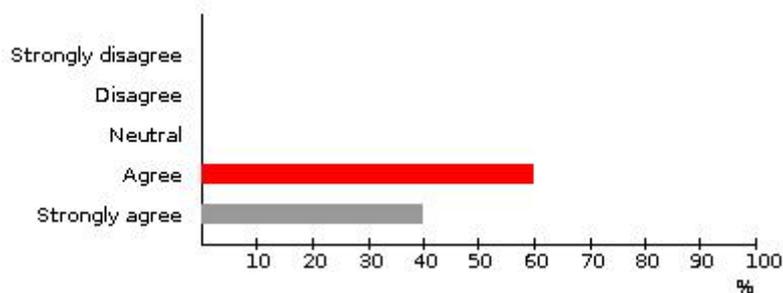
Part 2) – 29 students have passed (pass or fail)

Part 3) – 29 students submitted: 2 U (fail), 27 pass (4 A; 2 B; 4 C; 2 D; 13 G; 2 VG)

The course evaluation was conducted through a digital questionnaire published in Ping Pong at the end of the course. Now, three weeks later, 15 students have filled in the questionnaire. Diagrams and percentages generated by the questionnaire are presented below:

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

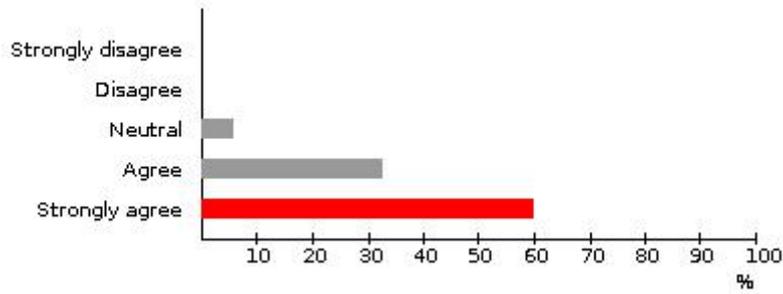


number distribution answer choice

0	0%	Strongly disagree
0	0%	Disagree
0	0%	Neutral
9	60%	Agree
6	40%	Strongly agree

15 has answered of 45 (33%)

Teaching has been carried out through discussions in Ping Pong and through lectures in connection to the meeting in Borås. The teaching has contributed to my learning and helped me reach the learning goals.

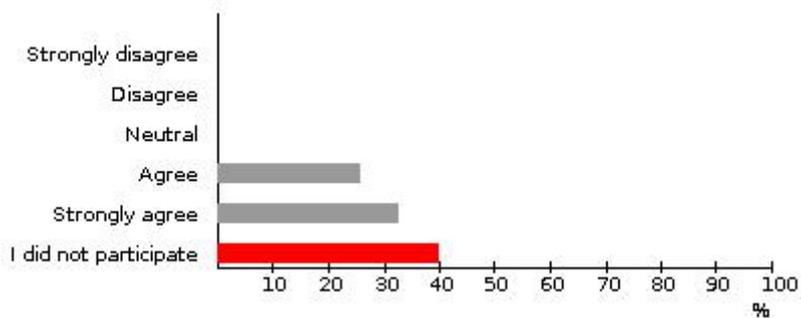


number distribution answer choice

0	0%	Strongly disagree
0	0%	Disagree
1	6,7%	Neutral
5	33,3%	Agree
9	60%	Strongly agree

15 has answered of 45 (33%)

The meeting in Borås was a good learning opportunity.

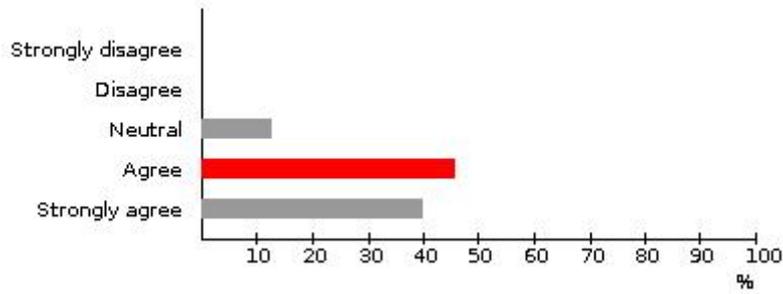


number distribution answer choice

0	0%	Strongly disagree
0	0%	Disagree
0	0%	Neutral
4	26,7%	Agree
5	33,3%	Strongly agree
6	40%	I did not participate

15 has answered of 45 (33%)

The course literature has been helpful for my learning.

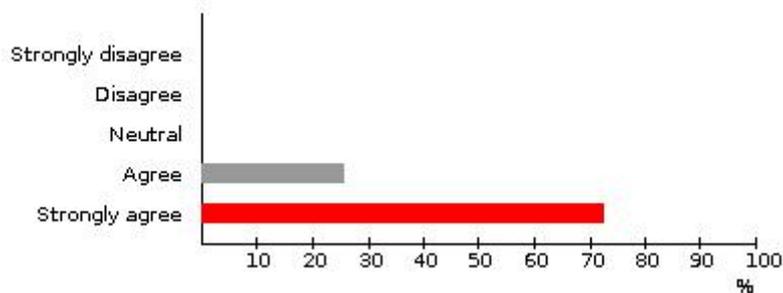


number distribution answer choice

0	0%	Strongly disagree
0	0%	Disagree
2	13,3%	Neutral
7	46,7%	Agree
6	40%	Strongly agree

15 has answered of 45 (33%)

The teachers have been helpful and have contributed to my learning.

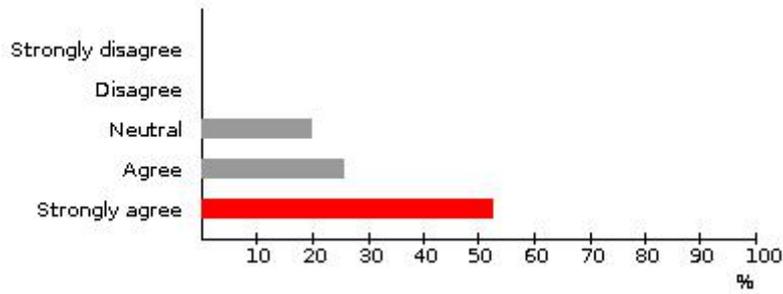


number distribution answer choice

0	0%	Strongly disagree
0	0%	Disagree
0	0%	Neutral
4	26,7%	Agree
11	73,3%	Strongly agree

15 has answered of 45 (33%)

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

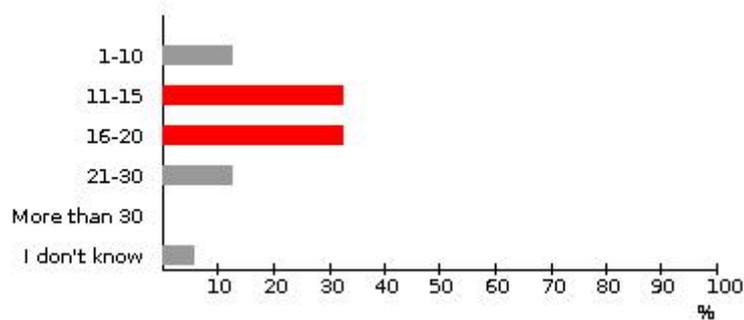


number distribution answer choice

0	0%	Strongly disagree
0	0%	Disagree
3	20%	Neutral
4	26,7%	Agree
8	53,3%	Strongly agree

15 has answered of 45 (33%)

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

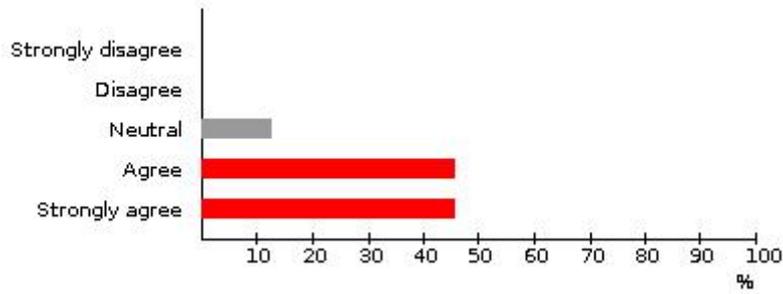


number distribution answer choice

2	13,3%	1-10
5	33,3%	11-15
5	33,3%	16-20
2	13,3%	21-30
0	0%	More than 30
1	6,7%	I don't know

15 has answered of 45 (33%)

The workload has been evenly distributed over the course.

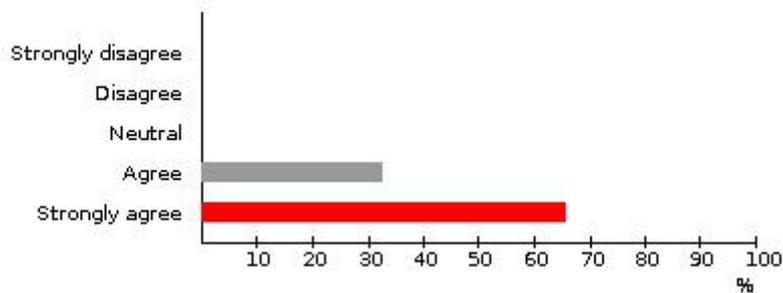


number distribution answer choice

0	0%	Strongly disagree
0	0%	Disagree
2	13,3%	Neutral
7	46,7%	Agree
7	46,7%	Strongly agree

15 has answered of 45 (33%)

Examination has been conducted through written assignments, a seminar in connection to the residential week, and a course paper. The assignments correspond well with the course goals.

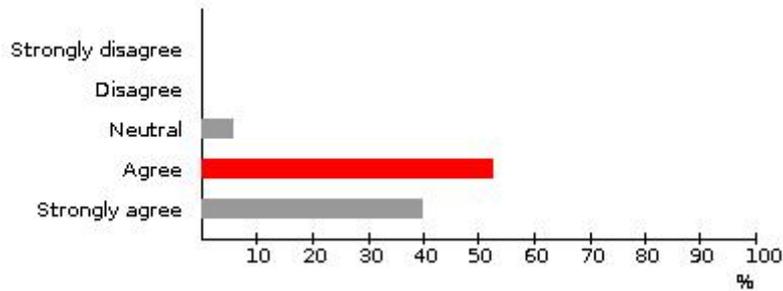


number distribution answer choice

0	0%	Strongly disagree
0	0%	Disagree
0	0%	Neutral
5	33,3%	Agree
10	66,7%	Strongly agree

15 has answered of 45 (33%)

I have read all or most of the course literature.

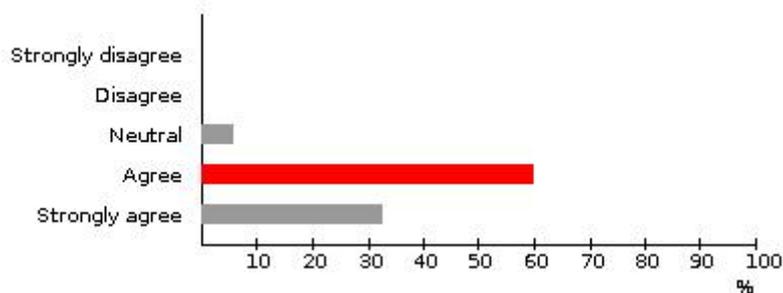


number distribution answer choice

0	0%	Strongly disagree
0	0%	Disagree
1	6,7%	Neutral
8	53,3%	Agree
6	40%	Strongly agree

15 has answered of 45 (33%)

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
1	6,7%	Neutral
9	60%	Agree
5	33,3%	Strongly agree

15 has answered of 45 (33%)

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. One student suggested that next time the course is given it would be good if there was a seminar or a relevant text on suitable methods for exploring information practices in digital environments. This is perhaps somewhat surprising since in one of the three

course books (Dobreva et al., 2012), there is a fairly substantial section, comprising five chapters, on the theme of “Methods explained and illustrated”. I will however take this suggestion into consideration for future versions of the course. Out of the eight separate comments provided in connection to the two last questions, seven were very positive. As a teacher, to learn that “*the course was excellent, one of the best I've taken part in so far*” and that it “*was a real treat to be a student on a course that was so well planned and executed*” is of course very encouraging.

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

Borås, 2015-04-13

Ola Pilerot, responsible teacher.