Report - AE2503 - 2019-12-20

Please note that there is only one respondent to this form: the person that performs the course analysis.

Course analysis carried out by (name, e-mail):
Katrin Grünfeld, katring@kth.se

COURSE DESIGN
Briefly describe the course design (learning activities, examinations) and any changes that have been implemented since the last course offering.
The course is given as 8 computer labs (including 1 short field exercise) and 8 lectures or workshops. During the computer labs the students work in groups of 2. Most of the exercises are followed by obligatory report submission (6 group reports, 1 group data upload, 1 individual report). The reports are graded according to the grading criteria outlined in course-PM, and contribute to the final grade. There is an anonymous written open-book exam at the end of the course.
Implemented changes: most of the lectures were replaced by workshops where exam questions from previous course rounds were discussed. Students were able to send in questions related to each topic, which were then answered in Canvas. Glossary of terms was compiled and published at the beginning of the course, and was appreciated by the students.

THE STUDENT'S WORKLOAD
Does the students' workload correspond to the expected level (40 hours/1.5 credits)? If there is a significant deviation from the expected, what can be the reason?
The reported workload varies, with peaks at 18-20 and 12-14 hours/week, maybe because only computer labs were obligatory. From comments: one student commented that the workload could increase while a number wrote that workload is fair. Noone wrote that workload was too heavy.

THE STUDENTS' RESULTS
How well have the students succeeded on the course? If there are significant differences compared to previous course offerings, what can be the reason?
The results were good, with a large number of A- and B-grades.

OVERALL IMPRESSION OF THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT
What is your overall impression of the learning environment in the polar diagrams, for example in terms of the students' experience of meaningfulness, comprehensibility and manageability? If there are significant differences between different groups of students, what can be the reason?
The overall impression is that the learning environment (average scores were between 4.0 and 5.6) can and should be improved further. There are no significant differences between different groups of students.

ANALYSIS OF THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT
Can you identify some stronger or weaker areas of the learning environment in the polar diagram - or in the response to each statement - respectively? Do they have an explanation?

Meaningfulness and manageability received mostly positive response, with some very critical voices. Regarding comprehensibility it varied: while the majority of students thought the assessment of the course was fair and honest, half of the respondents did not feel that they were able to practice and receive feedback without being graded. The explanation might be that a report has to be submitted each week and even if this does help to distribute the workload during the course more evenly, most students did only practice GIS during the class hours and felt that not enough feedback was given.

ANSWERS TO OPEN QUESTIONS
What emerges in the students' answers to the open questions? Is there any good advice to future course participants that you want to pass on?

Most comments stated that the best aspect of the course was GIS practice during the computer labs.
Suggestions to improve contained the recommendation to bring back the lectures, even if workshops were appreciated by some as well.
Advice to future participants: carefully read the material to be prepared before labs and make good use of the lab hours.

PRIORITY COURSE DEVELOPMENT
What aspects of the course should primarily be developed? How could these aspects be developed in the short or long term?

Provide links to online material like Youtube-videos and introduce short 1-hour lectures explaining the most important theoretical aspects before each lab occasion. Keep short 1-hour workshops to be held after each lab. Introduce quizzes for learning and examination: simple quizzes so the students can test themselves (based on previous E- and C-level exam questions), remove the final 4-hour written examination (to be replaced by something else, for example a time-limited quiz for those aiming at B and A-grades).

OTHER INFORMATION
Is there anything else you would like to add?

Introduce one more software: QGIS, to be used in one of the labs (QGIS is a freeware and thus easily available).
Further development of software-specific instructions that describe how to get started with GIS.