

----- INFO352 -- H14 -----

1. Teacher's assessment of the implementation

1.1 Practical implementation

The course was organized into whole-day seminars, which combined lectures, discussions, and student presentations. The seminars were spread over the semester from mid-august until then end of November, with eight seminars in total. As I was living in Canada during the semester three of the seminars were held with the students meeting together and me joining via skype. There were 2 guest lectures during the course.

Between the seminars the students were reading the course literature and working on their assignments and semester project. A semester project accounted for 40% of the total grade, a portfolio (with a reflection note and assignment) accounted for 30%, and an oral exam accounted for the remaining 30%.

The format seems to acceptable, the students liked having the seminars spread out and liked the topics and the discussions, but it was not ideal with the skype meetings and luckily this was only for this semester.

1.2 Failure rate and dropout

Five students attended the first session, four of which decided to follow the course. One of the students did not manage to complete his semester project. He is a mature student who works fulltime and due to being given an extra workload, could not meet the deadline. Thus, he did not take the exam either.

1.3 Grades distribution

The grade average was B, with 1 A, 1 B and 1 C being given. The distribution appears to be normal for a master's course.

1.4 Student Information and documentation

Course information, including links to course literature, lecture notes, assignments, and teacher's announcements, was provided in MiSide. We also exchanged email when necessary.

1.5 Access to relevant literature

Articles in the pensum were available in a folder on MiSide, and in addition the pensum list included links to the articles when possible.

2. Conditions

Facilities and teaching equipment were appropriate. We struggled somewhat with the equipment in the room when we needed to link up a student machine to connect via Skype, but got it to function in the end. Skype itself worked fine.

3. Teacher's comments on students' evaluation

All students submitted their reflections on the course through their portfolio. Students' opinions were generally positive. At the same time, they preferred the face-to-face sessions with the instructor to the Skype sessions. They pointed out, however, that even though the

instructor was not in Bergen during the entire semester, they felt that there was good communication via email and Skype so they did not feel abandoned. Several of the students mentioned that they particularly like the guest lecture by a previous Masters student who presented their research, and the research process she followed.

All three students wrote that they really liked the themes of the course and the literature, and found the course very useful for their future Masters work. The students liked being able to decide themselves which articles they would present and lead a discussion on, as they felt that this leads to a deep engagement in the material. They also mentioned that they liked having a range of types of semester projects they would carry out (design, evaluation, or literature survey). One student actually mentioned that they learned not only about the research field of TEL, but also on how to study and carry out research. One student was so pleased with his semester project that he will continue work on this topic during his Masters thesis.

One criticism was that the semester project was due the same week as the other course they were taking. We try to avoid this if possible, but given the time needed by the external examiners to read and grade the projects before the oral exam, it is often difficult to avoid these conflicts. On the other hand, they know from the first days of their courses when the projects are due, so they can plan early.

4. Teacher's overall assessment, including suggestions for improvement.

The course as a whole can be assessed generally positively. There were some very good discussions, covering a wide range of key theme in TEL research. It was unfortunate that there were only 4 students, as more students would have most likely led to more opinions and thus livelier discussions (previously the course has had between 11 and 20 participants). The students, however, did not see the small number as a disadvantage, and as one student pointed out this meant there was room for more personal discussion about what each student meant.

It is very satisfying as an instructor to have the students very pleased with the course. The reflections on the course and what they learned were very positive and showed that they did learn a lot.

The examination forms are relevant for this Masters course. In particular the oral exam is very good for such a theoretical course as one can engage the student in discussion of both course themes and their semester project. The external examination really enjoyed the discussions during the exam.

The class covered a wide range of topics in the area of TEL. One thing to consider is whether or not to focus on fewer themes. The course description opens for this. There are also a number of possibilities for further improvement, such as: (a) including more practical, hands-on activities, (b) have some ways to ensure that the students come to class having read the literature (e.g., hand in small summaries or questions before class).