Course report for the Faculty of Education and Society at Malmö University

Course name: Teaching and Learning in Higher Education: Thesis I

Background information

- Date for course report: 13 June 2025
- Semester: **spring 2025**
- Ladok code and course instance code: **HP705E, L3351**
- Course coordinator: **Adrian Lundberg**
- Number of registered students: **15**
- Number of students who responded to the summative course evaluation: 8 (53.33%)

Implementation	Mark with an X
The previous course report is communicated in connection with the start of the course	x
Early dialogue on expectations for the course	x
Formative course evaluation	x
Summative course evaluation	x
Feedback to students	x

Forms of evaluation
Describe the method(s) and implementation for both the formative and the summative course evaluation

The course is built up in different seminars. At each seminar, attending participants are asked for their formative feedback about the course. Sometimes, this was done in the form of a zoom poll, other times orally.

At the end of the course, students are asked to complete an online survey as a summative course evaluation.

Summary of the students' course evaluations

The students' views are objectively summarised here based on the various course evaluations for the course (see above). Individuals may not be named in the course report.

The quantitative data from the summative evaluation is showing a very positive view of the course. The only question that received mixed feedback was the one about the type of examination. One student suggestion to invite year 1 students to audit the **examination seminar** to give the students an idea of what is expected of them. The student mentions that the type of opposition examination seminar might be "uncommon" for international students. Another student criticised that the thesis supervisor of their opponent "was present and proceeded to critique [their] work. This situation "made for an uncomfortable learning environment where clear power dynamics were at play".

The additional qualitative comments provide some important points of departure to improve the course in general. They are therefore inserted here, with the topic in bold letters. First of all, both during the formative examination, during the seminars and also in the summative survey, students mention the need for more time:

*"the **time** was extremely tight to develop something really meaningful. I would consider extending the window of this project a lot longer, for example from January. I would also consider that all student-supervisors pairing should happen during the semester before i.e. october-december and so informal conversations/loose outlines and some background reading can start to take place."*

*"The **time** given to students to think about their thesis and write it is simply not enough. I am not sure why after a few intakes of this programme, this course gives such little time. This is a part-time programme. Why starting the course in mid February and expecting the students to finish everything by mid May? With only four lessons in which things are only discussed generally but learning does not really take place what students are supposed to do? Students are supposed to be prepared about research methodologies, some guidance should be given about the types of research studies that could be made. Without this, it all becomes demotivating and almost meaningless. Of course the student is supposed to do the work independently, but having such little time to do things while waiting for responses from supervisors that are delayed or in some cases do not come becomes frustrating. At this point, I am not sure if this feedback will be taken into account but please the timeframe must change."*

*"I feel there could be more support on the writing of the thesis. **Time** is really not enough considering this is a part-time programme as well"*

The third larger issue identified is the one about methods and analysis:

*The course gives no **background on methodological or analysis approaches**, i.e. does not guide through choices/design of the research. The programme misses this and I would consider introducing a module that leads to the thesis (i.e. a proposal module) where research questions and proposed methods are developed. This will enable to have a thesis project where student have already all the base to start collecting/analysing the data and write up findings."*

*"Why is there never any discussion about different **analysis methods**, how to code, and what programs can be used to achieve results? Headline references during classes and throwing students into a forest of internet information only causes frustration and boredom."*

*"Some students have difficulties with their thesis structure, particularly in areas like **methodology**. It could be helpful to have presentations on each section separately, such as ""What is mixed-methods research and how to apply it?""— covering the basics that some students may be missing.",consider adding workshops on different research methods to provide more hands-on learning opportunities"*

Finally, an on-campus graduation is suggested:

*"Not sure also if this is related to this part of the course or not, but we were told on the exam seminar that our "**graduation**" would take place only virtually for this course. I personally was disappointed to hear this as I had expected it would be a proper formal graduation, like any other course. I feel it lessens the importance or status of the masters*

course and the work we have done and achieved to not have a day to celebrate on campus, even just as an optional small moment for those that are able to attend in person, as well as online.”

Summary of the evaluations of the teaching team
The views of the teaching team regarding the content, learning activities and summative assessment of the course are summarised here.

There was only one teacher in the course. From my perspective, the content of the course seemed to be alright and well structured. Students attended the course more frequently than VT2024 and regularly participated in the only discussion forum. Those that were present seemed happy with the seminars. The question that is difficult to respond to is, what those that did not attend (and potentially not filled in the summative evaluation) think about the course. I do agree with the students that the available time is not enough to write an empirical master thesis and many students are not well-enough prepared to do research. Apparently, the supervisors are not able to support the students in the selected methodological and analytical approach. However, that might not be expected as well. More teaching and learning about research should happen before the final thesis course.

I appreciated the short emails from supervisors about their process with their students. That gave me as a course responsible an idea of what is going on in the students' writing process.

Analysis
The analysis is based on a summary of the students' and teachers' individual and joint course evaluations. Both success factors and problems are identified.

It seems to be an overwhelming problem to write a master thesis with a few months. If the program aims for a high quality of the final theses, the program might need to be restructured to give the students more time and access to a/their supervisor earlier. A connected issue is the one about pre-knowledge of methodological approaches and analytical procedures. The final thesis course does not provide all the information and background needed to conduct empirical research. It is, probably wrongfully so, expected of them to already know how to do research. The program needs to have a stronger focus on that if the final product is supposed to be an empirical thesis.

There is a need to discuss the examination seminar. Inviting first year students seems to be an excellent idea to introduce them into the academic culture (in Sweden). Supervisors need to be advised that they are not supposed to defend their own students during the examination seminar.

Action plan
The short-term and long-term changes that are to be implemented are specified here, along with a timeline. If no action is planned to address a specified problem, this decision must be justified.

1. Discuss the course's embedment in the entire program (time to contact supervisors and write the thesis and knowledge about empirical work)
2. Encourage supervisors to participate in intermediate seminars, stay in touch with the course responsible person and not defend their students during the examination seminar.
3. Consider an on-campus graduation.

Proposed revisions to the course syllabus
Suggestions for possible revisions to the syllabus are proposed here, supported by the above evaluation and the action plan.

None.

Information on course reports

The course report is an important instrument for the development of courses and programmes, as well as for guaranteeing student influence in this work. The *Decision on the model for systematic education-related quality work at the Faculty of Education and Society* (UTB 3.1-2017/410) indicates that course reports constitute the basis for the programme boards' efforts to systematically monitor the quality of the programme as a whole.

The *Course evaluation process at the Faculty of Education and Society* (UTB 3..2.2-2018/479) specifies what applies for the course report, including feedback to students.

The course report should include background information/key figures and a summary of the students' course evaluations, as well as analysis and an action plan together with any suggestions for revision of the course syllabus.

The course report is to be published in connection with other information about the course.

Revised 2020-05-24