

COURSE REPORT – Summary of course evaluation

Background information (To be completed by the course administrator)

Course LADOK code: KD335C	Scope (hp): 15,0 hp
Course title: CoDesign - Design, Participation and Democracy	
Course coordinator: Lizette Reitsma	Number of registered students: 22 (17 active students)
Semester in which the course is conducted: HT25	
Is the course an independent course, programme course or contract course? If the course has been completed within a programme, enter the programme name.	

Forms of evaluation and feedback (To be completed by the course coordinator)

Formative course evaluation, for example dialogue during the course (optional)	Approx. number of students who participated in formative course evaluation(s): 15
Summative course evaluation (obligatory) <input type="checkbox"/> Canvas and other form	Number of students who participated in the summative course evaluation: 11 out of 22

Student's perspective (To be completed by the course coordinator)

<p>Summary of the students' oral and written feedback:</p> <p>Overall course impression (Q1): Mean score 4.4 out of 6 (SD 0.8). No students rated the course 1 or 2. 18% gave a 3, 27% gave a 4, and 55% gave a 5. The course was well received overall. Students described it as eye-opening and appreciated the freedom to experiment, though some felt it lacked concrete foundations and only scratched the surface of best practices and methods.</p> <p>What worked well (Q2): Students valued the theoretical concepts, reading circles, and discussions. The openness of the project and the possibility of working directly with a real design opportunity were appreciated. Collaboration with students from different countries was a highlight. Exercises such as value manifestos and stakeholder mapping were seen as useful. The co-design method itself was considered interesting and worth exploring in depth.</p> <p>What could be improved (Q3): The most recurring theme was a lack of clear structure and concrete guidance, particularly in the early weeks. Students wanted more examples of what the design process and final output could look like, clearer milestones, and a stronger practical anchor. Several noted that teachers remained primarily in a researcher role and were hesitant to take a more directive mentoring role. Students also requested clearer differentiation between when they were in the PD process versus fulfilling course requirements. Better use of Canvas for scheduling and administration was also requested. Some suggested that the course would benefit from input from external practitioners working with PD methods in Malmö, and from sharing exemplary past projects.</p> <p>Expectations and learning outcomes (Q4–5): The course met expectations to a high degree (mean 4.4/6). Students reported achieving the learning outcomes strongly (mean 4.6/6). Reading of literature was the highest-rated learning activity (mean 5.0/6), followed by other teaching activities such as fieldwork and the Design Thing (4.9/6). Lectures (4.5/6), assignments (4.5/6), and seminars (4.4/6) also scored well. Canvas scored lowest (3.7/6), reflecting concerns about administration and structure.</p> <p>Examination forms (Q6): Mean 4.5/6. Most students felt the examination forms gave them adequate opportunity to demonstrate their learning, though the relatively high standard deviation (1.2) indicates varied experiences.</p>

Independent learning and time use (Q7–8): The course was seen as offering strong opportunity for independent learning (mean 5.2/6). Time spent varied considerably (mean 4.9, SD 1.9), with most students spending 21–25 hours per week. Students generally felt the time was sufficient, though some noted that a final product, rather than a Design Thing, would have required more time.

Teacher's perspective (To be completed by the course coordinator)

Summary of the teacher's views:

First time running the course: This was the first time the course was held in this form, which meant that structuring, scheduling, and administrative issues were inevitable. The teaching team is confident that these practical problems will not recur in the same way next time, now that the team has a clearer picture of how the course runs in practice.

The value of uncertainty as a learning experience: Students described the course as a “rollercoaster” and noted that they had to sit with uncertainty throughout. The teaching team views this as a rich and intentional learning experience — sitting with uncertainty is core to participatory design practice. While the team wants to provide clearer support and structure, they also want to preserve space for this productive discomfort. The goal is not to eliminate uncertainty but to make it feel purposeful rather than unnecessary.

More concrete cases with stronger stakeholder involvement: The teaching team aims to find more concrete design cases with stronger, more accessible stakeholders that students can actively involve and consult throughout the project. This will better anchor the course in the Malmö context and make the co-design process feel more real and consequential for students.

Introducing a whole process from the start: In HT25 the course introduced participatory design step by step, which meant students lacked an overall picture of the process until well into the course. In the next run, the teaching team plans to walk through a complete PD process example in the first week — showing students from the outset what a full process looks like from start to finish. This will give students a map to navigate by, even as they encounter the complexity and uncertainty of doing it themselves.

Exceptional student engagement and participation: Notably, we have high numbers of participants in both the oral evaluation and the online course evaluation. The teaching team sees this as a meaningful signal: it reflects a level of student engagement and investment in the course that goes beyond what is typical, and suggests that students genuinely felt the course was worth reflecting on and contributing to.

Additional feedback from individual reflections and beyond the survey: Upon examining all individual student reflections, the depth of learning that took place becomes strikingly clear. Many students write that this course has fundamentally changed their view on design, and that the insights gained will shape how they work going forward. Students describe a journey from initially feeling lost to gaining a genuine understanding of design as a social practice. One student, wrote that among all the courses she has taken in her education, this course demonstrated the highest relevance and impact. Beyond the course itself, at least one student who participated in Design Thing organised by students on the course was so inspired that she is now pursuing her thesis project on urban planning, future-making and more-than-human perspectives — a direct outcome of the course's influence.

Action plan (To be completed by the course coordinator)

The underlying analysis and the action plan should be based on a summary of the students' individual course evaluations, views from teachers in the course and the knowledge development in the research field. If identified problems are left without action, this should be motivated.

The following changes are planned in the short and long term:

1. Introductory structure and onboarding: Add an introductory workshop in the first week covering basic design concepts, an overview of the co-design process, and concrete examples of

what the course project could look like. Start with simpler, more familiar cases before introducing complex ones.

2. Clearer course structure and milestones: Provide a more concrete course outline from the start, with clearly defined weekly goals or checkpoints. Introduce theory earlier in the course and delay the introduction of the main case until students have a stronger conceptual foundation.

3. Teacher role and mentoring: Discuss within the teaching team how to balance the researcher role with more active mentoring and facilitation. Students need freedom within clear guidelines — not vagueness.

4. Canvas and course administration: Improve the Canvas setup so the schedule is complete and correctly implemented from day one. Ensure all materials, assignments, and deadlines are clearly communicated and easy to navigate.

5. External practitioners and past project examples: Think about inviting guest speakers who work with PD methods in practice in Malmö (or show their work as examples), and share exemplary past student projects at the start of the course to inspire and guide new students.

Remember to orally feedback the results of the course evaluation to

- the students who have completed the course evaluation
- the students of the next course round, i.e. the next time the course is given