Course evaluation GEOM11 2018

Introduction

This course evaluation is based on the responses, comments and suggestions made by the students in a course valuation performed directly after the written exam of the course. Additional comments were given in a round table discussion format.

Student course valuation summary

In general the students think that there is a good balance between lectures, exercises and presentation material (lecture notes etc.). A few students would like to have a few more exercises. Explanatory notes for lecture slides with little text is desired and more specific additional reading suggestions, e.g. rather than referring to a book title, we (lecturers) should advice on specific chapters or pages. Provide solutions for all home assignments.

The students generally think that the course is well structured and that the content is relevant for the course goals. Suggestions for improvements are more exercises on radiometric dating and tracing of geological processes through radiogenic isotopes. More integration (through exercises) between crystallisation processes and petrography is also suggested. Video on key diagrams such time-isotope ratios or phase diagrams would be beneficial.

The students are well pleased with the course literature, although we should bear in mind that it does not cover all parts of the course. Additional material such as videos, links and other resources on Live@Lund was much appreciated. There was a general opinion that the instructions for the Gran Final could be more detailed.

The students are generally pleased with the teaching methods for the course; they particularly liked the electronic response cards. One suggestion for improvement is to go through exercises and home assignments. Video lectures are also appreciated. Lectures and exercises are generally well structured and pedagogical, although there was a bit of overlap between some isotope lectures, and that some of the statistics felt a little rushed. Some also express that thermodynamics might need a little more time.

The highlight of the course was the fieldtrip to Tenerife, but the students point out that many aspects of the course came together during the trip, which was very illustrative for a number of processes.

All students that responded the course valuation felt that the course met their expectations and that they are satisfied with their learning outcomes. Some note that the course is very demanding, but thought this was ok since it was clear from the start. The main suggestions for improving the course are:

- More exercises.
- Maybe more group discussions, perhaps together with the lecturer.
- Upload (video) solutions to home assignments or separate sessions were the lecturer go through the answers.
Reflection and summary
The decision, based on the evaluation from 2017, i.e. to separate the written exam from the Gran Final fell out successfully. We experienced through this structural change students were more engaged and focused during the field excursion. Also completing the main assignment “the Gran Final” before the exam and the excursion we believe improved the learning outcomes. We thus intend to retain having the written exam relatively early in the course, followed by the Gran Final work that leads up to a concluding fieldtrip. By this order of activities, students are better prepared for the fieldtrip (through their tasks in the Gran Final), and they need not to worry about the exam, as it should be past them.

The suggestion to produce more video material and more exercises is encouraging and we are positive to this, but note that this will inflict on the time available so this must be balanced. We will also continue to consider more “flipped classroom” style lectures as we think it would enable more integration between exercises and lectures. However, it would also require more preparatory work from the students. This setup would also enable us to provide more quantitative feedback quicker to the students. Single best answer multiple-choice self tests might provide an additional way to assess progress during the course. These self-tests can be organised to mimic written exams in both context and form, thereby providing the student with a direct and quantifiable assessment of their progress.

From the last course evaluation we will use the final day (or half-day) in Tenerife to sum up the learnings and observations from the excursion. We will also consider to do the course evaluation this last day if time is available.

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