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DM526 Introduction to Computer Science, Fall 2009, Action Plan

The course DM526 Introduction to Computer Science was evaluated as it was a first year course. Out of the 35 students, 15 have answered the course evaluation sheet.

The course was widely perceived as relevant and interesting and – with one exceptions – the evaluation results range from positive to very positive. There are two issues that should be addressed or at least discussed for next year's rerun of the course.

First, the course book was not very popular and the question evaluating it received the worst scores in the whole evaluation. More precisely, only 60% were satisfied while 26.7% were dissatisfied. The comments support this impression as 3 out of 4 comments on the teaching material criticize the book for errors and unsatisfactory presentation and selection of the content.

Second, the working load was perceived as slightly too high and the size of some of the obligatory assignments was mentioned as the reason for this. This is mainly due to the way the course was run, i.e., because there were so many different teachers and the level and the amount of the assignments varied a bit more than it should have. Although a comment specifically mentions the large number of teachers as a positive thing, I think the course would profit from a more uniform execution.

A positive aspect I find worth mentioning is that the two teaching assistants have gotten very positive evaluations and comments. As the teaching assistant for the second quarter was in fact a second year student, this confirms that students early in their study can be very engaged and effective teaching assistants.