

# eValuering 2.1 - Sammanställning

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## SAMMANSTÄLLNING

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**Utvärdering:** Constraint Technology (autumn 2009)  
**Antal svarande:** 14

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## WELCOME!

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Please fill out the survey below to provide the assigned teachers and the department with feedback. Don't forget to click on "Submit Evaluation" when the form is complete. Your answers are anonymous.

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## QUESTIONS

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The following questions are required by the faculty board. You must answer them.





*What is your general feeling about the course?*

Svarsalternativ	Graf (%)	%	Σ
1 (= bad)		0	0
2		0	0
3		7	1
4		29	4
5 (= good)		64	9

Medelvärde: 4.57

Standardavvikelse: 0.65




*The total amount of work on the course, in relation to the credits (7.5 högskolepoäng = 7.5 ECTS credits = 200 hours of work expected), was ...*

Svarsalternativ	Graf (%)	%	Σ
1 (<170h)		0	0
2 (170..190h)		14	2
3 (190..210h)		21	3
4 (210..230h)		36	5
5 (>230h)		29	4



Medelvärde: 3.79

Standardavvikelse: 1.05

*Did you at the start of the course receive information about previous course evaluations and measures taken because of them?*

Svarsalternativ	Graf (%)	%	Σ
no		7	1
yes		71	10
I don't know		21	3

*Did you get the opportunity during the course at a scheduled time to give anonymous written feedback on the ongoing course (in short: was there a mid-course evaluation)?*

Svarsalternativ	Graf (%)	%	Σ
no		7	1
yes		93	13
I don't know		0	0

## TELL US WHAT WE SHOULD KNOW!

### What in this course has been particularly good?

- I switched this course to another course at the beginning, so I guess I am not qualified and not able to give comments. but I attended some lectures which are pretty good. The reason I switched this course is that the courses I chose for this period are overloaded, so I switched it to an easier course which requires not much work. <sup>1</sup>
- 1.It meets my personal interest; 2.The content delivered in this course can be applied into real life problem; 3.And the technology solves hard & interesting problems; <sup>2</sup>
- The lectures have been very interesting and I really liked them as much as how the teacher lectured. To be honest... I have taken this course because I wanted and for curiosity as I don't need any credits and the subject itself did ever bring my attention, but after these weeks, I must admit that I learnt a lot and liked the subject. The project has been interesting to put in practice those things that were taught in class, and also to get an overall picture of how these things are put into practice (same as the guest lecture from the company) <sup>3</sup>
- It told me a lot about mathematic methods <sup>4</sup>
- There is lots of content. The slides are quite good, and quite clear. In general we get a very clear idea what this course is tutoring. The bonus system is also good. I liked the idea of guest

lecturers to show the over side of the coin.<sup>5</sup>

- I liked all topics, specially the distinct propagator and the lectures that include modeling. I wouldn't change any lecture, I just would add more!<sup>6</sup>
- The topic ! Other good points include : nice applications presented, good theory outline. Very nice points : quick correction of assignments and great feed-back. Best lecture : the one on how to trivialize kakuro with user-defined constraints ! It was for me the most inspiring lecture.<sup>7</sup>
- Good content of the lectures<sup>8</sup>
- efficient to learn as much as possible in the lecture Assignment is huristic<sup>9</sup>
- the whole course is good<sup>10</sup>
- The laboratory exercises were particularly good. The lectures were also good.<sup>11</sup>
- This course offers useful knowledge such as constraint problems and gecode<sup>12</sup>
- Structured course, nice assignments and projects. Knowing teacher<sup>13</sup>
- assignment, but we need more guide.<sup>14</sup>

### How could the course be improved?

- I guess the answer is 'no comments':D<sup>1</sup>
- 1. The course can be divided into 2 periods so that there can be more content on programming implementation of CSP models.<sup>2</sup>
- Course lacks practical exercises or problem sessions. It is very nice to present the theory and provide simple examples, but I think it is much more important to do exercises to make sure that people understood the ideas, rather than presenting a bunch of theory. Using some other lecture slides is bad, very bad. I agree on re-use... but I think that notes are personal, and someone that is supposed to teach should prepare his own notes rather than modify his behaviour and teaching according to someone else's notes (but this is just a personal opinion as I think that notes are personal). I think it's unfair that doing an assignment in pairs count the same as doing individually (specially given the last comment about Gecode...). Those bonus points should've been adjusted according to the number of people doing the assignments (I think you agree that two brains usually do more than one brain...). In fact I think it would have been better to give bonus point according to the final grade. I guess I was stupid when I decided to work alone and spend probably more time than a couple, but I think I learnt more (it won't be counted towards the grade but I am happy I was able to get such a good grade on my own, though not one of the bonus grades :) Projects are not even, or at least, after talking to people I realise that I chose the wrong one (second one...), or at least when it comes to debugging and modelling the one I chose had almost zero support from Gecode (see the next comment about Gecode). But as Farshid said, the second one has more "meat" because more different constraints are involved... but once again, as long as the base (Gecode's documentation) is able to level things (and it's not been the case). Last but not least (and quite honestly the most important...), this course has failed (badly) with the practical part (or assignments). I felt like a guinea pig. I heard that Gecode/J was quite problematic last year, Gecode/C++ hasn't been problematic in the sense that there have been bugs or issues related to the library itself, but it has failed at having a decent documentation. There's no decent Gecode documentation, yes, there's a pdf which is useful up to some point (up to the point where you do simple things such as the first assignment), but when things get complicated, there's no reasonable way to learn how it works because the on-line documentation is absolutely useless (what's the point of having a documentation where the documentation doesn't have anything else than the parameters of a function?). The examples that this library includes are not commented at all, so how am I supposed to know how it was modelled when I am not an expert. Gecode is a library that works but as long as you know a lot of CT, if you're a beginner... then you need a manual, a tutorial and explained examples. Maybe it

would be useful, since I don't think that this will ever be solved as writing decent documentation takes a lot of time and effort, to do a preparatory session for each assignment and a couple for the projects (or do problem solving sessions including some Gecode modelling sessions....). Maybe it's me, but I lost (and I mean wasted) many afternoons to learn what some of the examples meant or how to use some things. As well as found errors in the documentation (see page 54 of v3.1.0 "documentation" pdf and check the second constraint in 5.2.3, it doesn't exist in Gecode!). This is the reason why I hate this course as much as I like it, even though I don't need the credits and I took it, as I said for fun, and I could've thrown the towel but I'm too proud to be defeated like that. I spent most of the time playing around to learn the internals of Gecode when a commented example and probably those preparatory sessions would've saved that (wasted) time... Summing up everything... solving sessions and do something with Gecode documentation (it's been almost hell some nights...) <sup>3</sup>

- none <sup>4</sup>
- The bonus systems is good, but maybe it would be better to have more points as bonuses, and not to leave most of the grade to the exam. It would be also good to have lecture notes not for only theoretical slides, but also for the modeling example slides as well, with a bit more prose, examples and advices, it is so much easier to read and reference later. I know this is repeating, but the course needs a better schedule (it's a bit ironic, that we had this schedule for Constraint programming course, maybe there is a need for more soft-constraints in the schedule CSP :) )! The first assignment is too soon, or maybe add another assignment as the first (and move the current first further down), for just acquainting with Gecode, something very simple, just to get the feet wet, to know how the model is specified, compiled, and run. Use more "user-friendly" system than Gecode (in their own words, they intend that Gecode is to be used as a back-end). Gecode is very good, but their language of choice is a hindrance. It is very verbose, so it discourages experimentation, and the semantics are sometimes just plain weird, it does not check the model for inconsistencies, it will happily allow creating decision variables on the fly, and produce solutions with incorrect results. Which is very hard to debug, because you're not aware of the limitation. As the exam is hand written, I missed some exercise sessions. If you have this kind of exam, there must be some exercises. It is done in every other course that I took! In whole I think this course would be better experience, if it would be 10 cr, not 7.5. It feels a bit rushed now. <sup>5</sup>
- I would like an extra class with modeling examples, or an extra assignment with modeling. The exam is way too long. Even when you know the answers you write and write and write... My hand was very tired. <sup>6</sup>
- The lecturer from Tacton wasn't so enthusiastic. Maybe briefly presenting current research in the ASTRA group would be nice. <sup>7</sup>
- The assignments could have been more balanced - the first one is so big compared with the second one. Also the slides can be uploaded to the webpage earlier so that they can be previewed before the relevant lecture starts <sup>8</sup>
- the deadline for assignment1 is too tight It could be better to provide material of some notions. For example value consistency. Since some of them are not explicitly mentioned in the PPT. It took times to search the internet to look up for some notions <sup>9</sup>
- give more materials about the Gecode <sup>10</sup>
- A lecture on how to, as formally as in this experimentation heavy field possible, select good branching heuristics for a certain model would be nice. To me, the connection between search heuristics and the time required to find a solution is still quite unclear. The results from the first laboratory assignment, where random variable and value selection was consequently the most effective, were never explained such that I gained any real clarity. <sup>11</sup>
- Course Timetable should be improved <sup>12</sup>
- Projects could be made in pairs (nice to have someone to discuss approaches with) A bit more time before deadline on the first lab :P <sup>13</sup>

- show more examples in real life not just theory<sup>14</sup>

Please be informative and constructive.

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