

Wpc2008_03: Bioinformatics and Comparative Genomes Analyses
Florianopolis, June 30 – July 12, 2008

We have encouraged all students to write down their impressions about the whole course, as suggested in question 14 of the EMBO questionnaire. As it can be seen the reactions are numerous and diverse with a general trend for constructive suggestions.

During the evaluation session we have discussed some of the comments together with all the students. The organizers have particularly acknowledged the students for their comments and suggestions and for their overall positive course evaluation.

We have made some clarifications:

-Concerning the monitors who were there solely to help technical and system questions not for scientific problems. They did a perfect job.

-Concerning comments on the course program, length, documents to read and topics we have long before the starting of the course sent many e-mail messages to alert the selected students about the intensity of the course and that individual preparation should be done before coming to the course and provided many hints in a list of useful links:

http://www.pasteur.fr/~tekaia/BCGA_useful_links.html

In the following we report all comments mentioned by the students.

EMBO questionnaire: Q14: List of additional comments or suggestions for future events

1. This course is very important to share knowledge about Bioinformatics and genome analyses with international approach. It is necessary to continue with similar courses for all areas. A suggestion for future events is to reduce the extension of the course for one week.

2. The organizing members did an outstanding job! The course was wonderful but as anything in life, there are always points that could be improved:

-In my opinion, 2 hours are too much for lunch. 1H – 1.5h would be enough, giving people more time for classes in the afternoon.

-Practical classes could have been better organized among the speakers and the assistant students. There should be more people helping out the participants in the practical sessions.

-In this course, the graduate students that were supposed to help in these sessions barely had an idea of what was going on.

Some positive points that I would like to point out:

-The group was very friendly and receptive, which helped a lot in the dynamics of the course.

-The organizing members and the speakers were always around, even during « social » activities, always open to help the participants, to talk about professional life, and to give us a good time in and out of the classes.

-The subject was covered accordingly to my personal expectations, in such a way that i could follow and learn a lot.

3. The course was well organized and the resources (computers, conference room- were excellent).

-The class of *Unix* and *perl* should have been more practical and applied than theoretical, and i think *Bioperl* should have been included.

-I think a class of sequencing methods should have been included, especially because bioinformatics works with great amount of data and it is important to know how it is integrated.

-Some of the lecturers are too long and not didactic, and some too specific of a research project not for a course, but in general they were good.

4. I considered that the time of each day is very long, then it is very difficult to maintain the attention especially in the last hour. I suggest the finish hour to 17 :00H.

5. I think that *UNIX* class was very simple and the lecturer did not prepare it.

-The quality is excellent.

-The level of the students was unequal.

-I think it is possible to select the students in another way.

6. I suggest reducing a little bit the number of hours a day or sessions.

7. It Would be desirable more practices about *Unix* and scripting programming. The topic *Bioperl* should be paid more attention, as the *Python* programming Language. Some fundamental algorithms of Bioinformatics and administrative tasks in Unix should be seen in more details.

8. I think the organization was excellent in many aspects. The organizers were all the time concerned about any request we would have. They were always checking that everything was OK. It was a great pleasure to interact with them.

-I really want to point out the incredible predisposition of all the teachers to share information and to answer any kind of doubt we had plenty of time to interact with them.

However i feel the first two days were not so successful. I would have liked to have more practical training in the computer about *Unix* and *perl* use instead of too much theoretical information. I think the best way to acquire knowledge about the application of these topics is performing exercises directly in computer.

However since the third day of the course the level was excellent and we performed a lot of practical applications.

-Another comment is that some of the lectures were too long. In these cases it was very difficult to take attention and understand correctly the last part of the lectures. I suggest lectures no long than 1.15H.

However all lecturers had very good level.

9. For all courses I am very satisfied, but i expected more details in some sections.

10. More practical sessions.

11. The course was well organized and topics selection was very good.

May be discussions would have been more fruitful if we were given some written material to read (scientific papers) before attending the course.

I would also have the discussion of my own samples.

I found the first classes on programming very difficult to follow. I think it would have helped to have more practical sessions on the topics which were important for the following classes.

Finally, i would like to point out that the quality of the scientific lecturers was excellent, but may be some of them were too long.

12. I think the course was very interesting and useful. It provided me a lot of new bioinformatics knowledge and tools. In some cases, i think the speakers prepared very extensive expositions and didn't focus in the most important items or they hurried up at the

final part and didn't have time to clarify some concepts. May be, it should be convenient to organize shorter lecturers. I would like that the *UNIX/PERL* practical section would have been better organized and guided to follow and understand the exercises.

All the speakers were very kind in answering the questions and suggested new tools to improve our researches.

13. All social activities were very well organized and very enjoyable. In all times meeting with other attendees of the course was easy.

Course topics lessons have been appreciated.

All in all, this course is an important contribution to my post-graduate formation.

14. The course was very good, but i think there are some things that could be improved, at an advanced course.

Students should be supposed to know all basic aspects, including *linux* and *perl*, and the course should be a step further and not the first one.

I would reorganize the beginning of the course, but most of the classes were very good on the rest of the time.

15. For *linux* scripting, may be work online some weeks before the course. This could give more time for understanding.

Perfect the lecture – workshop system.

16. The meeting practice should be more independent and self-taught, because it is so that we will be in our daily work.

17. I think several teachers have serious problems to communicate clear and in an enjoyable way their ideas. This causes a waste of time and unnecessary fall in the understanding.

However i think the problem has solutions, and this kind of meeting are very important for us.

18. It could be good to have more practical sessions or at least 50% of lecture and 50% of practicals, from the beginning to the end of the course.

3-The programming lectures did not fulfil my aims. We did not talk about *Bioperl*, *R*, and *Bioconductor*.