

Common DA training course evaluation

General feeling about the training

Good both for participants and lecturers - everybody could learn something new.

Good things

Most of the relevant topics covered.

Bad things

Some topics would probably need more time. the exercises were maybe too technical.

Missing subjects

-

Superfluous subjects

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Your suggestions to make things better next time

The group may be limited to max 30 people.



Common DA training course evaluation

General feeling about the training

Plenty of new information for me. Learned quite a few new things.

Good things

Good explanations, presenters know their respective field

Bad things

Some slides were overly crowded. Sometimes the explanations were given too fast.

Missing subjects

Maybe a short session on running a standard Harmonie configuration in forecast mode

Superfluous subjects

Cannot think of any

Your suggestions to make things better next time

Smaller groups. Provide detailed solutions after training sessions. A bit more on visualising the results.



Common DA training course evaluation

General feeling about the training

Not for newcomers

Good things

A good variety of topics

Bad things

Presentations too advanced for newcomers, practicals mostly spent on tool installation

Missing subjects

None

Superfluous subjects

None

Your suggestions to make things better next time

To get everyone a training account with necessary tools preinstalled which would leave more time for practicals and examples. To test everything is working for training accounts. Bring topic presentations more to a newcomer level (basics are usually not well covered in documentations). It would be better to do practicals together with participants using a training account and leave introductions to practicals out. Maybe teach participants how to set assimilation up for a specific cycle.

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Common DA training course evaluation

General feeling about the training

Positive; a great opportunity to deal with DA issues jointly with experts.

Good things

Contents and structure.

Bad things

Too much focus was put on the system issues and not clear connection to science; exercises should focus more on scientific learning goals.

Missing subjects

None for the available time.

Superfluous subjects

Eventually some system details.

Your suggestions to make things better next time

Technicalities of the exercises should be simplified, so that more focus be put on getting theoretical achievements through practical exercises (a better balance should be achieved between providing information on DA and on practical tools). Two proposals: keep the exercises information in the slides instead of dispersing it through website+slides+readme_files; comment the practical exercises at the end so that practices could be connected properly to theory.

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General feeling about the training

It was OK, but not more than that. I don't feel much smarter than before.

Good things

Pretty much all important parts of DA were in the program. The general structure of the training was good.

Bad things

Chaotic at times. Goals of the practical sessions were not clearly defined. At times, it seemed like an advertisement of the HARMONIE system. Many things were not properly explained in both theoretical and practical sessions. Screening practicals were only blacklisting.

Missing subjects

Superfluous subjects

Your suggestions to make things better next time

Better organization and preparation so that we don't lose half of the time on installation. Studying goals need to be defined and focus should be on understanding the subject and not to just see what is out there (eg. HARMONIE system). Experiments should have some conclusion and purpose. For example, single-obs experiments were great, but more effort should have been put to explanation of what they mean and what can be learned from them (eg. connection to correlations from B-matrix). Overall, more simple experiments which illustrate the basic nature of the DA system should have been prepared for people to get more basic feeling of the whole DA system and get the grasp what is happening inside. Also, theoretical part should be more clearer with the clear explanations why we do certain things. There is a big room for improvement.

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Common DA training course evaluation

General feeling about the training

Good

Good things

The diversity of subjects of data assimilation, the support of personnel. The exchange of knowledge.

Bad things

Some tools didn't install like obsmoon

Missing subjects

Superfluous subjects

Your suggestions to make things better next time

Some parts of presentation could be organised better. Also, you could give less information but much more clear and structured than much information not so structured and so clear.

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Common DA training course evaluation

General feeling about the training

Very well prepared with good structure. It was very useful.

Good things

It is always very good to have practical sessions where we can try things out ourselves.

Bad things

None.

Missing subjects

None.

Superfluous subjects

None.

Your suggestions to make things better next time

Sometimes the learning objective of the practical exercises wasn't very clear. It may be useful to have more questions for the exercises besides the steps which should be done. For some of the exercises it was not clear why exactly we are doing what we are doing. But overall the practical sessions were useful and well prepared.

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Common DA training course evaluation

General feeling about the training

In general, useful. I wish I would have access to a similar one when starting to work on NWP.

Good things

Practical sessions. Nice step-by-step instructions in many cases. Keeping theoretical data on low level in most cases. Helpful lecturers.

Bad things

Too much emphasis was placed on surface DA / conventional data assimilation. In some cases, too much theoretical data on slides. Sometimes the practical lectures were not so organized, especially when dealing with HIRLAM-related systems. Using ECMWF machine as a common platform was not a bad idea at all, but most attendants did not have previous experience with cca/ccb/ecgate + we overflowed them a little bit. Placing practical sessions after lunch, when most people could not really concentrate (I guess this was one of the reasons for proceeding with the exercises slower than expected).

Missing subjects

None. Maybe the possibilities of new, not so conventional observation types (for instance, sky cameras, domestic weather stations, etc) could have deserved a slide / lecture.

Superfluous subjects

Little bit too much surface DA.

Your suggestions to make things better next time

Try to find another working platform / make things easier on ECMWF machine (for example, work only with cca or ccb or ecgate to make things quicker). Try to mix practical and theoretical sessions. For HIRLAM lecturers: better preparation for the practical sessions (example: Aladin/Arome colleagues).

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General feeling about the training

Very useful training course. A lot of material was covered (perhaps too much).

Good things

Content of lectures was good. Exercises were interesting (perhaps more visualisation of output would have been nice).

Bad things

There appeared to be a presumption that knowledge of the audience would be at a high level, and as such topics seemed quite advanced. A lot of acronyms went unexplained (eg data types).

Missing subjects

More general introduction to system.

Superfluous subjects

Your suggestions to make things better next time

Perhaps a survey beforehand would allow trainers to know the minimum level they need to pitch material.

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Common DA training course evaluation

General feeling about the training

It was useful.

Good things

It was nice to hear not just theoretical part but practical.

Bad things

HIRLAM practical parts were sometimes confusing.

Missing subjects

Superfluous subjects

I felt that there was plenty of time spent with surface DA.

Your suggestions to make things better next time

More practical session.



Common DA training course evaluation

General feeling about the training

Interesting, useful and comprehensive.

Good things

Exercises (teachers who know their stuff) and website can be used as future book of reference. Social events.

Bad things

Some presentations too technical but that may be undeterrable.

Missing subjects

No idea because I was a newbie anyway.

Superfluous subjects

None.

Your suggestions to make things better next time



Common DA training course evaluation

General feeling about the training

good and useful training with an informal and friendly atmosphere

Good things

presenters are really key experts in the topic, good training exercises

Bad things

would have been better to make three groups for the exercises, e.g. HIRLAM-beginner, HIRLAM-advanced and LACE

Missing subjects

none that I can think of

Superfluous subjects

none that I can think of

Your suggestions to make things better next time

organize the HPC accounts a bit more in advance; separation of groups for exercises (see above)

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Common DA training course evaluation

General feeling about the training

Useful

Good things

The concept of practicals in the afternoon. Very useful to do some hands-on testing! Also, the prepared software scripts and environment were very useful.

Bad things

1) Few of the talks started with a general overview of the subject, but jumped straight to details. I had to search on Google during some talks to understand how things fit together. 2) Font/image size was often an issue, even sitting on the second row.

Missing subjects

See under suggestions

Superfluous subjects

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Your suggestions to make things better next time

1) A general overview talk on the first(?) day to explain how the various concepts and software fit together as a system, and the general purpose of each. There are many names and acronyms! 2) Maybe split the training into "Beginners" and "Already using the software"? 3) No program items after lunch on Friday (it is often inconvenient to travel on a Saturday).

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General feeling about the training

It was a very informative training and I was able to take away many aspects to be used in my work.

Good things

- The meeting was generally well organized with a balance of theoretical and practical components.
 - Most of the slides were simple to understand and were concise.
 - I liked how the small components of Harmonie were extracted to help demonstrates their workflow and features.
 - The instructors were very knowledge and helpful when asked for assistance.
 - It was nice to chat with attendees from other institutes during the social events and lunch time
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Bad things

- It was sometimes hard to follow the instructions with the instructors, because of the speed of the course and/or the visibility of the projector.
 - Some practical were too long to complete within the given time period.
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Missing subjects

Superfluous subjects

Your suggestions to make things better next time

- I find working with a few people help with some clarifications and tackling the tasks together. So maybe dividing the class into small groups can make the practical component run more smoothly?
 - Shorter exercises
 - Re-emphasize the overview of each section (especially the practicals)
 - Maybe additional social events can promote more collaboration during the training week?
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Common DA training course evaluation

General feeling about the training

It was necessary for me :-) Very interesting, but also often confusing.

Good things

Practical session! That errors in slides / descriptions were corrected on the way. You offered both a bit theory and practical stuff :-) Smart to put practical session in the end of the day. Thematic days are good. It showed that the lecturers where interested in passing their knowledge. You could always come with a question.

Bad things

Exercises were sometimes quite confusing. Not all lecturers were very pedagogical (to busy slides, assuming not-known things) . Some slides were only readable when magnifying on the PC several 100%.

Missing subjects

More focus on how to find out why the run has failed.

Superfluous subjects

Your suggestions to make things better next time

I think you overestimated the knowledge of the audience. Perhaps it is better to narrow the either new-bees or experts. Give a general overview first. The middle sessions about running the system could f.eks. be done in the beginning. Do not have slides with only equations without any(!) descriptions/explanations of what is shown.

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Common DA training course evaluation

General feeling about the training

Satisfactory

Good things

Theoretical and practical approach

Bad things

Organization

Missing subjects

General overview before starting the course

Superfluous subjects

None

Your suggestions to make things better next time

I would have divided the course into two groups so that the Harmonie system users, for example, could have done practical exercises centered on that model.



Common DA training course evaluation

General feeling about the training

Very useful, hands-on training

Good things

Well-prepared exercises, good presentations

Bad things

Some jargon, some unavoidable glitches in practicals, no excursion

Missing subjects

For me it was fine

Superfluous subjects

For me it was just right

Your suggestions to make things better next time

Include an excursion. More problems are solved during breaks than during sessions, and a change of scenery always inspires...



Common DA training course evaluation

General feeling about the training

An excellent chance to learn aspect of the overall model system! Very useful! Good to meet and work together with the other participants and very good instructions and help during practicals from teachers!

Good things

The structure of the course was good, going through the system and with teaching first and then practicals directly afterwards. Good instructions and advises from the instructors, this helped to learn a lot.

Bad things

Maybe the room was not perfect, the people in the back did probably not see, hear too much. Important to have the presentations, material uploaded well in time so that participants can download them. Small "typos" in the practicals can delay and create confusion (but that is life..).

Missing subjects

Not what I know.

Superfluous subjects

Not what I know.

Your suggestions to make things better next time

A better room, wider, so that all can better follow and interact. Head-microphone would make things easier.

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Common DA training course evaluation

General feeling about the training

The DA training course is a great initiative, and there is absolutely need for such a course in the community. There is however need for several iterations before reaching the optimal solution.

Good things

The training course had a nice mix of lectures and practicals. The long coffee and lunch breaks were much appreciated. It was obvious that a lot of preparation had gone into preparing for the practicals, for instance the version of Harmonie that would run straight out of the box without problems, and without having to wait for it to compile, and this worked very well.

Bad things

It was not clear to me if the course was targeted at beginners, intermediate or advanced users and it did not seem like the lecturers had agreed on this either. Many lectures had a lot of details on narrow topics, but it was not always clear how this fit into the big picture (what are we doing and why?). More general introduction into data assimilation, the different modelling systems that were used, and the difference between the modelling systems would be helpful on the first day. Also, some of the slides were very very busy with a LOT of text and tiny plots or screenshots with poor resolution. Sometimes the axis labels of the plots were not readable on the laptop even when using 300% zoom.

Missing subjects

General introductions into data assimilation in general and the modelling systems in general during the first day(s)

Superfluous subjects

Your suggestions to make things better next time

To make the training week more coherent, and to make sure that people know what to expect, it is necessary to decide on a target audience and to communicate who the target audience is to the potential participants and to the lecturers. I would suggest picking a single modelling system for the week and focusing on that, particularly if the target audience is beginners. Finally, it is always important to take a step back during lectures and provide context (what are we doing right now and why), particularly for the more specialized topics.

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General feeling about the training

A very useful training, good opportunity to get an overall picture of DA, and go a bit deeper in details through practical exercises. I feel pleased that I took part in it.

Good things

It was a well organized training, subjects were well collected and arranged. Also, practicals were useful, teaching many tools in DA.

Bad things

I was a bit slower and could not always follow "on-line" hints in the practicals, and/or read them from back of the room.

Missing subjects

It was not missing subject but I would be interested next time even more about observation errors and EDA aspects.

Superfluous subjects

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Your suggestions to make things better next time

Maybe practicals in smaller groups, and/or bit more flexible exercises, more opportunities to "play with" (e.g. some of namelist parameters more explained).

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Common DA training course evaluation

General feeling about the training

Interesting, but chaotic

Good things

Very nice, patient and motivated teachers. Good balance between theory and practicals. For me personally, the very last session on diagnostics was the most helpful.

Bad things

I really appreciate your effort and motivation, but there were different things that contributed to making the sessions often quite messy. I elaborate more on that below.

Missing subjects

As you noticed yourself already, a short introduction about what the different programs (BATOR, Screening, etc.) are doing and how they interact would have been nice.

Superfluous subjects

I completely missed the point of the introduction to the working environment.

Your suggestions to make things better next time

1. I think that we were too many people for this kind of interactive course. When people in different corners needed help, the whole session fell apart into different subgroups who proceeded in their own way and speed. Useful information was not always exchanged between those subgroups and the rest (or the front teacher). Due to the distraction and the noise level, the front teacher sometimes disappeared from people's focus and important information got lost. In advance, you announced to maybe split people into subgroups. I think that would have been really helpful. In school/university, there are normally no interactive courses with 40 people because it is just too much.
 2. The instructions for the practicals were often not clear. There was information on the website, then there was a pdf and sometimes even another pdf or a README somewhere. And all of these documents contained slightly different information. That was very confusing, especially when one missed one of them. Only one document containing instructions can also be updated more easily when a bug is found.
 3. It would have been better to install everything in advance and then just let people source the bin paths. Also, the structure of the output paths (home, scratch, perm, cca, ecgate) was very unclear in the beginning and seemed not intuitive. Maybe a short HowTo-document would have helped. Information on the front slides often got quickly overlayed by other windows...
 4. Maybe it is not possible everywhere, but pre-installed computers would have simplified a lot. The NX client worked on Windows machines only by Wednesday for everybody. The alternative ssh connection was very slow.
 5. For me, the information content of the output was sometimes not clear. The log files contain really a lot of information. I preferred the sessions where we got graphical output in addition.
 6. Maybe, it would be possible to mix theory and practice more. Like giving an introduction, doing an exercise and putting the result into context afterwards directly, before moving on to the next topic.
 7. I found the schedule a bit unfortunate. The coffee breaks in both morning and afternoon were a bit too late for my taste, the lunch break too early. I would have preferred a short break between two sessions.
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Common DA training course evaluation

General feeling about the training

It was a useful training for me.

Good things

The trainers were helpful and knowledgeable in their fields.

The conditions of the training hall were good.

Bad things

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Missing subjects

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Superfluous subjects

-

Your suggestions to make things better next time

Time allocated for practices can be increased.



Common DA training course evaluation

General feeling about the training

All the presentations were very good and interesting. I appreciate a lot of work performed by the lecturers and their patience during exercises. Thank you.

Good things

- I liked most very well organized presentations of Antonin Bucanek, nicely explained theory in Roger Randriamampianina's presentation on screening, very practically oriented presentations of Benedikt Strajnar.
 - I got good overview of minimization.
 - Many references in presentations are very good for further study.
 - Well done background for exercises, step by step tutorial was helpful and obviated typos while copying from the board.
 - Quite easy exercises.
-

Bad things

Bator, bufr parts were a bit too technical for a newcomer.

Missing subjects

As already mentioned, a basic overview of abbreviations and slang would be useful.

Superfluous subjects

Similar exercises to blacklisting were performed twice. Once would be enough, the second time would have been substituted by something different.

Your suggestions to make things better next time

I would appreciate more discussions about the results from the exercises.

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Common DA training course evaluation

General feeling about the training

I think, it was a very useful week and it was a good idea that we need learning about assimilation common. I enjoyed the training.

Good things

We could learn many practical things, not just a theory. On Thursday the dinner was very good.

Bad things

It would have been more useful if we were fewer in practicals.

Missing subjects

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Superfluous subjects

I think, all subjects were very necessary to understand the whole assimilation cycle.

Your suggestions to make things better next time

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