

School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences
Linguistics & English Language (LEL)
Staff Student Liaison Committee
Tuesday, 9 October, 1pm
Room 7.01 DSB

Present

Staff: J. Fruehwald (SSLC Convener), C. Cummins (LEL1A course organiser), N. Gisborne (Head of LEL), P. Iosad (Senior Personal Tutor/LEL2D course organiser)

Students: F. Melzer, A. Lee, I. Douglas, J. Kim, K. Chen, A. Holtz

In Attendance: E. Nelson (Student Support Office)

Apologies: M. Ota, L. Hall-Lew

1. Welcome from SSLC Convenor

- a. Introductions took place
- b. The Convenor explained the general format for meetings – to look year years 1 and 2 separately, and honours (years 3 and 4) together.

2. Nik Gisborne asked students for general feedback following National Student Survey results.

- a. He asked what students think works well about the Linguistics and English Language (LEL) subject area. The themes that emerged were that staff were very friendly and approachable, and that this created a good atmosphere for students. Staff are also very passionate and enthusiastic about the subjects they teach.
- b. He asked whether LEL's research reputation was important to undergraduate students. The consensus was that it matters as it shows that staff are actively engaged with their subject area. This links back to the enthusiasm they show for subjects.

3. Pre- Honours Reports and Feedback

a. Year 1

The first year programme representatives reported that students would like a mechanism for providing anonymous feedback about their LEL lectures and tutorials.

Response – there will be anonymous mid-semester feedback cards handed out in class during the next few weeks. There will also be an anonymous end-of-course survey sent to all students enrolled on the course.

The pacing of LEL1A is confusing students. This was echoed by the experiences of FamLing (The Linguistics Society's Peer Support Scheme). Topics are being covered quickly and students are finding it hard to link these together. The year 2 representatives reported that students taking LEL1A and 1B in 2017/18 really liked the data puzzles from LEL1A and wished these had continued into LEL1B.

Response – there are a combination of reasons for this, including that LEL1A is a relatively new course and that it is taught by a team of lecturers rather than an

individual. This feedback will be taken into account as the course develops. It was also suggested that there be pre-honours course meetings with the teaching teams for each course to consider these issues such as how to transition between topics and the pacing of the course.

b. Year 2

The second year programme representatives reported that students felt that the lectures for LEL2A were moving too quickly and, to help with this, that they would like more foundation level readings suggested for before lectures. They also reported that the blackboard is not captured during lecture recording for the course, and that information was being written and erased on the boards before students were given enough time to digest the information and take adequate notes.

It was reported that a lecturer in LEL2A was very quiet and could not be clearly heard by students, even when they were wearing a microphone.

Response – This will all be passed onto the lecturers for the course. They will be asked to be considerate of the fact that the blackboard is not recorded and leave information on the board for longer, or write on another board, where possible to allow for note taking.

Students on LEL2B reported that they felt that the course spent too much time recapping material covered in year 1.

Response – The course has been taught by a new teaching fellow who may not have built up a knowledge of exactly what was covered in LEL1A and 1B. This feedback will be passed along.

Students on LEL2B also reported that there was a general feeling that the practice ear-training test for LEL2B was a lot easier than the final test and that the recording for the test moved too quickly.

Response – The Course Organiser will check the recording's speed and use this feedback when preparing future tests.

The second year representatives reported that the soundclips used by the lecturer in LEL2B were not working when posted on learn (in PDF form). Students would also like example answers for praat exercises.

Response – This feedback will be passed onto the lecturer.

4. Honours Reports and Feedback

It was reported that over the summer honours students put together a shared Google doc with comments about courses that they had taken – what they enjoyed, comments on type of assessment etc. – and that this had been very helpful.

Response – It's good to hear about student's taking the initiative. Please keep going with this next year!

The year 4 representative reported feedback she had received about honours courses from students that has taken these in 2017/18:

- a. Child Bilingualism: Language and Cognition. Students felt that the essay deadline was too close to the exam and that this did not leave enough time for adequate feedback to be received on the essay before sitting the exam.
- b. First Language Acquisition. Students reported that the instructions for the data analysis assessment were not clear enough. Some students even felt that the instructions were misleading.

Response – Students are encouraged to ask Course Organisers questions (e.g. through use of office hours) about specific assignments if they need clarity or want to check that they are on the right track. Staff are happy to help with these kind of questions.

Students are confused about which spaces they are allowed to use in the Dugald Stewart Building e.g. are they allowed to use the 7th floor common room or the kitchens.

Response – Staff are also confused about this. This will be followed up with the Head of Student Support and Enhancement, Shian Holt, to seek clarification.

It was reported that students are confused about feedback - how to view their exam scripts, how to view feedback on turnitin, and some difficulties reading markers handwriting.

Response – It was clarified that exam scripts can be viewed at the Teaching Office and that emails will be sent once scripts are available to view. Links to a guide to reading feedback on turnitin are available on learn and emailed to all students when marks are released. Students are encouraged to ask the marker or course organiser for help with reading handwriting – they are happy to help.

5. The Convenor thanked everyone for attending. The meeting closed at 2.30pm.