

School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences
Linguistics & English Language (LEL)
Staff Student Liaison Committee
Wednesday, 14th November at 1pm
Room B.01 DSB

Present

Staff: J. Fruehwald (SSLC Convener), N. Gisborne (Head of LEL, until 2pm), P. Iosad (Senior Personal Tutor/LEL2D course organiser)

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

In Attendance: E. Nelson (Student Support Office), Michael Gray (Student Support Office, from 1.45pm)

1. Welcome from SSLC Convener

2. Pre- Honours Reports and Feedback

a. The year 1 representative reported;

- Generally, the reps received lots of positive feedback. Students are very happy that the lectures are recorded.
- Students are unsure of the correct answers for tutorial problems and would like answer keys. They would like it clarified whether these will play a role in the LEL1A final exam. Student would also like some example Multiple Choice Questions ahead of the exam.
- Students are not aware of the academic support available (e.g. writing centre workshops, FamLing). Academic staff are unsure of how to raise further awareness as they have already used most of the tools at their disposal i.e. learn and lecture announcements. After some discussion, it became clear that learn messages were getting lost because of the vast number of notifications that students receive from learn. Staff will investigate whether it is possible to turn off notifications and will clarify the use of different types of learn announcements among colleagues.
- There was confusion around the style of essay question that was set for LEL1A and students would like some more guidance. After some discussion, it was decided that staff would consider using the word 'assignment' rather than 'essay' where possible. This is to try and avoid associating the style/approach to assessment with School taught essay formats.

b. The year 2 representative reported;

- The mailing list was not reaching everyone (e.g. CogSci students) and that some of her emails had not reached anyone. It was confirmed that the mailing list only reaches students on an LEL programme, not students taking LEL courses as electives. Cognitive Science students have their own mailing list for their programme. The Teaching Office manage mailing lists so problems with emails getting through should be raised with them.

- Year 2 students would like the chance to speak to current year 4 students who studied abroad in their third year about their experiences. This will be raised with Patrick Honeybone who is the LEL co-ordinator studying abroad.
- Students fed back that there were last minute changes to the instructions for the first LEL2B project, meaning that there wasn't a lot of time to respond to this and some students had already submitted.
- Students have had hardcopy submissions for both LEL2A and LEL2B – there was a lot of negative feedback about this. There was a discussion on the positives and negatives of electronic submissions and marking. It was decided that as hardcopy submissions become the exception, students should be provided with detailed instructions as to how to complete this.
- Students really liked the glass tube vowels that were used in LEL2B.
- Students taking LEL2A have been receiving inconsistent messages about the branches in tree diagrams; the lectures and syllabus use different practices, and students are confused as to what is expected of them. This will be investigated further as it appears to be a miscommunication.
- Students that have attended office hours have left feeling confused. There was discussion as to the balance between helping a student but not, for example, giving them the answer to an essay question. Students are advised to ask for further clarification if they are still confused.
- Students don't like being asked to upload tutorial work the night before the actual tutorial, but would instead like to be able to take their work to class and have the tutor note that they have completed it. Students would also like there to be more time for discussion in tutorials rather than focussing on the tutorial exercises.

3. Honours Reports and Feedback

a. The year 4 representative reported;

- Students feel that the tutorial groups for First Language Acquisition are too large.
- There have been cases where lectures slides have not been uploaded 24 hours in advance of lectures.
- Students are finding the course Statistics and Experimental Design to be particularly hard, and some students have felt like they have been talked down to when they couldn't understand something fast enough.
- There seem to be differing expectations between markers regarding page numbers in in-text citations. Students would like this clarified.
- Students do not like hardcopy submissions.
- Colour-blind students are struggling with the colour schemes used on some lecture slides, particularly red text on a black background.
- Students taking Origins and Evolution of Language have reported that there are a few problems with the mandatory reading quizzes – TopHat doesn't do a great job of marking and you can get a low mark for simple mistakes like using an abbreviation. Students also feel like they cannot approach the Course Organiser for help if they haven't engaged with the quizzes.

b. The year 3 representative reported;

- Year 3 students would like dissertation guidance sooner. Staff will endeavour to communicate the upcoming Dissertation Conference. This will also be fed back to the department, who are already having discussions as to how best to run the dissertation course over the honours years.
- Students taking Phonetics and Laboratory Phonology have found it hard to link the different topics covered together, particularly because there are different lecturers. The class also has Wednesday deadlines with extra lab time on Friday, which is 2 days too late for the deadlines.
- Courses have different lengths of time between assignments being released and their deadlines. Staff will take this to the upcoming Teaching Review Meeting to see if it's possible to harmonise this.
- Students taking Speech Processing have found the course to be very hard, and the lab report has a large word count.

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