

# School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences

## Linguistics & English Language

### Staff Student Liaison Committee

Tuesday, 4 November 2014 at 1pm

Room B21, 7 George Square

#### Present

#### Staff:

J. Fruehwald (SSLC Convenor), P. Ackema, R. Cann, S. King, M. Ota, B. Remijsen, A. Turk,

#### Students:

E. Kouhi, M. Field, K. Szymanski, I. Youmerski, A. Moseley, E. Wong, G. Starling, R. Bell

#### In Attendance:

M. Davidson and S. Nicol (Minute Taking)

#### 1. Welcome from SSLC Convenor

J. Fruehwald welcomed all those present to the first SSLC of the year and explained that the SCC would go through each year. If anything is not covered in the SSLC then class reps should contact the SSLC Convenor.

#### 2. Apologies

N. Gisborne, C. Cowie, J. Gafaranga, W. Maguire, K. Smith, Linda Van Bergen, J. Strenger, I. Dew, Y. Kementchedjhieva, H. Williams, Z. Beisembayenva, D. Hill, K. Brown, D. Kerr, D. Vollmer, R. Colleran

#### 3. Year 1 Reports and Feedback

##### Linguistics and English language 1 (LASC08015)

E. Kouhi conducted a survey with year 1, 60 people responded to the survey and only 2 students responded to say that they do not feel that they can keep up with the course. Only 1 student responded to say that they do not understand the material. 10% of the students that took the survey feel that they do not have access to support. The survey also brought to light that some of the lectures are too fast paced; the lectures that encourage participation from students are more effective.

Students think it would be good to have extra material e.g. old exam papers and more information on exams. Students are sometimes not sure what to do because they are not sure what the question is asking them to do.

R. Cann pointed out that exam preparation can be difficult for LEL1 because there are a finite number of multiple choice questions. However, if students have specific questions it is quite useful to contact lectures involved in the course. For the course a Brief Introduction to language students will receive more information on the exam.

#### **4. Year 2 Reports and Feedback**

##### LEL2A: Linguistic Theory and the Structure of English (LASC08017)

K. Szymanski reported that continuous assessment is very helpful because students can measure their progress. In LEL 2A students would like to see more assessment throughout the year for progress purposes. Lecture slides are very informative but students feel that they need a list of grammar terminology.

M. Field reported that students don't feel that they have enough guidance on assessment particularly in LEL 2A, it would be helpful to have example essays or more discussion on marking guidelines in lectures or Tutorials. Students like chapter specific reading lists and there were many comments that the lectures are very good and informative.

R. Cann suggested there are books such as James R. Hurford (1994) Grammar: a student's guide (Cambridge University Press) that is recommended in LEL 1 (LASC08015). There are also online sources that students can search for, tutors will try and get together to make a list of recommended reading sources.

A. Moseley mentioned that the Oxford Linguistics book is very useful.

M. Field stated that a mock exam in tutorials would be helpful.

#### **5. Year 3 Reports and Feedback**

I. Youmerski had more to say about specific courses but generally, students find it hard to follow the structure of lectures so it may be helpful to have a minute at the beginning to have a general outline as to where the lecture will go this relates particularly to Origins of Evolution of Language (LASC10031), a good example of where the structure of each lecture is made clear at the start of that lecture is in Speech Processing (LASC10061). In some other courses, students are also unsure on what they will be assessed on and what they are expected to know and include in their essays.

##### Phonetics and Laboratory Phonology (LASC10090)

There are complaints regarding the Lab work for B. Remijnsen's course because it is assumed that the students have a certain amount of knowledge on scripting that they lack. A suggestion is that there is more reading before the course starts. Another complaint is there is too little time to write the lab reports because there is a lab tutorial on Wednesday and the hand in is on the Thursday, even one more day would be useful.

B. Remijnsen replied by saying that he can't see any way to avoid jumping in at the deep end, however this has made him aware of the problem and he will try to exchange ideas with other colleagues to see what the best practice is.

I. Youmerski also noted that there is not much information on the project, there should be a document that states what they need to do, something a little more concrete.

### Morphology (LASC10086)

In Morphology students feel there are many points in the lecture that went over the reading and some basic terms were over explained.

P. Ackema replied that he will try to find a balance between what needs to be explained.

## **6. Year 4 Reports and Feedback**

### Middle English (LASC10009)

A. Moseley stated that in Middle English many people are from different backgrounds which has made it quite interesting, and everyone is generally happy with the course. All the students were particularly happy about being allowed to see the manuscripts in the library.

## **7. PG Reports and Feedback**

G. Starling reported that it is hard to compare against people as it is a very different experience in postgraduate research. The biggest concern is relating to conference proceedings, students are finding it difficult to find relevant articles for their research in the library or through online access.

S. King stated that the main conference in speech technology was not available unless you went to the conference and therefore the library may not have them in the catalogue.

M. Ota stated that the library used to have a subscription to one of the conference series mentioned by G. Starling but it is possible that this has been discontinued this could be checked and then reapply if needed.

J. Fruehwald added that it may be useful to do a generalised survey to see how many people would want these articles and send it on to Karen Fleet in the Library as she can order certain articles.

R. Bell reported that some subject materials for postgraduate taught are not widely accessible.

## **8. Course Evaluation Discussion**

J. Fruehwald discussed that transitioning to an electronic evaluation system has been a problem in past there has not been much of a response. The Convenor asked if the class reps could think about it and report back, if the reps have a feeling about how we could boost the response, it may be a good idea to talk to their class mates.

J. Fruehwald asked the class reps if they had completed the course evaluation form and the general response was yes.

R. Bell stated that students are more likely to fill out forms if they know that the tutors and course organisers are reading the feedback otherwise the students feel like there is no point as they are being in the classes that he teaches the students did not fill out the form when the students thought that the tutors did not look at it, but when the students realised that the tutors do read the evaluation forms more forms were completed.

I. Youmerski commented that sometimes it seems like any changes will be made years after they filled out and will not benefit them and this is why students do not fill out the evaluation forms.

J. Fruehwald replied this will always be a difficulty because most of the tutorials are completed by the time the results are revealed and therefore implementation cannot occur until the next year. The SSLC convenor asked the class reps their opinion on the e-evaluation form.

A. Moseley replied that it was short and there was not too many multiple choice questions, a small not intrusive email to the students and help from the class reps would encourage students to fill out the form. This should be part of the class reps role to get the students involved in the feedback.

A. Turk asked if it would be more helpful if the evaluations were handed out now, so we could change them earlier.

R. Bell replied that they are already available

I. Youmerski suggested sending out the evaluation forms a 1/3 of the way through the semester.

J. Fruehwald replied that this may not work for some courses as they are taught earlier in the year which means they may not get feedback. The SSLC Convenor asked if the problem was perhaps survey fatigue.

E. Kouhi reported on the amount of surveys first years are receiving in the first semester e.g. on fresher's, accommodation this may be the reason why students have stopped filling out the evaluation forms.

R. Cann suggested a way of getting feedback is to have a class rep for each course to communicate with the course organiser directly or indirectly. Rather than do a formal course evaluation which can be a bit negative.

A. Moseley stated that for honours one for each class would be too much, because the students know each other well and therefore a few core class reps would be sufficient rather than one for each class.

R. Cann replied that this would not work for 3<sup>rd</sup> years, but that sounds like a good idea that would work for 4<sup>th</sup> years.

## **9. AOB**

Next meeting will be held on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2015, 1 – 2pm.