

General report on evaluations SEMLING/LICS, fall 2014.

By Peter Bakker, April 2014. Revised after discussion in UFU LICS, April 13 2015.

LAST YEAR'S POINTS OF ATTENTION

Last year for the same semester (FALL 2013) we noted five points that need attention, which we repeat here.

- (1) *The workload of some courses should be adjusted upwards or downwards*
- (2) *The udd.leder has to make sure that the evaluations are done in the correct way, i.e. orally midway; final written evaluation with subsequent oral discussion, and a report signed by the teacher and a representative of the students. For the written evaluation, good opportunities should be given for the students to fill out a form. Especially for large classes, an accessible electronic survey is desirable, with a method to automatically transfer email addresses from lists.*
- (3) *There are recurrent complaints from students about the lack of electricity outlets in many teaching rooms, or their locations, and in some cases also that there are too few chairs and tables.*
- (4) *Students don't like it when they have two three-hour lectures in a row. It kills their attention span.*
- (5) *The BA-projects take up a lot of time, especially later in the semesters, which has led to decreased class attendance and unsatisfactory student preparation for classes. The workload must be distributed better throughout the semester, so that students can perform maximally in both the BA-project and their supplementary/Tilvalg course.*

As none of them were repeated in the current evaluations (except perhaps in one or two individual remarks), these problems have apparently been solved, either by natural developments, or through measures taken.

OVERVIEW OF COURSES COVERED, FALL 2014.

Lektiologi:

- (1) Morfologi, syntaks og tekster E2014, BA-tilvalget i lektiologi, efterår 2014, ved Vibeke Fischer
- (2) Specifikke Skriftsprogsvanskeligheder E2014, BA-tilvalg i lektiologi, efterår 2014, ved Bertil Norman Andersen
- (3) Fra lyd til skrift E2014. BA-tilvalget i lektiologi, efterår 2014, ved Ditte Zachariassen.

Bertil Norman Andersen var en ny underviser i *Specifikke Skriftsprogsvanskeligheder*, og evaluering af faget var meget positiv. Vibeke Fischer stod i år som eneunderviser for faget Morfologi, syntaks (hor tekster er lidt på sidespor i.f.m. tidspres), og her også var de studerende alle sammen tilfredse. Der er ikke kommet en evaluering om det sidste fag.

Det ser ud at lektiologi kører godt, efter erfaringer fra sidste år er arbejdsbyrden tilpasset.

Lektiologi

Det var anden gang der var udbudt lektiologi-tilvalg, og det ser ud at fagets undervisere har fundet en god balance mellem de andre fag og de andre opgaver af de studerende (især BA-projekterne). Det kører vel meget tilfredsstillende.

LIN BA

Note that the Tilvalg students follow a selection of the regular courses in linguistics together with the LING students. Five courses were taught:

- (1) Understanding linguistics, William McGregor (BA1, BA-tilvalg)
- (2) Danish and the Languages of the World, Line Krogager Andersen (BA1, BA-tilvalg)
- (3) Dansk Grammatik, Jakob Steensig (BA1)
- (4) Language, Cognition and the Brain, Ethan Weed (BA3)
- (5) Structure, Meaning and Use, Jan Rijkhoff (BA3, BA-tilvalg)

Courses by experienced teachers and external lecturers were all satisfactory. There were some remarks about the lesser quality of student presentations. However, we should think of these presentations as also a useful experience for the presenters. Nevertheless, perhaps less time could be spent on student presentations. There was also some discussion about articles versus textbooks, and pros and cons of each. Strikingly, quite a few students admitted they did very little preparatory reading, and some students also complained about other group members not being prepared at all. See also my general remarks below. It is also clear that students prefer different forms of presentation, and dialogic teaching; on the other hand, they do not show the necessary engagement themselves.

LIN MA

- (1) Language and Social Interaction, Jakob Steensig, MA1
- (2) Typology, Jan Rijkhoff, MA1
- (3) Research Workshop, Auditory Neuroscience and Speech Processing, Ethan Weed, MA1
- (4) Research Workshop, Research Workshop 1: Computational Linguistics, Hilke Reckman, MA 1.

The first two courses were taught by experienced teachers, and the evaluations are satisfactory, with no real room for improvement. The final two courses were research workshops, with different subjects taught each semester, and therefore always new. Both research workshops were evaluated positively, but for one of the courses more practical hands-on work and more reading were suggested. The course by the new teacher needed some adjustment of the level, as too few students appeared to have the expected prerequisites. Not all students did the exercises, and spent the number of required hours for a 10 ECTS course. Overall the course was evaluated positively, especially after the adjustment of the level.

SEM -Cognitive semiotics

- (1) Cognition and Semiotics 1, Peer Bundgaard, BA-tilvalg
- (2) Language, Cognition and Culture, Svend Østergaard, BA-tilvalg
- (3) Cognitive Science, Mikkel Wallentin, MA 1.
- (4) Cognition and Semiotics , Peer Bundgaard, MA 1
- (5) Cognitive Semantics, Svend Østergaard, MA1
- (6) The Literary Work of Art/Cognitive Aesthetics, Peer Bundgaard, MA3
- (7) Experimental Methodology, Mikkel Wallentin, MA 3
- (8) Ecological Semiotics, Rasmus Høll Nielsen and Frederik Laigaard Nielbo, MA

All courses 1-7 were taught by experienced teachers, with no special remarks that are

relevant in this report, but which find their way to the general remarks. The last course was taught by two PhD students. Even though it was not geared toward a specific exam, students showed up regularly, and the evaluation about both the course and the teachers is very positive.

GENERAL REMARKS

(1) Different evaluation forms.

The department leader has to make sure that the evaluations are done in the correct way, i.e. orally midway; final written evaluation with subsequent oral discussion, and a report signed by the teacher and a representative of the students. For the written evaluation, good opportunities should be given for the students to fill out a form, i.e. in the language that the course is taught in. Especially for large classes, an accessible electronic survey is desirable, with a method to automatically transfer email addresses from lists.

There are increasing grudges at all levels on the fact that all teachers use a different evaluation form, with different questions, different level of details. One teacher made a unique form adjusted to the class (a very satisfactory way, in my view, by the way). A minority of the evaluations appear to follow the regulations. For me, as a department leader, it makes no sense to try and standardize the forms now, as we have been expecting a new standardized but still flexible form for years now, with continuous promises. Honestly I do not understand why the group responsible for a new form needs half a year just to come with a proposal. This diversity of forms is increasingly frustrating, as it is unnecessary. I hope the situation will change sooner rather than later. 11 teachers use, all in all, 10 different evaluation forms, and the number seems to increase every semester.

(2) More teaching asked

For several courses, students ask for more teaching, either more hours, or over more semesters, because they like to know, more, or acquire more in-depth knowledge. Especially in connection with some courses in semiotics, several students expressed a desire to learn more statistics combined with practical exercises. This could perhaps be done by an instructor.

(3) praise for students

It is good to see that one teacher praises his students as the best group he ever had, in terms of engagement, interest and preparation.