

# Language matters

Newsletter for Modern Languages at Southampton | Summer 2012

## Celebrating our Success

**In a time of change in Higher Education nationally Modern Languages at Southampton has good reason to be positive about the challenges ahead. To start with, our finalists again enjoyed outstanding examinations success in 2010-11. 88% of students achieved either an upper second, or a first, improving on the already outstanding figure of 87% for 2009-10 and topping 80% for the third successive year. These figures compare with a national average of 77%. These results testify to the academic excellence, hard work and commitment of both students and staff.**

We were also delighted to be ranked once again in the top five in the Guardian Higher Education League Table 2012 for the sixth successive year, an achievement matched only by Oxford and Cambridge. We were particularly pleased with a 96% student satisfaction rating for our teaching in the Guardian table, the best performance for any Russell Group (the UK's 20 leading research-intensive universities) Modern Language department in that table, as well as coming 3rd amongst Russell Group universities for overall student satisfaction in the 2011 National Student Survey.

All of these achievements are a source of great pride within Modern Languages at Southampton and allow us to start 2011-12

in the most positive way possible. While Modern Languages student numbers continue to decline nationally, Southampton has welcomed its largest ever first year cohort. They have once again arrived with exceptional results not only in A levels and the International Baccalaureat but a whole range of qualifications from across Europe and around the world, testifying to the diversity which makes Southampton such an exciting place to study Modern Languages. They are already well into their stride and I have every confidence that they will emulate the successes of the class of 2011.

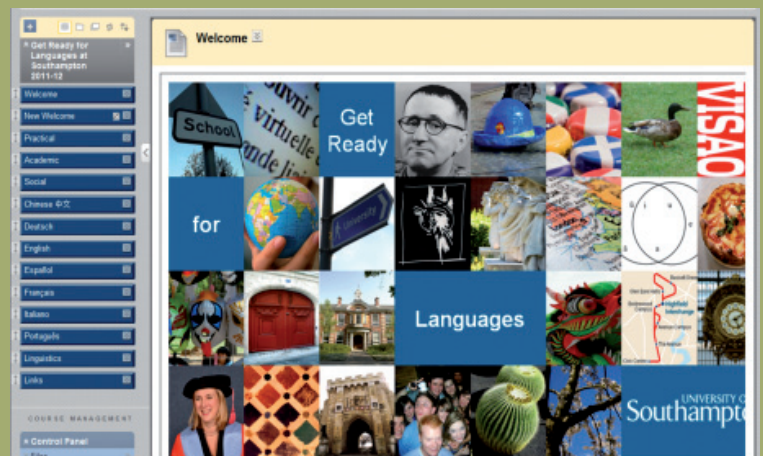
**Dr James Minney**

Director, Centre for Language Study

## Get Ready for Languages at the University of Southampton

So you have your exam results, and you can't wait to come to Southampton to study languages. Now you'd like to know what living and studying at Southampton will be like and whether you can possibly do anything to prepare for it...

Look no further than 'Get Ready for Languages'! This is our pre-arrival online resource which is open to all students who have been accepted onto one of our languages degree programmes. Each September, incoming students are invited to log on and check out a wide range of information and learning resources; from practical tips on living and socializing in Southampton to advice on studying languages at the University through interactive activities across different languages and disciplines. Students can also watch video clips of current students and staff talking about courses, learning and teaching at Southampton. Last but certainly not least, they can get in touch with current second year students who offer a 'buddy scheme' through which you can ask them questions and get to know other Freshers. These schemes are run by the committees of the different student languages societies through their Facebook groups. So whether you are feeling courageous, nervous or simply curious at the prospect of starting university life, we hope you find this resource informative, useful and entertaining!



Welcome page of 'Get Ready for Languages' Blackboard

# Language Learning during the Year Abroad: A Longitudinal Study

A group of researchers and teaching fellows in Modern Languages at the University of Southampton have been awarded a grant from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) to investigate language learning during the year abroad. Approximately 60 students from the department are participating: half are spending the year in France, and the other half in Spain, Mexico, or Chile. Students will complete a series of language assessments and questionnaires about their experiences with the target language (French or Spanish) multiple times over the next 2 years. Members of the research team will visit the participating students in the cities and towns where they are living three times during their year abroad. The study has several goals. For example, one goal is to better understand how the placement type students choose (work placement, teaching assistantship, and Erasmus) impacts on the amount and type of interactions they have in the target language, as well as their language development. Another goal is to provide guidance to higher education institutions (HEIs) regarding advance student preparation ahead of residence abroad, in terms of language learning strategies and opportunities. Additionally, research-based guidance for HEIs on the hosting of residence abroad students will be developed, focusing in particular on how to promote students' social integration and development of local social networks. If you are interested in learning more about this project, contact Dr Nicole Tracy-Ventura: N.Tracy-Ventura@southampton.ac.uk.



**I spent my year abroad working full time in southern Germany, in what most definitely was a unique and special place. The castle in Kleiningersheim, nestled amongst the vineyards of the Neckar Valley (which was the view from my flat!) was where I worked for 8 months. This alone was an extraordinary experience.**

I worked for a company called CEPA GmbH, organizing faculty-led study abroad programs throughout Europe for American and Canadian students. This incorporated everything from flights, hotels to guest lectures with CEO's from top firms. My main responsibilities were in the operations department but I was also able to gain some key skills in the marketing department, which enriched my work experience even more. I played a central role in telemarketing and one specific project where we introduced a photo competition on Facebook. What I really enjoyed was working in a small team which allowed for a more intimate atmosphere and a more personal experience. Working full time and having to write a project was fairly demanding but rewarding. I pride myself now with my immaculate time management skills!! (And it also looks good on the CV!)

I feel I really got involved with the locals, living life as they do. I played hockey for a local team but was also involved in a Fair-Trade group helping to promote Fair-Trade in the local town and still found the time to travel a lot through Germany. Living in the middle of nowhere and leading quite a demanding life was pretty difficult initially but I am now so glad I persevered as it turned out to be one of the best years of my life.

**Gabriele Conradie** | Year 4 BA Management



**I spent my 3rd year in Paris working as International Communication Assistant for Lagardère Global Advertising. LGA is the international advertising sales house for the Lagardère Group, covering all media platforms: Press,**

**Internet, TV, Radio, Mobile and Tablet applications, across 45 countries. LGA is the exclusive sales house for many famous media brands such as ELLE, ELLE Decoration, ELLE à Table, ELLE Girl, Marie Claire, Paris Match, Red, Psychologies, and many more.**

During my internship within the International Communication team, my main responsibilities were: writing and updating the news articles on the LGA website; writing and translating articles to be featured in the quarterly newsletter; coordinating the creation and formatting of the newsletter; contributing to the creation of sales tools (such as the ELLE and ELLE Decoration Worldwide brochures and DVDs); translating and proof-reading various communication tools such as: emailings, mailings, press releases and brochures; updating the LGA global portfolio; ordering and sending out all ELLE promo gifts. Alongside my main tasks I often had one-off jobs, such as organising the Christmas gifts for LGA's top 100 advertising clients and helping the PR team organise ELLE events and parties held for our advertising clients.

I have now handed over my role to Charlotte Osbourne, a Southampton university student on her year abroad who studies French & English. In addition to Charlotte, Jonathan Twitchin, another Southampton Modern Languages year abroad student, has started an internship within the International Marketing department.

Having spent over a year living and working in Paris I feel my French improved dramatically. Paris now feels like home and I intend to move there permanently once I have finished this final year at Southampton. My experience of working at Lagardère was irreplaceable both for my French and for my career. I am now certain that I want to pursue a career in journalism and feel that having this experience on my CV will stand me in good stead to do so. My year in Paris flew by, and I would recommend to all language students who are going to take a year abroad, to make the most of it: stay for the whole year, or longer if you can... You will not regret it!

**Suzie Bath** | Year 4 BA French

# Supporting and promoting languages education – LLAS Centre for languages, linguistics and area studies

LLAS Centre for languages, linguistics and area studies has been working with and for language educators in universities, colleges and schools for eleven years. Hosted by the Faculty of Humanities at Southampton, it was formed in 2000 as part of a network of 24 subject centres set up to support learning and teaching in higher education across all subject areas. Over the last eleven years LLAS has provided professional development, resources and opportunities for networking for the HE languages community. Despite reductions in government funding, LLAS has organised a programme of professional development courses for this academic year on a wide range of themes including e learning, supporting international students, assessment and research methods.

LLAS has also developed materials to promote language learning. The Why Study Languages website is aimed at those teaching and learning languages in schools and colleges. The site has information and resources for teachers and careers advisers, quizzes for learners and advice on study skills. Go to [Whystudylanguages.ac.uk](http://Whystudylanguages.ac.uk) to find out more. Its sister website, Studying languages, ([www.studyinglanguages.ac.uk](http://www.studyinglanguages.ac.uk)) has a wealth of materials to help undergraduates adapt to studying at university.

As well as online resources, we have developed resource packs for teachers to use with their students. These packs include posters, badges and stickers, ideal for motivating students or as prizes. Order these online from <http://www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/resources/index.html>

Routes into Languages has been managed by a team at LLAS since 2007. Routes is an exciting government funded initiative which aims to encourage a wider uptake of languages at university. Universities in the nine English regions and in Wales have worked together to organise a programme of activities for students in schools and colleges to enthuse them about language learning. Routes was due to end this summer but HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England) has invested an additional £1.2 million in the programme for the coming year. To find out more, go to [www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk](http://www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk)

LLAS works closely with Languages South East, a regional centre which provides professional development for teachers of languages across the South East. Languages South East succeeds the Links into Languages South East Regional Centre and offers teachers in the region workshops and conferences, language upskilling courses and a bespoke menu of training. Go to the website to find out more <http://www.languagesoutheast.ac.uk> or contact the Regional Manager, Zena Hilton ([Z.I.Hilton@southampton.ac.uk](mailto:Z.I.Hilton@southampton.ac.uk))



CENTRE FOR  
LANGUAGES  
LINGUISTICS &  
AREA STUDIES

LANGUAGES  
south east



Cllr Burke and his wife and pupils from The Trafalgar School at Downton

## Local pupils learn what fair trade means in other languages

Around 150 school pupils from across Southampton and the local region took part in a special event at the University of Southampton on Wednesday 22 June to encourage young people to study languages.

The 'Able Linguist Day' involved a Fairtrade-themed project activity in French, German or Spanish in the morning, led by trainee language teachers from the University. In the afternoon, the year 8 pupils experienced a new language, such as Japanese or Norwegian, led by Modern Languages staff and learned how languages can be used in the workplace.

The Sheriff of Southampton, Cllr Derek Burke, visited the event to see an exhibition of the pupils' Fairtrade work and to find out more about the University's language outreach work.

Zena Hilton, Languages South East Regional Manager at University of Southampton, says: "This is the fourth year of our Able Linguist event and is the biggest outreach event we do. This year the theme of the day is Fairtrade, so students will be learning about Fairtrade in general terms and will also be learning about different countries around the world which benefit from Fairtrade, especially those relating to French, German and Spanish-speaking countries."

The event, which took place at the University's Avenue Campus, is supported by the national Routes into Languages initiative, which encourages young people to continue studying languages.

The University is carrying out more outreach events again this year, both for year 8 and year 12. Please look at the outreach page on the Modern Languages website for more information.

## Postgraduate News:

# Jenny's Outstanding Performance!

This summer's graduation ceremony had a very special flavour for Modern Languages and the Centre for Transnational Studies because it not only saw the graduation of one of our research students and teaching assistants in German to a doctor, but was followed up by a concert where she performed live what had been at the centre of her research. Dr Jenny Fuhr as she has now become wrote a brilliant thesis on the experiences of rhythm in contemporary Malagasy music and the processes of identification associated with it. Her thesis had arisen out of a collaboration between her and her supervisor, Prof. Ulrike Meinhof, who was directing an AHRC funded research project on musicians' transnational networks during the same period. Their shared interest in Malagasy music and the lives of the musicians who practice it singularly influenced Jenny's life, in that she not only conducted cutting edge research in Madagascar and Europe, but discovered for herself the music as a practicing musician, with her violin, her flute, and eventually even her voice. One of the most popular Malagasy musicians, the singer song-writer Erick Manana became a very close friend of Jenny's, influencing her own discovery of the intricacies of Malagasy rhythms and led to her own new career as a performing artist. Since her first concert with Erick at the Olympia in Paris she has performed with him on concert tours in Europe, Canada and Madagascar, whilst writing up her thesis into a book and applying for a post-doc Marie Curie scholarship with the EU.



Erick Manana and Dr Jenny Fuhr

On the day after her graduation Jenny and Erick gave an electrifying performance on Avenue Campus, showing that research and artistic performance make an excellent partnership- one of the key insights of her thesis. Check her out on [www.youtube.com/watch?v=ofPxPcfKgMI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ofPxPcfKgMI) or <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oe3UJTqCEWc>

## The MA in ELT through a learner's perspective

**Last July I completed my MA in ELT (English Language Teaching) online as part of the first cohort of participants. As an in-service English teacher at a Northern Mexican University, I found this postgraduate course really responded to my professional needs, in terms of both content and flexibility.**

Looking back in time, I can also see how this innovative course, entirely delivered through an online virtual learning environment (Moodle), has provided a stepping-stone for me to grow, not only as an ELT professional but also as an active learner. In order to illustrate the latter, I will describe how key stages of the programme led me successfully

to achieve the aims and objectives of each module. First, I was guided to read relevant, current theory in a given ELT topic. Then, I was supported to process key learning aspects through online interactive resources that enabled personalisation and scaffolding. After that, I was encouraged to participate in an e-forum to share and discuss my own viewpoints with colleagues. Finally, I was charged with developing written tasks for me to consolidate my learning process and show evidence of it.

Going through these stages required an obvious investment of time and effort as well as a strengthening of my independent study skills. However, I am sure it has been also an investment in a future of better

opportunities in the ELT arena.

**Natanael Alvarado Delgado**



Homepage of the MA online

For further information please contact:

Recruitment and Admissions Office, Humanities, University of Southampton, Southampton SO17 1BJ

[ugapply.fh@southampton.ac.uk](mailto:ugapply.fh@southampton.ac.uk) | +44(O)23 8059 9339

[www.southampton.ac.uk/ml](http://www.southampton.ac.uk/ml)