Winter Storm Assessment

Compiled from on-line survey data
by
Annie Gagliardi, Sunyoung Lee-Ellis,
Derek Monner, Joshua Riley

R Course

Good Points
Well-Organized

Comprehensive

Very Knowledgeable Instructors

Weak Points
Pacing = way too fast

Unrealistic expectations about amount of out-of-class work

Not hands-on enough

Students who need it most = most bewildered and lost

Suggestions for Improving R Course

- make course a bit longer
  o Perhaps split class into beginner and advanced sections
- less lecturing and code-copying, more in-class working through problems
- short overview of each class and notes/summary code posted BEFORE each class
- Use of some non-linguistic data sets to not scare away all the non-linguists from the very first day - we're meant to be concerned with biology too!

Eyetracking Session

Good Points
(Very few mentioned by participants)

Weak Points
Instructors not especially knowledgeable

Too much lecturing, not enough hands-on

Did not feel at all collaborative; no chance to work together in a group

Far, far too topical

Not especially organized or prepared

Suggestions for Improving Eye-Tracking

- Get help from people more experienced with eye-tracking
- Focus on what instructors **do** know
  - Don't dwell on instructor ignorance
- More opportunities for hands-on group work
- Instructors need to be more familiar with background literature

EEG Session

Good Points
- Informal Sessions
- Hands-on Opportunities

Weak Points
- More Experimental Work/Design
- Clarify exporting data from computer to computer and Matlab to R
- Divided group problems
- More theoretical background
- Varying degrees of Matlab familiarity/skill caused some confusion

Suggestions for Improving EEG

- somehow make group smaller (whether by limiting enrollment or running more concurrent methodology/ hardware sessions)
- walk through creating a Psyscope script
- more discussion of background and theory

Research Group

Strengths

An opportunity to share knowledge from different disciplines
The most facilitative activity for collaboration
Areas for Improvement

Not enough diversity in some groups
Discussion dominated by faculty in some groups
A lack of organization

Sub-Group Comparisons

Critical period (Success)

- A good mix of participants
- Balanced participation during discussions
- Time outside the meeting was highest
- Highest expectation for future collaboration
- The smallest group

Rel Clause & Speech

- Homogeneous group: mostly LING dept
- Lack of leadership/ organization
- Narrow topic, yet individual interests
- Discussion dominated by faculty
- Unclear expectations/roles

Suggestions

- A broader range of participants is necessary
- Faculty ensure they facilitate but not dominate
- More group structure would be desirable
- Student leadership and participation is important
- Individual expertise should be shared more broadly
- Topic choice should be of interest to people from different disciplines
- Group size may be relevant too (smaller is better?)

Talks

Strengths
- Expanded exposure to ongoing work by campus researchers
- Planted the seed for collaborative ideas
- Helped increase enthusiasm for multidisciplinary thinking and potential projects

Areas for Improvement

- Topic Subjects
- Familiarity (too much?)

Suggestions for Talks

- More non-traditional linguistic topics
- Topics Desired for next time:
    1. More Computational Ling
    2. Systems Neuro
    3. L2

Collaboration

Strengths
- Enhanced understanding of what other departments do
- Anticipation of collaboration by students
- Enhanced understanding on the challenges of collaboration

Areas for Improvement

- Some activities did not reach their potential (some research groups)
- Some students are still unclear how to connect with people in other departments

Suggestions

- The most beneficial for collaboration: Research group followed by Lunch talks
- More participant diversity
- A way to increase student collaboration between departments?

Scheduling

Strengths

- People from all departments were generally happy with the scheduling as it was, by far the most popular second option was adding a few short breaks into the day
- Same for location

Weaknesses

- Ran right up to the end of break, people wanted more down time before the semester began
- Tight schedule didn't leave everyone with enough time to work outside of groups as much as they would have liked

Scheduling: Suggestions

- Since length of Winter Storm seemed overall good, but people felt like they weren't getting anough done in the groups and didn't have time to work outside them, trying to do less might let us accomplish more

General: Components

<u>Overall Strongest Components</u>

- R Course
- Lunchtime Diversity Talks

<u>Overall Weakest Components</u>

- Hardware Groups
- Research Groups

General: Things that went well

- Commitment of people from all areas
- Learning lots of R
- Many people coming together to make this work
- Wiki - good participation & result
- Learning what goes on in other departments & how it's done

General: Things that need improvement

- Research groups were not as productive or interdisciplinary as expected, clear goals are needed
- Hardware sessions didn't always prepare as well as expected
- More 'bonding' time needed earlier in the program, in the form of varied afterhours activities
- Late notice may have limited participation from other department: need advance planning
- Need broader participation across departments
  o Interest from some Philosophy people, etc.