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What's Hard in German?

Advice on how to increase student participation rates

Introduction

Based on collecting data from four of our current nine partner universities, we understand that getting enough student participants can be quite challenging. The University of Leeds very successfully implemented WHiG into their course planning and attracted a high participation rate. This guide aims to share advice to our partner universities on how to attract as many student participants as possible.

Integrate & Plan Ahead

- Involve all language tutors;
- Include it in the curriculum;
- Adjust the programme so that the WHiG essay fits logically into the course;
- Include the WHiG data collection session as part of the programme;
- Mention the data collection session in the handbook;
- If possible, work out similar essay titles for your own assessments;
- Avoid planning any assessment the same week (e.g. essay deadline, oral exams).

Convince the Students

- Forward Cedric's email to all second and final-year students;
- Add your own comments and rationale to convince them why participation is crucial;
- Emphasise the customised feedback (errors are highlighted *and* text is rewritten);
- Emphasise WHiG's aim to develop better German learning materials, even if this might be a secondary issue for students;
- Remind students on numerous occasions when and where the data collection session is;
- Mention your own presence during the data collection session.

Incentivise Participation

- The aim is always to give feedback within a month;
- Mention that Cedric will bring biscuits for the data collection session;
- If 20-29 students participate, WHiG donates £20 to the Departmental student society, if 30 or more students participate, WHiG donates £50;
- Students who participate are allowed to miss language classes on that day.

Follow-Up

- Offer to go through their feedback;
- Ask students for feedback on the data collection session;
- If Cedric or Astrid is giving a paper on WHiG, invite students to come and listen.