Mrs Agnès Gower Maîtrise, MPhil

Language Coordinator (French Studies)

Department of Modern Languages: French Studies (/schools/lcahm/departments/french/index.aspx)

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About

I first came to Birmingham as a Colloquial Assistant (lectrice), as part of the University's long-standing exchange with The *Université Lumière Lyon 2*. After a few months back in France, I decided to return to Birmingham and the Department of French Studies, again as a Colloquial Assistant. I have not left since.

Qualifications

- Licence de Langue Vivante Etrangère: anglais (equivalent of a BA in English) : Université Lumière Lyon 2
- Maîtrise de Langue Vivante Etrangère: anglais (equivalent of an MA in English) : Université Lumière Lyon 2
- MPhil in History: University of Birmingham

Biography

Before coming to Birmingham, I did two years in the *Classes Préparatoires aux Grandes Ecoles* in Lyon, specialising in English in my second year, before joining The *Université Lumière Lyon 2* where I obtained a *Licence de Langue Vivante Etrangère: anglais* (equivalent of a BA in English).

Immediately after my *Licence*, I was sent by my home university to Birmingham as a *lectrice*. At the same time I completed a *Maîtrise de Langue Vivante Etrangère:anglais* (equivalent of a MA in English) at Lyon 2 University.

In 1991-92, I assisted Henri Béjoint (*maître de conférences at l'Université Lumière Lyon 2, France*) in his work on the lexical notes and correspondence pages for the Oxford-Hachette French Dictionary which was published in 1994.

I came back to Birmingham to work as a Colloquial Assistant in September 1992, was appointed Language Tutor in 1996.

At the same time, I studied for an MPhil in the Department of History at the University of Birmingham, under the supervision of Professor Peter Jones. I graduated in December 1997. My MPhil was entitled *A Comparative Study of the Development and Impact of Child Labour Legislation in Birmingham and the Stéphanois region of France from 1830 to 1900*.

I was promoted to Language Coordinator inthe Department of French Studies in 2003.

I became of a member of the Institute for Learning and Teaching in 2001 (subsequently the Higher Education Academy). I have been a fellow of the HEA since 2007.

Teaching

When I started teaching at the university I taught *expression orale* and language laboratory classes. I taught not only Single Honours and Joint Honours students, but also Engineering, Science, Commerce, Law students who were on "with French" programmes, mostly but not exclusively post-A-level students. In 1991, I was one of the first tutors teaching for the newly created Modern Languages Unit, and subsequently taught Open Access classes for a couple of years for the Centre for Modern Languages.

I taught on Modern France 1 and 2 for anumber of years before moving more exclusively into language teaching.

I am responsible for overseeing language modules in the Department, and more particularly in charge of all the oral and aural teaching in French, as well as Final Year language, a Final Year interpreting option and the First Year Business French module.

I have been involved right from the start in the development of online self-assessment language exercises, first on the intranet with the creation of the Self-Assessment Facility (SAF tests) in the early 1990s and then on WebCT, the University's virtual learning environment.

Research

I have always been employed on a teaching only contract, so I concentrate on teaching and administration.

Other activities

In the Department, I am in charge of the 4 Assistant Language Tutors that come to us each year from our 4 French partner universities (Lyon 2, Montpellier 3, Nancy 2, and Toulouse 2) and take part in the training of new language assistants for the School. I also take part in the selection of the 4 assistants Birmingham sends each year to each of our partner universities.

Publications

- 'Case study 3: First-Year language course for (specialist) post-A-Level students of French', in Heather Fry, Steve Ketteridge, Stephanie Marshall (eds), *A Handbook for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, Third Edition, Routledge, 2009, pp. 339-341.
- 'Using the foreign language assistant', in James A. Coleman and John Klapper (eds), *Effective Learning and Teaching in Modern Languages*, chapter, Routledge, 2005, pp. 102-107

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