

Committee for Linguistics in Education (CLIE)

Meeting 107

1.30 – 4.45, Friday 16th May 2014

King's College London, Waterloo Campus,
Franklin Wilkins Building (Waterloo Bridge)

<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/campuslife/campuses/waterloo/Waterloo.aspx>

*Enter not from Stamford Street but through the door near Waterloo Bridge by the subway steps. The building is white Portland stone and says Cornwall House above the door (even though we don't call it that anymore!)

Draft Minutes

1. Opening and apologies

Present: Esther Daborn (BAAL), Vivienne Rogers (LAGB), Simon Coffey (BAAL), Catherine Walter (co-opted), Graeme Trousdale (LAGB), Charlotte Franson (NALDIC), Dick Hudson (LAGB), Willem Hollmann (LAGB), Nick Mair (ISMLA), Melissa Cudmore (BC)

Apologies: Terry Lamb (co-opted), Pamela Frame (NATECLA), Ursula Clark (BAAL), Wanda Marshall (ALL), Emma Marsden (BAAL), Jonnie Robinson (BL), Nicole King (HEA), Wasyl Cajkler (ALA), Ian Brinton (EA), Neil Sheldon (co-opted), Julie Blake (NATE), Sue Ellis (UKLA),

2. **Minutes of Meeting 106** - Minutes accepted. No corrections.

3. Matters arising

3.1 Exam board contacts identified, so item completed.

3.2 ML a level variable grading issue: NM feels that awareness of the issue has been raised.

3.3 Language assessment/ preparing for languages at primary. This issue will be parked for now.

3.4 EM sent out link for linguistics fund.

3.5 ED thanked VR for web contribution. No volunteers yet for web-master role. DH is happy to be interim web-master.

3.6 Co-option (ED) MV thanked for his contribution. There is a current vacancy for a co-opted member. Decision made that it doesn't need to be filled immediately as we need to discuss what specialism we need. ED suggested invitations be sent to potential speakers: Peter Downes about ML in the primary school and / or Jim Anderson, Goldsmiths, about Community languages . **Action ED**

3.7 Community languages (ED) ED has contacted the leader of the NATECLA community languages to find out information about NATECLA's view on the

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current support for community languages and is waiting to hear back. CF knows the person at London Met and has offered to help obtain a response. **Action CF**

4. Updates on current issues for CLiE:

4.1 GCSE subject content (SC)

- i. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/gcse-subject-content>
- ii. <http://comment.ofqual.gov.uk/modern-foreign-and-ancient-languages/>

The new GCSE exam has not yet been produced so there is not a lot of detail. New style offers good potential. Concern: end of coursework will disadvantage some pupils but the lack of assessment during the course will allow for more space. AS will also be abolished. Teachers consulted like the re-introduction of translation and some literary texts. Return to target language rubrics in exam papers. Need to see how the criteria translate into the exam. **Action SC to circulate handout.**

Led to interesting discussion with examples from many language teaching contexts in particular the context of modern language degree in UK.

4.2 GCSE English language specifications are general literacy skills and not related to the subject content. NM advised writing as an individual not organization. CF suggested putting statement on CLiE website. This is a good idea, but not sure how to take this forward – ED parked it.

4.3 Modern languages curriculum reform and grading: the Scottish perspective (ED)

4.3.1 In the context of a Higher education reps meeting with Scottish qualification reps, ED asked about ML variable grading in England and how it compares with Scotland. SCA rep says all exams marks centrally to avoid teacher 'over-optimistic' marking.

4.3.2 As is the case in England and Wales, the actual syllabus is very general. The detail is in the exam tasks and criteria ('judgements of evidence' as they are called in Scotland). There is scope for influence here in that SQA draws on the expertise of practicing teachers and consultants appointed as item writers and 'Verifiers'.

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4.4 Report from APPG on Modern Languages meeting 14th May (CW)

Meeting was on 'Languages in Government'. Much discussion about languages spoken in foreign office but also civil service. Current career structure does not encourage retaining of people with language skills. FO is addressing this with rewards, opportunities for CPD. Need for engagement with HE and sharing of information across promotion.

Lord Wallace of Saltaire suggested need for high language level for promotion to highest level. Lord Howell suggested there should be a languages unit at cabinet level.

NM: this is preaching to the converted in the sense that only people who ML knowledge turn up to these meetings. How does that translate to real policy? 15 members of House of Lords there.

SC: commented that although the FCO language school is to be re-opened, much of the discussion was very anecdotal. It would have helped to promote the 'soft' benefits of language learning.

MC: Baroness Cousins can lobby questions into parliament etc. so this can develop to wider audience. BC creating a new website – will notify CLIE when available. Manifesto being put together: importance of learning a language. Next meeting will focus on industry – ERASMUS plus. October meeting: Elaine Taylor from Ofsted about primary languages.

SC: is there a lobby to re-introduce ML as compulsory subject at GCSE?

NM: that attempt was torpedoed by feedback on initial ebacc.

MC: not at the moment.

DH: At a recent meeting, commented to Liz Truss that UK devotes less classroom time to languages than other countries. She was interested to know this. It would be worth a topic for APPG.

4.5 A-level English language media coverage (All)

iii. Media coverage:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2625146/The-A-levels-idiocy-Celebrity-obsession-examiners-revealed-MoS-survey-test-papers-Gove-told-standards-fatally-undermined.html>

<http://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/may/06/english-a-level-russell-brand-dizzee-rascal>

iv. Responses

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Barbara Bleiman: http://englishandmedia.co.uk/pdfs/EMC_Facts_Straight.pdf

Dan Clayton: <http://englishlangsfx.blogspot.co.uk/2014/05/defending-level-english-language.html>

GT had made suggested phrasing with additions from UC and ED. What do we do with it?

GT cannot have his name attached as an individual due to exam board sensitivities.

DH: suggested CLiE write to OCR to offer support for their submission to Ofqual.

DH and GT: will write to OCR offering expert opinion on matters relating to the texts relating to the lang/lit specs should that be useful, subject to BAAL and LAGB approval and subject to seeing the specs.

Decision: Action ED to inform OCR of CLiE offer to support for their submission to Ofqual

4.6. UKLO update (DH)

Drop in numbers. Possibly because the questions have gotten too difficult. It started last year but continued this year. Not a disaster, but systems being put in place to fix it.

Previously only one person picked the questions (DH). Using two or three people as question selectors will help control for difficulty. A model problem set will be produced with guarantee of difficulty. Lots of encouragement from primary schools – level B. Also planning a lower level called 'UKLO-lite', with one question, that a teacher could work through in one lesson. Planning a meeting for teachers at Oxford in October and developing resources.

CW: suggested a weekly puzzle in a newspaper in the future. DH agree, when the bank of questions /puzzled is large enough.

5. Reports from member organisations for information (CLIE members). See CLIE website for links to member associations.

6. AOB - none

7. Date of meetings: Doodle poll for 2014-15 link sent: <http://doodle.com/hxyedg45wca8aech>
Meeting 108: Nov 2014 – possibly 28th
Meeting 109: Feb 2015 – possibly 6th or 13th
Meeting 110: May 2015 – possibly 8th