

BAAL/LAGB COMMITTEE FOR LINGUISTICS IN EDUCATION

MINUTES OF MEETING 45

Held on Monday 15 November 1993 in Committee Room, University of London South Wing.

Present: Lynne Cameron (BAAL, Chair), Larry Trask (LAGB Secretary), Alison Littlefair (UKRA), Ali Haouas, Kay Richardson (BAAL), Peter Daw (NAAE), Katherine Perera (co-opted), Ben Rampton (BAAL), Tom Bloor (editor, CLIE working papers).

Apologies for absence were received from Connie Cullen, Nigel Falb, Lid King.

45.1 Minutes of meeting 44

The minutes were signed as correct.

45.2 Matters arising.

Matters arising from the minutes of Meeting 44 are subsumed under later.

45.3 National Curriculum for English update.

KP wrote to Sue Horner at NCC on behalf of CLIE: letter and response included with the minutes of Meeting 44 and agenda for Meeting 45.

The present situation is that revision of the English curriculum is on hold pending Ron Dearing's next report, due just before Xmas and which then goes out for consultation. The July and September versions of the English curriculum were circulated at the meeting. PD commented that:

- a) the status of the September document is unclear
- b) its probably most controversial feature is the retention of a list of worthy authors.
- c) some points in CLIE's submission (see above) had been ignored, others accommodated eg, the removal/reduction of specific attainment points.

The September document is not presented as part of a formal submission but views of readers are requested - in spite of the phasing out of the NCC.

BR commented that the document as a whole takes PASCAL and not COX as its point of departure.

AH mentioned the importance of trying to ensure that any new response by CLIE informs policy. It was decided to seek copies of the document for all members of CLIE for full discussion at Meeting 46 (the 1994 AGM).

No copies had yet been received within Higher Education, or in schools, or by individuals/groups who had responded to the previous document.

LT as secretary to request copies for BAAL members, and for all future documents to be sent to the Chair and/or Secretary, if they concerned the English curriculum (3 copies). This letter should also note with concern that CLIE's response for the July document is not included amongst the responses formally acknowledged in the September document.

It was noted that both CLIE and BAAL had published responses to the June document in the latest BAAL newsletter.

It was decided that Sue Horner should be invited to Meeting 46 as a non-voting member, when the committee would make the English curriculum its main agenda item. Sue Horner would be present on behalf of SCAA, replacing NCC and SEAC. This body promises to adopt a stance of greater openness than its predecessors and the presence of Sue Horner at the next meeting could help create a lever for influencing future curriculum discussion.

45.5 PGCE admissions policy: report on survey and action to be taken.

The point at issue to whether undergraduate Linguistics majors would be accepted on to PGCE courses given that Linguistics is not a National Curriculum subject. LC had been successful in contacting 13 institutions and KP in contacting 16. Results were circulated to committee members at the meeting. It was noted that

- (a) the variety of responses indicates some confusion.
- (b) one or two institutions had strong, particular views.
- (c) elsewhere, the decision would be taken by admissions tutors on the basis of individual student backgrounds, making this group very important gatekeepers.

The Committee approved the idea of A CLIE information sheet indicating the policy of named institutions as far as this was known. Its publication should be preceded by a consultation stage. The Committee of Heads of Departments and Professors of Linguistics should be consulted, and the PGCE-awarding institutions themselves. The purpose of the information sheet would be to advise Linguistics students who were thinking of teaching careers. Institutions not yet contacted should be pursued again, until the end of November.

45.6 CLIE working papers: report.

TB reported the sale of 30 + working papers at the recent UKRA conference and a similar figure for the annual BAAL conference. There has been some response to advertising in the LAGB newsletter. Income from the working papers since February stood at £221.61.

AL agreed to send TB her unsold copies for the Working Paper by Hilary Nesi on dictionaries, now out of print.

TB agreed to speak to HN about a possible updated version.

KP agreed to provide her own material for a new working paper.

45.7 CLIE information sheet no. 2.

It was agreed that CLIE information sheet no. 2 should be the one reporting on PGCE admissions policy in respect of Linguistics BA/BSc. courses.

It was further agreed to pursue the research on the list of linguistics courses in HE at first degree level, for publication at CLIE information sheet no. 3. This research could be pursued through the Committee of Heads and Professors in Linguistics.

45.8 Modern foreign languages at primary level.

AH reported on a recent conference organised by the National Association of Head Teachers with especial reference to a session given by the Association for Language Learning. The goal is to promote primary foreign language teaching within the context of the EEC. Claire Burstall's report for NFER was the previous landmark, since when interest in primary FL teaching had increased.

The thrust of the argument was that the learning of any foreign language was beneficial: no particular language eg French was emphasised and the question of (lack of) continuity with secondary schooling was not thought to be a problem.

It was thought that the forthcoming revision of the National Curriculum would make more room in the timetable for such teaching, at a stage when pupils would be well-motivated. The provision should be part of the normal school day and integrated into the curriculum.

Resources at present are focused upon Key Stage 2. Anymore in this direction would have resource implication, particularly for staffing and initial teacher training which would need to incorporate a modern foreign language component. Staff could be sought from the pool of inactive teachers (PIT) with dormant languages.

Reference was made to a pilot study in Kent, with generalist primary teachers.

Issues arising included those of liaison with secondary schools and of which languages to promote.

LC circulated a document indicating the much more prevalent teaching of foreign languages at primary level in other European countries, whilst noting the dominance of English as the most widespread foreign language at this level.

Other issues noted by the Committee included the problem of teachers' lack of communicative experience, and the difference between children and adults in respect of the argument that learning of any foreign language is good preparation for learning others.

Ron Dearing has said that there will be more room henceforward on the National Curriculum for other subjects. But the government would have to back any foreign language teaching initiative or the lack of resources will undermine it. Committed head teachers may push it through but in the absence of a national policy it must rely upon this kind of unquantifiable factor.

45.9 Date of next meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for 7th February (AGM) at London University if possible. AL announced her resignation from CLIE and indicated that a new UKRA representative would attend the next meeting.

45.10 Any other business.

LC mentioned that the September BAAL conference had succeeded in getting Catherine Snow and Norman Fairclough as plenary speakers.