

CLIE

Minutes of the 47th Meeting,  
2.00, Monday, 13 June 1994  
Room E302, Birkbeck College

Present: Tom Bloor, Lynne Cameron (in the chair), Ali Haouas, Ben Rampton, Jo Reynolds, Larry Trask, Sue Horner (by invitation)

47.1. Apologies for absence: Connie Cullen, Dr P. Daw, Katherine Perera, Kay Richardson

47.2. Matters arising:

46.1: Jenny Cheshire had submitted a letter of resignation from CLIE, since she was no longer in the country. No response had been obtained from ALL concerning a new representative.

46.8: The Working Papers' Editor's report had been received.

46.10: CLIE Information Sheet No. 2 had been received from Katherine Perera; this would be reproduced in the BAAL newsletter.

47.3. National Curriculum Proposals in English

47.3.1. Deadlines: We were asked to submit our responses to SCAA before 30 July 1994. SCAA was to report to the Secretary of State by the end of September 1994. Results would be published to schools in January 1995, and would begin operation in September 1995.

47.3.2. Responses: Responses would be in the public domain. Procedures for obtaining responses were *possibly* public, but this was not certain. There was no commitment to take account of advice in responses: all decisions were up to SCAA.

47.3.3. Recent revisions: English had *not* been singled out for slimming. Reorganization of the document had been well received. The new version was attempting a rationale on page one; this was approved of. Programmes of study were now the basis of attainment, rather than levels. The "hurdle" approach had been de-emphasized. Instead, the approach would be "What level has this child reached?" Attention was particularly drawn to §1.1 in each Key Stage: this would form the basis of assessment. It was suggested that the final version should make more explicit reference to the principles of the Cox Report. Standard English continued to be stressed, but the

treatment of it had been significantly improved: standard grammar and vocabulary were now clearly distinguished from accent, and attention was given to the differing roles of standard and non-standard English. There was a (minority?) view that language studies should not be firmly linked to standard English.

47.3.4. Bilingual pupils: Reading from a range of cultures was now required. However, the development of first languages was not mentioned, except for Welsh. On p. 1, §4, we would want to generalize the Welsh case to all bilingual pupils.

47.3.5. Special needs: More might be said about these.

47.3.6. Formulation of responses: All comments should be sent to Lynne Cameron by the end of June and copied to Sue Horner. A draft should be available by the middle of July. Suggested division of topics:

Bilingual education: Ali Haouas

Speaking and listening: Jo Reynolds and Lynne Cameron

Reading: Henrietta Dombey

Reading and writing (especially standard English, language structure and terminology): Tom Bloor and Larry Trask

English and the media: Katherine Perera

47.4. Possible CLIE session at the next LAGB meeting:

It was decided not to pursue this.

47.5. Date of next meeting:

31 October 1994

47.6. AOB:

There was none.

## NATIONAL CURRICULUM CONSULTATION SUMMER 1994

### RESPONSE TO THE DRAFT PROPOSALS FOR ENGLISH FROM C.L.I.E. (THE COMMITTEE FOR LINGUISTICS IN EDUCATION)

The Committee for Linguistics in Education is a joint committee set up by the British Association for Applied Linguistics and the Linguistics Association of Great Britain. Its members also include representatives of the Association for Language Learning, the Committee for Information on Language Teaching, the National Association of Advisers in English, the National Association for the Teaching of English, the National Council for Mother Tongue Teaching and the United Kingdom Reading Association.

#### 1. Content

We would agree that the amount of content prescribed is about right, but would have some reservations about the nature and organisation of the content:

##### 1.1 Terminology for Language Study:

Discussing, explaining or learning about the grammar of English requires the use of adequate and useful terminology; there does not, however, seem to be any unambiguously stated requirement for pupils to learn basic grammatical terminology. The presentation of explicit statements about the learning of concepts and terminology alongside statements about learning how to use sentence grammar would clarify assumed links between awareness, skills and explicit knowledge.

##### 1.2 The Linking of Standard English and Language Study

We have a strong objection to the pairing of these two topics, and to the way in which the study of language often appears to have the development of standard English as its main purpose. We would argue that these strands be separated, allowing the development of Language Study to be described in its own right.

#### 2. Progression

Generally this is an improvement on previous versions, with application across the full range of abilities and experience. However, we would make the following points:

##### 2.1 Speaking and Listening

The characterisations of progress in 1.1 of each programme are, to some extent, interchangeable across Key Stages, and give little indication of what the distinctive aspects of each Key Stage might be. Statements lack any explicit links to norms or criteria for development in this area. There is little reference to the previous development of spoken language before school entry, to the continuing maturation of linguistic skills, or to growing personal maturity.

##### 2.2 Grammar

The grammatical topics of tenses and subject-verb agreement occur repeatedly with no obvious development, in KS1 (writing), KS2 (Speaking and Listening), KS3-4 (Writing).

### **3. Balance**

No comment

### **4. Level Descriptions**

Generally, these are an improvement on Statements of Attainment; they are clearer and shorter, with teachers allowed a degree of flexibility in assigning them. We would make the following points:

#### **4.1 Attainment Target 1: Speaking and Listening**

The level descriptors lack clarity, with very little that could be operationally defined, and enormous subjectivity. They leave much to the judgement of the teacher/assessor, and to produce any useful information across schools, or even classes within a school, will require careful moderation, involving national exemplification material..

#### **4.2 Standard English**

The descriptors within AT1 relating to Standard English seem to provide a useful progression, although that at Level 4 - "use some of the core features of standard English vocabulary and grammar appropriately" - is self-evident, and does not imply progress from Level 3.

### **5. Further Comment**

#### **5.1 Support for pupils with special language needs**

The paragraph (1.3) in each KS of Speaking and Listening which refers to limitations of linguistic skill needs, in our opinion, to go much further in requiring appropriate provision for pupils who have broad special needs, including delayed or disordered language development at 5 years, and in recognising the needs of normally intelligent children who have more than average difficulty in developing language skills. These can arise for physical reasons, not purely because of limited opportunity, and can affect far more than vocabulary development.

#### **5.2 Bilingual /bicultural pupils**

Again, the nature and provision of "support" (1.3) to be given to children learning English as a second language should be more clearly specified. The paragraph 4. on page 1 should be rephrased, or the reference to Wales should be deleted. As it stands, the role of languages and cultures other than Welsh in the curriculum is ignored.

#### **5.3 Standard English and Language Study**

The description of standard English in paragraph 5 on page 1 should refer to "conventional use" rather than to "correct use".

Some of the statements made about the development of standard English are rather clumsy and could be rephrased: eg. "pupils should be introduced to the importance of appropriate subject-verb agreement" (p3) and reference to "the use of the verb 'to be' in the past and present tenses" (p21)

#### **5.4 Guidance for teachers and trainers**

Although the revised format is a great improvement and will be much more manageable than earlier documents, this results in the inclusion of statements that need informed interpretation. We feel that guidance to teachers, especially newly qualified teachers, will be needed in interpreting Programme of Study statements and Level Descriptions.

Earlier orders related clearly to the background of the Cox Report; we would suggest a reference to this report in the Introduction to the new Orders and to the continued use of the Cox Report in teacher training as a comprehensive source of background information .

Lynne Cameron  
Chair, Committee for Linguistics in Education  
July 1994