

# COMMITTEE FOR LINGUISTICS IN EDUCATION

## Minutes of Meeting no. 55

Wednesday 5 February 1997  
University of London Institute of Education

**Present:** Nicola Woods (Chair); Roz Ivanič (Secretary); Tom Bloor; Greg Brooks; Charlotte Franson; Ali Houas; Joe Reynolds; Linda Thompson.

**1. Apologies:** Larry Trask (Treasurer - provisionally) Kersti Borjars; Peter Daw; Henrietta Dombey; George Keith; Jane Medwell; Ann Miller; Jenny Cheshire; George Keith; Brian Street.

**2. Minutes of Meeting 54 - corrections:**

2.1 Spelling of Nicola Woods with an 's'

2.2 5.8 UKRA has commissioned the response from John Mountford, not NFER.

**- comments on timing and format:**

Length and format good: maximum 4 sides of A 4 reduced to two

Timing: ideally within a week of the meeting to remind us of agreed action.

**3. Matters arising from the minutes**

All coming up under other items on the agenda

**4. Dates of future meetings** (Under this item we also discussed speakers for these meetings.)

4.1 9 June 1997 in London

4.1.1 We have a provisional offer from Annie Grant at the TTA to talk about their draft proposals for Initial Teacher Training for Primary English, so that we can come to an understanding of their rationale for these and offer our response.

**ACTION** Roz to confirm invitation;

Roz to circulate the draft proposals when they are published

*see letter* (~~these are enclosed~~: please can you prepare your responses for the meeting on 9 June - in addition to anything you are doing in your own institution)

4.1.2 Back-up offer from Greg Brooks to talk about EITHER a) Trends of literacy standards in Britain since 1948 OR b) Family literacy. We chose (a) on the understanding that (b) would remain on offer for a future meeting.

4.2 A date in September in Birmingham at the BAAL AGM.

We provisionally agreed 10 Sept 1997 at 11.30. (However, the meeting does not begin until 11 Sept. I therefore propose Thursday 11 Sept at 11.30

**ACTION** Roz check if this is possible with the BAAL meetings organiser before the next meeting of CLIE.

4.2.1 We discussed the idea of making our discussion session open to anyone attending BAAL, and for this to be the proposed revisiting of Dick Hudson's topic: 'What Do All Linguists Agree on?' We discussed what such a session might be like.

We felt the spirit of such an event should be an open brainstorming to suggest additions and amendments to the original document. We would particularly be keen to identify new areas of

language study to include and new specific items within areas originally identified. There should be several invited commentaries of approx. 10 mins each (see below for suggested contributors). We suggested ground rules for the event:

- It must be participatory;
- It must be at least one hour overall;
- Each individual would have only a set time limit to speak;
- A strong chairperson would be needed.

'Plan B': If it is too difficult to arrange something so ambitious at such short notice as a proposal for BAAL in September, the alternative would be to attempt to mount a 'first round' of such discussions at the LAGB Spring Meeting 1998.

**ACTION** *Roz* to get agreement in principle to such a session from the BAAL meetings secretary;  
*Roz* to circulate the original Hudson article (*enclosed*)  
*Nicola* to contact Dick Hudson to ask his permission for such a revisiting, and to ask him to participate.  
*Nicola* to invite Larry Trask and Andrew Radford  
*Linda* to invite David Crystal  
*Tom* to invite Malcolm Coulthard  
*Roz* to invite Gunther Kress, Geoff Leech and Ron Carter.

(In follow-up discussions, Tom has suggested that we need to give very careful thought to the format of such an event in order to ensure that it is not just an exchange of incompatible views, and that some agreement can be reached. We have therefore not proceeded with issuing these invitations for the September meeting of BAAL, and should give active thought to 'Plan B'))

4.2.2 We need to check with BAAL and LAGB whether we can offer travel expenses to representatives of organisations who can only afford to travel to London for CLIE.

## 5. **Statement of accounts (*Larry*)**

Postponed to next meeting. However, we did discuss some financial matters:

- 5.1 Our finances need to cover the funding of larger events (see 4.2.1); travel to meetings outside London (see 4.2.2); our desire to co-opt additional members
- 5.2 It was noted that some members do not claim travel expenses, but have them paid by their institutions.

## 6. **Exchange of information among committee members**

Some of the items took the form of open discussion. The following topics and issues were discussed (the names of those who know about them / raised them are in italics)

- 6.1. Testing for 5-year-olds in the 3R's *Joe*
- 6.2. Base-line assessment for pre-fives, pilot studies in Wandsworth, Birmingham and Surrey, including the voucher scheme, 'value added' issues, STEPS, *Linda, Charlotte, Greg.*
- 6.3. National Literacy Project Centres *Ali*
- 6.4. Concern that these proposals are not paying enough attention to the knowledge base children bring with them, are strait-jacketing teachers, deprofessionalizing them, dangerously comforting, making them more dependant, focusing too much on assessable outcomes *Ali and Charlotte*
- 6.5. SCAA literacy and numeracy tests *Linda*
- 6.6. Concern with literacy is sweeping aside attention to spoken language *Joe*
- 6.7. Concern that the people making decisions are not linguists, and are not consulting linguists and that the linguists at SCAA are constrained by having to act on politicians' prejudices *ALL*

- 6.8. Concern that linguists in HE should speak out on these issues, support linguists working in under constraints at SCAA, TTA and OFSTED, and that there should be more public debate about education, like in France and Australia. *ALL*
- 6.9. What action should the CLIE be taking on this? *Nicola*
- 6.10. Concern that the entitlement to learning community languages has not been upheld: bilingual resources are invisible and not harnessed. Research needed into the current provision of teaching in community languages up to and including GCSE. *Ali; Greg offered some information.*
- 6.11. An interest in research, such as that in Leeds (Lynne Cameron) and TVU) Roxy Harris, Ben Rampton and Constant Leung) aiming to redress the current way in which citizenship and culture are seen in single terms *Charlotte, Greg.*
- 6.12. NCMTT, through its publications and conferences, aims to discuss how mainstream education and policy is affecting bilingual learners in terms of their mother tongue development. *Ali*
- 6.13. NALDIC holds a national conference, is part of consultations with government bodies, is lobbying for funding for ESL specialist provision: this is OK til August 1998, but then what? One of their main tasks is generating awareness among teachers of the needs of bi- and multilingual pupils. *Charlotte*
- 6.14. UKRA has approached junior ministers in the Labour education office. Greg knows the names of those who have the ear of the Labour Party on educational matters. 'Effective schooling' is the principle to latch things on to. *Greg*
- 6.15. SCAA is beginning consultation about the next revision of the National Curriculum. *Greg*
- 6.16. There's a new book about Learning to Punctuate and a conference at Manchester about Punctuation 6 - 7 June - *Roz has details*

## 7. Update on committee membership

- 7.1 An updated list was circulated by Nicola
- 7.2 Katharine Perera's resignation was noted
- 7.3 Three new members of CLIE have recently been provisionally co-opted: Brian Street, Gunther Kress, Jenny Cheshire.
- 7.4 Charlotte Franson is the new representative of NALDIC (The National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum) and NAAE (The National Association for Advisers for English) are in the process of appointing a rep. in time to attend the June meeting
- 7.5 OFSTED have not offered to send Peter Daw as a representative; however, he has asked to stay on our mailing list to keep informed of our activities.  
ALA (The Association for Language Awareness); BSA (The Basic Skills Agency); and NATECLA (The National Association for the Teaching of English and Community Languages to Adults) are being invited to send representatives to CLIE.  
**ACTION:** *Roz to ask Linda* to consult colleagues in Durham about who to invite to represent the needs and interests of Deaf people in education.
- 7.6 **ACTION:** *Roz to contact Chris Singleton at Hull and Margaret Snowling at UCL about who to invite to represent the needs and interests of dyslexic people in education.*

## 8. Teacher Training Agency criteria for funding

We postponed discussion of this item until we have further information  
(? is Nicola following this up? - I can't remember who should take what action ...)

## 9. Teacher Training Agency consultations about KAL for teachers

- 9.1 Roz reported that she had composed a set of recommendations in consultation with some members and sent it to TTA, and also published it in the BAAL Newsletter. She had a response from Roger Wilshaw (circulated with minutes). We should expect the TTA consultation document by the end of February.

**ACTION** *Roz*: circulate this when she receives it(*enclosed; see also item 4.1.1*)  
*ALL*: respond as individuals within our organisations and institutions

- 9.2 Charlotte circulated a copy of NALDIC's response, saying that, following advice from Annie Grant, they tried to be very specific and detailed (a) about what all teachers need to know to support speakers of English as an Additional Language and to recognize progression, and (b) about the role of the specialist ESL teacher.
- 9.3 General agreement that it was essential to keep insisting that unless teachers understand more about language than just 'what is a noun and a verb', the basics won't improve: linguistic knowledge is NOT an esoteric extra.  
We need to decide what further involvement we should offer and seek in this matter.

**10. OFSTED inspection criteria and methodology for inspection of ITE courses**  
*(Linda)*

Inspection is very important because quotas are based on ratings. OFSTED will re-inspect the 20 teacher training institutions which came top in the previous round, focusing on reading only. Info about this came far too late. Criteria for assessing student teacher performance in the teaching of reading and for the performance of teacher-mentors are being imposed with no consultation. It is not going to be a peer review: there is no information about the qualifications of the inspectors. It is not taking the opportunity to undertake valuable shared research about provision.

In our response we should point out that in the TQA of HE by HEFCE we are informed very clearly and long in advance of (a) the members of the inspection team; (b) the criteria for assessment. Also that these criteria are very carefully determined through peer consultation. We would expect the same quality of operation from TTA and OFSTED.

**ACTION** *Linda* to send a copy of the criteria to Nicola and to draft a response  
*Nicola* to circulate the draft and compile a CLIE response.

**11. Training for curriculum leadership at KS 1 and 2 for English** *(Linda)*

SCAA, at extremely short notice, is asking institutions to tender for providing In-Service training for 'curriculum leaders' in various areas, including English and ESL/EAL specialists. Their specifications are so vague that those who respond to the call to tender, such as NALDIC, are actually writing the specifications themselves.

We should be insisting that providers are qualified to ensure such training is linguistically informed.

**ACTION** I didn't note any action to be taken. Should there be some??

**13. no other business**

**14. Linguistics and the teaching of writing**

As predicted, the agenda had been so full that this item acted as a 'reserve', should time be available. There was no time, so Roz circulated a three-page handout, and offered to talk more about it another time. (Copies attached for those who did not come to the meeting.)