

To: ivanic
From: Dick Hudson <dick@ling.ucl.ac.uk>
Subject: CLIE
Cc: woods, jaworska
Bcc: me

Dear Roz,

Thanks for the minutes of the February meeting, and also for arranging for QCA to send me a copy of the draft curriculum revisions. I'm afraid yet again I shan't be able to come to next week's CLIE meeting - very much to my regret. Please pass my apologies. I hope to be able to come to the following ones.

I have some comments on the February minutes. Since I wasn't there I clearly can't comment on their accuracy, and I assume they are accurate. So what I'm commenting on is what actually happened at the meeting.

2.5. The talk about putting minutes on the web site sounds a bit pointless, given that no new minutes have been put on the web site since 1997. It's also a bit pointless putting out minutes about forthcoming events months after the events have happened. LAGB has decided to solve the information-flow problem by appointing its own official "CLIE Reporter" whose responsibility is to attend CLIE meetings and report back to LAGB. Our first Reporter is Ewa Jaworska, who I hope will be able to attend the coming meeting.

6.15. I'm sorry if people were offended by my report on the QCA meeting, but teacher ignorance *in the relevant area - i.e. grammar* is a (well documented) fact. I don't see how it in any way devalues all the other skills and knowledge that teachers have, and I don't see how it helps to pretend it isn't true. It's nonsense to say that the ignorance is 'created' by NLS; it was there before NLS came along. Clearly NLS should have been tied to an intensive training scheme to help fix the problem, but that's a different matter.

6.16. This minute is almost entirely negative about NLS, which I find very strange. For the first time we have an opportunity here to introduce some really serious study of language throughout our education system, and all CLIE can do is grumble about generalities. Even if NLS was fundamentally flawed, this would be pointless - there's so much momentum behind NLS, and these criticisms are so fundamental, that it's destined to fail. My personal view is much more positive (with the big exception of the glossary), and I simply can't understand how some of the minuted comments relate to NLS - e, f, g in particular. The list of agreed points in i) is surely inadequate; if that's all we can agree on we should certainly give up! (Has anyone ever suggested that linguistic theory should be taken as a metaphor for pedagogy? I can't imagine anyone dreaming of it.)

I'm also concerned at j), "Nicola to co-ordinate the writing of a letter from CLIE to TES about ..., to be sent for approval to chairs of BAAL;" I hope this is a mistake

7.2. Alastair, not Alistair

8. Another inadequate list of half-thoughts, masquerading as a considered view. What about bilingualism, language processing, language variation, .. on a par with 2, 3; or are they all included under 1)? And re 4), the whole point is surely that you don't need language study in order to understand the discourse of policy documents and the media - they're what you get without language study!

11.4. Surely this is indefensible. If deficit means lack of something, then illiteracy is a deficit of literacy, just like monolingualism is a deficit of second languages, innumeracy is a deficit of numeracy, and so on.

My general view of these minutes is that if they got into the public domain they'd make a laughing stock of CLIE, and more generally of linguists (BAAL as well as LAGB); and as I said before, I'm not questioning the accuracy or clarity of the minutes, but the quality of the discussion at the meeting. This is serious, because both BAAL and LAGB have to be able to justify their continued support of CLIE as their joint sub-committee. I think this would be hard to do on the basis of meetings like this - CLIE doesn't seem to speak for linguists like me, at least, nor, I suspect, does it speak for many in the LAGB.

I should say that I haven't discussed these comments with either Nicola or Ewa, though I'm copying them in; so they may well not share my feelings. And I haven't enjoyed being so critical because I recognise the hard work that you and Nicola put into CLIE, and I really want CLIE to function well - after all, I am one of the founding members!

With best wishes,

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