

COMMITTEE FOR LINGUISTICS IN EDUCATION

Minutes of Meeting no. 62 (*DRAFT - Long version for members*)

Wednesday 16 June 1999

at The University of London Institute of Education

1. Attendance

Present: Kersti Borjars (LAGB), Tom Bloor (BAAL), Pam Hulme (UKRA), Roz Ivanič (BAAL: Secretary of CLIE), Ewa Jaworska (LAGB), Joe Reynolds (RCSaLT), Brian Street (co-opted), Alison Sealey (BAAL), Nicola Woods (LAGB: Chairperson of CLIE).

Apologies: Richard Aplin (ALA), Jenny Cheshire (LAGB), Charlotte Franson (NALDIC), Richard Hudson (LAGB), Gunther Kress (co-opted), Constant Leung (BAAL), Helen Sunderland (NATECLA).

2. Minutes of Meeting 61 on 17 February 1999: amendments

2.1 *Item 6.1:* The word 'and' was replaced with a full stop.

2.2 *Item 6.15:* was amended to read as follows:

A brief written report was received from Dick Hudson on the one-day conference organised by the QCA which he had attended, on the theme:

The teaching of grammar in English and Modern Foreign Languages

There was particular concern at the statement 'everyone there agreed ...The main block in teaching grammar is teacher ignorance'. Those present recognised the spirit of this statement, but felt that it could perhaps have been more sensitively expressed. It was noted that the NLS in its current form perpetuates ignorance by presenting information about language without references to sources, and by being fraught with linguistic misunderstandings.

2.3 *Item 6.16:(i)* The introduction was amended to read:

There was a long discussion about the National Literacy Strategy, stimulated by notes from Dick Hudson on the above, and on a workshop he had attended on it. Some of the points made were

a) The emphasis on explicit teaching about language in the National Literacy Strategy is a valuable step forward. However,

(ii) Item (j) 'chairs of BAAL' was amended to read 'chairs of BAAL and LAGB'

(iii) Item (l) The reference to 'Linguistic Society of America' was corrected.

(iv) Item (o) was omitted, as too cryptic.

2.4 *Item 11.* Members asked for an abstract of Brian Street's talk to be included in the minutes. The published version of his article does not have an abstract, so I have copied instead for you the introduction and conclusion of the article. It is enclosed herewith.

2.5 It was noted that the detailed discussion of items 6.15 and 6.16 is not included in the 'short' version of the minutes which is published on the CLIE website ?

3. Matters arising

3.1 *re: Item 5.4* It was noted that Martin Turner is the Head of Psychology of the Dyslexia Institute.

3.2 *re: Item 6.6* It was proposed that the programme for the Kings College 'cross-London' Language and Education Seminar should be advertised on the edling List.

3.3 *re: Item 6.15* It was observed that the NLS should have been tied to an intensive teacher development programme.

3.4 *re: Item 6.16* There was considerable concern that our discussion had focused on the negative aspects of the National Literacy Strategy, but the committee recognised that there are also a lot of positive aspects of it. It is important that, rather than dismiss the initiative completely, CLIE should contribute to amending and developing it.

3.5 *re: Item 6.16 (f)* It is important to distinguish between what teachers themselves need to know about language and the knowledge they might transmit explicitly to learners.

3.6 *re: Item 6.16 (j)* CLIE had decided not to go ahead with the action suggested in view of three recent developments:

(i) Representatives of the LAGB had been invited to discuss amendments to the NLS Glossary.

(ii) Alison Sealey's paper: 'Theories about Language in the National Literacy Strategy' is now available (see attached Order Form).

(iii) An article based on the colloquium about the NLS, held at the BAAL meeting in September 1998, is soon to appear in the proceedings of that meeting. ?

Some of the participants in that colloquium (specifically, Jill Bourne and Gunther Kress) are following up on this colloquium by engaging in a dialogue with John Stannard and other members of the DfEE about the view of language underlying the NLS. ?

3.7 *re: Item 6.16 (m) and (n)*

It was thought that several individual contributions to the TES would be preferable, rather than attempting to speak with a unified voice.

ACTION: Nicola to inform Sue Palmer of the TES of the existence of CLIE, sending her a description of its functions and membership, and offering to act as a point of contact to put her in touch with members.

Ewa to update the CLIE e-mail list to tell members that this is happening, and to encourage members to make contributions. ?

4. Dates of future meetings and choice of speakers

- 4.1 3 Nov. 1999 We should attempt to get Laura Huxford to speak about the development of the Word Level Guidance for the National Literacy Strategy.
- 4.2 The agreed dates of meetings beyond this are:
23 Feb. 2000
21 June 2000

5. CLIE Membership and Officers

- 5.1. Nicola distributed an updated version of the Membership Contact Details, which was circulated for further amendments.
ACTION: Roz (?+others) to send any other details which Nicola may need to bring this list up to date, for circulation at the next meeting.
- 5.2 **ACTION:** Roz to approach the British Dyslexia Association to invite them to appoint a representative to CLIE
- 5.3 **ACTION:** Nicola to approach NFER to invite them to appoint a representative to CLIE, now that Greg Brooks no longer attends on behalf of BAAL
- 5.4 **ACTION:** Nicola to contact George Keith to find out whether he wishes to continue to serve as a co-opted member of CLIE.
- 5.5 It was agreed that Nicola and Roz should continue as officers for one more year, and that a new Chair and Secretary should be appointed to shadow these offices at the June 2000 meeting, with a view to taking office in October 2000.

Reports from Representatives - there was no time for this item in view of the urgency of making time for Items (8) and (10)

7. Revisions to the NLS Glossary

The committee received Dick Hudson's written report (sent out with the agenda of Meeting 62).
It had been referred to earlier (see Item 3.6 (i))

8. The National Curriculum Review of English and Languages

Some brief observations were made in advance of the main discussion with Alistair West:

- The revisions to the curriculum are, by and large, to be welcomed: there is a lot GOOD in the documents.
- It is GOOD to mention language use across the curriculum: it would be good if this were more pervasive.
- It is GOOD to include mention of the language aspects of maths as part of the curriculum.

9. **No Other Business**

10. **Speaker and discussion:**

Alistair West: Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
The Review of the National Curriculum for English

Alistair West talked about the review process, and about aspects of the draft document on which it would be particularly helpful to comment. The deadline for written comments was 23 July 1999, so the practicalities of sending in responses are not worth minuting. The revised Orders are now being finalised on the basis of the consultation process which took place over the summer. What follows is an overview of the key issues which came up in his presentation and in the discussion.

The background to the draft document we were looking at

1. The 'revised NC has operated, and been monitored, since 1995
2. By July 1998 this, and reports from advisers, had given a good idea of what needed to be revised for 2000
3. Since then, subject associations have been consulted, and at Easter 1999 recommendations were made to the Secretary of State.

Key features of the 2000 NC

- Each subject curriculum is to say what the distinctive contribution is of this subject to the national curriculum as a whole.
- The National Curriculum has to make clear what each Key Stage adds up to as a coherent whole.
- Other subject areas have been massively cut to make space for the NLS and National Numeracy Strategy.
- People felt that the function of the Programmes of Study was different from the non-statutory, more temporally located NLS objectives.
- Schemes of work are being produced for all subjects.

Specific issues concerning the English NC

- The principle of 'minimum change' for this review meant that 'Language Study' could not become a separate programme of study.
- A feature of the revisions is an attempt to improve the relationship between the 'Range' and 'Skills' specifications.
- Standard English is mentioned less than it used to be.
- Members of the committee commented on the fact that references to the use of Standard English were sometimes integrated with references to language study, and sometimes not.
- Schemes of work will have to incorporate literacy issues 'at the unit level'.
- A member of the committee commented that there seemed to be almost more potential for work on language: development of concepts, inner language, within the specifications for the Maths curriculum than within the English curriculum.
- It was noted that there is no mention of learners with speech and language needs.
- The 'boys' issue: there was concern at the fact that boys' achievement was given special attention.