

COMMITTEE FOR LINGUISTICS IN EDUCATION

Minutes of Meeting no. 64 (*DRAFT - Long version for members*)

Wednesday 23 February 2000

at The University of London Institute of Education

1. Attendance

Present: Mary Auckland (RCSaLT), Richard Aplin (ALA), Sue Barry (LAGB), Henrietta Dombey (NATE), Charlotte Franson (NALDIC), Pam Hulme (UKRA), Richard Hudson (LAGB), Roz Ivanic (BAAL: Secretary of CLIE), Ewa Jaworska (LAGB: Acting Chair), Constant Leung (BAAL), Brian Street (co-opted), Alison Sealey (BAAL),

In Attendance: Laura Huxford (National Literacy Strategy Team)

Apologies: Nicola Woods (LAGB: Chairperson of CLIE), Ann Miller (ALL), Helen Sunderland (NATECLA).

2. Minutes of Meeting 63 on 3 November 1999: amendments

As circulated

3. Matters arising

- 3.1 Nicola reported that Sue Palmer had apologised for the delay in responding, said that she does not work for TES directly, and passed on Nicola's offer to act as a contact person for articles about language and education to Joyce Arnold at the TES.

4. Dates of future meetings and choice of speakers

- 4.1 Alan Moys of the Nuffield Inquiry into the teaching of languages will be willing to speak on 2 Nov.
The report will be launched in May (see attached details in e-mail from Dick).
- 4.2 Ron Carter to be asked if he can speak on 21 June; if not, some time next year.
We should ask him to speak on the topic:
'Where is Linguistics in Education Going? A Personal View'
ACTION: Roz or Nicola to ask
- 4.3 Later it was suggested that we need a meeting without a speaker to pursue discussion of current documents and initiatives on language and linguistics in education.
- 4.4 Dates of future meetings were agreed in principle:
Thursday 2 Nov. 2000
Thursday 22 Feb 2001
Thursday 21 June 2001

5. CLIE Membership: Update

- 5.1 Ewa will take over as Secretary for the next three years, shadowing the job as from 21 June meeting.

*Kids finds NLS boring
- Henrietta Dombey
- Graham Frater - 3 surveys
on lit. teaching. Critical
between the times.
- Hancock - kids' views*

- 5.2 BAAL still to appoint a Chair for the next three years.
- 5.3 Several reps of organisations are not attending. The organisations now need to be contacted by phone and replacement reps. appointed where necessary.
ACTION: to be carried forward to Sept, by new Chair

6. Reports from Representatives of organisations

- 6.1 ALA conference programme is drafted: there will be 40 – 50 speakers.
- 6.2 The Kings College Seminar Speakers: Ron Carter and Deborah Cameron.
ACTION: Please can these be advertised on edling? (Brian to add edling to his circulation list; if you don't receive this, give Brian your e-mail)
- 6.3 There will be Summer Schools 4 – 7 Sept preceding the BAAL meeting 7 – 10 Sept.
- 6.4 UKRA held a 'Phonics Seminar' in January.
Will hold a Grammar Seminar in July, and a summer conference in Oxford.
- 6.5 Sad news that Madeleine Lindley died.
- 6.6 - NATE: Trainee teachers on the 4 – year BA QTS are experiencing a high level of anxiety over KAL, and the imminent literacy tests are increasing this, and having a backwash effect into teacher education (Mary adds: and among experienced teachers).
- Can we have a session on ideas about how to do the 12 hours of KAL on ITT courses: CLIE to act as a forum for the exchange of good practice (?When?)
- There are lots of misconceptions in available materials.
- 6.7 There are equivalent organisations to CLIE in other countries, with e-mail lists, e.g LINGUISTlist No
- 6.8 LAGB will have a session on the NLS on 7 April: Paul Higgins and Molly Sayer to speak.

7. The TTA Literacy tests

- All we can offer is a 'white coat and pincers' service as regards the technicalities of grammar.
- It WILL happen.
- The important thing is to see that it's monitored, not just steered:
- It's important to have an evaluation of the effects of its being introduced: an aims – outcome study. Does it achieve what is intended?
- It's also important to identify what can't be captured by this test: what aspects of literacy it misses.
- The likely effect will be that language will be reduced to what can be tested.
- This test is about professional aspects of becoming a teacher: writing letters home, completing report forms, etc ('document literacy').
- TTA intend to point towards training material.
- There's a need for the TTA to make explicit the assumptions on which the initiative is based:
How teachers learn;

How the tests aid learning;
How the tests achieve the intended outcomes;
They need to state these positions, not expect us to: these assumptions are NOT transparent.

8. **Reports on other contact with DfEE, TTA, and QCA – covered elsewhere on the agenda**

9. **The QCA publication: "Not whether but how. Teaching grammar in English at Key Stages 3 and 4."**

- The claim is that specific knowledge of grammar will aid writing.
- What IS the relationship between KAL and language use?
- Correct use of apostrophe CAN be helped by knowledge about NPs
- There is a nod towards genre theory
- George Keith's idea of 'noticing grammar' seems good.
- Yet there is evidence that 'noticing grammar' can slow down reading.
- The papers assume a straightforward relationship between explicitness, analysis and production.
- Certain language users in certain cultural styles may process language in different ways from others.
- At KS3 and 4 in the NC the learners will be exposed to a lot of different text-types.
- This approach is dependent on a lot of prior teaching.
- The ideas here are potentially useful as an unthreatening way of developing KAL for trainee teachers.
- Schools don't automatically receive all QCA documents, such as this one.
- This is good because it moves away from 'definitions' of grammatical concepts.
- In a future meeting we should each do a short presentation on separate papers, including if possible those in the 'Grammar Papers'.

10. **The NALDIC Project:**

Descriptors of the Knowledge, skills and understanding of EAL teachers

NALDIC is working on what should be the 'descriptors' for EAL teaching. (There's a debate over the word 'standards' which is also used in this context.). Recommendations to be to the DfEE by April.

Charlotte will send out the final report on this work for consultation and feedback.

US TESOL is also conducting a similar exercise.

Constant: The distinction between EFL, ESL and EAL is being queried by David Nunan.

11. **A.O.B.** – no time for Brian's item on RAE panels dealing with language and education – deferred to next meeting.

12. **Speaker and discussion:**

Laura HUXFORD:

Director of Training for the National Literacy Strategy

Laura: was asked to do distance training on phonics: produced 'The box'.

In 1999 was asked to produce Catch-up materials for children getting level 1 or 2c at KS2

SATs: Produced Additional Literacy Support (ALS) Materials.

Key issues: We have never taught children how to blend

- ALS moves backwards and forwards between phonemic segmentation and blending

- Progression in Phonics is NOT worksheets. It is whole-class teaching.
- Anecdotal evidence suggests that the majority of children embrace phonics easily; their problems are more at a communicative level.

What teachers should know:

- Phonics is ONE of many 'searchlights'
- Phonics + skills of segmentation & blending + knowledge of the code
- The distribution of words in English
- What are young children's capabilities
- How to teach phonics in a lively interactive manner

Some principles of Progression in Phonics

- Decisions had to be made to simplify for teachers, to construct a coherent scheme, e.g. over how much and what terminology to use.
- Don't rely on telling: phonics teaching should include investigative activities (for teachers and for children), and quick and fun for children.
- Important to draw attention to the consistencies which exist
- Weigh up what is frequently seen with what is easy/logical in deciding what to teach next.
- It can do no more than 'giving one leg up' into the spelling system.

Concerns which were voiced

- Teacher educators fear that teachers will treat material like Progression in Phonics as an orthodoxy;
- Linguists are not being consulted, only educationalists;
- Inconsistency in descriptions of phonemes;
- The relationship between different accents and phonics work: an implicit set of values favouring R.P.;
- Whether the materials support E.A.L. learners;
- If teachers are fluently literate, but have little explicit knowledge of phonics, why are phonics so highly emphasised in the NLS?

Future developments

There will be money available for teacher training in sentence level objectives and writing next year.

What can CLIE do?

- Help with grammar and writing: the next stage.
- Help with identifying specific places where there are inconsistencies in the ways of writing about phonemes and graphemes, and on how to use notation of words to indicate sounds.
- Help in the early stages eg sorting out terminology and ensuring it is consistent before it gets published.
- Everything has to be produced fast.
- Chair can act as coordinator of expertise: Laura could approach the Chair of CLIE for advice on who to consult.