

COMMITTEE FOR LINGUISTICS IN EDUCATION
MINUTES OF MEETING 73

Wednesday 19th February 2003
2.00-5.00 p.m.

at The Institute of Education, University of London

1. Welcomes, introductions and apologies for absence (RI)

PRESENT: Sue Barry (LAGB, secretary), Billy Clark (LAGB), Keith Davidson (NATE), Ros Fisher (UKRA), Dick Hudson (LAGB), Roz Ivanič (BAAL, Chair), Terry Lamb (ALL), Constant Leung (BAAL), Brian Street (Kings College London), Francesca Target (NATECLA)

APOLOGIES: Richard Aplin (ALA), Mary Auckland (RCSaLT), Mike Baynham (BAAL), Keith Brown (LAGB), Deborah Cameron (Institute of Education), Celine Castelino (BSA), Sharon Curry (ALL), Charlotte Franson (NALDIC), Janet Maybin (BAAL), April McMahon (LAGB), Teresa O'Brien (BAAL), Marina Spiegel (NATECLA)

The committee welcomed Francesca Target (London Language and Literacy Unit), who was representing NATECLA at this meeting in the place of Marina Spiegel.

2. Amendments to Minutes of Meeting 72 (RI)

Item 1:

Brian Street had also sent his apologies

Item 4: (RI)

4.3: Co-opted members: should read

"There are currently two coopted members on the committee (Brian Street and Deborah Cameron): according to the CLIE constitution there are two additional coopted places. Three people were suggested: Ron Carter, Mahendra Verma, Tim Shortis. It was agreed to discuss at the next meeting in February 2003 which two should be asked."

3. Matters arising

Item 3:

Item 3.5i (communication with Laura Huxford)

RI wrote to Laura Huxford on behalf of CLIE offering input on the revision of the NLS framework (see Agenda papers for meeting 19/02/03 for copy of this communication). LH replied that, although no revision is planned in the immediate future, when it is the NLS Team would be in touch with CLIE. It was agreed that RI should write to Alan Howe (Director of the English strand of the KS3 Strategy), offering assistance in the development of the English strand.

ACTION: RI - *Alan Howe*

ACTION
→ *me*

Item 3.5ii (discussions between NALDIC and NS KS3)

RI to ask CF for an update on the EAL strategy

CL: Lynne Cameron (University of Leeds) is carrying out an analysis of EAL writing at KS3, which is due to be posted on Ofsted's website. RI to approach Lynne Cameron to express interest and enquire as to when she expects it to be completed. CL to check Ofsted's website. [The material has since become available at: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk>]
ACTION: RI & CL

Item 3.6 (Responses to 14-19 Green Paper)
DH reported no further urls have been sent to him to be posted on CLIE's website.

Item 6 (Research on *Grammar for Writing*):
BS noted that Deborah Myhill (University of Exeter) has carried out research on raters and marking of GSCE writing, and suggested her as a future speaker to CLIE.

Item 10 (The new AS/A level English Language):
A draft briefing paper for CLIE by Tim Shortis, *Recent Developments in Advanced Level English Language AS/A2*, was circulated. TS requests comments on this paper from CLIE members: to be emailed to him by the end of February, after which he will return a revised paper. It was agreed that members should copy in the rest of the CLIE representatives in their replies.
ACTION: All

TS also left example assessments to be circulated at the meeting.

4. Languages Alliance (TL)

After the National Languages Strategy was published in December 2002, the Languages Steering Group ceased to exist. However, ALL and UCML (University Council for Modern Languages) felt that the strategy falls short of the Nuffield recommendations, and have set up an independent group of organisations to monitor progress and commission research: the Languages Alliance. The first meeting is to be held next week (w/b 24/2/03) to establish a steering group. Organisations invited to this first meeting include the British Academy, the British Chamber of Commerce, NALDIC and CLIE (RI).

The brief of the Languages Alliance is to cover all education sectors. It is hoped a meeting with the DFES will be possible.

DH: The possible beneficial effect of L1 work on L2 learning is recognised by some at the DFES (e.g. Alan Howe, Paul Higgins), but has not been exploited by government strategies. This is one line of argument to pursue, in view of the present emphasis on structure in L1 work.

CL: One result of future activity by the Languages Alliance may be recognition on the part of the DFES of different pedagogical models within both MFL teaching and mother-tongue teaching.

TL to liaise with BAAL to keep them informed. KD: requested NATE be kept informed; and Francesca Target said that NATECLA would also be interested in being involved. TL noted that the organisations represented could be reconsidered after the forthcoming initial meeting.

5. The National Languages Strategy (TL)

Terry Lamb (ALL) gave a presentation on the government strategy, "Languages for All, Languages for Life" (the full presentation is downloadable from the CLIE website: www.phon.ucl.ac.uk/home/dick/ec/cliemeetings.htm). The main thrust of the strategy is at primary level (the primary entitlement that every child should have the opportunity to learn a foreign language in KS2). Some strategy is developed for KS3 (e.g. specialist language colleges) and 14-19 (at which stage the learning of a foreign language will no longer be compulsory). No strategy for FE/HE. For employers: a regional language network to be in place.

KD: the 14-19 strategy will affect the number of graduates to go into primary teaching. TL: the government takes the view that the combination of a push from primary level (in the form of increased motivation to learn languages at this level) and a pull from employers (encouragement from them to learn) will stop any decline in numbers entering the profession. KD: there will still be a hiatus where a decline is very possible.

RF: the transition to secondary level may also be a problem, in view of the fact that students would come with different levels of experience from their various primary schools. There is also the potential problem at primary level that if some training places entail "learning on the job", there may be no-one to learn from.

TL: one positive aspect of the strategy is the cross-sector collaboration it envisages.

6. News reports from representatives of organisations (ALL)

a. **NATE** (National Association of Teachers of English):

- i) Report on KS3 English (Targets and testing versus teaching and learning) (Attachment 1)
- ii) *Supplement to The Grammar Book* is now on sale (www.nate.org.uk).

b. **UKRA** (United Kingdom Reading Association):
International and national conferences were announced

c. **ALL** (Association for Language Learning)
The annual Language World conference will take place at University of Bath, 4-6 April

d. **BAAL** (British Association of Applied Linguists):
i) Report (Attachment 1)
ii) BAAL/CUP seminar series announced (further information available on BAAL website)

e. Brian Street announced three forthcoming conferences:
• Sociolinguistics Symposium, Newcastle, 15th April 2004
• Language in Society, Ghent, September 2003

- *The Learning Conference*, Institute of Education London, 15th-18th July 2003

f. **LAGB** (Linguistics Association of Great Britain):

i) Report (Attachment 1)

ii) DH attended meeting with QCA English Team, 18th February 2003, on behalf of LAGB (report given in Attachment 2)

7. Dates and topics for future meetings (RI)

The dates of meetings in the academic year 2003/4 were agreed: November 5th 2003; 18th February 2004; 9th June 2004 (all three are Wednesday, 2-5pm)

Topics and invited speakers would be discussed at the next meeting in June (Alan Howe and Deborah Myhill were suggested). It was agreed that one of the three meetings would include an open session with invited speaker; the other two would include discussion meetings for CLIE members only, in order to provide the opportunity to exchange views on current issues in more breadth and depth than is possible at present.

The forthcoming meeting (Wednesday 11th June) will include a discussion on The Teaching of Grammar. This session will be for CLIE members only. DH and RF to circulate beforehand a list of issues for consideration.

ACTION: DH & RF

8. AOB

CLIE membership (RI)

After discussion the committee decided to invite Ron Carter and Tim Shortis to be coopted.

ACTION: RI

Charlotte Franson is stepping down from NALDIC and therefore will no longer be able to represent this organisation on CLIE. CL to ask NALDIC for a decision on their CLIE representative.

ACTION: CL

It was noted that Teresa O'Brien was stepping down from representing BAAL on CLIE.

The committee thanked Teresa and Charlotte for their work on CLIE. It was also noted that RI and CL would be stepping down from CLIE after the next meeting in June, and that therefore there would be three new BAAL representatives in the new academic year.

ACTION: BAAL representatives

The new secretary (to take office in November 2003) will be a BAAL representative. It is hoped to appoint this representative before June so that they will be able to shadow the present secretary at that meeting.

ACTION: BAAL representatives

9. Issues in the interface between BSL and Education

Open discussion session (4-5pm)

Guest speaker: Professor Bencie Woll, Chair of Sign Language and Deaf Studies, City University.

A written version of this talk will shortly be available on the CLIE website.

CLIE Meeting No. 73: Attachment 1

Agenda item 6:

a. Report from NATE: (KD)

CLIE, 19 February 2003

NATE and KS3 English

Targets and testing versus teaching and learning

- A NATE press release following the release of information in the autumn about changes to the KS3 SATs for 2003:-

NATE welcomes the recent media attention given to problems linked to examinations from KS1 through to post-16. These shortcomings, though important in themselves, highlight a badly flawed assessment system dominated by external testing.

NATE is particularly concerned about the domination of the curriculum at Key Stages 1,2 & 3 by SATs. We do not believe that SATs benefit children. They take up much valuable teaching time and do not provide teachers, children or parents with the most appropriate information about pupils' progress. Teachers are capable of making professional assessments about a child's progress; all teachers use tests, in the right place and at the right time, to help them make these judgements and to inform their teaching.

The status given to the test results puts pressure on teachers to teach to the tests. There is a real danger that the curriculum will become increasingly narrow and the experience of children severely limited if this continues.

We would like to see the government phase out the tests in their current form and introduce a system which includes properly moderated teacher assessment. NATE condemns the use of published League Tables because, as with SATs, they do not provide a true assessment of what schools are achieving.

The problems which have now been revealed prompt NATE to reiterate its call for a major review of the way pupils are assessed in schools.

- LATE (the London Association for the Teaching of English) and the NATE 9-14 Committee called an open meeting on 29 January – in the light of a possible boycott by the NUT - to review the many complaints received about the new KS3 English test arrangements, including those concerning:
 - the content of the new SATs
 - the late arrival of sample papers
 - the lack of consultation

For further details

LATE
johngwilks@hotmail.com
www.late.org.uk

NATE
natehq@btconnect.com (with 'KS3 Debate' in the subject box)
www.nate.org.uk

- The row over 'dumbing down' the English tests centres on the fragmenting of writing and reading tasks into 'bite-sized' questions and the spurious use of the Shakespeare texts to hang them on. The issues highlighted by Dr Bethan Marshall (of the King's College, London 'Assessment for learning in the classroom' project), have been featured in recent *Times Educational Supplement* reports (Julie Henry):-

... the authority [QCA] appeared to have given up on trying to get a serious response to literature from teenagers and had reduced the exam to an exercise in grammar. Writing in this week's *TES* she said: "Any book, play or poem or article is turned into a grammar primer as texts are trawled for some rule of punctuation or example of a subordinate clause."

'The 75-minute reading paper will now consist of three text excerpts and 15 questions. The answers are all short paragraphs, worth up to five marks. Pupils used to answer two or three longer questions.

'Even where the new questions ask for critical responses to text, said Dr Marshall, inflexible marking guidelines gave banal and sophisticated answers the same score [...]. "This is not a valid assessment of how good a child is, particularly at the top end. It is dumbing down and is about training kids to hit markers and jump through hoops." she said.

Ruth Moore, chair [2001-2002] of the National Association for the Teaching of English, said: "The English test is an example of trying to come up with a test that helps league tables rather than learning. The QCA claims the tests are diagnostic but the only thing they diagnose is the ability to do the test. I think there is now real scope to question the whole issue of tests." In a recent NUT survey the vast majority of teachers said they would support a boycott of tests. The union has written to other teacher organisations for their backing. John Bangs, NUT head of education said: "There is an alliance building against tests, particularly at key stage 1."

- and in *The Guardian* - Rebecca Smithers, 'Shakespeare test boycott', 8 February:-

In a significant move, English teachers in London and the home counties who belong to LATE have unanimously called on the National Union of Teachers to extend an existing mandate for teachers to boycott the new tests. The NUT is revising its campaign for national tests and league tables to be scrapped on educational grounds....

-oOo-

- On the other hand, Alan Howe, the new Director of the English Strand in the KS3 Strategy was well received at the NATE AGM in September:-

On the whole those present were pleasantly surprised by his candid approach. He did not come to present a whitewash of the progress of the KS3 Strategy but to share his perception of the strengths and weaknesses which have emerged so far.... [He dwelt] on the improved teaching and learning that has emphasised interactive teaching. He specifically mentioned the flexible use of a recommended lesson structure and the emphasis that the Key Stage 3 places on speaking and listening.

Other strengths gleaned from feedback around the country were the training materials for English and Literacy Across the Curriculum together with consultant support, all of which have been well received by schools.

The weaknesses... were centred around the time available for staff to implement the Strategy, workload issues and also the impact of staffing problems in schools. The Transition Units and the Literacy Progress Units have also not gone as smoothly as perhaps they could have done in raising students from level 3 to 4.

Future opportunities and plans include a continued focus on raising standards of writing, with additional materials becoming available in most areas. There will be a continued increase in the focus on oracy and drama supported by interactive teaching in classrooms. The aim is for teachers to engage in more discussion about the pedagogy of learning, as it emerges from frequent observations in their own and their feeder schools.

The most encouraging aspect... was the feeling that feedback from teachers had influenced some of the planning for future action. It seems that the philosophy of learning, underpinning all the strands of the Strategy, may well be why so many teachers are interested in adapting the ideas to suit their own situations. However, the pace for embedding change continues to be a concern, as does the need for teachers to be supported in consolidating their own learning.'

Moyra Beverton, NATE Assistant Secretary
NATE News (20), November 2002

b. Report from UKRA (RF)

UNITED KINGDOM READING ASSOCIATION Notice of conferences

International Conference

Children and their Texts Homerton College, University of Cambridge, 11th-13th July 2003
Details: Rosemary Chapman admin@ukra.org

National conference

28 February 10am - 4pm

Spoken English

Keynote speakers: Sue Homer, QCA, Ron Carter, University of Nottingham, Neil Mercer, Open University
Venue: Davidson Professional Centre, Croydon, Surrey
Details: Rosemary Chapman admin@ukra.org

National conference

28 March 9.30am - 4.15pm

Innovation and Inspiration: Creativity, Language and Literacy

Keynote speakers: Jonathan Bames, Canterbury Christ Church University College, Trevor Millum, NATE
Venue: Royal Victoria Hotel, Sheffield
Details: Rosemary Chapman admin@ukra.org

Regional Conference

March 8

Popular Culture

Speaker: Jackie Marsh
Venue: Edge Hill College of Further Education
Details: Sandra Farmer sandrandgeoffarmer@leylandliipr5.freemove.co.uk

Regional Conference

March 8

It's good to talk

Keynote speakers: Judith Graham, author 'Cracking Good Books' and Pat Ryan, storyteller
Venue: Canterbury Christchurch University College
Details: Carol Precious c.precious@cant.ac.uk

Regional Conference

March 22 9.30-12.30

Drama and Writing

Speaker: Helen Lowe, Richmond Consultant
Venue: Cricket Road Centre, Oxford
Details: Debbie Wright Debbie.Wright@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Regional Conference

27 March 5-6.30

Interactive Writing

Speaker: Pam Hulme, European Representative UKRA
Venue: Strathclyde University
Details: Sue Ellis Sue.Ellis@strath.ac.uk

Ros Fisher

United Kingdom Reading Association

19.02.03

d. Report from BAAL

BAAL Annual Meeting 4th-6th Sept 2003 at University of Leeds
The theme of this year is 'Applied Linguistics at the Interface. The keynote speakers will be Jim Cummins (University of Toronto), Casmir Rubagumya (University of Dar es Salaam) and Rosamund Mitchell (University of Southampton).

f. Report from LAGB

As part of its series of Linguistics at School sessions, the Education Committee of the LAGB is organising a session on .Community Languages at the forthcoming Spring meeting of the LAGB (Sheffield, 14th-16th April 2003). The guest speakers will be
Mahendra Verma (University of York)
Mike Reynolds (University of Sheffield and Sheffield Multilingual City Forum)
Arvind Bhatt (Crown Hill Community College, Leicester)
Further details are available at:
<http://www.phon.ucl.ac.uk/home/dick/ec/ecsessions.htm>

CLIE Meeting No. 73 Attachment 2

Agenda item 6:

Report by Dick Hudson on an information session at QCA on 18th Feb 2003

This was one of the regular twice-yearly meetings that the QCA English team arranges for all the professional associations that have an interest in the English curriculum, including the LAGB (which I represent) along with the Poetry Society, the Queen's English Society, the British Library, the BBC, Ofsted and others.

The English team were represented by Sue Horner (their senior member) and two others, Paul Wright and Roz Hicks. Sue gave an overview of their recent work, and especially their work on Dialogue (see below). There were also presentations from the English Speaking Union, Ofsted and the British Library.

The following news items struck me as interesting.

- QCA continues to be very heavily influenced by the idea of "Dialogue":
 - based on the work of Robin Alexander ("Culture and Pedagogy").
 - Alexander's work is based on a survey of teaching styles in five countries,
 - the favoured model is Russia - for instance they have a video of a Russian six-year old talking for two minutes (a very long time! UK pupils rarely speak for more than 30 seconds) about language!
 - QCA are preparing a book(let), with video, called "Teaching through Dialogue", which will be issued in the summer of 2003; they distributed an extract at the meeting.
 - Dialogue is a way of organising spoken interaction in classrooms, and is rather different from the dominant model in UK schools:
 - much longer contributions from pupils, with time for planning of talk where needed and extended interaction between the teacher and the same pupil,
 - much more challenge from teachers, and much less indiscriminate praise,
 - more active mental participation by the whole class, because any could be called upon to contribute,
 - more direct teaching of the language (grammar and vocabulary) needed to engage in this dialogue.
- The aim is to extend dialogue throughout the curriculum - not just in the English class.
- Meanwhile, QCA are exercised about the teaching and assessment of Speaking and Listening in the National Curriculum. They have a framework of target skills in four areas:
 - speaking
 - listening
 - group discussion
 - drama

However this work still seems to be under development.

- Peter Daw, who gave the Ofsted presentation, has responsibility for the inspection of English, and is very well disposed towards linguistics. The most relevant points that he reported were:
 - He recently did an in-depth study of Y9 boys in one school and found a strong correlation between skill at writing and conscious attention to vocabulary (also to voluntary reading).
 - The 2002 Ofsted report said that the standards of spoken language at entry were low in a significant number of schools, and in some of these schools they remain low throughout KS2. These weaknesses involve "vocabulary range, articulation, listening skills and confidence in speech".
 - The NLS has had a big impact on primary schools, including "improvements in the subject knowledge of teachers (particularly in the area of language structure)". "The most effective teachers have been able to integrate their grammatical knowledge into their teaching of both reading and writing, ... Where teaching is less effective it concentrates too much on the grammar or structure as something to be learned for its own sake ..." Later: "The match of sentence type to purpose and thought is omitted and complexity is praised for its own sake. ... In the worst cases teaching becomes too 'mechanistic' and grammatical knowledge is seen as a short cut to 'mature' writing, omitting the need both to engage deeply with the writing of others and to have something worthwhile and subtle to say. No such short cut exists."
 - At secondary level the National Strategy in English had only just been introduced in all schools, but "in most departments greater direct teaching of the structure of words, sentences and texts is already evident and teaching methods such as 'modelling' ... are being introduced far more widely." But "in many cases practice is in a state of transition". But "some schools continue to have difficulty in recruiting and training English teachers at all levels."
 - At A2 and AS, English language continues to grow in popularity.

- The British Library are working with Tim Shortis to provide "Texts in context" - texts for use at A-level.