

CDC Key Learning Area Committee on English Language Education 2001-2002
Minutes of the Second Meeting

Date: 21 January 2002

Time: 2.30 p.m.

Venue: Rm 1023B, 10/F, Wu Chung House, 213 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai, Hong Kong

Present: Mr. Stephen CHAN (Chairperson)
Ms CHAN Wai-ming (Vice-Chairperson)
Mrs Shirley DUTHIE
Mrs FUNG Sin Lai-wan
Mrs Christina LEE
Mrs Catherine LI
Mr KUAN Yuk-kin
Professor William LITTLEWOOD
Mr Lindsay MILLER
Dr. Angela MOK
Ms Truely SIU
Dr Gordon SLETHAUG
Mr Derek Rodney TOO
Mr Raymond NG (Secretary)

Apologies: Ms CHENG Woon-kai
Mr CHEUNG Man-biu
Ms MOK Fung-ye, Emily
Mr Simon THAM
Ms WAN Koon-Har

In attendance: Mr Kevin CHAN
Ms Hazel CHIU

Documents tabled:

- (1) Brief Evaluation Report on Seminar on Secondary English Curriculum Development and Leadership
- (2) New Senior Secondary Curriculum: Some Points to Consider
- (3) Simulation of New SCC Scenarios
- (4) English Language Education: the New Senior Secondary Curriculum
- (5) Important Dates and Proposed format for KLA curriculum guide (21 Jan 2002)
- (6) CDC Learning to Learn: English Language Education Consultation Document 2000

1 Confirmation of the Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 October 2001 were confirmed without amendment.

2 Matters Arising from the Minutes

2.1 The Secretary referred to paragraph 2.2 of the minutes of the last meeting and reported that the matter of subject name change from “English Literature” to “Literature in English” was discussed at the CDC Standing Committee on Curriculum Development (S4-7) meeting on 23 November 2001 and that the change was well-supported by members.

[Post meeting note: A circular memorandum was issued on 7 February 2002 to inform schools of the name change.]

2.2 The Secretary also referred to paragraph 7.2 regarding the series of 4 identical seminars on Secondary English Curriculum Development and Leadership. Both the Vice-Chairperson and the Secretary thanked Dr Angela Mok for being guest speaker for the first two seminars and Professor William Littlewood for being guest speaker for the last two seminars. The Vice-Chairperson further thanked members for their continued support and looked forward to future opportunities of co-operation.

2.3 The seminars were generally well-received and the participants (i.e. school principals, deputy principals and panel heads) were all very positive about supporting teachers in implementing the English Language curriculum.

2.4 The participants were largely receptive to the two suggested samples of report cards (Appendix 1) as well as the idea of including an attachment sheet (Appendix 1) showing students’ performance in terms of the learning targets/outcome under the three dimensions of interpersonal, knowledge and experience, if schools were inclined towards a more detailed reporting system.

2.5 The suggested report samples, the attachment sheet, and a compiled list of the participants’ comments and suggestions (Appendix 2) collected during the discussion sessions, would be forwarded to members. Members were asked to forward their views/suggestions, if any, regarding these documents to the Secretary.

3 Issues Related to the New Senior Secondary Curriculum

Members devoted much time to discussing the newly proposed senior secondary curriculum. The following is a summary of their discussion:

3.1 Should Literature in English be an independent “X”, i.e. an independent subject or elective, or should it be part of the English Language curriculum?

- Members were referred to Appendix 3 which outlined the focuses of Literature in English as an independent subject under the new 3-year senior secondary

curriculum. In content it remained more or less the same as the Literature in English subject under the existing 4-year senior secondary curriculum. The only difference was that a lesser number of prescribed literary texts would be included in the new curriculum. The major focuses of learning (i.e. study of literary texts; skills of literary comprehension and appreciation; literary competence development strategies; and attitudes) remained the same.

- Members of the CDC Committee on English Language Education were invited to consider whether Literature in English should be an independent “X”, i.e. an independent subject or elective. Their major views are as follows:
 - One member suggested that Literature in English should help promote reading in schools if it was incorporated in the English Language curriculum. However, others felt that reading could be better promoted through the use of language arts as recommended in the English Language curriculum. This was because Language Arts involved using literary texts to encourage reading and learners' creativity and free expression of personal responses, whereas Literature in English involved the critical study of literary texts, which most students were not ready for.
 - Whether Literature in English should be an independent subject ties in with the question whether a broad-based, generalist education or a more specialized one is encouraged. If it is the former, then Literature in English as an independent subject may not be necessary. If it is the latter, however, students who enter university may not have enough background knowledge in literature, if they have not taken Literature in English as an independent school subject.
 - As an independent subject, Literature in English offers a chance for students with high language proficiency and strong interest in language arts/literature to engage in the study of the subject; it would also help meet society's needs by nurturing a cohort of students who are highly proficient in English.
 - It is doubtful if most English Language teachers can adequately cope with the task of teaching Literature in English, if it becomes part of the English Language curriculum, whether as a required or optional module/component.
 - Literature in English is not a subject that all students are interested in and willing to pursue. The less able students, in particular, are likely to have great difficulty with it. It is better to keep Literature in English as a separate subject.

- Members were not worried if students opted for both Literature in English and Chinese Literature as electives. To them, such choices would not restrict their scope of learning but provide them with an opportunity of enhancing their proficiency in both English and Chinese. Members agreed that they would indeed feel pleased to see students good at both languages and added that very few students would actually opt for both Literature in English and Chinese Literature as electives.

3.2 Time allocation

- Two teacher members felt that the suggested time allocation of 6 periods per week for the subject of English Language was insufficient and it would be better to have 6-8 periods allocated for the subject. However, one member from the tertiary sector observed that flexibility had been built into the proposed senior curriculum structure, since schools could flexibly make use of the 25% of learning time for remedial or enrichment purposes to arrange for more English Language classes, if necessary.
- The following two kinds of views were expressed with regard to the proposal of allocating 25% of learning time for flexible use:
 - It is doubtful if schools will really assign the suggested 25% of learning time (10 periods) for remedial or enrichment purposes in the form of additional study/subjects within or across KLAs or of other learning activities such as community service, career related experiences and aesthetic/physical education activities. Quite possibly, some schools will allocate all the 25% of learning time to language subjects or they will assign 2 periods to each of the subjects of Chinese, English, Mathematics, P.E. and Art/Music. It may be necessary to specify more clearly how schools should allocate the 25% of learning time.
 - The present suggested arrangement allows schools to make flexible use of the 25% of learning time to cater for their students' needs, interests and abilities, and should therefore be retained.

3.3 Assessment

- Members assumed that the new senior secondary English Language examination would be pitched at the level between the present Sixth Form Use of English and CE English Language (Syllabus B) examinations.
- The question of whether portfolio work would be made part of the public English Language examination was discussed. Because of problems concerning moderation and standardization, Mrs Christina Lee observed that it would be easier to have portfolio work as school-based assessment rather than to make it part of the public examination.

- Concerning whether students' portfolio work (i.e. collection of evidence of students' achievements including school work and community services) would be made part of their university admission requirements, tertiary members thought that it was up to the universities to decide.
- Mrs Christina Lee reported that the Hong Kong Examinations Board had postponed implementation of the Core Competence Initiative from 2004 to 2006. The Core Competency Initiative would have to tie in with the Quality Criteria (QC) and Basic Competency (BC) descriptors for senior secondary level to be worked out collaboratively between the Curriculum Development Institute (CDI) and other key stakeholders including the Hong Kong Examinations Authority (HKEA). This would allow for a better interface between the curriculum and the Core Competency Initiative.

3.4 Proposed SSC Scenarios

The feasibility of the "Scenario" in offering three different subjects, one in each of the SS years, was questioned. This was because many factors would need to be carefully considered, notably its acceptance by universities.

3.5 Exit Point

- There was the worry that if there were two exit points (one at SS2 and one at SS3) within the new three-year senior secondary structure, an examination-based culture would be encouraged. If on the other hand there was only one exit point, there would be problems for students who intended to leave school for work after SS2.
- It was agreed that the exit point system be made as flexible as possible. The idea of having one exit point with different levels of performance was generally favoured, although its feasibility had to be worked out by various key stakeholders including CDI, HKEA and tertiary institutions.

3.6 The Senior Secondary English Language Curriculum: Proposed Versions 1 and 2

- The two proposed versions of the new senior secondary English Language curriculum (Appendix 3) were considered. In version 1, the content of learning will follow the same direction as that recommended for the existing S4-5 English Language and Sixth Form Use of English, and will be based on the review of these curricula. Version 2 consists of a compulsory part and an optional part. The compulsory part includes the learning of English Language at S4-S5 and English for Work and Study at S6. The optional part is offered on a modular basis at S6 and includes topics such as English for Academic Purposes (EAP), English for Professional Communication (EPC) and Language Arts (LA).
- Members had reservations about the optional modules, EAP and EPC, proposed for version 2 since they are too specialized and do not really cater for most students'

needs. The modules suggested by members to replace EAP and EPC included Grammar/The English Language System, Drama, Language and Fashion, and Language and Pop Culture. Modules which aim at strengthening students' mastery of basic language structures were favoured as they seemed more realistic and appropriate.

- Members were not entirely comfortable with version 2. They had concerns with regard to resources, logistics, the way to assess the optional modules and whether students would need to sit for them in the public examination. However, after considerable deliberation, they still generally preferred version 2 to version 1 because of:
 - its clear focus on linking the curriculum with society's needs, as suggested by the SS3 title "English for Work and Study"; and
 - the flexibility it offers to students in directing their own learning and to schools with different types of students in tailor-making their own curriculum.
- It was agreed that version 2 need to be more carefully considered before any recommendations could be made.

4 The CDC English Language Education KLA Curriculum Guide 2002

- 4.1 The Vice-Chairperson referred members to the tabled document, English Language Education Curriculum Guide: Important Dates. The first draft of the Guide has been scheduled for distribution to members on 18 February 2002 and discussed at the third CDC English Language Committee meeting tentatively scheduled for 27 February 2002. The document would undergo second and third drafting before it would be presented to the CDC Standing Committee on Curriculum Development for K – S3 on or around 12 April 2002 and distributed to CDC English Language Education Committee members for comment in early May.
- 4.2 The Vice-chairperson also referred members to the additional topics/sections to be included in the Guide, which were highlighted in bold in the tabled document, "Proposed Format for KLA Curriculum Guide". She added that exemplars at primary/secondary level would be provided in the areas of "Teaching/Learning of Grammar", "Reading to Learn", "IT in Language Learning", "Catering for Diversities in Learning", "Project Learning", "Assessment for Learning", and "Language Arts".
- 4.3 Members who have any comments/suggestions regarding the proposed content of the Guide were asked to forward them to the Secretary.

5 Any Other Business

- 5.1 Teacher Development Courses on Curriculum Leadership and the Implementation of the English Language Education Curriculum Framework

- The Secretary reported that the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Chinese University of Hong Kong, had been commissioned to run a course for Secondary English panel heads on curriculum leadership and the implementation of the English Language Education curriculum framework. The course consists of 8 identical 15-hour events, and will be launched between May and July 2002.
- The Secretary also reported that the Hong Kong Institute of Education had been commissioned to run the “In-service Teacher Development Course on Curriculum Leadership and the Implementation of the English Language Education Curriculum Framework at Primary Level”. This course is also made up of 8 identical 15-hour events, and will be launched between March and June 2002.

5.2 Membership for CDC Ad Hoc Committee on Assessment for Learning (Secondary) and CDC Ad Hoc Committee on Senior Secondary English Language Curriculum

It was reported that teacher members were still needed for the two new CDC Ad Hoc Committees to be established, i.e. one on Assessment for Learning (Secondary) and the other on Senior Secondary English Language Curriculum. In addition, the Ad Hoc Committee on Assessment for Learning (Secondary) would need to have a representative from the business sector so that the views from this sector of society could be heard. Members of the CDC English Language Education Committee were encouraged to submit membership nominations for either of these committees to the Secretary.

5.3 There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 5.30pm

Confirmed on _____

Mr Stephen CHAN
(Chairperson)

Mr Raymond NG
(Secretary)