

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

Date: 26 October 2001

Time: 2.30 p.m.

Venue: Rm 1419A, Wu Chung House, 213 Queen' s Road East, Wan Chai, Hong Kong

Present: Mr. Stephen Chan (Chairperson)
Ms Chan Wai-ming (Vice-Chairperson)
Mr Cheung Man-biu
Ms Shirley Chuang
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 Mok Fung-yee, Emily
Ms Truely Siu
Dr Gordon Slethaug
Mr Derek Rodney Too
Ms Wan Koon-har
Mr Raymond Ng (Secretary)

Apologies: Dr Angela Mok
Mr Chan Sai-ho
Mr Simon Tham

In attendance: Ms Cindy Chan
Mr Kevin Chan
Ms Chan Yuk-king
Ms Amy Shu

Documents tabled:

- (1) Minutes of the last meeting
- (2) CDC Learning to Learn: English Language Education Consultation Document 2000
- (3) Proposed format for KLA curriculum guide
- (4) Proposals for the New Senior Secondary English Curriculum

1 Election of Chairman

Mr Stephan Chan was re-elected as Chairman. He welcomed new members of the committee: Mrs Fung Sin Lai-wan, Mr Kuan Yuk-kin and Ms Wan Koon-har.

2 Confirmation of Minutes and Matters Arising

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 28 June 2001 were confirmed.

2.2 The change of name from “English Literature” to “Literature in English” (item 4 of the previous minutes) was referred to. It was noted that this issue would be brought forward to the CDC Standing Committee on Curriculum Development (S4-7) on 23 November 2001 for discussion.

3 CDC English Language Education KLA Curriculum Guide

The “Proposed Format for KLA Curriculum Guide”, a document tabled at the meeting, was discussed. The issues considered might be categorized into three areas:

3.1 Core Elements/Essential Content for Learning

In response to the question as to what core elements for learning in English Language Education meant, the Secretary explained that they included forms and functions, language skills, generic skills and language development strategies as well as values and attitudes, i.e. the learning objectives listed in the lower left box on p.28 of the CDC Learning to Learn: English Language Education Consultation Document 2000.

3.2 The Learning and Teaching of Grammar

3.2.1 Mr Cheung Man-biu expressed the concern that under the communicative approach, grammar was not systematically taught. He suggested that it might be better if students first learnt and developed a firm grasp of all the grammar basics (for example, the different parts of speech) so that they could apply them in different situations. He added that most of the textbooks only focused on one or two grammar points in relation to specific tasks/activities, and teachers had to do a lot of work in re-sequencing or re-organizing the grammar items to be taught throughout the term.

3.2.2 Most of the teacher members felt that it was important to teach grammar in context rather than in isolation. Mrs Christina Lee supported this view by suggesting that grammar was often tested in context rather than as discrete items. Ms Truely Siu also stressed that it would be difficult to decide on a specific sequence in which to teach the grammar items and structures, and that it was important for teachers to use the textbooks flexibly, emphasizing those grammar points they felt appropriate and supplementing other relevant language learning materials.

3.2.3 Professor Littlewood suggested that a balanced picture be given in the Curriculum Guide, making sure that the basics such as the teaching of grammar were not left out while the new focuses for language curriculum development as presented in the 2000 English Language Education Consultation Document were emphasized.

3.2.4 The Vice-Chairman remarked that the inclusion of one or two exemplars

illustrating how grammar could be effectively taught would be necessary in the Curriculum Guide.

3.3 Scope of the English Language Education Curriculum Guide

- 3.3.1 The point concerning the scope of the Guide was raised. Mr Cheung Man-biu asked if the Guide would be a condensed or expanded version of the English Language syllabuses for primary and secondary levels. It was explained that the Guide would likely be a concise document outlining the English Language Education curriculum framework and the future directions for curriculum development. However, there would be a section devoted to summarizing the state-of-play of the English Language Education curriculum framework and the various syllabuses, clarifying their relationships. The Vice-Chairman observed that the learning targets and objectives listed in the syllabuses could be appended to the Guide, but it would be infeasible to include everything into one single bulky volume. She further said that it might be necessary to put together a combined teaching and examination guide later on.
- 3.3.2 Mrs Christina Lee asked if the QC and BC would be included in the CDC English Language Education KLA Curriculum Guide when they were ready. The Vice-Chairman said that this issue would be considered and the views of colleagues in the Key Learning Areas of Chinese and Maths would be sought because they were also involved in the development of QC and BC.

4 **The New Senior Secondary English Language Curriculum**

- 4.1 In line with the recommendations of the Education Reform, a three-year senior secondary curriculum structure (S4-S6) was proposed to replace the current four-year structure (S4-S7).
- 4.2 The question was raised regarding whether the Extended Part of the proposed CE English Language Examination under the Core Competence Initiative would be further developed and used to assess students' proficiency level at SS3 (Senior Secondary Year 3).
- 4.3 In this connection, Mr Cheung Man-biu reported that the possibility of developing a proficiency test like the TOEFL had been discussed at a EC Working Group on the Review of the Academic Structure for Senior Secondary Education and Interface with Higher Education (WGRASIH) meeting. Such a test could be taken several times throughout the year, and university admission would be determined by the test scores or level that students attained.
- 4.4 In response, teacher members expressed serious concern over the possibility of introducing such a test. They feared that the pressure of both the teachers and students would unduly increase should it become the requirement for entering university. It was also observed that if such a test were to be adopted, it would give rise to the flourishing of tutorial schools.
- 4.5 The Chairman remarked that at present KS4 referred to S4 and S5 but under the new senior curriculum structure KS4 would also include S6. As a result, there would be the need to review the present English language syllabus for KS4 and see what should be included for the additional year.

- 4.6 It was agreed that a CDC Ad Hoc Committee on the Senior Secondary English Language Curriculum be set up to consider issues related to the new secondary curriculum structure. Mrs Christina Lee and Ms Truly Siu indicated interest in joining this committee. Other members were also asked to consider joining and/or submit nominations to the Secretary for membership.

5. Work Progress of CDC Ad Hoc Committee on English Language Education

5.1 CDC Ad Hoc Committee on English Language Education (P1-S3)

Ms Cindy Chan reported that the CDC Ad Hoc Committee on English Language Education (P1-S3) had completed its work and would therefore be dissolved. Members had contributed a number of ideas concerning the development of cross-curricular modules and ways of integrating language arts into the school junior secondary English programme. These ideas would be further explored in the seed projects conducted at primary and junior secondary levels respectively.

5.2 CDC Ad Hoc Committee on Assessment for Learning (Primary)

Reporting on behalf of Mrs Sheila Ip, Ms Cindy Chan noted that the CDC Ad Hoc Committee on Assessment for Learning (Primary) had finished drafting the proposed descriptions for Quality Criteria (QC) and Basic Competency (BC) (Tryout Version 1) at the end of KS1 and started work for KS2. To ensure their right progression into KS2, she maintained that revision work on the KS1 QC and BC might still be necessary.

5.3 CDC Ad Hoc Committee on English Language Education (S1-S7)

Ms Amy Shu reported that the second round of the Workshops on Task-based Language Teaching, Learning and Assessment (Part 1) would be conducted on 15-17 and 19 November 2001, and that the first and second rounds of the Workshops on Task-based Language Teaching, Learning and Assessment (Part 2) would take place on 21-24 November 2001 and in February 2002 respectively. The Part 1 Workshops focused on summative assessment and the Part 2 Workshops focused on formative assessment.

5.4 CDC Ad Hoc Committee on English Literature (S4-S7)

Mr Kevin Chan reported that the Resource Package on the Teaching of Poetry for KS3 had been completed and would be disseminated to schools in April 2002.

6 CDC Ad Hoc Committees on Assessment for Learning (Secondary)

It was agreed that a CDC Ad Hoc Committee on Assessment for Learning (Secondary) be set up to develop QC and BC at secondary level. It was suggested that one primary teacher member of the Ad Hoc Committee on Assessment for Learning (Primary) should serve on this committee to help ensure continuation and connection of the proposed descriptions for QC and BC at KS1/2 and those to be developed at secondary level. Members were asked to consider joining this committee and/or submit nominations to the Secretary for membership.

7 Any Other Business

7.1 Knowledge Fair on Assessment for Learning

The Vice-Chairman drew members' attention to the Knowledge Fair on Assessment for Learning to be held on 12 November 2001. The major purpose of the fair was to promote the culture of assessment for learning and to provide teachers with the opportunity to discuss and share ideas and experiences as to how to make effective use of the various types of formative assessment and how to provide appropriate feedback. The English Section had planned four presentations, one on primary assessment and three on secondary assessment. The Chairman, Mr Stephen Chan, would be doing one session on the promotion of language learning through assessment tasks. Members were encouraged to attend the Fair.

7.2 Seminar on Secondary English Curriculum Development and Leadership (for principals)

7.2.1 The Secretary reported that four identical seminars on Secondary English Language Curriculum Development and Leadership for principals had been scheduled for 14 Dec. 2001, and 5, 11 and 12 January 2002 respectively.

7.2.2 The seminars would be organized and run by district, catering for schools in Hong Kong, Kowloon, New Territories East and New Territories West.

7.2.3 Tentatively, there would be two parts to the programme. The first part focused on the English Language Education curriculum framework and directions for future development. The second part would be a discussion session in which the participants would examine the role of principals as curriculum leader by considering a collection of questions from teachers with regard to the implementation of the task-based approach to language learning.

7.2.4 Members were thanked for contributing samples of their school report cards, which helped a great deal in planning and developing some of the materials for use in the seminar.

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

A fifteen-hour course had been scheduled to run in May 2002 for Secondary English panel heads on curriculum leadership and the implementation of the English Language Education curriculum framework. A similar course had also been planned for Primary English panel heads and it would be run at around the same time.

7.4 There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 4.50pm.

Confirmed on _____

Mr Stephen CHAN
(Chairperson)

Mr Raymond NG
(Secretary)

