

Minutes of the Language in the School Curriculum (LiSC) Committee

January 11, 2007

Meeting held on January 6, 2007 – Anaheim

Kristin Denham, chair

Chair 2006 – Kristin Denham (kristin.denham@wwu.edu)

Co-chairs 2007 – Fred Field (fredric.field@csun.edu) and Tami Kaplan (tkaplan@mit.edu)

Present at the meeting:

1. Brief introductions by all in attendance: Kristin Denham, Catherine Rudin, Tom Payne, Jeff Reaser, Mary Buzan, Benjamin Tucker, Mark Aronoff, Fred Field, Sharon Klein, Michal Martinez, Ray Jackendoff, Donna Christian
2. Review of 2006 LiSC activities, led by Kristin Denham
 - a) **Organized session** at 2007 LSA meeting with invited NCTE members called “Continuing to Build Linguistic Knowledge for Teachers: Collaborating with NCTE’s Commission on Language.” Presenters were Laurie Katz, Dolores Straker, and Jerrie Cobb Scott.
 - b) **Invited LSA panel at National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)** annual convention. John Boyle, Fred Field, and Jeffrey Reaser presented in a session called “Multiple Voices in the Classroom: Attending to them, learning from them, and the threat of silencing them.”
 - c) Ray Jackendoff reported on the two-day **workshop on linguistics in education** held in July 2006 at Tufts, hosted jointly by the Center for Cognitive Studies (directed by Ray Jackendoff) and the Center for Reading and Language Research (directed by Maryanne Wolf). The aim was to identify important language knowledge and develop modules or courses to help teach this material and provide teachers with materials by which they can incorporate knowledge about language into their classrooms. It is hoped that by this June, Tufts will be ready to host a 2-day workshop for (mostly local, Boston-area) teachers. The preliminary content of the course is as follows:
 - i. Sociolinguistic understanding of language prejudice (and teacher prejudice) but that you cannot confront ideologies directly. Teachers must be led to this discovery.
 - ii. Systematic nature of dialects and language and the notion of errors.
 - iii. Tools for looking at grammar. (Jeffrey Reaser suggested that it’s important to actually examine what is and is not grammar.)
 - iv. Phonetic decoding for reading with a link to semantics to help students read for content.
 - v. A module for teachers to provide feedback about how the course will/has affected their teaching.It is also hoped that peer-led discussion and discovery learning will be the main form of information dissemination. It was suggested that the group carefully consider the language knowledge suggestions put forth by the NCATE/NCTE program standards for initial teacher preparation. Further, it is suggested that the group attempt to tie their workshop to ways to help with increasing standardized testing scores and accountability metrics. Organizers and participants include Ray Jackendoff, Maryanne Wolf, Anne Charity, Rebecca Wheeler, Kristin Denham, and Anne Lobeck. If successful, the program would be expanded.
 - d) The committee has talked for several years about the usefulness of having a list of **state**

standards and benchmarks for teachers and students that relate to linguistics. Johanna Rubba (jrubba@calpoly.edu), Mary Buzan (buzanm@mcmurryadm.mcm.edu), and Julie Sweetland (unwieldymomentum@gmail.com) have all compiled various lists of standards for students and teachers. The 2006 LiSC report contains links to these and Johanna Rubba has a document that she will share with LiSC.

- e) Some LiSC members and affiliates (Tami Kaplan, Sharon Klein, Carol Lord, Maya Honda, and John Boyle) began discussion of a **position paper** on both what teachers and students need to know about language. We have discussed using the K-12 standards for Language Arts for both teachers and for students as a starting point for the position paper, as well as using existing research by the Center for Applied Linguistics, Wayne O'Neil's "Linguistics is for Everyone", among other work. The direction of this project has changed slightly. (See Plans and Goals for 2007.)

- f) Tom Payne attended an **NSF-funded workshop** in Pittsburgh on Sept. 17 in order to plan a Linguistics Olympiad contest for high school students. Tom is now the general Co-Chair, along with Lori Levin of Carnegie Melon University, of the newly organized **North American Computational Linguistics Olympiad (NAMCLO)**, which will be held in Boston, Philadelphia, and Pittsburgh this year and may expand after that. The Olympiad is based on the Russian model, begun in 1965, which now includes over 800 high school students each year in Moscow and St. Petersburg. The Russian program is credited with introducing many prominent Russian linguists, including Sasha Aikhenvald and Vera Podlesskaya to the field. Students compete by solving a series of linguistic problems in languages they have never learned. The University of Oregon (where Tom Payne is) hosted Linguistics Olympics from 1998-2000. LiSC provided \$500 to help revitalize this program at the website at the U of O. It was suggested that the group also consider investigating the Academic Decathlon, which could allow the insertion of linguistics information into an already established, national framework. Tom Payne agreed to look into this. The website for NAMCLO can now be accessed via LinguistList or www.namclo.org.

3. Plans and Goals for 2007

- a) Continue to connect with NCTE. If invited to present at the NCTE convention, be sure to respond to that invitation by helping to organize a panel.
- b) Consider whether to propose another organized session for next year's LSA meeting. The committee has done this for the past three years.
- c) Encourage LiSC members and affiliates to submit regular session papers. If enough papers are submitted, we can begin to have Linguistics in Education as regular sessions.
- d) Continue the standards and benchmarks projects in a different form. It was suggested that LiSC endorse the NCATE/NCTE program guidelines for the initial preparation of teachers—possibly offering commentary on our understanding of the guidelines. LiSC might produce a document formally acknowledging our connections and support of other organizations, including NCTE (and its affiliates: NCATE, ATEG, IRA), the Center for

Applied Linguistics, and others. This sort of document, which could be posted on the LSA website and then linked back to the related sites, might be the focus of this year's committee. Another idea was to produce an annotated bibliography of work on linguistics and reading, education about language, writing, and ESL. However, it was brought up that similar committee projects—the old compendium and a white paper—began several years ago were never actually that useful to “outsiders.”

- e) Investigate the Academic Decathlon.

Notes from the chair:

Continue to maintain an email communication list of not only LiSC members, but also “affiliates.” This aided greatly with sharing information, as well as finding interested LSA members to participate in the organized sessions and on the committee's projects. (For example, most people working on the position paper and the standards' collection projects are not current LiSC members.)

Post information about LiSC activities on the LSA website.