

## PROPOSAL FOR THE ESL REFERENCE GROUP

The TESL profession would argue that it is premature for the English FOSC to shift the responsibility for ESL students' needs in the VCE from VCAB or the FOSC to individual English FOSC members with a particular interest in ESL to organise.

We acknowledge the achievements that have been made to date, but we have yet to see whether these arrangements are sufficient to cater for the needs of the whole range of ESL students in the VCE and provide for just treatment of them.

The 1990 trial of English Units 3 and 4 involved too small and unrepresentative a sample of the ESL population to give any conclusive results.

There has been no monitoring of ESL students across the whole VCE nor documentation of their access to and success in it.

VCAB needs to take responsibility for taking account of ESL students and their results in the VCE across the board.

As far as ESL students are concerned, VCAB has not yet put the runs on the board. The English FOSC should need no reminder of the problems with the downgrading of ESL students' CAT results in 1990 and the subsequent partial upgrading after intensive pressure was applied. Even after hearing Brian Foster's explanation and reassurances, the FOSC remained uneasy about future prospects for justice for ESL students.

As for ESL people being in key positions in the implementation and development of the English study, a number of these people feel isolated and in a difficult position of being in a minority in the various VCAB settings in which we work. We feel the need to meet regularly for input, discussion and feedback with ESL colleagues.

The current ESL Reference Group may well be the only such body within VCAB with a responsibility for a "minority", but some 30% of the secondary college population is of non-English speaking background and the number of ESL candidates in Units 3 and 4 this year is greater than VCAB anticipated. It might well be argued in addition that VCAB should take more responsibility through Reference Groups for other groups in the cohort as well.

### **Recommendations**

1. that VCAB maintain the ESL Reference Group so that account is taken of ESL concerns;
2. that the ESL Reference Group's reference be extended to the whole VCE and all its studies;
3. that there be an additional member of the English FOSC with particular responsibility for ESL;
4. that ESL students' performance across the whole VCE be monitored and analysed in 1991-92 and thereafter.

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