

From the Editor

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If you talk to an IALLT member at any length about our organization, one of the words you will no doubt hear very quickly is “community”, a quality that transcends our varying perspectives and professional responsibilities. It’s such an important and salient characteristic of our group that we’ve even included it in our mission statement: “[Our] sense of community promotes the sharing of expertise in a variety of educational contexts.” Many of us feel that this is what distinguishes us from other professional groups in which we participate. From LLTI to the regional and biennial IALLT conferences, we relish the opportunities to share ideas, lend a helping hand, and offer moral support. Along the way we establish valuable professional connections, and in many instances, long-lasting friendships.

In the last few months, I’ve been thinking a lot about what we can do at the Journal to reflect this sense of community and the expertise of the IALLT membership more consistently in our pages. The medium represents a particular challenge. When we’re working with people face-to-face, as we do in our labs and in the classroom, it’s easy to organize brown bag lunches, focus groups, workshops and informal activities to bring together the faculty and students we work with. Many of us participate in on-line groups such as LLTI or in virtual spaces that sustain interaction outside the classroom. And when we attend an IALLT conference, the sense of community is palpable. The wealth of good ideas and creativity demonstrated in the sessions inspires even the veterans among us.

While I leave the conferences feeling a new motivation for my professional work, I also come away with the feeling that the Journal has not yet managed to represent the diversity of knowledge and experience in evidence at our meetings. Part of this is due to the lack of emphasis on writing in our professional culture. Most of us are not in positions that require us to publish on a regular basis. And –let’s be honest– many of us wear so

many hats that it's a challenge to carve out the time needed to write up the work we are doing.

In spite of the obstacles, however, we as a community need to find new ways to bring our collective expertise to the printed page. This is important for two reasons: it will help sustain the energy we experience at our conferences, and it will increase our visibility in the larger academic community, which –for better or for worse– does place a high value on publication. In doing so, we will help contribute to IALLT's efforts to educate our academic colleagues about the professional nature of our work. So put those fingers to the keyboard (or for those advanced types – talk to that computer voice recognition system!) and let us know about the work you're doing! Write it down, send it in, and let it be known! Your friendly Journal editors are available to assist and advise you. So if you have an idea, don't be shy – contact us today!♦