

From the President -Elect

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It is an honor to serve as your President Elect and I would like to thank the IALLT membership for electing me. The passing of Ursula Williams saddened us all and she will be in my thoughts frequently in the coming years.

I was asked to present to you my hope for IALLT and my vision for the field and I will attempt to do this in a few words. IALLT has played an important role in the changes that have taken place in language learning and with the rapid growth of technology, this role has grown exponentially. In the past, choices as to which technology to use were more limited, but today the vast array of possibilities can be inspiring yet overwhelming at the same time. Educational institutions are not known to adopt changes easily and yet our responsibility to our field is to keep abreast of new technologies and try to implement them. How can IALLT help us and what are our responsibilities?

Through regional meetings, biennial conferences, the Journal, and LLTI, we are able to share and disseminate information which is crucial if we wish to grow. Learning about new products, research, applications, and evaluations is essential in order to decide in which direction to go in the future. The expertise of so many of us, scattered throughout continents, is a valuable source of learning. Language learning has significantly evolved over the years and our field has contributed to a great extent. Speed, ease of access, geographic expansion, and adaptability of today's technologies have opened our classrooms and language laboratories to the world. Students are no longer limited to communication with their teachers and classmates. The world is their learning laboratory. Teachers are no longer sole assessors of students language skills, rather the world is. Some will argue that language learning has not changed much, but I will argue to the contrary. Students can now more easily reach out to local communities, people in distant countries, and publish their thoughts and ideas for the

world via speaking or writing on the Internet. Students' sense of purpose and responsibility can now take a new dimension. They can reach out but also take in the rest of the world.

One of our most important roles in this is to be facilitators and to provide the best possible tools with which students are able to accomplish what is needed for learning to take place. We can be facilitators of technology use for teachers, but we also need to play that same role for students. Our role is no longer to just support the learning in the classrooms but also to provide a rich learning environment outside of the classroom. Once this environment is in place, it is important to be able to assess its quality and success. This assessment needs to be done using measurable criteria to enhance our credibility within and outside our field.

In order to ensure that we are providing the best quality language learning environment, it is important that we also provide the best technical expertise possible. We are in a difficult field since technology changes almost on a monthly basis and it is very hard to keep up with this fast pace. But it is our responsibility to know and understand the new technology in order to better select programs and applications. Without the proper knowledge of technical expertise costly mistakes can be made. The more we can share what we know the more we will all benefit from it.

Last week, I was fortunate to be able to hear Rudolph Giuliani, former mayor of New York, speak and was impressed by the advice he gave for good leadership. Amongst the list, I noted the following as being relevant to our field: optimism, relentless preparation, team work, and communication. I would like to end by saying we can all be leaders in our field by applying these qualities to our research, implementation, and teaching. ♦