IALLT in Print: A Forty Year Retrospective

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The year 2006 marks the formal end of the printed version of The *IALLT Journal*. For many of us in the organization, we have seen this coming, and at this point we can but remember with fondness the several incarnations of the journal that came to us over the years.

The Beginnings

IALLT itself was founded in 1965 as NALLD, The National Association of Language Lab Directors. In fact, my predecessor at Wisconsin, Thomas R. Goldsworthy, was one its founding members, and put together its first newsletter in February 1966. Little did this humble, seven page, mimeographed piece suggest the good things that lay ahead for the organization.

In 1966 NALLD membership dues were $3.00, and vacant lab director positions were being advertised for $7,000 to $9,000.

The first issue included this tip for keeping tape reels in order on the shelf: "First, arrange them in order, with reel number one on the left. The draw a diagonal line across the face/edge of the tape boxes..." The idea was that it would clear as to where a tape box should be place when reshelving.

The Newsletter quickly evolved into a folded, center-stapled publication by the end of 1967 (Volume II). Tom Goldsworthy was now the official Editor of the Newsletter, and the mechanism for electing officers was in place, with Louis J. Chatagnier from Emory University as the NALLD President. In his president's message, Mr. Chatagnier states:

"It is our duty to translate the mechanics that science and technology produce into humanly valid terms for academicians to be able to absorb."

Clearly the organization was intended to act as interface between technology and education. On the one hand they saw they need to encourage the use of technology for language learning, but they also recognized the importance of serving as a buffer between commercial interests and the needs of language professionals.

The NALLD Journal

With Volume IV, Number 1 (October 1969), the newsletter officially became the *NALLD Journal*, a 96-page publication with glued binding. The professional look and content of the journal had made a great forward stride.

In that issue we find that dues were doubled! To $6.00 per year. We also find a wonderful article by Pierre Capretz (who would later become NALLD President) entitled "The Language Lab: A Relic of the Past or the Solution to the Future?" From page 32:

"[The Smith Report on Language Lab Effectiveness]... does not prove that the language lab cannot be used effectively, but simply that in a sizeable sector of the nation's schools...it is not used effectively in the great majority of cases throughout the country.

"And that is disturbing indeed. What is even more disturbing is that this sad fact is known by more and more misinformed people who will draw from it the erroneous conclusion that the language lab is no good in itself and should be relegated among the various foolish and catastrophic experiments of the past."

The article then explores what it requires to take advantage of the language lab, a theme we see in articles throughout the history of the journal, including more recent articles on other technologies used for language learning.

In the 1970s the *NALLD Journal* reflected, as it has over its entire life, the volunteer nature of the organization it represented. Depending on the current editor or organization leadership, the journal fluctuated from four relatively full publications per year, to much leaner, and less frequent editions. For example, beginning with Volume X, Number 2, the 46-page issue returned to the stapled binding, and Numbers 3 and 4 were combined into one issue. We have had many wonderful, dedicated, and talented editors over the years, but maintaining a consistent publication schedule with unpaid volunteers has been difficult, at best.

NALLD Evolves

Many changes to our organization have taken place over the years, some substantive and others more subtle. We have little record of these changes beyond what appears in the journals. Even then, often we have to infer by what we see because nothing explicit is recorded.

Although the organization's familiar concentric circle logo appeared inside the journal beginning in October 1969, it didn't appear on the front cover until Volume XI, Number 1 (1976). I found no mention of the provenance of the logo, although over the years I have heard various stories. The most prevalent seems to be that it represents tape loops and reels. As a side note, I know that discussions have been raised periodically about changing the logo. After many fruitless hours of debate, each time the organization officers have chosen

to stay with the recognizable, if not particularly well understood, symbol of the organization.

In IX, Number 2, it appears that the official name of the organization was changed to the National Association of Learning Laboratory Directors. As the nature and use of labs has evolved so has our attempt to include as many as we can in the organization. For a number of years we downplayed the foreign language aspect of our official titles, although our foreign language roots have always been present in our activities and in our journal articles.

Following our efforts to collaborate with our Japanese colleagues in FLEAT I (1981, Foreign Language Education And Technology conference in Tokyo, Japan), the officers decided to portray an expanded view of our organization by becoming the International Association for Learning Laboratories (international audience, and not just directors but anyone associated with learning labs). Nevertheless the name of the journal remained the same (*The NALLD Journal*).

Once again, reflecting the up and down, voluntary nature of the organization's leadership, and the departure of editor Dale Lally, the NALLD Journal published its last volume in Spring/Summer 1985 (Vol. 19, Number 3-4) following one year under the acting editorship of Jackie Tanner. IALL was now without a publication, although communication with members continued with a periodic newsletter.

The JETT Period

In 1986 Suzanne Lindenau from the University of Georgia stepped forward and volunteered to start up a new journal. Out of desperation the board accepted her offer, although she wanted to take the journal in a quite different direction. Backed by substantial resources from her institution, Suzanne organized and published The Journal of Educational Techniques and Technologies (J.E.T.T.). No one was particularly thrilled with the title, but Suzanne insisted and lacking any alternatives, that became the journal's title for the next three years. With Volume 20, the size of the journal also changed from the 6" x 9" format we had seen for years, to a larger 8.5" x 11" format, with glossy and color-rich covers.

This period in the organization and in the journal reflected in many ways the sea change that was beginning to occur in instructional technology generally, and in computer technologies specifically. Many language labs had deteriorated into non-use and some had disappeared altogether. Computers brought new (but familiar) promises for a teaching/learning revolution and lab directors found themselves trying to find their identity and to scramble to preserve their jobs. It's no wonder, then, that the organization struggled in the mid-1980s, and this struggle was reflected in the J.E.T.T. Journal which didn't always seem to represent IALL members.

Fortunately, IALL saw new life and a resurgence of direction and purpose as a new presidency (Sue Otto, Iowa) took over in 1989 and the "modern" era of IALL conferences began at M.I.T., hosted by Ruth Trometer.

The IALL(T) Journal

Frustrated by a lack of communication between the J.E.T.T. Journal and the organization it was supposed to represent, the board decided to cease publication of J.E.T.T. and to start over with a completely new IALL Journal.

Beginning in 1990 with Volume 23, a new editorial board, working closely with the IALL board, reintroduced *The IALL Journal of Language Learning Technologies*, more commonly referred to simply as *The IALL Journal*. The journal sported a new format (7" x 10" with glued binding) and a general content structure and organization that would continue for the next 16 years, through Volume 38.

No one can say that the new journal was any more "regular" than it was before, but it did provide much of the kind of timely content that IALL members desired. Articles also reflected changes in technology, and the evolving nature of language learning and technology. Legal issues such as copyright and intellectual property rights have found place alongside articles on digital versus analog technologies. Tips and guidance on management issues appeared next to articles on lab design issues. With the beginning of the LLTI listserv, ad hoc contributions, comments, questions and answers from IALL(T) members also appeared in each issue.

Finally, because of the organization's incorporation, and the need to change its moniker from IALL to IALLT, in 2002 the journal also changed to *The IALLT Journal of Language Learning Technologies*.

It is interesting to scan the titles of journal articles over the years, and to discover that the more things change, the more they seem the same! Remember those articles in the early issues of the journal wondering what would be the fate of the language lab? In the last print issue of the journal, we find this quote from "The Future of Language Learning Centers" by Anton Brinckwirth from Virginia Commonwealth University:

"Ubiquitous computing and the Internet continue to change the landscape of education at an unprecedented rate. With the advent of high bandwidth networks, E-learning, and new media, many language labs have been transformed into full-service language learning centers, integrating new technologies far beyond the traditional language lab construct. Technology has always been an important intervention in foreign language educations because it facilitates communication on so many levels. Because of this, language labs will continue to evolve with technology and play a key role in language learning."

*The
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Learning
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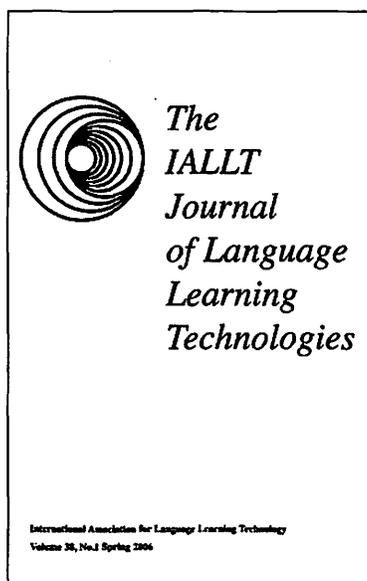
New Directions

As stated earlier, we have seen the change from a print to an electronic journal coming for some time. Years ago we began to recognize how difficult it is to talk in print about things we needed to show electronically. For example, most of our IALLT sessions are presentations that include multimedia elements, and convincing presenters to rework their presentation to fit a print format has been extremely difficult. Now we can post presentations electronically, thus preserving the intent and impact of the presentations, and getting more and timelier contributions. Coincidentally we can also reduce the costs of printing itself and use the savings to focus on other IALLT activities.

We owe a great debt of gratitude to the many dedicated members of the organization who over the years have made the journal what it has been. It is an honor to be a colleague. And I, with you, offer my most sincere best wishes as the journal moves into the next phase of providing support for language technology professionals all over the world.

Read Gilgen is former editor (1989-1992) and acting editor (1995) of The IALL Journal, and also former President of IALLT (1999-2001). He has in his possession, perhaps, one of the only complete collections of the journal from its inception in 1966 to the present.

Former Journal Editors

Name	Journal Name	Years
Tom Goldsworthy Univ Wisconsin	The NALLD Newsletter	1966–1969
Charles P Richardson Ohio University	The NALLD Journal	1970–1979
Dale Lally Univ of Louisville	The NALLD Journal	1980–1983
Jackie Tanner (Acting) Georgetown Univ	The NALLD Journal	1984–1985
Vacant	No journal	1986
Suzanne Lindenau Univ of Georgia	Journal of Educational Techniques and Technologies (J.E.T.T.)	1987–1989
Read Gilgen Univ of Wisconsin	The IALL Journal of Language Learning Technologies	1990–1992
Marie Sheppard Univ of Colorado	The IALL Journal of Language Learning Technologies	1993–1995
Read Gilgen (Acting) Univ of Wisconsin	The IALL Journal of Language Learning Technologies	1995
Pete Smith Univ of Texas Arlington	The IALL Journal of Language Learning Technologies	1995–1998
Jan Marston Southern Methodist Univ	The IALL Journal of Language Learning Technologies	1999–2000
Samantha Earp Duke Univ	The IALL Journal of Language Learning Technologies	2001–2002
Andrew Ross Brown Univ	The IALLT Journal of Language Learning Technologies	2003-2006

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