CONFERENCE REPORTS

[Editor's Note: This column will provide summaries of major conferences that might be of interest to IALL members. Highlights of some of the more interesting speakers and/or presentations, perspectives on trends in hardware, software, or professional directions, and overall impressions of the conference will help those of us who can't attend learn from those who do. If you are planning to attend such a conference, plan also to take notes and to prepare a brief summary for this column. We intend to appoint an editor for this column as well. If you are interested, please contact me.]

AECT Annual Conference

by Connie Bakker, University of Wisconsin-Madison

The theme for conference planning in the '90's will be the coming new century. AECT's first convention of the decade, held in Anaheim January 30 - February 3, was no exception as it proclaimed "Preparing for 2001: Learners in a Global Society." Thousands of educators involved in media gathered for five days of sessions, exhibits and social activities. The convention opened with futurist Christopher Dede, who shared his vision for an increasingly intelligent computer-driven media that would transform education. Most attendees had no trouble joining in on opinionated discussions generated by Chris Whittle, founder of "Channel One" news program, and his plan to broadcast news specifically for teens - with commercials. Friday's general session featured a fascinating presentation and demonstration of Cyberspace, an interactive system that actually allows the user to enter the computer environment by using special goggles and gloves to "walk through" the images shown on the screen. Developed by NASA, this process is being adapted for educational use.

In between general sessions, convention goers were faced with a seemingly endless number of sessions on a variety of issues and techniques in media use today. If at any time one could not find a session of interest, then the mammoth exhibit floor could occupy hours of one's time. Dazzling displays of video equipment seemed to abound, while those with especially keen eyesight gathered to watch the annual "shoot out" as video products went head-to-head in demonstrations.

This was my second AECT convention and I immediately noticed one major difference. Last year, one of my tasks was to search for an on-line system for reserving our audio visual equipment. The pickings were slim and I returned with little to share. This year, that had all changed. At least half a dozen vendors were displaying systems for booking media, equipment, rooms, and even people. Most allowed for inter-related files so entering the information one place put the information in all files and then, if needed, warned of conflicts. The most expensive models even allowed for the direct transfer of files from existing circulation systems. Similarly, session after session offered the perspective of those who had developed in-house reservation systems.

On the social side of things, over 50 receptions and social events, including the traditional ECT Foundation Fundraiser and the traditional "Rap-up" ball, offered innumerable opportunities to meet colleagues. Add California's balmy weather and, as a Midwesterner, I had the perfect combination for a action-packed, thought-provoking, and fun-filled winter break. For those interested, next year it's on to Orlando where "Go for the Magic" will draw enthusiastic participants to another AECT convention.

SYSTEM

An International Journal of Educational Technology and Applied Linguistics

Editor: NORMAN F DAVIES, *Department of Language and Literature, University of Linköping, Sweden*

This international journal is devoted to the applications of educational technology and applied linguistics to problems of foreign language teaching and learning. Attention is paid to all languages and to problems associated with the study and teaching of English as a second or foreign language. The journal serves as a vehicle of expression for colleagues in developing countries.
System prefers its contributors to provide articles with both a sound theoretical base and a visible practical application which can be generalized. The review section may take up works of a more theoretical nature to broaden the background.

A Selection of Papers
C SHERRARD (UK), Teaching students to summarize: applying textlinguistics.
P KING (UK), The uncommon core. Some discourse features of student writing
F SALAGER-MEYER, G DEFIVES, C JENSEN & M De FILIPIS (Venezuela), Principal component analysis and medical English discourse: an investigation into genre analysis.
R R NYNS (Belgium), Is intelligent computer-assisted language learning possible?
T M SCOTT Y S JOLLY & N O'BRIEN (UK), Interactive videodisc in computer-assisted language learning: a communicative project.
A HIRVELA (Hong Kong), The case against CAI: a reply to John Higgins.
J HIGGINS (UK), A reply to Alan Hirvela's reply.
O FAIRFAX & M GREEN (UK), Introspection, language learning and curriculum development.
R V WHITE (UK), Curriculum studies and ELT.
T WOODWARD (UK), Styles of EFL teacher trainer input.

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