

TAKING THE BYTE OUT OF THE BIT: A FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHER'S GUIDE TO NEW TECHNOLOGY

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In an effort to eliminate the bite often encountered while working with technology in language teaching, Washington and Lee University's (W&L) Language Laboratory played host to approximately fifty individuals from around the country at a hands-on conference entitled "TAKING THE BYTE OUT OF THE BIT: A Foreign Language Teacher's Guide to New Technology" under the direction of Paul R. (Dick) Kuettner, Language Laboratory Director. The conference was sponsored entirely by the PEW Charitable Trusts, whose funding has paid for the majority of W&L's foreign language laboratory and foreign language classroom equipment purchases in the last five years, as well as for faculty research in the areas of computer and video technology during the same period.

While "cutsie" in title, the contents of the four-day conference were far from such, as participants came to do some serious learning and sharing in computer and video

technology. Conference attenders had the opportunity to participate in twenty-four presentations of thirty minutes each and in fourteen, ninety-minute workshops.

The conference opened with an informal buffet breakfast, followed by the opening ceremonies that included a relaxed and informative address from keynote speaker, Pegge Abrams, Director of the Language Laboratories at Duke University.

Major topics for the four day conference included: Grant Acquisition and Use, Language Laboratory Facility Utilization, Computer Technology, Computer Technology Used for Audio and Video Interactively, and Strategies Imperative for Meaningful Employment of Film and Video.

A sampling of specific presentations (apologies to those who are not listed): "Acquiring Major Grant Funding" (Anne Farrar, W&L), "Murder and Mayhem—Using the Lab Communicatively" (LeeAnn Stone, UCI), "Designing the 'Almost' Perfect Computer Exercise" (Gwyn Campbell, Harold Hill, W&L), "Using the Computer for Extra Credit" (Lisa Cornick, ODU), "Videodisc 101: An Introduction" (Kathy James), "New Developments in Interactive Technology" (Katie Sprang, College of Charleston), "Ideas for Using SCOLA in the German Classroom" (Robert Youngblood, W&L), "Making Television Commercials:

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Video Project for the Language Classroom" (David Phillips, Guilford College), and "Historical Perspectives: Avoiding Past Mistakes in Implementing Technological Innovations" (Robert Quinn, Millsaps College).

As the list of topics for presentations and workshops was varied, so was the level and range of expertise of those who attended. A partial list of participants indicates the wealth of experience made available to those attending: Pegge Abrams, Duke University; Frank Borchardt, Executive Director of CALICO (Computer Assisted Language Learning and Instruction Consortium) and Director of the Humanities Computing Center at Duke University; Lee Ann Stone, President of IALL (International Association of Learning Labs) and Director of the Language Learning Resource Center at the University of California Irvine; A. Allen Rowe, president of ILIAD (Interactive Language Instruction and Development) and Former Director of the Language Technology Center at the Monterey Institute of International Studies of the Defense Language Institute; Katie Sprang, Language Laboratory Director at the College of Charleston in South Carolina; Kathleen James, independent researcher in language laboratory methodologies and technological applications for language learning; Walter Tuman, Director of the Russian Program at the American Graduate School of International Management; Robert Quinn, Chairman, Department

of Modern Languages, Millsaps College in Jackson, Mississippi; Gary Smith, Associate Professor of German at the College of William and Mary and Krystyna Wachowicz, Training Specialist in the School of Russian Studies at the Defense Language Institute. Other presenters, including several members of the W&L rounded out the slate of those making presentations or leading workshops.

As a "surprise" highlight to the conference, Dick Kuettner and John Ittelson (Chico State) coordinated a special live and interactive satellite teleconference with the Media Tech Services Department of California State University, Chico, which provided W&L with the necessary uplink to receive Allen Rowe's presentation "Making High Tech High Touch."

The conference met its goals of participants sharing and learning from one another through active participation. Virtually every workshop was a hands-on experience whether developing foreign language exercises with PLANIT on the mainframe, or creating interactive programs with Macintosh computers and videodisc players, or using one of 30 DOS machines to author programs using CALIS. Participants lived, ate, discussed, and learned together from dawn to midnight for four days. Our only regret was that it was not possible for many more to share the experience.