CONFERENCE REPORT

CONFERENCE REPORT: AECT 1992

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The convention of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT) took place in Washington, D.C., February 5-9. It was held in conjunction with InfoComm, the largest media technology exposition in the U.S. 16,000 people came to see the more than 350 exhibits and attend the 300 sessions. I will limit this review to some of the major areas of discussion. Readers interested in more information can consult AECT's magazine *Tech Trends* (vol. 37, no. 3) for a more complete report on the conference.

Of special note was the first general session on Wednesday in which Carlos Fuentes gave the first public preview of *The Buried Mirror* television series. This is a Columbus Quincentenary project which explores Latin America history from pre-Columbian times to the present. It is a five-part series that was featured on the Discovery Channel this April and is available for purchase in English or Spanish. On Thursday there was a two-hour presidential session in which a panel of educators discussed how *The Buried Mirror* could be used for multi-cultural education. Multimedia formats of the series were also demonstrated at this session.

Other major sessions (held in ballrooms or auditoriums) were devoted to the role of technology in school reform and state initiatives in that regard, hypermedia and multimedia design, distance learning via satellite television, and federal and industrial training. There were concurrent sessions (three or four related presentations given in rooms holding 100-150 people) on ethics and values for instructional technologists, PBS education initiatives, international technology transfer, higher education media centers, campus-wide media network planning, faculty development, and hypermedia for educational change. Small roundtable sessions are housed in an area called the Showcase of Achievement. The topics of these sessions generally mirrored those of the larger sessions, but tended to be more interactive and hands-on. I attended one which was a demonstration of a hypercard stack that teaches Chinese characters.

IALL sponsored two sessions. Kathleen James described a language immersion program she helped set up using a customized network of Macintosh computers. The other session featured Trisha Dvorak, Carmen Greenlee, Robin Lawrason, and Jackie Tanner discussing the results of an IALL survey

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and their own experiences working with other campus media units. Tapes of these sessions are available for $8 each from InfoMedix at 800-367-9286 (ask for Sue Vandermolen). E114-85 is the number for Kathleen James' presentation and E114-89 is the number for the panel talk. IALL also hosted a membership and information meeting which brought together all of the above presenters and several others. Although a great deal of IALL business was discussed at this get-together, many of us found it necessary to continue our conversations the next day over some delicious Chinese food! Thanks Jackie for leading the way!

The AECT convention allows attendees the opportunity to see the latest in educational hardware, hear firsthand reports of research and curriculum development projects, and interact with a wide range of educators. AECT has a membership of 5000 and is the largest professional association devoted to the pedagogical use of technology. It has many publications including eleven titles (soon fifteen) on copyright issues. Although a large and diverse organization, it is one in which foreign language specialists can feel comfortable because of a strong international presence. Members come from 50 countries and there is an active and visible International Division which at each convention hosts a lounge where one can meet people from around the world. The featuring of *The Buried Mirror* series and the new name for the equipment exposition from 1994, InCITE, (International Computing and Instructional Technology Exposition) are other indications of AECT's international interest.

This year's convention was the fifth consecutive one I have attended. I recommend next year's in New Orleans (January 13 - 17) to my language laboratory colleagues and hope to see many of you there. IALL will sponsor at least three sessions and plans to have an information booth which can serve as a meeting place.