



## FROM THE PRESIDENT

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The end of a term is typically a time for retrospection, review, and tying up loose ends to prepare and project for the future. In this, my last column as president, I'd like to share with you some of the thoughts and issues I have been considering as I prepare to pass on my presidential duties.

The first issue is one that I've discussed here before, and it has to do with the nature of IALL. IALL is quite unique from many other organizations because of the diversity of the membership it represents. We are neither all foreign language teachers (ACTFL), nor ESL/EFL teachers (TESOL). What we do with computers is not just foreign-language oriented (CALICO), but at the same time, some of our foreign language components fall outside the scope of AECT. IALL members are varying combinations of teachers, managers, educational technologists, computer specialists, software developers, and more. And yet, among all this diversity arises a clear, common identity (albeit "clear," perhaps, only among ourselves!).

IALL, therefore, meets the needs of a very targeted membership, and as such, will likely remain a relatively small organization. In some circles, an organization's

size is equated with its "success." I want to see IALL continue to promote itself to others within our "learning lab community" who are not yet aware of the organization. At the same time, however, I would hope that IALL's success continues to be rated on the basis of its responsiveness to the needs and interests of its membership, and that increase in membership is an outgrowth of that relationship rather than an objective in itself.

Another issue relates to a recent Board discussion regarding the pricing of IALL publications. One school of thought is to maximize the price of our materials to increase the IALL coffers so that the organization can provide additional services. The other is to keep prices as low as possible to forward the goal of disseminating information as widely as possible. The Board has decided to try to do both. In the new IALL brochure, you will note that we have lowered the prices. In doing so, the Board hopes to expand the circulation of these materials and, at the same time, to realize greater profit through greater sales volume.

While only time will tell us whether this was the "right" approach in terms of generating income, I advocate this approach for

other reasons as well. Basically I believe that the simpler we keep things, the fewer levels of organizational structure that we maintain, the better that IALL will be able to continue to respond to its membership. As the relatively small organization that we are, IALL is its membership and vice versa. That is IALL's strength.

If I were writing a campaign statement at this time, I would propose taking the next two years to further develop and strengthen the communication networks that IALL has already established (conferences, publications, affiliate relations, etc.), rather than proposing any major new projects. In terms of service, this is really IALL's *raison d'être*. That is, most of us are involved with IALL at least in part (in my case, a major part) to be able to communicate with, share experience and advice with, and to learn from others who are basically in the same boat as ourselves. My concern is that we balance the expansion of new projects with the development of existing ones; I'd rather see us do a few things very well than to struggle with several.

Finally, I hope that IALL '93, "Defining the Role of the Language Lab," is only the beginning of a serious, in-depth assessment of what it is we do. With developments in technology, budget issues, "downsizing," the movement towards cooperation among service departments within campuses, and the move away from dedicated "language labs" to more comprehensive "learning centers," the question deserves serious discussion. Not only will the answers help IALL identify its responsibilities to membership, but our relationships with affiliate groups such as TESOL, ACTFL, AECT, CALICO, etc. as well.

Before I sign off this last time, I want to thank the IALL membership for the opportunity to serve on the Board. While these words will sound cliché, the sincerity

behind them is anything but: the last four years have provided me with an unparalleled opportunity to grow both personally and professionally. While any endeavour such as this has its highs and lows, I can honestly say that all of my experiences on the Board have served to help me understand myself, the organization, and the profession better. I hope that IALL and its membership have equally benefitted. I look forward to continued active participation in new and different roles within IALL.

### ...and Signing In

The next words you read in this column will come from Trisha Dvorak, who will "sign in" as President at the end of IALL '93. Trisha brings to the position extensive professional, managerial, organizational and technological experience. She presently serves as Director of Michigan's Language Resource Center as well as Special Assistant to the Dean for Instructional Technology. With a B.A. in Spanish and a doctorate in Applied Linguistics, she has taught most levels of Spanish, teaching methodology, and T.A. training. Before being elected to the IALL Board, she served as the MWALL regional leader.

As you can see, with Trisha heading the Board, IALL is in good hands. I hope you all join me in welcoming Trisha and the new Board members at IALL '93.





The “passing of the gavel” from LeeAnn to me will happen this summer during our biennial conference. The theme of this year’s conference, “Defining the Role of the Language Lab,” makes the occasion even more significant for me. Not only does this theme summarize the issues that have personally been my central priority as a Lab Director, it also suggests a focus for the next two years as your President. We are, as LeeAnn has said, a richly diverse organization whose strength and vitality emerges, at least in part, because we have been willing to recognize and appreciate the value of our diversity. Multiculturalism, internationalization, global community, multimedia are the buzzwords for our age; they are also motivations for us to explore—and define—the ways in which our many and varied skills as Language Lab professionals can contribute. I am honored and privileged to have the opportunity to serve you during this extraordinarily exciting time. I look forward to seeing you all in Lawrence!

*Jisha Draval*