

Conference Report

ACTFL: Languages: Key to the Past and Passport to the Future

**by Kuan-Yi
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The 28th ACTFL Annual Meeting was held November 18 – 20 in Atlanta, Georgia. The conference offered over 300 sessions on a range of topics in the language teaching field and attracted thousands of participants from across the nation. They attended sessions and workshops on language assessment, culture, curriculum, FLES (Foreign Language in Elementary Schools), learner variables, literature, methods/techniques, policy issues, teacher preparation, research and, of course, technology. Forty-four technology-related sessions (from classroom use of video to multimedia applications to Internet access) plus hands-on experience provided by the various exhibitors on available technology-aided materials in language teaching/learning captured most participants' interest and reaffirmed the view that technology will continue to play an important role in the foreign language curriculum in the years to come.

The various IALL-sponsored sessions drew large audiences and were enthusiastically received. They covered a wide range of topics, including the following:

- Carolyn Fidelman, Northeastern University, in her presentation on "Technology Enabled Outcomes: Learning Non-verbal Communication Skills with *In the French Body*," discussed the use of interactive materials in an explicit approach to explain the nuances and behaviors of face-to-face interaction in the target culture.
- Robert Henderson, University of Pittsburgh, outlined a number of basic factors that need to be considered in the design and organization of a learning center, including pedagogical goals, faculty coordination and training, space allocation, budgeting, and staff development.
- Jackie Tanner, Georgetown University, addressed the use of technology as a means of creating an interactive environment for the active language learner and teacher in her presentation on "Technology Application: Interactivity by Definition."

- Kelly Nelson, University of Iowa, and Kathleen Ford, UCLA, presented "Multimedia on a Grand Scale: Network Technology in Language Learning," in which they described a variety of physical configurations for the delivery of audio and video applications on a network, and gave examples of networked projects ranging from electronic newsletters to interactive multimedia.
- Beth Secrist, University of Tennessee, demonstrated the use of computer networks and the Daedalus Integrated Writing Environment to enhance writing and critical thinking skills; she introduced a number of software modules that are new to foreign language classrooms, including Respond, Invent, and Mail.

IALL provided a continental breakfast at our General Interest Meeting. Over forty people attended the session. The gathering started with IALL members sharing general information about IALL—Kelly Nelson talked about the *IALL Journal*; Jackie Tanner reported on activities at JNCL (Joint National Council on Languages); Ursula Williams discussed the IALL '95 conference to be held at Notre Dame University and distributed information about it; and Kuan-Yi Rose Chang talked about IALL's presence at ACTFL. There were very lively discussions and exchanges of ideas and experiences on various aspects of the role that technology and/or the language lab plays in the learning and teaching of a foreign language. IALL members at the meeting offered numerous valuable suggestions/comments on new facility design, day-to-day management, equipment and software acquisition, and faculty involvement and development. Overall, the meeting was definitely a success.

Tech Fair was held on Sunday, November 20, from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Several commercial producers of software, hardware, video and multimedia provided hands-on demonstration of technology-aided material. As in the past, IALL displayed its publications and handed out order forms and membership information. Those who visited the booth were overwhelmingly positive in their response. Bob Henderson and I distributed the IALL pamphlet, answered questions, and/or redirected the individuals to IALL experts for specific assistance.

ACTFL '95 will be held in Anaheim, California, November 18 – 20. The conference theme will be "Standards and Assessment: Implementing the Vision." IALL will again sponsor five sessions and host a General Interest Meeting. I expect IALL to be invited to participate in Tech Fair as well. We might want to be thinking of ways to participate, what IALL information

to disseminate at the next Tech Fair, and how best to do it. For further information please contact me at Box 6298, West Virginia University, Department of Foreign Languages, Morgantown, WV 26506; (304) 293-3769 (office) or (304) 293-8642 (fax).

Special thanks go to Dick Kuettner for shipping all material needed for the Tech Fair and to Bob Henderson for staffing the IALL Booth at Tech Fair, for prepaying the furniture rental fee and for staying up late ironing the IALL flag. Many thanks, Bob! ■

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Robert Henderson (Director of the Language Acquisition Institute, University of Pittsburgh) and Jackie Tanner (Director of Language Learning Technology, Georgetown University) also made contributions to this column.

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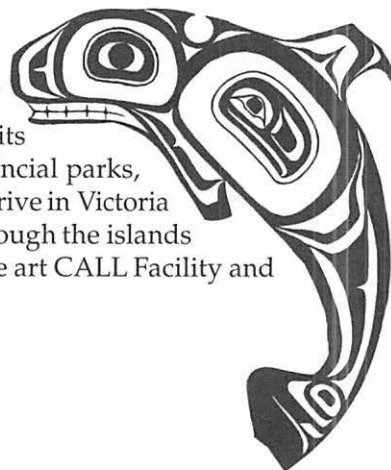
August 19-23, 1997
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The third in a series of jointly sponsored conferences and the first to be held in North America. Sponsors: LLA, Language Laboratory Association of Japan and IALL, the International Association for Learning Laboratories.

August 12 - 17, 1997 Victoria BC Canada

Victoria is Canada's westernmost city, situated on the southern tip of Vancouver Island, in one of Canada's mildest climates. Famous for its gardens, sailing, fishing and close to spectacular National and Provincial parks, Victoria is a year-round destination for international tourists. Plan to arrive in Victoria by air via Vancouver or Seattle, or land there and cruise in by ferry through the islands and sounds. The University of Victoria is renowned for its state of the art CALL Facility and looks forward to hosting this important conference.



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— Rudyard Kipling

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