

Conference Reports

Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

by Kathleen James,
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Tech Talk

The forty-third annual meeting of the Northeast Conference, still the country's oldest and largest gathering of foreign language professionals, had as its theme this year "Foreign Languages for ALL: Challenges and Choices." There was the usual wide array of activities, including pre-conference workshops, concurrent sessions, special-interest sessions, exhibitors' sessions, and a keynote address.

Of particular interest to members of IALL, for the second year in a row, a morning of "Tech Talk" panel discussions attracted a broad and keenly interested audience. Emceed by David Herren (Middlebury College), discussion panelists included several IALL members: Otmar Foelsche (Dartmouth College), Joel Goldfield (Fairfield University), and Victor Aulestia (University of Maryland at Baltimore County), who shared their expertise on satellite technology/distance learning, interactive hypermedia, and the Internet. There was active participation from the audience indicating a thirst for information, and referrals were made to both CALICO and IALL.

Presentations and Speakers

Paul A. Gagnon, the 1996 keynote speaker, addressed "Standards and Equity: Can We Have Both?" Research Professor in Education at Boston University, Dr. Gagnon is one of our educational leaders who will help us strive to bring foreign languages to all and still maintain standards.

Five exhibitors' sessions, out of 28, were devoted to instructional technology:

- "Using Multimedia Tools to Enhance Foreign Language Teaching," sponsored by DynEd International, Inc.;
- "Multimedia—Make Your Classroom Come Alive!" sponsored by Heinle and Heinle;
- "Innovative CD-ROM Technology: Automatic Speech Recognition and Branching Dialogues," sponsored by Living Language and Syracuse Language Systems;

Technology Sessions

"As always, the Northeast Conference offered a plethora of activities to stimulate and motivate." (Julia Bressler, 1996 Conference Chair)

- "Ask the Experts: Opportunities on the Internet," sponsored by Middlebury College;
- "Strategies for the Language Lab: New French Video," sponsored by Sony.

There were only five academic sessions devoted to instructional technology out of a total of 66 sessions, including:

- "Linking Schools through Language and Technology and the Friends and Partners World-Wide Web!" presented by Mary Ann Hansen (Connecticut Department of Education), Thomas Dzicek (Coventry Public Schools), and Greg Cole (University of Tennessee);
- "Foreign Languages for All: Even Those with Hearing Impairments?" presented by Mark Weinberg and Margaret Mullens (Gallaudet University);
- "Interactive Video and Internet: Enhancing Your Curriculum with Authentic Materials," presented by Margaret Ann Kassen and Michael Busges (Catholic University of America);
- "Interactive Multimedia Courseware in Support of Language Sustainment," presented by Kiril Boyadjieff (Defense Language Institute);
- "Choosing and Using from the Net: FL Resources and Materials on the Internet," presented by Jean LeLoup (USAF Academy) and Robert Ponterio (SUNY—Cortland).

A special-interest session entitled "Teaching with CALL and the Internet," facilitated by Joel Goldfield (Fairfield University) and David Herren (Middlebury College), encouraged an exchange of ideas and web resources to further the integration of technology into the foreign language curriculum.

Exhibitors' Displays

Among the largest of its kind, the exhibitors' showcase opened Thursday evening and remained active until Saturday afternoon. Textbook companies continue to invest in the production of multimedia components. Technology-assisted learning materials have become standard fare throughout the exhibits hall.

IALL General Interest Meeting

The IALL General Interest Meeting, which took place just after the three-and-a-half hours of "Tech Talk" panel discussions, attracted a hardy few. Discussion centered around the challenges and decisions involved in planning and implementing a new facility. IALL continues to function as a central clearinghouse for information and guidance on this and many other associated topics.

IALL and NEC

The Executive Director of the Northeast Conference, in concert with the Northeast Conference Board of Directors, has invited IALL to become officially associated with the Conference as its technology consulting arm. The IALL Executive Board and Council are enthusiastic about this exciting opportunity. Please contact the author with ideas about this new initiative and offers to serve as a volunteer. ■

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CALICO '96

by Susan Mackey,
University of Victoria

IALL Member Presentations

Several IALL members presented at this event, which took place at the Sheraton Hotel in Albuquerque, New Mexico:

- "Second Language Acquisition Theory/Research and CALL," offered by IALL Acting President, Nina Garrett;
- "Spanish Partner," described and demonstrated by Karl Fisher (Vanderbilt University);
- "How Second Language Learners Utilize Input in CALL," Claire Bradin (Michigan State University);
- "Computer Conference Logs: What Can They Tell Us About What's Happening On-Line?" was presented by Mary-Louise Craven (York University);
- "Targeting Networked Language Instruction to Student Learning Objectives," Sharon Scinicariello (Case Western Reserve University);
- "Teacher and Student Opinions of and Computer Support for Distance Learning Courses in Chinese and Russian," Marlene Johnshoy and Tomo Yanagimachi (University of Minnesota);
- "Oral Language Archive," demonstrated by Christopher M. Jones (Carnegie Mellon University);
- "Using CMC to Increase Collaboration and Interactivity in French Studies," Dana Paramskas (University of Guelph);
- "A French Pronunciation Course for Asynchronous Delivery," Bernard Rochet (University of Alberta) with Norris Weimer;
- "Getting a Driver's License for the Integration of Computer Technology in the Foreign Language Curriculum," Joel Goldfield (Fairfield University);
- "Disneyland Paris: An Author's Adventure in Simulation," Christopher T. Jones (Grand Valley State University).

"The IALL booth shared space with many commercial vendors whose names I recognized from equipment and catalogues around my own facility."

Several IALL members were especially visible, appearing in more than one session. Carolyn Fidelman (Agora Language Marketplace) spoke about product marketing through the "Agora Showcase." Agora's Internet-based organization provides services that bridge the gap between authors and the "traditional publishing world." Carolyn also led a preconference workshop entitled "How to Teach Non-verbal Elements of Language via Technology-Enhanced Learning Materials."

Otmar Foelsche (Dartmouth College) was also a busy individual. He participated in Robert Fischer and Jack Burston's panel discussion on the design and use of multimedia/hypermedia authoring systems. Speaking about *SuperMacLang*, he also read a paper entitled "The IALL Foreign Language Software Database." The database, located at <http://eleazar.dartmouth.edu/flldb/>, is supported by Dartmouth College, the Consortium for Language Teaching and Learning, and the International Association for Learning Laboratories (IALL).

My sincerest apologies to any of our members whom I have omitted.

Vendor Displays

The Sheraton Hotel did a very nice job of drawing people to the vendors' area. The IALL booth shared space with many commercial vendors whose names I recognized from equipment and catalogues around my own facility.

Tandberg had a wonderful set-up that included comfortable director's chairs to accommodate a small audience for their presentations. BYU had a cheerful group just behind our booth showing their videodisks. Gary Dauphin of Apple was there with information and help galore! His resource guide for foreign language materials is a wonderful tool! And the *Triple Play Plus* people had a machine set up to demonstrate their voice recognition software. One of the joys of visiting a vendors' area at a conference such as CALICO '96 is the generous discount some of them offer when you purchase their products. By selling at the conference, they bypass shipping and handling costs and often pass the savings on to the customer.

We were set up in a mall-like environment just off of the main hotel lobby area. People visiting the gym, hair salon or heading out to Old Town Albuquerque passed through two sets of vendors. An other drawing card enticing people our way was the much welcome hospitality tables. Laden in the morning with coffee, tea and juices to drink plus continental breakfast items, the fare changed just before lunch

to huge bowls of candy. I confess I took full advantage of their hospitality!

IALL Interest Meeting

One of the highlights of the conference for me was the Interest Meeting. I was pleased to see that of the 30 or so people in attendance, many were those who had approached me at the IALL booth earlier in the week with questions about our organization. I would add that the meeting inspired several people to come back to the booth later in the conference to purchase memberships.

Conclusion

Conferences of this scope take a lot of work and advance preparation. My thanks to Frank Borchardt, Claire Bradin, Eleanor Johnson, and Laura Rhodes—not only for their skills and efforts in putting the conference together— but also for their invaluable publication of the conference proceedings from which further information on the meeting and its presentations can be obtained.

Work Cited

Borchardt, F. L., C. L. Bradin, E. Johnson, & L. Rhodes (eds.) (1996). *Proceedings of the Computer Assisted Language Instruction Consortium 1996 Annual Symposium "Distance Learning."* Durham, North Carolina: CALICO. ■

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AECT by Ursula Williams, University of Notre Dame

Presentations

The annual meeting of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology took place in Indianapolis, Indiana, February 13 – 17, 1996.

It was another of those endless gray days in Indiana when I made the three-and-a-half-hour drive to Indianapolis from South Bend. Several sneezes in a row led me to think that maybe I hadn't recovered from the cold that had already plagued me for several days. I arrived late on the 14th—St. Valentine's Day—and was amused and pleased to find a heart-shaped box of candy in my suitcase.

First thing Thursday morning, I made my way to the hallway where affiliate exhibits were set up, to prepare the IALL booth. Robert Henderson appeared early in the morning, and we prepared to attend the two sessions scheduled for February 15. My cold had now grown to gargantuan proportions, and Robert agreed to chair the sessions. I was grateful. Chair-

ing a session meant introducing the speakers and distributing evaluation forms after the presentation, and I felt I could manage either of these tasks, but not both.

Together we attended "*Authorware Academic: An Easy and Inexpensive Approach to Multimedia Authoring.*" The presenters, LeAnn and Robert Hall, of Patrick Henry Local Schools in Hamler, Ohio, demonstrated *Authorware Academic* as an easy and inexpensive alternative to *Authorware Professional*. The presenters demonstrated how easy it is to prepare exercises using templates provided with the application.

Later, we attended the session "Effects of Interactive Multimedia on Computer Assisted Language Learning." The presenter was Tinsiri Siribodhi, who recently completed a Ph.D. at the University of Kansas and is now teaching English in Thailand. This presentation was extremely interesting, as it opened discussion not only on whether computer-assisted instruction makes a difference in foreign language learning, but also introduced the question of whether computer-assisted learning was gender-specific in its effectiveness. Ms. Siribodhi's research appears to indicate that female students do better at computer-assisted tasks that require short-term memorization, and that male students do better at retaining lessons learned with the assistance of a computer application for longer periods of time. From the types of questions it was clear that Ms. Siribodhi had piqued the curiosity of those in attendance and had presented an idea that generated interest in the area of measuring the effectiveness of computer-assisted instruction.

Membership Meeting

The membership meeting later on Friday was, unfortunately, not well attended. This may have been due in part to the fact that the meeting was announced only in an addendum to the regular program. But the time was put to good use by Karen Landahl, Bob Henderson, and me as an opportunity to discuss the IALL outreach program.

Conclusion

The AECT convention was the first opportunity I had to get to know Robert Henderson a little better, to experience his warmth and sensitivity, and to learn of his great organizational and management skills. Imagine my delight when, after "schlepping" myself to the IALL booth on the first day, I found a bright and chipper Robert Henderson. A quick hug assured the transfer of cold germs from friend to friend. He was very concerned about my well-being, and he went almost immediately to the nearest drug store and purchased

some super-strength cold medicine for me. Later, while waiting for the membership meeting to begin, Bob, Karen Landahl and I put on an impromptu talk show, complete with "an old soft shoe" (Robert). I had the chance to see the laid-back, fun side of this charming and otherwise reserved gentleman, and it is one of several moments that will forever come to mind when I think of Robert Henderson.

InCITE

by Karen Landahl,
University of Chicago

"I was able to see a variety of products I was interested in and learn a lot about them: LCD video projectors, video presentation stands, and furniture designed to accommodate media."

I have attended several AECT conventions, mostly to explore the accompanying exhibition of hardware, software and support materials. In the good old days, when AECT met with ICIA (International Communications Industries Association), the exhibition, called INFOCOMM, was vast! I enjoyed it. The range of equipment extended from the inexpensive to the cutting edge and financially out-of-reach—with everything in between. INFOCOMM allowed the visitor to appreciate the range available and then find his/her appropriate level, both from the monetary and the needs points of view. One met colleagues from higher ed and K-12, as well as corporate and industrial types. The mix was energizing. The last such combined exhibition was held in Washington, DC in 1993. Then the two organizations split. ICIA still holds INFOCOMM. Unfortunately for me it is now held in mid-June, at a time that does not fit my schedule. I miss attending. AECT's exhibition is now called InCITE, and I have attended two of the three times that it has been held: the first, in Nashville, and the third, in Indianapolis this past February.

InCITE is much smaller than INFOCOMM—one can cover every display comfortably within the exhibit period. During the INFOCOMM days, I first used to survey the entire hall (that took one day) and then prioritize my visits. I never was able to see in detail all that I wanted to. Nevertheless, I have found the InCITE exhibition useful. It provides an opportunity to see a variety of products in one space (with a proximity that allows easy comparison), to talk with vendors and manufacturers, and to compare notes with colleagues who are also in the market for items one is interested in. This year I was able to see a variety of products I was interested in and learn a lot about them: LCD video projectors, video presentation stands, and furniture designed to accommodate media. What I regret, of course, is the more limited range of products. The vendors have decided what type of equipment is appropriate for higher ed and K-12. I miss deciding that for myself.

I hope someday to be able to attend INFOCOMM again. From what I have heard from our vendors, the exhibition is still as great and as exciting as ever. It is the site for many product introductions. In the old days, ICIA did not permit those who were solely end-users to be members of the organization. That has changed. The new category is associate member, the cost is \$150, and the membership address is Membership Services, International Communications Industries Association, 11242 Waples Mill Rd., Ste. 200, Fairfax, VA 22030-9654. Give some thought to joining. One receives a variety of interesting publications, including *Communications Industries Report*. ■

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