Conference Reports

Association for Educational Communications and Technology

by Ursula Williams, University of Notre Dame

A sunny respite for most, the AECT convention featured the usual plethora of sessions plus InCITE '97, the International Computing and Instructional Technologies Exposition—all in the Albuquerque Convention Center.

IALL sponsored three sessions at this convention. The first was "Have I Got a Lab for You!" which was presented by Anthony Pina (College of the Desert). In this session, Dr. Pina discussed the pleasures and pitfalls of designing a brand new computer lab and integrating it with the renovation of a traditional language lab. He focused on such issues as needs assessment, choices in hardware and software, space considerations and technical support. He outlined some of the problems encountered in his project at College of the Desert, and explained solutions. One issue of particular interest was the ongoing need for funds to maintain and expand the facility.

"E-mail Brings Data and Surprises into Japanese Intercultural Communication Classes" was presented by Yasuyo Edasawa of Doshisha (Women's College of Japan). This session illustrated the use of email as a tool for research in an Intercultural Communication class. Students first used email collaboratively to develop research questionnaires which they then distributed to email partners in their target culture (in this case college students in the U.S.). The task was to publish a research report at the end of the course. Professor Edasawa indicated that, because her course had a reputation for being very difficult, most students enrolled in it only because there were no other choices left. Indeed, the course did provide serious challenges, and produced a research report in the form of a 200-page book. But at the end of the course, 86% of the students indicated that they had enjoyed the class.

The third IALL-sponsored session was "Instructional Technology for the Preservation of Native American Languages." In this session, Barbara Lockee outlined her project, which is unusual in that it is being used to teach young Native Americans in North Carolina their native language, Cherokee.

Preserved in digital format are narrations of legends, which are used to teach pronunciation, vocabulary and other aspects of the Cherokee language. The hypermedia format allows students to access information as they become interested.

At the informational meeting, we welcomed new members Yasuyo Edasawa (Doshisha Women's College) and Peg Schultz (Bowdoin College). We were delighted to see Kuan-Yi Rose Chang again, now at the University of Colorado at Boulder. Topics of discussion at the membership meeting included the upcoming FLEAT III conference at the University of Victoria, the IALL Management Manual and Design Kits, and the AECT convention itself.

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Here are brief reports on other sessions that IALL members found useful and interesting:

"A Beginner's Guide to Computer Conferencing" presented a clearly-organized discussion of computer conferencing forms (computer conferencing vs. computer-mediated conferencing vs. email), desirable features, and advantages and disadvantages. Presenters were Earl Misanchuk, Dirk Morrison and Margaret Peterson. The presentation is available in electronic form at **http://www.extension.usask.ca/Papers/Misanchuk/AECT97/BeginnersGuide.html**.

"Interactive Multimedia CD-ROM Development: A Step-by-Step Approach" presented very practical, experience-based advice on managing the software development process. Allowing time for front-end analysis and review, keeping the project simple and focused, managing the team participants, and other topics were discussed. More information available at **http://tblr.ed.asu.edu/pambos**.

"Authoring Database Connectivity to the Web using Tango" demonstrated how to use the Tango software, to make database information searchable on the web. The demonstration showed an existing FileMaker database; it is possible to use Tango with other databases as well.

"QuickTime VR for CD-ROM and Web Applications" was offered by J. Steven Soulier (Utah State University). Professor Soulier has produced a quick reference guide to QTVR which was given to attendees. The following sources for further information and tools were suggested:
http://www.crd.ge.com/esl/cgsp/projects/video/qtvr
(sample QTVR files)
http:/qtvr.quicktime.apple.com
http://www.kiadan.com/
http://www.bzzzzzz.com/

We would be remiss if we failed to mention Ed Dente's tireless search for the new, different and exciting gustatory

experience. This time Ed's unfailing talent led us to Rudy's Barbecue for a dizzying variety of delicious barbecued meats and a surly waiter with Very Big Hair. Ed also led us to Sadie's, which featured authentic Southwestern (not to be confused with authentic Mexican) fare. At Sadie's we were joined by Derek Roff (University of New Mexico). ■

The Joint National Committee for Languages

by Edward M. Dixon, Georgetown University

In April, 1997, The Joint National Committee for Languages (JNCL) and The National Council for Languages and International Studies (NCLIS) met in Washington, D.C. with House and Senate policy makers to discuss the Administration's fiscal year's budget requests for languages and international studies. This year's meeting of JNCL-NCLIS provided a forum of cooperation among the many professional language organizations and concentrated on ways of unifying them to speak with one voice on issues of national concern in the field of language education in the U.S. Among the objectives stated at this year's meeting were (1) the initiation and promotion of national, state, and local policies that encourage language and international programs; (2) the need to increase public awareness of the importance of understanding other peoples and cultures; and (3) developing leadership in the member organizations for the purpose of achieving the aforementioned objectives and gaining new members. Currently, JCNL-NCLIS represents and lobbies for more than 300,000 professionals in many areas of the language field, including all major and less-commonly taught languages, bilingual education, linguistics, technology, research, exchanges, and translation. Among the many professional organizations represented at this year's meeting were the International Association of Learning Laboratories (IALL), the American Association of Teachers of French (AATF), the American Association of Teachers of German (AATG), Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), National Committee for Latin and Greek (NCLG), American Council of Teachers of Russian (ACTR), Chinese Language Teachers Association (CLTA), American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), and the Modern Language Association-Association of Departments of Foreign Languages

(MLA-ADFL). At April's meeting, The American Association of Arabic was approved for membership.

During the meeting, the member organizations were asked to submit in writing a summary of their concerns which I expressed as the following:

As interest in and use of technology continue to grow in the field of foreign language education, there is a need for foreign language specialists in technology and directors of foreign language resource centers to train and support faculty in the development and implementation of computer-enhanced instructional materials. The job requirements for these positions vary and include designing teaching activities with technology, providing technical support, evaluating hardware and software, grant writing, lab design, multimedia and web development, and foreign language teaching. Funding is needed at both national and regional levels for seminars that will keep these professionals informed of emerging technologies and help them to develop the necessary skills for media implementation.

For more information about the National Council for Foreign Languages and International Studies, contact their web site at **http://www.languagepolicy.org.** ∎

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Language Laboratory Association of Japan— 36th Annual Convention

by LeeAnn Stone, University of California—Irvine

"Changes in Learning Environments and Foreign Language Education: How to Cope with Globalization and Computerization"

Peter Liddell and LeeAnn Stone represented IALL and the FLEAT III Planning Committee at LLA's 36th annual convention at Takushoku University in Hachioji, Tokyo in July of 1996. Six hundred eighty-four other people also attended the three-day conference with representatives from kindergarten through university levels as well as non-academics. Like IALL, the bulk of LLA attendance comes from the university level (48%), with 13% from junior colleges, and the balance distributed in small numbers among various categories. Scanning through the conference program (which was graciously translated into English for the Japanese-challenged), one notes many similarities in the interests of LLA and IALL members. Sessions included titles such as "Current and Future Educational Uses of the Internet: Some Implications of a Project Involving 1,000 Schools," "Prospective Duty Changes, Problems and Tasks for Lab Staff with Increasing Uses of Computers,"

"Development of Listening Materials in HTML form for an AppleTalk Network," and "International Distance Education Utilizing Telecommunications Technology: An Experimental Study at Asia University" among the more than 50 presentations, workshops and special lectures at this conference.

Even more telling of the common interests between the two groups is the lengthy and energized debate by LLA membership regarding "The Future Direction of LLA" at a three-hour panel discussion on the first day of the conference. LLA President Hiroyoshi Hatori and Representative to IALL Akio Iwasaki attended the IALL Council meetings at the University of Victoria in June, during which the IALL Board and Council also discussed, debated, and explored various names before arriving at a consensus regarding our organization's recommended new appelation. Professors Hatori and Iwasaki reported that the LLA discussions were even more energetic than ours, and did not result in a consensus at this time.

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With only a handful of sessions in English (including those of the representatives themselves), the IALL representatives took the opportunity to visit and examine the technologies displayed at the vendors' booths, guided in this endeavor by Professor Ishikawa, Secretary General of LLA's Kanto (Greater Tokyo) Chapter. Vendor support of the LLA conference was quite impressive-each of the major technology firms outfitted full suites with everything from the newest in language lab equipment to video editing and multimedia stations, furniture displays, and a full cadre of specialists to demonstrate and discuss each system. Much of this equipment is unknown and unavailable in the United States. One item was particularly innovative: a cloverleaf-shaped furniture system for computers that rotated at one axis and could be easily re-configured in any of multiple variations. The secret of this system is that all cabling goes to the floor through a pole at the pivot point, allowing the computers (desks and all) to move without pulling, removing and/or relocating cables, power, etc.

On a personal note, this conference surpassed my expectations. Visiting Japan for only the second time in my life, I walked into rooms filled with familiar faces and welcoming expressions—people I met four years ago at FLEAT II, colleagues I have met at IALL conferences, and those I've corresponded with via email. It was such a comforting feeling to be miles from home, across the Pacific Ocean, in a country so seemingly "foreign," and yet to feel as at home with these colleagues as I do with my IALL friends. I look forward to

seeing many of these friends and colleagues at FLEAT III in Victoria in August. ■

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