Conference Report

Association for Educational Communications and Technology

by Warren Roby, Washington State University

The 1995 convention of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT) was held on February 8 – 12 at the Anaheim Convention Center, California. The convention theme, "Information Technology: Expanding Frontiers," featured 21 workshops, approximately 300 sessions, and 150 exhibits at the concurrently held In CITE Exposition. In addition, there were tours of the Pioneer Laserdisc Pressing facility and of Century High School, which was billed as a "model technology high school."

Dr. Linda Roberts, Director of the Office of Educational Technology in the U.S. Department of Education, spoke during the first plenary session on the current initiatives and long range goals of the department. Despite probable future budget cuts, she expressed optimism for the prospects of a greater use of technology in education, especially in K – 12. She sees consortia of businesses and schools making this happen. The other plenary speaker was Dr. Elliot Soloway of the University of Michigan. The title of his talk was "Reading and Writing in the 21st Century or John Dewey Meets Terminator II." He foresees a fuller exploitation of the interactive capabilities of computers than has been the case hitherto; that is, technology will be used less to replicate what is done with paper as the electronic medium is appreciated for what it can truly offer.

IALL sponsored and co-sponsored nine sessions. This report will give a synopsis of four sessions. The IALL presence was also seen in the information booth which we maintained. Besides the organizational information we distributed, we gave away Orange County oranges thanks to LeeAnn Stone. LeeAnn also invited IALL members to her home on Thursday night for a delicious Mexican meal. On Friday afternoon an information meeting was held which was attended by the following IALL members: Ed Dente, Cleve Friedman, Robin Lawrason, Marti Morandi, Michael Nieckoski, Warren Roby, Roger Sanchez-Berroa, Sharon Scinicariello, LeeAnn Stone, and several newcomers.

Stanley B. Suppinski of Florida State University spoke on Wednesday on "Proficiency Orientation in Foreign Language Education: Implications for Instructional Design." He touched on the following topics, most of which are familiar to foreign language educators, but are less known to many of the AECT attendees who come from other disciplines: Acculturation; Linguistic Universals; Interlanguage, Discourse, and Cognitive Theories; the Acquisition/Learning Distinction; the Natural Order Hypothesis; and the Notion of Input, Monitor, and the Affective filter. He maintained that these theories and concepts must be articulated with instructional design theory in order to create viable foreign language courseware.

Robin Lawrason of Temple University, and LeeAnn Stone of the University of California, Irvine, conducted the "Managing the Academic Media Resource Center" session. It was aimed at providing the basics of lab management for novice academic resource center management staff or directors who wish to update or broaden their management skills. Panelists and session participants shared ideas on the following tasks:
- defining the role and job of the manager/director;
- developing good public relations in working with faculty;
- setting up an operations budget;
- training and managing staff;
- developing and maintaining staff;
- developing and maintaining a resource collection;
- working with faculty to integrate technology into the academic curriculum;
- setting up copyright policies and procedures;
- managing equipment checkout services, and coordinating efforts with other campus media resource centers.

Warren B. Roby of Washington State University and Sharon Scinicariello of Case Western Reserve University presented "Using Global Resources to Train Workers for the Global Economy." They described the courses each of them teach which make much use of realia, from a variety of sources, to prepare students for the international, high-tech workplace. Class activities are based on negotiation role-playing and group problem-solving. Students prepare for these in-class activities by: reading both textbook and press materials, listening to audio materials, watching videotapes prepared for French business people and French language television, and by working on French software. They are also encouraged to gather information through the various news groups, in particular, to provide immediate commentary on current problems in the French economy. This commentary can be used as the starting point of classroom discussion.

Bright and early Saturday morning (8:00), Lars Leader addressed his robust audience on "Digital Audio and Learning in a Multimedia Language Lesson." This was a report of an empirical study of the effects of textually-redundant audio on an ESL vocabulary program created in HyperCard. The software consisted of 30 cards presenting instruction and writing practice for 12 English verbs that described common actions involved in preparing food). It was found that the audio had a significant effect when the post-test task was to rematch verbs with the objects they had been used within the treatment. However, the audio did not have an impact on the post-test measure of sentence-writing which was similar to what had been done in the treatment. Mr. Leader concluded thus: "For presentations of instruction through audio and visual channels, designers should consider taking advantage of the additive effect of combining channels. When longer chunks of information are presented, it might be best to use one channel at a time...."

The other sessions sponsored by IALL were "Integrating Technology in the Writing Curriculum of Learners of English as a Foreign Language" by Rowena Santiago of California State University, San Bernardino; "Creating Language Courseware in Less Than Two Hours" by Kathy Haiyan Chen of Utah State University; and "Language Multimedia: A Makeover" by Anita Knisbacher of the Department of Defense. I can put any readers who would like to know more about these talks in contact with the presenters.

Next year's convention will be held February 14 – 18, 1996 in Indianapolis. The theme is "Exploring the Information Kaleidoscope." IALL will again sponsor several sessions. ■

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