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Fall 2005 Newsletter

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Letter from the President

Dear NEALLT Members,

I look forward to each NEALLT conference with keen anticipation. When Mary asked me to write this letter, I started reflecting on just why it is that I enjoy attending NEALLT so much. I hope that you will bear with me as I offer a somewhat serious answer to my own question.

I enjoy NEALLT because I always learn a lot. I get to see other lab directors' facilities and get ideas for different ways of dealing with new technologies. I gain new perspectives as well as novel solutions to old problems. (As we go from analog tape to CDs to MP3s and DVDs and on to streaming media, doesn't it seem that we are always in a phase of "transition" from one technology to a new one? Or am I the only one who feels this way?) I also like the satisfaction of occasionally being able to contribute some nuggets of information about whatever I might have figured out along the way. Since new colleagues are always entering our profession, I have learned that what is familiar to some of us is bound to be challenging, new information to others.

I like the fact that NEALLT has a very small and informal conference, so I usually get to talk to every single person there. I enjoy socializing with kindred spirits. Each of us might well be the only person on our own campus who faces the same challenges that we

face daily, and it is refreshing to be able to share our experiences with empathetic colleagues.

I truly hope that you will be able to join us for the next NEALLT Conference, April 7-9, at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. I am already looking forward to it!

Best regards,



Claire Bradin Siskin

Mark your calendars! April 7-9

***NEALTT 2006 at the University of
Pennsylvania***

Guest Speaker: Barbara Lafford

Notes from the editor

“The NEALLT conference continues to be one of the best conferences related to language teaching and technology”—that was the opinion expressed by the 2005 conference participants in their end-of-session evaluations. Indeed, this year’s participants had the opportunity to choose from a panoply of fifteen presentations and two panel discussions, the focus being “The Language Resource Center: Trends and Visions”. Host Jack Burston of the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) started the camera rolling with a highly informative pre-conference workshop on dubbing student-based video projects. However, it was the RIT student themselves who stole the show. Andrew Moore, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts at RIT, related in his opening remarks that the new, \$400,000 FLTC was a result of, yes-- STUDENT DEMAND. Foreign language study at RIT has been steadily rising, so much so that RIT now teaches ten languages! Dean Moore reported that the engineers are keen on increasing their language skills because they recognize that most of their jobs will have an international dimension.

I am confident that all conference participants will join me in extending a sincere thank-you to RIT and Jack Burston, to the NEALLT executive board, as well as to everyone who shared his or her work and insights into teaching with technology. The NEALLT conference should not be missed! If you did not have a chance to attend this year, set aside the date for next year's meeting at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia: April 8 and 9.

The following is a list of the topics from the 2005 program as well as a few notes from sessions that I personally attended. As we start off the new academic year, we hope that these summaries might give you some new ideas. Let me apologize in advance for their brevity and/or any misinterpretations. Everyone should feel welcome to contact any of the presenters for more detailed information on a subject of interest.

- **Workshop: Creating and Managing Student-Based Video Dubbing Projects** (Jack Burston, RIT)
Basic training was provided on how to use Moviemaker (a Microsoft freeware program) to prepare video projects for dubbing by students: Audio tracks can be extracted from film clips and used by students to practice pronunciation. Students can then dub their voices into the muted video selections (Use Moviemaker or Audacity). The challenge for students is to be able to lip-sync the dialogue!
- **Revisiting the Language Resource Center: A New Approach For a New Century** (John Mark Esposito, College of Staten Island/CUNY)
With digital media now being streamed to students at CUNY, the mission of the FLRC needed to be redefined. Native speakers with personalities were hired as student lab assistants to engage learners in conversation. A program to develop tutors was started: tutors visited classes, started language clubs and conversation hours. The focus on learning was redirected towards video and projects. Other initiatives included building the Web site, dressing bulletin boards, preparing posters and brochures, and sponsoring a film festival.
- **Digital Language Lab Solutions** (Jack Burston, RIT)
Eleven software-based systems were reviewed as possible digital language lab options for replacing the SONY and Tandberg hardware of the old analogue labs; the digital options include: NetSupport School, Synchron Eyes, Dartmouth College DL Web Instructor, LangLab, Wimba Voice Management System, SANAKO Lounge 100, SANAKO Lab 300, LEM/Spe@ker, Genesis, SANS Virtuoso;Soloist, CAN-8 VirtuaLab. Costs range from a few hundred dollars for an entire lab to over \$2000 per station. These reviews have been compiled and are available through the IALLT.
- **Web-based Software for Facilitating the Study of Authentic Texts** (Bradley Gano, Yale University)
Yale University is developing an application to facilitate students' reading of authentic foreign language texts. Features of the program, called CRAFT, include annotations, note taking, bookmarks, a dictionary and on-line questions.

- **Using Video and Audio in Web-based Portfolios for Language Learning** (Lee Abraham, Villanova University)

Many new photo software programs, *e.g.*, Photostory, I-Movie or Adobe Elements, can be used to create exciting digital portfolios of course content or study abroad experiences. Features include voice-overs and captions as well as visual effects such as panning or zooming
- **Crossword Puzzles in the Foreign Language Curriculum: Child's Play or Serious Pedagogy?** (Elizabetta D'Amanda, Tatiana Ripoll & Birgit Deir, Rochester Institute of Technology)

This presentation demonstrated a number of approaches to crossword puzzle construction derived from recent research in the field of vocabulary acquisition. Presenters described a variety of ways crosswords may be used in the curriculum.
- **QuickTime Streaming: An overview of how to set up and manage your digital files while keeping your sanity** (Michael Jones, Swarthmore College)

Streaming video is a service being offered currently by many language resource centers. As opposed to downloading media, streaming in uncompressed does not have the same copyright problems; in theory, the user never receives a full copy. QuickTime has been used at Swarthmore without problems for several years and is not as expensive an option as other forms of streaming software. It can be purchased from Apple or as open source ware for a Windows computer.

Recommended tools include: a Web editor, QuickTime Pro, a cleaner to process and compress media (Sorenson Squeeze), the freeware utility "Renamer" for CD audio tracks, Sound Studio or another recording software of analog sources, an I-mic to bring analog input into the computer.

Recommended end file includes IMA 4:1 CODEC, the sample rate should be set at 44,000 kHz, 16 bit stereo.
- **How to Use Free software, such as MS Movie Maker, to create a Video Clip** (Chi-Hua Tseng, State University of New York at Albany)

The presenter gave an overview of a collaborative internet project wherein students refined linguistic skills as well as discovered unfamiliar cultures. The Prometheus course management system was used, especially, the e-mail, chat room and web board features.
- **Medium and Low-tech Tools for Managing Student Workers** (Claire Bradin Siskin & LaShanda Lemmon, University of Pittsburgh)

The University of Pittsburgh lab depends on students for most staff positions. The following tools were implemented to improve service and provide professional development for employees: a password protected Web site with work schedule, announcements, contact information, policies and orientation movies. Moreover, a three tiered system of jobs was created, conferring ranks and corresponding salary incentives. The new management system is working

well! Audience response indicated that this could be a topic for a whole conference.

- **Using WebCT to Improve Students' Listening and Speaking Proficiency** (Jim Wang, Allegheny College)

WebCT and other course management systems can be used to house audio files. Programs such as Sound Forge extract sound files from CD's; these files can then be uploaded to the management system and accessed anywhere on campus. Students can also upload mp3 recordings of their own voices to a course management dropbox; the latter can be easily accessed by instructors for grading.

- **Toward Appropriate Technology** (Jing Luo, Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania)

As opposed to purchasing the ever fleeting "state-of-the-art" technology for a lab, the speaker recommended equipping resource centers with equipment that reflects the underlying pedagogical philosophy of the respective language department.

- **Dubbing Advertising Videos: A Project for Business French** (Judith Ainsworth, Wilfrid Laurier University)

Students transcribed and translated a number of digitized video clips from television ads; they then dubbed their voices in over the original ad. They thus became familiar with the language used in advertising as well as different marketing techniques; students also encountered an interesting variety of cross-cultural and cross-lingual difficulties as they tried to duplicate the original message of the ad.

- **How to Use Nicenet to Create Your Free Internet Classroom Testing** Chi-Hua Tseng, State University of New York at Albany)

The presenter demonstrated the features of the internet classroom management system, Nicenet; these included file management and a moderated discussion board.

- **A Wiki Project for Independent and Collaborative Learning** (Cindy Evans, Skidmore College)

The wiki was the "hottest" tech tool at the conference. It operates on the principle that anyone can contribute and is basically an open Web site where any number of pages can be generated by any of the participants. A blog, on the other hand is linear; defined users may make comments onto the main corpus of the blog; but, the blog is owned by the blogger.

The presenter herself experimented with a wiki for the first time in a 2004 literature course of Quebec readings. Going into the course, her pedagogical expectations of the wiki included the following:

- That it would promote greater learner engagement (students spent one day a week in the lab)

- That it would provide an environment for authentic communication
- That it would encourage “discovery” learning as students search the Web for new information
- That it would emphasize process oriented learning, where learners actually transform their world and not just conform to it
- That it would support individual and collaborative work.

What would the presenter change the next time she uses a wiki? She reported that she would require more collaborative work (she had expected more), give students more opportunities for feedback and revision, and pay more attention to the design of the interface.

- **Managing and Securing a Language Center with Symantec Ghost 8.2 and Faronics Deep Freeze** (Michael Krynicki, Laurier Language Centre)

The presenter discussed the pros and cons of using Ghost and Deep Freeze to control viruses and, when necessary, ensure quick system restores

- **Three Templates from Yale; Course Materials and Exercise Templates** (Mark Knowles, Yale University)

Yale has developed a series of templates--The COMET (course materials and exercise templates), vision, picture dictionary and ART—to deliver multimedia based foreign language materials over the Web. There will be listening options, lecture notes, a dictation template and grammar exercises. Plans are underway to eventually release the templates so that other colleges and universities may use them.

- **Panel Discussion: Language Center Design: Directions for the Future**

Five language center directors described their wish list for what to put in a new lab or, if they already had a new facility, what they liked best.

Cindy Evans, Skidmore College—wish list:

- More teaching space.
- Smaller, more flexible tables that what she has.
- Space for a viewing area.
- A center that is less curriculum driven; she would offer more materials for general needs.
- More space for digital group projects.

Mike Jones, Swarthmore College—took a survey of faculty to help plan for a new lab. The results were:

- Group viewing rooms given a high priority for a new lab.
- Most frequent lab use was of satellite TV.
- 21 channels at every station and in classrooms are well liked and used for assignments. There is new and continued curriculum development in this area.

- Center needs more boom boxes.
- The evaluation of student workers was low; they need more training.
- Faculty requested more workshops, but then didn't come.
- A tri-college collaboration of earlier days was remembered fondly.

Marianne Crusius, Princeton University—already has a new facility

- In the main lab, every station offers every function (computer, DVD, multistandard VCR, cable TV with 5 channels. The only equipment missing is a mini DVD player.
- Viewing rooms for small groups.
- Smart classrooms with chairs on casters and 12 computer stations (there are no more than 12 students in a Princeton language class).
- The language lab also serves as the university media center.
- The atmosphere is a big plus; students could do what they do elsewhere, but choose to come to the language center (Marianne's secret? Get the best technology and then lower the lights "just a touch"!).

Bradley Gano, Yale University—has a new facility

- Labs are used heavily for drop-ins.
- A faculty development lab is important.
- There is no Tandberg/SONY console or "traditional" set up.
- Four small group study areas are incredibly popular; these are equipped each with a laptop, table, chair and whiteboard.
- Cable TV is less used.
- Important to keep space flexible.
- Students study in labs.
- Labs open to whole campus, not just languages.

Jack Burston, RIT—has a new facility

- Do a needs analysis before designing space.
- Keep space flexible.
- Tutorial rooms for 10 to 12 people are successful.
- Lounge area with satellite TV channels attracts students.
- The language lab as a model is outmoded; faculty are interested in a multimedia learning environment.
- Important for labs to be ADA compliant
- Recommends checking the recent IALLT book evaluating commercial "language labs" to find the right hardware / software for your college's / university's teaching style.

• **Exploring Ideas for Developing the FLL Web Site**

Each presenter discussed a special feature of her Center's /Department's Web site:

- *Mary Beth Barth, Hamilton College* has built on the Web's potential as a promotional tool for learning languages. A stream from a Web camera serves as a window on the language center and helps create the impression

that the site is a “living document” of what is to be experienced in the lab. The video and background music are sensational.

- *Mary Toulouse, Lafayette College* is developing a “living history” archive with digital sound and video files from speakers and interviews conducted in different foreign languages. These materials can be used by students for projects or as primary sources for courses. It is important to start the collection now –even with materials that *a priori* might not seem particularly important. Case in point, Lafayette’s nascent archive has a ten year old video interview of Elfriede Jelenik; she won the Nobel prize in literature (2005) just before the NEALLT conference.
- *Luba Iskold, Muhlenberg College* discussed several aspects of her site: a comprehensive resource list of links and materials for professors, a “Why study a foreign language” promotional page with video clips of recent grads, and course materials for Russian.

Minutes of the NEALLT 2005 Business Meeting

March 13, 2005

Rochester Institute of Technology

Present:

Lee Abraham (Villanova)
Jutta Schmiers-Heller (Columbia)
Marianne Crusius (Princeton)
Bradley Gano (Yale)
Jing Wang (Allegheny)
Monique Burston (Temple)
Jack Burston (RIT)
Mark Siskin
Claire Bradin Siskin (Pitt)
Mustapha Masrou (Hofstra)
Leslie Graul (Thiel)
Erika Jones (Thiel)
Mary Beth Barth (Hamilton)

Cindy Evans (Skidmore)
Mary Toulouse (Lafayette)
Mike Jones (Swarthmore)
Agnieszka Kolodeicj
Mark Knowles (Yale)
Judith Ainsworth (Wilfrid Laurier)
Michael Krynicki (Wilfrid Laurier)
John Mark Esposito (College of Staten Island, CUNY)
Sergei Bunaev (Wesleyan University)
Michael Heller (Montclair State)
Audrey Sartiaux (Union)

The meeting was called to order and the members of the Executive Board were introduced. The Minutes from the 2004 Business Meeting were approved as presented.

Secretary/Treasurer Marianne Crusius (Princeton) presented the NEALLT Financial Report. After NEALLT 2004, NEALLT had approximately \$4750 and Crusius reported that NEALLT 2005’s deposits and expenses were still pending as were some transfers to IALLT. Bradley Gano (Yale) inquired about income from corporate sources like Sony and Tandberg. President Claire Bradin Siskin (Pitt) replied that the last time there was corporate participation was 2002 and it was determined to be more effort than it was worth. Bradin also noted that the market conditions make it more difficult for corporate support.

Bradin noted the upcoming FLEAT V August 5-10 (Foreign Language Education and Technology <http://www.iallt.org>). Bradin also noted that in late February NEALLT had made a \$500 donation to IALLT for the Ursula Williams Graduate Student Conference Grant. (The grant helps to defray registration costs and up to three \$500 grants will be awarded.) Vice president Michael Heller (Montclair State) will represent NEALLT at FLEAT V.

There was discussion on the letter sent by the NEALLT Board to the IALLT Executive Board. Webmaster Mike Jones (Swarthmore) asked for those present to express any concerns. Jones recalled the events thus far, and he noted that Yale's Center for Language Study (CLS) had written the IALLT Board with their concerns of BYU as FLEAT V host. The Yale CLS letter noted the contributions to the field and expertise at BYU, but expressed concern over the institution's policies that could be perceived as sexist and homophobic. The NEALLT letter that echoed the concerns raised by Yale CLS followed the Yale CLS letter. The NEALLT letter was distributed via LLTI. The NEALLT letter was not intended as a call to boycott FLEAT V, but rather as a request that future site selection include considering the potential host institution's policies on the issues noted. Bradin noted that NEALLT had received lots of email in support of the Board's actions from IALLT members in and beyond NEALLT. Jones stated that Heller will express NEALLT's concerns regarding the site selection process during the Leadership Meeting at FLEAT V, including NEALLT's position that the selected host site not result in distress to part of the IALLT membership. Bradin encouraged new lab directors to attend and recalled IALLT conferences as some of her favorites. Jack Burston (RIT) affirmed that site selection requires careful attention including allowing valid counter discussion to ensue and he wondered why this had not occurred earlier. Bradin noted that BYU's policies have turned more restrictive since the site was selected and noted some sources. Gano commented on the timing of the Yale CLS letter and noted the recent reporting on the issues including banned books in the library and discipline to undergraduate students for watching certain television shows. He noted that Yale CLS's concern is for future site selection.

Bradin noted that NEALLT 2006 planning is currently underway and noted Montclair State University's tentative offer for 2007. [The 2006 conference will take place at the University of Pennsylvania.] Bradin mentioned the Board's goal to make the conference appealing to K-12 and communities. Jones noted that the Executive Board meeting had already identified some new ideas that would be implemented on the NEALLT web site toward this end. John Mark Esposito (College of Staten Island, CUNY) noted that at K-12 conferences participants typically come away with something (tangible and useful) like lesson plans or CEUs. Jones noted that NEALLT had worked with the Pennsylvania MLA to offer pre-conference workshops that would qualify for continuing education credits. Mustapha Masrou (Hofstra) suggested parallel workshops so that conference attendees can enjoy more options for participation and Bradin replied that this could be done but would result in shorter hands-on sessions. Esposito suggested longer sessions and that bios be included on the program and in the list of participants for both attendees

and presenters, including those that registered on-site (approximately 4 registered on-site at NEALLT 2005).

Thanks were bestowed on the host and the host thanked Lee Abraham (Villanova) for taking pictures of the event.

Under new business Masrou noted the value of the searchable LLTI listserv and wondered if NEALLT might run its own local listserv, but Bradin answered that LLTI is a preferable venue. Jones noted that highlight ideas and projects both on the NEALLT website and the Newsletter edited by Mary Toulouse (Lafayette). Jones noted that this would be a project that would be more effective if spearheaded by IALLT, as it would be more comprehensive. Heller will address this item at the Leadership Meeting at FLEAT V and Esposito offered to collect these for posting on the NEALLT web site. First-time attendee, Erika Jones (Thiel) noted that she had learned lots at the conference, had something to take home, and was excited to try some new things. Masrou spoke of lots of last minute learning and was leaving the conference with many answers and even more questions. For future conferences Masrou suggested more social events including breakfast meals and early evenings as a time to meet and discuss with others in the field. Leslie Graul (Thiel) suggested identifying an area in the hotel where attendees could congregate. Audrey Sartiaux (Union) suggested sessions on management issues that new lab directors face including budgeting. Krynicki (Wilfrid Laurier) seconded this idea and suggested session that are hands-on in nature and which highlight how others do things (session that is more hands-on and less conceptual in nature). Graul and Judith Ainsworth (Wilfrid Laurier) suggested two track sessions (one toward technology and one toward faculty) that would allow a participant to do the content upon return to his or her campus. Graul suggested a session strategic planning (best practices, standards for our field, appropriate provision of services given population serve and budget) so that participants can identify if they spend their budgets appropriate. Esposito suggested that each attendee bring along a faculty member to the 2006 NEALLT Conference and Jones noted that faculty participation varies from year to year and on faculty's choice on where to spend his or her conference funding.

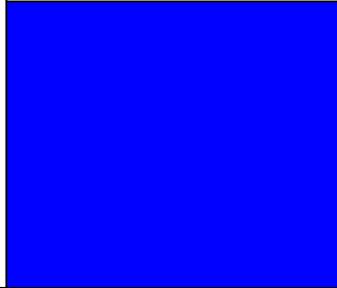
Conference Pic(ks)



Pre-conference
Workshop with Jack
Burston (left)



Opportunities to talk shop at breakfasts, lunches and other social functions.





Animated and articulate presenters



Appreciative audiences





NEALLT: Preparing the next generation.



***Many thanks to Lee Abraham of Villanova for the pictures.**