NEALLT

northeast association for language learning technology

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2008-2009 Newsletter

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Note from the editor

As we look forward to the 2009 NEALLT conference, it's always interesting to take a look at last year's conference. I am sure all attendees would like to express their thanks to **Ursula Atkinson, Carolyn Burger, and Karen Campbell of Rutgers University** for their hard work, especially as it concerned their initiative to encourage meaningful K-16 collaboration during the conference as well as between Rutgers and their own State of New Jersey.

I'm sure some of you will be disappointed, but there will be no conference pictures included in this newsletter; the pictures I took last year were horrendous. With any luck, someone else will bring a camera this year!

I've also included a listing and some nuggets from last year's presentations; these may give you some ideas for this year. There was a great deal of interest among participants in assessment, a topic which we hope to pursue further in 2009.

Regards to all,
Mary Toulouse

Keynote Address: "No Longer a Frill: Using Technology in Learning, Teaching and Assessing World Languages"

Janis Jenson, New Jersey DOE

Janis Jensen is currently the Director of the Office of Academic Standards at the New Jersey Department of Education, State of New Jersey. In her talk, she outlined the unique collaboration between Rutgers University and the State Department of Education as they have worked and continue to work for the systematic implementation of World language teaching from K through 16. Indeed the focus of the NEALLT conference at Rutgers was on how universities and secondary education can dovetail their teaching endeavors.

Ms. Jensen recalled that old language pedagogy stressed rote learning and play acting. In contrast, the current educational mission focuses on providing authentic, contextualized interactive tasks that demonstrate proficiency. In doing so, educators help students use strategies, develop critical thinking skills and enable students to perform real tasks with members of a target language speech community--not just master isolated facts.

Unfortunately, our students are not scoring well on performance-based tests. Ms. Jensen noted a gap between sound, modern pedagogical goals and the reality of what is being taught in the classroom. She cited a number of "needs":

- There is a need to convince teachers to use technology to make connections with the target language speech community.
- There is not enough time in the day for good language instruction because of No Child Left Behind
- Most language classes are teacher-centered and grammar-based, not task driven.
- Languages are usually taught by levels and frequently only to fulfill requirements.
- Students receive credit for "seat time", not proficiency.

Ms Jensen observed that the insistence on language "teaching" rather than learning only creates a barrier to the latter; *technology,* in her opinion, is the tool to break down this barrier. She gave the example of virtual worlds, such as Second Life's "My China" as providing thoughtfully constrained interactions in an authentic, socio-cultural context with peers, mentors and native speakers.

In an effort to update the curriculum to match the new proficiency goals, New Jersey has been using the STAMP test (http://www.state.nj.us/), a proficiency based, task based assessment tool. Over 40,000 students were tested in the 8th grade. Reports go to teachers by topic so that they can understand what is needed and shift the teaching style. Some clear findings from the data are:

- The duration of language study is important; instruction that lasts across a whole academic year is more effective as opposed to being condensed into a single semester.
- Intensity of instruction is also important; meeting three times a week is significantly more effective than only meeting twice a week.
- In order to attain the desired "novice-high" proficiency by the end of 8th grade, a student should have had 5,000 minutes of instruction across the school year.
- Instructional time should be evenly distributed; sequential study is preferable to block study.

To listen to the podcast of Janis Jenson's talk, please go to www. NEALLT.org

	Conference Nuggets

The following is a list of the topics from the 2008 program, **The Language Learning Space: Real and Virtual Uses**. PowerPoint presentations for many of the papers may be found on the NEALLT (www.neallt.org) website.

Maintaining Relevance in a New World
--**Sean Palmer,** La Guardia Community College

Bringing Virtual Reality and Literary Fiction Together
--**Anamaria Banu,** Rutgers University

iStudy- Enhancing Russian and Japanese Courses with iPods
--**Marisa Castagno,** Connecticut College

Lessons Learned from the UPOLAI Project
--**Claire Bradin Siskin,** University of Pittsburg

The Wiki Way- an Online Collaborative Writing Tool for Students
--**Jutta Schmiers-Heller,** Columbia University

The Applications of Multimedia-induced First- and Second- Hand Experiences of DKE Model for Language Learning
--**MingTsan Lu, Yu-Chia Lin, Kang-Hao Hung,** Teachers College Columbia University

Cost Effective Solutions for LRC: Problems and Solutions for a Dual-Boot Environment
--**Kyo Koo, Chase Lovellette,** Davidson College

The Internet and Authentic Learning
--Edward Dixon, University of Pennsylvania and **Nelleke Van Deusen-Scholl, Ya**le University

Showcasing Your Language Resource Center
--Michael Jones, Steven Day, Swarthmore College

Interactive Learning in Spain
--Cybele Posner, Linda Magee, Jessica Consiglio, Applegarth Middle School

Vive l'Environnement
--Mina Kim, Churchill Junior High School

French Online and the French Online DVDs
--Marc Siskin, Carnegie Mellon University

Global Analysis of the Arabic-English Etymology
--Hebatalla Elkhateeb-Musharraf, Princeton University

Acquiring Oral and Writing Proficiency in the Lab
--Maria Jose Cabrera-Puche, West Chester University

Angel Course Management System and its Technology Integration by Language Faculty
--Takeshi Sengiku, Gettysburg College

FL Students A-Twitter with Micro-Blogging
--Enza Antenos-Conforti, Montclair State University

The Power of PowerPoint
--Santiago Peña, East Brunswick High School and Rutgers

	Panel Discussions

Panelists Duane W. Kight of Haverford College and Jun Kramer of Yinghua Day School respectively discussed the benefits of using Flash animations to teach French grammar and promote second language learning.

Claire Braden-Siskin of U. Pittsburg, Nelleke Van Deusen-Scholl of Yale and Karen Campbell of Rutgers discussed the advantages and caveats of Web2 programs in the curriculum.

Open mic—a hallmark of the NEALLT conferences
An opportunity to ask questions, seek advice, and present issues. In 2008, we touched on concerns about using Vista and Office 2007.

Poster Sessions

- **BabelMOOing at Rutgers: Language Teaching in a Virtual Environment**
  Myriam Alami, Rutgers University
- **Digiclass – Information Technology and Classroom Materials: A Perfect Match**
  --Ursula Atkinson, Rutgers University
- **Microsoft's Photo Story 3: An Innovative Tool for Creative Language**
  --**Anne Catherine Aubert,** Rutgers University
- **Emerging Technology and the World Language Curriculum: Rutgers' Use of the "Cutting Edge" to Sharpen Language Proficiency**
  --**Carolyn Burger,** Rutgers University
- **Facilitating Professional Development for the K-12 Community through an Online Platform: RutgersOnline**
- **youtube.com - Window to the World?**
  --Beatriz Pelaez Martinez, Middletown High School North