

FROM THE EDITORS

The Editors are pleased to introduce the first issue of 2001, Volume 5, Number 1, which contains five articles on a broad variety of topics. The first two articles involve different forms of communication among learners which promote literacy development, and the third examines the use of e-mail and word processing for improving writing. The last two articles are concerned with vocabulary acquisition, first in children's software, and second, using multimedia annotations in software for L2 adult learners.

The first article by Gilberte Furstenberg, Sabine Levet, Kathryn English, and Katherine Maillet is entitled "[Giving a Virtual Voice to the Silent Language of Culture: The *Cultura* Project](#)." It presents a Web-based, cross-cultural, curricular initiative, *Cultura*, with particular emphasis on the ways in which the Web can be used to reveal invisible aspects of a foreign culture and to empower students to construct their own approach to cross-cultural literacy. The authors report on the participation of almost 150 students in two countries and assess how the project has contributed to the learners' cross-cultural literacy.

In the second article, "[Exchanging Ideas with Peers in Network-Based Classrooms: An aid or a pain?](#)" Sima Sengupta explores the nature of peer exchanges in two partially network-based classes and the conflicts learners face in this situation. Analyses of both the linguistic and the personal dimensions of peer exchanges reveal how learners used the available technology to interact with peers and their perception that this mode of delivery extended their traditional notions of learning. The data indicate that students also develop a sense of personal accountability arising from the high visibility of the Web.

The third article by Sigrun Biesenbach-Lucas and Donald Weasenforth, "[E-mail and Word Processing in the ESL Classroom: How the medium affects the message](#)," investigates the question of whether electronic mail writing can improve academic writing abilities. The authors compared ESL learners' electronic mail and word-processed writing and found no obvious differences between the two types of writing. However, the electronic mail texts were significantly shorter than the word-processed texts, and text-initial contextualization was more prominent in the word-processed than in the electronic mail texts. They suggest that e-mail may not be the most appropriate vehicle for improving academic writing, particularly during the drafting and revision stages of writing. However, if the drafting and revising were done in a word processor and then e-mailed, this might be a more suitable way to use electronic mail for improving writing.

In the fourth article, "[Can Software Support Children's Vocabulary Development?](#)" Julie Wood examines 16 well-reviewed software products designed for elementary grade students based on a set of guidelines derived from research. The guidelines included

assessment, for example, of whether instruction relates the new to the known, whether it promotes active, in-depth processing, whether it provides multiple exposures of new words; whether it teaches students to be strategic readers, and finally, whether it promotes additional reading. Findings indicated that the potential of technology to help students understand word meanings has yet to be fully exploited, as many of the products often merely varied a drill and practice routine rather than actually helped students really know a word.

Finally, in the fifth article, "[The Effect of Multimedia Annotation Modes on L2 Vocabulary Acquisition: A Comparative Study](#)," Khalid Al Seghayer examines which of the image modalities -- dynamic video or still picture -- is more effective for L2 vocabulary acquisition. The study found that a video clip is more effective in teaching unknown vocabulary words than a still picture. The author suggests that videos might help learners build better mental images and create curiosity on the part of the learner that might lead to increased concentration. In addition, the combination of modalities present in the video clips (visual image, background sounds that enhance accompanying video, textual definition, and pronunciation) could also be factors that enhance memory and learning.

Our [On the Net](#) column by Jean W. Leloup and Robert Ponterio presents an annotated list of "collection sites" for FL educators who are looking for on-line materials and resources. The selected collection sites are categorized by subject areas and themes. FL educators will discover much to use in their classroom as part of projects, as ancillaries to textbook materials, to further their own knowledge, and to assist students in their FL learning.

In our [Emerging Technologies](#) column, Bob Godwin-Jones addresses the issue of accessibility of Web pages to users with special needs. He provides links to the W3C, the standards-setting body for the World Wide Web and outlines the main considerations for design practices of Web sites that ensure the widest accessibility.

Our Reviews section begins with a review by Peter Lafford of [The Internet](#), a volume from the Oxford series *Resource Books for Teachers*, which provides a practical manual for the language teacher who wants to use the Internet as a resource in the classroom.

The second review, by Tomoaki Tatsumi, evaluates [Real English](#), a series of CD-ROM-based multimedia English lessons by the Marzio School and Ipse Communication, and recommends it as ancillary material for classroom or self-study learners at the beginning level.

In the third review, Mark Peterson provides an [overview of lab management software for the Macintosh](#) and reviews eight available tools, both in the freeware/shareware and the commercial domains.

It is hard to believe, but Language Learning and Technology is in its fifth year of publication. We are very grateful to our fine Editorial Board and would especially like to

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thank all of the outgoing board members who have served and supported LLT so well during its first few years: David Bickerton, Diane Birckbichler, Robert Bley-Vroman, Jim Cummins, Otmar Foelsche, Nina Garrett, Kazumi Hatasa, Debra Hoven, and Ted Yao. They have undoubtedly contributed to its present stature and success.

We are also pleased to announce that starting with this issue, readers will have the option of downloading PDF files of individual articles, as well as a PDF file containing the entire issue. The editors would like to thank our Editorial Assistant, Pamela DaGrossa, and our Web Production Editor, Dennie Hoopingarner, for making this opportunity a reality.

We hope you will continue to support our journal by sending us manuscripts, commentaries, and reviews, and by taking out a free subscription. We look forward to seeing you again in May 2001, when Volume 5, Number 2 appears. It will be a special issue of LLT on "Computer-Assisted Language Testing," to be edited by Irene Thompson.

Dorothy Chun, Irene Thompson,
& Mark Warschauer, Editors

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