Minutes from LLT 2009 Editorial Board Meeting

The 2009 editorial board meeting was held in Tempe, Arizona at the CALICO conference on March 12 from 12:00-1:30pm. In attendance were Klaus Brandl, Dorothy Chun, Robert Godwin-Jones, Trude Heift, David Hiple, Philip Hubbard, Betsy Pfaff Lavolette, Meci-Ling Liaw, Carla Meskill, Matthew Prior, Irene Thompson, and Carol Wilson-Duffy.

Dorothy and Irene welcomed the attendees and introduced Matthew Prior as the new managing editor, Carla Meskill as the new associate editor, and Klaus Brandl and Meei-Ling Liaw as new editorial board members.

Overview of 2008 Report

Matthew Prior presented highlights from the 2008 report, including the publication schedule for special issues, reviewer information, and the steady increase in the number of subscribers and submissions. Carol Wilson-Duffy gave an overview of readership statistics (Appendix 3 of the report).

The editorial staff noted the main countries of submission were the U.S. and Taiwan, but expressed concern over the lack of quality submissions from underrepresented countries as well as an overrepresentation from English instructional settings. Meei-Ling Liaw and Carla Meskill explained that the rise in submissions from Taiwan and Turkey might be due to the fact that the Ministries of Education in Taiwan and Turkey now encourage scholars to subscribe and submit to journals cited in SSCI.

Journal Management System

A main topic of discussion focused on the possible adoption of an online management system such as Open Journal Systems or Manuscript Central (MC). Some members spoke positively about MC, noting its ease of use, its ability to convert MS Word into PDF, and its ability to keep track of various versions of manuscripts. However, as it costs about $2,500 a year to license, the question is how to pay for it. It was suggested that we might ask the NFLRC at the University of Hawaii to fund it as it might be a good investment for them if all three of their journals could make use of it. Other options suggested for raising the money were to solicit sponsors, have authors pay a fee, initiate a subscription fee, add a donation function to LLT (like Wikipedia), or even to go commercial. Robert Godwin-Jones noted that he discovered Thomson Gale Publishing is charging customers $5.95 on Amazon to download his articles. This is without LLT’s permission and must be stopped, as the contract with Thomson Gale was terminated in March 2008. Most of the members present were in favor of keeping LLT’s open access status. David Hiple, co-director of the NFLRC at UH, pointed out that making LLT a pay-based journal could endanger NFLRC funding by the U.S. Department of Education.

Submissions

Irene Thompson pointed out that the number of submissions related to the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL) has been increasing, while the number of submissions related to less commonly taught languages (LCTLs) has not grown. She stated that it is important for LLT to attract more submissions representing LCTLs since Title VI funding is targeted for LCTLs and not EFL. Several attendees pointed out that many who are doing work in LCTL are often not trained as researchers or authors. This would require more tutoring and support of these authors. To encourage more LCTL-related submissions, suggestions that were offered include a (face-to-face) summer institute (such as through the NFLRC or in collaboration with MSU or other
LRCs), perhaps in combination with online preparatory work, and a more active presence at ACTFL and related conferences.

It was also pointed out that it is not just LCTLs, but commonly taught languages (other than English) are also underrepresented. For example, submissions from Europe and Latin America are virtually absent. A few members asked about the possibility of offering content in languages other than English, but the consensus was it would make the review and editing process too difficult. Klaus Brandl and Dorothy Chun mentioned the possibility of having abstracts in other languages. A question then was raised regarding how to go about choosing the languages for the abstracts—whether or not to just leave that up to the author or just ask editorial board members for their help. Irene suggested that this would not be for all the articles, just the ones that are accepted for publication. Carla Meskill suggested it might not be appropriate to ask editorial board members to edit or translate these abstracts. Trude Heift then said that the big question is what would be gained by this.

Dorothy Chun also mentioned that it seems that articles with the word “multimedia” in the title get a large number of hits. We could ask authors to supply keywords for metatags (keywords for internet search engines). Carol Wilson-Duffy said that we could do this for targeted languages, but she was unsure about the feasibility of doing this, particularly for languages that use a non-Roman script. She promised to look into it. It was suggested that it might be useful to first come up with a short list of languages/countries to target.

"On the Net" Column

The editors solicited suggestions for a replacement for the discontinued “On the Net” column edited by Jean LeLoup and Robert Ponterio. Klaus Brandl suggested having an integrated column (e.g., best practices, lesson plans) that could serve as a mini-publication. The chief editors suggested that a research-based teacher-oriented column would be useful if it showed how to apply language learning theories to classroom practice and perhaps even provided links to existing and ongoing projects. Carla Meskill mentioned the Canadian ELIXIR program (Tom Carey's project in conjunction with MERLOT <http://www.merlot.org>) that has lesson plans with research-based templates. She also asked whether LLT accepts action research and if so, why not an action research column?

Carol Wilson-Duffy suggested a readership survey to solicit opinions about possible column content.

CALL-related dissertations

Dorothy asked board members to suggest names of graduate students who could update the list of CALL-related dissertations. Carla Meskill said she may have someone in mind. Trude Heift said that she may also have a student that could help update the list of Canadian dissertations. Philip Hubbard suggested that it might be useful for the whole board to take a look at this list.