From the Editor
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How does one become a technology-using teacher? This is a question that is central to all of us in the language media field and to all of us working to foster technology development among our colleagues and faculty peers. I think the answer is a simple and perhaps shocking one: one matures into such an instructor very, very slowly.

I would argue that all of us who are active teachers became who we are in the classroom over a significant span of time, a period ranging from years to decades. It is invariably painful to think back to that first teaching experience—your first year out of graduate school, or that earliest instructional position. If your experience was anything like mine, it was a nightmare of nervous performance mixed with worry and self-doubt. Slowly, very slowly—over the course of those first semesters and later years—I gained confidence and experience and, I hope, continue to mature as a teacher to this day. That first full-time teaching year of mine was 1985, and I find myself thinking back more and more to that year.

I believe too that one becomes a technology user in the classroom in much the same way: in a process that begins with nervous performance and continues through to more experienced and mature use of electronic tools with learners. For all of the formal training in technology that I received, there was simply no substitute for years of experimenting and trying and utilizing electronic media with my students in hundreds of different ways. I was brave to the point of stupidity during those early forays into educational media, and I think that perhaps allowed me to mature as a technology teacher a bit more quickly. But at the same time I think back and shudder at some of the painful class sessions that I lead. And I remember—now fondly—that day the classroom television caught fire, as well as to the day I first watched a whole room of learners take fire with the spark of inspiration brought about by watching a single target language video I was brave enough to bring into class that day. My first full-time year as a technology-using teacher was 1987, and recently I find myself reminiscing more and more about that year as well.

As I think about how best to mentor and guide new teachers in the language profession toward the goal of technology use, I often recount this incremental process framework. I attempt to persuade any teacher who will listen that development as a technology user in the curriculum will be a long road. I try as best I can to express that it is an act of bravery to change significantly as a classroom teacher, and that what follows will be a time of sheer nerves, as well as a period requiring hearty perseverance to "stick with it" over a course of a career. If I can both prepare my colleagues and friends for those nervous early days of using technology and then support them during the years of instructional change that follow, I think I will have done my job. Part of that support I give will be merely technical—helping a teaching assistant find a new television set when a video class goes wrong. But I think the far more important part is talking to that teacher and encouraging him or her not to lose faith, urging that colleague to go forward and use media again, even though a television set just caught fire in front of the class! In the end, it will be essentially a process based upon bravery and perseverance. And a little bit of supportive help from me and all of those like me who make up IALL.

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Several of the articles in this issue were written by newer language teachers and technology users. It is a particular joy of mine that print publications like the *Journal* can foster columnists and authors who are both beginning the long road to becoming a media teacher, as well as those who have long experience in doing so.

One IALL. member who exemplifies the latter is David Pankratz. It has also been a distinct joy of mine to work over the past several year, with David, our "LLTI Highlights" columnist, who himself after five years with the *Journal* makes this his last issue. During the past five years, David has undertaken the Herculean task of summarizing and commenting on conversations and discourse threads from our organization's electronic list. As I mentioned in a recent posting to that list, David not only summarizes, but also writes and reflects with a creativity and a panache that are rare, and I always find his columns a refreshing look at our profession and our professional conversations. We will miss having you as part of the *Journal* family, David, and wish you the best of luck in the exciting endeavors you have planned!◆