

NZALT Conference 2008

Philippa Doig, Conference Convenor

NZALT INTERNATIONAL BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

6 – 9 July 2008

absolutely positively languages

Well... What can the committee say? Conference was the most demanding, exciting, exhausting, rewarding, nerve wracking event I have ever been involved with!

The keynote speakers were well received – unless you have heard speakers before you can never be sure that they will be able to put across their ideas and research in an engaging way. No need to worry about Ian Lillico and Ema Ushioda; the evaluations showed that their presentations were enjoyable and thought-provoking. I won't forget the picture of Ema, respected academic, learning to ride her bike in the back garden at age six and she won't forget the virtual tour of Napier when she was at the mercy of The Improvisors at the conference dinner!



At the heart of the conference, though, are the language and level specific sections. We owe serious thanks to Debra Atkin (Primary and Intermediate) Liwei Wang (Chinese), Janet McCallister (French and Te Papa quiz), Judith Geare (German), Hidemi Fuke (Japanese), Kim Tattersall (Latin), Galumalemana Hunkin (Samoan) and Jairo Trujillo Ramirez and Wayne Jackson (Spanish), because without the specific content most teachers would have left feeling very dissatisfied. I would also like to thank Sue Sutherland (Treasurer), Pauline Kotze (accommodation, prizes and conference dinner), Eric Yates (selection and peer reviewing of generic presentations) and Peter McClymont (technical brilliance). A big thank you also to all from Victoria NZALT who contributed – help came from a much wider circle of members than the organising committee.



Conference organiser
Philippa Doig

It was an innovation at this conference to include Samoan and Latin. Samoan teachers in particular were extremely appreciative. One said to me that it was the first time they had had the chance to work professionally together as a national group. Latin teachers were few in number but we felt that it was important to acknowledge Latin, because we have some common ground as teachers of a language. In spite of strenuous efforts we failed to attract many teachers of Te Reo Maori although there was interest in the session on Ka Mau Te Wehi which unfortunately had to be cancelled when a flight failed to take off on Wednesday morning.

Just over 300 delegates exceeded our estimates and meant that conference will return a profit to NZALT which will be used to benefit language teachers up and down the country. We are grateful to the sponsors who contributed: the Ministry of Education (major sponsor), the Goethe Institut, the Sasakawa Fellowship Fund for Japanese Language Education and AUT.

It was controversial to return to a school for NZALT conference but there are serious advantages: all those computer rooms (all those classrooms!) as well as a big space for plenaries. Wellington is not well served with venues that provide both a large hall and lots of small rooms for break out groups.

We couldn't have done without the tech angels and the gofers who ran around helping, guiding and always smiling!

We could have done without: freezing weather, wet paint on the doorways and the road works outside in the street, but we all survived and enjoyed some motivation, some inspiration and plenty of communication!

The biggest thank you to you, the delegates, without whom there would have been no conference.

Philippa Doig
Convenor



The TEAL hat brigade – same colour as our new Learning Area !

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