

This document contains the simple notes jotted down by each of the three groups during the afternoon session of the NERALLT Meeting at Connecticut College in April of 2006. The general meeting title was “**The Language Resource Center and Emerging Structures on Campus: Integration, Innovation, and Independence.**”

Group One

Are there any “language lab” arrangement similarities or parallels which seem to be evident among the institutions?

- Physical
 - o Mix of analog (VHS tape), turnkey audio solutions with instructor station, and individual workstation labs. “Audio Portfolio”
 - o Language Labs within Media Centers
 - o Collections of media
 - o Tanberg (?) console solutions used at about half of the Liberal Arts institutions, but are very old
 - o A couple institutions using Wimba
- Individual student lab work v. student/faculty projects
 - o Many institutions with digitized audio resources available from “anywhere”
 - o Students come to labs for a few reasons:
 - Media resources such as foreign language movies that aren’t available elsewhere
 - Workstations are set up with everything they need (working headphones and microphones, multi-regional DVD players)
 - Quieter than their dorm rooms

Group Two

Free discussion

Williams — input from depts. is advisory — not control per se

Center is responsible for the classrooms, shared responsibility for equipment with IT, but Registrar assigns the classrooms (but local overrides the room assignments)

New building woes — with LangLab not a satellite computer lab
90 faculty “soldiers”

I-Tech trying to take over more and more around campus

Dartmouth — Like having Otmar locally for help. (Cindy — Boudin same — stayed in basement)

Discussion on how proximity is key

Sergei @ Wesleyan — oversees all the classrooms in his building (mostly language 10 smart classrooms) despite it being IT's responsibility

Example of collaboration — replacement of the recording studio equipment

Dartmouth — patterns of collaborations (has keys to fix the problems)

Similarities or parallels in the types of Language Lab arrangements

When IT doesn't give credit, help

Hard to get a good relationship, clout, and how to not get taken over

Since we're driven by the pedagogy, we have to highlight the difference here

IT provides the mechanism to provide the content —

Notion of collecting IOUs — let them do what they do best — refocusing us to do what makes us unique.

Discussion: doesn't handing something over to OIT mean giving up something in the process?

A: as long as we don't get our mission driven by them

But when IT thinks they know how to do things that they don't ...

Nurture — you need IT for a network, but beyond that ...

Overcome (lack of input) by OIT

Strength of one's personality

And relationship of highest level person that we answer to and who they are on equal footing with in IT

Sergei on a search and how to (re)visioning a position during the search to better serve our needs

When things don't move quickly enough ...

Need a domain in LRC @ Dartmouth — create one's own —> if so and so can do, then ...

I'd like to do but I'm confused because I have this and this obstacle
students as advocates for changes, power faculty members

Group Three

MIT, Harvard (Hammond), Brown (Ross), Yale (Garrett, Knowles), BU, UNH

Yale's got three floors, including classrooms and labs; Nina thinks that physical spaces are less important than sense of mission and participation

MIT sez: they wouldn't do what Dartmouth has done and make the lab virtual, in part because students like the space and things like video are necessarily localized (not streaming yet, ditto Yale)

Brown straddles library and IT functionality, physical space not great, no instructional space hardly; less a place where people are doing foreign lang work and more where people are dealing with media; admin @ Brown seems to want centralized media services place where faculty can get media work done (Nina points out that pedagogy is not centralizable, Ross concurs)

Professional development important for faculty, decreases specificity of disciplines
This makes LLs somewhat into places with some consultative efforts, but cross-departmental, cross-disciplinary

Economies of scale with cross-disciplinary work

Difficulties in knowing what to centralize and what not

Importance lies in methods of work, not necessarily work output

Administrators care about cost-benefit analysis, tangibility

Tricky business to guide faculty when working on projects

MIT tried to guide a faculty member recently, asking for revisions on a grant proposal, and the fac member pitched a fit at feeling like being asked to change his/her teaching style; committee still asked for changes

Nice for Yale that our grantees are generally non-ladder faculty, so CLS doesn't have the same leverage problems

Faculty don't think of themselves as researchers and don't seem to care about writing good grant proposals; UNH commented that many faculty see grants as given by favoritism and therefore they don't need to write good grant proposals

Discussion about grant writing and how writing a good proposal is half the project in many ways

Change over last 15 years is that LLs are now seeing themselves (and making themselves) less pure service than service+ organizations, where pedagogy is "embedded in and necessary to" the use of technology, though nobody talks on campuses about how tech enhances or transforms teaching

@ MIT, course evals take into account how instructor used media (methods and quality)

UNH mentions that faculty often fobs the use of technology off on the students, where the instructor isn't learning how to use the technology, just helping the students to learn it.

UNH gets students together periodically to ask them about use of technology on campus; most often students comment on the faculty's inability to use it or to adapt to glitches

Harvard asked how to get faculty involved and interested; Nina said one example is having a good facility and encouraging instructors to use the facilities; using our facilities also gives the faculty quick access to our staff for support (help or futhering)

BU puts most advanced and least advanced in most advanced classrooms and rooms closest to LL staff

@ Brown, only half of the classrooms are registrar controlled, and half of those are media capable; not known of the departmental-controlled ones how many are media-capable

@ BU, they control one floor of the building from 9-5, but after 5 it's under the registrar and this discourages them from tricking out classrooms because there are many budgetary issues as well as maintenance ones

Delivery of material (a/k/a pedagogy) primary

Brown using WebCT as potential video delivery mechanism, covering them for copyright issues

Cross-disciplinary groupings work well

Pedagogy one of the most important things, and that's how LLs can make ourselves important, by supporting and enhancing teaching (without leaning on the concept of 'enhancing' when talking to the instructors)

Having good facilities very useful in getting hesitant instructors to use tech (support staff present) and in furthering skills of advanced ones

Collated by Dick House
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