

## **Educational Policies Need Global and Local Accents**

### **Successful Conclusion to the Conference:**

#### **Awareness Matters: Language, Culture, Literacy**

Fostering and promoting the new generation of up-and-coming academics was the central theme of the 10<sup>th</sup> International Congress of the Association for Language Awareness held at the University of Kassel.

Under the auspices of the Federal Ministry for Education and Research, the German Research Foundation sponsored an academic exchange of opinions into the latest developments in the field of the acquisition of first, second and foreign languages, teacher training, cultural research and the role of language and culture in the job market. The congress has been held up to now in Canada, Great Britain, Sweden, Spain, France and China – in this year's event in Kassel, academics from nearly 50 different countries presented 200 talks and presentations. The participants came from as far afield as Brazil, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Finland, India, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Ireland, New Zealand, Australia, Qatar, Kuwait and USA to name but a few of the countries represented.

Professor Dr. Claudia Finkbeiner acted a double function as chairperson of the Association for Language Awareness and together with Marc Smasal, M.A. and her team from the department of Foreign Language Teaching and Learning Research and Intercultural Communication, as host of this year's conference. Particular emphasis was laid on the development and furthering of young academics. This future generation had the opportunity to present in the form of colloquia their research findings and were able to discuss their results with a team of international experts. Thus the two aims of the congress were united – the building up of a network of international young academics and their sponsoring for future congresses.

Well-known academics in this field from Britain, USA and Germany could be won for these aims. Keynote plenary speeches were given by Prof. Dr. Michael Byram, Durham, UK, Prof. Dr. Patricia Ruggiano Schmidt, Syracuse New York, USA, Prof. Dr. Guenter Nold, Dortmund, Germany, Prof. Dr. Pat Edwards, Michigan, USA as well as Prof. Dr. Huenerberg and Dr. Geile, Kassel, Germany. The speeches elucidated not only the role of language and culture in the acquisition of languages and the development of learning- and reading competency in various contexts but also illustrated the development of language in international economic relations, the training and further education in Europe and the promotion of IT- supported infrastructure in the modern service sector, e.g. in health care.

ALA plays an active role in the present debates in the educational field and offers concrete suggestions to governments, educational facilities, administrative bodies and companies throughout

the world. For this reason, this year's congress of the ALA offered an important platform for educational, cultural and economic exchange and set new accents at regional, national and, in particular, international levels. Prof. Dr. Claudia Finkbeiner was reelected as president of the association for a further two years. Furthermore, the new ALA Committee was elected with Prof. Dr. Richard Aplin as treasurer and Prof. Dr. Joanna White as ALA secretary. Prof. Dr. Anita Malmquist, Dr. Agneta Svalberg, Dr. Andrea Young, Dr. Lleila Ranta, Dr. David Lasagabaster, Dr. Charlotte Kemp, and Dr. Marcelo Concario were elected as ordinary committee members and Prof. Dr. Carl James and Cathy Pomphrey as co-opted members.

Papers on the conference theme will be published in the Journal Language Awareness (Claudia Finkbeiner & Agneta Svalberg eds.)

For further information on the conference, please contact  
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The programme is also available there. Requests for information and interviews can be made to Prof. Finkbeiner at the address above. Material such as photos, etc. can also be submitted to that address.

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