

## Assignment 2: Conference Attendance

I attended two SouthWest Association for Language Learning Technology (SWALLT) online conferences. The first conference was on February 12<sup>th</sup> titled “Teaching Literature with Technology,” for which the presenter was Brenna Reinhart (UCLA). There is an online recording of the presentation, which was divided into 2 parts because there was a section where the presenter brought up a student, that did not want to be recorded. Part one can be found at <http://connect.csumb.edu/p29548577/> and part two at <http://connect.csumb.edu/p24158038/>. The second SWALLT conference was on March 12<sup>th</sup>, for which Enza Antenos-Conforti, Ph.D. from Montclair State University presented on “A Personal (iPod) Touch to Language Teaching and Learning.” The online recording is available at <http://connect.csumb.edu/p10272383/>.

The presentation in February was geared towards using technology in teaching literature. Ms. Reinhart’s presentation focused primarily on blogging. Her language students used blogs to post summaries and journals of their readings, for which fellow students were supposed to comment either in support of their posts or to provide helpful critique as to why they didn’t agree with the main blog entry. Ms. Reinhart also had students create wikis so that they could work together to find the best translation of literature that the class or group of students was working on translating. She also was using google maps, in a rather creative way, which was to have students create entries on a layer for google maps that shows the locations of where things were happening in the literature that they were reading.

The second conference presentation was geared towards iPod Touch usage and the difficulties that Professor Conforti encountered. During Professor Conforti’s research into applications she found that Blackboard’s iPhone app was not user friendly, but she also found

that the wordpress application for posting blogs also had some problems that made it difficult to use by some none tech savvy users. She found that most of her students began using “wordier,” “unit conversion,” “twittelator,” “voice memos,” “youtube,” “learn10,” and “Montclair” the most during her class and for the other language classes that required the usage of an iPod Touch or iPhone for their homework.

I found that the presenters were primarily getting good feedback from using technology in a foreign language classroom, but there were some roadblocks or stumbling blocks that need to be overcome to get the technology up and running in the classroom. The important thing that I saw was, that using technology is really a learning process for both the user and the instructor, because for the student they need to learn how to use something new in order to do their homework while also having to deal with some of the growing pains of technology and bugs that happen to arise. For the instructor they have to deal with the same problems the student has, but they also need to constantly fine tune and look for new software/technology that does that same job while simultaneously being more user friendly than what is currently being implemented in the classroom.

I discovered that one needs to attend conferences either online or in person frequently in order to keep up with the new technological advances that are happening. Conferences also serve as a great opportunity to get to meet colleagues that are attempting to do similar things with technology and to see what they are doing and discover what has worked and hasn't worked for them.