

To: Joyce Yamada

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From: Molli Fleming

Subject: Discussion of the benefits of attending ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) Conference, November 20-22, 2015 in San Diego, CA

The ACTFL conference is recognized by college-level World Language teachers as the most in-depth conference from which to gain the widest and deepest base of new information/pedagogies in the field.

Unfortunately for me, this conference always takes place the week before Thanksgiving when my classes are in full swing, and it is often situated in the Midwest or East Coast, making easy travel prohibitive. However, this year my need for interaction and advice from other language colleagues was at an all-time high, and the relative proximity of the San Diego location made attendance this year a must.

My decision was rewarded in numerous ways. I attended several sessions each day, as well as keynotes, and spent hours pouring over text books and materials from a gymnasium full of publishers, all the while meeting new colleagues and reconnecting with old ones. This kind of immersion in the world and culture of language teaching was a re-energizing balm that has helped me reignite my enthusiasm and creative juices.

Three of the sessions I attended gave me specific ideas and information that I will integrate in my classes this semester, and help me to review how I scaffold such skills as connecting the language to cultural awareness. One of the sessions I attended on the first day, "Bringing Culture Role-immersion into the Foreign Language Class", presented me with the idea of including assignments on issues-based research and presentations. I have been designing a way to scaffold this idea through the four-course sequence, beginning with having SPAN 101 students choose and research one issue that is pertinent to people in some area of the Spanish-speaking world. As they progress through the sequence of courses, there will be more in-depth discussion and ultimately in SPAN 202, a role-playing exercise to imagine solutions and explore how to advocate for them.

In another session I was introduced to Radio Ambulante, a Spanish-language public radio program and podcast, with full ancillary support for classrooms. This source will enrich each course I teach, and help me make the break from the current text-books supersite, which is expensive and not liked by the students.

Another session entitled "Movement Magic: Teaching through kinesthetic activities", gave me more data to support my long-term use of movement activities, and provided me with five new movement-based games and activities to use.

I could fill another page with smaller tidbits, but these are the most impactful and explainable benefits that I gained from this conference. Thank you for helping me to go through process to get professional development funding!