# CATESOL 2008 Report

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The theme of the 39th Annual State conference, held April 10-13 in Sacramento's Hyatt and Sheraton Hotel and the Sacramento Convention Center, was *Growing Democracy: Classrooms, Communities and the Capitol*. I gave three presentations, attended a few others, participated in one business meeting as an officer, visited the exhibits, talked with publishers, and networked with colleagues from many other institutions. This year I was physically limited by a broken leg suffered in a skiing accident. Traveling by wheelchair among the hotels, convention center and downtown restaurants gave me the opportunity to experience first-hand some challenges that the disabled deal with on a daily basis. The following sessions represent a small fraction of the hundreds of presentations and activities available to the thousands of conference-goers.

## CATESOL Board Sponsored Panel: Using Technology to Grow Democracy

The Technology-Enhanced Language Learning Interest Group (TELL-IG) hosted a panel to report on the use of technology to enhance participation in the community. The next five paragraphs summarize this panel's presentations.

## Empowering a Learning Community – Growing Democracy

Martha Ramkin, Assistant Principal, explained how Newport Mesa Adult School is growing a participatory professional learning community through technology. She demonstrated an essential component of their innovative onsite/online professional development plan: an active professional blog. In six short months, the *Adult Education Maters* blog (http://adultedmatters.wordpress.com) has grown to over 19,000 views, 73 posts and 260 comments. She described the blog's purpose and function and showed us behind-the-scenes administrative steps that help nurture a culture of collaboration, participation, and shared leadership. She asserts that to grow democracy in our schools, we must start with a school culture that reflects our democratic principals.

## Online Meetings for Students

I have been teaching ESL at a distance for many years and have been a frequent presenter on the TELL-IG panel. For this year's panel I shared CCC Confer, a web-based meeting system that is free to California Community Colleges. I explained I use this system to interact synchronously with students at a distance. http://www.cccconfer.org

## Family Literacy with High School Students

Larry Ferlazzo, Grand Prize Winner of the 2007 International Reading Association Reading and Technology Award, discussed Luther Burbank High Schools' Family Literacy Project. He used his vast experience in community organizing to engage parents and children in using technology to develop English and leadership skills. In addition, that schools before-and-after-school ESL computer lab has inspired a large affordable housing and community development group in the area to work with tenants/ residents to replicate the labs (and their focus on relationship building and leadership skills) in their housing developments.

### Publish an International Online Student Newspaper

Belinda Braunstein demonstrated a project at UCSB-X's English Language Program wherein students work in teams to write, edit and publish articles on entertainment, food and health. Their online publication, International Eye, can be accessed at http://inteyesummer.wordpress.com.

### Using NPR to Write about Values

Beth Bogage showed how the NPR radio show *This I Believe* provides an excellent springboard for student discussions and writing assignments. *This I Believe* is an international project engaging people in writing, sharing, and discussing the core values that guide their daily lives. These short statements of belief, written by people of all walks of life, are archived at http://www.thisibelieve.org and featured on public radio.

### Using CCC Confer to Enhance Online Learning

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CCC Confer provides the California Community College system with a high-quality web technology in support of meetings, collaboration and e-learning environments. I described e-conferencing, outlined Confer value and benefits, and explained features and functionality and training options. Then I demonstrated to an audience how to present content to online students using slides, application sharing, text chat, and telephone or voice over Internet protocol. Being able to speak and explain material orally augments visual and textual material to provide rich distance learning.

To view the archive of this conference presentation:

http://www.cccconfer.org/cccc/GoToArchivesAnonymously.aspx?MeetingID=d9c8da09-8700-44df-abe9-95cdbf04bd95

### Creating Sound Files with Audacity

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To a packed standing-room-only audience in one of the Electronic Village computer labs, I taught users how to use Audacity, a free, cross-platform downloadable audio editor-recorder. I explained how to get set up, recorded samples, demonstrated some basic editing techniques, showed how to export the native files to compressed mp3 format. During the session, I gave practical advice and provided hands-on practice. My PowerPoint presentation and handout can be downloaded from http://catesol2008.org/audacity

### Pronunciation Priorities: A Pyramid Approach

Judy Gilbert presented a pyramid of core concepts essential to intelligibility. These include intonation, template sentences, syllables, word stress, focus words, priority vowels, and priority consonants. The presenter explained that these elements must be mastered before time and energy are used for more subtle topics, and she gave participants a chance to work with practical tools to teach these elements.

### TELL-IG Business Meeting

As Secretary of the Technology-Enhanced Language Learning Interest Group, I took minutes of this meeting. After introductions from the membership, Coordinator Marian Thacher reviewed TELL-IG's activities of the year. We discussed this year's conference activities and proposed topics for next year. After electing new officers or re-electing existing ones, we participated in a raffle of books and software donated by vendors.