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Lina Lee Professor Spanish; Languages, Literature, & Culture, College of Liberal Arts (COLA) travels to Italy

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Lina Lee - Italy 2015

Professor of Spanish; Languages, Literature, and Culture, College of Liberal Arts (COLA)

In August 2015, I traveled to Padova, Italy to attend the European Association for Computer Assisted Language Learning (EUROCALL) annual conference. The conference took place at the University of Padova, 45 minutes outside of Venice. The University of Padova was founded in 1222 as a school of law and is one of Italy's leading universities. I delivered a research paper entitled "Developing Learners' Content Knowledge and Oral Proficiency Through Digital News Stories" and participated in a workshop at the conference. I also had the honor to chair a panel session on the evaluation of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) research with a focus on how the use of digital media for virtual intercultural interaction and collaboration can help develop learners' cross-cultural knowledge and awareness. It was very well attended.



Prof. Lina Lee at entrance of psychology building at the University of Padova

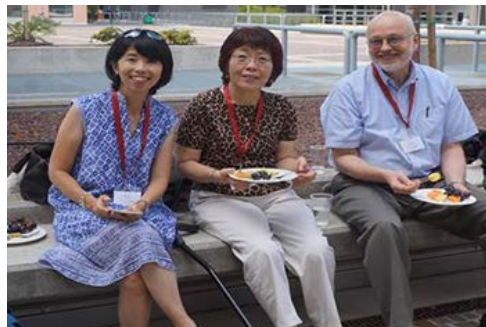


Patio at the University of Padova

Although online intercultural exchange practice and research exist, they remain relatively peripheral to the field and have yet to be taken up by a significant number of university educators outside of Europe. During the conference, I met with my long-term research collaborator, Professor Robert O'Dowd from the University of León, Spain who coordinated the INTENT project funded by the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme to support the integration of telecollaboration in European Higher Education (<http://www.scoop.it/t/intent-project-news>), and developed the *UNICollaboration* platform: <http://unicollaboration.eu/>. We shared and discussed ideas of how to create a pilot prototype and develop a platform at UNH to allow teachers and students to use tools and resources, including instructional modules and training videos for cross-cultural exchange. I attended a training workshop to learn more about telecollaborative exchange, including organizational, pedagogical and technological aspects of online interaction and collaboration. Telecollaboration provides a unique opportunity for language learners to exchange first-hand knowledge of the target culture with native speakers. During the luncheon, I had the opportunity to meet and network with colleagues from other countries to explore possible online exchange programs.



Prof. Lina Lee speaking at the EUROCALL 2015 Annual Conference



(l. to r.) Prof. Yukiko Yabata, Prof. Lina Lee, Prof. John Brine

Overall, my trip to Italy was very productive. My participation in the EUROCALL conference served as an important site for continued dialogue and collaborations with international educators. Importantly, I learned how to develop a platform along with instructional modules and training videos of language teachers and learners. Unquestionably, such a site will allow language teachers at all levels (K-12, community college, and university) to find partner classes, to read about tasks, successful projects and evaluation tools, and to share and exchange ideas through forums. I'm grateful to CIE for their support and I'm eager to build an online exchange platform at UNH.



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