

Guatemala Through Their Eyes

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Members of the Tulane University Innovative Learning Center are on location shooting audio and video content for a multimedia learning program that teaches the "less commonly taught language" of Kaqchikel Maya. During its visit to Guatemala this week, the team is blogging about the experience.



Technology services staff members (from left) Derek Toten, Marie Carianna and Lee Rubin pause at Guatemala's Lake Atitlan with Valerie McGinley Marshall (right) of the Stone Center for Latin American Studies. (Photo from Derek Toten)

"Since my interest is in new media, production and social media, I am using this opportunity to field test these technologies by incorporating things like YouTube and Flickr into the process," says Derek Toten, director of [instructional media](#) at Tulane. "This year we will be using geo-location technology, which means you can actually follow our paths online and see where our photos and video fit on a map."

Toten explains that this is the team's fifth and final journey collecting video and audio for the [language-learning application](#), which will feature instruction in both

English and Spanish.

The concept of creating the multimedia program originated from a summer learning institute, where students are submerged in Mayan culture for six weeks. The institute, directed by anthropology professor Judith Maxwell, has taken students to Central America annually since 1988. It is sponsored by the [Stone Center](#) for Latin American Studies.

Valerie McGinley Marshall, director of external relations for the Stone Center, says that the instructional CDs are being produced in an ongoing manner as more footage is collected each year.

"We released our first CD in 2008, but it only had the first unit," says Marshall, who directs the project and works with the team in Guatemala. "We are now going straight to online."

While on the trip, the team will distribute CDs of the online version to the teachers and people they've worked with. Since the project has Title VI funding from the U.S. Department of Education, the program is available free of charge.

Log onto the [blog](#) daily to follow the ILC production team as it treks through Guatemala.