School Outreach Stories

Skype Visit with the Université de Bourgogne

_Meghan McCallum_

In November 2014, I spoke to a translation class at the Université de Bourgogne in Dijon, France about my experiences working in the translation industry. The entire visit was conducted online, so I was able to speak to the students in France from my home office in the United States.

A week before the visit, I uploaded an introductory video on Vimeo for the students to watch. In my intro video, I spoke about my education and career path and briefly described my day-to-day work. The students’ professor asked the students to watch the video and leave comments with questions they wanted me to address during my class visit the following week. I received a lot of intriguing questions on the video, and prepared a presentation based on common themes of the students’ interests.

The day of the presentation, the professor and I set up a video call on Skype, which was displayed on the classroom computer for the students to participate in. I addressed some of the key points of interest and questions that the students had posed, and followed up with an additional round of questions and answers. The students were very engaged in the conversation, and the visit went quickly!

Being in a specific translation program at the Université de Bourgogne, the students were already familiar with translation as a skill; however, they were very curious about the professional world of translation and what they could expect after graduation. The students wanted to know details about working in an in-house linguistic role at a translation agency, what being a project manager was all about, and what specific business skills were important in addition to translating.

It was very interesting to speak to a group of students in a program similar to the one I had completed in the United States. We were able to delve into specific details of the profession because of their existing backgrounds in translation, and we had a productive, two-way conversation. It made me very happy to see a classroom full of eager translators and to give them some information that will help to guide them in the next step in their careers!