



## **TESL Ontario's 46th Annual Conference**

### **“Synergies of Language and Life”**

#### **TESL Ontario 2018 Conference Report**

The 46<sup>th</sup> Annual TESL Ontario Conference, “Synergies of Language and Life” acknowledged the connectivity of language teaching and learning with the lives of our learners and was evident in many of the sessions. While there was slightly less emphasis on Portfolio Based Language Assessment (PBLA) this year, there were a number of sessions which did focus on that theme.

The 909 attendees expressed their approval at being back at Sheraton Centre Toronto for the conference, which took place November 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Once again 250 of the delegates received conference assistance from the former Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration. Many of these were among the more than 100 individuals who attended the Friday afternoon Administrators session.

A conference of this size is due in part to the generosity of our sponsors who contribute to our success. We are most appreciative of the support of British Council – IELTS, ESL Coin, FAST (Fighting Antisemitism Together), Ontario Road Safety Resources, Paragon Testing Enterprises, Retired Teachers of Ontario, and University of Saskatchewan for their support.

Asmaa Cober, a clinical social worker who also has a private practice in Waterloo, delivered a well-received keynote on ‘Learning and Resilience’. Asmaa’s personal refugee experience has informed and influenced her work in this important field.

Our second keynote was a first for TESL Ontario! Dr. Deborah Healey teaches online teacher training courses for the American English Institute at the University of Oregon and delivered her message on ‘Gamification’ remotely which was well-received by those who participated.

The focus on technology continued as there were 2 other remote sessions offered, and a new session called Techknow in which participants moved throughout the room and participated in different groups to learn about various aspects of technology.

The theme of the 13th Annual Panel Discussion was “Building Thriving Communities”. The audience heard updates from Yves Saint-Germain, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and Yvonne Ferrer from the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. The audience very much appreciated the opportunity to ask questions and give input.

Our second annual Career Connections session provided conference delegates an opportunity to hear advice and input from a panel of three employers following which they could connect with representatives from 19 organizations who were seeking potential staff. While most employers,

covering the public and private sectors, were from the Greater Toronto Area, there was also representation from Kitchener and Guelph. We had reached out to employers across Ontario and will continue to do so in the future.

Best practices and innovative ideas were shared by 168 volunteer presenters through 110 workshops and presentations. In addition, there were 13 poster presentations.

Twenty-eight exhibitors displayed their goods in the exhibitor hall, providing participants with the opportunity to peruse and purchase the latest ESL resources.

At Thursday's Welcome Reception the TESL Ontario's Distinguished Contribution Award as well as the Sparks of Excellence awards for contributions to the field of ESL were presented. We continue to be grateful for, and inspired by, the dedication and hard work of our members.

The volunteers who present, monitor doors or staff the registration desk contribute significantly to our success. The TESL Ontario conference could not exist without their commitment and effort; the conference committee is most appreciative of their dedication to our profession.

Barb Krukowski  
Conference Chair