

TESL Ontario's 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference  
"Language Learning: A Focus On Success"

## TESL Ontario 2011 Conference Report

The 39th Annual TESL Ontario Conference, "*Language Learning: A Focus On Success*" was held at the Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel from October 27th to 29<sup>th</sup>, 2011. Over 1500 delegates attended, 719 of whom were LINC and ELT personnel who received conference assistance from Citizenship and Immigration Canada. An additional 244 ESL delegates were supported by Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration.

The plenary speakers provided an in-depth look at various aspects of language acquisition. Donna Brinton, from the University of Southern California, discussed new methodological paradigms in her topic *English Language Teaching Methods -- What's New Under the Sun?*

Dr. Peter MacIntyre, a professor of psychology at Cape Breton University, presented *A Focus on Successfully Transforming Second Language Learners into Language Speakers: The Psychology of Second Language Learners and Communicators*. Jowi Taylor shared his story of creating an instrument that would reflect Canada's rich history in his presentation *What's Your Canada?: Building the Six String Nation*. Several of the speakers also shared their views in the 12th Annual Research Symposium which is reported on elsewhere.

The 6th Annual Panel Discussion, *Building Pathways to Learner Success*, provided an opportunity for conference delegates to hear representatives from Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities, and Ontario Ministry of Education. Each shared updates and discussed new initiatives relevant to professionals working with English language learners in Ontario.

In addition to those highlights, attendees had nearly two hundred workshops and presentations from which to choose over the three days. It is extremely gratifying to have so many ESL professionals volunteering to share their insights, best practices and innovative ideas with their peers. Participants were also able to become enhance their knowledge regarding technology in the classroom which is reported separately.

The extensive exhibitor displays are always popular and provided participants an opportunity to examine and purchase the latest ESL resources.

The response to our first ever "Going to the Theatre" option proved popular. Over one hundred delegates took advantage of reduced ticket prices to see either "Private Lives" or "Chess" at local theatres.

The Welcome Reception provided an additional opportunity for networking and to recognize the winners of the various ESL contests in celebration of ESL week. Each year the number of communities that recognize ESL Week increases; this year over 40 cities, towns and municipalities acknowledged the importance of English as a Second Language education by declaring ESL Week.

The Friday evening dinner and entertainment provided an opportunity to relax. Three individuals were recipients of a TESL Ontario pin in recognition of their outstanding contributions to the field of ESL. Following a delicious dinner, the crowd enjoyed the music of Swing Shift "Little" Big Band.

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

Barbara Krukowski  
Conference Chair