



TEACHERS OF ENGLISH
AS A SECOND LANGUAGE
ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

ARTICLE #3

ESL EDUCATION & LEARNING IN ONTARIO CELEBRATED WITH ESL CREATIVITY CONTEST & ESL WEEK OCTOBER 12-18, 2014

What do people with a passion for teaching and learning, a love of Canada and a desire to make a difference for others and/or themselves have in common?

They are all part of the [TESL Ontario](#) (Teachers of English as a Second Language Association of Ontario) network numbering more than 4,600 instructors and many thousands of English language learners. Six of them in particular, recently demonstrated their creativity in TESL Ontario's annual [ESL \(English as a Second Language\) Creativity Contest](#) celebrating ESL education and learning.

More than 40 entrants selected a communications vehicle of their choice - traditional or electronic - to create a story, essay, poem, video, blog, short film or photo collage about ESL.

Two Grand Prize winners, one each in the Instructor and Learner categories, were selected for two very different but meaningful projects. Instructor **Barb Sawyers** wanted to make learning fun and not boring. So she created a two minute [video](#), 'The Search for the Present Perfect'. Barb explains: "Students have trouble with this very imperfect verb tense," as she discovered through teaching ESL to foreign students at the ILSC Learning Centre Toronto. "Although it is a tricky tense in the English language, I wanted students to be able to understand it better through this short video however they wish – by watching, listening or even dancing to the music."

The Grand Prize winner in the Learner category was **Afia Akhlaq** who studies English at the Caledon Community Services. After reading an article about happiness presented to the class by her instructor, Afia wrote a [short story](#) about her own life that, although may have seemed difficult and unhappy to many readers, was to her, a very happy one.

The runners-up in each category had, again, very different ways of expressing themselves about ESL...

Instructor **Svetlana Lupasco** (Thornccliffe Neighbourhood Office, Toronto)'s Blog entry [Teach2LearnESL](#), was started as a way to connect with other colleagues who were also learning how to become better teachers. "Blogging has become a way for me to reach out to teachers and contribute to professional development of the Adult ESL community in Canada," she says.

Danielle Rychlo (University of Toronto instructor) created a visually intriguing poem in which she compares the ESL network to a [Spider Web](#), where "learning happens fast. And good things take awhile".

Advanced academic skills learner, **Gunes Alkan** (University of Toronto), was part of an entire class assigned a project to plan, write narrative, record their voices and create a [digital story](#) of their language learning histories. Students had to reflect on their past and current learning experiences that influenced them. They shared their work in progress and held a class screening at the end.

Another learner runner-up winner **Samreen Aslam** (Thornccliffe Neighbourhood Office) was sure that when she arrived in Canada from Pakistan, she would have no trouble communicating in English. She quickly realized and explains in her [essay](#): "I had no clue how different reality would be!" After finding out about a LINC (Language Instruction to Newcomers to Canada) program, she enrolled and soon found out that "LINC classes are not just providing language education but are also teaching coping strategies and helping in character-building".

The winners were honoured at the TELS Ontario [annual conference](#) in Toronto during ESL Week, October 16 – 18, 2014 (#TESL2014).

[TESL Ontario](#), established in 1972, is a non-profit organization serving the needs of teachers of English as a Second Language. It represents more than 4,600 language training professionals working in immigrant serving agencies, school boards, publicly funded sites across Ontario, colleges/universities, elementary/secondary and private language training schools. TESL Ontario's expertise is in teaching, advocacy, accreditation and professional development. The organization is instrumental in influencing the success of many thousands of English language learners throughout the province.

For more information visit www.teslontario.org and follow us on

