MEDIA RELEASE

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TESL ONTARIO 2013 CONFERENCE ‘MERGING AND EMERGING PATHWAYS THROUGH LANGUAGE’ APPROPRIATELY NAMED, SUCCESSFULLY EXECUTED

Toronto, November 25, 2013 – TESL Ontario (Teachers of English as a Second Language Association of Ontario) recently concluded its 41st annual conference at the Allstream Centre in Toronto. The appropriately named theme “Merging and Emerging Pathways through Language” was successfully executed.

With more than 150 presentations, interactive workshops, technology labs, keynote/feature speakers, panel discussions and research symposia, the 1,500+ participants (i.e. language training professionals from public/private sectors, academics, researchers, and federal/provincial government representatives) learned new skills, techniques and tips to enhance their professional development. Some of these include:

- Adult Chinese language classes need to be taught in the mornings; while adult Russian students learn best during coffee breaks

- A typical adult from an English speaking background knows 20,000 word families; while a 5 year old child just starting school knows 5,000 word families

- ESL teachers are among the first mentors that immigrants meet when they come to Canada
A key highlight of the Conference, the Eighth Annual Panel Discussion “Integrating Pathways to Language Learning”, was also appropriately titled. Presentations from the federal Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, and from the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities identified current trends, updated initiatives and shared recommendations. Some highlights from this panel discussion were:

- Settlement and language will transition to a national program; placement and outcomes assessment will be strengthened; and the reach of language services will be broadened to include diverse online options.

- A new direction for immigration to Ontario (currently in decline) of a four-way partnership with the above ministries will provide a single point of access and a consistent approach to language assessment and referral.

- Better coordination amongst the three Ontario ministries will improve the pathways and transitions for adult learners needing services of more than one ministry.

- The Literacy & Basic Skills program (of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities) has determined literacy competencies to be learner-centered, competency-based, goal-directed, and transitions-oriented and is now implementing a performance measurement program that will begin Phase Two in 2014.

Each of the complete presentations can be viewed on the TESL Ontario website here.

Webcasting of selected presentations from the 41st Annual Conference will soon be posted on the TESL Ontario website.

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