



TESOL Italy



Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages in Italy
An Affiliate of TESOL International Association
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Rome, April 10th, 2014

Dear Colleague,

TESOL Italy's 39th National Convention will take place on November 14th and 15th, 2014 in Rome **at Polo Didattico, Piazza Oderico da Pordenone, 3.**

Hoping that you will consider taking an active part in the event, we are sending you the Call for Papers, which should be returned to our office by June 7th, 2014. We trust these notes will help clarify the title and subtitles, suggesting some ideas for your presentation.

Yours faithfully,

Beth Ann Boyle
President, TESOL Italy

Lina Vellucci
Convention Chair, TESOL Italy

LEARNING COMMUNITIES



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Learning is multifaceted and dynamic; it can slowly mature over time or be almost instantaneous. It is an individual process, but at the same time it can be made easier if it is encouraged within a community.

Sharing goals, emotions, values and beliefs is what transforms a group of individuals into a true community. Every learning community is unique in its *raison d'être* and in its members' sense of belonging that encourages and reinforces the learning experience. Learners use each other as powerful resources, and differences are valued as a means of enriching the entire community. Genuine cooperation is the goal. The learning that takes place within such communities is continually under study as the complexity involved in what unfolds and the mysteries in need of understanding are fascinating.

Language Education is naturally often designed within and around learning communities. Why is this so, and what kinds of communities have been emerging in recent years? Because society is rapidly changing, educational systems are changing. English language learning in Italy is shifting from being primarily exclusively in the language classroom to also being an integral part of non-linguistic subject classrooms. Lifelong learning is the norm today and communities of learners also arise in the workplace where communication in English is intensified. Equally important, the increased use of the Internet and the advances in online learning platforms has led to the creation of many new digital communities. What sorts of cultures of learning are being fostered within these communities and what is the role of educators in shaping them?

CONTENT AND LANGUAGE: PERSPECTIVES AND PRACTICE

In content-based programs, our students now have the opportunity, as they learn content, to also improve their foreign language skills via Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). Learning a language and learning specific subject matter by way of that language are concurrent and logarithmic spiral processes, characterized by a slow but continuous and regular increase in knowledge and competence. However, finding just the right balance between the teaching/learning of content and language mastery represents a real challenge for teachers of all subjects. Whereas CLIL teachers' primary focus is on their area of specific competence (e. g. mathematics, history, philosophy), they use the L2 or L3 as the means to teach and communicate. Language teachers' main aim in these circumstances, is to develop and improve students' language competence, so that learning other subjects in the L2 or L3 is indeed possible. Since most CLIL programs are experimental, there are still a few open questions. What is the current state of the art from both a theoretical and a practical standpoint? How can language-learning and content learning best be integrated? How can content and language teachers effectively share their work and successfully collaborate?

FOSTERING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Inclusive Education is an approach to educating students with special educational needs. In 2008 UNESCO set the guidelines for social and cultural inclusion of children with disabilities, marginalized groups and those students who are at disadvantage for other reasons. Teachers play a crucial role in encouraging development and participation as well as ensuring equal opportunities for quality education.

In Italy a policy of inclusion has existed for many years now. What real and significant changes have been made? Is it opportune to re-think and restructure policies, curricula and practices? Promoting inclusive education should be done at a community level by creating awareness raising activities as well as integrating pre- and in-service teaching programs, aligned to better inclusive education approaches. How can communities of learning be actively and systematically involved in the process?

COMPETENCIES FOR NEW GENERATIONS

Competencies are essential for defining any profession. Students need to develop skills and abilities for their future jobs just as pre- and in-service teachers continue to build on experience to become even more effective. That requires a combination of content knowledge, cognitive, interpersonal and intrapersonal competencies, plus the ability to transfer knowledge and skills and apply them in new contexts. Given that, what works? How is this all achieved? What makes some teachers more effective and efficient than others? What is it that leads to optimum learning? How are new technologies impacting the teaching/learning process today?

In recent years there has been a push for tech-centered classes. Today's students as well as pre-service teachers are so-called 'digital natives' and form a generation that has never known life without the Internet—and the Internet speaks English. How is this affecting teaching and learning? How does the competency in using Information and Computer Technology for teaching and learning ensure that effective learning outcomes are achieved? What competencies are most vitally useful?

SUBMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

We expect all presentations to be consistent with the title and subtitles of the convention. In addition, both the abstract and the summary of the proposal submitted should match the actual content of the presentation given in November. We are very selective in choosing the presentations and especially encourage practical workshops and interactive presentations.

You can participate by making either a professional or a commercial presentation. A commercial presentation is designed to promote products or services, such as books, programs, certifications, etc. Professional presentations should not be used for promotional purposes.

Please read the "Steps in Submitting a Presentation Proposal" carefully and then fill in all the items on the attached *Call for Papers* form clearly and completely. We also invite you to share this information with your colleagues, so feel free to photocopy this letter and the attached *Call for Papers* form and display them at your school, in your office or staff room.

On behalf of TESOL Italy, we thank you for your interest and look forward to meeting you at the convention.