

ASI 2011 - Connected Community Learning: The Next Decade
August 22 - 24, 2011
York University, Toronto, Ontario

From August 22-24, 2011, the award-winning ABEL program hosted its 10th annual ABEL Summer Institute (ASI), ASI 2011 – Connected Community Learning: The Next Decade.



Over the past decade the Internet has impacted society in many ways. This impact includes democratizing access to information, creating opportunities for individual voices to be heard, sharing ideas and knowledge, allowing instantaneous responses to questions, creating social networks that expand our knowing and doing, developing new regulations and policies for information access, copyright, and use, digital citizenship... and the list continues. What will the next ten years bring? At ASI 2011 delegates pondered this question and investigated the power of a connected community to effectively use technology for teaching and learning.

ASI 2011 welcomed approximately 150 delegates, many of them educators, from across Ontario and Canada. The two-and-a-half-day event included keynote and spotlight presentations, hands-on training sessions and networking opportunities, focusing on implementing new technology tools with best practices in the classroom.

Highlights on the opening day included greetings from York University's **Vice President Research and Innovation, Dr. Robert Haché**. Dr. Haché emphasized the meaningful collaboration taking place between ABEL, educators, and the University research community. He stated, "(ASI) is a great contribution to the national dialogue on higher order 21st century learning and reform."

The keynote address was given by **Dr. Curt Bonk**, Professor of Instructional Systems Technology at Indiana University and President of CourseShare. His talk, "**The Flat World Has Swung Open: How Web Technology is Revolutionizing Education**" offered an intriguing look at 10 technology trends which he refers to as educational openers.



The conference included talks from spotlight speakers **Dean Shareski**, Digital Learning Consultant for Prairie South School Division in Saskatchewan and **Dr. Norm Vaughn**, Associate Professor in the Department of Education, Faculty of Teaching and Learning at Mount Royal University in Calgary. Shareski explored what methods of learning need to be kept and which ones need to be abandoned. Dr. Vaughn discussed blended learning in the classroom to foster student engagement and success.

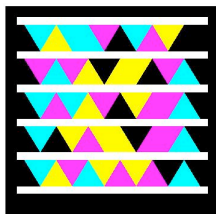
Some comments from our delegates:

"Curt Bonk's keynote was a great kick-start for the school year."

"Norm Vaughan is a great speaker, very animated, passionate about his work and helpful in providing excellent information and exemplary on-line resources."

"The keynotes, particularly the opening and closing addresses, were important in putting blended learning into a global context."

The ABEL Summer Institute celebrated its 10th anniversary this year. A luncheon recognizing the milestone took place at Michelangelo's on the York University campus, and included celebratory speeches, VIP comments and a retrospective video.



New this year was the ability to scan Microsoft Tags to access speaker biographies and resources for specific presentations. The tags were also used for a lunchtime online scavenger hunt which proved popular with delegates. When scanned, the tag to the left will direct smartphones and tablets to the ASI 2011 website.

As with previous Summer Institutes, the ABEL program has maintained its commitment to creating an environmentally friendly event. This year ASI saved paper by continuing to use a printed mini-agenda and not using a traditional program guide. This compact guide was supplemented by information on the ASI 2011 website and the ASI 2011 Wiki that included presentation resources, presenter biographies and ABEL Tool Tip Sheets, all easily accessed at www.abelearn.ca.

Private and public sector sponsors make the ABEL Summer Institute possible. This year's ASI sponsors included Microsoft, Apple, Pearson Education, Ektron, Mindshare Learning, Mygazines, York University and the York Region District School Board.



Feedback from delegates at the ABEL Summer Institute included the following:

- 95% thought the keynote addresses were insightful and motivated them to use ABEL resources in the classroom/school/workplace.
- 85% said they feel better prepared to use ABEL tools and resources in my classroom/school/workplace because they attended the Summer Institute.
- 90% felt that ASI 2011 increased their commitment to engage students in authentic twenty-first century learning and to collaborate with colleagues in the ABEL community.



More comments from our delegates:

"Really enjoyed networking and learning with all of the amazing people at ASI - we will be back next year!"

"ASI reinforced the importance of technology, collaboration, differentiation and visuals. It enhanced my commitment to use all of these."