

### ASI 2010: Creating the Future Now August 22 - 25, 2010 York University, Toronto, Ontario

From August 23-25 2010, the award-winning ABEL program hosted its ninth annual ABEL Summer Institute (ASI), **ASI 2010: Creating the Future Now**.

Interactive technologies have revolutionized how we communicate, collaborate and generate ideas and knowledge. How do these changes affect classrooms? How can we stay ahead of the learning curve to prepare our students for their future? ASI 2010 explored these questions by investigating the effective use of technology for teaching and learning.



ASI 2010 welcomed approximately 200 delegates, many of them educators, from across 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 and best practices in the classroom.

Highlights on the opening day included introductions from York University's **Vice President Research and Innovation, Dr. Stan Shapson** and **Dean of Education Dr. Alice Pitt**. Dr. Shapson emphasized the meaningful collaboration taking place between ABEL, educators, and the University research community. His welcome message reinforced the sense of pride in the conference, for all involved, reminding delegates that "Your participation in ABEL and the Summer Institute ensures your students will be exposed to leading-edge instructional strategies and develop a life-long attitude for innovation and creativity."

The keynote address was given by **Alec Couros**, professor of educational technology & media and coordinator of information & communications technologies at the University of Regina. His talk, "How Informal Learning Networks Can Transform Education" demonstrated how educators can embrace informal networks such as Twitter and Facebook, and looked at how our networked future is key to the reform of teaching and learning.



ASI 2010 also included talks from **Garfield Gini-Newman**, lecturer at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto, and **Bill Muirhead**, associate provost, academic, at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT). Both speakers had unique takes on how the rapidly changing technology landscape will affect the future of teaching and learning.

*"[Garfield Gini-Newman's] talk on critical thinking was inspiring and transformative!"*

*"I enjoyed Alec Couros' presentation... he gave me a number of useful links I can use in my classroom related to media and technology."*

*"Bill Muirhead's presentation was very informative on the ways we can approach our teaching with technologies in a new and improved manner."*

- ASI 2010 Delegates



The ABEL Program launched its new website and online community at ASI, giving delegates the opportunity to continue discussions and stay connected online once professional learning and networking sessions had ended. The ABEL website can be visited at [www.abelearn.ca](http://www.abelearn.ca).

At this year's **Birds of a Feather (BoF) Sessions** delegates had the opportunity to meet new people with common interests and discuss ideas and issues without a pre-planned agenda. The BoF discussions have continued online in ABEL Community Groups with discussions related to the various topic areas.

Continuing to encourage social networking, we invited delegates to **"Blog it, Tweet it, and Picture it"** as a way of enriching the conference experience and build on this year's theme. We were thrilled with the response, with comments posted on our Community Blog, Facebook ABEL page and ASI 2010 page, and the many tweets and photos using the #ASI2010 hashtag.

As with previous Summer Institutes, the ABEL program has maintained its commitment to creating an environmentally friendly event. This year ASI saved paper by replacing our large program guide with a print mini-agenda. This compact guide was supplemented by supplemental information on the ASI 2010 website. Delegate kits also included a RoHS compliant USB stick containing little to no hazardous materials, and reusable mugs to reduce waste from plastic cups and water bottles.



Private and Public sector sponsors make the ABEL Summer Institute possible. This year's ASI sponsors included **Microsoft, Polycom, Apple, ORION, Pearson Education, Duplicom, Mindshare Learning, Ontario's Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat, York University, the York Region District School Board, Turning Technologies and Sobeys.**

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

- 94% thought the keynote addresses were insightful and motivated them to use ABEL resources in the classroom/school/workplace.
- 83 % 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 2010 increased their commitment to engage students in authentic twenty-first century learning and to collaborate with colleagues in the ABEL community.

*"I was thoroughly engaged and found the information immediately useful."*  
- ASI 2010 Delegate