

Sirio Di Giuliomaria award granted to “Tandem Project”

The “Sirio Di Giuliomaria Award” was created in 2008, it is presented every year at the TESOL-Italy National Convention and is intended to honour the memory of Sirio Di Giuliomaria, who passed away two years ago, here in Rome.

The winner of this year’s Sirio Di Giuliomaria Award is Attilio Galimberti who at present teaches English at the Istituto Superiore “Natta” in Bergamo. He was awarded the prize for his “Progetto Tandem Italia-USA - Learning English and Italian”.

The project was carried out in the school years 2006-2009 with students of Liceo Scientifico “Amaldi” in Alzano Lombardo, of Istituto Superiore “G. Carducci” in Ragusa e of Liceo Scientifico “Volterra” in Fabriano who were engaged in online written and spoken language exchanges, both in Italian and in English , with students of Eugene “Oregon University”.

More information about the project is available on the Internet at: <http://amaldi-english-corner.wikispaces.com/file/view/TESOL+RELAZ+CONCORSO.pdf>

The award was presented to the winner by Paolo Coppari, one of the members of the evaluating committee of the “Sirio Di Giuliomaria Award”, along with Paola Mirti, Marina Morbiducci, Franca Stephenson and the committee President Maria Cirelli, and by Lucilla Lopriore, Rosanna Morozzo e Cosma Siani, who edited a special issue of TESOL Italy’s journal Perspectives in memory of Sirio di Giuliomaria.

Paolo Coppari’s address given in memory of Sirio on the occasion of the award presentation is reported below.

My task here is to briefly introduce Sirio, for those of you who didn’t have the chance to know him during his lifetime, and briefly explain the reasons why it was decided to create this award.

We decided to create this award and entitle it to the memory of Sirio because all of us, who have taken part in the building and the development of TESOL-Italy as a professional association feel indebted to him. One of the reasons is - simply put - because he was one of the founders of TESOL-Italy, as far back as the 1970s, and, in the following years, gave a crucial contribution to the growth and the success of the association.

In many ways all of us, senior members of TESOL-Italy, feel as we have been – as we all are - Sirio’s pupils.

A lot could be said to introduce Sirio Di Giuliomaria.

He was a very rich and intense person, who committed himself into several walks of life, but no doubt his most remarkable contributions were made to the field of language education.

He was highly regarded as one of the leading figures in this field, both in Italy and abroad, and was appreciated for his qualities as a brilliant speaker at meetings and seminars, or as a trainer at teacher development courses, or as a successful writer of language pedagogy books, textbooks, articles in professional journals, and so on.

However, we like to remember Sirio for what perhaps he wanted to be more than anything else, that is as a school teacher, and a colleague among colleagues.

As a matter of fact, though he could have aimed to some more influential or prestigious positions in the profession, he never wanted to leave his job as a teacher, his school and his students.

And his main concern as a foreign language school teacher was always focused on improving the learners' proficiency in the use of English.

He considered the battle against communicative incompetence as the most important task of the language teacher, and to such battle he devoted the best of his professional skills and efforts, as a teacher, as a teacher trainer and as a writer.

And that also explains the rationale of the Award, which TESOL-Italy has entitled to Sirio.

In fact, as it is clearly stated in the "bando", the award is to be given to an in-service English language teacher, working in an Italian state school, and is meant to

"Valorizzare e premiare un'esperienza di insegnamento condotta con i propri studenti, esplicitata in un resoconto scritto che indichi in modo chiaro il conseguimento di esiti di profitto nello sviluppo delle competenze comunicative in lingua inglese".

I am very pleased to say that all the papers we received for this year's award are highly commendable.

They all show evidence of both the enormous amount of extra work that was involved, and of the high standard of professional commitment of the teachers who submitted them - in times in which the hardships of the job have increased exponentially - and they all deserve to be praised by the evaluating committee.

Unfortunately, there can be only one winner.

However, on behalf of the committee and of TESOL-Italy, I want to formally say thank you to all these colleagues.

Thank you, for sharing and supporting Sirio's belief that good school teaching is possible, and that a school teacher's efforts and professional dedication are worth the while.

