



Lecture

MERRILL SWAIN

Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto

Friday, May 30, 2008

3:30 pm

Mary Gates 241

Reception to follow

A Language Learning Strategy: Production Before Comprehension

Merrill Swain will focus on research designed to explore the role of collaborative dialogue in second language learning among young adolescents. Her recent study of student story-writing in middle school-level French immersion classes illustrates a phenomenon not commonly discussed in the current literature on second language learning among either children or adults: production leading to comprehension (rather than the oft-discussed comprehension leading to production). The students, alone or in pairs, wrote a story based on a visual or auditory stimulus. The dialogue of the students as they wrote their stories, as they received feedback about the language they used to write their stories, and as they reflected on that feedback will be examined and related to the students' post-test performance.

Merrill Swain is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. Her interests include bilingualism and bilingual education, particularly French immersion education, and communicative second language learning, teaching and testing. Her most recent book, co-edited with Bygate and Skehan, is *Researching Pedagogic Tasks: Second Language Learning, Teaching and Testing* (2001). Swain is currently co-writing a textbook on sociocultural theories and second language learning.

Sponsored by the College of Arts and Sciences, the Canadian Studies Center at the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies, the Department of Linguistics, and the Simpson Center for the Humanities.

For more information see www.simpsoncenter.org/bilingualism

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