

Literacy: The Ripple Effect

April 17-19, 2024 | Radisson Hotel Vancouver Airport



Decoda Literacy Conference 2024 Program Guide



On behalf of Decoda Literacy, we welcome you to our sixth Decoda Literacy Conference.

This year's theme is "Literacy: The Ripple Effect." Literacy touches every aspect of people's lives. Literacy programs, supports and practitioners have a ripple effect throughout communities.

Literacy intersects with and contributes to our health, employment, food security, personal wellbeing, continued learning, communication, community and the economy.

Over the next two days, we look forward to seeing familiar faces and welcoming those new to the conference.

Let's make the most of our time together!

The Decoda Team

Pre-conference

Pre-conference: Wednesday, April 17, 2024				
8:00-9:00	Breakfast			
9:00-10:30	Parents as Literacy Supporters (PALS) Facilitators Training – with Fiona Morrison and Aliza Dhungana	Plain Language: What Is It and Why Do We Need It? – with Margaret Sutherland	Working Effectively with Indigenous Peoples® Training – with Flavio Caron	Financial Support for Non-Financial Managers – with Bill Scott
10:30-10:45	Break			
10:45-12:00	Parents as Literacy Supporters (PALS) Facilitators Training (cont'd)	Plain Language (cont'd)	Working Effectively with Indigenous Peoples® (cont'd)	Financial Support for Non-Financial Managers (cont'd)
12:00-1:00	Lunch			
1:00-3:30	Parents as Literacy Supporters (PALS) Facilitators Training (cont'd)	Plain Language (cont'd)	Working Effectively with Indigenous Peoples® (cont'd)	Financial Support for Non-Financial Managers (cont'd)
6:00-8:00	Conference Registration			

Day One: Thursday, April 18, 2024							
7:30-8:30	Registration and Breakfast						
8:30-9:30	Keynote: Craig Alexander						
9:30-10:30			Panel discussion: BC Literacy Strategy				
10:30-11:00	Break						
11:00-12:00			Panel Q&A: BC Literacy Strategy				
12:00-1:00	Lunch						
1:00-2:30	Creating ‘Reel’ Content that Connects: How Community Organizations can Create Stand Out Social Media Platforms with Limited Time and Resources. Michelle Osbourne	Leveraging Connections: Building Resilience Through Literacy, Settlement and Community Development Carolyn Amantea	Street Literacy. Literacy and Homelessness Samantha Letourneau	Envisioning Social Change through Community Capacity Building Hasrat Grewal Gill	Am I Literate Enough for Digital Literacy? Learning the ‘Language of Being Online’ Audrey Gardner	The Ripple Effect of Creative Expression for Literacy Learners Spring Gillard	Courageous Dialogues: Bridging Divides in Polarized Times Diana Twiss
2:30-3:00	Break						
3:00-4:30	Literacy for Life: Bridging the Gap to Success for a Fair and Inclusive Society Greer Donaldson	Fostering Inclusivity: Empowering Educators with AI-Powered Tech Tools Leanne Adegbonmire	Growing Your Volunteer Base Thomas Briginshaw	Envisioning Social Change through Community Capacity Building (cont’d)	How the Ripple Begins: Exploring an Experiential Arc of Learning Another Language within the Settlement Sector Trudi Diening	Junior Journalists Chrisy Hill	Beyond Boundaries ECALA's Collective Kitchens Debbie Clark
4:30-6:30	Social						

Day Two: Friday, April 19, 2024

7:30-8:30	Registration and Breakfast						
8:30-10:00	Discovering NeuroInclusive Education! Sue Hall	The Artificial Intelligence Revolution and Literacy: A Critical Discussion Annie Montague	The Triple Ripple and the Meaning of Education Roberta Powers	Principled Community-University Engagement: What, Why, How Shanti Ang	If You Don't Dream It, You Can't Achieve It! Kimberley Chung	Facilitation Skills and Evaluation Katie Johnson	Take a Break Nicole Sharp
10:00-10:30	Break						
10:30-12:00	Morning sessions con't						
12:00-1:00	Lunch						
1:00-2:30	The Soft Skills for Success Catherine Toovey	Empowerment Through Digital Inclusion: Bridging Gaps through Smartphone Skills Ambreen Ahmad	From Ripple to Tidal Wave: Building Community Capacity in Trauma-Informed Financial Literacy Murray Baker	EMBRACE BEWILDERMENT: The Nine Most Important Things I've Learned About Creativity from Writing For — and Teaching It to — Kids Lee Fodi	A Successful Journey to Mosaic's New Literacy Intake Project Ammarah Imran	An Indigenous Skills for Success Journey: Planting the Seeds for Growth Francesca de Bastiani	Community Engagement and Two-way Learning: Building Connections and Capacity in the Downtown Eastside Rachael Barton-Bridges
2:30-3:15	Keynote: Jackie Hildering + Closing						
3:15-3:45	Coffee + networking						

Workshop Descriptions

Pre-conference: Wednesday, April 17

Parents as Literacy Supporters (PALS) Facilitators Training

This training will provide the philosophical overview and shape of the PALS program, a review of the themes for each session, and a discussion of appropriate program resources. The training will respond to the needs of facilitators and will include:

- play-based learning activities
- suggestions for how to work with adult participants, newcomer immigrant families and Indigenous communities
- philosophies of child development
- information about cultural sensitivity
- how to embed Indigenous ways of knowing and being within a PALS program
- share authentic Indigenous resources

Fiona Morrison, Gail Stromquist and Aliza Dhungana

Fiona Morrison co-developed the PALS program with Dr. Jim Anderson, University of British Columbia in 1999 in the Langley School District. Fiona has more than 40 years of experience as an educator in a variety of roles. She has been a classroom teacher, curriculum coordinator, faculty associate and university instructor. She retired as director of family literacy and early learning at Decoda Literacy Solutions in 2012. Fiona continues to be passionate about working with families and supporting young children's literacy learning.

Gail Stromquist is a member of the Spuzzum First Nation nestled in the ancestral lands of the Nlaka'pamux. She is the assistant director for Aboriginal Education at the BC Teachers' Federation. Before working at the BCTF, Gail taught for 20 years in the Langley School District. During that time, she facilitated many Aboriginal PALS programs, and she continues to collaborate to provide support to the PALS program. Her passion is educating hearts and minds, confronting Canada's genocidal history while engaging with expressive art forms as a valuable path to healing.

Aliza Dhungana is the program manager responsible for PALS at Decoda Literacy Solutions. She has over 15 years of experience in program development, comprehensive adult literacy, gender equality, early learning and community development with UNESCO and various other national and international development agencies. Aliza brings with her a passion for joyful learning.

Plain Language: What Is It and Why Do We Need It?

We want people to access, understand and use the information we share.

In this introductory session, we will explore plain language and how we can apply the principles of plain language to make our message clear. This will include:

- Knowing your audience
- Identifying the purpose of writing
- Writing for your reader
- Using clear layout and design
- Editing and testing your work

Participants are encouraged to bring samples of their work to the workshop and share. They will leave with practical tips and tools to apply and use when they create promotional materials, develop content for programs, write reports, and communicate with colleagues, partners, communities and funders.

Margaret Sutherland

Margaret began her work in the literacy field as a volunteer in 1999. The next year she was hired as adult literacy coordinator in her home community of Castlegar. She was a founding member of Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy (CBAL), where she worked as regional program manager in the West Kootenay and Boundary. In 2012 she went to work at Decoda Literacy Solutions, holding a variety of posts before retiring as executive director in 2022.

At Decoda, one of Margaret's roles was co-editor of *The Westcoast Reader*, a newspaper for adults wanting to improve their English skills and learn about life in Canada. She valued this opportunity, as creating clear and accessible material is important to her, whether it is for learners or other audiences.

Margaret was awarded the Premier's 2022 Council of the Federation Literacy Award in recognition of outstanding achievement in literacy. When she's not working with words, she enjoys spending time with friends and family, getting outdoors in the garden or on a hike, doing yoga, and reading.

Financial Advice for the Non-Financial Manager

Most managers in the social profit sector are drawn to the work of their organizations. Managing finances is rarely what motivates people to support seniors' recreation or the unhoused, or children, youth and families or the environment. Many social profit managers are experts in their organization's mission who have been charged with managing the finances for their area of responsibility. And yet, few have little or no formal training in financial management.

In this workshop, you will begin to build financial management skills and knowledge that will allow you to begin to accurately interpret the information given to you by your finance department. You don't need to be a financial expert to interpret the information you are given. You simply need to know the questions to ask of the experts – the people in your finance department. Asking the right questions and understanding the answers can help you understand the story that the numbers are telling you. Understanding will increase your level of confidence when assessing financial matters impacting the performance of your area of responsibility.

Bill Scott

Bill Scott spent 21 years in the child, youth and family services sector — the last nine as the executive director of a medium-sized organization in the Lower Mainland. For the past 20 years, he has provided consulting and training services to clients primarily operating in the community, education and health services fields.

Bill is an innovative management consultant, trainer and speaker with a unique blend of business and social services training. He delights in helping people identify their strengths and learn how to leverage them collaboratively with others. He practises from a strength base, believing challenges that limit innovative thinking can be reframed as opportunities that open possibilities and creativity.

In addition to his consulting and training work, Bill has taught at numerous universities over the past 25 years, including the Beedie School of Business and the Continuing Education department at Simon Fraser University, BCIT's business program, the Continuing Education department at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. and online through the University of Phoenix.

Bill has a BSW, an MBA, a certificate in appreciative inquiry, and extensive training in strengths assessments, negotiation, mediation and conflict resolution. He is based in Surrey, BC and lives with his wife Cindy, and their mild-mannered rescue dog, Jessie.

Working Effectively with Indigenous Peoples® Training

Flavio Caron is a trainer and speaker with the Indigenous Relations Academy. The team's goal is "changing the world and meeting the goal of reconciliation" and Flavio is committed to their mission of providing Working Effectively with Indigenous Peoples® training for everybody.

Working Effectively with Indigenous Peoples® delves into the history of Indigenous Peoples in Canada, the Crown-Indigenous relationship and how that was formed. This session will offer invaluable hints, tips and suggestions on building respectful and effective relationships and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and communities.

Discussion, tips and tools will address the following key challenges:

- Understanding how history impacts Indigenous Peoples
- Understanding how current Indigenous issues impact Indigenous communities
- Understanding Indigenous self-government
- Understanding the constitutional, political and legal context of Indigenous issues
- Understanding how Indigenous and western worldviews impact decision-making
- Understanding how to cultivate Indigenous relationships
- Understanding business reasons for working with Indigenous Peoples
- How to begin to consult with Indigenous Peoples
- Fear of saying or doing the wrong thing
- How to manage risk when cultivating Indigenous relationships

Flavio Caron

Being the son of an Anishinaabe mother and Italian-Canadian father, Flavio Caron has grown up in two worlds, and is honoured for what both have brought him.

As an entrepreneurship and cross-cultural trainer, Flavio hopes that we all embrace the need to understand and be understood. The respect and trust that we strive to achieve in our personal and professional lives comes first and always from understanding.

Contributing to the success of thousands of individuals and organizations - he is honoured with each and every opportunity. Relationship-building is the cornerstone to his training philosophy: where individuals, organizations, communities and Nations learn and prosper through this spirit.

Leading or consulting with projects involving some of the most respected organizations and corporations in the world, Flavio trusts that inspired people — inspired educators — embracing new knowledge and ideas will always succeed.

Morning sessions: Thursday, April 18

Keynote: Craig Alexander

Craig Alexander is a senior executive and leading economist in applied economics and forecasting, with more than 30 years of experience in the private sector. He currently runs an independent economic consulting practice. Craig has served as the chief economist at TD Bank Financial Group, Deloitte and The Conference Board of Canada. He is also the former vice-president, economic analysis at C.D. Howe Institute.

Craig is a passionate public speaker who travels across the United States and Canada discussing economic, financial and public policy issues. Craig holds a graduate degree in Economics from the University of Toronto. He received a Queen's Jubilee medal for his work on literacy.



Panel discussions: BC Literacy Strategy

Decoda wishes to develop a BC Literacy Strategy that identifies solutions to achieve a British Columbia where everyone has the literacy skills to thrive in their communities. Through this initiative, the literacy skills of the province would be enhanced, leading to stronger, more resilient, and sustainable communities.

A BC Literacy Strategy will layout a clear path to help individuals, families and communities succeed. It will also assist the BC Government achieve various policy goals.

To launch this initiative, we have assembled a panel of government representatives, an industry expert, a university dean, an Indigenous educator, a social services non-profit representative, and a member of the justice system.

After the panel discussion, there will be Q & A session, followed by facilitated small group discussions on various aspects of the "BC Literacy Strategy."

Afternoon sessions: Thursday, April 18

1. Creating 'Reel' Content that Connects: How Community Organizations Can Create Stand Out Social Media Platforms with Limited Time and Resources

Do you know which social media platforms are best to use for your organization? Do you have a limited budget and time to manage your communications initiatives? Is the fast-paced world of social media overwhelming and you don't know what to do and how to keep up?

In today's world most if not all organizations need to be on some type of social media platform to effectively communicate with their audience. This workshop will be focused on helping community/literacy organizations build a targeted social media plan that is simple and budget friendly so they can reach a broader, more diverse audience.

Michelle Osbourne

Michelle Osbourne is an activist, content creator, communications and literacy professional that specializes in helping marginalized entrepreneurs/communities build socially-conscious enterprises. She works from an anti-racist, anti-oppression, intersectional feminist framework and coaches' clients/organizations on how to build people-first businesses without compromising who they are and their values. In her activism work, Michelle champions for diversity, equity, inclusion and has been featured in magazines, interviewed on radio, podcasts, and T.V. Michelle scaled back working in the literacy field in 2021 to start her own communications studio, Michelle Osbourne & Co.

2. Leveraging Connections: Building Resilience through Literacy, Settlement and Community Development

Literacy organizations are uniquely positioned to support newcomers beyond traditional language and settlement services. Literacy practitioners evaluate Skills for Success using the Canadian Adult Literacy Benchmarks and assist settlement clients to develop those competencies to meet their settlement and employment goals.

By applying a literacy lens to the settlement journey, it is possible to provide a more robust scope of service when conducting Needs & Assets Assessments and allows the settlement team to focus on the whole person and their unique needs.

Literacy service providers utilize their community networks to develop fulsome opportunities for newcomers, enhancing the traditional settlement trajectory.

Carolyn Amantea, Wyatt Gordon and Desneiges Profili

Carolyn Amantea started with CBAL as a volunteer language tutor and later worked as a program facilitator, settlement worker and literacy outreach coordinator. Carolyn understands the role that everyone plays in helping newcomers settle in our region. A community-builder at heart, Carolyn is keen to leverage those experiences as the new West Kootenay Local Immigrant Partnership (LIP) Coordinator.

Wyatt Gordon is a skilled communicator with a background in sociology and Chinese language & literature. Wyatt brings a unique perspective to his role as CBAL's settlement worker and language instructor in Trail. Wyatt also understands the challenges with social integration and access to services that newcomers to rural communities often face.

Desneiges Profili has a background in education and community development. She brings a wide range of skills and expertise to her role as CBAL's executive director. A lifelong West Kootenay resident, Desneiges is proud to be part of an organization that aims to meet the needs of newcomers and promote welcoming communities.

3. Street Literacy - Literacy and Homelessness

As Canada's homeless crisis appears to be growing, what can literacy practitioners do to support adults who are unhoused? Adults living in extreme poverty may be unable or uninterested in committing to a regular class, however they still have literacy needs.

This presentation provides insight on how to incorporate learning strategies and resources to make literacy accessible and relevant to people who are transient, underhoused and/or homeless.

It pulls from Samantha's experience of developing the Word on the Street program, during her time as executive director of Literacy Central Vancouver Island, receiving three years of consecutive funding from the City of Nanaimo. The program took place in temporary and long-term shelters in the mid-island region and included facilitating literacy drop-in sessions, weekly poetry nights and assisting learners in applying for housing, ABE courses, etc.

During the run of this program, a literacy publication titled *Place* was produced and received provincial funding and national recognition.

Samantha Letourneau

Samantha Letourneau has worked in literacy for over ten years supporting refugees, women and people unhoused with their literacy goals. She holds a Master of Adult Education from St. Francis Xavier University, winning the Marie Gillen award for her research on creating a safe learning space for women impacted by abuse.

4. Envisioning Social Change through Community Capacity Building

In this session, we aim to explore community capacity building as an instrument for social change. We will share a case study of the Community Capacity Building (CCB) Citation program at Capilano University. As a community of educators and learners we will share our experiences and draw on stories from the alumni to reflect on the impact this work has made. Rather than a ‘learning’ session, we envision this as an experiential learning space.

Hasrat Grewal Gill, Erin Stewart Elliot and Michelle Grace Lebeau

As a settler, Hasrat Grewal Gill lives on the unceded territory of the Squamish Nation, and currently works as a faculty member in Capilano University's Community Development and Outreach department. Over the last 10 years, she has worked in the community with newcomers and literacy learners. In her community work and research, she aspires to explore decolonial, social justice and equity-based approaches to community work.

Erin Stewart Elliott has over 20 years of community development experience and has been with Capilano University for 10 years. She has three significant passions: collaboration, individual and community capacity building and art. Guided by her values, Erin pursues the question: How can art be used for individual and community change?

Michelle Grace Lebeau brings 25+ years’ experience working in the community as an adult educator and community developer. A faculty member in Capilano University’s Community Development and Outreach Department, she’s the current instructor for the Community Capacity Building Citation. She integrates concepts of wholistic healing and wellness to adult education approaches.

5. Am I Literate Enough for Digital Literacy? Learning the ‘Language of Being Online’

We will present examples of digital literacy teaching practices and an online learner-centered tool that focuses on basic digital technology skills interconnected with building critical media knowledge and vocabulary for adults to feel more confident and competent when using computers, smartphones or tablets. In other words, feeling more capable in reading, communicating and technical problem-solving while being online.

One example is a course we developed that brings together critical media literacy and financial literacy; the other example is a website that we developed for learners to practice basic (and taken for granted) digital tasks and online vocabulary at their own pace.

Audrey Gardner and Ryan Pike

Audrey Gardner has worked in adult literacy since 2001 in community, college and union education settings. She has experience as an instructor, coordinator and researcher in building capacity for learner-driven programming. Audrey has a PhD from OISE, University of Toronto in adult education and is the adult literacy coordinator at the Labour Education Centre, Toronto.

Ryan Pike has worked in adult literacy since 2011 in community and union education settings. He is an experienced instructor in digital literacy and excels at developing online learning resources for basic digital learning for adults. Ryan has a BEd in Adult Education from Brock University and is an adult literacy instructor at the Labour Education Centre, Toronto.

6. The Ripple Effect of Creative Expression for Literacy Learners

In this interactive workshop, we will explore how arts-based approaches can benefit adult learning by creating space for exploration, accessing non-rational thinking (using both left and right sides of the brain), tapping into emotions (essential part of learning), using our bodies, bringing playfulness into our literacy work, supporting relational engagement with others, democratizing participation, healing trauma and building community.

Then we'll share some examples of bringing a variety of arts-based methods to our work with adult learners illustrating how sketching, poetry, collage, stitching and so on, can create space for exploration and tap into embodied forms of knowing and learning.

Participants will be invited to share their experiences of integrating arts-based methods following which will be a hands-on activity for participants to experience creative expression methods for themselves. We'll conclude with discussing how to integrate arts-based activities into our pedagogy and explore concerns and strategies.

Spring Gillard and Shauna Butterwick

Spring Gillard works with English language learners and has embarked on a cross cultural conversation on losing language, using weaving and poetry to explore the theme. The work was inspired by research in the Downtown Eastside that revealed a group of Chinese seniors who had fallen through the cracks as they speak one of several "dying" dialects. These seniors are marginalized in multiple ways, through their race, age and class, and as a result they have been virtually invisible in terms of policy solutions.

Shauna Butterwick is an adult educator and retired University of British Columbia (UBC) professor whose focus has been on community-based adult learning and the transformative power of arts-based approaches to adult learning. She has explored how various forms of creative expression including painting, poetry, collage and theatre methods support marginalized learners, most recently those facing mental health challenges.

7. Courageous Dialogues: Bridging Divides in Polarized Times

We introduced our project and the topic of polarization at the last Decoda Conference (2022). In the time since, we convened community learning circles to learn more about the social dynamic of polarization. Following that, we facilitated groups to explore resources, approaches, tools and strategies to help us avoid or minimize polarizing dynamics. Nearing the end of this project, we are ready to share some key things we've learned from the research — and we want to share them in a presentation and hands-on workshop trying out some of the tools and strategies.

Diana Twiss, Jennie Barron, Alisha Samnani and Andrea Korens

Diana Twiss is the chair of the School of Access and Academic Preparation at Capilano University, and one of the five faculty researchers on the Courageous Dialogues: Moving Beyond Polarization project.

Other research team members are Jennie Barron, director of the Mir Centre for Peace in Castlegar, BC and project director; Andrea Korens, faculty researcher at VCC; Alisha Samnani, student research assistant at Capilano University and Selkirk College.

8. Literacy for Life: Bridging the Gap to Success for a Fair and Inclusive Society

ABC Life Literacy Canada is a national nonprofit dedicated to developing introductory adult literacy materials and resources. We envision a Canada where everyone has the skills and opportunities to fully participate in learning, life, and work. In keeping with our mission and vision, this presentation will delve into how our foundational learning materials align with broader societal goals. We'll explore the ways our programs can contribute to poverty reduction, promote justice and equity, foster diversity and inclusion, and empower learners with essential life skills.

Clear Language and Design (CLAD) principles are at the core of our content development, ensuring that our materials are not only educational but also accessible and adaptable to diverse learner needs. We'll discuss how these principles align with our commitment to fostering inclusivity and accessibility, drawing on adult learning theory and intersectional practices to create programs that resonate with a wide range of learners.

Greer Donaldson and Savanna-Jae Busia

Greer Donaldson is the team lead, community engagement at ABC Life Literacy. She works with the Community Engagement Team to foster relationships with community organizations and support literacy programming across the country. With her background in social justice and advocacy, Greer drives to bridge the gap through literacy.

As the community coordinator for ABC Life Literacy's UP Skills for Work program, Savanna-Jae Busia works to build partnerships with organizations promoting adult learning nationwide. Drawing on her extensive background in social services and mental health, she brings a wealth of experience in empowering vulnerable populations and driving social progress.

9. Fostering Inclusivity: Empowering Educators with AI-Powered Tech Tools

Join us for an engaging session where we'll look into the potential of free tech tools such as Canva AI and MagicSchool.ai in cultivating inclusivity within foundational learner classes, focusing on plain language and multilingual materials. Participants will learn how to use AI-based tech tools to communicate with potential learners, create class materials and reduce language barriers.

During our time together, we'll bring these tools to life with live demonstrations, so you can see firsthand how they can enhance your class preparation and in-class sessions. You're invited to join interactive discussions, where your insights and experiences are not only valued but celebrated.

By the end of our session, you'll leave with practical strategies and a toolkit of resources that you can easily apply in your teaching. Our journey is dedicated to embracing inclusivity through a multilingual and plain language lens, enriching the learning experience for all.

Leanne Adegbonmire and Ella Ruth

Leanne Adegbonmire is a grants liaison with Edmonton Community Adult Learning Association (ECALA) and a PhD candidate in Languages and Literacy Education at the University of Toronto. She has taught English and Spanish to adults for more than 10 years. She is passionate about inclusive pedagogy, multilingual education and technology.

Ella Ruth is the communications specialist with ECALA. She completed her Diploma in Paralegal Studies at BVC, along with marketing, branding and social media classes. She is passionate about inclusive communication and plain language in marketing.

10. Growing Your Volunteer Base

Non-profit and charitable organizations are struggling to attract volunteers after the pandemic, which is especially challenging because most services are now facing unprecedented demand for their services. This session will discuss strategies to grow your volunteer base, even if you've lost most of your volunteers in recent years.

Thomas Briginshaw

Thomas Briginshaw is the executive director and literacy outreach coordinator for the Literacy Alliance of the Shuswap Society. Thomas holds an MBA from Wilfrid Laurier University and was recently named one of Salmon Arm's Top 20 Under 40.

11. How the Ripple Begins: Exploring an Experiential Arc of Learning Another Language within the Settlement Sector

Warm up activity (10 minutes): Find the same written passage in several languages and have them read aloud in succession with no breaks. Ask participants if they can piece the ‘meaning’ of the passage together at all? As a group, put the ‘pieces’ together and try to decipher what the passage is about. Talk about what it is like to not understand one word. Talk about what it is like to only partially understand. Talk about what it is like to perhaps be the only person who understands.

Main Activity (80 minutes): Telling my story through ‘bead’ prompts. The leaders will assign different ‘meanings’ to beads. Participants will be asked to take five or more life events and string them chronologically onto a cord with spacer beads in between. Once completed, participants will be separated into pairs. Each person will take a moment and try to understand their partner’s ‘beaded story’ and create a storyline without revealing it to their partner. Once both have had a chance to do that, they will tell the story of one another to each other and see how close they came to ‘knowing’ their partner’s story.

Trudi Diening, Andrea Dunne and Katrina Heron

As a faculty member in the Community Development and Outreach Department at Capilano University (CapU), Trudi Diening has been working as a fundamental English educator for over 25 years. She is the program manager of the Sunshine Coast Welcoming Communities, a Federally (IRCC) and Provincially (BCSIS) funded settlement project that CapU manages and delivers in the Sunshine Coast, Squamish and Whistler/Pemberton. Along with two very capable settlement outreach workers, Welcoming Communities brings newcomers from around the world and helps them create community in their newfound home country.

Andrea Dunne has been involved in programs and services in the Sea to Sky region for newcomers, immigrants and refugees since 2011, firstly as a volunteer in the Whistler CALP. Following this, she held frontline positions in both the settlement and anti-violence sectors, supporting newcomers and immigrants. During these times, she developed several key literacy and skills development programs for immigrants that opened pathways to literacy-focused outcomes for immigrant and newcomers, women and families. Andrea has been a Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultant since 2019 and continues to be a licensee of the College of Immigration & Citizenship Consultants, offering immigration advice, advocacy and representation in economic, family and some humanitarian classes of the immigration program. She is currently an instructor and program manager for Capilano University’s Community Development and Outreach (CDO) Department’s Newcomer Services program in the Sea to Sky and Sunshine Coast region.

Katrina Heron has been in the role of Instructor and Program Manager for Capilano's Community Development & Outreach department since September 2021. In this role, she helps the Whistler Pemberton Newcomers Services to provide immigrants, refugees and new Canadians with support with living in the community and English language skills. In her previous work she taught English as a Second Language for over 15 years and helped develop curricula for a variety of different language courses and teacher training programs.

12. Junior Journalist

Junior Journalists is a program that encourages hands-on learning and community involvement. It takes students' writing and communication skills from the classroom into the real world. In this program, school-aged students prepare and publish articles for local news outlets. During this interactive workshop, Chrisy Hill will lead participants through the program components, provide examples of published work and have some hands-on activities to take part in. Information on how to connect with local schools, libraries and new agencies will also be provided.

Chrisy Hill

Chrisy has been the literacy outreach coordinator in the Elk Valley since 2015 and has a great passion for program development. Her latest creation, Junior Journalists, came about after her own children expressed a desire to write for a newspaper. Chrisy is looking forward to sharing this program with a broader audience.

13. Beyond Boundaries: ECALA's Collective Kitchens

Have you ever been curious about collective kitchens? This session focuses on literacy, numeracy, financial literacy and life skills, offering a relevant and learner-centred experience for diverse foundational learners through the lens of communal cooking. Explore the *ECALA Collective Kitchen Handbook* to unlock insights for facilitators and provide practical guidance for setting up community cooking programs.

Walking through the handbook, we will introduce activities, recipes and strategies that build self-confidence and strengthen learner identity. With tangible materials like food labels, recipes and safety guidelines, participants gain knowledge applicable to life beyond the classroom. Use tools like coupons, apps like Flipp and Receipt Hog, and comparative shopping to enrich participants' understanding of money matters. Explore the transformative impact of planning and cooking within a group, fostering essential skills like cooperation, collaboration and communication. Join us for a session that goes beyond the norms, exploring holistic learner development through collective kitchens.

Debbie Clark and Wendy Peverett

Debbie Clark is the executive director of the Edmonton Community Adult Learning Association (ECALA). She is a strong literacy and community advocate with a forty-year career journey in the service sector. Her commitment to diverse communities includes funding learning opportunities and embodying "nothing about us without us," fostering lasting impacts through literacy as a key to empowerment.

Wendy Peverett is the professional development specialist at ECALA. She brings over 25 years of expertise in the literacy field to the conference. Her wealth of experience reflects a commitment to collaboration, advocacy and capacity building, emphasizing the importance of united efforts to uplift foundational learners. Wendy is passionate about sharing insights for collective growth.

Morning sessions: Friday, April 19

14. Discovering Neuroinclusive Education!

In the first part of the presentation Sue Blyth Hall and Julie Brewer will present the dynamics behind so-called learning disabilities. One-third of the population have a way of thinking and learning which is different from the way they are taught, hence the labels that begin with 'dys'. They are in fact, very able to learn, if they are taught in the way they were born to learn.

In the second part, presenters will provide a hands-on opportunity for attendees to experience one of the correction methods. They are very excited to be able to describe strategies that are being used with 3–5-year-olds as well as K-3 children. These strategies ensure the challenges never have an opportunity to arise!

Sue Hall and Julie Brewer

Sue Blyth Hall is a dyslexia facilitator, author of *Fish Don't Climb Trees*, TEDx speaker, March 2021, and the founder and chair of The Whole Dyslexic Society. For 25 years she has worked with children and adults who have a wonderful way of thinking and learning; they are the opposite of learning disabled.

Julie Brewer is a pre-school Montessori educator and owner of Langford Montessori. She is a director of The Whole Dyslexic Society.

15. The Artificial Intelligence Revolution and Literacy: A Critical Discussion

As global societies begin utilizing software that can simulate human-like thinking, we emerge in a new era of knowledge generation, access and distribution. Throughout this presentation, we will begin a critical discussion attuned to the following questions:

- What is AI and how can we use it effectively and ethically?
- What basic literacy skills (including digital literacy) do we need to use AI in a meaningful way?
- How is strengthening critical thinking skills essential when utilizing AI?
- Can AI help to eliminate education inequities, or will it deepen the divide?

This presentation, grounded in United for Literacy's 2023 national report on the same topic, will provide an overview of AI as it relates to literacy and places of learning. Through guided activities and discussions, participants will better understand their personal positionalities, explore AI's impact on places of work/learning, and become more familiar with technologies such as Chat GPT through hands-on use.

Annie Montague, Bree Canton and Emily Bridge

Annie Montague (she/her/hers) is the BC regional manager with United for Literacy. She has a Master of Arts in Educational Studies at UBC focusing on social and environmental equity. Annie is a passionate educator and community collaborator and promotes learning with respect to the interconnected and complex world we inhabit.

Bree Canton (she/her/hers) is the BC community coordinator with United for Literacy. She has a BA in Psychology with a counselling specialization. Bree is passionate about people's learning journeys and fostering genuine connections. Often, you'll find her cozied up in a café with a good book and tea.

Emily Bridge (she/her/hers) is the BC program support with United for Literacy. She has a BA in Interdisciplinary Studies from Capilano University and is currently pursuing her Master of Library and Information Science at the UBC School of Information. Emily is passionate about reading, art, and community capacity-building.

16. The Triple Ripple and the Meaning of Education

This three-hour session will focus on three key areas of adult education in which it is essential to champion the unique potential of learners: corrections education, ESL and adult literacy.

Roberta Power will share interviews from her podcast for incarcerated students and their teachers on Canada's voicED radio. She will share and encourage ideas for boosting motivation, self esteem, literacy, digital skills, and future career prospects among residents in correctional facilities. Roberta hopes her interviews with compassionate educators from the Correctional Service of Canada will inspire instructors and those who find themselves incarcerated, as well as deepen the awareness of the implications of low literacy, in order to potentially reduce crime and help heal the often compromised esteem of learners in and out of prison. Together with participants, she would like to chat about engaging resources and how to best incorporate Indigenous and cultural perspectives.

She will also discuss how she has used drama in the ESL/LINC classroom through video-making, theatre and puppetry to improve literacy, fluency and confidence. Attendees will explore using *The Westcoast Reader* and global news sources with ESL and ABE students for newscasting and self-expression.

Margaret Lyster and Stephanie Lowe will accompany Roberta to present on the resources they've used with their ESL and ABE students, some of which include *The Westcoast Reader* and a family-literacy-friendly learning platform. Because the non-intimidating and fun nature of these resources have created a positive ripple effect, they want to share their potentially great impact on ESL, corrections education and adult or family literacy.

Roberta Power, Margaret Lyster and Stephanie Lowe

Roberta Power is a longtime LINC instructor. Now, she is the educational consultant in Canada for New Readers Press, ProLiteracy. Two years ago, she asked if she could be their Canadian representative after using their books in her class and witnessing how well received they were. Additionally, Roberta has a love of the English language and the human psyche; she spreads her delight in both, making videos, plays, and expressive art with her students. Recently, she started a podcast on Canada's educational network voicED radio, where she speaks to incarcerated students and their teachers in corrections.

Margaret Lyster was serving as a volunteer tutor when, while working in a CALP 30 years ago changed her career trajectory. She left her government job and returned to university to earn a BA/BEd. Since that time, she has taught in the school system, and worked with adults in academic upgrading, career development, and as a LINC teacher. Margaret has been a community adult literacy liaison with Lethbridge Public Library since 2016.

Stephanie Lowe's journey into the field of adult literacy started when she was a CALP participant in New Westminster. After upgrading, she went on to a successful career in the healthcare field, where she practiced for 18 years. She is again an adult learner working towards becoming a certified instructor of Adult Foundation Learning in Literacy and Numeracy. She's also a community adult learning liaison at Lethbridge Public Library.

17. Principled Community-University Engagement: What, Why, How

Small community organizations often want to work with universities but don't know how to start the conversation or who to contact. Universities are increasingly placing more value on community engagement and seeking ways to connect with communities in respectful, mutually beneficial partnerships. Join us to learn how community organizations and universities can establish and develop healthy, effective partnerships.

We will tell you our story of how a small non-profit (READ) partnered successfully with Simon Fraser University (SFU) and began exploring a relationship with the University of the Fraser Valley (UFV). We will explain how universities historically engaged with communities and why that approach is changing. We will describe the Principles for Partnerships developed by SFU, and UFV's PAIR (Partnerships Agency Inclusion Recognition) tool that is used to evaluate potential partnerships.

Finally, we will lead you through two hands-on activities to learn how to use UFV's PAIR Tool, and how to analyze partnerships for principled engagement.

Shanti Ang, Rachel Nelson and Susan Mide Kiss

Shanti Ang is the literacy outreach coordinator for Surrey and White Rock. She has travelled a varied employment path through clerical positions, library technician work, vegetation management, community development, teaching ELL, and literacy. Shanti is passionate about literacy, learning and spreading kindness.

Rachel Nelson is the associate director for Partnerships and Programs at Simon Fraser University. With a focus on fostering authentic, respectful, sustainable, and mutually valuable partnerships, Rachel leads the development of the SFU Surrey – TD Community Engagement Centre and collaborates on strategic initiatives that build institutional capacity for community engagement.

Susan Mide Kiss is the vice-president, community engagement, at the University of the Fraser Valley. Currently pursuing a Doctorate in Social Sciences at Royal Roads University, Susan is deeply committed to working in a good way exploring wise and ethical engagement practices with Indigenous and other equity-deserving communities.

18. If You Don't Dream It, You Can't Achieve It!

What is the dream/vision of your organization and the work you do? What would achieving this make possible and for who? In the not-for-profit world, we are often mired in reacting to the crisis of the moment and the day-to-day work. Scarcity mindset and fear can paralyze organizations. We might be doing good work and solving immediate problems, but are we really moving towards what might be possible?

If you're feeling stuck, it might be time to ask different questions, break out of the traditional not-for-profit box, and explore your organizational culture to go from reacting to moving forward to achieve your dream/vision. In this workshop, we will look at a different approach to build your organization's capacity, resilience, and connect your daily work to your dream. You will leave with concrete tools, resources to support your learning, and examples of how this process is working at the Centre for Family Literacy.

Kimberley Chung

Kim Chung is the executive director at the Centre for Family Literacy in Alberta. She is passionate about family literacy and the centre's holistic approach to literacy learning. She feels privileged to work with an incredibly dedicated team that excels at supporting and building capacity in individuals, families, and communities, using a strengths-based, responsive approach.

19. Facilitation Skills and Evaluation

Facilitation and program evaluation are two words that can make people very nervous! Strong facilitators help a group get to their goals, by shaping conversations, encouraging brainstorming and debate and leading decision making. Evaluation is an important part of facilitating, as it helps us to gain feedback about group goals, how a program or session is helping the group to achieve those goals or not, and helps to improve your facilitation. This session will cover the goals of both, why they are important to programs and ways to plan for them. Participants will also do hands on activities that can be incorporated into your own facilitation and evaluation.

Katie Johnson and Charlotte Upton

Katie Johnson joined the NWT Literacy Council team in 2010 as a family literacy coordinator, began our youth literacy programming and is now the NWTLC's program director. Katie has a strong interest in experiential learning and supporting neurodiverse learners like her own children.

Charlotte Upton has worked with the NWT Literacy Council since 2015 in the program areas of Family Literacy, Youth Literacy and Skills for Success. Charlotte enjoys working with community groups across the NWT and spending time on the land.

20. Take a Break

Take a Break is a newly designed program intended for caregivers of young children to bring about connection and increase wellbeing all while developing various literacy skills. The program falls under the umbrella of adult literacy, family literacy and wellbeing. It is structured to scaffold learning by starting with the parent/caregiver in adult-centred workshops, then sets the caregivers up for success in bringing the learning home. With additional child-friendly activity ideas and materials, parents are supported in modeling and integrating wellbeing and literacy skills into their daily routines.

This program equips facilitators with the tools to create opportunities for parents and caregivers to learn and practice useful strategies that foster wellbeing and sustainable connection with their children and other caregivers. This scaffolded approach invites caregivers to form connections with other parents, share parenting ideas, and embrace well-being through experiential learning. The intention of the program is to have a profound effect on the confidence and wellbeing of caregivers while having a ripple effect into their families and their communities.

Nicole Sharp and Christine Lewandowski

Nicole Sharp joined the NWT Literacy Council in 2022 as a family and community literacy coordinator. Prior to working in the NWT, Nicole worked with families and community members as a public programmer, supporting education in public art galleries in Ontario.

Christine Lewandowski has lived and worked in the North for 18 years and is passionate about promoting a holistic approach to learning and wellbeing, fostering personal accountability in students

and inquiry-based experiential learning. She is an educator, mother of two beautiful children, business owner, yogi, mindfulness practitioner and a life-long learner.

21. The Soft Skills for Success

There are five social emotional skills included in the Skills for Success. What are they and how do they affect a person's life outcomes? This breakout session looks at the importance of developing soft skills with adult learners, through the lens of Ontario's Literacy and Basic Skills program. Learn how practitioners are teaching these important skills and hear inspirational testimonies from the learners themselves.

This session will look at the new Skills for Success framework, as it relates to adult learners in Ontario's LBS programs. The session will pull from the presenters' experience in developing new SFS curricula resources and the feedback from piloting those resources.

Catherine Toovey

Catherine Toovey is the executive director of Community Literacy of Ontario, a provincial support organization that serves over 100 community-based LBS programs across the province. Catherine is passionate about literacy as a basic human right.

22. Empowerment Through Digital Inclusion: Bridging Gaps through Smartphone Skills

This session will provide an overview of Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy's smartphone project as a transformative initiative, weaving together learning, research and training to address critical challenges in the digital landscape. This will offer valuable insights into creating 18 culturally relevant learning modules and qualitative research gathered from experiential learning and community partnerships, aiming to address the digital divide and barriers to accessing and using digital technologies.

The project sets the stage for future endeavors aimed at fostering inclusivity, poverty reduction, equity, diversity and accessibility. The project's multifaceted approach gives individuals digital skills and knowledge creating positive change agents in their communities and across society.

Ambreen Ahmad

Ambreen is working as a managing director at Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy, a non-profit organization that supports adult literacy in Toronto and York Region. She is also the co-founder of Studypages, a free online tutoring platform that provides tutoring across Canada. Her previous work experience and life-long learning certificates and diplomas bring a wealth of information to develop learning strategies, recruitment procedures and governance at MTML. She is an ardent supporter of digital empowerment and is continuously working to not only to upgrade her digital skills but also to improve MTML's processes based on digital changes.

23. From Ripple to Tidal Wave: Building Community Capacity in Trauma-Informed Financial Literacy

Financial literacy is powerful! But it is not a magic wand. An individual's financial challenges are often complex and multifaceted; something that a mere exercise in budgeting will not solve. The workshop will explore how financial empowerment with a trauma informed lens can have a lasting impact on a person's financial health and their overall wellbeing. Exploring a person's financial situation and other events and factors impacting them can help financial coaches provide a more effective, individualized and appropriate support for those whom we serve, while creating a safe space for individuals to grow in their financial journey.

The workshop will also outline how sharing this approach with community-based partners like Coast Capital is creating a greater understanding of the realities faced by marginalized people, and increasing access both to supports and to the financial system.

A ripple of financial literacy support can become a tidal wave of financial resilience!

Murray Baker

Murray Baker is the manager, Financial Empowerment, Family Services of Greater Vancouver (FSGV) with over 25 years working in financial literacy. He is also a leading North American authority on student financial planning and author of the bestseller; *The Debt Free Graduate: How to Survive College or University Without Going Broke* (HarperCollins).

Coast Capital has served its members and the greater community for more than 80 years, guided by its purpose of "building better futures together." Coast strategically invests in partnerships that promote and improve financial inclusion, including the Financial Empowerment Program at FSGV.

24. EMBRACE BEWILDERMENT: The Nine Most Important Things I've Learned About Creativity from Writing For — and Teaching It to — Kids

In this workshop, Lee Edward Födi draws on his 20 years of experience as a children's author, illustrator, and creative writing teacher to unpack the mystery — and myths — of creativity. He will discuss perspectives, approaches, and strategies for nurturing imagination in the classroom and expanding literacy. The session will include examples of specific writing and visual literacy activities that can be implemented in the classroom to set students up for success. Participants will also be given the opportunity to engage in a sample exercise.

Key points to be discussed include:

- There are no lightning bolts
- Creativity is stressful
- The process is the product
- Teaching is trying (in more ways than one!)
- Thinking inside the box
- Sharing the power
- Nurture over nature
- The importance of generosity and patience

Lee Födi

Lee Edward Födi is an award-winning children's author, illustrator, and educator. He is the co-founder of a not-for-profit society that helps kids publish their own books and has designed and led writing programs for kids in Canada, the US, Korea, and Thailand. Find out more at leefodi.com.

25. A Successful Journey to Mosaic's New Literacy Intake Project

This November 2023, Mosaic applied a new intake procedure to assess literacy clients to ensure accuracy of their assigned levels. The clients were assessed on their numeracy and literacy skills through ten language tasks using, pictures, flashcards, symbols, and tracing sheets. Each client was given enough time, space and pace to complete tasks. The instructors introduced each task through role modelling, using clear and precise instructions while supporting clients using their first language where and when needed.

Throughout the process, clients felt supported which provided them the feeling of 'can do' ability. This also provided them an opportunity to have transparency of their own performance, e.g., through moving pictures back and forth to make a logical connection of an event. In short, this new approach with such a dynamic assessment module enabled the assessor to recognize the literacy clients' level of language competency along with their challenges and barriers.

Ammarah Imran

Ammarah Imran is a LINC instructor/lead teacher at Mosaic. She has been teaching for twenty years of hands-on classroom experience in Canada and the Middle East. She is a dedicated and goal-driven educator who creates a classroom atmosphere that is stimulating and encouraging to for all learners.

26. An Indigenous Skills for Success Journey: Planting the Seeds for Growth

Explore the updated Indigenous Skills for Success Journey Refresh Project. The interactive and engaging workshop facilitates connection with like-minded colleagues while presenter-led activities guide you to put the skills framework into practice with relevant scenarios. The session includes the opportunity to try out some exciting new learner activities and come away with new tools to add to your tool kit.

Francesca de Bastiani and Danica Isherwood

Francesca de Bastiani is a certified essential skills practitioner and holds a Master's degree in Education with a focus on diversity and curriculum development. She has over 30 years' experience working in employment and training initiatives working closely with Indigenous learners and practitioners. She is currently working in partnership with Douglas College to refresh some new curriculum called: *An Indigenous Skills for Success Journey: Planting the Seeds for Growth* (Paintedstone & Associates Learning Systems (PALS)).

Danica Isherwood (Douglas College) holds the CCDP and Vocational Rehabilitation designations and is passionate about Skills for Success. As a firm believer in lifelong learning and continuous upskilling, she supports others to build skill and career efficacy.

27. Community Engagement and Two-Way Learning: Building Connections and Capacity in the Downtown Eastside

The UBC Learning Exchange provides free, low barrier programs for residents in the Downtown Eastside that emphasize community building and are grounded in personal experiences and knowledge of learners. In this session, program coordinators will discuss how we engage patrons in social, recreational, and arts-based activities to build community and create opportunities for two-way learning. From field trips, seasonal celebrations, arts-based workshops, and cultural sharing activities, our programs are designed to foster literacy through reciprocal sharing of knowledge aimed at building confidence and a sense of belonging among learners. With examples of what this learning looks like in practice, this session will demonstrate how such programming aids in combatting social isolation for community members and positively impacts their health and overall wellbeing. Hear the perspectives from program coordinators and program participants to learn about the community capacity building that can come from these informal learning opportunities, as well as how to embed these community engagement practices into your own programming.

Rachael Barton-Bridges and Jennifer Rentz

Rachael Barton-Bridges is the community animator at the UBC Learning Exchange, where she works closely with community members to offer arts and cultural activities. Rachael is passionate about fostering spaces for curiosity and belonging that bring people together. She has spent the past five years working within the intersection of academia and community and holds an MA in Sociology.

Jennifer Rentz is the drop-in coordinator at the UBC Learning Exchange. In this role, Jennifer creates and maintains a welcoming and harmonious learning space for local residents to access computers, pursue learning opportunities, and connect with each other. Prior to her time at the Learning Exchange, she worked with local community-based nonprofit organizations that served in empowering and supporting women, children, and families.

Keynote: Jackie Hildering

Jackie Hildering is a biology teacher, cold-water diver, underwater photographer and Humpback Whale researcher living and learning in the Territories of the Kwakwaka'wakw-speaking Peoples, northeast Vancouver Island. She is co-founder of the Marine Education and Research Society (MERS) nonprofit.

Her work has been featured on Animal Planet's *Wild Obsession* series, BBC's *New threat to Canada's Pacific humpback whales*, BBC's *Ingenious Animals*, PBS' *Lineage / When Whales Walked*; and will be in an upcoming episode of *Planet Earth III "Humans"* – narrated by Sir David Attenborough!

Jackie has been recognized with an ECOSTAR Educational Leadership Award; Canadian Power Squadron Environment Award; Science Writers and Communicators of Canada People's Choice Award for best Canadian Science Website; Black Press "Local Hero" awards, Environmental Hero of the Year, Northern Vancouver Island.



Photo: Andrew Topham made possible by Melanie Wood

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