

# Literacy connects us!

May 4 – 6, 2022 | Radisson Hotel Vancouver Airport



## Decoda Literacy Conference 2022 Program Guide

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

This year's theme is "Literacy Connects Us." Connecting is so important. It is how we learn, build relationships and inspire one another.

We're so glad we can once again meet in person. Over the next two days, we look forward to seeing familiar faces and welcoming those new to the conference.

Let's connect and make the most of our time together!

*The Decoda Team*

# Pre-conference

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Wednesday, May 4, 2022	
8:00-9:00	Breakfast
9:00-10:30	Parents as Literacy Supporters (PALS) Facilitators Training with Aliza Dhungana, Carolyn Amantea and Rapinder Rai
10:30-10:45	Break
10:45-12:00	Parents as Literacy Supporters (PALS) Facilitators Training with Aliza Dhungana, Carolyn Amantea and Rapinder Rai (cont'd)
12:00-1:00	Lunch
1:00-3:30	Parents as Literacy Supporters (PALS) Facilitators Training with Aliza Dhungana, Carolyn Amantea and Rapinder Rai (cont'd)
6:00-8:00	Conference Registration

## Day One: Thursday, May 5, 2022

7:30-8:30	Registration and Breakfast						
8:30-9:30	Keynote: Dr. Ralf St. Clair						
9:30-10:30	1. The Role of National Non-profit Organizations in Community Capacity Building	2. Heritage Language Teaching and the Global Storybooks Project	3. Canadian Adult Reading Assessment (CARA)	4. Discovering our History: Heroes, Heroines and Literacy Landmarks	5. Éyxel Together: Cultural Sharing in the time of COVID-19	6. Developing Legal Literacy with Clear Language and Design	7. Placing Connections at the Heart of Virtual Programming
10:30-11:00	Break						
11:00-12:00	8. Cooking on a Budget: Learning Math Can Be Yum!	9. Digital Literacy Capacity – Building at the Regional Level	CARA (cont'd).	Discovering our History (cont'd)	10. Promoting Multilingualism During and Beyond the Pandemic	Developing Legal Literacy (cont'd)	11. Write a Winning Grant Proposal!
12:00-1:00	Lunch						
1:00-2:00	Keynote: Angela Sterritt						
2:00-3:00	12. Plain Language: Making Everyday Documents Clear	13. Trauma Informed Care and Adult Foundational Learners	14. Moving Beyond Polarization – Implications for Literacy Work	15. Facebook for Non-profits	16. Connecting Literacy to Learners' Lives	17. Indigenizing Curriculum and Developing First Nations Learning Materials	18. Grassroots Community Development: Growing Agency and Voice
3:00-3:30	Break						
3:30-4:30	Plain Language: Making Everyday Documents Clear (cont'd)	Trauma Informed Care (cont'd)	Moving Beyond Polarization (cont'd)	Facebook for Non-profits (cont'd)	Connecting Literacy to Learners' Lives (cont'd)	Indigenizing Curriculum (cont'd)	Grassroots Community Development (cont'd)
5:00-7:00	Social						

**Day Two: Friday, May 6, 2022**

7:30-8:30	Breakfast						
8:30-9:30	Keynote: Craig Alexander						
9:30-10:30	19. Embodied Literacy – Artistic Literacy to Create and Support Community	20. Supporting Refugee Resettlement: Lessons Learned, Scalable Resources and Digital Delivery	21. Writing Out Loud	22. Reaching Families: A Virtual Book Club Model	23. Digital Literacies and Digital Justice: New Pedagogies in Times of Crisis and Possibility	24. Improving Instructor / Learner Connections in Literacy Classrooms by Building Personal Resilience with Energetic Self-Care	25. Your Life in Lines: Fostering Belonging Through Literacy
10:30-11:00	Break						
11:00-12:00	19. Embodied Literacy (cont'd)	20. Supporting Refugee Resettlement (cont'd)	21. Writing Out Loud (cont'd)	22. Reaching Families (cont'd)	23. Digital Literacies and Digital Justice (cont'd)	24. Improving Instructor/ Learner Connections (cont'd)	25. Your Life in Lines (cont'd)
12:00-1:00	Lunch						
1:00-2:00	Keynote: Provincial Panel with Brigid Hayes						
2:00-3:00	26. Community Connections	27. LOC Roundtable Discussion	28. Literacy and Libraries in Isolated Communities: The Write to Read BC Project	29. Reading Comprehension	30. More Than Just Clicks – A Workshop for Creating Digital Literacy at the Right Level	31. Reading through the Pandemic: Inspiring Change and Building	
3:00-3:15	Closing						



# Workshop Descriptions

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## Pre-conference: Wednesday, May 4

### 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

### Aliza Dhungana, Carolyn Amantea and Rapinder Rai

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.

Carolyn Amantea works as the Settlement Services Coordinator and is one of the 16 community literacy outreach coordinators for the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy. Reducing barriers to success is an area she strives to focus on in program design and delivery. Carolyn's experience with immigrant clients is extensive, and she is keenly aware of the challenges that face those new to our community. Additionally, Carolyn is highly motivated to create healthy, inclusive communities through strong partnerships and advocacy work. Carolyn completed a Bachelor of Science in Biology at the University of Victoria. She spent three years living in Hokkaido, Japan and while teaching there discovered her passion for adult education.

Rapinder Rai is a kindergarten and Grade 5 Punjabi language teacher at Harry Sayers Elementary School in Abbotsford. She has run PALS sessions with her kindergarten families since 2002 and has been a facilitator for Immigrant PALS Punjabi since 2008. She is the author of bilingual English and Punjabi children's books published by HomeRoots Books. Rapinder developed The Punjabi Family Literacy Resource for PALS in Immigrant Communities with 2010 Legacies Now. She has translated and adapted LEAP BC resources into Punjabi for Decoda Literacy Solutions.

## Morning sessions: Thursday, May 5

### Keynote: Dr. Ralf St. Clair

In the two decades since completing his PhD, Ralf St. Clair has been involved in many fascinating projects and in universities in three countries: the U.K., the U.S. and Canada. Some of the highlights include an EU-funded study of vocational adult education across Europe, managing a massive skills survey in Scotland for the Scottish Government and a large-scale exploration of educational aspirations in deprived areas of the UK. Currently, Ralf is Dean, Faculty of Education at the University of Victoria. One of his favourite things to do is write books. He has three single-authored books out so far and is hoping for more in the near future!



### 1. The Role of National Non-profit Organizations in Community Capacity Building

Community Capacity Building (CCB) is designed to enable all individuals to develop skills and competencies regardless of their socioeconomic status. Through CCB, individuals can take greater control of their lives and are empowered to more fully participate in their communities. While all organizations in the literacy sector contribute to CCB, national non-profit organizations play a pivotal role by supporting regional non-profit connectivity. This is achieved through the sharing of resources, research and best practices, ultimately building capacity for both literacy practitioners and the community of learners they support. Join ABC Life Literacy Canada as we discuss the role of national non-profit organizations as a unifying collaborative force amongst a currently fragmented landscape.

#### Ellie Tamura and Nnolika Niles

Ellie Tamura is currently working as the Community Coordinator at ABC Life Literacy Canada. Since joining ABC, Ellie has been enjoying helping practitioners and educators bring financial, digital, family and workplace literacy to learners across Western and Northern Canada.

Nnolika Niles is currently working as the Outreach Manager for ABC Life Literacy Canada, where she develops outreach strategies for community engagement for all ABC programs and initiatives. Nnolika thoroughly enjoys fostering relationships and helping national literacy practitioners find the right program for their learners.

## 2. Heritage Language Teaching and the Global Storybooks Project: Lessons from the Vancouver Bangla School

The session reports on a qualitative case study that investigates how teachers of the community-based Vancouver Bangla School (VBS) leverage translingual and multimodal resources to promote children's (aged 6-14) online Bangla Heritage Language (HL) learning in the COVID-19 era. The study also examines the extent to which the digital educational resources, Storybooks Canada and Storybooks Bangladesh, which is part of the Global Storybooks project, help to promote HL learning. Currently, the school has five volunteer teachers who are participants of the study. The data sources include participant class observations, field notes, questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with teachers. Data is being analyzed using NVivo 12, a qualitative data analysis computer software. Preliminary findings suggest that the combined practice of translanguaging along with other modes of meaning-making promotes students' investment in Bangla HL learning. The session concludes with a discussion of the relevance of the study for HL learning across global sites.

### Asma Afreen

Asma Afreen is a PhD Candidate at the University of British Columbia. Her research addresses identity, multilingualism and multimodality, with a focus on Bangla heritage language learning. She is a Global Storybooks team member and helped develop Storybooks Bangladesh, a free online literacy resource for learners of Bangla.

## 3. Canadian Adult Reading Assessment (CARA)

Assessment helps to ensure that the student's learning journey continues to be successful. In this workshop, you will learn how to administer and interpret the results from the Canadian Adult Reading Assessment (CARA). This tool provides diagnostic information that will enable you to identify a student's reading pattern and choose effective teaching strategies. You will also learn how this assessment tool helps you place learners on the Community Adult Literacy Benchmarks.

### Diana Twiss and Jade Chan

Diana Twiss is a faculty member in the Community Development and Outreach Department at Capilano University. Her passions are making education and learning accessible; demystifying assessment and evaluation practices; and of course, knitting and making yarn.

Jade Chan has over ten years of experience in education, including teaching and curriculum planning for students from kindergarten to adults. Previously, Jade worked at Sylvan as a Centre Director. She holds degrees in Linguistics and Education. Jade is a passionate educator who believes that literacy is a key to opening doors for people.



## 4. Discovering Our History: Heroes, Heroines and Literacy Landmarks

What can we learn from our history? How has it positioned our field in society? How should we envision the future of our field?

Although it is an unknown part of our practice and knowledge base, the field of adult literacy has a very long, proud and amazing history. In this presentation, we will discuss seven adult literacy landmarks. Knowing more about our proud history can build a stronger sense of professional pride in our field. It can give insight to the struggles of so many who have worked – even risked their lives – to build the field we work in. This work is effectively the only research on adult literacy history in our field. Takeaways will include how our field has lived with far fewer resources and greater challenges than we have today. With this long proud history, shouldn't our field see itself as a profession? What can the past teach us to help us envision our future?

### Dr. Allan Quigley

Allan Quigley is a retired Professor of Adult Education. He taught his first literacy/ABE class in North Saskatchewan in 1972/73, then in Fort McMurray in 1974/75. He was one of the founders of the Regina Plains Community College in the late 1970's. With the Saskatchewan Ministry of Advanced Education in the 1980's, he was Director of ABE/ESL and the GED program that helped found the Saskatchewan college system through the 1980's. After attaining a PhD in Adult Education, he was Professor of Adult Education at Penn State University, then Professor of Adult Education at St. Francis Xavier University in Nova Scotia. Internationally known for his research and publications – including four books and some 200 articles and reports – now in his "retirement" in White Rock, he is President of READ Surrey/White Rock which provides free literacy/numeracy tutoring to adults in the Surrey and White Rock region as well as some adult literacy consulting.

## 5. Éyxel Together: Cultural Sharing in the time of COVID-19 in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside

Éyxel means more than one person paddling a canoe in the Halq'emeylem language of the Coast Salish people. In this session, you will hear how two organizations worked together and pooled their resources to provide virtual cultural activities to Elders and community members in the Downtown Eastside during COVID-19. This workshop aims to get participants thinking about the importance of respectful and reciprocal partnerships and how, when we paddle together, more can be achieved.

Some of the cultural sharing activities included a virtual smudge and a video series on the importance of Indigenous languages. These will be shared along with practical advice and lessons learned on how to transition cultural sharing activities to a virtual format and how to do this in a decolonizing, inclusive and accessible way.

## **Nicole Bird and Suzie O’Shea**

Nicole Bird is an Indigenous Programs Coordinator at Carnegie Community Centre. She is a member of the Haida Nation under the Raven Moiety, St’langng Laanas clan. She has been working in the Downtown Eastside for over seven years and, as an experienced community programmer, has delivered many events, programs and workshops for the community to enhance and further connection to Indigenous culture.

Suzie O’Shea is a Community Animator at University of British Columbia Learning Exchange. She is from Ireland and has been working in the Downtown Eastside for 10 years. Suzie is passionate about bringing people together, and in her role as Community Animator she works in partnership with community members and community groups to host arts and cultural activities.

## **6. Developing Legal Literacy with Clear Language and Design: Empowerment through Co-Creation**

Understanding legal language and navigating the system can be challenging for anyone. Come learn about the innovative resources developed by Legal Aid BC (LABC) that empower thousands of people in BC to recognize, solve and prevent legal issues. From graphic novels to free online mediation, LABC develops resources that reach people where and how they need it most.

Join us for an interactive presentation, including an overview of legal aid services and resources and how we engage hard-to-reach communities. Learn how we work with communities to develop and improve accessible print resources through a case study of an animation and graphic novel on Indigenous rights in the legal system. Also, we’ll do a deep dive into LABC’s interactive websites and how we have improved client success with clear language, supportive features, usability improvements and personalized help, including free online family law mediation.

### **Adam Fraser, Patricia Lim and Sarah Chau**

Adam H. Fraser is program support and lead in enhancing Legal Aid BC’s online mediation platform. He recently contributed to usability research for the LABC website and the Achieving Digital Equity project, working with frontline workers, intermediaries and clients, to research barriers and solutions to accessing digital legal resources.

Patricia Lim is the Publications Development Coordinator for Legal Aid BC. She develops and evaluates Public Legal Education and Information (PLEI) materials and resources and lets community workers know about these free and plain language resources.

Sarah Chau is the Community Engagement Coordinator at Legal Aid BC. She partners with service providers in rural, remote, Indigenous, and hard to reach communities across the province in order to get legal information and Legal Aid into the paths of those who need it.

## 7. Placing Connection at the Heart of Virtual Programming

Throughout the pandemic, as ONE TO ONE trialed and tested new-to-us ways to virtually support children’s literacy, it became increasingly clear that the foundation of our over 30-year-old in-person program – cultivating strong one-on-one connections – was as, if not more, important virtually. We branched out to strengthen and forge new relationships with schools, tutors, families and community partners. Relying on technology to deliver services encourages a one-to-many model. In contrast to this, we re-committed to individualized connection.

Join us for an interactive session detailing several initiatives that ONE TO ONE undertook in response to COVID-19 and how we kept connection at the core of each. We’ll explore the successes and challenges of each initiative and offer some tips and best practices for literacy organizations and practitioners looking to connect and support their clients virtually beyond the pandemic.

### **Alistair Nagle and Zahida Machan**

In his third year as Program Manager at ONE TO ONE and a believer in the possibility of language, Alistair Nagle is excited to be contributing to the ever-changing world of children’s literacy. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in English literature from Bishop’s University and a Bachelor of Education from the University of Ottawa.

Zahida Machan joined the ONE TO ONE team in 2015 and has influenced the organization’s provincial expansion. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature and a Bachelor of Education from the University of British Columbia. She brings an extensive background in education, curriculum development, service-learning and workshop facilitation.

## 8. Cooking on a Budget: Learning Math can be Yum!

Cooking on a Budget is a hands-on, community-based literacy program where participants prepare and eat a meal together while gaining kitchen math, budgeting, and money-saving skills. Chrysy will lead participants through the program curriculum using real-life examples as they make a food item to experience the program firsthand. Chrysy will show you how to cook up a “non-institution-like” learning environment while teaching everyday financial and math skills.

### **Chrysy Hill**

A literacy outreach coordinator since 2015, Chrysy Hill always had a passion for explaining and teaching in a different way to ensure everyone understands. This dedication led her to be listed in *Ski* magazine as one of North America’s top 100 ski instructors. Her passion continues strong in literacy program development today.

## 9. Digital Literacy Capacity-Building at the Regional Level

The session shows how Victoria Literacy Connection, a regional literacy agency using traditional learning approaches, pivoted to online tutoring for various age-groups, which in turn developed a digital literacy program for adults. Through consultation with fellow literacy organizations in the province and other support organizations regionally, it was understood that many organizations are still struggling with making the shift to online learning or are having issues with getting their clients to follow their own online learning. Victoria Literacy Connection proposes a capacity building and marketing package for organizations to establish digital literacy as a useful tool to reach more community members. It also imparts individualized 1:1 support for organizational members to teach skills and reduce anxieties to enable other learning sessions, as well as increase general awareness of relevant and important resources.

The objective of this presentation is to reduce organizational apprehension around online learning and to show how, with a little guidance or support, your organization could also reach out to members of the community that cannot be reached through traditional learning, either due to logistics, illness, stigma or anxiety.

### Christine Bossi

Christine Bossi has almost 20 years of extensive experience in managing non-profit programs internationally, nationally and regionally. She is the Executive Director of Victoria Literacy Connection, a charitable non-profit society, promoting literacy on South Vancouver Island.

## 10. Promoting Multilingualism During and Beyond the Pandemic: Lessons from Chinese Households in Vancouver

How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted young multilingual children's development in multiple languages? How have parents mitigated the negative impacts? Based on a two-year study of 208 K-2 Chinese-Canadian children's bilingual development in Vancouver, this session will present the children's development trends in vocabulary and reading during the pandemic. This will be followed by sharing lessons gained from 244 interviews with parents about their efforts to ensure their children's continued progress in English and/or French and maintain their heritage languages (such as Mandarin, Cantonese and other Chinese dialects) at home during the pandemic.

Our analyses show that the children maintained steady progress in both English and their heritage languages and parents utilized a variety of strategies and resources to ease the pandemic influences. While the children and families have demonstrated tremendous resilience in cultivating multilingualism during the pandemic, challenges still lie ahead in fostering social language and socio-emotional literacy development.

## **Guofang Li and Zhen Lin**

Guofang Li is a Professor and Canada Research Chair (Tier 1) in Transnational/Global Perspectives of Language and Literacy Education of Children and Youth in the Department of Language and Literacy Education, Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia. Her recent research interests are immigrant children's bicultural and bi-literacy development through the educational systems, technology-infused language instructional approaches, diversity and equity issues, pre- and in-service teacher education for culturally and linguistically diverse children, and current language and educational policy and practice in globalized contexts.

Zhen Lin is a doctoral student at Department of Language and Literacy Education, Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia. Zhen Lin's research interests include materials for literacy education, multimodal literacy, early literacy learning and development, and heritage language teaching and learning for young children.

## **11. Write a Winning Grant Proposal!**

You have a great project. You need money. How do you get it? Learn the tips to writing a successful grant proposal. Topics include: getting started, telling your story, what do funders really want?

### **Carmen Ryujin, Gail Hanney and Margaret Sutherland**

Carmen Ryujin is a Community Investment manager at RBC. She will answer your questions about what funders look for in a proposal.

Gail Hanney is Director, Fund Development at Decoda Literacy Foundation. With over 30 years of experience in fundraising, Gail has written successful grant proposals from \$1,000 to \$1 million.

Margaret Sutherland is Executive Director at Decoda Literacy Solutions. She has served as a grant writer and reviewer in many capacities throughout her career.



## Afternoon sessions: Thursday, May 5

### Keynote: Angela Sterritt

Angela Sterritt is a Vancouver based award-winning journalist, author and artist from the Gitanmaax band of the Gitksan nation. Sterritt has worked as a journalist for close to twenty years and has been with the CBC since 2003.



### 12. Plain Language: Making Everyday Documents Clear

Writing in plain and clear language is a skill that is essential to successfully communicate a message to a specific audience. This session will highlight what plain language is, the top plain language principles, and how to structure a document that focuses on the key aspects for making information easy to scan, read and absorb.

#### Kaitlyn Vecchio

Kaitlyn Vecchio is a librarian skilled in plain language, data collection, public libraries, and quantitative research. Kaitlyn is currently working as the Literacy Outreach Coordinator for Literacy Prince George as well as the Director for the Northwest Library Federation.

### 13. Trauma-Informed Care and Adult Foundational Learners

Have you ever been nervous about public speaking? Does your voice shake when you talk? Maybe your hands shake as well, and you turn red in the face? This is your nervous system's unconscious response to the effects of stress. Understanding Trauma-Informed Care and the physical, cognitive and behavioural effects in our learners can impact how we meet, intake, support and teach them. Knowledge of trauma-informed practices can help us to be more empathetic, leaving the "door open" to reluctant learners. As adult literacy practitioners, instructors and coordinators, our biases or "blind spots" are often a barrier to accurately support an adult foundational learner.

Trauma-informed education assists us in not passing judgment about learners who miss appointments, who call in “sick” before a first meeting and who often miss several sessions throughout their learning journey. We can better support a learner with intake, retention and learning by being trauma-informed.

### **Rochelle Galeski**

Rochelle Galeski is the Coordinator of Adult Basic Literacy Education at Medicine Hat College in Brooks, Alberta Campus. She is also a Trauma-Informed, Red Cross Certified Psychological First Aid (PFA) Facilitator. Her experience working with trauma affected adult foundational learners has helped her to better intake, support and retain adult foundational learners. She believes trauma-informed care can better bridge and build strong and supportive Adult Foundational Learning programs in our communities.

## **14. Moving Beyond Polarization – Implications for Literacy Work**

Polarization is a social dynamic in which people come to see differences of opinion as intolerable and threatening, and imagine the social world as divided into two opposing camps – “us” versus “them.” Instead of working with differences and making conflict constructive, polarization leads us to avoid it and make dissent unwelcome.

Our team of seven BC post-secondary researchers and community partners has embarked on a three-year applied participatory research project called Courageous Dialogues: Moving Beyond Polarization. Our goal is to understand how polarization is affecting our communities, and how we as community literacy workers and public educators can intervene.

In this session, we will give an overview of our research activities to date including findings from a literature review, a survey distributed to hundreds of people through our literacy partner organizations and our early explorations into interventions that have been applied with success in other jurisdictions to overcome polarization.

### **Diana Twiss and Jennie Barron**

Diana Twiss is a faculty member in the Community Development and Outreach Department at Capilano University. Her passions are making education and learning accessible; demystifying assessment and evaluation practices; and, of course, knitting and making yarn.

Jennie Barron is Chair of the Mir Centre for Peace at Selkirk College where she also teaches peace studies and restorative justice.

## 15. Facebook for non-profits

Bring your laptop for this two-hour hands-on workshop! We will discuss how to use your organization's Facebook page to share news, events, resources and success stories; to promote awareness and fundraise; as well as to connect you to other organizations and funders. Participants will learn what to post, when and how often and how to use Facebook tools like pre-scheduling, boosting posts, events, stories and insights. Trish will also share the importance of branding and voice and how to utilize hashtags and tags.

### Trish Weatherall

Trish Weatherall is Communications Specialist at Decoda. She manages Decoda's social media platforms and writes impact stories for the website. She has 25 years' experience writing, editing, marketing and media planning for corporate, retail, non-profit, municipal organizations and newspapers. She was also a Literacy Outreach Coordinator for North Vancouver Island communities.

## 16. Connecting Literacy to Learners' Lives

Literacy is more than reading the words and comprehending meaning from a text. It is intricately woven into the ways we interact and engage in the world around us. Research indicates that learners show greater gains in literacy skill development when their learning is easily transferrable to their daily lives. Then, how can we plan literacy learning to strengthen adults' use of literacy in their roles and interactions at home, at work and in the community?

Join Corrie Rhyasen Erdman in this interactive session to explore how we can use adult learning and literacy approaches to build on the complex ways learners use literacy in their lives. Together, we will look at ways to weave literacy skills with what learners bring to learning, such as values, beliefs, knowledge, experiences and skills. Through this process you will be able to make critical connections between learning and the literacy practices in a learner's everyday life.

### Corrie Rhyasen Erdman

Corrie Rhyasen Erdman is the Training Manager with the Community Learning Network, a non-profit that provides relevant training, professional development and networking to Community Adult Learning Programs (CALPs) across Alberta. She's passionate about literacy work and has worked directly with learners, tutors, instructors, CALP staff and boards to support learner-centred adult learning programs.

## **17. Roundtable Discussion: Let's Share Our Experiences with Indigenizing Curriculum and Developing First Nations Learning Materials**

At Capilano University, we are just starting a project to develop literacy materials for our First Nations students at Ealha7an Learning Centre with the Squamish Nation. Come and share your experiences with developing materials for and with First Nations students. What has worked well? What are the challenges? What are the important protocols we need to consider? What have you learned from the experience? Please bring samples of materials you have already developed. Let's share your ideas and support as we engage with this important step in Reconciliation.

### **Betsy Alkenbrack and Michelle Lebeau**

Betsy Alkenbrack has worked in the field of adult literacy, English language learning and community development in Toronto, Johannesburg and Vancouver for 40 years. She is currently an instructor at Capilano University working with community programs on the shared territories of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.

Michelle Grace Lebeau, with more than 25 years of experience as an adult educator, often works with marginalized, trauma-affected people. They have taught her about living with trauma and its effects. She draws from her background as a certified Advanced Integrative Energy Healer (AIEHTM) to provide a unique approach to working with trauma-affected learners.

## **18. Grassroots Community Development: Growing Agency and Voice**

The session will present a case study of how a community-based approach to building empowerment and advocacy skills in immigrant populations can grow opportunities for development, self-fulfillment, and grow real grassroots voices in the community. From project start in 2012, through development of a volunteer-based community group, to an incorporated non-profit employing six immigrants in 2021, the session will review how immigrant buy-in was gained, maintained and now leads the Whistler Multicultural Society. The case study will be combined with group exploration of key asset-based community development challenges addressed along the way.

Participants will have the opportunity to both identify key challenges when working with grassroots groups in community and to explore ways of addressing these. This will be done through presentation of a real-time case study and in small groups where participants will be able to share their own experiences, successes and challenges working in community development.

## **Andrea Dunne and Carole Stretch**

Andrea Dunne started as a volunteer tutor in the Whistler Community Adult Literacy Program (CALP) by providing language support to other immigrants. While working as a Whistler Settlement & Integration Worker, she developed several key literacy and skills development programs for immigrant populations. She is currently Program Manager for the Welcome Sea to Sky project in Squamish.

Carole Stretch has worked in community development programs in Whistler since 2008, managing the Whistler Welcome Centre, Settlement Services and Community Learning Program (CALP) providing settlement and integration, ESL, literacy and skills support. She manages the Welcome Sea to Sky project in Whistler, a long-term immigrant capacity and empowerment project.



## Morning sessions: Friday, May 6

### Keynote: Craig Alexander

Craig Alexander is a senior executive and leading economist in applied economics and forecasting, with more than 25 years of experience in the private sector. He currently runs an independent economic consulting practice and is contracted as the Chief Economist and Economic Advisor at Deloitte. He has previously held positions as a Partner at Deloitte, SVP and Chief Economist at TD Bank Financial Group and SVP and Chief Economist at the Conference Board of Canada. Craig has written extensively on Canadian public policy issues, with a particular focus on literacy, education, skills development and measures aimed at reducing income inequality and raising living standards. For his work in the literacy field, he was awarded the Queen's Jubilee Medal and an honorary degree in Applied Studies from Humber.



### 19. Embodied Literacy – Emotional, Physical, and Artistic Literacy to Create and Support Community

Catering to the needs of neurodivergent children and their families, this session will reflect on a project that aims to build capacity amongst the neurodivergent community. Over eight weeks, we provided emotional, physical and artistic literacy support. We will discuss how participants' capacity, physical and emotional literacy were expanded, the expressions that emerged through the arts, and how this process helped create community.

Along the way, attendees will be asked to reflect on the needs of the community they work with and how various approaches to embody literacy can expand the community's capacity to fill these needs. Bouncing back and forth between the project update and the needs identified by attendees, ideally, attendees will walk away with a template to implement an embodied literacy program

#### Shahira Sakiyama

Shahira Sakiyama has been an Early Years Family Support Worker at LMNHS since May of 2021. Shahira has been building off her seven years in early years family support work by creating welcoming and educational spaces for children and adults to decolonize/recommodify parenting. With the pressures of raising a family in the most unaffordable city in North America, to addressing the familial needs this pandemic has highlighted, she approaches these opportunities with curiosity and joy.

## 20. Supporting Refugee Resettlement: Lessons Learned, Scalable Resources and Digital Delivery

The session will have three presentations:

1. Lessons learned from delivering family programs (especially HIPPY for early childhood education) during the pandemic. The session will explain what the key needs of women in isolated and vulnerable newcomer, refugee and Indigenous communities were — and how program partners across Canada supported them as they navigated the pandemic. The session will also explain how HIPPY partners moved from an in-person home visitation program to a virtual delivery modality and were still able to retain over 70 per cent of their clients. The session will explain challenges and opportunities associated with the shift in programming and reflect on what future programming could look like.
2. Reviving Hope and Home: The session will present key data, approaches and lessons learned from delivering a three-year refugee resettlement program for Government Assisted Refugees (GARs) who had arrived from Syria. The project was funded by IRCC and can serve as a scalable model for Afghan Refugee Resettlement. The project used early learning for children between two and five years as an entry point to support settlement outcomes for GAR families. This model can inform initiatives targeting Afghan refugees and their resettlement needs — women and pre-school children especially.
3. Supporting Mothers and Raising Toddlers (SMART): The session will share key findings from a structured play-based early learning program adapted by the Mothers Matter Centre in Canada. SMART program providers will share their experiences and feedback from the families about the program.

## **Akiko Ohta, Jennifer York, Osiris Lopez and Yusra Qadir**

Akiko Ohta is a PhD student in Languages, Cultures and Literacies at Simon Fraser University and holds an MEd in Adult Education and Community Development from Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. She completed the evaluation of a three-year-long pilot project that supports government-assisted refugee mothers in Canada in managing their resettlement challenges and preparing their preschoolers for school. She is currently leading the evaluation of the Fostering Literacy program at one of the Surrey schools to learn about the effectiveness of the program and mentorship approach on turning reluctant readers into enthusiastic readers. Her research examines programs that support vulnerable populations and aims to make these programs more accessible and inclusive, considering the intersectionality of the participants.

Jennifer York has worked at ISS of BC for over 16 years in frontline and management for federally and provincially funded employment and settlement programs. Her current role as Division Manager of Settlement Services oversees the ISS of BC's settlement programs in Metro Vancouver. Recently, Jennifer is the lead RAP SPO for the Afghan Resettlement in BC initiative. Jennifer has an Executive Master of Business Administration and a Certificate for Responsible Leadership from Queen's University.

Osiris Lopez has been the Coordinator for the Indigenous HIPPY Program expansion in Vancouver East Side at the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre since the program started in October 2018. Previously, Osiris worked as HIPPY Coordinator and Home Visitor for Vancouver Native Health Society. She graduated from The National Autonomous University of Honduras with a degree in accounting. Osiris also studied Aboriginal Child and Youth Care at Douglas College B.C. She has worked with HIPPY and other community programs since the year 2000, which has given her an opportunity to acquire extensive knowledge in working with Indigenous families and building relationships with other Indigenous agencies and resources.

Yusra Qadir works with the Mothers Matter Centre Canada as the Director for Innovations, Advocacy and Multicultural HIPPY. She has rich experience of working with refugees and displaced populations in both the global south and north. Her interests include gender-based programming, mainstreaming vulnerable groups in governance processes, and working on meaningful social inclusion programs. She has a master's degree in Sociology and MS in Human Rights Practice from Europe. Yusra has 15 years of experience designing and managing projects aimed at empowering vulnerable and marginalized groups, especially women and minorities at global and national levels. Before her engagement with the Mothers Matter Centre, she worked for the United Nations and many other rights-based international organizations.

## 21. Writing Out Loud

In this two-hour workshop, participants will experience being part of a Writing Out Loud (WOL) group with founder Deborah Morgan and experienced WOL Instructors Diana Twiss and Mary Kiviste. Participants will take part in creating guidelines, freewriting, guided writing and sharing writing with supportive feedback. This is suitable for trained WOL facilitators as well as participants not familiar with WOL. Notebooks will be provided. Bring your favourite writing implement!

### Deborah Morgan, Diana Twiss and Mary Kiviste

Deborah Morgan spent 30 years in the Alberta literacy field as a program coordinator, instructor, researcher, writer and advocate. It was while working in a three-year literacy/life skills program for women that Deborah discovered the benefits of using writing to help students tell and share their life stories. She wrote Writing Out Loud to document and pass on what she learned through encouraging “freewriting” in literacy programming.

Mary Kiviste worked in the field of adult literacy at Okanagan College for 18 years. She became a Certified Writing Out Loud Instructor in 2005 and began working with community organizations interested in building literacy into their programming. She retired from the college in 2018 and continues to facilitate Writing Out Loud outreach. These outreach groups have continued virtually for the past two years.

Diana Twiss became a Certified Writing Out Loud Instructor in 2002. In each of her 24 years of teaching in adult literacy, she has used freewriting (and since 2002 – WOL) in some capacity with learners, colleagues and community partners to support their writing development. She is currently the Chair of the School of Access and Academic Preparation and coordinator of the Community Development and Outreach department at Capilano University.

## 22. Reaching Families: A Virtual Book Club Model

The pandemic served to provide opportunity for virtual book club groups to flourish in ways that were unlikely prior to 2020. During COVID-19, a blended in-person and virtual model was needed to allow parents to participate without the need of finding childcare or committing to an in-person group amongst the challenges of parenting young children. Parents were looking on Facebook for support, community connection, and empathetic spaces.

In this session, participants learn about how to approach a new program without best practices available to follow. Presenters will demonstrate how to incorporate leisure and recreation into literacy programs to increase engagement of learners.

## **Kimberly Vance-Lundsbye**

Kimberly Vance-Lundsbye has worked in a variety of roles for Cariboo-Chilcotin Partners for Literacy in 100 Mile House and Williams Lake since 2013. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Recreation Therapy from Douglas College and this education background complements literacy work in program development and engaging learners.

## **23. Digital Literacies and Digital Justice: New Pedagogies in Times of Crisis and Possibility**

In this two-hour session, we present two case studies of approaches to digital literacy education that emerged from the crisis of the pandemic. The Burnaby Neighbourhood House, the Downtown Eastside Literacy Roundtable and the UBC Learning Exchange were already aware of the digital exclusion their constituents experienced before the pandemic: prohibitive internet costs, lack of access to working digital devices and spotty access to digital literacy education. During the pandemic these digital exclusions intensified and became a matter of survival. Our session will report on specific situations and challenges that these organizations faced and the strategies they adopted to address digital exclusion even during the limits of physical distancing. We consider the new possibilities that have emerged in this inventive work for integrating new technologies and new literacies toward a more digitally-just BC.

### **Dionne Pelan, Gwen André, Rajeeta Samala, Suzanne Smythe and William Booth**

Dionne Pelan is a non-traditional educator with over 20 years' experience teaching community-based digital literacy for adults. In addition to teaching formal computer workshops, she runs peer-led pop-up tech cafés in various community settings. Dionne works with community organizations to identify opportunities to develop and lead computer workshops within their own spaces. She collaborates with academics and community members on research related to digital literacy, access and equity issues.

Gwen André is a PhD candidate at the Simon Fraser University Faculty of Education. Her research focuses on how young people and young adults experience digital literacies before and during the pandemic. This investigation ambitions to articulate an ecological understanding of the phenomenon, including individual and social, but also political dimensions.

Rajeeta Samala is the Adult Literacy Programs Coordinator at Burnaby Neighbourhood House working with several low literacy and multi-barriered individuals. With the help of amazing volunteers, the program offers free and informal computer drop-ins for individuals needing a device, access to the internet or a human to talk to in order to resolve their tech-related questions.

Suzanne Smythe is Associate Professor, Adult Literacy and Adult Education, Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University. Suzanne's research interests are at the intersection of digital literacy, digital justice and new literacies emerging from automated and algorithmic society.



William Booth is Literacy Outreach Coordinator for Downtown Eastside Literacy Roundtable, a coalition of educators who understand literacy as having the knowledge, skills and confidence to participate fully in one's life. With community partners and with the support of community members they are addressing digital literacy and convene weekly pop-up cafes both in-person and virtually.

## **24. Improving Instructor/Learner Connections in Literacy Classrooms by Building Personal Resilience with Energetic Self-Care**

This workshop introduces deep self-care and energetic boundary strengthening. Dis-ease and imbalances in the body and psyche originate from over- or under-charged nervous systems. Breathing and gentle movement regulate and build resilience, to balance and heal our entire Being.

We will share healing practices literacy practitioners can use for personal self-care. The concepts of the Human Energy Body and Chakra System are interwoven throughout to show how these are fundamental to calming and regulating the nervous system. Balance, good boundaries and calm are vital to ensuring safe, secure connections with learners in literacy settings.

The session will end with a meditation for deep relaxation and restoration and to expand your boundaries and potentials! Bring a yoga mat, blanket or towel, if possible, but it's not required.

### **Michelle Lebeau and Robyn Leslie**

Michelle Grace Lebeau, with more than 25 years of experience as an adult educator, often works with marginalized, trauma-affected people. They have taught her about living with trauma and its effects. She draws from her background as a certified Advanced Integrative Energy Healer (AIEHTM) to provide a unique approach to working with trauma-affected learners.

Robyn Leslie was faculty in Langara College's Advanced/Integrative Energy Healing (IEH/AIEH) Programs (2004-2019) teaching Healing Sciences and Energy Awareness. She co-developed and co-taught the Strategic Resilience for First Responders program with the founder of these programs. Robyn has presented to First Responders in Vancouver, Nova Scotia and two Indigenous groups in the Yukon.

## 25. Your Life In Lines: Fostering Belonging Through Literacy

The most powerful story you can write is your own. The most important relationship you can have is with yourself.

Your Life In Lines is a youth creative nonfiction and journaling program. This program provides youth with the opportunity to use literacy to build relationships with themselves and with their peers, while gaining a sense of creative agency. In this interactive session, participants will learn about the structure of Your Life In Lines through exploring a youth development framework called the “Circle of Courage.” Participants will leave with practical tips and tricks for their own youth programming, understand how non-fiction writing can be a tool for youth to cultivate social and emotional literacy and finally, explore how this program addresses youth’s inherent need of belonging through literacy.

### **Mandy Huser and Rhonda Palmer**

Mandy Huser has a passion for exploring the question “What makes us who we are?” Working alongside youth in Canada and New Zealand, Mandy has used writing to explore the important concepts of adolescent identity and belonging. She wanders wild spaces and puts pen to paper in the West Kootenays where she works as the Regional Youth Program Coordinator for Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy.

Rhonda Palmer has a passion for fostering literacy for all ages but has a special place in her heart for cultivating literacy in young children. She has been working in the literacy field for over 20 years. Rhonda loves to explore nature with her family in Castlegar where she works as the Community Literacy Outreach Coordinator for Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy.

## Afternoon sessions: Friday, May 6

### Keynote: Provincial Panel with Brigid Hayes

Join provincial literacy leaders from across the country for insights on their activities and programs. This lively panel session will be moderated by Canadian literacy expert and blogger, Brigid Hayes.

**Brigid Hayes, Jayne Hunter, Joanne Kaatari, Kathryn Barry Paddock, Lisa Dickner, Margaret Sutherland and Phaedra Hitchings**

Brigid Hayes has developed an expertise in learning that spans over 35 years as a senior policy advisor and program manager. Her knowledge of and experience in workplace literacy and learning has contributed to her recognition as an expert in this field, and she has undertaken significant activities to both help promote and enhance literacy and lifelong learning.



Jayne Hunter is Executive Director of Literacy Nova Scotia. She has extensive experience in literacy roles including Learner Coordinator, Professional Development Coordinator, and Director of Programs. Jayne is a founding member of the Community Sector Council of NS (now known as IONS - Impact Organizations of NS) and is currently past chair. She also supports the Rural Communities Foundation of Nova Scotia.



Joanne Kaatari is Co-Executive Director of Community Literacy of Ontario. She has been passionate about literacy for 25 years. She is an active volunteer in several causes, including health and poverty related issues. She's also passionate about spoiling her family, hiking, reading and lifelong learning.



Kathryn Barry Paddock is Executive Director of NWT Literacy Council. She has visited 28 of the 33 remote communities in the NWT in her roles in non-profit management and family literacy. In her spare time, she enjoys quilting, knitting and other fibre arts and dressing the family dog in hats and coats.



Lisa Dickner is Executive Director of Community Learning Network in Alberta. She is passionate about training, adult learning and literacy, board governance, stewardship and collaboration. Outside of her formal role, you'll find her seeking out her next book, golfing for fun or strolling through her home community of Edmonton.



Margaret Sutherland is Executive Director of Decoda Literacy Solutions in British Columbia. She has 20 years' experience working in BC's literacy field, including work as a manager, literacy outreach coordinator, program facilitator, trainer, event planner and tutor. She was previously Director, Programs and Services at Decoda. When she's not at work, you'll find her playing with her grandkids, gardening, hiking or reading.



Phaedra Hitchings is Executive Director of Saskatchewan Literacy Network. She has been collaborating to combine community and learning for over 16 years. She was previously Saskatchewan's Regional Coordinator for Frontier College and Community Service-Learning Coordinator at the University of Saskatchewan. Phaedra loves the opportunity to learn and work together in community, honouring all ways of knowing and the strengths we all bring.



## 26. Community Connections

Community Connections Programs are offered by NWT Literacy Council to newcomers. This informal language programming encourages immigrants to practice their conversational English in a range of settings. This talk will focus on the recreational activities that Karen Johnson organizes for newcomers. These include Ladies Only Swimming and outdoor programs organized to introduce immigrants to their new environment and new recreational activities, like skiing and paddling. A few children are sponsored to attend BushKids, an outdoor discovery-based learning program. The idea is to introduce people to activities that they might not have tried before and to help them gain familiarity and hopefully feel comfortable in the bush.

### **Karen Johnson**

Karen Johnson is a community builder and a long time NWT resident. Since September of 2017, she has been coordinating Community Connections programs, funded by IRCC, for new immigrants to Yellowknife. Outside of work, she spends lots of time in the bush walking, cross country skiing, paddling and camping. Time in nature is rejuvenating for Karen.

## 27. Literacy Outreach Coordinator Roundtable Discussions

Join Margaret and Maureen to discuss literacy outreach coordination; the ups and downs, the important community literacy work you do, what resources you need, and how Decoda can support you. This session will have a collective agenda. Bring your ideas and questions.

### **Margaret Sutherland and Maureen Kehler**

Margaret Sutherland is Executive Director of Decoda Literacy Solutions in British Columbia. She has 20 years' experience working in BC's literacy field, including working as a manager, literacy outreach coordinator, program facilitator, trainer, event planner and tutor. She was previously Director, Programs and Services at Decoda.

Maureen Kehler has worked as a literacy advocate for many years. She was involved in community development and partnership building through her work as a literacy outreach coordinator and in pilot programs for adult learning and ESL in the Fraser Cascade region. Her background in health and employment services has provided the context for teaching and gaining experience in a variety of environments.

## **28. Raising Skills and Expectations in Indigenous Communities Through Libraries and Learning Centres**

Since 2011 the Write to Read BC Project (W2R) has worked in close collaboration with Indigenous Elders and educators to establish, supply and support libraries and learning centres in 20 communities around the province. This work implemented the vision articulated by the former Lt. Governor, the Honourable Steven Point (who is still involved). All efforts adopt the principles of participation, partnership and power-sharing as well as a commitment to a long-term relationship that is based on mutual leadership, integrity and respect.

By drawing on a wide range of skills in a loosely organized team, W2R is adaptive and responsive and utilizes the strength of networks to achieve goals. At the community level, education and literacy is the primary focus of each centre, in order to disrupt the damaging impact of colonization through culturally appropriate methods of teaching and the offering of educational programs. This session will provide examples of successes and challenges in this ongoing effort to establish and sustain healthy Indigenous individuals and communities, wherever they may live.

### **Gordon Yusko, Louise Ormerod and Shirley-Pat Chamberlain**

Gordon Yusko has a well-established career in libraries and is currently an advisor for the Write To Read BC Project. In this role he focuses on organizational development, strategic planning and team coordination. He grew up on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Kwantlen and Katzie First Peoples.

Louise Ormerod is the Principal and Education Manager in the Gitsegukla First Nation. She is a leader and advocate. She was born and raised at Prince Albert Indian Residential School, continuing on to complete a Bachelor of Education at University of Saskatchewan, a Master of Education in Leadership with University of Oregon and a Master of Education-Clinical Counselling with University of Northern BC. She is grounded by the premise that education is driven from community grassroots and culture.

Shirley-Pat Chamberlain is Co-Leader of the Write to Read BC Project. She is an energetic passionate literacy advocate, committed to social action literacy initiatives and community development innovation in rural and remote British Columbia in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. She is a woman of mixed heritage and is Tl'esqox na whelh deni heelen (adoptee of Tl'esqox).

## 29. Reading Comprehension Workshop

How often have you heard the refrain, "Nothing sinks in?" In the afternoon, we will discuss why some ABE students and literacy learners have difficulty comprehending text. We will explore ways to help learners understand, remember and retain information. You will walk away from this workshop with comprehension strategies that can instantly be implemented into your lessons. Participants will receive a handout.

### Pat Campbell

Pat Campbell began her career as a teacher in rural Nigeria. In the 1980s, Pat became a reading specialist and coordinated an adult literacy program. In 1996, Pat co-founded Grass Roots Press. She is the author of *Teaching Reading to Adults: A Balanced Approach* and several assessment tools, including Nunavut College's entrance assessment and the Canadian Adult Reading Assessment (CARA).

## 30. More than Just Clicks – A Workshop for Creating Digital Literacy at the Right Level

This is a practical workshop on how to create adult digital literacy workshops at the right level for your participants. It aims to get educators thinking about how to implement dynamic digital literacy frameworks for new age learners. The session will include an interactive discussion centered on tips, tricks and best practices to adapt digital literacy material to fit a variety of groups and skill levels in formal and informal digital literacy workshops.

### Dionne Pelan and Karen Chiang

Dionne Pelan is a non-traditional educator with over 20 years' experience teaching community-based digital literacy for adults. In addition to teaching the computer workshops at the UBC Learning Exchange she leads peer-led Pop-Up Tech Cafés in a variety of community settings. Dionne works with community organizations to identify opportunities to develop and lead computer workshops within their own spaces. She collaborates with academics and community members on research related to digital literacy, access and equity issues.

Karen Chiang is a Drop-in Programs Facilitator. She is a bi-lingual, experienced community educator with experience setting up and leading formal and informal workshops, pop-up tech cafes, and events in the Downtown Eastside community. She graduated from University of British Columbia with a background in political science and psychology.



### **31. Reading through the Pandemic: Inspiring Change and Building Resiliency with Online Early Literacy Tutoring**

In the first program of its kind in Canada, high-need schools in First Nations communities and under-resourced areas are partnering with our non-profit to match early readers with virtual volunteers from leading corporations who use our proprietary online platform to read virtually together via dedicated reading stations we install in participating classrooms, learning hubs, and community centres.

Innovations for Learning (IFL) also leverages the latest evidence-based practices by providing daily 1:1 “high-dosage” tutoring. IFL hires and trains paraprofessionals from partnered communities to serve as Early Literacy Interventionists who spend five minutes with each child each day, helping them with phonics practice to build the necessary foundation for literacy.

To support language revitalization, we partnered with community leaders and Indigenous language experts to launch a series of original e-storybooks that celebrate the strength of partnered communities and include words in their original languages, infusing phonetic spellings and audio recordings into the e-books.

#### **Fabrice Grover and Jacob Pitawanakwat**

Fabrice Grover was inspired by his experience teaching at the Native Education College in Vancouver. He moved to New York in 2012 to complete his master’s degree at NYU. After working for the United Nations, Bloomberg Philanthropies, and Innovations for Learning (IFL), Fabrice relocated to Toronto in 2018 to establish IFL in Canada and bring its programs home.

Jacob Pitawanakwat is a computer science major and former supply teacher. Wiikwemkoong resident Jacob joined IFL as an Early Literacy Interventionist in 2019. Now a Program Manager, Jacob continues his work in the spirit of innovation, developing technology programs, identifying literacy challenges in Indigenous schools and designing learning systems that meet the needs of communities.

# Thank you



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