

Learn ▪ Teach ▪ Inspire

MAY 2021: ON-THE-GO PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

EDMONTON REGIONAL LEARNING CONSORTIUM



"Partners in adult learning for students' sake"



The Edmonton Regional Learning Consortium is thrilled to announce that our conference, LEADING THE CONVERSATION: THE PEDAGOGY OF ASSESSMENT on October 20th, 21st, and 22nd, is now open for registrations!

The goal of this virtual event is to bring together our various stakeholders, thought-leaders and classroom practitioners in the area of assessment and pedagogy from across Alberta and beyond. Through thought-provoking keynotes by world renowned leaders in pedagogy and assessment, and engaging concurrent sessions by experienced practitioners and instructional leaders, ERLC will lead a conversation that affirms the promise and power of classroom assessment practice.

This virtual event features an amazing lineup of keynote speakers: **Dr. Anne Davies, Dr. Doug Fisher, Sandra Herbst, Jay McTighe, and Ron Ritchhart!** We also have an expert panel to look forward to: **Dr. Thomas Guskey, Dr. Naomi Johnson, and Tom Schimmer.**

We look forward to you joining us for what promises to be a rich 3-day conversation! You can check out our [conference website](#) to see what we'll be thinking about together.

If you have any questions, please contact our conference co-hosts:

[Adelee Penner](#) and [Tannis Niziol](#)

CURRICULUM and ASSESSMENT

Reading the Moment -- Teaching Social Comprehension Skills

In her book [Being the Change: Lessons and Strategies to Teach Social Comprehension](#), Sarah K. Ahmed explores the potential impact of a pedagogy where we "...give ourselves permission to create learning conditions where kids can ask the questions they want to ask, muddle through how to say the things they are thinking, and have tough conversations" (p.xxii).



It is undeniable. Everyday, no matter the subjects we teach, the world we live in strides through the door of our schools and into our classrooms. Sadly, some days it might come in the form of an offensive comment, a political talking point, or news of a violent death or attack. It's in these traumatic moments that we often feel woefully unprepared, and somewhat fearful, to meaningfully address what students are seeing and hearing on the news and on social media. How might we strike a delicate balance between a fear of unintentionally doing more harm and believing our classrooms to be safe places where the relationships and trust we so painstakingly build are meant for making meaning of moments just like this? How might we shift to a pedagogy that embraces these teachable moments as a further opportunity to build authentic critical thinking and productive dialogue?

The following are a few practical tools and strategies to help us teach through, and facilitate, some of the crucial conversations our students want and need to have:

1. [Big Paper: Building a Silent Conversation](#)
2. [S-I-T: Surprising, Interesting, Troubling](#)
3. [Fostering Civil Discourse: How Do We Talk About Issues That Matter?](#)

--Submitted by Tannis Niziol, Learning Facilitator, ERLC

Contact a member of our team

--[Tannis Niziol](#), [Adelee Penner](#), [Tim Coates](#), or [Irene Heffel](#) --

to book a professional learning session that explores this and other Curriculum and Assessment topics.

EARLY LEARNING

When We Stayed Home



The power of storytelling can't be overstated as a tool to help us make meaning of a time in history, learn and gain perspective and as a way of helping us unpack our experiences. I have really become fascinated and intrigued by the amount of children's literature that has been released in the last few months, specifically targeted for children 3-8. Titles of "And The People Stayed Home", "Good Morning Zoom", "Lucy's Mask", "Why Did the World Stop?", "Paula and the Pandemic", and of course "When We Stayed Home" are cropping up on shelves and online.

I find myself appreciating the books co-written by children as they share their perspective so honestly and authentically. Several classrooms around the world have started to share their own Covid stories with each other. I encourage you to help your little ones find their voice and share their experiences with others as they are healing for the author and reader.

--Submitted by Adelee Penner, Learning Facilitator, ERLC

Contact [Adelee Penner](#) or [Kelly Gibbs](#)

to book a professional learning session to further explore this or other Early Learning topics.

EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

Ed. Tech. SEL Supports

It's been a long-haul year for teachers and students alike, a year that reminds us all of the importance of the connections we make and relationships we build with our students, in person and/or online, in order to create a classroom where students are ready to learn. Staying connected can seem a challenge in an online or blended scenario punctuated by long video conferencing sessions.



Pear Deck™

SEL supports

Pear Deck (both free and paid versions) offers Google Slides template resources that, when integrated into a Slides presentation, can help us carry out quick entrance, in-session, and exit interactive SEL check-ins with students. Usually, we use Pear Deck to make presentations more interactive, or for formative assessment tracking; with such great ways to use Pear Deck already, we can easily overlook

the SEL template resources, pre-made for us to customize or use just as they are. But these days it's worthwhile to check them out: These SEL templates can be especially helpful when online, where we can miss the body language nuances that we'd pick up on when in the same room. Having a sense of where students are coming from today helps us help them to become comfortable in today's learning space.

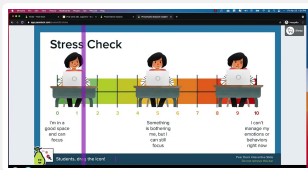
Pear Deck's SEL templates are easily discoverable right from within Google Slides. If you've installed the Pear Deck addon to Slides ([here](#)), you'll see a menu appear to the right of your page - templates are all right there to quickly click/drag into your presentation. Watch our [video](#) to see how to insert a premade Pear Deck SEL template into your presentation!

As we move into our last quarter and begin to wonder about what next year could look like, consider how using a tool such as Pear Deck can not only add interactivity to your presentations but also, tactfully and unobtrusively, provide you with key insights into your students' social-emotional lives, so you can continue to help them be their best in your classroom in the months ahead.

--Submitted by Janet Bell, Learning Facilitator, ERLC

Contact [Janet Bell](#)

to book a professional learning session that explores a variety of Ed Tech topics.



[ERLC-PearDeckSEL.mp4](#)

drive.google.com

FIRST NATIONS, METIS, INUIT

Intentional Conversations with Indigenous Youth

Dr. Sean Lessard, an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta, shares in his [Red Worn Runners](#) work about the significance of moving with intention both metaphorically and physically. His central provocation is powerful as it challenges us to move past entertaining student voices and remove barriers that are in the way of student achievement.



Recently I was in a conversation with system leaders where we looked at the reasons why students could not graduate or culminate their education in the way that they would like to support their future aspirations. 95% of the reasons why students could not achieve the learning they wanted was due to restrictions and policies put in place by the school authority.

It has been exciting and encouraging to watch leaders systematically remove barriers to move student voice into action. To see hope renewed in the following weeks as students one-by-one began to feel heard, valued and see the possibility of the future they wanted has been a gift. I couldn't help but see

the students and staff through Dr. Lessard's eyes as a beautiful "long red line, staying as close together as possible."

How do your policies impact student achievement?

--Submitted by Adelee Penner, Learning Facilitator, ERLC

Contact [Adelee Penner](#)
to book a professional learning session.

FRENCH LANGUAGE LEARNING

I Spy...Building Vocabulary



Morphological instruction is a valuable strategy for students in French Immersion as it assists in a variety of literary areas. This smallest unit of meaning, the morpheme, can serve to build vocabulary; a difficult task for FI students. By explicitly teaching in the early years, students will gain the skills of analysing and decoding complex words leading the way to easier recognition of the bases and affixes in words. This ability to recognize word families will increase their vocabulary by, eventually, alleviating the cognitive load required to learn new words, offering confidence with their ability to perceive the associations. Spelling, comprehension and fluidity all develop concurrently.

This is great for K-12 and beyond and as we know, once a L2 teacher, no matter the subject, language must be taught.

Consider having your young students become detectives looking to break the code within a shared book or on their own. Consider having older students do the same with their science or social studies texts.

Do you need a quick list to work with students at grade level? [MELS](#) is a FI teacher essential that can sort words in a variety of ways!

How many words can they find that have smaller words hidden within?

- Mots de la même famille ont un rapport du même sens.
- Mots ayant le même radical/base mais dont le préfixe ou le suffixe est ajouté, change le sens du mot.

Journalier, journal, jour : la base = jour

Can students find other associated words?

aujourd'hui journée honneur : la base = jour

How and why did the word change? Was it a suffix, a prefix?

Cycle, bicyclette, cyclone : la base= cycl

Grand, agrandir, grandeur : la base = grand

Students will gain a greater understanding of our writing system and ability to decode when morphemic awareness is taught in conjunction with the grapheme-phoneme correspondences.

A great paid [resource here](#). A free [resource here](#).

Here is another fabulous [website on morphology](#) to get you started!

--Submitted by Marylou Gammans, Learning Facilitator, ERLC

Contact [Marylou Gammans](#)

to book a professional learning session to further explore second language learning development for FSL and FR.IM.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Accessible Text Resources

Having the “same” text accessible for different levels of comprehension can be a powerful scaffold for the English Language Learners in our classrooms and for those students who need modified texts to build their fluency, reading stamina, and confidence. Importantly, these adapted texts also provide students with a greater sense of belonging and agency during academic discussions.



The following online resources can be powerful additions to our differentiation toolboxes.

- Sites such as [Newsela](#), [News In Levels](#), [Breaking News English](#), and [Tween Tribune](#) provide several reading “levels” of the same articles, on a variety of content topics, along with some accompanying instructional support. In addition Newsela Google Classroom Extension syncs content with class rosters.
- Online tools like [Text Compactor](#) and [Rewordify](#) let the user copy and paste an excerpt from a longer, more challenging text. These sites then automatically transform it to a modified version with fewer words.

However, as effective as tools like the ones shared above might be, it must be acknowledged that they have their limitations and don’t always provide the age or curriculum appropriate content that teachers require. Carmen Nguyen, in her article Transforming the Resources You Have into Accessible Formats for All Students outlines a 5-step framework teachers can use to adapt their own subject-specific resources.

--Submitted by Tannis Niziol, Learning Facilitator, ERLC

Contact [Kelly Gibbs](#) or [Adelee Penner](#)

to book a professional learning session to further explore this and other Inclusive Education topics

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Maintaining Leadership Credibility During Disruptions

This is the time of the school year where we formally reflect on what went well, what could be improved and what we need to focus on for next year. How are we going to support student achievement in the upcoming year?

This week a group of principals unpacked what was most successful for building teacher efficacy during this last school year. They reflected on what they felt had the largest impact on student achievement this year. Our conversation quickly turned to focus on communication. We noticed that the schools and systems that suffered the least amount of impact during disruptions during the year had clear, concise and credible communication. Folks shared that the more effective they were with communicating to staff, students and parents the more they were able to keep learning continuity as their shared focus.

On the surface it seems simple and an old lesson, however, COVID has helped many schools, leaders and systems rethink the amount of communication that is necessary to be successful. In school and system survey data (Alberta) parents are reporting in significant critical mass that they feel more connected to the school right now than they did when they were allowed to freely enter the building. They have a stronger sense of trust and leadership credibility now than they did one year ago. They attribute that sense of trust and credibility to the amount of information that is shared with them now in direct comparison to previous years.

How will you earn/maintain your **Leadership Credibility**?

--Submitted by Adelee Penner, Learning Facilitator, ERLC

Contact [Adelee Penner](#)
to book a professional learning session.

LITERACY and LANGUAGE ARTS

Talking to Learn -- Improving Classroom Discussions



We dream about having a less teacher-centered class, where students are having rich conversations with each other about texts and content, academic conversations that work to deepen what they know, understand and are able to do. However, it seems that no matter how hard we try, or what technique we use, the same students are still doing all of the talking. In her Cult of Pedagogy post [The Fish Eye Syndrome: Is Every Student Really Participating?](#), Jennifer Gonzales concedes that “Some students are naturally going to be more active, more talkative, livelier than others. We’re not trying to make them all be the same, just better, stronger, more balanced versions of the people that showed up on day one.”

So what are some of the scaffolds we might use to support more rigorous, equitable classroom discussions? The following video models how explicitly teaching “talk moves” can help amplify all student voices, build social connections, and push the critical thinking we dream of hearing in our classrooms.

--Submitted by Tannis Niziol, Learning Facilitator, ERLC

Contact [Tannis Niziol](#) or [Irene Heffel](#)

to book a professional learning session that explores this and other Literacy and Language Arts topics.

Encouraging Academic Conversations With Talk Moves



MATH and NUMERACY

Start Your Math Class With A Thinking Routine

"Quick routines and warm-ups are efficient ways of practicing reasoning, uncovering prior knowledge, and engaging students to participate with open-ended questions and many possible answers." (Wills, T. (2021). Teaching Math at a Distance. Corwin). There are many different routines you can choose from. Planning the routine does not need to be time consuming. So many great Math teachers have done the work for us. One of my favorite routines is ['Which One Does Not Belong'](#). Posing one question that has multiple entry points with no one right answer gets the students thinking and reasoning mathematically at the beginning of each class. Good routines are a way to have quick and meaningful math-based conversations. If you have not tried a simple routine, time to start is today. If you have been doing a routine already, check out other routines and change it up. Your students will love you for it.



--Submitted by Ulana Soletsky, Learning Facilitator, ERLC

Contact [Ulana Soletsky](#)

to book a professional learning session to further explore this and other Math topics.

Math Talk Starters

MENTAL HEALTH

Taking Care of Your Mental Health



I don't always feel like I have a clear pulse on providing an authentic answer to the question "how are you doing". Last weekend when the sun shone, we could enjoy a beautiful summer day on the deck and feel the grass on our feet - I had a clear answer. I have been working out how to have the answer more often that is not dependent on a beach, the ocean or sunshine. With the return of winter outside my window, it becomes more and more important.

The key for me to feel healthy and have positive mental health is finding a way to be active. I have a hard time doing that without a goal or good friend that I can be accountable with for my actions. Covid has presented new and wonderful ways to keep being challenged and motivated. I have learned from many friends during the last year the power of the online marathon challenges that come with very beautiful medals and swag worthy of earning. A friend of mine who does not enjoy walking or running finds herself outside every day to be able to share later that she walked the Great Wall in

China or Climbed Mount Kilimanjaro. What do you need? How will you take care of your Mental Health in the next week?

--Submitted by Adelee Penner, Learning Facilitator, ERLC

Contact [Adelee Penner](#)

to book a professional learning session on this or other Mental Health topics.

SURVEY



ERLC welcomes your input!

As ERLC works to be as responsive as possible to the needs of our jurisdiction members, we welcome your suggestions and feedback.

* Required



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