



The Faculty of Education, McGill University

Friday, March 27th, 2026

8:00 am – 8:45 am	Conference Check-In & Breakfast	
8:45 am – 9:00 am	ATEQ Welcome	
9:00 am – 10:00 am	<p style="text-align: center;">Literacy Lights the Way: Story, Identity, and Belonging Opening Conversation with Roen Higgins</p> <p>Literacy is more than reading and writing. It is meaning-making. It is how we understand ourselves, interpret the world, and find our voice within it. In this keynote, Roen Higgins explores literacy through powerful storytelling and oral narrative practices, demonstrating how story helps students regulate emotions, build identity, and develop agency. Especially for diverse learners, literacy becomes a pathway to belonging, resilience, and hope. Roen invites educators to be lighthouses — using story, creativity, and compassion to guide students toward exploration and a future they can author.</p> <p>Roen Higgins is an award-winning spoken word artist, speaker, artist educator, life coach, social worker and clinical therapist based in Montreal. For over two decades, she has worked on the front lines in schools to community organizations supporting youth across diverse learning and emotional needs. With a background as a Special Care Counsellor, she holds a BA in Human Relations and Family Life Education, and a Master’s in Social Work specializing in mental health and trauma-informed care. Roen integrates creativity, narrative therapy, and expressive arts to empower young people to find voice, agency, and healing.</p>	
10:00 am – 10:15 am	HEALTH BREAK	
	ELEMENTARY	SECONDARY
10:20 am – 11:05 am	<p style="text-align: center;">Teaching Critical Thinking Beth Kennedy & Annemarie McCaffrey</p> <p>This workshop will present an ELA lesson demonstrating how I have been using critical thinking in the classroom. The lesson includes looking at the difference between a bibliography and a memoir. It will also show how the students in the grade 5 classroom used critical thinking methods to find the criteria of a memoir and how they used that to inform their memoir writing. There will be examples of student work and a few reflections on their writing afterwards.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Stations for Success: Engaging Secondary ELA Students with Rotational Learning Annie Krespil & Kelly Donovan</p> <p>Want to boost engagement, differentiation and student autonomy in your secondary ELA classroom? In this interactive session, participants will experience station-based learning firsthand while exploring practical strategies for designing, managing, and assessing stations effectively. Through a station rotation format, educators will engage in hands-on activities that model different station types, including literature analysis, writing workshops, and tech-enhanced learning. By the end of the session, participants will leave with ready-to-implement station templates and lesson plans that they can use in their classrooms tomorrow.</p>

	ELEMENTARY	SECONDARY
11:10 am – 11:55 am	<p>The Emotionally Ready Classroom: Using Literacy to Support Emotional Milestones in Cycle 1 Emily Langevin</p> <p>More than ever, emotional regulation has become an essential part of our curriculum as students enter our classrooms with big feelings they are still learning to understand. In Cycle 1, students are at a critical stage of emotional development, making it especially important that our classrooms reflect intentional instruction in self-regulation and emotional awareness. In this session, participants will engage with a wide range of children's literature and practical classroom activities designed to support students as they navigate their emotional journeys. These strategies will empower educators to help students become confident, capable champions of emotional regulation and self-awareness.</p>	<p>Using Talk to Motivate Reluctant Readers Lea Beddia</p> <p>This presentation includes techniques on how to introduce accessible literature for reluctant readers and students with learning difficulties by incorporating talk into the classroom culture. Using talk to guide students into improving literacy, gaining confidence, and validating their reading choices can foster learners who read for pleasure. By introducing specific books in a non-threatening way and using talk to support writing and reading comprehension, students can engage with literature in a social classroom setting. ELA teacher and published author Lea Beddia will provide project ideas and evaluation tools to support literacy.</p>
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm	Student-Led Lunch & Learn Sessions	
1:00 pm – 1:10 pm	Quist Online Literary Magazine Information Sharing	
	ELEMENTARY	SECONDARY
1:15 pm – 2:00 pm	<p>Big Conversations with Little Learners: Talking about National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, Black History Month and Topics Surrounding Identity with K-3 Students Jessica Landry & Talya Barnes</p> <p>Teachers are trained to teach academic subjects, but what about helping our students better understand themselves and the world in which they live? We will discuss our experiences teaching important yet challenging topics to our youngest learners. Feedback we often hear is from colleagues who don't want to say the wrong thing, or who don't feel like they have the skills to address topics in an age-appropriate way. We want to help build your capacity to take the next steps toward Big Conversations, regardless of where you may be in your learning. Come for perspective-sharing, unit ideas, and inspiring initiatives!</p>	<p>Dark Knights and Neon Lights: Teaching the Graphic Novel through an 80s Cultural Analysis Sarah Jones & Julian Beauvais</p> <p>This unit blends literature, history, and cultural studies to engage students and spark nostalgia for teachers and parents. Centered on a close reading of Frank Miller's <i>The Dark Knight Returns</i>, students explore the concept of zeitgeist through immersion in 1980s culture—music, film, fashion, media, and historical events. The unit examines Batman's cultural mutability and addresses key 1980s issues such as crime, Cold War anxiety, AIDS, and emerging technologies, while drawing parallels to contemporary concerns, including fascism. Diverse assessments culminate in an interactive 80s-themed potluck showcasing student learning.</p>
2:10 pm – 2:55 pm	<p>Designing ELA Activities in the Era of Gen AI Stacy Allen & Chris Colley</p> <p>If AI can write a passing essay in seconds, how do we evaluate student growth? This session moves beyond the basics of what Artificial Intelligence is to explore a broader pedagogical shift: how do we effectively teach English Language Arts (ELA), given the wide availability of these tools? We will examine strategies for AI-resilient assessment design by shifting focus toward the stages of the writing process. In small groups, we will explore traditional ELA assessments and discuss how we can revamp them in light of generative technology.</p>	
2:55 pm – 3:00 pm	Closing & Giveaways	