

Calgary 2025

BETTER, TOGETHER:
COLLABORATE.
INNOVATE.
INSPIRE.



Keynote:
Barbara Coloroso

Best Western Premier Calgary Plaza Hotel & Conference Centre
1316-33 Street NE, Calgary, Alberta



FEBRUARY 14, 2025

AISCA Teachers' Convention 2025 AGENDA - Calgary

8:00–9:00	Registration and Trade Show Opens
9:00–9:15	Opening & Welcome
9:15–10:30	KEYNOTE: Barbara Coloroso Teaching With Wit & Wisdom
10:30–11:00	Wellness Break
11:00–12:00	Concurrent Sessions A
12:00–1:15	Lunch Break
1:15–2:15	Concurrent Sessions B
2:15–2:30	Transition
2:30–3:30	Concurrent Sessions C

11:00 – 12:00 Concurrent Breakout Sessions A							
Text Structure: The Key to Developing Skilled Writers Middle/High Dr. Miriam Ramzy Michelle Bence	Just Because It's Not Wrong Doesn't Make It Right Teaching Children to think and Act Ethically All levels Barbara Coloroso	Transforming Perceptions of Math Anxiety: Insights from Collaborative Professional Learning All levels Sheryl Walters	Using AI to Support Diverse Learners All levels Curtis Slater	Engaging with Indigenous Learners (EWIL) All levels Samantha Fox Andrea McHugh	Unlocking Foundational Reading Potential for Older Students Grades 4–9 Kim Tackaberry	Supporting EAL Students in the Classroom All levels Jade Lewis Julia Lavendar	Executive Function – The Single Most Underutilized Support in a Classroom All levels Erin Ellis Sarah Galbraith
1:15 – 2:15 Concurrent Breakout Sessions B							
Unlocking the Layers of Reading: 3 Essential Keys to Word Study Success Elementary Dr. Miriam Ramzy Michelle Bence	The Bully, the Bullied, and the Not-So-Innocent Bystanders All levels Barbara Coloroso	Neurodiversity 101: Celebrating and Supporting Our Unique Differences All levels Elysa Sandron Eve Chan	Games and Puzzles in the Math Class Elementary/Middle Aaron Renert	EF Spotlight Agendas for Organization and Time Management, All levels Sam Sirianni Kellie Adams	Formative Assessment Tools for Outcomes Based Classrooms All levels Sara Tkachuk Neil Frail Charlotte Nixon	Accessing the Learning Brain All levels Esther Groen	Unlocking the Power of Spatial Reasoning in Early Childhood: Play, Books, and Math! Preschool/Kindergarten Wanda Dechant
2:30 – 3:30 Concurrent Breakout Sessions C							
Supporting Autistic Learners Within the Classroom Elementary Yolande Daley	Become an AI Whiz: How to Use AI as the Best Teaching Assistant Ever! All levels Jessilyn Swanson	Building Protective Factors for Mental Health in Schools All levels Demetra Mylonas Gina Cherkowski	Unlocking Math for All: UDL Strategies in K–8 Classrooms Katie Heidt	Navigating Teacher Stress and Burnout: Personal Stories and Wellness Strategies All levels Erin Day Jennifer MacKay	Transforming Challenges: A Strengths-Based Perspective on Student Behavior Elementary Dorota Kyriacou Ginger Mullen	Gestalt Language Processing: Supporting Communication in Children Who Use Scripts Elementary Shikara Fahie	What Are EF Skills and How Can We Support Them in Children? All levels Lauren Thompson

KEYNOTE: Barbara Coloroso
Teaching With Wit & Wisdom
 All levels

Solid practical advice for educators on how to create a school climate in which students can become self-disciplined, compassionate, responsible, resourceful, resilient human beings who can act in their own best interest, stand up for themselves, and exercise their own rights while respecting the rights and legitimate needs of others. Barbara will discuss the keys to good teaching; treating students with respect; giving them a sense of positive power in their own lives; giving them opportunities to make decisions, take responsibility for their own actions, and learn from their successes and mistakes.

Michelle Bence & Dr. Miriam Ramzy
Text Structure: The Key to Developing Skilled Writers

Middle/High School

Join Michelle and Miriam for an engaging session that uncovers the vital role of text structure in writing, an instructional concept that is often misunderstood yet essential for fostering skilled writers and enhancing reading comprehension.

In this interactive workshop, we will:

- Clarify Key Concepts: Break down the distinctions between text purpose, structure, and form to simplify your instructional planning and delivery.
- Explore Practical Tools: Discover effective strategies and resources designed to support secondary students as they navigate various writing structures across different disciplines.
- Enhance Classroom Practice: Walk away with actionable tools and techniques that you can implement in your classroom as soon as next week.

Barbara Coloroso
Just Because It's Not Wrong Doesn't Make It Right
Teaching Children to think and Act Ethically
 All levels

A workshop packed with solid practical advice on how to use the stuff of everyday life to teach children to act with integrity, civility, and compassion. Beginning with the idea that it is in us to care, that we are born with an innate capacity for compassion, Barbara Coloroso shows professionals, educators, and parents how to nurture and guide children's ethical lives from toddlerhood through the teen years using everyday situations at home, at school, in social settings, and in the world at large.

Sheryl Walters
Transforming Perceptions of Mathematics Anxiety: Insights from Collaborative Professional Learning
 All levels

Mathematics anxiety has impacted both teacher and student performance in the classroom for decades, remaining a persistent challenge in everyday practice. In this session, we will explore how collaborative professional learning communities (PLCs) can reshape educators' perceptions of math anxiety and inform their instructional approaches. This presentation shares preliminary insights from an ongoing study examining how engaging in PLCs influences teachers' understanding of math anxiety, fostering new strategies to support students in overcoming these challenges and enhancing overall learning experiences.

Curtis Slater
Using AI to Support Diverse Learners
 All levels

In this session we will explore ways that AI can be used to support a range of diverse learners in the classroom and promote inclusive classroom environments for all students. Practical examples will be provided and attendees will walk away with a better understanding of how AI tools can be leveraged to create more inclusive classrooms and discover specific strategies to help make course content more accessible to diverse learners.

Samantha Fox & Andrew McHugh
Engaging with Indigenous Learners (EWIL)
 All levels

This professional development arose from the recognition that success in a learning environment inclusive of Indigenous learners is best accomplished through understanding. It is designed to develop:

- an awareness of historical relations between Indigenous peoples and others in Canada,
- an understanding of the principles of Indigenous learning and
- an understanding of how trauma affects the Indigenous adult learner.

This presentation supports literacy practitioners who may not have had previous opportunities to learn about Indigenous peoples, knowledge, issues, and culture within the Indigenous context. We must strive toward new relationships that move away from Eurocentric systems, practices, and worldviews and embrace the wholeness, yet diversity, of Indigenous knowledge.

Kim Tackaberry
Unlocking Foundational Reading Potential for Older Students (Grades 4-9)
 Grades 4-9

Join us for an insightful session delving into APLC's innovative Student Reading Video Library, a valuable resource tailored to support grade 4-9 students grappling with basic decoding and encoding skills. Our mission is to equip educators with an effective tool to survey students' level of decoding skills. Once established, discreetly engage these students in foundational reading skill lessons using an iPad, laptop, or similar device, accompanied by a headset.

During this session, participants will:

- Gain a comprehensive understanding of APLC's Student Reading Video Library and its objectives.
- Discover techniques for assessing student reading progress and customizing instruction to meet individual needs.

Jade Lewis & Julia Lavendar
Supporting EAL Students in the Classroom
 All levels

Do you want to expand your toolkit for teaching students who are learning English as an additional language (EAL students)? This workshop offers valuable insights into the complexities of multilingual speech and language development and practical approaches to fostering a supportive learning environment. We'll begin by exploring how multilingualism shapes communication skills and discuss key indicators for identifying when additional support may be beneficial. You'll leave with actionable strategies and classroom resources designed to enhance engagement and learning outcomes for EAL students across diverse settings.

Erin Ellis & Sarah Galbraith
Executive Function – The Single Most Underutilized Support in a Classroom
 All levels

Join us to explore the lens of Executive Function, as the single most underutilized support in a classroom. This session will focus on the essential connections between neuroscience and effective teaching strategies. We will further discuss how understanding the brain can enhance learning outcomes, with a special emphasis on the role of EF and its impact on empowered learning. Discover the concept of the regulated brain and learn practical techniques for nurturing classroom environments that foster emotional and cognitive well-being. Don't miss this opportunity to deepen your understanding and transform your approach to education!

Michelle Bence & Dr. Miriam Ramzy

Unlocking the Layers of Reading: 3 Essential Keys to Word Study Success

Elementary

Join Michelle and Miriam for an insightful exploration of the Layers of Reading Development Graphic, synthesizing the latest research in reading education. In this session, we will:

- **Examine Each Layer:** We will briefly provide an overview of each layer, and share some evidence-based teacher moves that support students in engaging with, and transferring reading skills across multiple texts.
- **Focus on Word Study:** Gain practical insights into designing a comprehensive program, and explore some evidence-based teacher moves that support students in engaging with Word Study. We share 3 keys to success as you design your program to meet the needs of your learners as they learn to read, spell, and write in English, a complex orthographic system. We discuss ways to tailor your word study instruction to the needs of your diverse class.

You'll walk away with actionable ideas to enhance your teaching practices, and leave with strategies you can implement next week!

Barbara Coloroso

The Bully, the Bullied, and the Not-So-Innocent Bystanders

All levels

It takes much more than slogans, posters, and anti-bullying programs to break the cycle of violence and to create more deeply caring communities. Brave-hearted kids willing to step up and step in to stop these attacks can't do it alone; we all need to pitch in to make a difference. In this session, we will discuss verbal, physical, relational, and cyber bullying violence and its effect on the bully, the bullied, the not-so-innocent bystanders and the entire school community. Participants will receive tips, tools, strategies, and handouts to bring back to their home and educational communities to help enact positive change.

Elysa Sandron & Eve Chan

Neurodiversity 101: Celebrating and Supporting Our Unique Differences

All levels

Join us in learning strategies to celebrate the unique differences of neurodiverse students! In this interactive presentation, you will learn more about neurodiversity-affirming language and strategies to support regulation, communication, and play.

Aaron Renert

Games and Puzzles in the Math Class

Elementary/Middle

Mathematics is far more than the ability to "do" arithmetic or solve word problems. In its widest sense, it encompasses any and all activities that make the analytical side of the brain fire up. Fostering a stronger analytical mind at Renert School is done through playing MANY games, and introducing the students to a wide array of logical puzzles, riddles, brain-teasers and the like. In this presentation Aaron will showcase, discuss, as well as provide resources to some of the most impactful activities. In the session we will engage in playing games and solving puzzles.

Sam Sirianni & Kellie Adams

EF Spotlight Agendas for Organization and Time Management

All levels

Join Sam and Kellie as we talk about strategies to support executive skills at different levels throughout a student's school life. We will touch on age-based agenda iterations at Rundle Academy, the importance of practice using the agenda as a tool, and how these skills can build student agency over time.

Sara Tkachuk, Neil Frail & Charlotte Nixon

Formative Assessment Tools for Outcomes Based Classrooms

All levels

This interactive session led by instructional designers is tailored for K-12 educators aiming to integrate powerful, evidence-based formative assessment tools into outcomes-based classrooms immediately. Participants will delve into how formative assessments can clarify learning objectives, provide targeted insights, and inform instruction in real-time, ultimately empowering students to achieve measurable progress.

Esther Groen

Accessing the Learning Brain

All levels

Attendees will learn about the structure of the brain and how best to access the learning brain, particularly when students are experiencing dysregulation. Content will focus on the 3 R's as proposed by Dr. Bruce Perry in the Neurosequential Model in Education - Regulate, Relate, and Reason, which is used to support children to learn, think, and reflect. Strategies will be offered for each step of this supportive intervention, as well as strategies for how to create a trauma-informed environment to support regulation and education of students of all ages.

Wanda Dechant

Unlocking the Power of Spatial Reasoning in Early Childhood: Play, Books, and Math!

Preschool/Kindergarten

Join us for a hands-on journey into the world of spatial reasoning—a key building block for early math and cognitive development! In this interactive session designed for early childhood educators, we'll explore how spatial thinking sparks curiosity, builds number sense, and sets the stage for lifelong learning. Through playful activities, cognitive challenges, and engaging connections to children's literature, you'll discover practical, research-backed strategies to nurture spatial reasoning in your young learners.

Yolande Daley

Supporting Autistic Learners Within the Classroom

Elementary

This session will provide teachers with practical solutions in educating autistic and diverse learners within the classroom. We will discuss factors that impact student learning and strategies that can be adapted to any classroom setting.

Jessilyn Swanson

Become an AI Whiz: How to Use AI as the Best Teaching Assistant Ever!

All levels

Have you ever thought, "I know AI is supposed to make my life easier as a teacher but I can't get it to make what I'm looking for! Help!" Well, this is the session for you! During our time together, you will learn how to engineer AI prompts to make AI work efficiently for you. We will spend time playing with tools and learning how to make AI work for us, regardless of what we teach! You will leave the session with the skills to make what you need for your classroom using AI and resources to continue upping your AI game.

Demetra Mylonas & Dr. Gina Cherkowski

Building Protective Factors for Mental Health in Schools: The Use of Social Emotional Learning as a Preventative Measure of Mental Illness

All levels

This presentation outlines the systematic integration of a research-based SEL curriculum into schools, covering training, support, implementation, and the infusion of SEL and wellbeing into school culture and the community. It highlights methodologies, best practices, and initial findings, emphasizing the need for strong leadership to ensure sustainable SEL adoption. The presentation addresses the mental health crisis affecting youth and teachers and aims to foster greater collaboration between research, policy, and practice for long-term impact on school wellbeing and student success.

Katie Heidt**Unlocking Math for All: UDL Strategies in K-8 Classrooms**

Kindergarten – Grade 8

Discover how Universal Design for Learning (UDL) can transform K-8 math instruction, empowering all learners to access, engage with, and succeed in mathematics. This session will explore practical strategies and tools that address diverse learning needs, by creating multiple pathways for comprehension, expression, and engagement. Join us to learn how to design math lessons that are inclusive, flexible, and effective, ensuring every student can thrive in math.

Erin Day & Jennifer MacKay**Navigating Teacher Stress and Burnout: Personal Stories and Wellness Strategies**

All levels

In this engaging presentation designed specifically for educators, we will address the pressing issues of stress and burnout that many educators face in today's demanding educational landscape. Through the lens of our personal experiences, we will share heartfelt stories, including our roles not only as educators, but also as primary caregivers to family members living with Parkinson's disease. These experiences have deepened our understanding of the emotional and physical toll caregiving can take, highlighting the importance of self-care in both our professional and personal lives.

Dorota Kyriacou & Ginger Mullen**Transforming Challenges: A Strengths-Based Perspective on Student Behavior**

Elementary

In this interactive session, and thought-provoking discussions, we will explore how our perceptions shape our understanding of student behavior, especially when we encounter what we consider "challenging" behaviour". Incorporating insights from neuroscience, let's dive in and discover the messaging behind the behaviors together! In addition to their practical experience, the facilitators keep up with the latest research and best practices, continuously refining their methods to support educators of young learners.

Shikara Fahie**Gestalt Language Processing: Supporting Communication in Children Who Use Scripts Elementary**

There are two ways a child can develop language. Ever wonder why your student repeats lines from TV shows/movies, uses rich intonation when speaking and/or uses long unintelligible strings of language? If so, they might learn language through what's called Gestalt Language Processing (GLP). This is one of the ways a child can learn language and is quite common in Autistic children. In this way of language learning, the child learns language through memorized 'chunks' or 'scripts' rather than word-by-word. In this presentation, you will learn about...

- What Gestalt Language Processing is
- Signs that your student may be a Gestalt Language Processor
- Gestalt Language Processing vs. 'expected' language processing
- The 4 stages of language development
- Practical strategies to best support your students' communication in the classroom

Lauren Thompson**What Are EF Skills and How Can We Support Them in Children?**

All Levels

Executive functioning skills are life skills that help people manage time, organize themselves and their belongings and navigate social interactions. Often, these skills are impacted in children with learning disabilities and ADHD. These students can be labeled as "bad" because of their inability to self-regulate and plan and organize. This session will present information on what EF skills are and how they look in real life, as well as practical skills and strategies to help teachers and parents support the children in their lives to have success in school and at home.