



MTS PD DAY PROGRAM OCTOBER 23RD, 2026



MANITOBA EARLY LITERACY INTERVENTION TEACHERS (MELIT)

PRESENTS:

DAVID A. ROBERTSON

ACCLAIMED AUTHOR & GRAPHIC NOVELIST
ADVOCATE FOR INDIGENOUS STORIES & MENTAL HEALTH
KEYNOTE SPEAKER



EVERY LEARNER HAS A STORY

*LISTENING HELPS US UNDERSTAND WHO
THEY ARE AND HOW TO TEACH THEM*

MELIT MTS PD DAY 2026 Registration Fees

Early Bird in-Person Registration	\$100.00
Regular in-Person Registration	\$120.00
Early Bird Virtual Registration	\$70.00
Regular Virtual Registration	\$90.00
Student (Virtual/In-Person) Registration	\$60.00
Half-day In-Person Morning Registration (no lunch)	\$60.00
Half-day Virtual Morning Registration	\$60.00

FULL DAY IN-PERSON INCLUDES LUNCH

Early Bird Registration for In-Person Conference Sept. 8th -Sept. 28.

LINK TO REGISTER [HERE](#)

EMAIL QUESTIONS TO: MELIT.CONTACT@GMAIL.COM

Location: The Leaf at Assiniboine Park and Virtual



MELIT MTS PD DAY 2026 PROGRAM



KEYNOTE SESSIONS

OPENING KEYNOTE

GROWING RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH STORIES

David is a member of Norway House Cree Nation and is a celebrated author, graphic novelist, and podcaster. One of Canada's leading literary voices, his work explores Indigenous perspectives, mental health, and identity, grounded in a belief that storytelling is essential for truth, healing, and connection. He is a two-time Governor General's Literary Award winner and Canada's nominee for the Hans Christian Andersen Award, and he holds honorary doctorates from the University of Manitoba and the University of Lethbridge. Robertson is the author of acclaimed books such as *The Theory of Crows* and the memoir *Black Water*, and the host of the podcast *Kiwew*. Through his work, he emphasizes the power of stories to foster empathy, challenge misconceptions, and strengthen community. He also serves as editorial director of Swift Water Books, an Indigenous-led publishing imprint.



KEYNOTE SPEAKER:
DAVID A. ROBERTSON



END OF DAY KEYNOTE

Gloria D. Sinclair is from the Peguis First Nation and carries her indigeneity with pride, along with the belief of responsibility to acknowledge and share indigenous ways of being. Gloria has more than 30 years of experience teaching, facilitating and training in various capacities. A trained Reading Recovery Teacher Leader (Emerita) and literacy project writer for several projects. Gloria is known to be a valuable resource to classroom teachers in various Manitoba First Nation Schools and in training teachers in Reading Recovery facilitation.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:
GLORIA D. SINCLAIR



EVERY LEARNER HAS A STORY

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

		In-Person	Online
8:30 - 9:00 AM	REGISTRATION REFRESHMENTS	Leaf Entrance and Mezzanine	Sign In to Zoom AM Keynote 8:55 am
9:00 - 9:10 AM	WELCOME	Event Hall A & B	Online
9:10 - 10:10 AM	OPENING KEYNOTE	Event Hall A & B	Online (continued link from Welcome)
10:10 - 10:40 AM	BREAK	Coffee/Tea Service/Snacks Mezzanine	BREAK Sign In to Zoom AM BREAKOUT SESSION 10:35 AM
10:40 - 11:50 AM	BREAKOUT SESSIONS AM	Locations as Posted	Online
11:50 AM - 1:00 PM	LUNCH	Buffet Served on Mezzanine Seating in Event Hall A & B	LUNCH Sign In to Zoom PM BREAKOUT SESSION 12:55 PM
1:00 - 2:10 PM	BREAKOUT SESSIONS PM	Locations as Posted	Online
2:10 - 2:30 PM	BREAK	Cold drinks & cookies Mezzanine	BREAK Sign In to Zoom PM Keynote 2:25 PM
2:30 - 3:00 PM	CLOSING KEYNOTE	Event Hall A & B	Online
3:00 - 3:15 PM	MELIT AGM PRIZE DRAWS	Event Hall A & B	Online



EVERY LEARNER HAS A STORY

KEYNOTE AND BREAKOUT DESCRIPTIONS



AM 01 KEYNOTE

IN PERSON & VIRTUAL

GROWING RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH STORIES: LISTENING AS THE HEART OF TEACHING

David A. Robertson

Every learner arrives in our classrooms with a story—stories shaped by family, community, land, and lived experience. In this keynote, acclaimed author and storyteller David A. Robertson invites educators to reflect on the power of listening as a foundation for meaningful teaching in the early years.

Drawing from his father's experience in day school at Norway House Cree Nation, David shares what it is like to enter a learning space that feels unfamiliar and disconnected from one's way of knowing. His father's journey from the known world of learning from the land into the unknown world of formal schooling highlights the barriers that can exist when children's identities and experiences are not fully understood or valued.

David will also reflect on influential teachers from his own school experience who impacted his sense of belonging and identity. Through these stories, he illustrates how educators can become powerful agents of change—by listening deeply, building trust, and honouring each child's story.

AM 02 IN PERSON

KID-DIRECTED ACTION: TURNING STORIES INTO PRACTICE

David A. Robertson

How can educators move from listening to children's stories to fostering young learners as activists?

AM 03 VIRTUAL

In this interactive session, David extends the ideas from his keynote into classroom-based application for K–3 educators. Grounded in the belief that children's stories matter, this session explores how educators can create responsive, story-informed learning environments that reflect truth, representation, and belonging.

Together, we will consider reconciliation and accurate and meaningful representation, relationship-building through story, and safe, community-centered classrooms. This session also highlights the importance of land-based learning and stewardship as pathways for connection, identity, and collective action.

AM 04

VIRTUAL

PLACING HIGH-QUALITY TEXTS AT THE HEART OF LITERACY

Charlotte Hacking

This session explores how high-quality children's literature can serve as the foundation for integrated reading and writing instruction. Charlotte Hacking will demonstrate practical approaches to using rich read-aloud texts as a springboard for purposeful learning. Participants will learn how to plan for embedded phonics, meaningful writing opportunities, and intentional reading instruction—all grounded in engaging, authentic texts. Join this online session to learn about designing literacy experiences that support all learners.



BREAKOUT SESSION DESCRIPTIONS CONT'D

AM 05

IN PERSON

STORY TELLING AND STORY ACTING

Jennifer Flight, Michelle Hildebrand, and Nursery-Grade 1 Teachers

This session explores storytelling and story acting as a play-based approach for students in K-2. Participants will learn how inviting, recording, and playfully sharing children's stories offers insight into children's thinking, language, identity, and sense of community, all within an authentic and purposeful literacy learning activity. Join us as we step into an "enchanted place" alongside children, where students' stories are valued, enacted and used to build understanding and connection.

AM 06

**IN PERSON
OUTDOORS**

NATURE JOURNALLING: WHERE LITERACY MEETS THE OUTDOORS

Melissa Scouten

Discover how a simple notebook can transform the outdoors into an exciting classroom! Nature journaling invites students to observe, wonder, sketch, write, count, measure, and ask questions as they explore the natural world. This hands-on approach strengthens literacy and numeracy skills while fostering creativity, curiosity, and a deeper connection to nature for all types of learners. Join us to discover fun, practical ways to bring learning outdoors and inspire students to become keen observers, confident communicators, and lifelong nature enthusiasts. All supplies are provided; please dress for the weather, as part of this session will take place outdoors.

(\$10 additional Leaf Conservancy Educator Fee)

AM 07

**IN PERSON
IN BIOME**

SEWING THE SEEDS OF INQUIRY

Kim Crockett

Discover how a simple notebook can transform the outdoors into an exciting classroom! Nature journaling invites students to observe, wonder, sketch, write, count, measure, and ask questions as they explore the natural world. This hands-on approach strengthens literacy and numeracy skills while fostering creativity, curiosity, and a deeper connection to nature for all types of learners. Join us to discover fun, practical ways to bring learning outdoors and inspire students to become keen observers, confident communicators, and lifelong nature enthusiasts. All supplies are provided; please dress for the weather, as part of this session will take place outdoors.

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AM 08

**IN PERSON
OUTDOORS**

LANDSCAPE LITERACY: TEXT BEYOND THE PAGE AND OUTSIDE FOUR WALLS

Barret Miller

The science and art of animal tracking, and the way we learn this skill, has some strong parallels with how we learn to read. This outdoor session will deepen your understanding and appreciation for local wildlife, help answer student questions on your next nature walk, and give you new perspective on your work with language literacy as you learn to read the stories written on the landscape. Please dress for the weather.

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BREAKOUT SESSION DESCRIPTIONS CONT'D

PM 01

WHAT DOES EFFECTIVE LITERACY INTERVENTION LOOK LIKE? A MODEL IN PRACTICE

Charlotte Hacking

VIRTUAL

This session highlights a current research-informed model for early literacy intervention, with a strong emphasis on classroom application. After a brief overview of the research that shaped the work, Charlotte Hacking will focus on the structure and design of the model itself. Participants will see how high-quality texts drive instruction and how phonics, reading, and writing are woven together within authentic literacy experiences. The session will prioritize concrete examples and planning approaches that educators can take directly into their practice.

PM 02

WRITE FROM THE BEGINNING: BUILDING STRONG HANDS FOR WRITING AND SHARING STORIES

Sinead Harmey

VIRTUAL

Taking an emergent literacy perspective, in this session we will explore what young children need to orchestrate in order to write meaningful messages. We will explore the behaviours and actions that educators can observe and how they can plan responsive instruction to support the cognitive, affective, and physical skills that children need to develop to become strong and confident writers. Particular attention will be paid to how children can be supported to develop a sense of self as a reader, writer, and speaker in the context of co-constructing messages with their educators in school, home, and in the community.

PM 03

TINY WORLDS, BIG WORDS 2.0!

Jessica Laluk & Jenna Wynnyk

IN PERSON

Back by popular demand—with new thinking and expanded strategies! Discover how small-world play can spark rich oral language and support emergent literacy in young learners. This hands-on session builds on last year's highly attended workshop, offering new approaches to interactive dialogue, storytelling scaffolds, and sensory-rich, student-led narratives. Leave with refined, classroom-ready tools to support joyful, responsive reading and writing development.

PM 04

DON'T THROW IT OUT! USING WHAT WE KNOW TO CREATE POWERFUL OPPORTUNITIES FOR LITERACY LEARNING IN INTERVENTION SETTINGS & BEYOND

Helen Proulx

IN PERSON

The literacy landscape is shifting rapidly, and it can feel confusing for educators. Practices such as explicit and systematic phonics instruction, morphology, and decodable texts are receiving renewed emphasis, while others – like levelled texts, shared reading, silent reading, and interactive writing – are often minimized or overlooked. This session explores how we can make intentional use of the full range of literacy practices and resources at our disposal to best meet the needs of our learners.



BREAKOUT SESSION DESCRIPTIONS CONT'D

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IN PERSON

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**MELIT would like to thank all of
the amazing presenters at this
year's MTS PD Day!**





Presenter Biographies

Presenter: David A. Robertson AM01 - Opening Keynote Growing Relationships Through Stories AM02 - In-Person AM03 - Virtual	David is an award-winning author, graphic novelist, and podcaster from Norway House Cree Nation. One of Canada's leading literary voices, his work explores Indigenous perspectives, mental health, and identity, grounded in a belief that storytelling is essential for truth, healing, and connection. He is a two-time Governor General's Literary Award winner and Canada's nominee for the Hans Christian Andersen Award, and he holds honorary doctorates from the University of Manitoba and the University of Lethbridge. Robertson is the author of acclaimed books such as <i>The Theory of Crows</i> and the memoir <i>Black Water</i>, and the host of the podcast <i>Kíwew</i>. Through his work, he emphasizes the power of stories to foster empathy, challenge misconceptions, and strengthen community. He also serves as editorial director of Swift Water Books, an Indigenous-led publishing imprint.
Presenter: Charlotte Hacking Placing High-Quality Texts at the Heart of Literacy AM04 - Virtual What Does Effective Literacy Intervention Look Like? A Model in Practice PM01 - Virtual	Charlotte Hacking is a London-based educator, literacy specialist, author, and speaker with extensive experience in primary education. She has worked as a classroom teacher, senior school leader, and literacy consultant, supporting schools in developing effective approaches to early reading and writing. Hacking has held a senior role at the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE), where she led research and professional development initiatives focused on early literacy, including projects exploring the use of picturebooks and poetry to engage young learners. She is co-author, with Professor Dominic Wyse, of <i>The Balancing Act: An Evidence-Based Approach to Teaching Phonics, Reading and Writing</i> (2024), which proposes a research-informed, integrated approach to literacy instruction.
Presenters: Jennifer Flight, Michelle Hildebrand and nursery-grade 1 classroom teachers Storytelling and Story Acting AM05 - In-Person	Jennifer Flight and Michelle Hildebrand work in early literacy support in the River East Transcona School Division and the Winnipeg School Division respectively. Children's stories are their jam, and they've been delighted to work alongside teachers and children in nursery/kindergarten/grade 1 recently in collaborative inquiry. Teachers Ashley Hildebrand, Holly Dumond, Jessica Larson, Lorielyn Castillo Holigroski, and Marian Polakoff will join us to share their classroom perspectives.

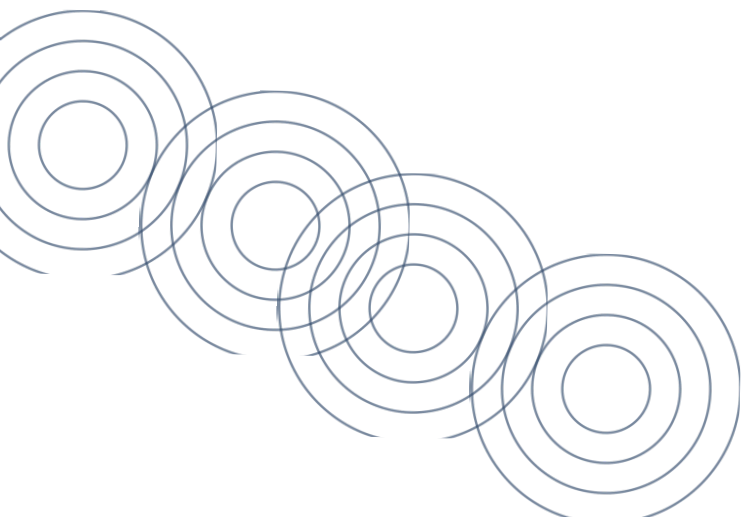
Presenter Biographies (Cont'd)

Presenters: Melissa Scouten Nature Journalling: Where Literacy Meets the Outdoors AM06 In-Person PM05 In-Person	Melissa Scouten facilitates environmental education programs at Assiniboine Park, creating engaging, hands-on learning experiences for children, families, and adults. She incorporates adaptive teaching strategies to support diverse learning styles and encourages people to notice and learn from the natural world around them.
Presenter: Kim Crockett The Roots Of Learning AM07 In-Person PM06 In-Person	Kim has 35 years in the Early Childhood Education sector. In the last 15 years, her career moved outdoors as a Forest School Canada certified Practitioner/Facilitator. Most recently, she has developed and facilitates family outdoor programming at Assiniboine Park Conservancy. She has seen first hand the irreplaceable benefits of time spent outdoors and the remarkable capability and resilience of young learners. Viewing the world through children's eyes keeps her in awe of all there is to learn and appreciate.
Presenter: Barrett Miller Landscape Literacy: Text Beyond the Page and Outside Four Walls AM08 In-Person PM07 In-Person	Growing up in the forest town of Pinawa, Manitoba, Barrett Miller has always felt a strong connection to the natural world. He was lucky to have great role models in the school system, and his post-secondary journeys to the U of Winnipeg and summer camp fostered his inquiry and passion for the outdoors. He's channeled this passion into a career in facilitating outdoor learning. After 18 years in education at FortWhyte Alive, he migrated north to the Assiniboine Park Conservancy in April 2024, where he is Manager Of Education And Programming. From the youngest child full of wonder to those with vast life experience, he believes we can all teach one another- and all of us benefit from direct interaction with nature and the inquiry that grows.
Presenter: Sinead Harmey Write From the Beginning: Building Strong Hands for Writing and Sharing Stories PM 02 - Virtual	Sinead Harmey is an Associate Professor in Literacy Education and Director of the International Centre in the Department of Learning and Leadership at University College London Institute of Education. She began her career as an early years educator in Dublin, Ireland, and later worked as a Reading Recovery teacher, Teacher Leader, and Trainer across the United Kingdom, Europe, and the United States. Her research focuses on early writing development in young children, with a particular interest in pedagogy and practice. Her work has been published in leading journals, and she is the author of '<u>Supporting Emergent Literacy in the Early Years</u>'.



Presenter Biographies (Cont'd)

Presenters: Jessica Laluk Jenna Wynnyk Tiny Worlds, Big Words 2.0! PM03 - In-Person	Jessica Laluk and Jenna Wynnyk bring extensive expertise in literacy leadership, instructional practice, and oral language development to their work with teachers. Jessica is a grade 1/2 teacher with over 20 years of experience, including roles as an Early Literacy consultant, Reading Recovery teacher, and resource teacher. Jenna is a grade 1/2 teacher and former Reading Recovery teacher with five years of classroom experience and recognized expertise in literacy instruction. Together, they empower K–2 educators with research-informed, play-based strategies that ignite storytelling, foster dialogue, and build strong foundations for literacy growth.
Presenter: Helen Proulx Don't Throw It Out! Using What We Know to Create Powerful Opportunities for Literacy Learning in Intervention Settings and Beyond PM04 - In-Person	With over 30 years of experience as a Manitoba teacher, Helen has built a dynamic and varied career. She has taught French Immersion from Grades 1-5 in multiple configurations and collaborated with multiple teaching partners. Beyond the classroom, she has served as a Reading Recovery teacher, Reading Recovery and IPLE Teacher Leader, and Early Literacy Support teacher. Helen has dedicated her career to understanding how young children develop as readers and writers and finding the best ways to support them on their journeys to becoming literate.
Presenter: Gloria Sinclair End of Day Keynote PM08 - In-Person/Virtual	Gloria D. Sinclair is from the Peguis First Nation and carries her indigeneity with pride, along with the belief of responsibility to acknowledge and share indigenous ways of being. Gloria has more than 30 years of experience teaching, facilitating and training in various capacities. A trained Reading Recovery Teacher Leader (Emerita) and literacy project writer for several projects. Gloria is known to be a valuable resource to classroom teachers in various Manitoba First Nation Schools and in training teachers in Reading Recovery facilitation.



CONFERENCE SPECIALS



**LEAF BIODOME
ENTRY FEE
15% OFF**

12:30 OR 3:30

**CONFERENCE
DAY**

Are you interested in touring the Leaf's Biodomes? MELIT members receive 15% off regular admission if they choose to tour the biodomes during lunch at 12:30 or after the conference at 3:30. Please note, that tickets have been reserved for these two time slots on October 23, 2026 and that the discount is not available for any other time slot on the conference day. Participants who wish to take advantage of this offer must purchase their tickets during the registration process.

BIRCHWOOD INN

Guests are responsible for booking their own rooms by the cut off date of **October 6th** Rate is (\$127.0) check fee + taxes per night for standard accommodations.
add code MB22

Reservations can be made one of the following ways:

Email:
res@birchwoodinn.ca
Direct phone: 204-885-4478
Toll Free: 1-800-665-0352
Fax: 204-831-5734
Group Code: M65

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