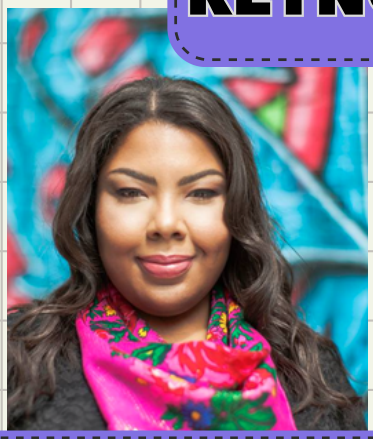
Manitoba Reading Association's 7th

ADOLESCENT LITERACY SUMMIT

Breaking Barriers

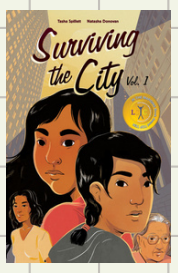
Friday April 16th 2027

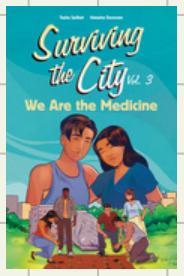
KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

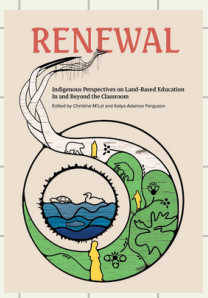


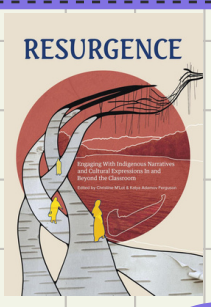
Dr. Tasha Spillett

Dr. Katya Adamov Ferguson









Registration opens June 1st, 2026

WWW.READING MANITOBA.ORG

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AGENDA

- 8:45 Welcome and Opening
- 9:20 Keynote Speaker: Dr. Katya Adamov Ferguson
- 10:30 Networking Break
- 10:45 Breakout Sessions:
  - AM1: Dr. Katya Adamov Ferguson: Supporting a Curriculum of Indigenous Resurgence and Renewal
  - AM2: Jay Nickerson: Theme-Based Senior Years English
  - AM3: Dr. Valdine Bjornson: Dyslexia in MY/SY and Beyond
  - AM4: Stacey Bradley: New ELA Curriculum... Where Do I Begin?!
- 12:30 Breakout Sessions
  - PM1: Dr. Tasha Spillett: Indigenous Storytelling: Voice and Vision in Picture Books
  - PM2: Katie Martin & Raelyn Voulgaris: Good Medicine
  - PM3: Tara McLauchlan: Let's Give Them Something to Talk About!
  - PM4: Della Magnusson, Ryan Crave, Makenzie Groot, Matt Enns: From Page to Practice: Using Direct Instruction to Strengthen Novel Studies
- 1:15 Networking Break
- 1:30 Action Planning Sessions
- 2:30 Keynote Speaker: Dr Tasha Spillett
- 3:30 Closing and Book Draws

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GENERAL SUMMIT INFORMATION

Early Bird (June 1, 2026 to October 31, 2026)	
Teacher Candidate	205.00
Professional	255.00
Late Registration (November 1, 2026 to April 1, 2027)	
Teacher Candidate	240.00
Professional	290.00

Note: Plus GST

1. **Refunds:**
   - **If you are unable to attend, you may transfer your ticket to another person at any point before the summit.**
   - **You can request a refund before April 1, 2027, but Eventbrite ticketing fees are non-refundable. On and after April 1, 2027, refunds will not be issued except in the case of illness, supported by written medical documentation. Requests and documentation must be received no later than April 26, 2027.**
   - **Please email adlitsummit@gmail.com to request a refund or transfer.**
- **Meals:**
  - **Lunch is included with registration. For dietary allergies or concerns, please indicate this upon registering.**
- **Breakout Sessions:**
  - **A variety of breakout sessions will be held throughout the day as outlined in the conference program. These sessions will be on a first-come, first-served basis for seating.**
- **Contact Information:**
  - **For registration questions, please email adlitsummit@gmail.com**

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1. **Scent Free: We respectfully request that you refrain from wearing scented products at the summit. Thank you for your consideration.**

Photography and Recordings: The Manitoba Reading Association will be taking photos, as well as making video and audio recordings of the Adolescent Literacy Summit for use in promotional and informational material. These recordings will be used on the Manitoba Reading Association's website and social media accounts. Attendance at the summit shall constitute your consent to appear in these photos and videos. Thank you for your participation and assistance.

KEYNOTE DESCRIPTIONS

Morning Keynote: Dr. Katya Adamov-Ferguson

Katya is an interdisciplinary artist, researcher and teacher whose critical and creative work is committed to breaking barriers through unearthing underrepresented stories, supporting relational curricular approaches, and sustaining commitment to the TRC's Calls to Action. Katya is a settler who grew up in Winnipeg's inner-city with ancestral connections to Ukraine and Russia. In 2026, Katya received her doctorate from the University of Manitoba, and her unique research introduces a method of "soilwork" which involves local, place-based compositions using earth-based materials in public places. Currently, she is involved in interdisciplinary partnerships between educators and nurses to mobilize the Calls for Justice of Canada's National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2019). Katya is passionate about artivism to transform practices and support understandings of complex topics with both young children and adults. Since 2012, Katya has been honoured to collaborate with incredible Indigenous authors on several teacher's guides with Portage & Main Press and is currently Co-editor with Christine M'Lot of the Footbridge Book Series which includes titles such as *Resurgence* and *Renewal*. Katya has experience as a classroom teacher, resource teacher, divisional early years support teacher, and university instructor. She has won several awards including the Canadian Society for Education through Art Provincial Affiliate Award for Manitoba and Reading Council of Greater Winnipeg Certificate of Merit and continues volunteer work with Canadian Association for Young Children.

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Afternoon Keynote- Dr. Tasha Spillett

Stories do more than entertain—they shape how we see ourselves, our communities, and our possibilities. In this inspiring keynote, Dr. Tasha Spillett explores the transformative power of Indigenous storytelling as a pathway to healing, identity, belonging, and liberation. Drawing on personal experiences, community teachings, and her work as an author and educator, she examines how books and stories can help young people reclaim their voices, imagine new futures, and recognize the gifts they carry within them.

Tasha Spillett, PhD (she/her/hers), stands as a luminary at the intersection of Indigenous advocacy, education, and literature. As a celebrated author, educator, and advocate, her commitment to uplifting marginalized voices shines through her literary works, scholarly endeavours, and community-led initiatives. Tasha's dedication to fostering equitable learning environments and advocating for the liberation of Indigenous women and women of colour marks her as a guiding force toward a more inclusive future.

Title: Supporting a Curriculum of Indigenous Resurgence and Renewal with Dr. Katya Adamov Ferguson

This interactive workshop will share key elements from *Resurgence* and *Renewal*, two resources co-designed to support Indigenous education. Katya will introduce the collaboratively designed Footbridge Framework which activates the power of Indigenous narratives and cultural expressions on a range of important and underrepresented topics. Katya will give insights into the work of co-creating these teacher resources and show practical ways to prioritize collaborative teacher and student inquiries, make personal connections, and address issues such as “land back”. Participants will be guided through critical engagement with Indigenous creative works and leave with ways to carefully consider and renew relationships with Land and to each other. (SY/MY). See Bio Above

Title: Theme Based Senior Years English with Jay Nickerson

Planning a Senior Years English course can seem like an insurmountable task. Balancing the things you need to do and the things you want to do can seem overwhelming. Using an overarching theme in a course makes that planning easier. Drawing on almost two decades of experience in a theme based classroom, Jay will share experiences and insights that highlight the power of this approach. (SY)

Jay Nickerson teaches English at Gimli High School.

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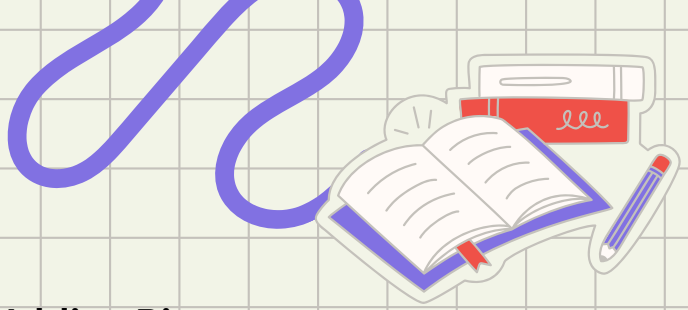

Title: Dyslexia in MY/SY and Beyond with Dr. Valdine Bjornson

Dr. Valdine Björnson will outline the diagnosis and classroom indicators of dyslexia in our classrooms with particular attention paid to middle years and older students. Using the Structured Literacy framework from the International Dyslexia Association, she will address practical ideas to support our incredible students with dyslexia. Drawing from ten years of work with adults at the University of Manitoba as a Reading Specialist with the Indigenous Student Centre, and her extensive work with students with dyslexia, this session will provide a stronger sense of what dyslexia is and how we can support all learners, especially our students with dyslexia. (SY/MY)

Dr. Valdine Bjornson has been an educator for over twenty-five years in public and private, international and Manitoba schools teaching music, early years, EAL and as a reading clinician. She has worked overseas (Japan, Finland and Egypt) teaching EFL and EAL in immersion, private/public and English language schools from ages three to adult. She has provided in-services, training as well as collaborative and formal diagnostic assessments, goal setting and intervention. She has completed a Doctor of Education degree in Language and Literacy (Educational Research) focusing upon dyslexia in adults. She founded the Reading and Learning Clinic of Manitoba in order to provide evidence-based professional development to educators across Canada, as well as advocacy and intervention to students with dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia. She is currently a divisional reading clinician in Winnipeg.

Title: New ELA Curriculum... Where Do I Begin?! with Stacey Bradley

This session is for the busy educator who knows that the new curriculum exists, but hasn't had the time to fully explore the website and resources. Together, we will delve into the Framework for Learning to make connections between Mino-Pimatisiwin, the Global Competencies and Guiding Principles, ultimately leading to an exploration of the ELA curriculum document and how it could be used in your own classroom. I will take a practical approach to look at how the curriculum connects with what you are already doing and how you can use it to extend and energize your practice even further. (SY)

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Stacey Bradley has worked in both rural and city schools in a high school setting for most of her twenty-five years of teaching experience. With a background in ELA and Social Studies curriculum as a classroom teacher, Stacey has also fulfilled numerous student and teacher support roles for Brandon School Division. She is currently a continuous improvement coach at Vincent Massey High School in Brandon, Manitoba. Stacey is passionate about literacy, collaboration and engagement and believes that we are always better together whether that be in professional learning or in our classroom environments. Stacey is also a strong supporter of Manitoba Reading Association and is a Past-President with the organization. Most of all Stacey is a life-long learner who is always looking for opportunities and experiences to expand her skill sets and grow her capacity to support all learners.

Title: Good Medicine with Katie Martin (she/her) & Raelyn Voulgaris (she/her)
We will share our experiences developing a sustainable Indigenous Education program at our rural high school. The learning has focused on alternative literacies and built capacity in our students to help them live productive lives in their community. and are strategies that engage students in critical thinking and developing authentic, differentiated assessment tasks that allow students to demonstrate what they have learned and, in turn, experience success. (SY)

Katie and Rae have been supporting students at Niverville High School since 2022. They both came to Niverville with a variety of experiences in the classroom and facilitating specialized programing within their school divisions.

Title: Let's Give Them Something to Talk About! With Tara McLauchlan (she/her)
Looking for accessible, creative and engaging ways to get your students talking to each other about story, texts and their reading identities? Join Tara for an interactive, hands-on session where she shares her favorite metacognitive strategies that will breathe new life into literature circles, book clubs, and other small or large group discussions.

Tara is a literacy coach in the St. James Assiniboia School Division. In her spare time, she likes to go on epic adventures with her husband and cats in their camper van. Her goal is find the most epic spots to read and work on her reading journal.

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Title: From Page to Practice: Using Direct Instruction to Strengthen Novel Studies in Middle and Senior Years with Della Magnusson, Ryan Crave, Makenzie Groot, Matt Enns

Traditional novel studies often rely on discussion and independent reading, which can unintentionally widen gaps for students who struggle with reading, writing, and language. This session explores how direct instruction can be intentionally embedded within novel studies to support learners in Grades 4–10 while maintaining rich texts and high expectations. Participants will examine a structured approach to novel study design that integrates explicit instruction in vocabulary, reading comprehension, literacy concepts and writing. Classroom examples will show how teachers can proactively teach the language and thinking demands of complex texts rather than assuming students already have the tools to access them. The session includes testimony from Grade 6, Grade 7, and Grade 9 teachers, highlighting the impact on student engagement, comprehension, and written responses.

Della Magnusson is the Literacy and Numeracy Consultant for Evergreen School Division, supporting teachers through coaching and classroom-based modelling of evidence-informed literacy practices. Ryan Crave, Makenzie Groot, and Matt Enns are Grade 7, 9, and 6 teachers at Gimli High School and Dr. George Johnson School who implement explicit literacy instruction to support student engagement, comprehension, and writing across novel studies.

Title: Indigenous Storytelling: Voice and Vision in Picture Books with Dr Tasha Spillett:

This workshop invites participants to explore how Indigenous storytelling carries knowledge, emotion, and identity through voice and visual narrative. Together, we'll examine the power of picture books as living teachings that honour community, culture, and language. Participants will engage in reflective discussion and creative exercises to discover how authentic voice and storytelling can nurture connection, understanding, and responsibility within classrooms and beyond.