



Session Descriptions

Thursday, January 14, 2027

Thursday Opening Session for all educators, 5:30 – 7:00 PM

Jan Richardson “Building Comprehension: Small-Group Instruction that does the Job!”

Using the Gradual Release of Responsibility model, learn comprehension strategies for teaching K-2 students in small groups. Master practical routines and scaffolding tools and learn how to select books that support deep thinking and help your students construct meaning from text.

Friday, January 15, 2027

7:30-8:30 AM Early Bird Session with Jaime Dawson “Stitching Together Big Stories for Young Writers: The Power and Promise of Writing for Early Learners”

Designed for K–2 educators, this session will explore practical ways to nurture confidence, independence, and joy in early writing. Participants will walk away with ready-to-use ideas that encourage daily writing opportunities and help even hesitant writers see themselves as authors.

8:45 – 10:00 AM Keynote: C.C. Bates “Being Intentional in Our Teaching and Profession Lives”

In today's educational and professional environments, being intentional is crucial for achieving meaningful outcomes for students. This session will examine what it means to act with purpose in our teaching and work.

Session #1

10:15 – 11:30 AM

Jeff Williams (Interventionists) *“Self-monitoring: Foundational Skill for Reading”*

This session explores the importance of self-monitoring, and how it is fostered, as a foundational executive function skill that is a precursor to strategy application and comprehension development.

Katie Kelly (General) *“Reggio Emilia-Inspired Learning: Expression, Inquiry, and Civic Life in Early Childhood”*

This session explores how young children build civic identity through the development and engagement with the “hundred languages”- gesture, movement, mark-making, storytelling, and collaboration. Participants will explore how Reggio Emilia–inspired classrooms function as democratic spaces where children co-construct meaning, share perspectives, and engage in inquiry.

Katie Hilden (General) *“Connecting Informational Reading and Writing in the Content Areas”*

We will explore how elementary teachers can create purposeful synergies between reading, writing, and the content areas. Educators will leave with adaptable instructional ideas and resources that foster curiosity, inquiry, and confident young readers and writers across the curriculum.

Session #2

11:45 AM – 1:00 PM

Maryann McBride (Interventionists) *“Letter Learning in the Intervention”*

Many children enter intervention with low knowledge of letters and sounds. While others enter with many letter and sound confusions. This session will provide practical strategies for teaching early letter knowledge, aiming to help children quickly master letters and sounds for improved reading speed and accuracy. Consistent letter practice is necessary throughout the intervention. Participants will learn how to integrate letter work into every stage of intervention, ensuring ongoing progress and reinforcement.

Katie Hildren/Lisa Aker (General) *“Supporting Independent, Strategic Readers in K-5 Classrooms”*

Do you have students who struggle to generalize phonics outside your lessons? This session will focus on active and engaging word work strategies that build inductive reasoning and student agency.

Jeff Williams (General) *“Notice and Note For Non-fiction in Primary Grades”*

Though originally intended for upper elementary students, this session shows how the work of Beers and Probst’s *Notice and Note for Nonfiction* can benefit comprehension of non-fiction texts for younger grades as well.

Session #3

1:45 – 3:00 PM

Maryann McBride (Interventionists) *“The Power of Writing”*

Writing and Reading are reciprocal processes and support the development of literacy skills. Students often rely on familiar words and concepts to monitor their understanding and decode new words while reading. A growing writing vocabulary provides students with the foundational knowledge needed to decode unfamiliar words during reading. This session will provide helpful and not time-consuming ways to keep track of this for students. For example, using Trace-Copy-Don’t Looks or quick vocabulary check-ins can efficiently monitor students’ progress.

Katie Kelly (General) *“The Power of Read-Alouds: Building Language, Comprehension and Connection”*

This session will guide participants in using purposeful read-alouds to build students’ language comprehension by deepening background knowledge, strengthening vocabulary, and developing essential comprehension skills. A multiple-read framework will be shared to support deeper exploration of texts. Practical examples using specific books will be provided to illustrate effective strategies.