

TRL-DC PRACTITIONER SHOWCASE: ADOLESCENT LITERACY

THURSDAY MAY 22, 2025

6PM-8PM

THE PLANET WORD MUSEUM, WASHINGTON D.C.

Join us for an evening of collaborative learning in breakout sessions led by area experts.

Breakout Sessions:

Khadejah Scott Artis

**Decodable Texts and
Engaging Routines for
Middle School Fluency &
Comprehension**

Claire Willard

**Mastering
Multisyllabic Words:
Decoding and Encoding
Big Words**

Monica Stevenson

Sara Dax

**We Are All English
Language Learners**

Kate Ray

**From Choppy to Confident:
Engaging Struggling
Readers with Reader's
Theater**

Dr. Keisha Woods

**One Text, Three Strategies:
Reading Support for
Multilingual Learners**

Deena Marshall

**Phonemic Awareness:
Build adolescent
confidence from the
'sound' up!**

Karen Taylor

**Beyond Speed: Unlocking
Fluency for
Comprehension and
Confidence**

MeQuel Bolden

**Peer Editing Protocols that
Develop Students as
Readers and Writers**

Jessica Leader



REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

*Tickets are free and open
to TRL-DC Members as well as the public!*

**REGISTER
HERE**



thereadingleague.dc



dc.thereadingleague.org

MEET THE EXPERTS:



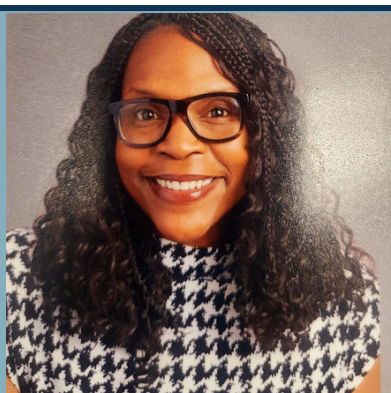
Monica Stephenson is an accomplished educator with over 22 years of experience, currently serving as a Reading Interventionist at a dual language school in Washington, D.C. Trained in the Science of Reading, she mentors DCPS teachers at the DC Reading Clinic and leads literacy instruction as a Program Leader for Springboard Collaborative. Monica also designs and delivers professional development for educators, supporting high-impact, equity-driven instruction across diverse learning communities.



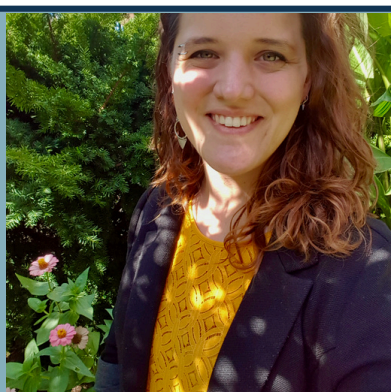
Karen Taylor is co-founder of English Language Training Solutions (ELTS), a teacher-built company dedicated to training educators and learners in the use of brain-based strategies for improved phonological awareness and language development. She is co-author of the Color Vowel Approach.



Jessica Leader is a trainer, curriculum developer, teacher, and author. She currently serves as the Director of Curriculum and Instruction at One World Education, where she supports DC teachers in constructing arguments about issues that matter to them. A graduate of Brown University, Jessica is the author of *Nice and Mean* (Simon and Schuster), a novel about middle-school girls and their drama.



Dr. Keisha Woods is a Washington, DC-based educator, literacy coach, and special education leader with over 20 years of experience supporting diverse learners. She specializes in inclusive instructional practices, the Science of Reading, and co-teaching models that elevate student outcomes. As an advocate for educational equity, Dr. Woods is committed to empowering educators through data-informed strategies, professional development, and collaborative leadership that ensures all students receive high-quality, accessible instruction.



Claire Willard entered teaching through the City Teaching Alliance (formerly Urban Teachers), specializing in English instruction and working with students with moderate disabilities. She later followed her passion for the humanities by getting certified to teach Social Studies, while continuing to infuse literacy instruction and intervention into her content. She has served as department chair and district-wide curriculum developer for Social Studies, as well as continuing to work as a classroom teacher in DCPS schools.



MeQuel Bolden, a former elementary educator with over a decade of experience, is a passionate advocate for structured literacy. As a specialist for DCPS's DC Reading Clinic and founder of MeQuel Bolden Consulting, she empowers educators and supports schools in strengthening their literacy outcomes. Having successfully coached over 88 teachers, MeQuel brings deep expertise, practical strategies, and a commitment to helping educators navigate the challenges of structured literacy implementation.



Deena Marshall is a dedicated educator with 17 years of experience advocating for multilingual learners. Her passion lies in helping schools and teachers effectively serve their ML students. She is a Multilingual Learner Coach at SupportEd and previously was a Director of Multilingual Learning, instructional coach, and ML teacher at two charter schools in Washington D.C. She holds an MA in Teaching from American University and a BA in Sociology from the University of Michigan.



Khadejah Scott Artis is an innovative educator with a focus on literacy intervention, instructional design, and inclusive practices for middle school students. Since beginning her career, she has served DC school students as a Special Education Teacher and Reading Interventionist, supporting students through high-impact structures and tech-enhanced instruction. In addition to her school-based work, she supports students and families in Baltimore through personalized literacy services grounded in research and equity.



Kate Ray & Sara Dax are fourth-grade literacy and Multilingual Learner (MLL) educators at E.L. Haynes Public Charter School in Washington, D.C. They are dedicated to fostering a love for reading and supporting language development in young learners. In their classroom, literacy goes beyond reading words—it's about connecting with stories, engaging with new vocabulary, exploring new ideas, and developing critical thinking skills. They employ a variety of strategies to engage students, including interactive read-aloud sessions, intensive reading groups, and individualized support tailored to each child's needs.



BREAKOUT SESSIONS:

In the workshop **“Mastering Multisyllabic Words: Decoding and Encoding Big Words,”** led by Monica Stevenson, attendees will explore practical, research-based strategies to help students read and write longer, more complex words with confidence. Through engaging activities and a model demonstration, the facilitator will demonstrate how to break multisyllabic words into manageable parts, improving decoding fluency. Attendees will also learn effective encoding techniques to support spelling and written expression. Attendees will walk away with an activity to begin their work with students in their own classrooms.

Join Karen Taylor for a session entitled **“Build adolescent confidence from the ‘sound’ up!”**. Phonemic awareness instruction, essential to teaching literacy, is too often conflated with phonics. Meanwhile, English learners desperately need sound strategies to navigate the gap between spoken and written English. In this session, participants will engage in three simple yet robust oral/aural games that position vowel quality, stress location, and rhythm as a bedrock for building literacy, vocabulary, and comprehension. Attendees will walk away with game outlines and materials that they can use and adapt immediately.

Join Jessica Leader for **“Peer Editing Protocols that Develop Students as Readers and Writers”**. Ask a student to peer-edit for a classmate and they'll likely plunk down some commas and a smiley face. Give a student a thoughtful peer-editing protocol and they'll turn into critical readers, asking questions that elevate the work better a teacher could. In this interactive lesson, you'll learn how the key categories of “love,” “hunh?”, and “more!” develop students as readers and writers, and give them pride and satisfaction as well.

Join Dr. Keisha Woods for **“From Choppy to Confident: Engaging Struggling Readers with Reader's Theater”**. Fluency is the often overlooked bridge between decoding and comprehension, especially for adolescent readers who struggle with pace, expression, and confidence. In this interactive session, educators will experience Reader's Theater as a high-impact, low-prep strategy that transforms hesitant readers into expressive, engaged performers. Participants will walk away with a deeper understanding of how oral reading, repeated practice, and performance build fluency and a toolkit of ready-to-use scripts and implementation tips to use the very next day.

Middle school students with reading challenges benefit from structured, engaging literacy routines that build fluency and comprehension. In this interactive workshop, **“Decodable Texts and Engaging Routines for Middle School Fluency & Comprehension,”** join Khadejah Artis and Claire Willard as they showcase strategies that integrate decodable texts, fluency protocols, and instructional technology to support adolescent readers. Participants will explore Reader's Theater, word sorts, partner fluency routines, and digital fluency tools, alongside specially designed decodable texts aligned with Social Studies content. This session provides practical, research-based techniques that educators can implement immediately to enhance student engagement and reading success.

Join MeQuel Bolden for a session entitled **“Beyond Speed: Unlocking Fluency for Comprehension and Confidence.”** Fluency is more than just reading fast—it's about accuracy, automaticity, and expression. In this session, we'll debunk common misconceptions about fluency instruction and explore evidence-based strategies that help students become confident, expressive readers. Walk away with practical techniques you can implement immediately to support your students in developing fluency that leads to deeper comprehension and reading success.

In **“One Text, Three Strategies: Reading Support for Multilingual Learners,”** Deena Marshall will outline three strategies participants can use with multilingual learners when reading a content area text. In this interactive session, we will practice a before, during, and after reading strategy with one text that will demonstrate ways to help adolescent multilingual learners with their comprehension. Participants will walk away with strategies to immediately apply in their context and a Padlet of supporting resources.

Join Kate Ray and Sara Dax for an engaging learning session titled **“We Are All English Learners.”** Participants will explore practical strategies and resources commonly used to support Multilanguage learners—tools that can enhance comprehension for all students. This session will highlight ways to make content more accessible, foster deeper understanding, and create an inclusive learning environment where every learner thrives. Walk away with recommendations for student facing resources using techniques to support language development, background knowledge, and deeper comprehension for every learner in your classroom.