



18TH ANNUAL LITASA CONFERENCE

Literacy in practice: Possibilities for praxis

IVOR BAATJES
KEY NOTE SPEAKER

Keynote speaker Ivor Baatjes is the Executive Director of the Canon Collins Trust. Prior to this, he served as director of the Centre for Integrated Post-School Education and Training (CIPSET), Nelson Mandela University and Chair of the Education Policy Consortium (EPC). He has worked in all the subsectors of the post-school education and training sector and is a member of the current Ministerial Task Team on Community Education and Training. His research interests include the social and solidarity economy and its relationships with community-driven food, health, water and energy systems; adult and community education; higher education; workers education; and learning in social movements.

Ivor was senior researcher at the Centre for Education Rights and Transformation (CERT) at the University of Johannesburg and previously director of the Centre for Adult Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). He also served as policy maker in the National Department of Education in the mid-1990s, and served on a number of Ministerial and Departmental Task Teams. He was the founder and country director of the Paulo Freire Institute – South Africa and served as a member of the international advisors to the Paulo Freire Institute (Brazil).



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Our second keynote speaker Dr. Trina Spencer is a professor at the University of Kansas in the Departments of Applied Behavioral Sciences and Speech Language Hearing Sciences, as well as a senior scientist and the new director of the Juniper Gardens Children’s Project in Kansas City. Drawing from the power of oral storytelling, she concentrates her research on the oral academic language that serves as a foundation to the reading and writing of primary-age students, with and without disabilities.



TRINA SPENCER
KEY NOTE SPEAKER

LITERACY: PATHS TO PRAXIS

She maintains a spirited research agenda that has yielded 60 peer review publications, 145 invited presentations, \$15M in external funding, and several commercialized curricula, interventions, professional development systems, and assessment tools. Her educational tools are used broadly in the United States, but also internationally (e.g., Australia, India, Chile, Mexico, Iceland, China). Dr. Spencer values researcher-practitioner partnerships, community engagement, and cross disciplinary collaborations to accomplish high impact and innovative applied research.



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TRINA SPENCER
KEY NOTE SPEAKER

Dr. Spencer will be addressing the topic *The Science of Oral Storytelling: Enhancing Literacy and Promoting Multilingualism*.

Abstract - A narrative is defined as a spoken or written (including Augmentative and Alternative Communication modalities) monological telling or retelling of past events, either real or imaginary. Importantly, narratives contain causally related events told/retold in a temporal sequence acceptable to the verbal community in which it is used. Narratives are powerful tools. We live our lives and think in story format. This ability has evolved alongside human development and has facilitated the emergence and transfer of complex language.

The narrative is useful, versatile, and pervasive because the human brain is skilled at detecting patterns, whether humans are aware of them or not. Multilingual and narrative intervention researchers who capitalize on this fact will discover that the patterns of narrative, and language generally, allow for rapid transfer across contexts, modalities, and languages.

In this talk, Dr. Spencer will unpack the discourse-, sentence-, and word-level patterns that are inextricably integrated within a narrative. These include the macrostructural schema made up of story grammar elements, the order and emphasis of which are culturally and linguistically derived. Drawing from behavioral and cognitive sciences, she will argue that through oral storytelling it is possible to accelerate the acquisition of critical literacy skills and promote multilingualism.

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