



Canadian Assessment
for Learning Network

Transforming Assessment

Equitable Assessment Practices in the Age of AI

October 1 - 3, 2026
Yellowknife, NWT

Learn from CAfLN's World Class Canadian Grown Speakers



Damian Cooper
CAfLN Co-Founder



Ken O'Connor
CAfLN Co-Founder



Lorna Earl
CAfLN Co-Founder



Katie White



Saad Chahine



Justin Green



Michael Holden



Myke Healy



**Bruce
Mellesmoen**



**Dionne
Potapinski**



Martha Koch

and
more!

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Conference Price **\$475** per person
Includes all meals!



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CAfLN Conference 2026 Agenda

Transforming Assessment: Equitable Assessment Practices in the Age of AI

Thursday, October 1, 2026

5:00	Registration Opens
6:00 - 8:00	Opening Program: CAfLN Conversations, Networking and Cash Bar

Friday, October 2, 2026 - Keynote Speakers and Student Panel

7:30	Breakfast
8:30 - 9:00	Indigenous Blessing, Welcome and Land Acknowledgment
9:00 - 10:00	KEYNOTE: Katie White presents <i>Letting Our Values Lead the Way: Assessment in the Age of AI</i>
10:00 - 10:30	Wellness and Networking Break
10:30 - 11:30	KEYNOTE: Damian Cooper and Justin Green present <i>Professional Judgement as a Human Endeavour</i>
11:30 - 12:15	Lunch
12:15 - 1:15	KEYNOTE: Ken O'Connor presents <i>Transforming Grading with a CALM Approach</i>
1:15 - 1:30	Wellness Break
1:30 - 2:30	KEYNOTE: Lorna Earl and Saad Chahine present <i>It's Time To Change the Assessment Default</i>
2:30 - 2:45	Wellness Break
2:45 - 3:15	Student Panel: Our Thoughts about Assessment in the Age of AI

CAfLN Conference 2026 Agenda

Transforming Assessment: Equitable Assessment Practices in the Age of AI

Saturday, October 3, 2026 - Concurrent Sessions

	KATIMAVIK A	KATIMAVIK B	KATIMAVIK C	KATIMAVIK D
7:30	Breakfast			
8:30 - 9:30	Assessment Equity and Decolonization Dionne Potapinski	Seeing Assessment Through Students' Eyes Bruce Mellesmoen	Canadian Educators Transform their Assessment Practices with Equity in Mind (even in the age of AI) Martha Koch and Rebecca Brooks	<i>Where are we now in the AI landscape?</i> Michael Holden
9:30 - 9:45	Wellness Break			
9:45 - 10:45	Facilitating Useful Conversations about Assessment in the Age of AI Katie White	Making AfL Count: Growing Students' Competencies as Mathematical Thinkers and Doers Sandra Fox	Architect Your AI: Designing Assessment Tools That Reflect Your Values Jamie Keet	Where Does Your Own Professional Judgement Fit in a World of Standardization and AI? Damian Cooper and Justin Green
10:45 - 11:15	Wellness and Networking Break			
11:15 - 12:15	Postplagiarism in Practice: How K-12 Teachers and Leaders Are Surviving and Thriving with AI Myke Healy and Naomi Paisley	Leading the Shift: Transforming Assessment Practices in Your Setting Bruce Mellesmoen	Privacy in Classroom Assessment in the Age of AI: A Necessary Aspect of Equity Martha Koch	to be determined
12:15 - 1:15	Lunch			
1:15 - 2:45	Closing Plenary - Panel Discussion - Drum Dance			

CAfLN Conference 2026 Session Descriptions

Transforming Assessment: Equitable Assessment Practices in the Age of AI

Friday Keynote Speakers



Katie White

Letting Our Values Lead the Way: Assessment in the Age of AI 9:00 - 10:00

Since artificial intelligence pushed itself onto the educational landscape, an urgency has emerged to "figure out" what to do about it. Which policies do we need to develop? How do we prevent cheating? How can we leverage AI in our assessment practices? Which AI platforms are best? This list goes on and on.

But at the root of all these conversations sits an even more important set of questions: What are schools for? What matters most in education? What does it mean to learn? How do we capture evidence of the development of skill and understanding? And most important of all: What do we value in our education system?

This interactive keynote focuses on the second set of questions, inviting participants to wrestle with difficult but critically important thinking that impacts how we navigate uncertainty.

Professional Judgement as a Human Endeavour in a World of Standardization and AI

10:30 - 11:30

Across Canada, standardized approaches to assessing student learning are becoming increasingly prominent. At the same time, AI promises to ease some of the workload in our already complex classrooms by generating feedback and supporting assessment tasks.

In this shifting landscape, educators face important questions: How do we navigate AI generated feedback alongside system-wide literacy and numeracy screening? How do we preserve what we know about high quality Assessment for Learning in a world that prioritizes data, metrics, and quantification?

Damian and Justin will explore these tensions with a focus on professional judgement as a deeply human endeavour - one that depends on curiosity, empathy, connection, and relationship - even within systems that mandate standardized screening. They invite educators to reflect on how we can honour the human side of assessment while engaging thoughtfully with the tools and structures that shape our work.



Damian Cooper
CAfLN Co-Founder



Justin Green



Ken O'Connor
CAfLN Co-Founder



Phil Stringer

Transforming High School Math Grading 12:15 - 1:15

This session shares a shift from traditional grading to a standards-based approach in high school math, grounded in CALM (Consistent, Accurate, Learning-focused, Meaningful). Beginning with a single AP Calculus AB class, we trace the move from points and units to standards, competencies, and evidence of learning while highlighting key challenges, tensions, and refinements along the way. Participants will have opportunities to reflect, question, and collaborate as they consider how these ideas apply to their own contexts. Teachers will leave with practical, actionable steps to make grading more learning-focused and meaningful.

It's Time To Change the Assessment Default

1:30 - 2:30

It's time to get serious about Assessment as Learning. The world in which our current notions of assessment were developed has disappeared and focussing on genuine learning for students is critical. The question is no longer whether assessment should change, but whether we are ready to change the assessment default.

This keynote positions teachers as choice architects in the classroom. Through the tasks they design, the feedback they provide, and the opportunities they create for students, teachers shape the default conditions. When the default structures of assessment emphasize sorting and selecting, students learn to focus on performance. When the defaults emphasize feedback, reflection, and growth, assessment becomes a powerful driver of learning.

Teachers are not alone in this process. We will:

- introduce a research-based Assessment as Learning framework that outlines the relationship between assessment, learning, and the educator's role in shaping that process and also,
- consider the role of generative AI as a powerful tool for promoting equity through greater personalization and expanded access to knowledge and feedback.



Lorna Earl
CAfLN Co-Founder



Saad Chahine

CAfLN Conference 2026 Session Descriptions

Transforming Assessment: Equitable Assessment Practices in the Age of AI

Saturday Concurrent Sessions

8:30 - 9:30

Assessment Equity and Decolonization

This session explores the intersection of assessment, equity, and decolonization, challenging traditional grading practices that sort, rank, and label students. Grounded in Indigenous ways of knowing and equity-centered educational research, the presentation invites educators and leaders to reconsider dominant assumptions about time, mastery, fairness, and success in schools.

Participants will examine how conventional assessment systems often reflect colonial and capitalist values, reinforcing deficit thinking, exclusion, and power imbalances. The session reframes mastery as an ongoing, cyclical process rather than a linear race toward perfection. It emphasizes that fairness is not sameness, and that equitable assessment requires responsiveness to students' identities, contexts, strengths, and lived experiences.

Through practical examples from school and classroom practice, the presentation highlights concrete shifts that support decolonizing assessment, including ungrading, flexible demonstrations of learning, trauma-informed approaches, culturally responsive teaching, and the intentional building of academic, emotional, and social safety. The role of language, relationships, and reflective practice is central, positioning assessment as a tool for growth rather than control.

Educators will be encouraged to reflect on their own beliefs, biases, and professional learning, and to consider how assessment can move from a mechanism of compliance to a space for dialogue, agency, and belonging. The session concludes with a call to collective leadership, emphasizing that transforming assessment is not an individual task but a shared commitment to equity, mastery, and meaningful student success.



Dionne Potapinski

Seeing Assessment Through Students' Eyes

Explore how students actually experience assessment and how teachers can shift that perception toward a formative, partnership-based approach.

This practical session will cover:

- Building classroom community where students feel safe and ready to take risks
- The big and small moves teachers make that show assessment is with students, not to them
- Strategies, routines, and classroom setups that support formative assessment every day

Join us to rethink, reframe, and reimagine assessment – through students' eyes.



Bruce Mellesmoen

Canadian Educators Transform their Assessment Practices with Equity in Mind (even in the age of AI)

Drawing on research with 25 educators from eight provinces, we describe how equity guided their efforts to transform their classroom assessment (CA) practices even as students, parents, teachers, and school and district leaders wrestled with the unknown implications of AI. We will begin the session by describing how concerns with inequity, student wellbeing, and fairness motivated these educators to change their CA practices. Then, we will invite session participants to explore mini case studies from this data. The mini case studies encompass a variety of grade levels, subject areas, and educator roles. These case studies will provide a basis for discussing changes that these educators made to CA practices including: increased use of formative assessment; understanding and enacting culturally responsive CA; reducing emphasis on grades; increasing student agency in CA; and insights about the use of AI in CA. By sharing the experiences of these educators, we hope to prompt dialogue among session participants about equity as a guiding principle for CA, especially in the age of AI. We found the work of the 25 educators we interviewed inspiring and thought-provoking. We look forward to sharing our observations and discussing everyone's experiences in working to transform CA practice.



Martha Koch



Rebecca Brooks

Where are we now in the AI landscape?

Four years. That's how long students, teachers, and schools have been grappling with AI and its implications for assessment. Grade 4 students will never know education "pre-ChatGPT," and most first-year university students had access to generative AI tools every semester of their high school life.

So where are we now? This interactive talk will provide the latest data on AI use from early childhood to adulthood and highlight emerging research from around the world. Participants will unpack key ethical dilemmas and discuss how to guide and support school systems in a shifting AI landscape.



Michael Holden

CAfLN Conference 2026 Session Descriptions

Transforming Assessment: Equitable Assessment Practices in the Age of AI

Saturday Concurrent Sessions

9:45 - 10:45



Katie White

Facilitating Useful Conversations about Assessment in the Age of AI

Artificial Intelligence has inserted itself into educational contexts and systems are wrestling with how to make sure this relationship is healthy. Assessment, in particular, has been broadly impacted by AI, and so conversations by leaders, teachers, students, and families are essential. In this session, Katie shares her efforts to facilitate useful conversations at a system level, including mis-steps, personal journeys, and successes. This session is intentionally honest, with evolution of ideas being the name of the game.



Sandra Fox

Making AfL Count: Growing Students' Competencies as Mathematical Thinkers and Doers

We will look at how formative assessment and feedback grounded in mathematics competencies help us see and promote student growth as mathematical thinkers and doers. We will consider how assessment for learning through a competency lens can help us align instructional practices to grow students' reasoning, understanding, representing, and connecting skills and illuminate the real work of mathematicians. Participants will leave with practical strategies and tools they can use right away to feel more confident in supporting student mathematical growth through assessment and feedback. Examples will be from a K-7 lens but participants can easily adapt the ideas to their own context.



Jamie Keet

Architect Your AI: Designing Assessment Tools That Reflect Your Values

AI can be a powerful assessment partner, but only if you tell it what you stand for. Without intentional design, AI defaults to generic, one-size-fits-all feedback that can reinforce the very biases we're working to dismantle. In this session, you'll learn how to move beyond basic prompting to craft AI instructions that reflect sound assessment practices, with equity built in from the start. Through live demonstrations, we'll explore how deliberate prompt design can ensure feedback is strength-based, criteria-aligned, culturally responsive, and accessible to all learners and their families.

You'll walk away with practical strategies for designing reusable AI assessment tools that apply your professional judgment consistently, recognize diverse ways students demonstrate learning, and keep the teacher, not the technology, at the center of the assessment process.

No technical experience required. Just bring your beliefs about what good assessment looks like.

Where Does Your Own Professional Judgement Fit in a World of Standardization and AI?

In this follow-up discussion to their keynote address, Damian andamp; Justin invite educators to bring their reactions and personal experience to the table in order to share and delve more deeply into this topic. Among the questions you may wish to consider before this session are:

- How prevalent is the use of early screening tools in your district?
- Does the use of these tools lead to effective differentiation of instruction for students who are deemed to be at risk?
- How much emphasis is given to your professional judgement in your school or district?
- How confident do you feel when asked to use your professional judgement?



Damian Cooper Justin Green
CAfLN Co-Founder

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Saturday Concurrent Sessions

11:15 - 12:15



Myke Healy



Naomi Paisley

Postplagiarism in Practice: How K-12 Teachers and Leaders Are Surviving and Thriving with AI

Generative AI is in our classrooms, our inboxes, and our parents' expectations, but what is actually happening inside Canadian schools right now?

Drawing on story-rich findings from ongoing doctoral research across Canada, this session maps how schools are using and avoiding AI in a postplagiarism era, where human and AI collaboration is increasingly normalized and traditional notions of plagiarism no longer quite fit (Eaton, 2023). Over 40 in-depth interviews with school leaders from coast to coast reveal how leaders are navigating the liminal space between legacy practices and emerging norms: teachers quietly offloading tasks to AI while fighting to preserve their own voice, detector and humanizer fatigue, leadership structures that either enable or tangle up coherent AI approaches, and students who see AI as simply "part of real life."

Together, we will explore where schools are converging and diverging, and what is likely to change next with AI in K-12. You will leave with concrete talking points, sample guardrails, and practical moves you can take back to your school.

Leading the Shift: Transforming Assessment Practices in Your Setting

Leading change in assessment goes beyond classrooms – it requires guiding your school or district through meaningful, sustainable shifts. This session equips leaders to move from directive guidance to collaborative support.

Participants will explore:

- Leading change and navigating the stages of adoption
- Identifying early adopters and supporting hesitant learners
- Shifting from coach to consultant to sustain momentum and foster a culture of growth

Gain practical strategies, insights, and confidence to lead assessment transformation with clarity and impact.



Bruce Mellesmoen

Privacy in Classroom Assessment in the Age of AI: A Necessary Aspect of Equity

In this session we will discuss privacy in classroom assessment (CA) including both student's right to privacy and their need for privacy of their thoughts as they learn. We will briefly compare how privacy in CA is viewed in various parts of the world and then focus on ways of enhancing privacy in the age of AI within Canadian contexts. Strategies for enhancing privacy that might be adopted by teachers, schools and divisions will be considered. Guidelines that provide helpful insights for educators will be shared and time will be set aside for discussion and sharing experiences in this increasingly complex aspect of CA practice.



Martha Koch

CAfLN Conference 2026

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Speaker Biographies

Rebecca Brooks

Rebecca Brooks is an educator, professional development coach, and academic leader with 15+ years of diverse experiences across K–12, college, and university settings. They collaborate with colleagues to co-create relational, meaningful learning in classrooms and co-curricular spaces, with a focus on experiential learning. Rebecca is the Director of the Career, Community, and Experiential Learning Centre at the University of Manitoba and is currently pursuing a PhD in education exploring changing assessment practices.

Saad Chahine

Saad Chahine, PhD. is an Associate Professor of Measurement and Assessment, Queen's University.

Damian Cooper

Damian Cooper is an independent education consultant who specializes in helping schools and school districts across Canada, the United States, and internationally, to improve their instructional and assessment skills. In his varied career, Damian has been a secondary English, Special Education, and Drama teacher, a department head, a librarian, and a school consultant. He has specialized in student assessment for more than thirty years. Damian served as assessment consultant to the School Division of Nelson Education. Prior to that, he was Co-ordinator of Assessment and Evaluation for the Halton District School Board in Burlington, Ontario.

Damian is a co-founder and Past President of The Canadian Assessment for Learning Network (CAfLN). Damian's international reputation rests on his wide-ranging experience as an educator, his deep understanding of assessment, and his no-nonsense, common sense approach to what works in schools.

Damian's publications *Talk About Assessment: Strategies and Tools to Improve Learning* (2007), *Talk About Assessment: High School Strategies and Tools* (2010), and *Redefining Fair: How to Plan, Assess, and Grade for Excellence in Mixed-Ability Classrooms* (2011), are all best sellers. Damian's latest book, *Rebooting Assessment: A Practical Guide for Balancing Conversations, Performances, and Products* (2022), published by Solution Tree, won the Gold Medal from the Independent Book Publishers of America as the best education publication of 2022.

Lorna Earl

Lorna M. Earl, PhD. is a retired researcher, academic, consultant and educator and a co-founder of CAfLN.

Sandra Fox

Sandra Fox is an educator living and working on the ancestral and unceded territories of the $x^w m \theta k^w \text{ \acute{a} y \acute{a} m}$ (Musqueam), $s k w \acute{x} w \acute{u} 7 m e s h$ Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) and $s e l \acute{i} l w i t u l h$ (Tseil-Waututh Nation) in Vancouver, BC. She is a district teacher supporting curriculum and assessment K-7 with a focus on math and numeracy. Additionally, she is an adjunct professor in the University of British Columbia's Faculty of Education. She is passionate about helping colleagues, teacher candidates, and students find joy in mathematics teaching and learning. Her work in assessment is grounded in illuminating competencies in all subject areas, especially in mathematics.

Justin Green

Justin's career in education has spanned almost 3 decades. He has been an elementary classroom teacher, teacher learning coordinator, president of a local teacher's union, and president of CAfLN. Currently, he is the Past-President and Treasurer for CAfLN and a District Vice-Principal (Teaching and Learning -Elementary) in his home school district in B.C.

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Speaker Biographies

Myke Healy	Myke Healy is Assistant Head - Teaching and Learning at Trinity College School in Port Hope, Ontario, and a doctoral candidate at the University of Calgary, where his research examines generative AI and academic integrity in K-12 independent schools across Canada. He presents nationally and internationally on AI in education, instructs at Queen's University, and serves on the board of eLearning Consortium Canada. In July 2026, he becomes Head of School at St. John's-Ravenscourt School in Winnipeg.
Michael Holden	Michael Holden is an assistant professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Winnipeg. He researches the complexities of classroom assessment, including artificial intelligence, assessment innovation, and teacher professional learning. Since moving to Manitoba in 2024, he has worked with thousands of teachers, students, and school leaders interested in assessment and learning at all levels.
Jamie Keet	Jamie is an instructional technology coach in Alberta with over 25 years in education and a Master's in Educational Technology. He is also a Google Certified Trainer and Innovator. Through his YouTube channel, Teacher's Tech, Jamie has built a community of over 1.1 million educators and learners worldwide, creating beginner-friendly tutorials that focus on practical, classroom-ready technology skills. His work centers on helping teachers use technology with intention, keeping professional judgment and student needs at the heart of every tool. Jamie believes AI has real potential to support meaningful assessment, but only when educators are the ones shaping how it works.
Martha Koch	Dr. Martha Koch teaches and does research at the Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba. She is a longtime member of CAfLN and currently serves in the role of Research Chair. Martha's research focuses on classroom assessment policy and practice in PK-12 and post-secondary settings. In recent projects, she has examined teachers', school leaders', and faculty members' experiences with changing their approach to assessment as well as students' need for and right to privacy in classroom assessment. She regularly presents her research at national and international conferences and publishes articles and book chapters examining various aspects of educational assessment.

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Speaker Biographies

Bruce Mellesmoen is an educator and system leader with Prairie Spirit School Division in Saskatchewan, where he supports schools in strengthening assessment practices and student learning outcomes. With experience spanning classroom teaching, instructional coaching, leadership coaching training, and system-level leadership, Bruce is passionate about helping educators create classrooms where all students can succeed.

Bruce Mellesmoen

He is the author of *Your Impact: Creating a Better World for Learners* and *Questions for You: Stories About Learning to Inspire Your Work*, where he explores the powerful role educators play in shaping the lives of students. Bruce is an experienced speaker who works with teachers and leaders across Canada to build assessment-capable learners, strengthen instructional practice, and lead meaningful change.

At the heart of Bruce's work is a commitment to clarity, connection, and impact—supporting educators to make intentional decisions that improve learning for every student.

Ken O'Connor is an independent consultant who specializes in issues relating to communicating student learning, specifically grading and reporting. He is a strong advocate for standards-based curriculum, teaching, assessment, grading and reporting.

Ken O'Connor

A graduate of the University of Melbourne (B.A. Hon) and the University of Toronto (M. Ed), he has been a staff development presenter and facilitator in 37 countries outside North America, 47 states in the USA, and 10 provinces and two territories in Canada. His thirty-three year educator career included experience as a geography teacher and department head at 6 schools in Toronto and Melbourne (Grades 7-12), and as a Curriculum Coordinator for the Scarborough Board of Education and the Toronto District School Board.

He is the author of *A Repair Kit for Grading: 15 Fixes for Broken Grades* and *How to Grade for Learning: Linking Grades to Standards*. Website: oconnorgrading.com, Email: kenoc@aol.com

Naomi Paisley is a research assistant and doctoral student in education whose work explores academic integrity, postplagiarism, and assessment design in the age of artificial intelligence. Naomi holds a Bachelor of Arts from UofC, a B.Comm from Athabasca University, a CPA designation, and an MBA. She also teaches accounting, audit and tax at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology.

Naomi Paisley

Dionne Potapinski began her career in education as a Physical Education teacher before moving into Student Services, where she developed a strong foundation in supporting diverse learners. She has since served in a range of leadership roles, including Principal, Vice Principal, Indigenous Education Coordinator and Physical Education Coordinator at both the school and divisional levels. These experiences have shaped her ability to thoughtfully connect system-level priorities with the realities of school-based practice.

Dionne Potapinski

Dionne is committed to creating learning environments grounded in safety, belonging, and equity. Her work centers on advancing progressive assessment practices that move beyond traditional grading to better reflect student growth and understanding. Through a focus on mastery learning and the ongoing work of decolonizing education, she strives to design systems that honour student voice, support meaningful learning, and create more just and responsive educational experiences for all learners.

CAfLN Conference 2026

Transforming Assessment: Equitable Assessment Practices in the Age of AI

Speaker Biographies

Phil Stringer

Currently, Phil serves as the Head of Mathematics at Crofton House School in Vancouver and teaches Mathematics 8 through to AP Statistics and AP Calculus BC. His interest in assessment emerged from helping his current school adopt an online gradebook in 2009. When collaborating with individual teachers, he discovered the various ways educators assess and grade, prompting him to focus on effective assessment practices that promote student understanding and achievement. This inquiry led to the incorporation of Standard-based Grading in his own classes where he saw the impact on student learning and confidence. After reading *Make It Stick*, Phil began a journey into the impact of memory on the long-term retention of mathematics. He started incorporating mixed and spaced practice in his mathematics classes as part of a Research Chair position at his school. In late 2019, he presented his findings at the Learning and the Brain Conference, where he connected with neuroscientists and teachers from around the world. Phil has presented locally, nationally, and internationally on assessment and pedagogy, sharing his insights and experiences with fellow educators. He is dedicated to giving back to the profession by hosting student teachers, actively engaging in workshops that foster professional growth, and writing multiple peer-reviewed articles. Outside of school he enjoys coaching soccer and travelling with his family.

Katie White

Katie White is an author, coach and consultant who spends her days working to transform the educational experience for teachers and students. She has a passion for helping others develop a personalized understanding of the connections between curriculum, assessment, and instruction and creative approaches for reaching and teaching every single learner in every single classroom.

Katie has served the role of classroom teacher (K-12), online high school teacher, instructional coach, vice principal, principal, and central office leader. She facilitates adult learning worldwide and feels privileged to grow through her interactions with so many gifted educators and leaders.

Katie has worked as a contracted writer and assessment, instruction, creativity, leadership, and intervention expert for various groups, including the Saskatchewan Professional Development Unit (authoring their provincial assessment accreditation training) as well as the LEGO Company (as creativity and assessment specialist). Katie has authored or co-authored five books (including the well-known *Softening the Edges*) and is currently working on her sixth. She has also contributed to several books published by other authors, has blogged on several sites, including *All Things Assessment*, and her voice can be heard on many podcasts.