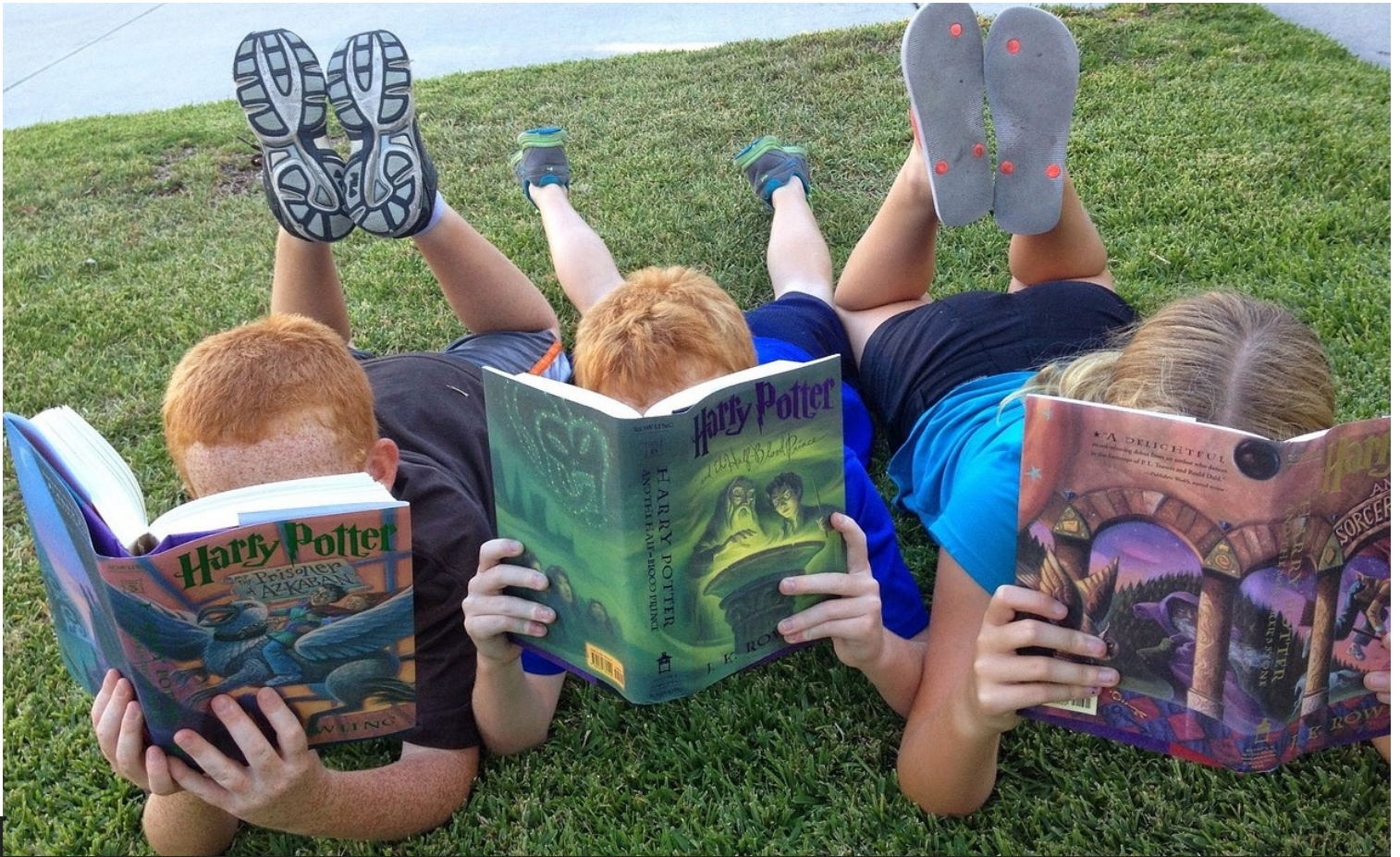


# LEARNING MATTERS

*The Bi-monthly Newsletter of Lethbridge School District No. 51's Lead Teachers*



## LITERACY

## Read Logs: Friend or Foe

*Literacy Lead Teacher Bev Smith*

Reading logs – to have students keep one or not? This is a hot button topic with many people taking sides. There are definitive reasons why having students keep a reading log or list is a benefit, and there are also very definitive reasons not to have students keep them. It is all in what you do with a reading log that makes them a useful tool for you as a teacher to inform your work with readers or not worth the paper they are written on.

When my children were in school they brought home their reading logs. For my son, who was the oldest, I was definitely more diligent at first in ensuring the reading log was accurate and that we completed and sent it back on time. As time went on and we became busier as a family, I will honestly admit that I just signed whatever was put in front of me or didn't sign at all. The reading log had become an exercise in accountability, and there was no way I was closely monitoring the reading of two little people in our busy lives. Eventually they quit bringing them home because I quit signing them. That did not mean they and we as a family weren't reading.

If your purpose in having students complete reading logs is to ensure they read at home, don't bother. We cannot control their home reading life. We can influence, we can share with parents the value of it, but we cannot enforce it. Children should not be penalized because they didn't bring back a signed reading log. Each time their classmates get a prize for a completed form and they don't because of circumstances they don't control, they are the ones paying the price for adult actions.

On the other hand, there are instructional benefits to reading logs being used as a classroom tool.

Having students complete a record of their reading at the end of independent reading/workshop time can be a rich source of data for you as their teacher, and for them as a reader. Reading logs can help students set goals for their reading life.

When we ask them questions like "What were your breakthroughs and accomplishments as a reader? Consider your pace, productivity, risk and challenges, new authors and genres..." (Atwell and Merkel, 2016, p.136) we support them in self-reflection and setting new goals. Penny Kittle has middle and high school students keep track of pages read so they can set goals for increasing their volume over time, and also so that they can build reading ladders to reflect on the complexity of texts they read.

For students of all ages keeping a reading log, at least periodically throughout the year in school, can provide you with rich assessment data. Jennifer Serravallo in her Literacy Teacher's Playbooks provides excellent look-fors when examining a log such as "Are there certain books that the student seems to be more successful with? Does the student finish a book before starting a new one?" (2014, p. 34-35).

Reading logs can be one of the many valuable snapshots in the entire collage of a student as a reader. They can help inform your work with them to move them along the continuum as a reader, but they are not a tool for accountability.

*Atwell, N. & Merkel, A. (2016). The reading zone: How to help kids become passionate, skilled, habitual, critical readers, 2nd ed. New York, NY: Scholastic Inc.*

*Serravallo, J. (2014). The literacy teacher's playbook: Four steps for turning assessment data into goal-directed instruction, Grades 3-6. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. (Also available for Grades K-2.)*

*Reading logs can be one of the many valuable snapshots in the entire collage of a student as a reader.*

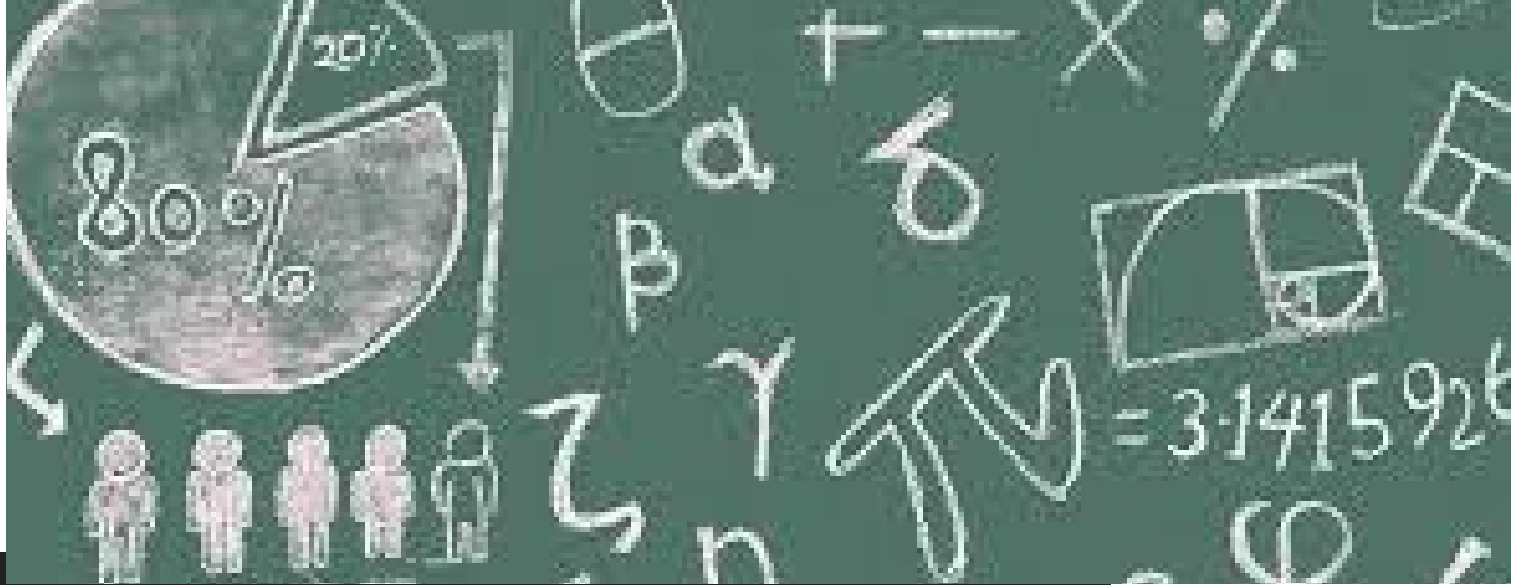
### VIDEO LINKS:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AqjMJM7quyQ>

### Online Articles:

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/blog-posts/juan-gonzales/17-18/goodbye-reading-log--5-ideas-on-how-to-keep-readers-accountable/>

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/blog-posts/beth-newingham/assessment-reading-workshop/>



# NUMERACY

*Numeracy Lead Teacher Jenn Giles*

## Growth Mindset and Mathematics

Mathematics is not short questions with fixed answers. It is about exploring ideas, relationships and patterns to make connections and sense of them.

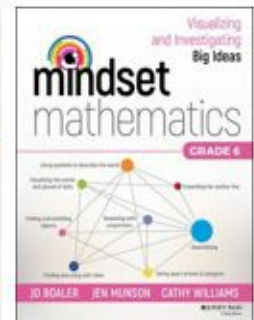
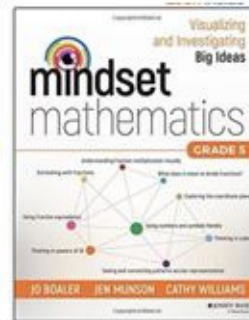
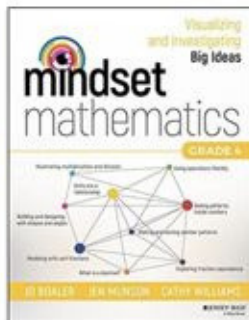
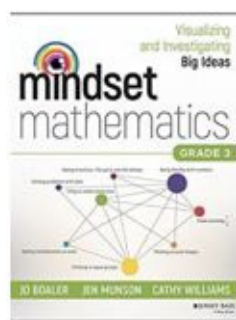
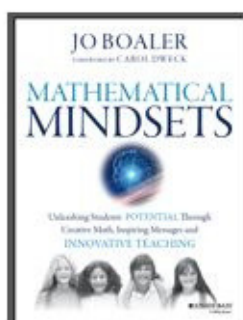
Mathematics is a conceptual and growth subject which focuses on problem solving and flexible thinking. People who find success in mathematics approach it with a hunger to understand and make sense of it. Our job as educators is to cultivate a belief in students and parents that everyone has the potential to make sense of and find success in math.

We want our students to have the willingness to work through difficulty and grapple with real problems. We must resist the urge to rescue our students and, rather than provide solutions, we provide strategies. When we solely provide solutions we are reinforcing the idea that the focus is on the numeric answer rather than the conceptual understanding and struggle through learning. Students have time to engage in productive struggle when we give them time to think.

Mathematics is not short questions with fixed answers. It is about exploring ideas, relationships and patterns to make connections and sense of them. When students have the opportunity to experience the beauty and power of mathematical thinking, it has the potential to be an asset in teaching our students to approach learning with courage, creativity, and curiosity.

Jo Boaler, a Stanford University Math Education professor, wrote the book *Mathematical Mindsets*. In her book, she translates Carol Dweck's concept of growth mindset into teaching mathematics. She bridges the gap by translating research findings about how we learn into practical activities and advice for parents and teachers to show children how they can succeed in math. *Mathematical Mindsets* is available in the Curriculum Resource Centre.

Jo Boaler Ted Talk - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3icoSeGqQtY>  
Four Mindset Boosting Messages - <https://youtu.be/bxrPy1fjVU4>





# EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

Educational Technology Lead Teacher Michael Krokosh

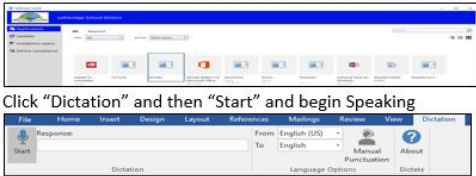
## Accessibility Tools

The newest update for Microsoft Word has a dictate built in that allows for multiple languages.

### Speech to Text

#### Microsoft Word - Desktop

1. Download the 'Dictate' function from the "Software Center"
2. Click "Dictation" and then "Start" and begin Speaking



#### Microsoft Word - Online

The newest update has a dictate built in that allows for multiple languages

#### iPad

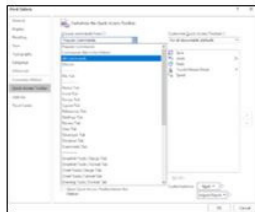
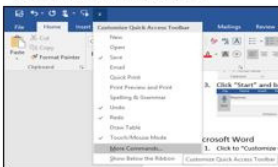
Open the "MS Word" App on an iPad. Tap the "Microphone" button and begin Speaking.



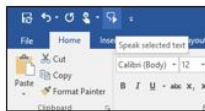
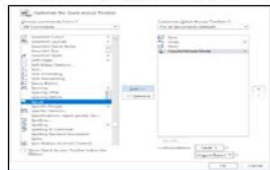
### Text to Speech

#### Microsoft Word

1. Click "Customize Quick Access Toolbar" then "More Commands"
2. Click the "Choose Commands from" dropdown and select "All Commands"
3. Scroll to "Speak", select it, click "Add", then "OK"

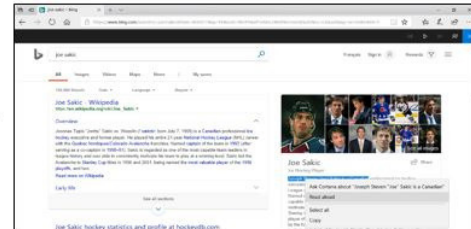


4. Now that it is in your Ribbon, highlight text and click the "Speak" button to have it read out.



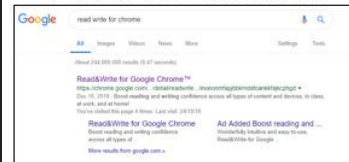
#### Microsoft Edge

Open any document in MS Edge (PDF, Excel, MS Form, MS Word) Highlight the Text you would like Read out and select "Read Aloud".



#### Google Chrome

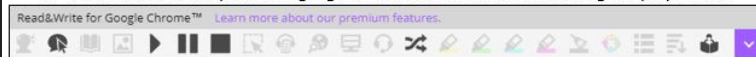
1. Look up "Read Write for Chrome"



2. Add the extension to your Chrome Browser

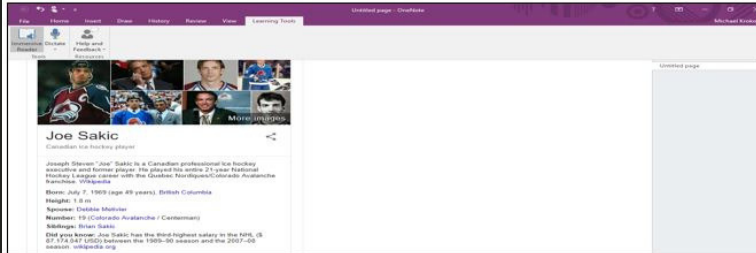


3. Once it is installed you can highlight desired text, and read out using the play button



#### OneNote

Immersive Reader will read out text. This reader also has a dictation feature.



# ENGLISH as a SECOND LANGUAGE



## ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

*ESL Lead Teacher Heather Willms*

### Language Acquisition and the ESL Benchmarks

One way to look at the Benchmarking process, is to view it through the lens of the stages of language acquisition.

Several continuums of language acquisition have been created, but the 5 stages developed by Krashen and Terrell align well with the Alberta ESL Benchmarks.

1. Pre-Production: 0-6 months
2. Early Production: 6 months-1 year
3. Speech Emergence: 1-3 years
4. Intermediate Language Fluency: 4-5 years
5. Advanced Language Proficiency: 5-7 years

If you would like a list of classroom strategies that align with each stage of language acquisition, contact Heather at [heather.willms@lethsd.ab.ca](mailto:heather.willms@lethsd.ab.ca).

Some students progress quickly through the language acquisition stages, while other students require more time and practice.

Although many students quickly pick up informal, playground language (Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills), it takes more time to develop academic language (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency). CALP, or academic language, must be scaffolded and taught, in order to support students in their progression of language learning.

Some students progress quickly through the language acquisition stages, while other students require more time and practice. Trauma and social transitions can impact the timelines of language acquisition, often slowing it down significantly.

