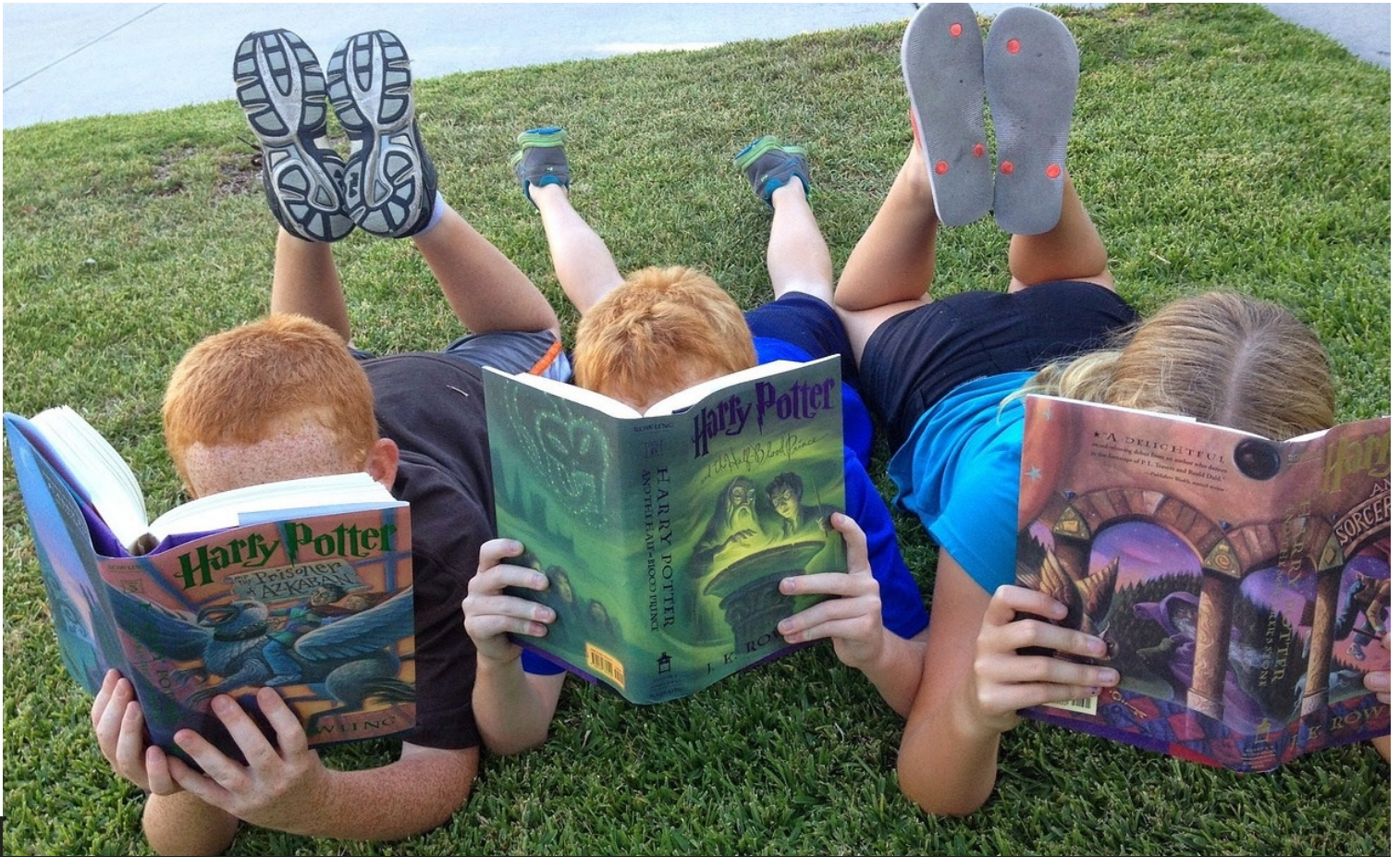


LEARNING MATTERS

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



LITERACY

Literacy Lead Teacher Bev Smith

Independent Reading vs. DEAR: What's the Difference?

Educational terms are constantly evolving. Usually terms change as practices are refined, for example, we now use the term comprehensive literacy in place of balanced literacy to reflect the shift towards a literacy framework that is responsive to the needs of the student(s) based on assessment and observation. Independent reading is a term that is now being used widely as it is a key component of comprehensive literacy.

Independent reading is quite different from DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) or USSR (Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading). During DEAR time, everyone, including the teacher, engaged in silent reading for a period of time. In theory this sounds like a great idea; in practice, if this is the only opportunity that students have to read independently, it is problematic. The intent of DEAR time is to convey that we are all readers and that we, as teachers, are reading models. Our students already know that we can read, hopefully they see us doing that throughout our day. Interactive read alouds provide the opportunity for us to model strategies we use as proficient readers for our students through strategies such as a think aloud. Often times, I as the teacher, never actually turned a page because I was so busy watching the students that I couldn't focus on my book, or I used it as a chance to quickly catch up on that email I needed to send.

Independent reading, on the other hand, is a highly valuable targeted instructional time for teachers to work with small groups or individual students towards the goals of the learner(s). There is clear evidence that supported independent reading, leads to improved oral reading accuracy, reading rate, and comprehension (Miller and Moses, 2013). The majority of a reading block should be spent in independent reading time where the students practice strategies the teacher has explicitly taught and modelled.

In order for independent reading to be successful for students, the following practices need to be in place:

- A large block of time to read
- Student choice in what they read
- Explicit instruction in strategies
- Access to texts students can and want to read
- Teacher support, assessment and monitoring
- Time for students to talk about reading

For a quick and easy read on this topic that combines research and practical applications check out:

Miller, D. & Moss, B. 2013. No more independent reading without support. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

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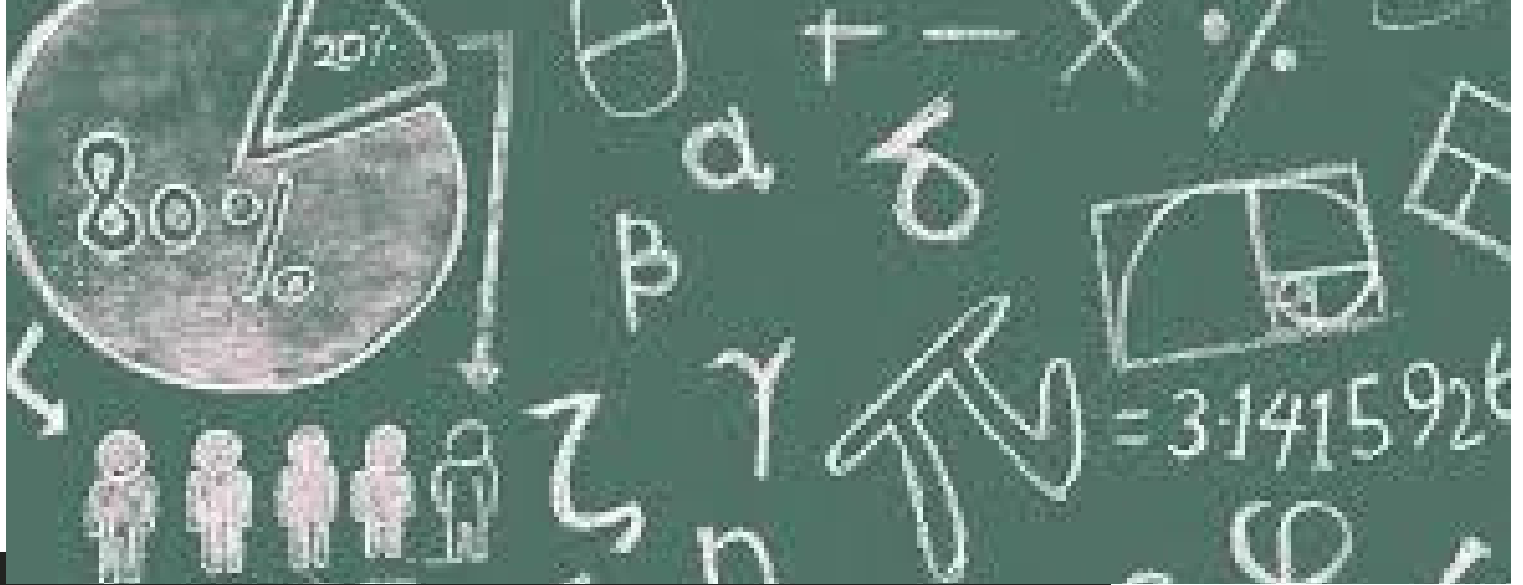
VIDEO LINKS:

<https://vimeo.com/55957324>

<http://pennykittle.net/index.php?page=reading-conference-videos>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cxXc4nLTS1I>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vCcr56Nw4c>



NUMERACY

Numeracy Lead Teacher Jenn Giles

What is the MIPI?

The Math Instrument/Programming Instrument is a short assessment created by Edmonton Public Schools' administrators and teachers to be used as a mathematics screening tool with students in Grades 2 to 10. The assessment is given at the beginning of the year and is based on mathematics outcomes from the previous year's Program of Study.

The assessment takes a maximum of 60 minutes to complete.

The process for writing and collecting the data has two steps.

The students complete the assessment on paper and then enter their answers into an online Microsoft Form. Once a class has completed the assessment, teachers and administrators receive the data analysis which is broken up into class and individual information.

The intent of the tool is for teachers to use the MIPI results alongside other information gathered to determine programming for their class(es) as well as individual students. It can also be looked at from a bigger picture in order to help co-ordinate and improve math programming and support for all students. As in literacy, our goal is to use responsive teaching to meet the needs of the learners based on all available evidence. When we teach responsively we use formative assessment to understand what students already know, what they are just beginning to do as mathematicians, and what they need explicit instruction in. We believe that all students have the ability to learn (Fletcher-Wood, 2018).

Fletcher-Wood, H. 2018. Responsive teaching:
Cognitive science and formative assessment in practice.
New York, NY: Routledge.

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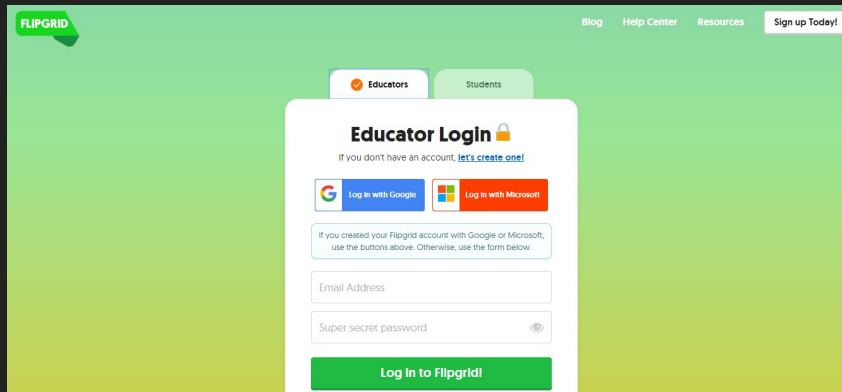


EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

Educational Technology Lead Teacher Michael Krokosh

District Teacher & Student Accounts – Microsoft & Google

Teachers and students can now login to Google accounts hosted by the School District. Your Lethsd email account now authenticates with Google online applications. When prompted to “Log in with Google” simply enter your Lethsd email address and password. This means everyone can log in to applications easily. An example of an online program is below:



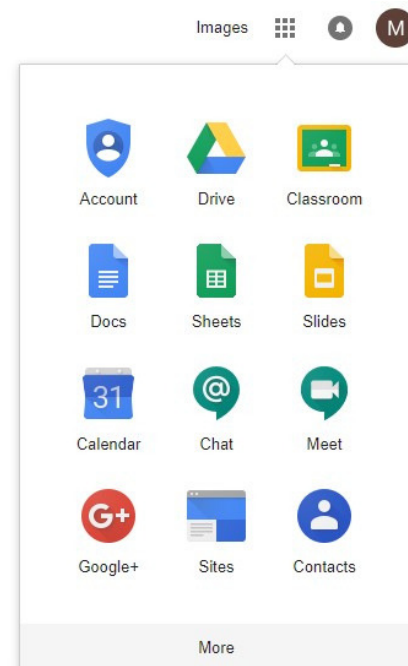
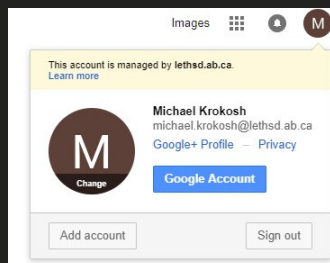
This works with countless other online applications, along with FlipGrid.

Please contact michael.krokosh@lethsd.ab.ca to discuss how to best use this functionality or for ideas of curriculum connections to available online technologies.

This Google account also has some of the same cloud apps we have become familiar with using in the Office 365 suite. To access these, login through the Google Chrome browser to your (firstname.lastname@lethsd.ab.ca) account and you will be able to see these.

An example of what it looks like is provided:
Contact Ed Tech Lead Teacher – Michael Krokosh – to help you with this, or other curriculum technology integration.
Please note any application linked with Google Drive or Gmail is not available at this time.

Teachers and students
can now login
to Google accounts
hosted by
the School District.



ENGLISH as a SECOND LANGUAGE



ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

ESL Lead Teacher Heather Willms

Visualizing success

One of the simplest and most effective ways to support English Language Learners (ELLs) is through an extensive use of visuals in the classroom. ELLs often struggle with processing auditory information, so when teachers support learning with visual clues, students can access more of the lesson's content. Regardless of age or grade level, visuals can be incorporated into instruction to support a wide range of learners. How are visuals helpful for ELLs:

- Visuals present information in a unique and different way
- Visuals help students understand and remember concepts
- Visuals provide a touchstone for teachers to refer to during and after a lesson
- Visuals reduce teacher talk time

Visuals can be accessed in a way that student might not be able to through written or spoken form.

There are many types of visuals that can be incorporated into teaching practice.

- Visual Schedules (for elementary students, don't forget to include recess and home time)
- Visual Note Taking and Interactive Notes.
- Anchor Charts
- Math Manipulatives
- Word Walls with pictures
- Graphs, maps and timelines
- Realia: items from real life (menus, pamphlets, brochures and ads)
- Videos with closed captions and reduced speed

ELLs often struggle with processing auditory information, so when teachers support learning with visual clues, students can access more of the lesson's content.



LINKS:

Long Story Shortz:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sleZ7h6u3JM>

Sentence Frames:

<https://www.teachingchannel.org/video/jumpstart-student-writing>