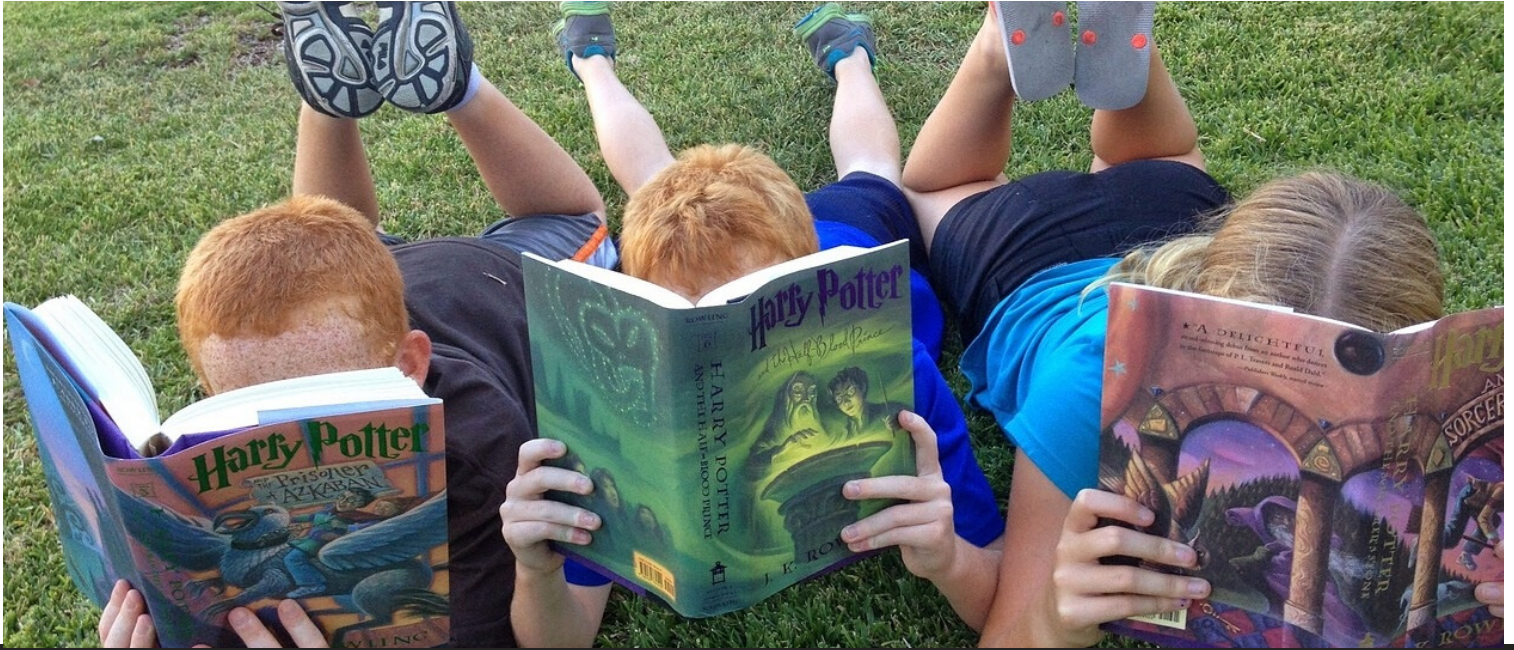


LEARNING MATTERS

The Bi-monthly Newsletter of Lethbridge School Division's Lead Teachers



LITERACY

What is the workshop model of instruction?

Literacy Lead Teacher Bev Smith

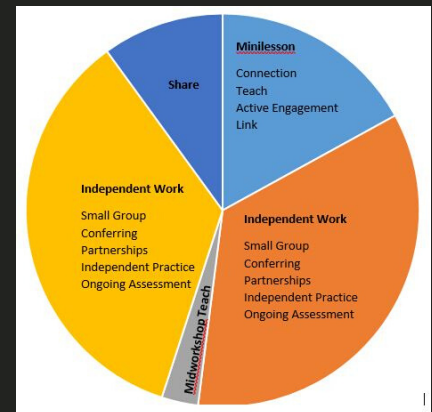
The workshop model is an instructional framework that utilizes the Optimal Learning Model (OLM)/Gradual Release of Responsibility. It provides support and scaffolding as students engage with new learning. The workshop model has been historically linked to the arts, and in the field of education with instruction in reading and writing. Recently, it has begun to be extended into content areas. It is one of the lesson framework tools cited by Julie Stern as a support for building conceptual understanding.

The foundations of the workshop model are access, choice, response, volume, time, and ownership and engagement (Goudvis et. al, 2019). Students need access to relevant materials depending upon the curricular area of study. Choice leads to increased student engagement and agency. Choice may be provided for example, in reading material, topic, or product. Students need, "...ways to express and shape their thinking" (p.12). This does not always have to be a product but can be discussion or performance. Whatever we are learning requires practice or volume. In order to practice and increase volume, sufficient time must be allocated. When all of the other foundations are in play, there is increased student ownership and engagement for the learning.

The workshop model has a predictable structure. It begins with a mini-lesson in which there is explicit instruction and modeling by the teacher. This is the "I Do" of the OLM. Usually the minilesson includes some guided practice—"We do." The majority of lesson time is spent in independent, "You Do," and additional guided practice via small group work or individual conferences, another "We Do." The workshop ends with students either sharing their work from the day or a short teaching share. It should be noted that independent practice does not mean worksheets. Independent practice involves applying skills taught in the minilesson in authentic reading and writing contexts.

The workshop model is an excellent way to differentiate instruction to meet the variety of needs of the learners in a classroom. The minilesson is presented to the whole class, and it includes supported practice. Small group work and individual conferences provide the opportunity for tailored instruction driven by assessment information to meet students at their point of challenge.

The workshop model is an excellent way to differentiate instruction to meet the variety of needs of the learners in a classroom



If you would like further information on implementing a workshop approach in your classroom, please contact Bev Smith. Videos of reading and writing workshops in action:

<https://vimeo.com/search?q=lucy+calkins>
Calkins, L. et. al. (Various publication dates). Units of study for reading or writing. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
Goudvis, A., Harvey, S. & Buhrow, B. (2019). Inquiry illuminated: Researcher's workshop across the curriculum. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.



NUMERACY

Numeracy Lead Teacher Jenn Giles

Fluency and Number Sense

Fluency in mathematics is achieved when students know how a number can be composed and decomposed and they use that information to be flexible and efficient with solving problems (Parish, 2014). When students have gaps in their knowledge with basic number sense it directly impacts their ability to solve problems. As a result, it is important to create opportunities for students to engage in daily number sense routines to ensure students have numerous opportunities to acquire and build on their understanding of numbers.

Jo Boaler's article, *Fluency Without Fear*, highlights research on the best ways to learn math facts.

"The best way to develop fluency with numbers is to develop number sense and to work with numbers in different ways, not to blindly memorize without number sense."

(Boaler, 2014)

(Boaler, 2014). When students have acquired foundational number sense skills, they will have the knowledge they need to access personal strategies that are effective, efficient and explainable. When we use timed tests as an instructional strategy to develop accuracy and efficiency it can be damaging for students because it increases math anxiety as they do not have foundational number sense skills.

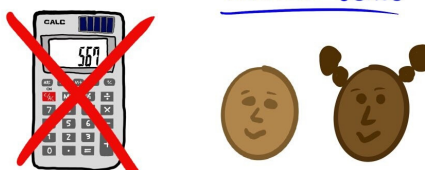
Daily number sense routines are an accessible way for teachers to create opportunities for students to develop understanding of numbers.

A daily routine is a whole-class activity conducted over time, to provide students the opportunity to develop "fluidity and flexibility with numbers" (Gersten & Chard, 2001). Number Talks are a 5-15 minute routine where students participate in meaningful practice in computation. During a number talk, students develop fluency skills using relationships and the structures of numbers. Pictured below are great number sense routines that can also be incorporated into all grade levels.

"The best way to develop fluency with numbers is to develop number sense and to work with numbers in different ways, not to blindly memorize without number sense."
(Boaler, 2014)

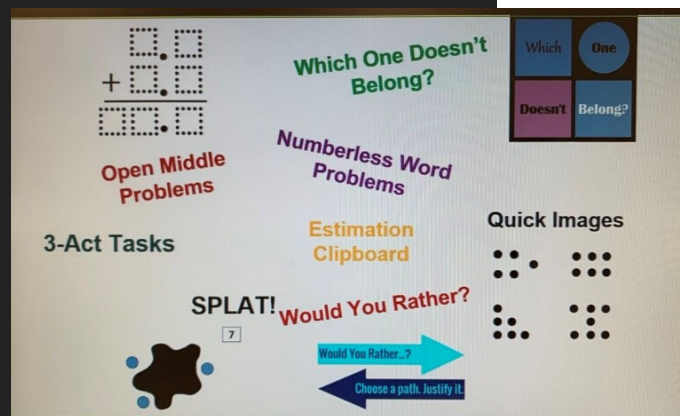
Number Talks are a 5-15 minute routine where students participate in meaningful practice in computation

Calculators don't have Number Sense



Humans have number sense because they **notice** and **wonder** while playing with **patterns** and **relationships**.

@Berkeley Everett



Open Middle Problems

Numberless Word Problems

3-Act Tasks

SPLAT!

Which One Doesn't Belong?

Numberless Word Problems

Estimation Clipboard

Quick Images

Would You Rather?



ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Erin Hurkett, principal, Mike Mountain Horse School

ESL proficiency benchmarks: What Are They and Why Do We Do Them?

The Alberta K-12 ESL Proficiency Benchmarks (Alberta Education, 2019) are a language proficiency assessment designed for use by teachers of English Language Learners (ELLs) and are to be used to assess language proficiency within the classroom.

ELLs are assessed in strands of language that include: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Benchmark indicators are founded on language acquisition theory that includes Cummins research on Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). Where BICS includes the acquisition of basic social language, CALP includes the acquisition of abstract academic language. Swain's Communicative Competence is another theoretical underpinning of the Benchmarks. Communicative Competence is the ability to recognize and produce authentic and appropriate language in social and academic situations and involves linguistic, socio-linguistic, discourse, and strategic competencies.



When teaching ELLs, teachers not only have curricular content to teach, but English language to teach as well. Therefore, after initial assessment due by October 30th is accomplished, ongoing formative use of the ESL Benchmarks or tracking sheets in conjunction with multiple samples of in-class work is necessary to understand the language needs of students and to plan for next steps of instruction. The overall purpose of the Benchmarks is to:

- provide descriptions of language proficiency for each grade-level division
- support schools in delivering effective instruction and program planning for English Language Learners
- support teachers in planning for explicit language instruction
- communicate with students and parents to develop an understanding of language acquisition

When teaching ELLs, teachers not only have curricular content to teach, but English language to teach as well

For further information on the Alberta K-12 ESL Proficiency Benchmarks, assessment videos and writing samples, please see the Learn Alberta website, Supporting English Language Learners: Tools, Strategies and Resources <https://www.learnalberta.ca/content/eslapb/index.html>