

An Interactive Tool for Improving Early Literacy Skills

A Presentation to the *Minority Community Vitality Through Education* Forum

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- **Presenter**
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- **The Centre for the Study of Learning and Performance (CSLP)**
 - Based at Concordia University for 30 years
 - Conducts research on teaching and learning
 - Develops digital tools to support learning

Youth Literacy in Canada & Quebec

- **The good news**

- According to PISA 2015 scores, Canada does well in reading:
 - Canadian score of 527 was better than the 500 average
 - Comparable to Hong Kong-China, Finland, Ireland
- Quebec score (532) was above the Canadian score (527)

- **The not-so-good news**

- Canadian PISA reading scores have dropped between 2000 (534) and 2015 (527)
- In Quebec, there is a gap in reading scores between anglophone and francophone school systems:
 - Anglophone (523) vs. Francophone (533)
- Girls outperform boys by 26 points

What Does This Mean?

According to the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC):

- 16.4% of Canadian adults score at or below Level 1 Literacy
- Only 31.9% achieve Level 2

Almost half (48.3%) of all Canadians don't have the literacy skills necessary to function and thrive in today's economy.



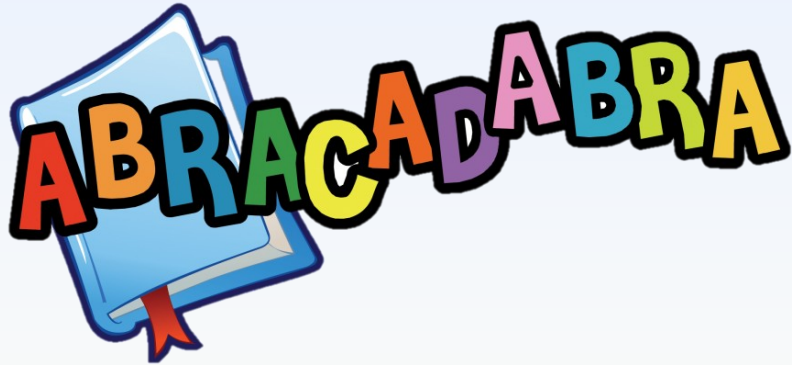
ABRACADABRA Is...

- **Evidence-Based:** Draws on best available research (National Reading Panel)
- **Evidence-Proven:** Tested over many years with different populations
- **Balanced:** Activities address skill acquisition in key literacy areas
- **Flexible:** No required path, customizable for particular individual needs (classroom, lab, at home)

ABRACADABRA Is...

- **Differentiated:** Multiple levels and embedded support to scaffold learning
- **Free of Charge:** Available at no cost through school board servers
- **Highly-Interactive & Engaging:** Children enjoy using it!

A Balanced Literacy Approach



Activities build skills in four key areas:

- Alphabetics
- Fluency
- Comprehension
- Writing

ABRA Includes:



Choose from skill type OR story

Four Main Skills:

- ✓ Alphabetics, Fluency, Comprehension and Writing
- ✓ 36 Activities

Digital Stories:

- ✓ 17 Stories

Alphabetics Development



Fluency Development



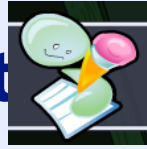
Access to Digital Books



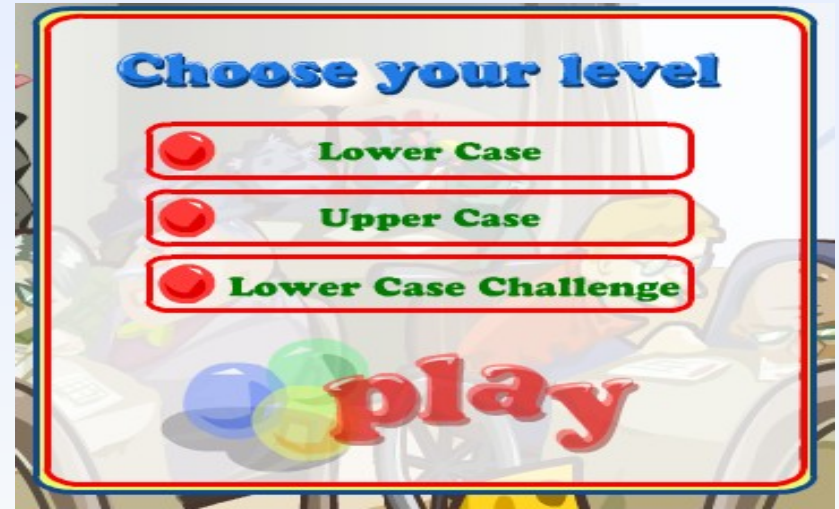
Comprehension Development



Writing Development



Multiple Points of Entry



Built-In Scaffolding and Support



Tool provides visual and audio support

ABRA Evidence...

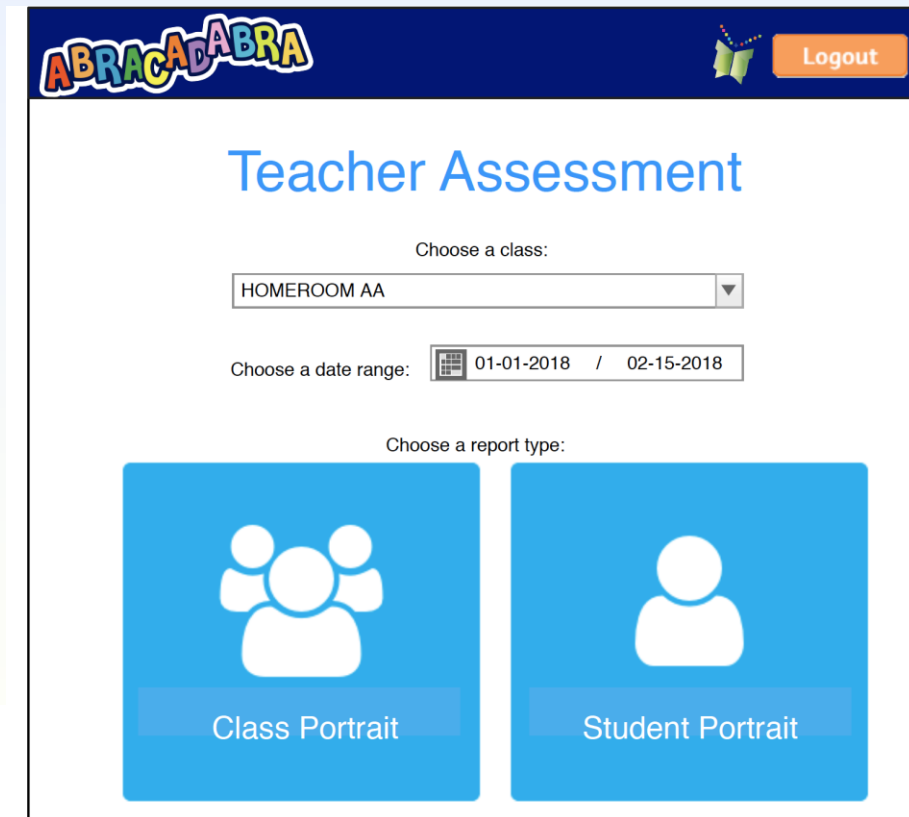
- Girls and boys improve equally
- ABRA effects last over time
- Large effects for students who are struggling
- Improvements transfer to other subject areas
- Effective in a wide range of learners (Autism Spectrum Disorder, low SES, different countries and cultures)
- Very high efficiency--very low cost implementation

Support for Struggling Students

- Remedial activities available (pre-alphabets)
- Activities can be repeated as often as needed
- Feedback non-threatening
- Teacher can view student progress (assessment feature)

Teacher Assessment Feature

- Whole class and Individual student views



The screenshot shows a web interface for 'Teacher Assessment'. At the top, there is a dark blue header with the 'ABRACADABRA' logo on the left and a 'Logout' button on the right. The main content area has a white background. The title 'Teacher Assessment' is centered in blue. Below the title, there are three selection options: 'Choose a class:' with a dropdown menu showing 'HOMEROOM AA', 'Choose a date range:' with a calendar icon and the range '01-01-2018 / 02-15-2018', and 'Choose a report type:' with two large blue buttons. The left button is labeled 'Class Portrait' and features a white icon of three people. The right button is labeled 'Student Portrait' and features a white icon of a single person.

ABRACADABRA

Logout

Teacher Assessment

Choose a class:

HOMEROOM AA

Choose a date range: 01-01-2018 / 02-15-2018



Choose a report type:


Class Portrait





Student Portrait

Teacher Assessment Feature


- Quick identification of struggling students

 Class Portrait 

[Start Over](#) 01-15-2018 / 02-15-2018 

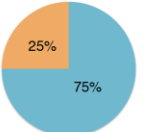
 100 mins  30 mins  60 mins  20 mins

Sounds, Letters and Words

 **Matching Sounds** ▼
Time Spent 30 minutes
Times Accessed 15
Average Time/Access 2 minutes

Choose the level(s)

Overall Statistics	Total
Correct on first try	123
Correct on second attempt <i>Help provided by the tool</i>	321
Incorrect	456



25% Incomplete
75% Complete

Error Report

 ▼

Doe, Jane ▼

Mous, Anony ▼

Smith, John ▼ [Go to Profile](#)

Level	Date	Correct Ans	Student Ans
2	02/15/2018	Wave	Cat
1	02/15/2018	Snoring	Jackhammer
1	02/13/2018	Bell	River

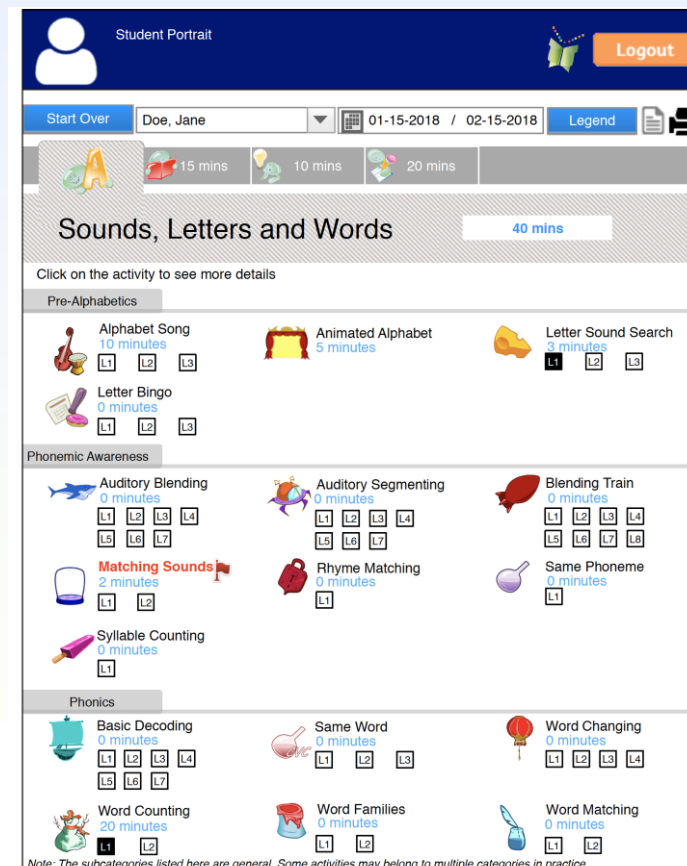
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Teacher Assessment Feature

- Overview of student progress through activities



Teacher Assessment Feature

- Detailed information for individual activities

The screenshot displays a 'Student Portrait' interface for a student named Jane Doe. The top navigation bar includes a 'Start Over' button, the student's name, a date range (01-15-2018 to 02-15-2018), and a 'Logout' button. Below this, there are tabs for different activity durations: 100 mins, 30 mins (selected), 60 mins, and 20 mins. The main section is titled 'Reading' and features an 'Accuracy' dropdown menu. Under 'Accuracy', the following data is shown:

	Student	/ Class
Time Spent	15 minutes	10 minutes average
Number of Sessions	4	5 average
Completed Activity	2 times	2 times average

Below this, a table lists 'Stories Read' with the number of times each was read:

Stories Read	# Times
Little Red Hen	7
Henny Penny	5
Feelings	1

Navigation links 1, 2, 3, and a 'See all' link are provided. The 'Words Clicked On' section follows, showing a table of words that needed help:

Story	Page	Word They Needed Help With
Little Red Hen	9	wheat
Little Red Hen	3	nothing
Feelings	7	phone
Feelings	1	real
Henny Penny	1	beautiful

Navigation links 1, 2, 3, and a 'See all' link are provided at the bottom.



Teacher Assessment Feature

- Available for January 2019
- Offers remediation tips (classroom activities)
- Suggestions for using related activities to reinforce skill development

Teacher Resources

[Activities](#)[Stories](#)[Using ABRA](#)[Videos](#)[Resources](#)

Activities

Children need explicit, systematic instruction and repeated practice of literacy skills in four broad areas: alphabetics (phonemic awareness), fluency, comprehension, and writing. The ABRACADABRA activities provide opportunities for children to develop and practice these skills, in a playful and engaging way.

Sounds, Letters, and Words (Alphabetics) present various new ways to explore, discover and play with sounds.

Students will find a variety of texts that help them to practice all elements of **Reading (Fluency)**.

Small group discussions are encouraged in several **Understanding the Story (Comprehension)** activities, which also reinforce students' understanding of the story.

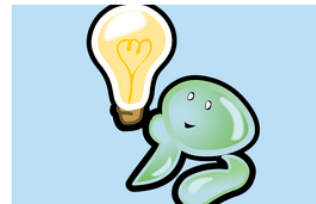
Lastly, students will be able to practice their spelling in two **Writing (Typing)** activities.



**Sounds, Letters, and Words
(Alphabetics)**



Reading (Fluency)



**Understanding the Story
(Comprehension)**



Writing (Typing)

Parent Resources

[Activities](#)[Stories](#)[Using ABRA](#)[Videos](#)[Resources](#)

ABRACADABRA

A collection of resources to support your children's early literacy skills and use of ABRACADABRA.

ABRACADABRA, A Balanced Reading Approach for Children Always Designed to Achieve Best Results for All, is a highly interactive, early literacy web-based tool that supports beginning readers through 33 engaging activities linked to 20 stories of different kinds.

In this Parent Module, you will find information about ABRACADABRA (ABRA) and how it supports early literacy skills. You will discover practical and fun tips for helping your child develop those skills and avoid anxiety.





Q & A



LTK+ Access Information

- **Promo** site: <http://www.concordia.ca/ltk>
- **Demo** site: <http://grover.concordia.ca/demos/ltk/public>
 - Username: meg
OR
 - Username: teacher
 - Password: 123





For more information, contact:

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