What is the Read-Aloud Menu?

The Read-Aloud Menu is a collection of popular children’s literature and related Read-Aloud mini-lessons that support each Growing Early Mindsets™ (GEM™) Learning Lab. The Read-Aloud mini-lessons and reading extensions (additional children’s literature) are organized by key growth mindset, social and emotional learning (SEL), and mindfulness principles and practices.

**Goal**

The goal is to promote, teach, and foster a growth mindset, SEL competencies, and mindfulness by embedding each Lab’s key principles and practices across multiple content areas. For example, teachers will develop their ability to use literacy practices and children’s literature to promote, teach, and foster a growth mindset, SEL competencies, and mindfulness.
Lab 1
Learning About Our Brain
Lab 1: Learning About Our Brain

Key Principle and Practice: Brain

Learning Goal: Learners will identify functions of the brain.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book Title</th>
<th>Prompts</th>
<th>Learning Extension</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Parts</em> by Tedd Arnold</td>
<td>Why was the little boy worried? When do you feel like the little boy?</td>
<td><strong>Act to Learn</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>What does the little boy learn about his body (brain, nose, eyes, ear, skin)?</td>
<td>1. Give a series of examples of what each body part does and invite learners to act them out (e.g., jump, think, listen, blink, smell, talk, write).</td>
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<td>How does learning about the different parts of his body help him feel better?</td>
<td>2. Make connections to how our brain controls what each body part does.</td>
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<td>3. Invite learners to draw a picture of themselves in their journals and label where their brain is.</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Your Fantastic Elastic Brain</em> by JoAnn Deak</td>
<td>What are the names of some of the parts of the brain? What do different parts of the brain do?</td>
<td><strong>Explore to Learn</strong></td>
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<td>Materials: copies of <em>My Brain</em> graphic organizer</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1. Invite learners to label parts of the brain (e.g., cerebellum, hippocampus, amygdala, prefrontal cortex) and draw a picture of an example of what that part is responsible for.</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Think, Think, Think: Learning About Your Brain</em> by Pamela Hill Nettleton</td>
<td>What does the book say our brain is like? What does our brain help us do? How can we take care of our brain? Why do we need to understand how our brain works?</td>
<td><strong>Explore to Learn</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Materials: copies of <em>My Brain</em> graphic organizer</td>
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<td>1. As a whole class, explore the following website for more information on the brain: <a href="http://kidshealth.org/kid/htbw/brain.html">http://kidshealth.org/kid/htbw/brain.html</a>.</td>
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<td>2. Using the <em>My Brain</em> graphic organizer, invite learners to draw what their brain is thinking.</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Young Genius: Brains</em> by Kate Lennard</td>
<td>What can our brain do? Do all animals have brains, too? What can a dolphin do?</td>
<td><strong>Explore to Learn</strong></td>
</tr>
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<td>1. Invite learners to explore the classroom and choose an object that represents something their brain “likes to do” (e.g., read books, color/paint, build with blocks/Legos).</td>
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<td>2. Invite learners to share what they chose and why.</td>
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Lab 1: Learning About Our Brain (continued)

Key Principle and Practice: Thinking/Metacognition

Learning Goal: Learners will identify their thoughts and make connections to how thinking and metacognition is a main function of our brain.

*Note: A variety of children’s literature can be used to teach and reinforce the concept of thinking and metacognition by prompting: What is _____________ (character’s name/identity) thinking? What are you thinking about after reading/listening to this book?

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| **Oh, the Thinks You Can Think!**  | What are you thinking about right now? What do you want to think about? | **Write and Draw to Learn**  
1. Engage learners in a shared, interactive, or independent writing opportunity and write an acrostic poem for “think.”  
2. Create additional poems for “brain” and “learn.”  
3. Invite learners to illustrate.  
*An online interactive tool for writing acrostic poems is available on IRA’s ReadWriteThink website: http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/acrostic/ |
| by Dr. Seuss                        |                                                                         |                                                                                    |
| **Chalk**                          | What is she thinking? What is he thinking? What are they thinking?      | **Draw to Learn**  
Materials: various colors of chalk, journals, or My Brain graphic organizer  
1. Share with learners a variety of colors of chalk.  
2. Invite them to share what each color makes them think about: red = strawberry, apple, etc.  
3. Invite them to choose a color of chalk and draw the pictures they “see in their brain” in their journals or on the My Brain graphic organizer. If appropriate, invite learners outside to draw their pictures on the sidewalk/pavement. |
| by Bill Thomson (wordless book)    |                                                                         |                                                                                    |
Lab 1: Learning About Our Brain (continued)

Key Principle and Practice: Thinking/Metacognition

Learning Goal: Learners will identify their thoughts and make connections to how thinking and metacognition is a main function of our brain.

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<tr>
<td>What Are You Thinking?</td>
<td>What are you thinking about right now? Are they happy thoughts?</td>
<td>Draw to Learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by Valerie Ackley</td>
<td>How can you change your thinking?</td>
<td>Materials: copies of <em>My Brain</em> graphic organizer</td>
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<td>What does the author want to teach you?</td>
<td>1. In pairs invite learners to draw a picture of what they think their partners are thinking on the <em>My Brain</em> graphic organizer.</td>
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<td>2. Provide learners an opportunity to share their drawings with their partner.</td>
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Lab 1: Learning About Our Brain (continued)

Key Principle and Practice: Learning

Learning Goal: Learners will identify examples of their learning and make connections to how learning makes their brains stronger and smarter.

*Note: A variety of children’s literature can be used to teach and reinforce the concept of learning by simply prompting: What does ________________ (character’s name/identity) learn?

Think-aloud: “Let’s see what we can learn by reading this book. When we learn something new our brain gets stronger and smarter.”

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| *I Can Read With My Eyes Shut* by Dr. Seuss    | How do you learn to read? Why is it so important to learn to read?     | Explore to Learn  
1. Explore Dr. Seuss’ website for games, activities, and resources: www.seussville.com. |
| *Listen and Learn* by Cheri J. Meiners          | What does good listening look like? How does listening help you learn?| Play to Learn  
1. Invite learners to practice listening by playing a game of “Brain Says”; modeled after “Simon Says.” |
| *Howard B. Wigglebottom Learns to Listen* by Howard Binkow | When do you feel like Howard? When do you feel like Howard’s friends?| Explore to Learn  
1. Explore the *We Do Listen Foundation* website for free animated books, songs, games, activities, and more at http://wedolisten.org. |

*additional prompts within the book*
Lab 1: Learning About Our Brain (continued)

Key Principle and Practice: Learning

Learning Goal: Learners will identify examples of their learning and make connections to how learning makes their brains stronger and smarter.

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| *Henry Finds His Word* by Lindsay Ward                 | What did Henry learn to do? How did he learn to say his first word? Do you remember the first word you learned to say? What are some other “firsts”? | **Ask to Learn**  
1. Invite learners to ask their parents/family members questions about when they were little: What was their first word? When did they learn to walk?  
2. Create a class poster titled, “Our Firsts.” |
| *26 Big Things Small Hands Do* by Coleen Paratore      | While reading aloud, invite learners to act out different parts of the book. What can your hands do? How do your hands help you learn? What part of your body controls your hands? | **Write and Draw to Learn**  
1. Engage learners in a shared or interactive writing/drawing opportunity and create a class poster titled “26 Things My Brain Does.”  
2. Invite learners to illustrate.  
*An online interactive tool for an alphabet organizer is available on IRA’s ReadWriteThink website: [http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/alphabet_organizer/](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/alphabet_organizer/)* |
| *Learning to Fly!* by Sebastian Meschenmoser          | What does the penguin believe he can do? What strategies do the penguin and his friend try? How does the penguin learn to fly? | **Watch to Learn**  
1. Invite learners outside to observe birds flying. How are the birds flying?  
2. Engage learners in a shared, interactive, or independent writing/drawing opportunity to create step-by-step instructions for flying.  
3. Invite learners to share the step-by-step instructions with their “animal friends” (puppets and/or animal manipulatives) to guide their “animal friends” through flight exploration. |
Lab 1: Learning About Our Brain (continued)

Key Principles and Practices: Self-Efficacy & Agency
Learning Goal: Learners will express/demonstrate self-efficacy and agency.

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<tr>
<th>Book Title</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jack's Talent</td>
<td>Why was Jack worried? When do you feel like Jack? What does Jack learn about himself? How does Jack learn to believe in what he can do? What are your talents? How are you developing your talents?</td>
<td><strong>Write and Draw to Learn</strong> 1. Engage learners in a shared or interactive writing opportunity and write a class book titled “Our Talents” using sentence frames from the book. 2. Dedicate a page to each learner. 3. Take a picture of each learner to include on each page. Invite learners to illustrate. 4. Explore the internet for book publishing ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by Maryann Cocca-Leffler</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cloudette</td>
<td>What does Cloudette want to do? What is her goal? Why is Cloudette worried? When do you feel like Cloudette? What does Cloudette learn about herself? How does Cloudette accomplish what she wants to?</td>
<td><strong>Watch to Learn</strong> 1. Invite learners outside to look for “Cloudette” in the sky. 2. Engage learners in a discussion about the importance of not only accomplishing big things but also accomplishing small things every day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by Tom Lichtenheld</td>
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<tr>
<td>Al Pha's Bet</td>
<td>What does Al Pha want to do? What is his goal? How does he accomplish what he wants to? When do you feel like Al Pha?</td>
<td><strong>Act to Learn</strong> 1. As a whole class, in small groups, or in pairs invite learners to act out different parts of the story. Integrate story props (puppets, letters, etc.).</td>
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<tr>
<td>by Amy Krouse Rosenthal</td>
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Key Principles and Practices: Self-Efficacy & Agency
Learning Goal: Learners will express/demonstrate self-efficacy and agency.

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<td><em>Dream Big: Michael Jordan and the Pursuit of Olympic Gold</em> by Deloris Jordan</td>
<td>What does Michael want to do? What is his goal? How does Michael accomplish what he wants to? When do you feel like Michael?</td>
<td><strong>Share to Learn</strong>&lt;br&gt;1. Within a whole class discussion, invite learners to share their dreams: “When you grow up, what do you want to do or be?”&lt;br&gt;2. Record learner “dreams” (quote journal and/or portfolios).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>From Head to Toe</em> by Eric Carle</td>
<td>How do you control how fast or slow you move? What part of your body controls how you move? Think? What you say? Do? Who controls your brain? Who controls what you think? What you say? What you do?</td>
<td><strong>Act to Learn</strong>&lt;br&gt;1. Invite learners to act out different movements along with the book.&lt;br&gt;2. Invite learners to add more animals and movements to the book.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>I’m Bored</em> by Michael Ian Black</td>
<td>What are some of the examples of what kids can do? What part of the little girl’s brain is she using to do all of the things in the book?</td>
<td><strong>Act to Learn</strong>&lt;br&gt;Materials: potato&lt;br&gt;1. Invite learners to act out different parts of the book in front of the potato.&lt;br&gt;2. Invite learners to brainstorm more examples of what kids can do and act them out.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lab 1: Reading Extensions

*Books in bold are Read-Aloud mini-lessons.

Learning Routine Read-Aloud


Books About Dolphins


Principle & Practice: Brain


Principle & Practice: Thinking/Metacognition

*Wordless books serve as an effective tool to teach the concept of thinking and metacognition.

• Seuss, Dr. (1975). *Oh, the Thinks You Can Think!* New York, NY: Random House.

**Principle & Practice: Learning**


**Principles & Practices: Self-Efficacy & Agency**


**Websites to Support Learning Extensions**

**Brain**

• [http://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/neurok.html](http://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/neurok.html)
• [http://kids.frontiersin.org](http://kids.frontiersin.org)

**Animals**

• [www.animalfactguide.com](http://www.animalfactguide.com)

**Other**

• [http://wedolisten.org](http://wedolisten.org)
• [www.seussville.com](http://www.seussville.com)
• www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/acrostic/
• http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/alphabet_organizer/
• www.mimicbooks.com
About Mindset Works

Mindset Works was co-founded by one of the world’s leading researchers in the field of motivation, Stanford University professor Carol S. Dweck, Ph.D. and K-12 mindset expert Lisa S. Blackwell, Ph.D. The company translates psychological research into practical products and services to help students and educators increase their motivation and achievement.

Our award-winning interactive program provides students, parents and educators with a better approach to learning.

Brainology® program is a fun, interactive, award-winning, online program that helps middle school students learn about how the brain works, how to strengthen their own brains and how to better approach their own learning. In the process, the Brainology® program helps them cultivate a growth mindset whereby they think of their intelligence as something they can develop through study and learning rather than as something fixed. The core belief in the malleability of the mind triggers motivation and learning-oriented behavior in various aspects of life.

Visit www.mindsetworks.com for more growth mindset resources, tools, articles, and videos. Contact us at info@mindsetworks.com.