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# LANGUAGE MATTERS

November  
2017

*Lethbridge School District No. 51*

## Meet David Fuller, the District's ESL Lead Teacher

### About me: David Fuller

I grew up in Lethbridge and attended Nicholas Sheran, Gilbert Patterson and Lethbridge Collegiate institute. I have a variety of international experiences including in 2001 where I lived and studied in Ulan-Ude ,Russia.

Returning home I studied French/Spanish to complete a B.A .in French/Spanish and B.Ed. in Modern Languages. In 2005, I studied in Guadalajara, Mexico where I met my wife Marisela at the University of Guadalajara. We have now been married nearly 11 years and have two boys, Andres (6) and Lucas (4). In 2016 I completed my M.Ed. in Literacy focussing on refugee education.

I have worked with the Lethbridge School District since 2009 and have worked at Wilson, Winston Churchill, and the Education Centre as Lead ESL Teacher. In my current role I provide both student and



teacher support for new English Language Learners. I work closely with immigrant services and other agencies to provide supports for students and their families.

I also work in schools teaching about the immigration experiences of new Canadians and building curriculum and supports with teachers who have new students.

23

Number of new Filipino  
students who have arrived  
in Canada

7,000

The number of islands in  
the country

117

The country's UN Human  
Development Index rating



# Resources:

Article:

Early Literacy Learning for Refugee Children: Parents' Critical Roles

<https://www.literacyworldwide.org/docs/default-source/where-we-stand/ila-early-literacy-learning-immigrant-refugee-children.pdf>



## Filipino students welcomed in Lethbridge School District

- The country is a collection of 7000 islands.
- Was a Spanish colony (1521-1898) and then an American colony (1899-1906).
- Ranked 117 of 187 on UN Human development index.
- Nearly 10 per cent of the 84 million citizens are migrants to other countries. Most are part of "labour export"
- Conflict on south island of Mindanao. Most migrants to Canada are not from that area but from around the capital Manila.
- Most students come with some level of English study as all students in the Philippines are expected to study English from Grade 1.
- We have seen an increase in migration from the Philippines during the presidency of Rodrigo Duterte (starting in 2016).
- The official language of the Philippines is Filipino (also known as Tagalog) a mix of Austronesian, Spanish and English.

## The role of the Literacy Lead Teacher

The primary role of the Literacy Lead Teacher is to provide school-based, job-embedded support for teachers as they implement effective literacy instructional practices.

One important way that the Literacy Lead Teacher works to support teachers is through residencies in schools. During a residency the Literacy Lead Teacher provides model lessons on a targeted focus, such as Writing Workshop, in classrooms. Often one classroom is used as a lab-site with other teachers joining in to observe as well. This serves as a catalyst for discussions and collaboration among teachers and with the Literacy Lead Teacher.

The Literacy Lead Teacher is also available to a school to provide professional learning on a broader scale on professional learning days or at staff meetings. Workshops on a various topics are also offered on a voluntary basis for teacher participation outside of the regular school day.



Collaborative planning is another way in which the Literacy Lead Teacher can provide expertise and support. The Literacy Lead Teacher can work with small groups or individuals in this process that can facilitate conversations about research-based effective practices.

## Getting to Know the Literacy Lead Teacher

Bev Smith is the Literacy Lead Teacher for Lethbridge School District No. 51

She joined the District in February 2016 after 25 years as a classroom teacher and three years in the same role in another school district.

Bev's classroom experience spans from Kindergarten to Grade Six. She obtained her Bachelor of Education degree from the University of Saskatchewan with specializations in Early Childhood Education and Reading. In 2012, Bev completed her Master of Education degree at the University of Lethbridge with a focus on Literacy.

Literacy has been an area of interest and focus of professional learning for her with attending the Lucy Calkins' Reading and Writing Project Summer Writing and Reading Institutes three times and most recently the Coaching Institute.

## This newsletter:

In this newsletter, there will be regular sections for you to enjoy including: country profiles/backgrounds, stories and pictures of school activities and events for ELLs, resources and research around best practice for ELLs. This week's profile looks at The Philippines.

This year, we had 23 new Filipino students arrive to Canada within the first two weeks of school.



## Video Links to Strategies for Developing Oral Language Skills

[http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/balancedliteracydiet/Oral\\_Language\\_ELL.html](http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/balancedliteracydiet/Oral_Language_ELL.html)

<https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/developing-communication-skills>

<https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/1-3-6-protocol>

# Oral Language – The Foundation of Literacy

Researchers have been saying for quite some time that oral language is the foundation of early literacy. I have recently been reading Visible learning for literacy: Implementing the practices that work best to accelerate student learning by Fisher, Frey and Hattie (2016). As I read the book this quote fascinated me:

The human brain is hardwired to learn to speak, due to evolutionary processes that evolved anywhere from 1.75 million to 50,000 years ago (Uomini & Meyer, 2013). But the act of reading is an invention, one that is only about 6,000 years old, and every brain must be trained to utilize spoken language structures to do the work of reading (Dehaene, 2009).

It just makes sense then that children who have a strong oral language foundation will find it easier to crack the code to reading and writing.

## What does Strong Oral Language Look Like?

Students who have benefitted from rich oral language environments have:

- Larger vocabularies—as much as a word gap of 30,000,000 words by age 3 (Hart & Risley, 1995)
- Incorporate new vocabulary into daily speech
- Demonstrate phonemic awareness including a sense of rhyme and the ability to manipulate and isolate spoken sounds
- Use more complex syntax and sentence structure in their conversations

• Hold conversations that include retell events in sequence, talk about feelings, wonderings, predictions, cause and effect

## Teaching Tip for Developing Oral Language Skills

- Ask questions that require more than a yes or no answer
- Strive for Five – in a conversation with a child try for five back-and-forth exchanges
- Use prompts such as "Say a little more about that" or "Tell me why you think that."
- Provide opportunities for students to engage in conversations with each other through strategies like Think-Pair-Share
- Reading aloud at least once a day and across subject areas