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LANGUAGE MATTERS

May
2018

Lethbridge School District No. 51

Supporting home literacies in the classroom

The 2017-2018 school year has seen incredible growth in the ELL populations in Lethbridge School district. Since September we have received nearly 200 new students between EEP and grade 12. This provides us with many challenges and opportunities to share and grow in the linguistic and cultural expertise that our students bring to our classrooms. As I meet with every student and their family before they begin, I often hear about the fears that students will begin to forget their first languages and literacies as they delve into the English language. Many parents feel the pressure to move to an English-only policy at home. We can support these families by encouraging the continuation of home literacy learning both for the benefit of first language and the growth of English. For students to find best growth in English we can provide:

- dual-language assignments through the help of Google Translate and Microsoft Translator,
- provide first language reading through en.childrenslibrary.org,
- send dual-language texts that can be ordered through our curriculum resource centre, and
- encourage parents to continue to speak and teach language and literacy at home



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The number of languages in which the Hold-On resource can be translated into.

100,000

Number of Bhutanese refugees who were once house in refugee camps.

70,000

The number of families included in a study to determine the amount of home access to books.

A detailed map of Nepal and its surrounding regions. The map shows Nepal's administrative divisions into seven regions: Bagmati (pink), Narayani (light blue), Janakpur (orange), Sagarmatha (yellow), Kosi (light green), Mechi (purple), and Lumbini (light pink). Major cities are marked with red stars: Kathmandu, Biratnagar, and Thimphu (in Bhutan). The map also shows the borders with China (Tibet) to the north, India to the south, and Bhutan to the east. A scale bar in the top right corner indicates distances of 0, 30, 60, and 90 km. A legend in the bottom left corner identifies symbols for Bhutanese Refugee Camps: Saniscare (triangle), Beldangi I (triangle), Beldangi II (triangle), Beldangi Extension (triangle), Timai (triangle), Khudnabari (triangle), and Goldrup (triangle). The map also shows the locations of several refugee camps, including Saniscare, Beldangi I, Beldangi II, Beldangi Extension, Timai, Khudnabari, and Goldrup. The map also shows the locations of several refugee camps, including Saniscare, Beldangi I, Beldangi II, Beldangi Extension, Timai, Khudnabari, and Goldrup.

We can encourage parents to continue to develop the languages and literacies at home by showing that we also value the histories, languages, literacies, and cultures that they have. Hold-On is a support tool you can give to parents describing the importance of holding on to their languages. Provided by Ryerson University, this resource can be printed and shared in 22 different languages. https://www.ryerson.ca/mylanguage/hold_on/

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 Bhutan.

about summer slide
youtube.com/

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Gm68Ovhc0M>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4EoFX5UHKhs>

More tips for teachers
www.scholastic.com/

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/blog-posts/danielle-mahoney/finish-off-the-year-with-amazing-summer-reading-plans/>

<http://www.scholastic.com/book-fairs/readerleader/ut-scores-soar-demonstrate-test-scores-soar-summer-reading-book-fair>

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Children who are given access to books over the summer perform 35-40% better on reading achievement tests than those without access to books.



Retrieved from:
<http://blog.firstbook.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Books-Beat-Summer-Slide.jpg>



SOURCE: Allington, Richard L., Anne McGill-Franzen, Gregory Camilli, Lunetta Williams, Jennifer Graff, Jacqueline Zeig, Courtney Zmach, and Rhonda Nowak. "Addressing Summer Reading Setback Among Economically Disadvantaged Elementary Students." *Reading Psychology* 31 5 (2010): 411-27. Web.

- Ethnically Lhotsampa
- 100,000 people in six camps.
- 5 of 6 camps are now closed.
- Often face medical difficulties
- Anemia.
- Vitamin B12 deficiencies.
- Malnutrition.
- Strong historical connections to caste system.
- Some had access to school in camps with large classrooms and few teachers.
- Mostly Hindi with some Muslim, Christian and Buddhist populations.
- Majority of children cannot read/write in Nepali.

Many of our students often refer to themselves as Nepali because they were born in Nepal and speak Nepali. But most of these students are actually Bhutanese refugees whose families were forced into southern Nepal in the Early 1990s. Lethbridge has the largest Bhutanese community outside of Bhutan and Nepal in the world.

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

Summer holidays are quickly approaching. Many of our students are eagerly awaiting the last day so that they can “let the fun begin.” All too often, that “fun” does not include reading. In September conversations among staff can be heard that go something like, “Last year Bev was able to do that. She had really come along in her reading and writing.” What may have happened is the “summer slide.” While that sounds like one of those fun activities our students were eager for, it is actually when our students lose, or are at a minimum out of practice with, the skills that they and we worked so hard to develop the previous year.

It has been reported that students possibly lose as much as three months worth of progress when they do not read during the summer months. The cumulative effect of this is staggering. In three years a the rate of three months growth lost/year will fall one year behind the grade equivalent average. By the end of grade six this student will be two years behind. This will undoubtedly affect their achievement in all subject areas. This is most prevalent in students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, but not limited to those from more impoverished homes. The good news is that this can be prevented when students read as few as five to six books over the entire summer.

So, why don't students read during the summer months? One of the biggest factors that affects summer reading is a lack of access to books. In one study of 70,000 families across 27 nations researchers found that, "...the effect of home access to books was about the same as parental education, twice as large as father's occupation, and stronger than family socioeconomic status" (Evans et. al, 2010 as cited in Cahill, et. al., 2013, p. 20). So if we want students to read during the summer we need to get books into their hands.

Access to books is one factor, but there is another factor that is hugely important—choice. Who chooses the books is critically important. Students must be given choice in what they read. Guthrie and Humenick (2004) found an effect size of 1.2 on reading motivation when students are provided with choice in their reading.

Social interaction around what students are reading also increases the motivation to read. When our students have a chance to share and discuss their reading with others they are more motivated to continue reading. They learn about what others are reading which leads them to having ideas for their next read.

By now you may be asking, “What can I do to get my students reading over the summer?” I have a few suggestions for access, choice and social interaction that I have adapted from the book *No More Summer-Reading Loss* by Cahill, Horvath, McGill-Franzen and Allington (2013).



Access

- Take your class to the public library or bookmobile and get them signed up for library cards.
- Hold a book swap within your classroom or school. Make sure every child leaves with at least one book.
- Organize a gently used book drive. Perhaps a local business or businesses would consider being drop off sites. After the books have been collected provide students with the opportunity to choose at least one book to take home.
- Teach children how to access books or other text online. Many families have at least one device that a student could use. There are many options for free text online.
- If you give your students a gift at the end of the year make it a book – and let them pick from a range of titles.

Choice

- Throughout the year include a variety of genres including information, poetry, articles, etc. in your read alouds.
- Provide students with book choices with diverse topics, genres, and reading levels.
- Introduce series books. Most adults who are readers recall one series that got them hooked on reading.

Social Interaction

- Book talk, book talk, book talk! Book talks by both and students exposes them to a wide range of titles that they can keep for the their next reads.
- Take "Shelfies" and post them in June of the books you and your students are planning to read in the summer. A shelfie is a picture of the spines of the books that a planned to be read.
- Develop blogs with students about their reading that could be maintained during the summer. A site like kidblog.org could be used for students to continue to share their reading lives throughout the summer.
- There are many sites in which students can read and write book reviews. One possibility is <http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/swyar/>

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