

# Identity Texts

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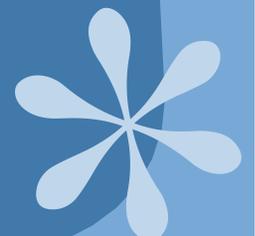


## Challenges we face

Madiha recalls being denied access to her first language at school (she was told by some teachers “don’t use it”)



cities are *linguistic graveyards* for the home languages of countless children (Cummins, 1991; Sirén, 1991; Wong Fillmore, 1991)



## Educational expectations are often lowered for students because they don't know English

Hira Ahmaad

①. When I am allowed to write stories in Urdu, I feel very comfortable because when I write English it's difficult for me. If I write in Urdu I feel very comfortable because in Pakistan people speak in Urdu and we also write in Urdu. Teacher give me a little work to do but I want to be smart and I want to do a lot of work. Teacher gives the little work because I can't speak in English. I want to be smart to tell teacher I know English very much.

②. Yes, I enjoy reading in Urdu because it's easy for me and I can understand it. In English, I can't understand very well. So, it's not so easy for me to understand English. I can read it very well but it's difficult for me to understand it. In Urdu, I can read anything.

③. When I am allowed to use Urdu in class it helps me because when I write in Urdu and then I look at Urdu words and English comes in my mind. So, it helps me a lot. When I write in English, Urdu comes in my mind. When I read in English I say it in Urdu in my mind. When I read in Urdu I feel very comfortable because I can understand it.

Hira writes:

*Teacher give me a little work to do but I want to be smart and I want to do a lot of work. Teacher gives the little work because I can't speak in English. I want to be smart to tell teacher I know English very much.*

Well-intentioned teacher: **assumption** that student can't handle work/content

Impact on student: frustration, disengagement

Little **output** doesn't mean little **input**



# Objectives of Presentation

- Why is it important to use students' linguistic and cultural identities as a base for curriculum
- In relation to ELLs what does it mean to build curriculum around their identities?



# Rationale

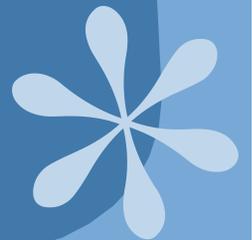
- Diverse cultural and linguistic student population is the norm.
- Historical disenfranchisement of immigrant populations in school settings.
- Common Core places an emphasis on academic language



## Our changing schools/societies have broadened the responsibilities of teachers and teacher educators

The role of teacher and school leadership in multicultural/multilingual settings must be re-examined.

1. What kinds of connections need to be in place in order to accentuate students' assets?
2. How will we enable all students to gain access and membership in school learning?
3. How can we legitimize the knowledge and experiences students bring to school?







# What does the research tell us about learning?

- Engage prior understandings

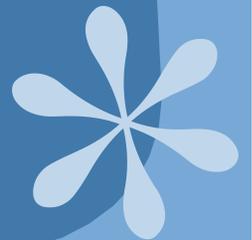
*“new understandings are constructed on a foundation of existing understandings and experiences” (Donovan & Bransford, 2005, p. 4).*

- Integrate factual knowledge with conceptual frameworks

*“deep understanding of subject matter transforms factual information into usable knowledge” (Bransford et al. p. 16).*

- Use metacognitive strategies to take active control over the learning process

*“a ‘metacognitive’ or self-monitoring approach can help students develop the ability to take control of their own learning, consciously define learning goals, and monitor their progress in achieving them” (Donovan & Bransford, 2005, p. 10)*



# How does this relate to ELLs?

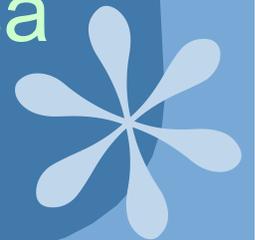
- Prior knowledge is encoded in first language (L1)
  - Value students' L1 as linguistic and cognitive asset.
  - Find ways to use L1 in teaching
  - Allow students to use L1 as a resource for learning



## One teacher's perspective

- “Rather than keeping this [linguistic transference] a hidden process, my aim is to give it a space in the class. And so [I create] opportunities ...[to] bring out the inner voice of the students and make what is invisible to the teacher visible.”

--Lisa

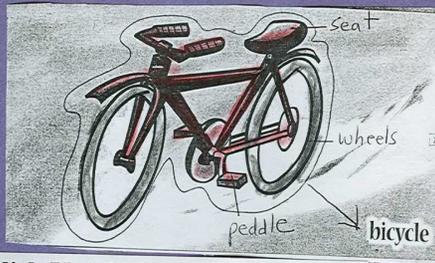


# Conceptualizing Identity Texts

*pedagogical practices - possible across all curricular areas  
re-position students at the centre of the classroom*

- **Identity texts** refer to artifacts that students produce. Students take ownership of these artifacts as a result of having invested their identities in them.
- Once produced, these texts (written, spoken, visual, musical, or combinations in multimodal form) hold a mirror up to the student in which his or her identity is reflected back in a positive light.
- Students invest their identities in these texts which then become ambassadors of students' identities. When students share identity texts with multiple audiences (peers, teachers, parents, grandparents, sister classes, the media, etc.) they are likely to receive positive feedback and affirmation of self in interaction with these audiences.





The English Knight

Once upon a time there was a very brave English knight who was the most famous/best knight in Europe. Every knight did have a horse but not this knight. This knight had a nice and strong dragon who spit fire when he fought. All the other knights would ride their horses and this knight would ride his dragon.

A year passed and a war erupted/started between England and Spain. The Spanish were leading in the war but suddenly the English knight on his dragon began to fight and within an hour all of England once again belonged to England.

And then, everyone honoured the English knight and made him into the king and called him King Arthur. The king knight Arthur conquered many countries with his dragon. He would tour around Europe to check that everything is ok in all of Europe.

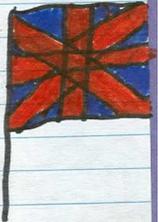
He was the symbol for law and order. England became a strong and serious country and started conquering other countries and other kingdoms. England became the strongest kingdom. The king knight Arthur arrived in

October 6, 2004

האגדה האנגלית

Tomer

היו היה פעם אביר אנגלי איתו מאבן הוא היה האביר האנגלי הטוב ביותר בקרובה לקדם אביר הוא סוס עליו נלחם האביר לא האב סוסים אבל הוא לא צדקון ונה חלק ויורק אל אביו הנלחמות כול האבירים היו נלחמים אל סוסים אבל הוא היה נלחם על הצדקון שלו עברה שנה והמלחמה נמשכה קר אנשים נלחמו הספרדים אובדו במלחמה אבל המלך ביקש האביר האנגלי על הצדקון שלו והוא נלחם נגדם שנה סוף אבדו הנה שנה שוב אנגלים ואז כולם נלחמו בקרב האנגלי ונלחמו איתו ואז הוא היה המלך אנגליה קראו לו המלך ארתור האביר המלך עשהו איתו ונלחם עמו בכבאצבזום עם הצדקון שלו האביר האנגלי היה עושה סיונים בארצות לנצוק שבתם כשהם כשהם אבדו הוא היה סוף המלך אנגליה המלך ליוט המלך בנינוט ומלכה אי הגמילה לכבוד אבדו זלבידו מלחמות אום היו המלכה אבו מלכה המלך אבדו המלך לכבוד הוא האב אום קנדה ונסה אומר לאבד מלכה האב אבו מלכה



Tomer sbahan

אביר מלך

# Dual Language Writing Process

- Tomer wrote this story in October. He chose these visuals around which he developed a story and wrote it in Hebrew.
- Lisa listened to him read it in Hebrew giving her the opportunity to see how he organized his writing, how much he wrote and to listen to his intonation and fluency while reading.
- With the assistance of another teacher in the school who spoke Hebrew, Lisa was able to learn more about the level of his vocabulary and to work on an English translation with Tomer.



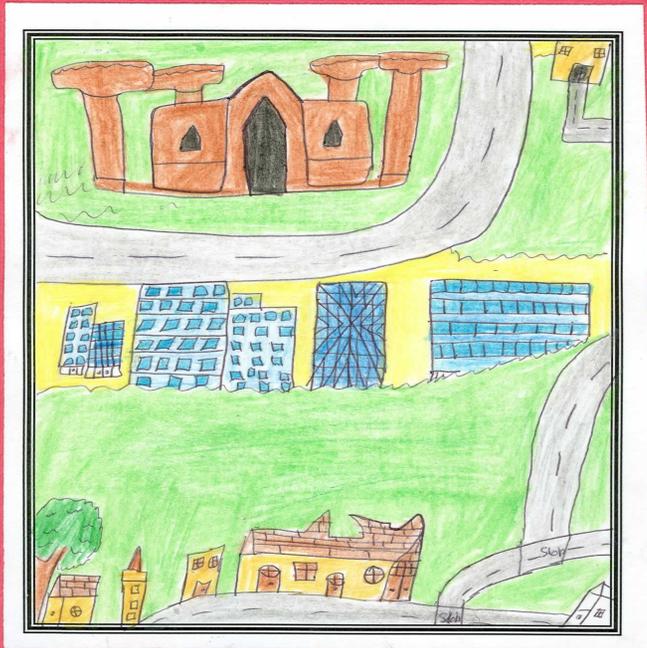
# Building on Students' Linguistic and Cultural Capital

- “Whether students are given the opportunity or not, its been clear to me that students learning an additional language, use their first language to help them make sense of not only grammatical tasks, but to make sense of the world around them since what is inside a language helps students see what they see and draw connections to old and new learning.”--Lisa
- “My intention is always [to be] drawing out that first language and cultural or prior lived experience as a way to make the connections between curriculum and what the child brings with him to the class.” --Lisa



# Unit: Communities around the world

Here a gr. 7 student **Aminah** describes big communities as having lots of land (Canada or Lahore, Pakistan) and small ones having little land and shares that in Pakistan there are both big and small communities (according to her definition). She later describes her small community Peace Village (pictures)



3- Communities can be big or small.

Some communities are big and ~~small~~ some communities are small. A big community has lots of land. A small community has little land. Pakistani communities can be big or small. My community in Maple, Ontario is small. It is called Peace Village in the Albradlyya community. Canada is a big community. There is lots of land in Canada. I like living in a big community. Pakistani communities can be big or small. Lahore is a big city in Pakistan and Islamabad's community is bigger than Lahore community. My community's name in Pakistan was Chabuzji. It is bigger than Peace Village community. I love living in a big community.

# Grade 5 English Language Learner *Practices writing descriptive paragraphs - writes about her home country, Turkey.*

## 3. Turkey

cold and hot. ✓  
Turkey is beautiful.  
beach and water.  
Turkey is big country.  
The important thing about turkey is  
that it is cold and hot. Turkey is beauti  
is beach and water. Turkey is a big country.  
But, the important thing about turkey is  
that it is cold and hot.

**Gizem shared: "I'm so happy  
to talk about Turkey with my  
friends at school"**

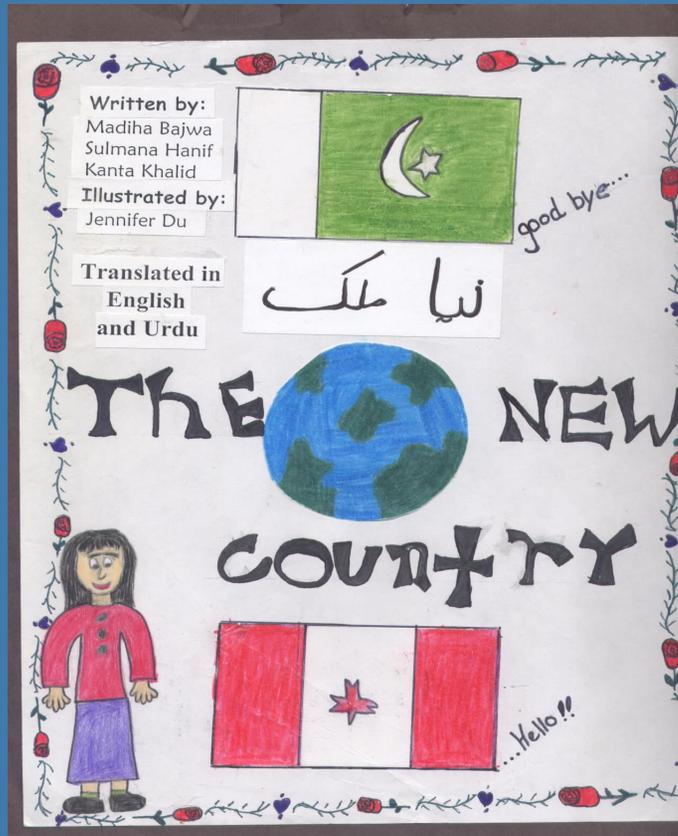
## Turkey



The important thing about Turkey is that it is cold and hot. Turkey is beautiful. There is beach and water. Turkey is a big country. But, the important thing about Turkey is that it is cold and hot.

# Dual Language Identity Texts

## *The New Country*



Collaborative writing piece

The expectation for this assignment was that it had to relate to the **theme Migration** and the storybook had to be written for a primary grade level audience.

Since the theme was Migration, the girls **used their lived experience as curriculum**. They created the character Sonia who leaves Pakistan to move to Canada. The 3 girls' immigration story is really encapsulated in the character Sonia.

### About The Authors

We are three best friends. Our names are Madiha Bajwa, Kanta Khalid, and Sulmana Hanif. We are in grade 7 at Michael Cranny E.S. in Maple, Ontario. This story we wrote mostly describes how hard it was to leave our country and come to a new country.

تین بہترین دوست ہیں، پہلا نام ہے مادیحہ باجوہ، کانتہ خلیل،  
اور سلمانہ حنیف۔ ہم کینیڈا میں پڑھتے ہیں اور ہم مائیکل  
کرنی ایلیمنٹری اسکول میں پڑھتے ہیں۔ ہم جیبل اور ٹیمر جو  
کینیڈا میں ہیں۔ ہم ایک کہانی لکھی ہے جس میں ہمارا ہیرو ایک  
ملک سے دوسرے ملک میں اپنا وطن چھوڑتا ہے۔



# The New Country

One day, Sonia came home from school after writing her final tests to enter grade 4. When she arrived home, her mother said, "I have great news for you!". Sonia asked, "What kind of news?" "We are moving to Canada next month to join your father," replied her mother. "What?, I don't want to move to a different country. I love all my friends and family here!", Sonia yelled.

ایک دن سونیا اسکول سے آئی تھی سلا نا امتحان دے کر چوتھی  
جہات میں جانے کے لیے جب سونیا گھر واپس آئی تو اس کی  
اُمی نے کہا کہ سونیا میرے پاس تمہارے لیے ایک بہت اچھی  
خبر ہے۔ سونیا نے کہا یہی اچھی خبر ہے، ہم اگلے صبح کینیڈا جا رہے  
ہیں تمہارے بوائے پاس اس کی اُمی نے کہا، "کیا؟ میں ایک  
ایدا ملک میں نہیں جانا چاہتی۔ اور میں اپنی دوستوں، اور  
خاندان کو چھوڑ کر نہیں جانا چاہتی سونیا نے جیک مار کر کہا۔

3



4



# Video Clip of Three Girls



# Turn and Talk

- What stands out to you in this video of the students working together?
- What types of engagement do you notice?



# Opportunities for Knowledge Building:

- First and second language development (e.g. vocabulary exploration)
- Meta-linguistic conversations about language
- The occasion to reflect on their own immigrant experiences
- Collaborative engagement



# What did we learn?

## Dual Language Book: *The New Country*

- **Linguistic negotiation and transfer**

Metasemantic awareness - Constant dialogue about which Urdu word would make most sense in a particular context

- **Vocabulary development**

Finding the correct English words to use and accessing classroom resources (dictionaries, thesaurus)

- **Linguistic expertise of Madiha** (newcomer) – she's controlling a lot of the *space* where she would not have been able to if this project did not reflect her identity knowledge, or give her the opportunity to express herself in her first language. This project made her a full and active participant in the literacy work of the class. She had a voice that was equal to everyone else (regardless of her English skills)



## Cross-Language Transfer Student perspective

- “Cause I never wrote in Urdu before so when Sulmana was writing I was like why aren't you starting with a capital? And she said we don't use capitals so that was really different even though I know how to translate really good now I didn't know how to write it. So it seemed like even though it was my language I didn't know much about it so I learned a lot.” --Kanta
- “The practice of writing in both languages helped us learn English because when you translate it you can see which word means what. For Madiha who was just learning English she could see what we had written in Urdu and have a better idea how to do it in English.” --Kanta
- “I think it helps my learning to be able to write in both languages because if I'm writing English and Ms. Leoni says you can write Urdu too it helps me think of what the word means because I always think in Urdu.”--Madiha



# Writing to Develop a Second Language

- Writing needs to be seen (and used) as a means to learning a second language (Harklau, 2002). An over-emphasis has typically been placed on the spoken language
- Dual language (writing in both languages) affords students the opportunity to see their first language alongside their second language and draw comparisons. This type of activity promotes noticing--an essential element of meta-cognitive learning.
- Allowing students to use their L1 enables greater potential for scaffolding of their writing--New students can be apprenticed into the writing process by their peers when they work in collaborative groups for writing projects



## *Literacy Engagement and Family Partnerships*

- “I had to ask my Mom a lot of words when we were writing it in Urdu but also before that, when I realized that we were going to be writing it in both languages I went home from that day and started reading more books in Urdu.”--Sulmana



# Identity Texts – what we've learned

- Students' culture and language can be integrated into school curriculum. They are valuable assets and resources for the classroom.
- There is increased engagement and confidence when students share about themselves.
- All students participate in the literacy interactions (regardless of English proficiency) in the class. No one is isolated. Differences are accepted.
- Parents of ELLs can contribute to their child's literacy development even if they have limited English skills.
- ELLs rely on their first language (L1) for second language learning (L2).



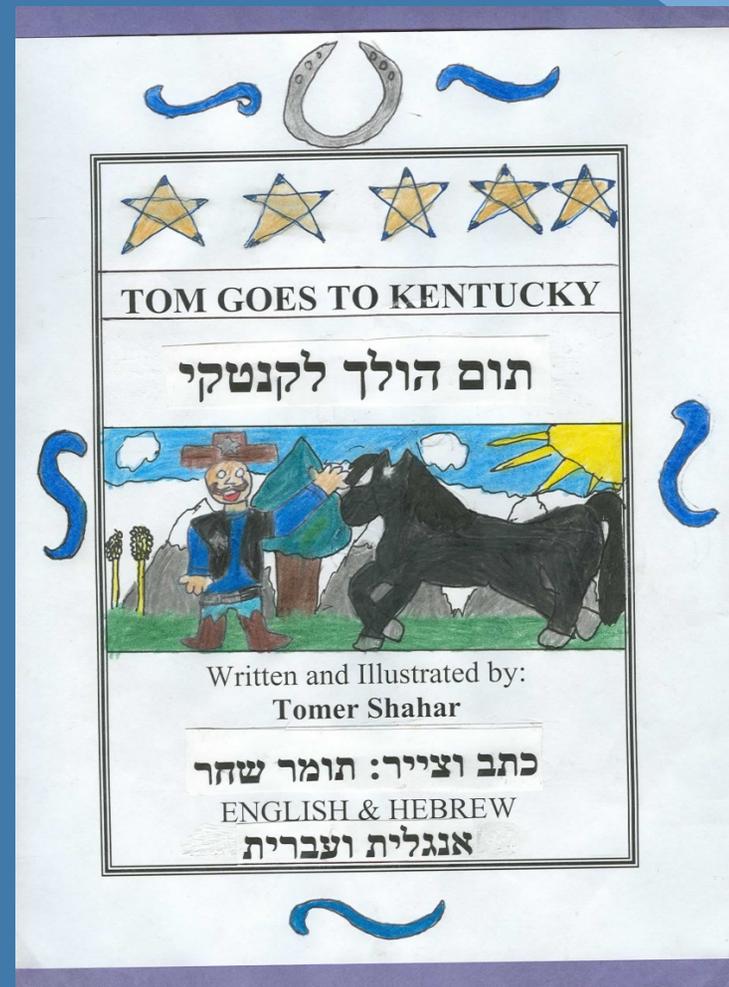
# Assumptions to challenge about new language learners

- Students lack experience and prior knowledge.
- Parents will have a hard time contributing to their child's literacy development because they have limited English skills.
- Being "literate" means that can read and write in English.
- Students' culture and language are irrelevant and cannot be integrated into the curriculum.
- It is hard to assess their literacy skills.
- If they are "allowed" to speak in their native language, they won't learn or want to learn the target language (let's listen to Tomer...)

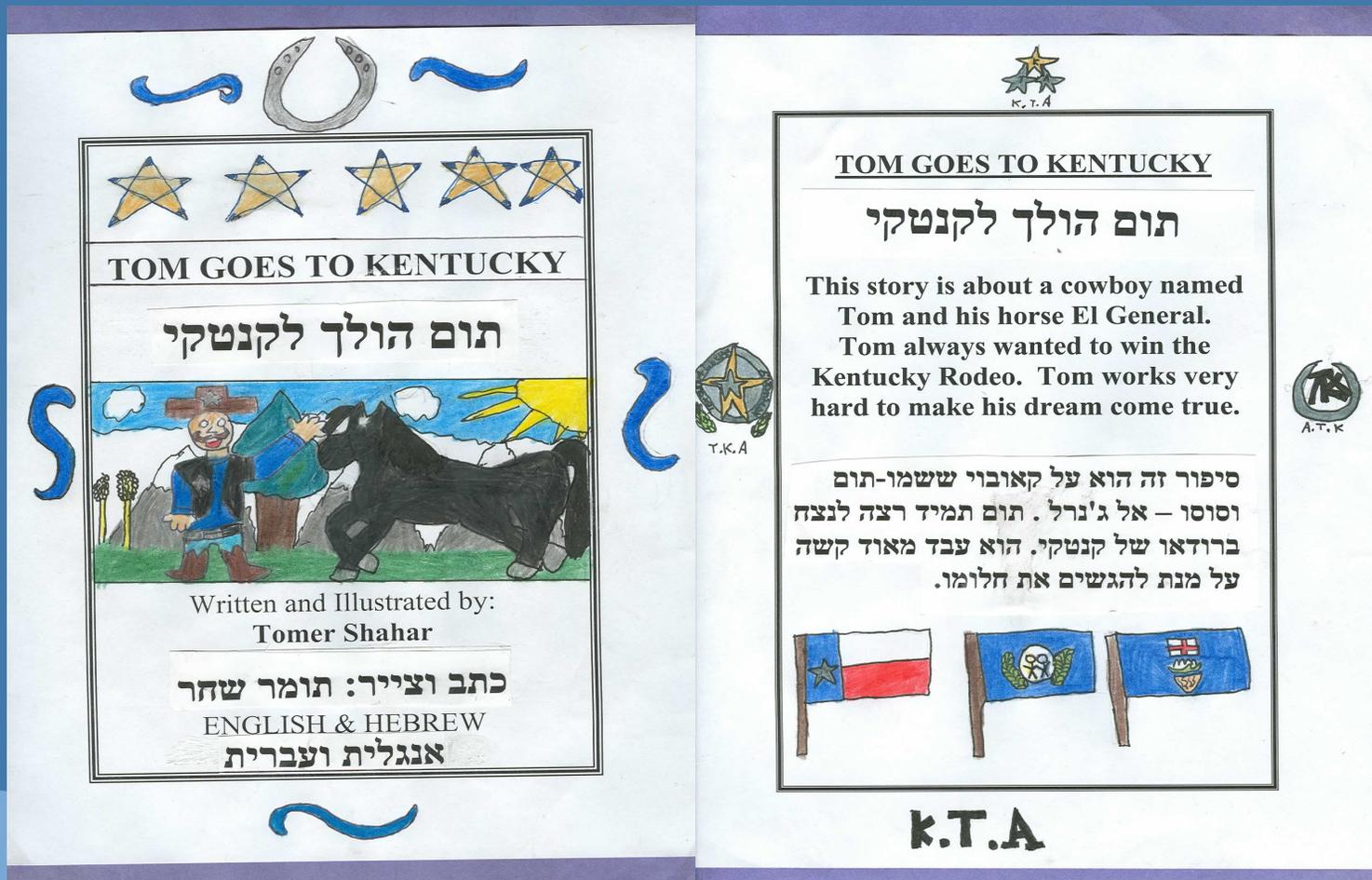


# Tomer's Perspective

- *I think using your first language is so helpful because when you don't understand something after you've just come here it is like beginning as a baby. You don't know English and you need to learn it all from the beginning; but if you already have it in another language then it is easier, you can translate it, and you can do it in your language too, then it is easier to understand the second language.*
- *The first time I couldn't understand what she (teacher) was saying except the word Hebrew, but I think it's very smart that she said for us to do it in our language because we can't just sit on our hands doing nothing.*



# Tom Goes To Kentucky



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

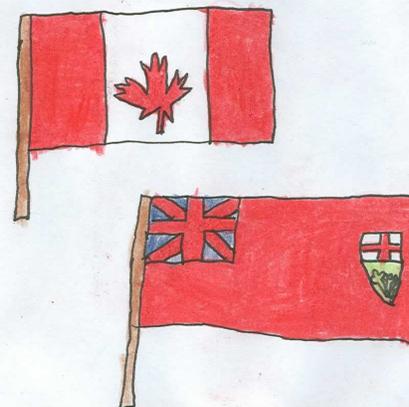
My name is Tomer Shahar.  
I am in grade 6 at Michael  
Cranny E.S. in Maple,  
Ontario. I am 12 years old.  
I am a new student in Canada.  
I came to Canada August 31, 2004.  
I love horses and in Israel I had  
12 horses on my farm.



Published by Michael Cranny E.S.  
Printed in Maple, Ontario  
Copyright 2005

### מידע על הסופר

השם שלי הוא תומר, אני לומד בכיתה ו בבית  
ספר מייקל קרייני, בית ספר יסודי  
בעיר מיפל אונטריו. אני בן 12, תלמיד חדש  
בקנדה, באתי לקנדה  
ב: אוגוסט 31, 2004. אני אוהב סוסים  
ובישראל היו לי 12 סוסים בחווה  
שלי.



פורסם בבית בספר היסודי "מייקל  
קרייני", נדפס במייפל, אונטריו, ב- 2005.

# Tomer discusses his book



# Tomer's Articulation of Process

- His interest- “as with everything--to do with horses”
- Audience-- “what would people like that has to do with horses?”
- Narrative structure-- one cowboy who loses, keeps trying and gets what he wants.-- “I think people like this kind of thing and I do too.”



## Language Transfer

- “When I am allowed to use Hebrew it helps me understand English. I am thinking in Hebrew and write in English. If I read in English I think in Hebrew and I understand more.”

-Tomer

## Bilingualism as an Asset

- “I think that’s good for who understand or English or Hebrew can understand that. Like one student come to Canada and to Israel and want to read this book if that’s only in Hebrew he can only see the picture and no understand. Now he can read in English the book and you can try in Hebrew. I think it’s good you know more than one language.”

-Tomer



# Examples of Curriculum Applications

## Identity Text: Tom Goes To Kentucky

### Language Arts

Write a speech about horse racing  
Research and write about jockey/horse/race  
Develop terminology related to sport

### Geography/Social Studies

History of horse races  
Maps of states where horse racing takes place

### Mathematics:

Statistics on horses  
Statistics on horse races  
Graphs and charts related to racing



# Relating to Common Core

- CCSS identifies what students should know and be able to do at different grade levels, not how teachers should teach;
- Emphasis on Academic Language Development—an important skill for ELLs (and all students). Should be a focus across the curriculum and in all subject areas.
- Focus on developing appropriate habits of mind through inquiry and higher-level thinking



# Relating Identity Texts to CCSS

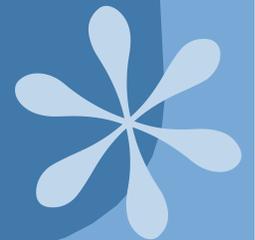
- CCSSELA-Literacy.W.3.3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique descriptive details and clear event sequences.



# *Identity and Academic Engagement*

- “I am proud of The New Country because it is *our* story. Nobody else has written that story. And when we showed it to Ms. Leoni she said it was really good. She said ‘It’s about your home country and family and Canada, it’s all attached, that’s so good.’ I like that because it means she cares about our family and our country, not just Canada. Because she cares about us that makes us want to do more.”  
--Madiha



# Resources

- [www.multiliteracies.ca](http://www.multiliteracies.ca)
- <http://www.thornwoodps.ca/dual/index.htm>
- [Colorincolorado.org](http://Colorincolorado.org)
- <http://blog.languagelizard.com/>

