



Designing Futures through Education:
Implementing Pedagogies that Weave Together Empowering
Interpersonal Spaces, Identities, Multiple Languages, and
Emerging Technologies

Jim Cummins

Ontario Institute for
Studies in Education at the
University of Toronto



BOKMÄSSAN
GÖTEBORG BOOK FAIR

Overview

- Given the multiple threats to human existence from climate change, environmental disasters, global conflicts, unprecedented movement of populations, and pervasive disinformation on social media, we need to ask what kind of education systems are required to prepare the next generation to resolve these threats more effectively than our generation has done.
- My answer is that we need to reinvent the deep structure of our educational systems so that three broad pedagogical goals are infused across the curriculum: *critical literacy, identity affirmation, and creative expression*.
- Teaching of content is important, but for most people graduating from high school, knowing about trigonometry, or the periodic table in chemistry, or micro details of history is not going to affect their lives or benefit their societies on an ongoing basis.
- However, being able to identify disinformation, analyze evidence in support of claims, and developing the ability to communicate across cultural, linguistic, religious, and political boundaries *is* going to make a huge difference within a democratic society. *Our education systems should be focused on ensuring that all students have ample opportunities to develop these skills and dispositions throughout their schooling.*

The theme of Space can also include the interpersonal spaces that we negotiate and create in our schools and societies



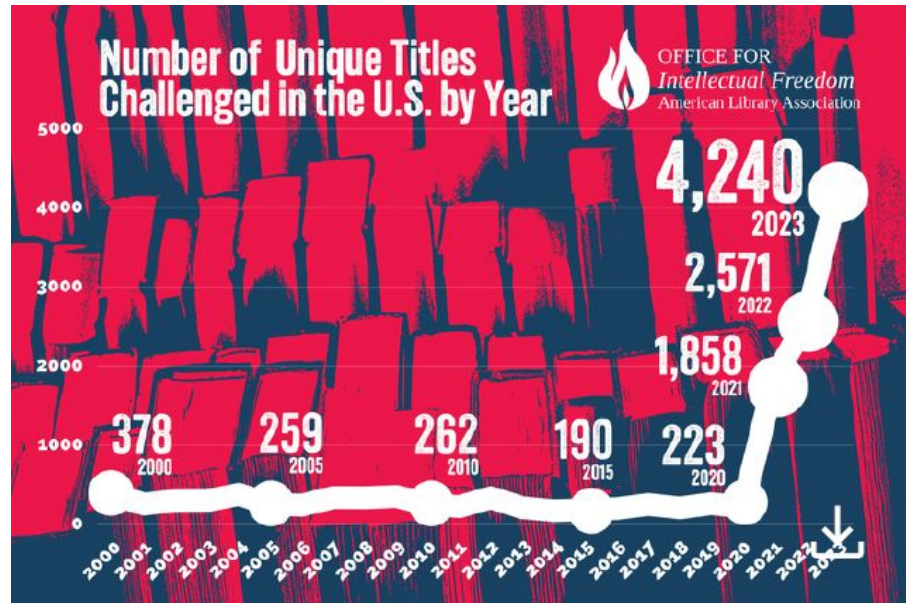
Theme Space at the Gothenburg Book Fair 2024

Through its theme Space, the Gothenburg Book Fair invites big conversations about modern technology, the boundaries of imagination, and the history and future of our life form.

Part 1

21st Century Societal and Educational Challenges

Culture wars, anti-immigrant riots and violence, climate change denial, and many other crises that the next generation will face



Floods, fires and record heat: Climate disasters multiply around the world



How can we create interpersonal spaces within our schools that expand student identities and generate power for students and teachers alike?

Our students are graduating into a national and global society characterized by multiple existential problems and challenges:

- Unprecedented movement of populations;
- Far-right neo-Nazi groups and political parties generating hatred and violence against refugees and minority populations;
- Climate change, environmental destruction, conflicts, and wars;
- Massive amounts of disinformation amplified by social media and artificial intelligence (AI).
- **In this context of critical levels of societal dysfunction, what skills, dispositions, and values do we need to nurture in the next generation to enable them to lead productive lives and, literally, save our planet?**

As educators, our interactions with students are constantly sketching a **triangular set of images**:

- an image of our own identities as educators;
- an image of the identity options we highlight for our students;
- an image of the society we hope our students will help form.
- ***This triangular set of images represent the deep structure of pedagogical interactions.***

Schools in many countries are also struggling to cope with changing social, demographic, and economic realities

There are stark contrasts, amplified by far-right social media disinformation, about what the core function of schools should be



Threats and violence against school staff and students have increased by 22% over the past five years, and teachers are more likely to be physically assaulted if they are women, according to a new report. ...

Recently, a preschool in Gothenburg was urgently closed after a security lockdown due to threats against staff, reports the tax-funded SR. According to the union, this was due to threats against the staff.

– *The staff were so frightened that they could not go to work. There were also security guards at the preschool, says Andrea Meiling, head of the Swedish Teachers' Association in Gothenburg.*



Is the U.S. Public School System Collapsing? New ProPublica Report | Amanpour and Company

Amanpour and Company   471  Share  Download ...

16K views 1 day ago #amanpourpbs

America's public school system is in crisis. Enrollment has plummeted since the pandemic, with one million families opting for private schools or homeschooling. The result? School closures across the country, with disproportionate impact on Black and Latino communities. ProPublica reporter Alec MacGillis joins Hari Sreenivasan to discuss his latest article for The New Yorker: "The D ...more

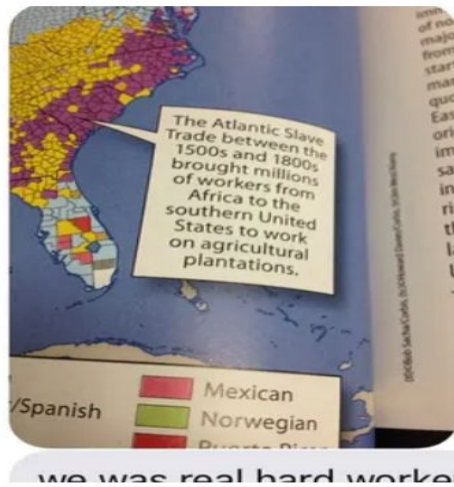
Sanitizing the curriculum to cover up historical atrocities

Textbook publisher apologizes for calling 'slaves' 'workers'

Lindsay Deutsch USA TODAY Network

Published 4:46 p.m. ET Oct. 5, 2015

[View Comments](#)



A screenshot of Roni Dean-Burren's initial exchange with her son over the caption in his 9th grade textbook. [Facebook/Roni Dean-Burren](#)

New Florida standards teach students that some Black people benefited from slavery because it taught useful skills

The standards, which were blasted by a statewide teachers' union as a "step backward," were approved Wednesday by the State Board of Education.

These examples (and many more!) illustrate how education has become a battleground in the 'culture wars.'

*They also illustrate how **societal power relations** play themselves out within the education system.*

*These power relations also highlight the importance of educators having a clear sense of their own **identities as educators**.*

The Fear of (Critical) Literacy



A book burning bonfire is held in Nashville, Tennessee, led by pastor Greg Locke

US public schools banned 10,000 books in most recent academic year
Survey by PEN America suggests bans nearly tripled nationwide from previous year's figure

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/sep/23/pen-book-bans>

- Literacy is dangerous and has always been so regarded. It naturally breaks down barriers of time, space, and culture. It threatens one's original identity by broadening it through vicarious experiencing and the incorporation of somebody else's hearth and ethos.
- So, we feel profoundly ambiguous about literacy. Looking at it as a means of transmitting our culture to our children, we give it priority in education, but recognizing the threat of its backfiring we make it so tiresome and personally unrewarding that youngsters won't want to do it on their own, which is of course when it becomes dangerous ...
- The net effect of this ambivalence is to give literacy with one hand and take it back with the other, in keeping with our contradictory wish for youngsters to learn to think but only about what we already have in mind for them.

(James Moffett, 1989, p. 85)

Critical literacy must be a/the central component of any education that aspires to prepare students for 21st century realities

- "Critical literacy is concerned with issues related to fairness, equity, and social justice. Critically literate students adopt a critical stance, asking what view of the world the text advances and whether they find this view acceptable, who benefits from the text, and how the reader is influenced. ...
- Opportunities should be provided for students to engage in a critical discussion of "texts", including books and textbooks, television programs, movies, documentaries, web pages, advertising, music, gestures, oral texts, newspaper and magazine articles, letters, cultural text forms, stories, and other forms of expression.
- Such discussions empower students to understand the impact on members of society that was intended by the text's creators.
- Language and communication are never neutral: they are used to inform, entertain, persuade, and manipulate."

Ministry of Education, Ontario (no date). *Critical thinking and critical literacy*.

<https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/program-planning/cross-curricular-and-integrated-learning/critical-thinking-and-critical-literacy>

Part 2

The Way Forward...

We need schools that:

- Enable students to develop critical literacy in order to evaluate evidence and alternative perspectives, and reduce the potency of indoctrination and disinformation;
- Affirm all students' identities by acknowledging and valuing the cultural and linguistic capital they bring to school;
- Create an ecosystem within the school, and in out-of-school contexts, that fosters students' creative talents;
- Uses powerful technological innovations (e.g., AI) to extend students' knowledge of academic content, as well as their creative and intellectual horizons.

We need teachers who are willing to challenge coercive relations of power

What Image of the Student Are We Sketching in Our Instruction?



Empowerment = the collaborative creation of power in teacher-student interactions

Identity negotiations extend along a continuum between coercive and collaborative relations of power

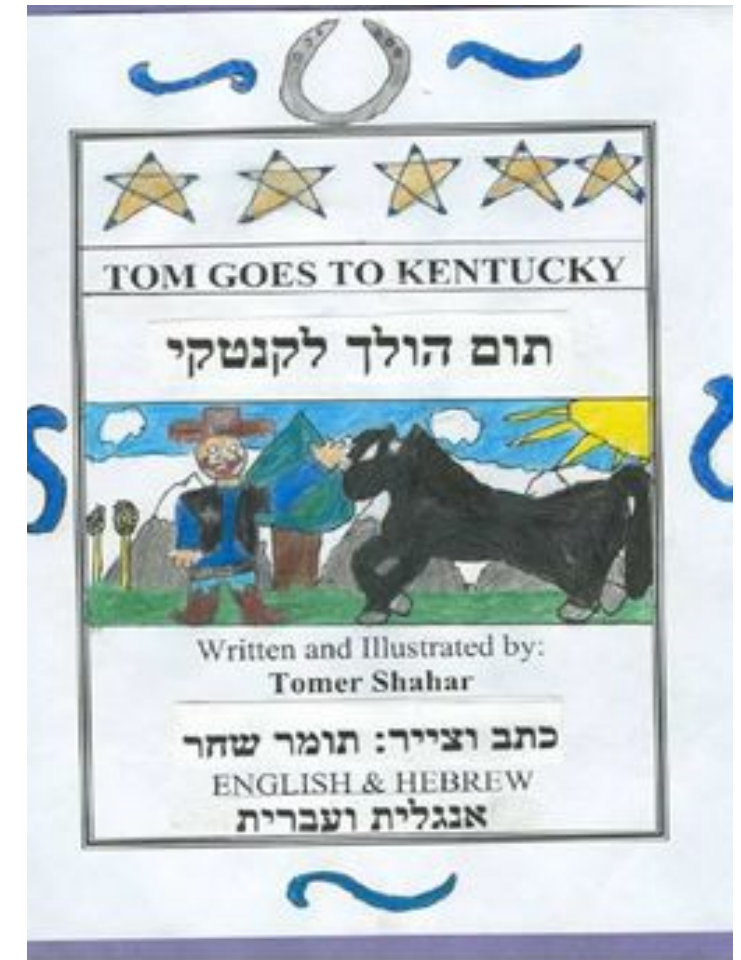
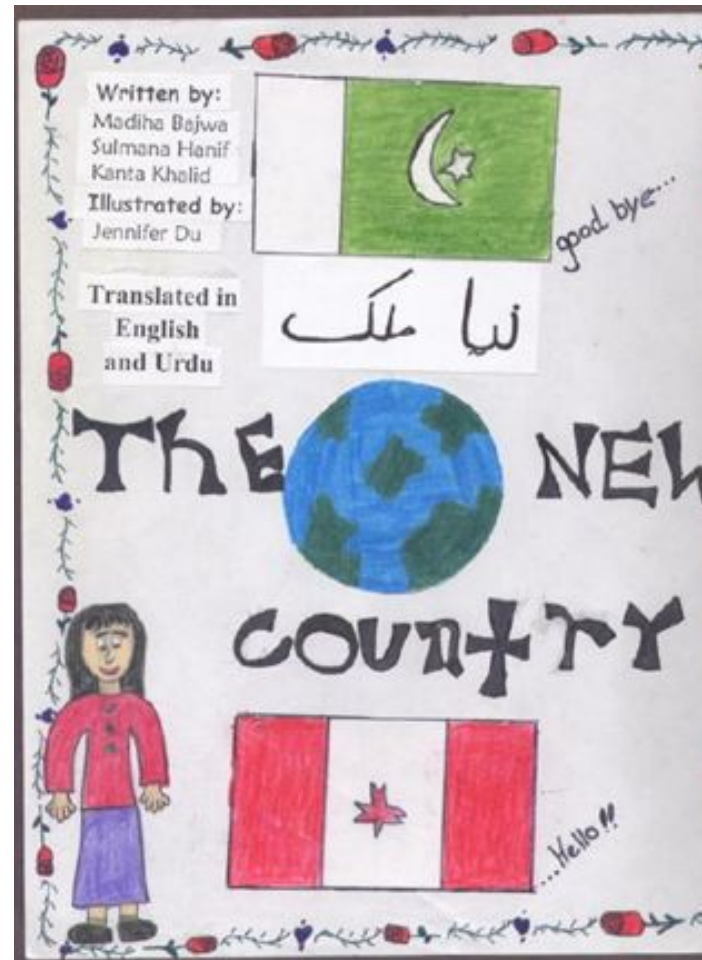
- **Coercive relations of power** refer to the exercise of power by a dominant group (or individual or country) to the detriment of a subordinated group (or individual or country).
- **Collaborative relations of power** operate on the assumption that power is not a fixed pre-determined quantity but rather can be *generated* in interpersonal and intergroup relations. In other words, participants in the relationship are *empowered* through their collaboration such that each is more affirmed in her or his identity and has a greater sense of efficacy to create change in his or her life or social situation.
- Thus, power is created in the relationship and shared among participants. The power relationship is *additive* rather than *subtractive*. Power is *created with others* rather than being *imposed on* or *exercised over others*.

The Multiliteracies Project
(Early & Cummins, 2002 -
2006); Cummins & Early,
2011)

Creating Dual Language
Books in the English-Medium
Classroom:

Insights from Multilingual
Learners

Two examples of empowering
pedagogy from Lisa Leoni's
grade 7 and grade 6 classes



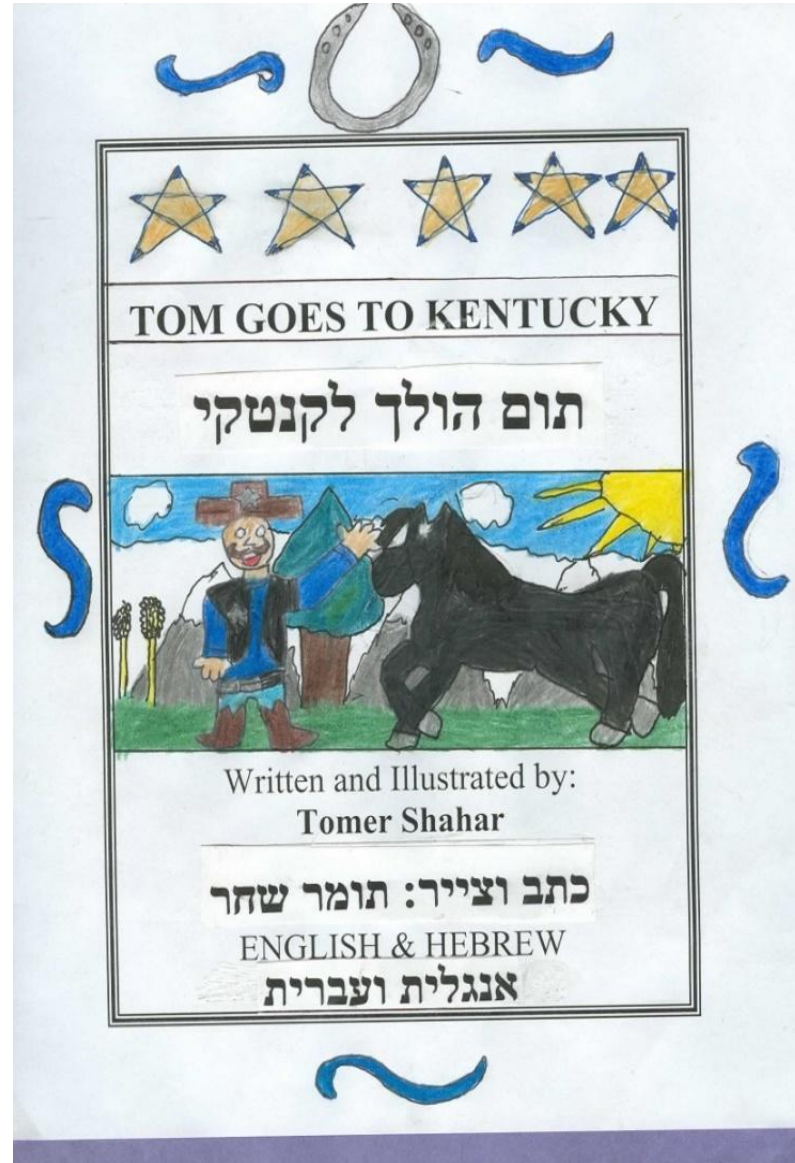
Kanta's Perspective

Kanta (Grade 7 student from Pakistan - wrote Urdu-English book with 2 classmates)

- And how it helped me was when I came here in grade 4 the teachers didn't know what I was capable of.
- I was given a pack of crayons and a coloring book and told to get on coloring with it. And after, I felt so bad about that--I'm capable of doing much more than just that. I have my own inner skills to show the world than just colouring and I felt that those skills of mine are important also.
- So, when we started writing the book [*The New Country*], I could actually show the world that I am something instead of just coloring.
- And that's how it helped me, and it made me so proud of myself that I am actually capable of doing something, and here today [at the Ontario TESL conference] I am actually doing something. I'm not just a coloring person—I can show you that I am something.

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 [Lisa] 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.



What pedagogical strategies are operating in these dual language book examples?

Connect to students' lives;

Affirm student identities by enabling them to create literature, drama, and art that expands their sense of who they are and who they can become.

Engage students' multilingual abilities by bringing students' languages into productive contact and promoting crosslinguistic transfer;

Reinforce knowledge of academic language;

Expand literacy engagement;

The Transformative Power of Projects Focused on Identity



This experience gave me a gift of poetry. I started to develop a passion for poetry during this project. I didn't know I had this passion. Since this project I have written and shared many pieces of poetry. ...

Participating in this project was like hearing a collective voice telling me: 'We are proud of you. We care about you. You have a future.'

Being able to express my thoughts about who I am as an Anishinaabekwe (an Ojibwe woman) made me feel like I belonged and was connected to a larger community. (Montero et al., 2013, p. 88)



Affirming Identity through Powerful Project-Based and Arts-Based Learning

-
- Take away identity and what do you have?
 - If you have a student that doesn't know who they are, do you think they care about what goes on in the classroom?

Montero, M. K., Bice-Zaugg, C., Marsh, A. C. J., & Cummins, J. (2013). Activist literacies: Validating Aboriginality through visual and literary identity texts. *Journal of Language and Literacy Education*, 9(1), 73-94.

(<http://jolle.coe.uga.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Validating-Aboriginality.pdf>)

Cassandra Bice-Zaugg, Mississauga of the New Credit First Nations, Ontario

Teacher: Tobin Zikmanis

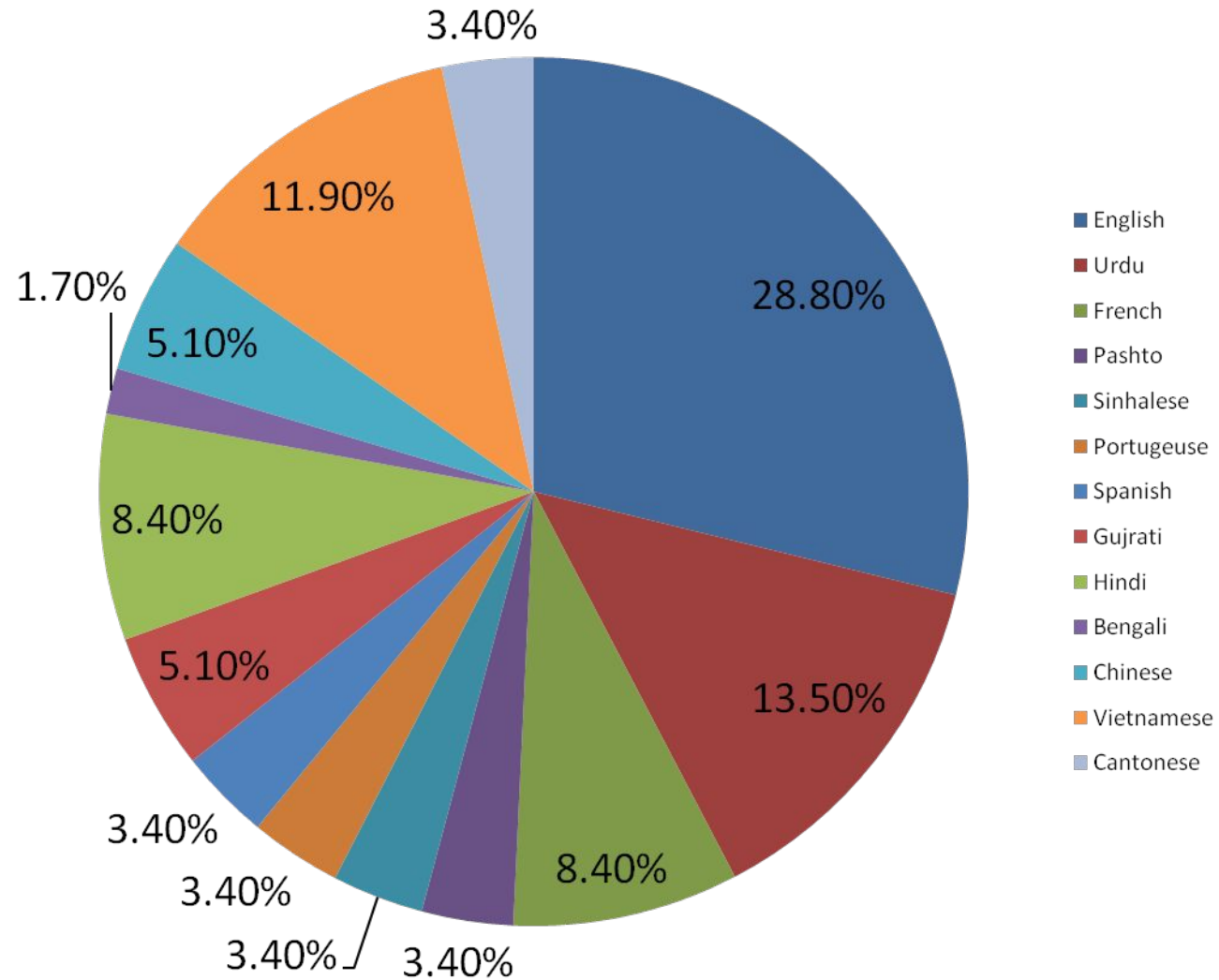
School: Thornwood Public
School

Grade 5
Data
Management
Unit:
Thornwood's
Diversity
Project



Part 3.1

Grade 5 - Languages Spoken



Roberto Di Prospero, the principal of Silver Creek Public School in Mississauga, Ontario, grew up in an Italian immigrant household, with parents who spoke Italian:

"I went into school with two languages, and I left with one.

This is the exact opposite of what education should do;

it should add things, not take away things."

(Le Pichon, E. & Kambel, E-R. (2022). The Language Friendly School: An inclusive and equitable pedagogy. *Childhood Education*, 98:1, 42-49, DOI:10.1080/00094056.2022.20205382022)



Silver Creek Public School, Peel Board of Education



Emmanuelle Le Pichon & Ellen-Rose Kambel (2022). The Language Friendly School: An Inclusive and Equitable Pedagogy, *Childhood Education*, 98:1, 42-49.

The overall vision of the Language Friendly Schools Movement is as follows:

As educators, we should be working as a whole school community to transform our schools into *Language-Friendly ecosystems*

- where students' languages are recognized and affirmed,
- where all students can expand their identities as they become aware of how language works in our heads, our families, and our societies,
- and where students can begin to use their entire multilingual repertoire for powerful (identity-affirming) purposes.

(languagefriendlyschool.org)

Binogi: A technology platform that provides curriculum access to newcomer students through multilingual instruction

- Binogi is an online system developed initially in Sweden in 2011 designed to support students in gaining access to and learning curriculum content.
- Curriculum content is presented through 3-5-minute animated modules that are narrated both orally and in written form (subtitles) in multiple languages (see binogi.com).
- Students (or teachers) can choose the language in which they want to listen to the content, and they can also choose the language of the written subtitles.
- For example, Arabic-speaking students could access a mathematics lesson on 'the common denominator' in Fractions by listening to the lesson initially in Arabic with written support from Arabic subtitles.
- As their proficiency in the school language increases, they could access this content in the school language, or listen to the content in the school language while continuing to use the Arabic subtitles as a support for comprehension

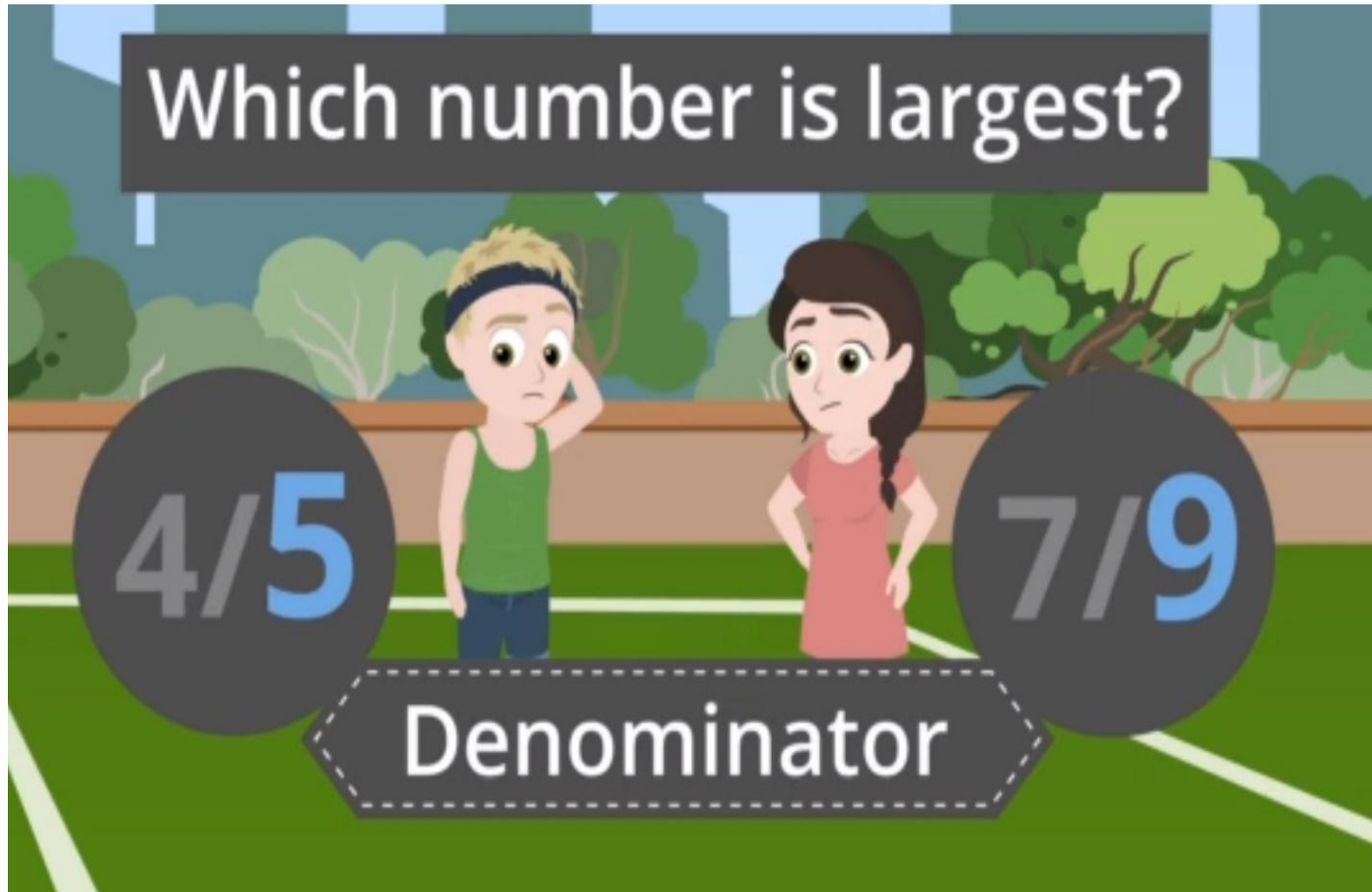


Spoken language

Subtitles

- | | | | |
|----------|---------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| English | Arabic | English | Arabic |
| Dari | Finnish | Dari | Finnish |
| French | German | French | German |
| Somali | Spanish | Polish | Russian (Auto-translation) |
| Swedish | Thai | Somali | Spanish |
| Tigrinya | | Swedish | Thai |
| | | Tigrinya | Turkish (Auto-translation) |
| | | Ukrainian (Auto-translation) | No subtitles |

Binogi as a Potential Resource



Grade 6 Students' Reactions to Binogi (Toronto Pilot Study)

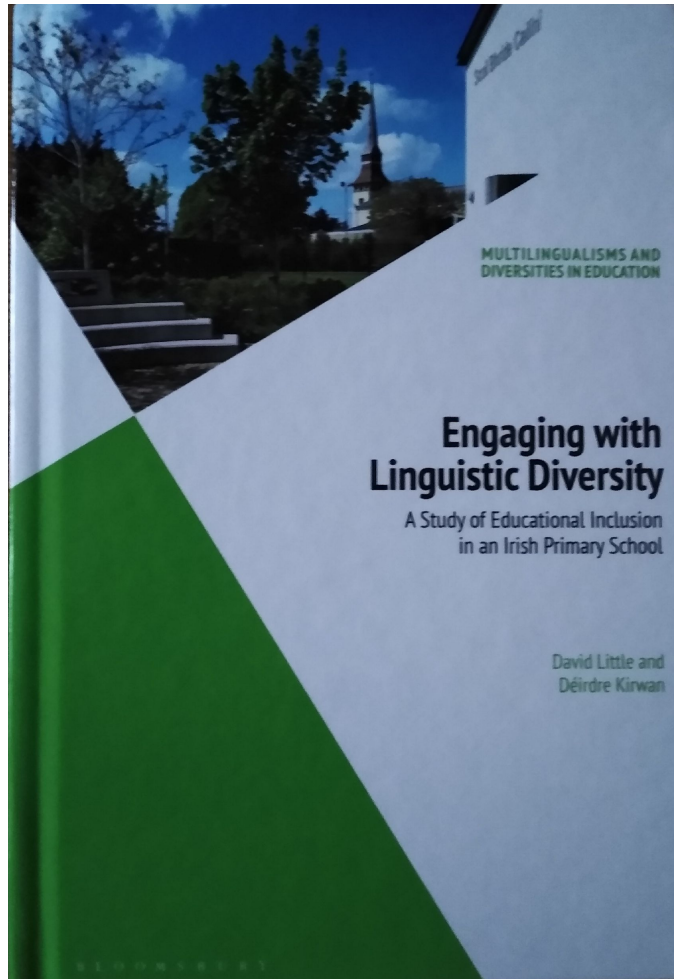
What I like about Binogi is:

What I liked about Binogi
is that they have characters
so it won't be boring. I
also liked how Binogi has varieties
of different languages so many people
can learn math with whatever language
they are comfortable with

What I like about Binogi is that they have characters, so it won't be boring.

I also like how Binogi has varieties of different languages, so many people can learn math with whatever language they are comfortable with.

Scoil Bhríde: An Inspiring Example of Language-Friendly Pedagogy



Fintan O’Toole: Schools with immigrants producing tomorrow’s Irish speakers

Fintan O’Toole, Irish Times, November 26, 2019

- Imagine a classroom in which half a dozen children are retelling an Irish legend in half a dozen other languages, translating, inquiring, playing with the infinite diversity of words. What a fabulous educational experience that must be – working-class kids getting a daily course in applied linguistics that would be hard to match at university.

Little & Kirwin, 2022, p. 286:

“When introducing and discussing new concepts, teachers routinely ask EAL pupils to contribute words from their home languages for purposes of comparison and contrast. This has a strong positive impact on the development of pupils’ English vocabulary.

For example, fractions are introduced in Third Class, when pupils are 8+ years old. One teacher did this by associating *fraction* with *fracture* and eliciting synonyms (*break, split*). She also asked for words for *break* in other languages. A Romanian pupil offered *rupt*, which others were quick to link to the *eruption* of a volcano, *interruption* and *disruption*.”

The Way Forward:

How can we create an institutional structure that builds on the inspirational work of educators and schools?

Top-Down initiatives can play a major role!

The previous examples have illustrated the power of educators as *knowledge generators*:

Educators, individually and collectively, made *choices* that created an instructional ecology that

- affirmed the value of students' languages,
- expanded students' identity options, and
- promoted powerful forms of creative expression and literacy engagement.

The Language Friendly Schools network provides an international community that is reinforcing and legitimizing language-friendly and literacy-friendly pedagogy:

But, in order to spread and institutionalize this vision of education, it will be necessary to form partnerships with government policymakers, school system leadership, and community agencies.

This process is beginning to happen in Ireland.

Recent Irish government policy initiatives

- The Language-Friendly plurilingual pedagogical initiatives in **Scoil Bhríde** (e.g., Little & Kirwin, 2019) have been supported and expanded by the Irish government in its **Languages Connect** strategy that provides a wide variety of resources and funding possibilities for schools that pursue school-wide policies to bring all the languages of the school into productive contact (English, Irish, foreign languages taught in the school, immigrant students' home languages).
- Ireland has also initiated a **Creative Ireland** program to promote the creative potential of children and young people.
- These initiatives make explicit the **Image of the Child** that is envisaged in Irish schools.



How can we help you?

[Fun with Languages](#)[Languages at Home](#)[Guidance for Parents](#)[Library Projects](#)[Summer Camps](#)[Mother Tongues](#)

What we do

Foreign language skills connect people to more personal, professional, social and cultural experiences. Right now in Ireland, language skills are more important than ever to keep us connected to new and exciting global opportunities.

The aim of Languages Connect is to build awareness of the many advantages of having foreign language skills, and to make foreign language learning more appealing to everyone. We've done a lot since launching in September 2018 and we're introducing more new and exciting projects and events all the time.





Mother Tongues

Promoting multi-lingualism through creativity



Who are Mother Tongues?

Mother Tongues is a social enterprise working to promote multilingualism and intercultural dialogue in Ireland.

They have three interconnected goals:

- Educating and empowering parents and educators
- Creating networks and support groups for multilingual families
- Raising awareness of the benefits of multilingualism and intercultural dialogue for individuals and society

They reach their goals by:

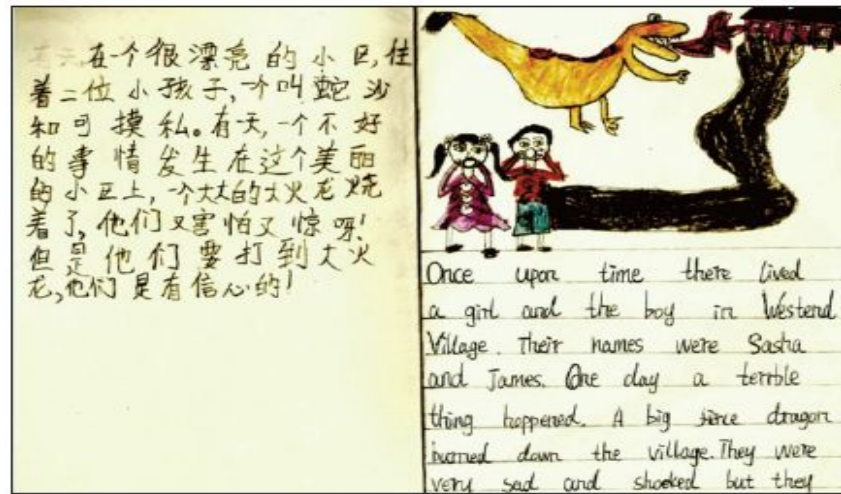
- Harnessing the power of creativity to promote intercultural dialogue



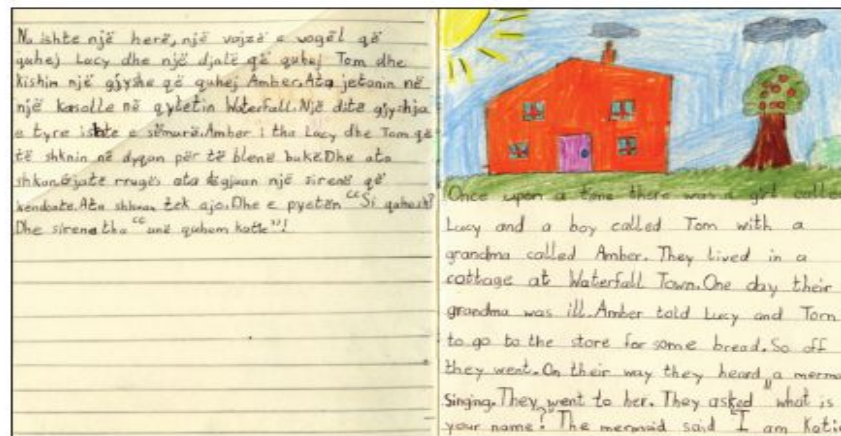
Language and Languages in the Primary School

Some guidelines for teachers

by David Little and Déirdre Kirwan



Third Class: Dual language storybook written in Chinese (unaided) and English



Third Class: Dual language storybook written in Albanian (with help at home) and English

<https://ppli.ie/ppli-primary-guidelines/>

The Power of Creative Expression in Education: Enabling students to take ownership of talents they didn't even know they had

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZgtL1pWdbYA>

5/20/24, 10:28 AM

'We got the energy': Irish children's rap video goes viral | Ireland | The Guardian

Ireland

'We got the energy': Irish children's rap video goes viral

The Spark, a song created by a group of nine-to-12-year-olds including refugees, has amassed 8.6m views



<https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/may/20/the-spark-irish-childrens-rap-video-goes-viral>

<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2024/sep/12/they-p-ut-cork-on-the-map-what-the-kids-behind-rap-sensation-the-spark-did-next>

The Spark was created on a shoestring budget by Rhyme Island, a youth rap project based at **Kabin Studio**, a non-profit at Knocknaheeny, a suburb of Cork, in collaboration with **Creative Ireland**, a government initiative that funds Cruinniú na nÓg, an annual celebration of youthful creativity.

The song features about 30 children aged nine to 12 from the neighbourhood plus a group who live in refugee accommodation in Lisdoonvarna, County Clare.

Over two and a half high-octane minutes they dance, run and rap. “Think you can stop what we do?” asks the opening lyric. “I doubt it,” the performers declare. “We got the energy, we’ll tell you all about it. I searched for my spark and I found it.”

The children developed the chorus and first verse during an Easter camp, after which tutors took the material to an asylum seekers’ accommodation and support refugee centre in Lisdoonvarna, where more children helped to complete it.

The rap has become a viral sensation that, as of September 13, has amassed more than 51m streams across multiple platforms, **half a billion views on Instagram and more than 1.3bn views on TikTok**.

<https://www.theguardian.com/news/audio/2024/sep/13/crew-behind-the-spark-how-2024s-surprise-hit-came-to-pass-podcast>

Blast off like a rocket off to outer space

Think you can stop what we do? I doubt it
We got the energy, we'll tell you all about it
I searched for my spark and I found it
Everybody in the crowd start bouncing [2x]

Making **bangers*** at a young age
My pen setting fire to the page
I will show you how to rock that stage
Listen to this in the car, you'll be getting road rage

Listen up cause what we do every day is decent
Kabin Crew non-stop, on top of every playlist
If we see a dream, you know we're gonna chase it
So get over any fear you have, just face it

That's my passion and I couldn't live without it
You can do it like we do it, don't doubt it
Any obstacle we find a way around it
If you're proud of who you are and what you do, shout it

* a song with a loud, energetic beat that is good for dancing to.

Going through my town people be like, who are they
Moving to my music, yeah, that gets me through the day
I create my own way, feeling super slay
Express my art, that's how I communicate

In my imagination never feeling out of place
Blast off like a rocket off to outer space
Living large, reaching for the stars
Let them all know us kids are in charge

Feeling awesome any time I rap
Taught to blossom when I'm on a track
Spittin bars, top class full of energy, no cap
Cruinniú na nÓg, Rhyme Island is on the map

Think you can stop what we do? I doubt it
We got the energy, we'll tell you all about it
I searched for my spark and I found it
Everybody in the crowd start bouncing

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZgtL1pWdbYA>

The Guardian Podcast, September 13, 2024

Creating The Spark: the kids behind 2024's surprise summer hit – podcast

<https://www.theguardian.com/news/audio/2024/sep/13/crew-behind-the-spark-how-2024s-surprise-hit-came-to-pass-podcast>

Interview with Darren Short, 15-year-old from Knocknaheeny, Cork, Ireland, member of the Kabin Studio

Q. What do you think about the fact that it was this collaboration between the Kabin kids and the kids up from Lisdoonvarna coming from all around the world, maybe some of them fleeing war, coming to Ireland to be safe?

A. It's inspiring, dude, like, they fled their country, they're in a bad place, like, to give them this opportunity. Every time I see them, they look so bright and cheerful, and genuinely they're amazing kids, and I wish the best for them.

Q. Over in England in recent weeks, and definitely up in Belfast, there have been riots, some people protesting against immigration, and I guess this is showing a different, like a positive side towards the potential that immigrant children in particular can have. Do you believe that this can be a powerful message?

A. Yeah, 100% like, do you know, the people looking at the negatives of it, they're just ignorant. Those kids have done nothing, so to take it out on the kids, it's bad. I feel like people just blow it out of proportion because it's unknown. And it's not familiar to them; like when one person, they're not familiar with it and they just decide, "yeah, let's hate everyone who looks like him, or who are from the same country. It's disrespectful to say that as an Irish person. We fled the country after the famine; we went everywhere, America, England, Australia. Like, we were the biggest immigrants at one point, and we were welcomed with open arms. These people are coming, they're working, they're providing for their families. I don't see a problem at all, and if you ask me, if you're hating on these immigrants, bro, you're not Irish. It's that simple.



What Image of the Student Are We Sketching in Our Instruction?



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