

# Using Identity Texts in Creative Writing with EAL Learners

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### Context 1: UK

- January 2017 over 1.5 million students with L1 other than English in UK schools (EAL)
- · Increasing year on year
- No ring-fenced govt. funding therefore...
- Declining support in schools and LAs
- · Trainee teachers given very little training
- · 94 words in the National Curriculum on EAL
- Must learn the English language whilst learning the contents of the curriculum
- Same assessments as native English speakers
- Danger of underachievement...

Context 2: One school

 A state-funded Muslim girls' high school since 2001\*

- In Bradford, an industrial, ethnically diverse city in the north of England
- 30 feeder schools
- Rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted
- High achieving 1<sup>st</sup> in the UK for 'Value Added' twice
- Regularly 1<sup>st</sup> in Bradford for 'Pupil Progress' measures in

English for learners at all ability levels

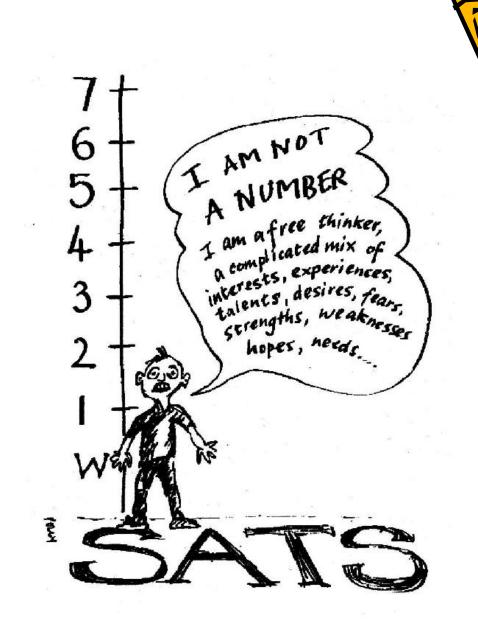


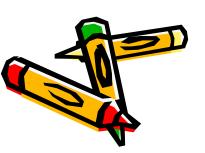
## Context 3 - The students

- Most born in the more deprived areas of the inner city - 34% free school dinners
- 90% use EAL in their every day lives South Asian mother tongues and Arabic
- · Educated for at least 6 years in the UK system
- · 'More advanced bilingual learners' (DCSF 2009)
- · Most teachers think support not needed
- · Little experience of academic English at home
- · High % not required standard by end of primary
- Each year some students arrive from overseas 'new to English'

- New arrivals?
- Advanced bilingual learners?

## All Individuals





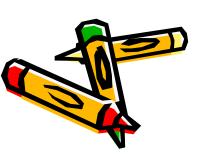
## Context 4 - The teachers

- Mainstream teachers a mixture of Muslims of similar ethnicity to the students and non-Muslims
- Bilingual and monolingual TAs also support in class
- EAL Coordinator responsible for:
  - making initial assessments for students transitioning at age 11 from primary school
  - interviewing new arrivals from overseas, making initial assessments and language plans
  - analysing results for common difficulties
  - training staff on setting appropriate targets and using support strategies to ensure progress.
  - training staff in other schools, NQTs and trainee teachers

### Overview

In this presentation I will share several tried and tested approaches to creative writing which encourage EAL students at different stages of English proficiency to:

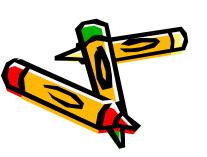
- use their identities and prior knowledge to gain confidence,
- · raise self esteem,
- accelerate their English acquisition and
- · ultimately improve their attainment



## Principles of good practice

According to NALDIC, the UK's national subject association for EAL, there are **five** principles which underpin good practice for pupils learning EAL.

Ref: NALDIC Working Paper 5 The Distinctiveness of EAL: a cross curriculum discipline. Edited by Hugh South 1999 (pages 14-16)



- · Activate prior knowledge in the pupil
- Provide a rich contextual background to make the input comprehensible
- · Actively encourage comprehensible output
- Draw the learner's attention to the relationship between form and function; point out key grammatical elements and make them explicit
- · Develop learner independence



NALDIC (1999)



## 1. Identity texts for initial assessments



## English Proficiency Codes

- From January 2017, UK Department for Education School Census required English Proficiency codes for all students with EAL:
- · Code A: New to English
- · Code B: Early Acquisition
- · Code C: Developing Competence
- · Code D: Competent
- · Code E: Fluent

EAL Assessment Frameworks, e.g. The Bell Foundation, provide descriptors for each Code which can be used to set targets for language development and recorded to show progress.

Activity 1: Assess the example scripts using the writing descriptors on the Bell Framework

## Initial Assessments

حىاتى

رضا كت عيشة في السعودية ولمية هاك المناك و مني السعودية والمركز هناك و مني أسوق كشوريه المركز المناك و مني أساكت (دَرَى وَ مراس أَفِله كانت مهتمهم عبدًا باللغه والربانية وقال والربانية وبعد عباء أبوي وقال ومنا لكي تحديد اللغه ومنا لكي تحديد اللغه وربانية ميوف هوس مكول وربانية ميوف هوس مكول وربانية ميوف هوس مكول

I was living In Sudia Ared a I dorum in sudia and I really love my cuntrey every thing Is there a bag shop I have I really bag school we learn english and a little bed of French then one day my dod came and siad that we going to angland we was happy then I go to crove huses school then Ferrir sham colly.

Samiya - Weaker skills in Bengali, L1; >>> support needed in the English version suggests DfE English Proficiency is between Codes A and B.

This information is used to indicate initial English competency on the assessment

framework, targets are set and shared with all colleagues.

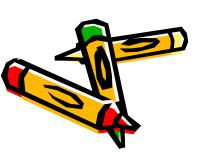
Students are asked to write about themselves:

<< Al-Maha - 'My live' shows age appropriate literacy skills in Arabic, L1; weak aspects of English indicate DfE Proficiency Code B - Early acquisition.

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## 2. Case study

Use of L1 and Identity
Texts with a Reluctant
English Learner



## May

- · Came to Bradford in Year 6 (primary school)
- · Saudi Arabian no motivation for learning English
- Arrived in Year 7 (high school) Code B 'Early acquisition'
- · Educational Psychologist she has SEN with SpLD...
- Arabic lessons outside school GSCE A\* in Year 8
- Supported both in the mainstream and three lessons of targeted withdrawal to rehearse and consolidate (?)
- Read mini story 'Tickling Spider' success! (pictures, gestures, screams etc helped her to understand and be amused)

Activity: Look at story and note activities involved

## Story File - Identity texts



Mini stories written by recent arrivals about their own experiences.

Sequencing

Key words

Question and answer activities for progression

Worksheets

Extension activities

"Racing to English' Language activities by Gordon Ward Support for students working in DfE Proficiency Codes A and B



#### She wrote a similar story from her own experience in Arabic

عنكبوت في الحمام الكاتبه مي

في يوم من الايام ذهبت الى الحمام و وجدت عنكبوت في الحمام و صدارخت امي عنكبوت في الحمام !!!!!! امي وكضت لتساعدني وسارخت امي عنكبوت في الحمام !!!!!! امي وكضت الله بي وجلي. والعنكبوت الله بي وجلي التت بي بلاستك كوب و بعض من الأوراق. العنكبوت على رجلي اذا امي الكوب و غطت بلورقه وهي رمت الكوب من الشبااك.

انااا کنت سعیده...



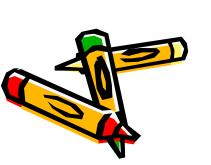


#### Spider in the Bathroom

One day I went to the toilet and I saw a spider in the bathroom. I screamed, 'Mum, there's a spider!' Mum ran upstairs to help me and the spider crawled on to my foot. It started to tickle me and so my Mum got a plastic cup and some paper. She pushed the spider into the cup and covered the cup with the paper. She took the cup to the window and threw the spider outside. Then I was happy.



- 1:1 discussion to teach the teacher with the same strategies: gestures, pictures etc to ascertain story in English 'Spider in the Bathroom'. Typed it up
- Wrote similar stories with the same format but adding additional activities each time with
- discussion, modelling and scaffolding the language forms
- Then...
- BBC News report of a dust storm in Riyadh







- · Discussed pictures, and May's experiences
- · Wrote the story in Arabic then English
- Made her own book with all the activities \*\*\*
- Taught the rest of her English class
- Rest of class wanted to make books about their own experiences.

Examples: Pakistani and Bengali food, clothes, weddings and natural disasters in Pakistan and Bangladesh using some L1 vocabulary, place names...

Activity 2: Think of something in your culture or a a memorable experience.

Write the story in a short paragraph.

Quickly jot down activities, questions...



The Riyadh Sandstorm BBC News 08-03-2009

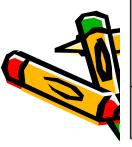
#### Some of the activities included

Please use long answers for the next questions.

- 14. Where is Riyadh?
- 15. Why did the sandstorm come to Riyadh?
- 16. Why did the people cover up their faces?
- 17. What happened at the airport when the storm came?
- 18. Why did the schools have to close?
- 19. Why were there traffic jams on the roads?
- 20. How many days did the sandstorm stay?

Now think of the answers to **five** questions about the sandstorm that we do NOT know the answer to. Did the buses stop running? What time did the airport re-open? Did anyone die? How can people see in the storm? What do people say to each other?

Now re-write the story about the sandstorm but include more detail to make it longer.



## Practice into research and back to practice



 Bernhard, J.K. & Cummins, J. (2004). Cognitive Engagement and Identity Investment in Literacy Development among English Language Learners: Evidence from the Early Authors Program.

'Identity texts...hold a mirror up to the students in which his or her identity is reflected back in a positive light.'



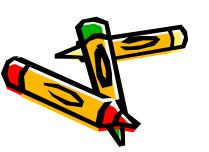
## 3. Identity in old stories retold

Idea from a British
Council Creative Writing
Competition



### Old Tales Retold

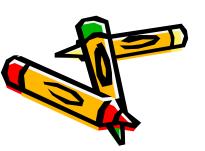
- Developing English Proficiency Codes B to C but could be developed further
- Turned into an innovative whole programme of teaching and learning in Year 8 English
- A chance for students to use their identities and L1 creatively in a range of English genres





## 1<sup>st</sup> Development - Creative Writing

- · Individual students choose a traditional story
- Rewrite the story changing the context, setting, names etc
- Use 10 key words in another language
- · Write a glossary
- · Share the story with the class
- Explain the moral of the story
- Create an activity to consolidate the learning e.g. quiz, word search, gap fill...



#### Some titles - can you guess the old stories?

- · The Elves and the Curry Maker
- · Akbar's New Clothes
- Yusuf and His Grandfather
- Salma and her Silly Slipper
- · Arooj the Slave Girl
- · Hamza and the Cornfield
- Hoicconip
- Ruby in Dubai
- · Badsha Akbar and the Ice Touch
- Dumpunzel

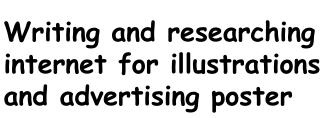


• Harris and Amirrah

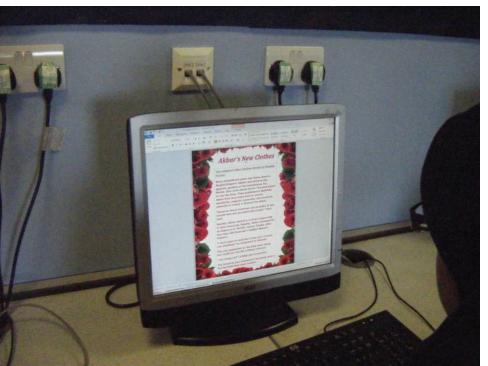




Writing and researching internet for illustrations









### Harris and Ammirah

Amirrah, a girl from Azad Kashmir with strict parents, and Harris, a chairman from Mirpur, loved each other but... their parents were enemies. When Amirrah asked her father, "بو چاہتے کرنا شادی لئے کے حارث نے میں" "Nay!" screamed her father.

Yusuf and his Grandfather
(The Hare and the Tortoise) retold by Arij

Yusuf and his Grandfather were at the annual عبيل in خيا . Yusuf was eager he had جيت ليا every race he participated in.

## 2<sup>nd</sup>: Conversion into a Play script

'Dumb Punzel' the Play By Yousra - Year 8

Scene 1 The King and Queen holding baby Rapunzel up, all the villagers watching.

(Camera angle-low angle shot looking up)

Narrator: She is she cutest, adorable, lovable princess.

Villager 1: She's so cute

Villager 2: Adorable

Rest of the villagers are whispering and admiring her.

Wicked witch: And very, very useful

Narrator: Unfortunately, Rapunzel grew up to be as dumb as a box of rocks and as clumsy as a drunk. Everything she touched broke; her servants were constantly re-building and fixing stuff. Behind her back her people used to call her, 'Dumb Punzel'.

3<sup>rd</sup>: Advertise the play with a poster



## 4th: Collaborative Groupwork

- Choose one play to dramatise (Ruby in Dubai, Dumpunzel, Salma's Silly Slipper, Hamza and Amirrah)
- Stage directions, music, costumes, props...
- · Rehearsals
- Acting
- Vote for best playscript, play, actor, costumes, make up etc
- Academy awards
- Video, vox pop



Rehearsing

Make up





Costumes



Acting

# Voted for best playscript, play, actor, costumes, make up ... 'Oscars'





Red carpet



Oscars





And the winner is...



**Presentations** 

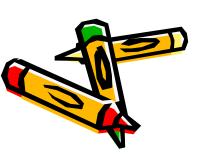


Acceptance Speeches



## 4: Identity texts through writers-in residence

- After school activity
- Developing English Proficiency Codes C...D...E





## First Story

- A writer- in-residence to work with a group of students \*\*
- The students' own experiences, identities, concerns, opinions ... are encouraged and explored in a variety of writing activities
- production of a professionally published anthology of their best work
- celebrated by an official launch and book signing event.

'First Story believes that there is dignity and power in every person's story and here you'll find young people expressing themselves in their unique voices.'

## FIRST STORY

Changing lives through writing





Working together

Writing workshops led Kate Fox, our Writer in Residence, teachers and students

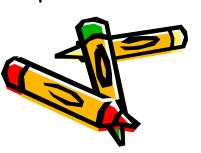


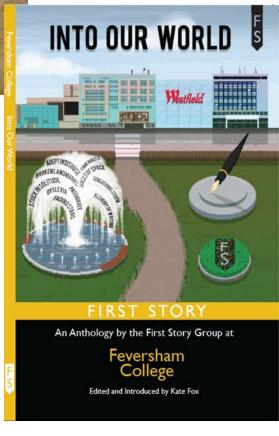


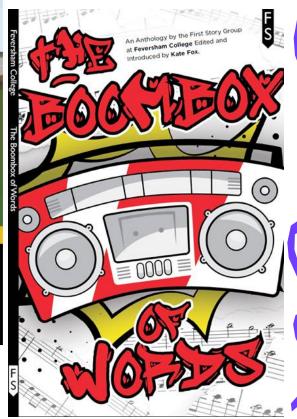
### The Anthologies

The titles are chosen democratically by the students themselves

Altogether 46 students have already become published authors







## Example 1: Excerpt in English and Urdu:

People waste time explaining themselves

Admi esa miti se bana hai

People waste time trying to understand.

Admi esa miti se bana hai

People waste time frustrated.

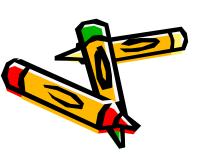
Admi esa miti se bana hai

People waste time disappointed

Admi esa miti se bana hai magar pir bhi ya hee insaan he jo pooch tha hai

'Where did the time go?'

Insaan, vaki, esa miti se bana hai.





## Example 2: Excerpt about being a Muslim

#### Into our world

Walk with us and see what the truth is behind the veil...

Don't judge us, we will surprise you.

The truth is really different from your stereotypical view...

Me and you ... what is the difference?

Our DNA may not match but we all have a heart.

Let me show you the real truth.

Not what you perceive to believe...

Activity: Writing your own identity texts using First Story techniques

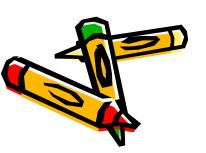


# 5. Identity texts through tourist guides

Developing English Proficiency Codes B-C-D

A Year 9 (aged 13-14) teaching and learning scheme of work in Computer Science involved:

- Home town or country
- · Joint selection of information required
- Research
- Powerpoint presentation to share as a Speaking task





#### **Contents**



Page 8: Government

Page 9: Cities

Page 10: People and language Page 11: Clothes Page 12: Food Page 13: Sports Page 14: Houses

Page 15: Shops Page 16: Schools Page 17: Jobs

Page 18: Religion Page 19: Festivals

Page 20: Glossary



### PowerPoint Identity Texts



### **Pictures of Attock**



The Jinnah
Gardens are a
popular attraction



The GT Road passes through Attock...

and the Indus River

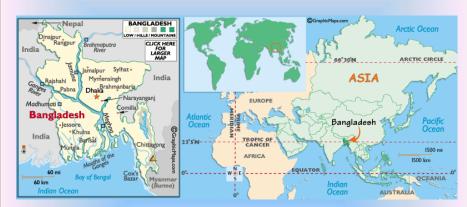




These are the District Courts

Attock Fort was built in 1581 when Moghal Emperor Akbar ruled the country

## Map of Banglades



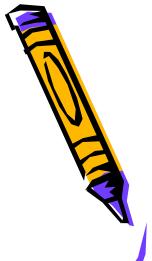
Bangladesh is situated in South Asia. Until 1947, as Bengal, it was part of India, which had been ruled by Mughal then British Empires. In 1947 East Bengal was also called East Pakistan. It became an independent country in 1971. Today it is bordered by India in the west, north and east, the Bay of Bengal to the south and Myanmar (Burma) in the southeast.

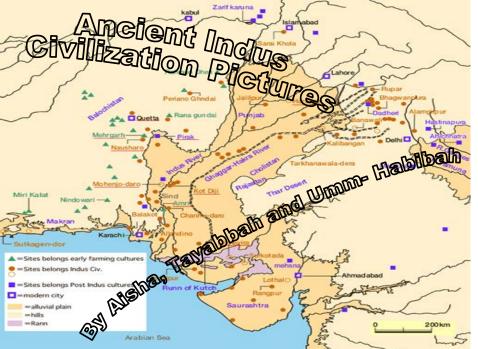
# 6. Identity texts in a cross-curricular project

### Exploring Pakistan's Heritage:

- Ancient Harappan culture
- The Silk Roads
- Spread of Islam
- Early Scientists
- Mughal Emperors
- The East India Company
- · The Raj
- Independence

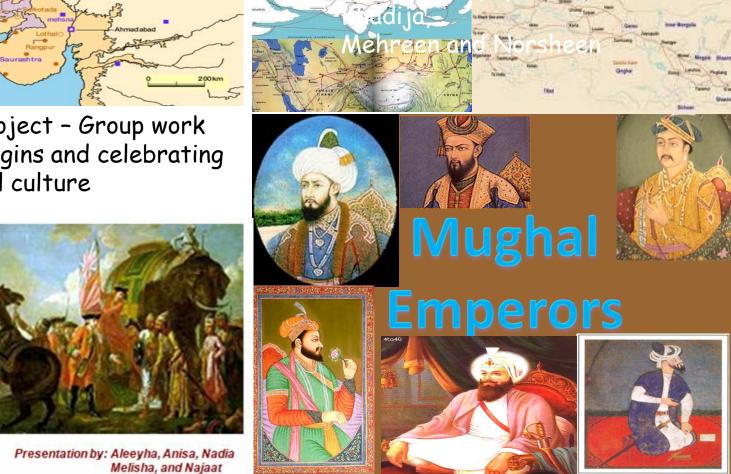
Developing English Proficiency Code C-D-E





Year 7 Heritage Project - Group work exploring ethnic origins and celebrating Pakistan's historical culture





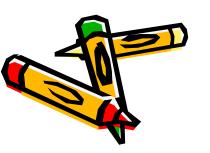
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# Essential elements

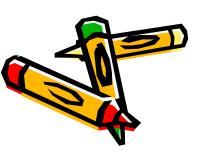
Bernhard and Cummins (2004) explained:

In identity texts, the essential elements are that 'children see themselves and 'talk about themselves.' There is 'identity investment' and 'increased pride' which develops an 'affective bond to literacy' and 'cognitive engagement.'

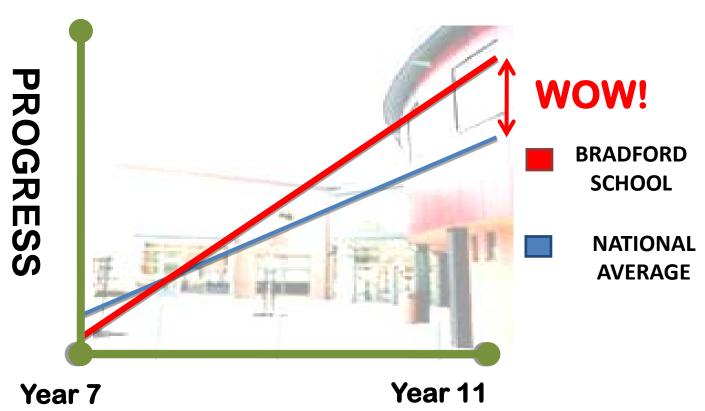


# In conclusion:

- EAL learners are an increasingly important consideration in English schools.
- Student attainment at this Bradford school is evidence that interventions involving the identity of EAL learners are effective and successful in enabling them to perform to their potential in national assessments.



# Pupil Progress KS2-4





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