

# *Literacy: A Human Right?*



**A Report from the Frontier**

April 15, 2008

## *UNESCO Statement: Literacy*

- Literacy is about more than reading and writing – it is about how we communicate in society. It is about social practices and relationships, about knowledge, language and culture.
- Those who use literacy take it for granted – but those who cannot use it are excluded from much communication in today’s world. Indeed it is the excluded who can best appreciate the notion of “literacy as freedom”

## *The Drivers of Change?*



- International/National Studies
- Provincial Reports
- Large Scale Assessment
- Educational/Pedagogical Research

- 1965 - International Literacy Day
  - “Literacy is at the heart of basic education for all, and essential for eradicating poverty, reducing child mortality, curbing population growth, achieving gender equality and ensuring sustainable development , peace and democracy.
- 2003-2012 – United Nations Literacy Decade
  - The promotion of literacy is in the interest of all
  - slogan – “Literacy as Freedom”
  - “Literacy as a human right”

# *Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development*

- The organisation provides a setting where governments can compare policy experiences, seek answers to common problems, identify good practice and co-ordinate domestic and international policies.
- Provides statistics and economic and social data
- Analyses and forecasts economic developments
- Researches social changes and evolving patterns in trade, environment, agriculture, technology, fiscal policy and more
- PISA International Testing

## *Statistics Canada*

- Stats Can produces statistics that help Canadians better understand their country—its population, resources, economy, society and culture.
- International Adult Literacy Survey – 1994-98
- Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey - 2003

## *International Adult Literacy Study (IALS)*

- Found that the investment in human capital (education and skills training) is three times as important to economic growth over the long run as investment in physical capital (machinery and equipment)
- Direct measures of human capital based on literacy scores perform better than years of schooling indicators when explaining growth in output per capita and per worker

## *Provincial Reports*

- 1987 - *The Ontario Study of the Relevance of Education and the Issue of Dropouts* (Radwanski Report)
- 1994 *For the Love of Learning* (Report of the Royal Commission on Learning)
- 2002-2004 - *The Double Cohort Study* – (Dr. Alan King)



# *Large Scale Testing*

## Provincial

- Provincial Review of Writing – 1993
- Ontario Grade 9 Reading and Writing test - 1993/94
- Ontario Grade 9 Reading and Writing test - 1994/95
- EQAO 3 and 6 Reading Writing and Mathematics – 1995-96 - present
- EQAO 9 Mathematics 2000-present
- EQAO 10 Literacy Test 2000 - present

# *Large Scale Testing*



## National

- SAIP 1993, 94, 96, 97, 99, 01
- PCAP 2007, 2010, 2013

# *Large Scale Testing*

## International

- Trends in International Math and Science Study (TIMSS) 1995, 1999, 2003
- Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2000, 2003, 2006 – Reading, Mathematical and Scientific Literacy
- Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2001, 2006

## *Research: Educational*

- Tomlinson – differentiated instruction
  - learning environment
  - instruction and assessment
  - evaluation
- Marzano – high yield instructional strategies e.g.:
  - setting objectives and providing feedback; generating and testing hypothesis; summarizing and note taking; questions cues and advance organizers; identifying similarities and differences
- Black and Wiliam
  - assessment for learning

## *Political Commitment: Three Goals*



- Success for All
- Closing the Gap
- Public Confidence

## *Political Commitment: Four Pillars*



- Literacy
- Mathematical Literacy
- Pathways
- Caring, Community and Culture

## *Political Commitment: Ministry Perspective*

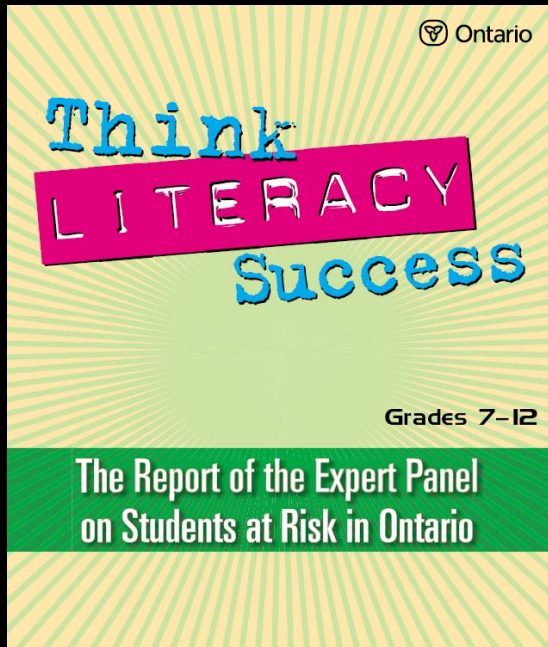
- Literacy/Numeracy: a Moral Imperative
- Evidence/Research based practice
- Partnership/communication/transparency

## *Where is Here?*



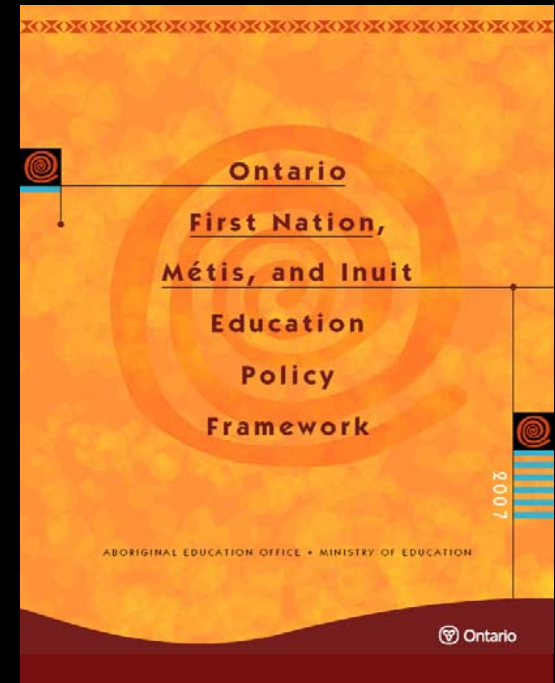
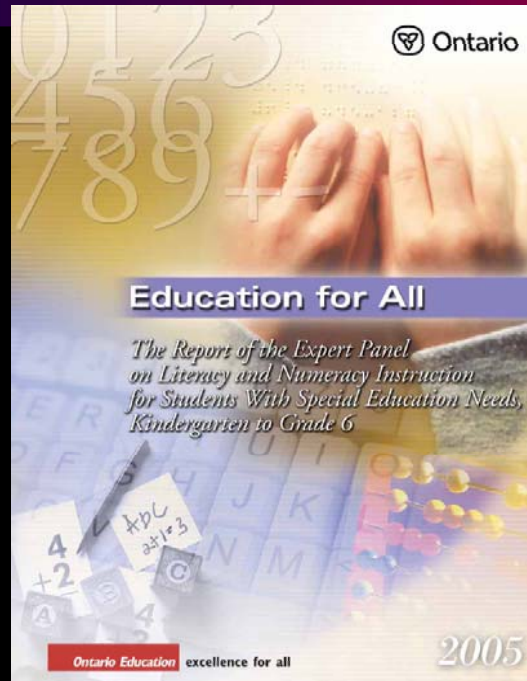
- Provincial Reports
- Curriculum Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Resource Supports
- Professional Learning Opportunities/Communities





2003

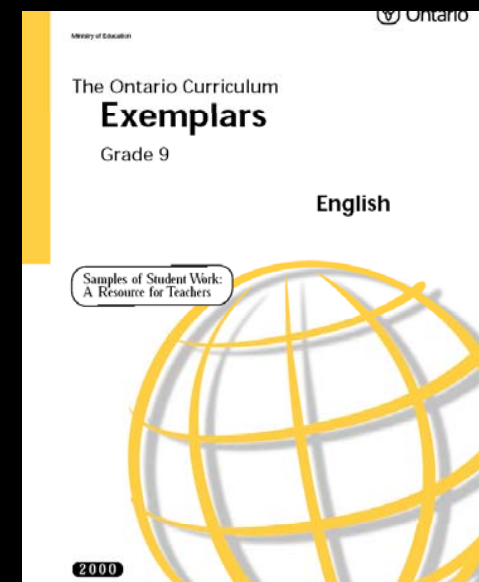
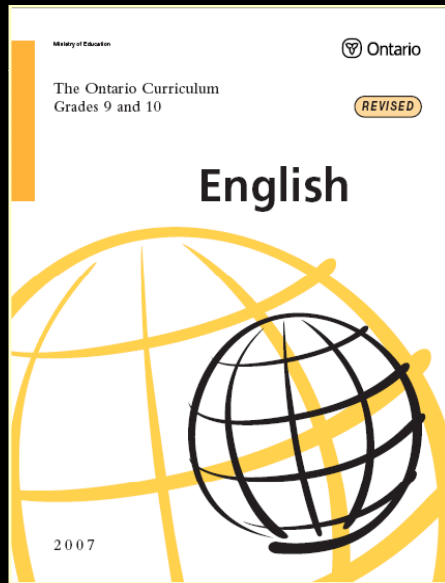
# Provincial Reports



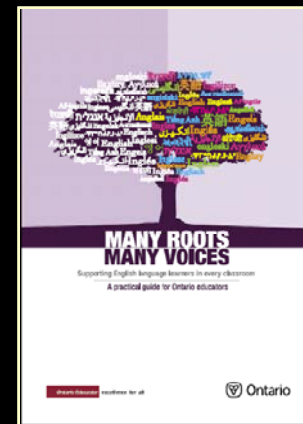
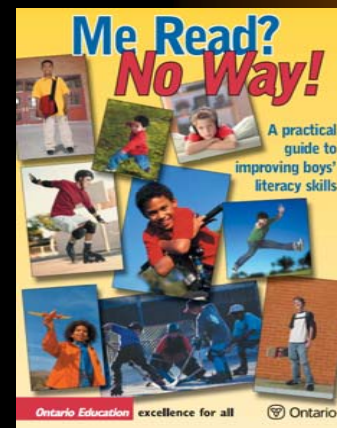
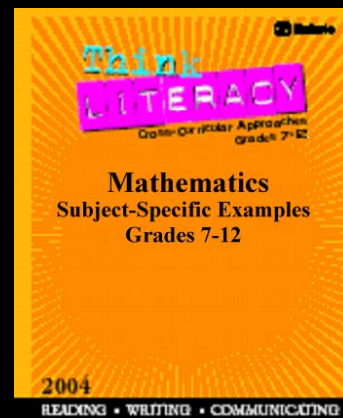
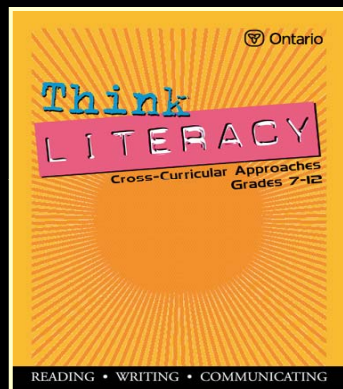
# *Curriculum and Assessment Policy*

- Curriculum Resource Documents (LAC 1978; 1989 Media Literacy)
- Curriculum Guidelines 1987,
- Curriculum Policy documents
  - 1993, The Common Curriculum
  - 1997-2000; The Ontario curriculum
  - 2003 – Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course;
  - 2006 (ongoing)- Curriculum Revision cycle

# Curriculum Policy Documents



# Teacher Support Documents



## *Literacy Definitions*

- Literacy is the skill and knowledge in reading, writing, speaking, listening, representing and viewing that empowers learners to make meaningful connections between what they know and what they need to know

*Think Literacy Success*

## *Core Beliefs for Literacy Learning?*



- All students can become literate learners
- Oral skills are foundational
- Literacy learning is a meaning making process embedded across the curriculum
- Teaching is key to student success
- Instructional and Assessment strategies should be based on evidence/research
- Literacy Learning is a communal project

## *GAINS: Subject Specific Literacy Training*

- Cross curriculum policy development and implementation partner
- Subject specific pilot and research projects:
  - lesson study research lessons
  - question structure
  - Building professional learning resources and communities
- Moving Literacies for Learning Forward – a working document

# *Learning to 18: Student Success Leaders*



- Monitor the four pillars - Rubrics
- Criteria for Literacy
  - Explicit teaching , of reading, writing, oral communication and media literacy strategies
  - Application of differentiated instruction
  - Teaching focus on higher level thinking skills
  - Cross curricular literacy practice
  - Focus on Formative assessment practice
  - Use of a variety of criterion bases evaluation tools



# *Learning to 18: Differentiated Instruction*

## *Differentiated Instruction Educator's Package:*

- DVD
- Teacher's Guide
- Wall Chart
- Cue Cards
- Facilitator's Guide

## *How Have We Changed?*

- Focus on success for all
- Valuing all pathways; celebrating individual strengths and building on them
- Move from transmission to constructivist model  
zone of proximal development – gradual release of responsibility
- Move from subject (language/English) responsibility to school (cross-curricular) responsibility - Literacy input into all curriculum development and training

## *How Have We Changed?*

- Refinement of Professional vocabulary making the implicit explicit
- Focus on research based, high yield instructional strategies
- Focus on at data driven decision making
- Focus on higher level thinking skills  
(Metacognition/Critical Literacy)

## *How Have We Changed?*

- Collaborative development of policy and resources
- Greater focus on implementation of policy
- From training to professional learning (Focus on building professional learning communities)
- Using new technologies to communicate

## *How Have We Changed?*

- Assessment of learning to Assessment for learning
- From Policy to Practice
- From teaching to learning
- Making the implicit explicit
- Scaffolding, explicit instruction, modeling, practice, feedback, gradual release of responsibility

## *Challenges and Solutions:*

- Building capacity – knowledge and belief
- Competing pressures
- Need for coherence
  
- Using data and research
- Building Professional Communities
- Utilizing Electronic networks

## *Where are we Going?*



- Deeper understanding of instructional and assessment practice
- Greater Understanding of how to teach and assess motivation; engagement; self regulation; perseverance

# *The Literacy Challenge!*



- Close the gap
- Feed the heart
- Free the mind

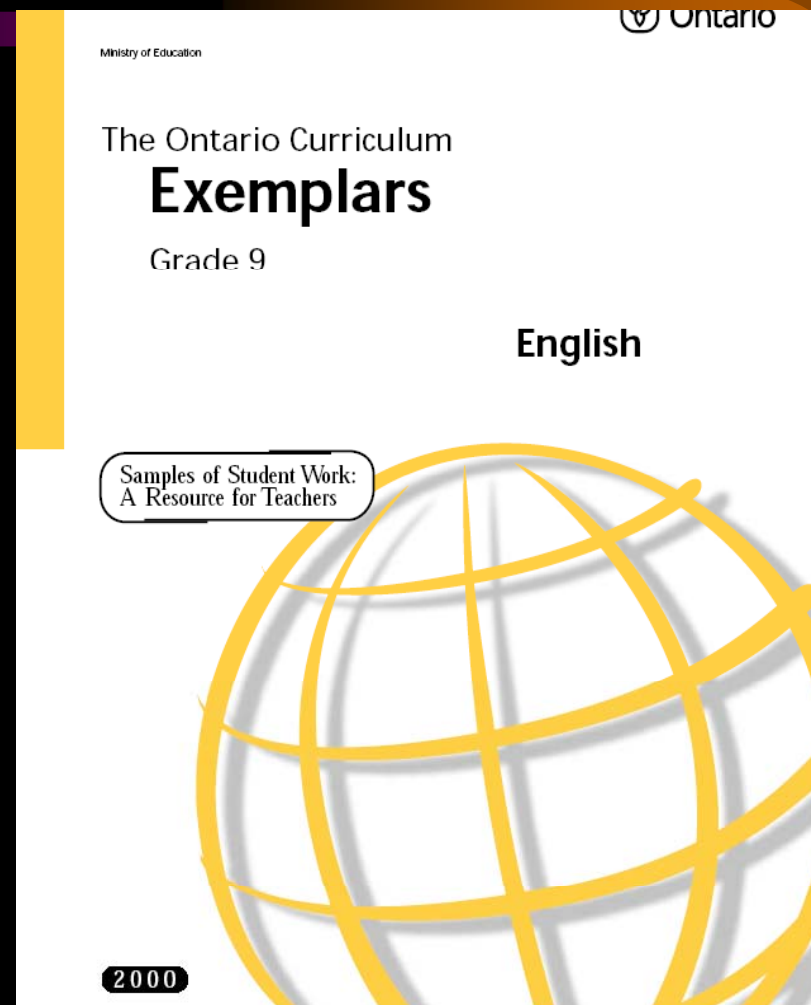


# *Appendices*



# *Resources: Exemplars*

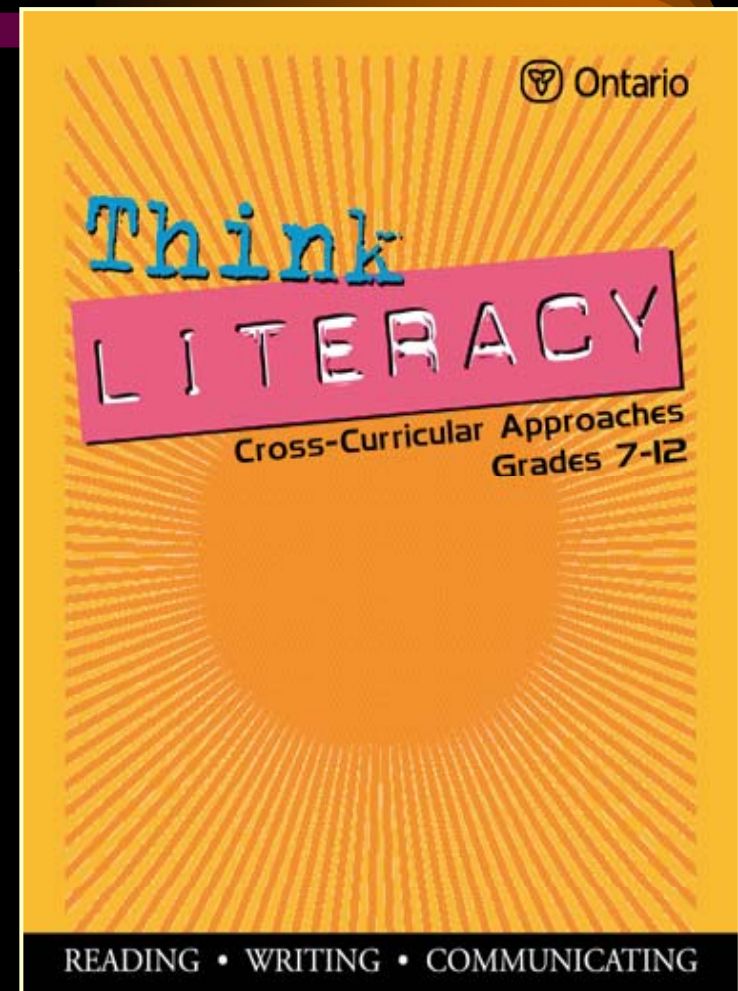
- <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/english9ex/>



# *Resources: Cross Curricular Literacy Strategies*

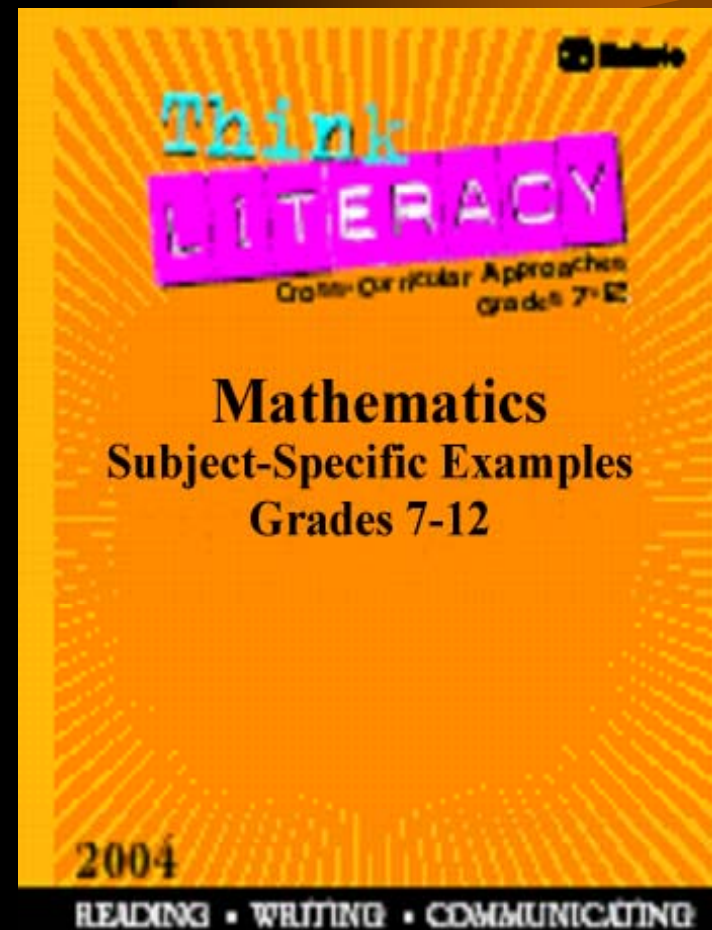
All teachers are teachers  
of literacy.

[http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/  
studentsuccess/thinkliteracy/](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/studentsuccess/thinkliteracy/)



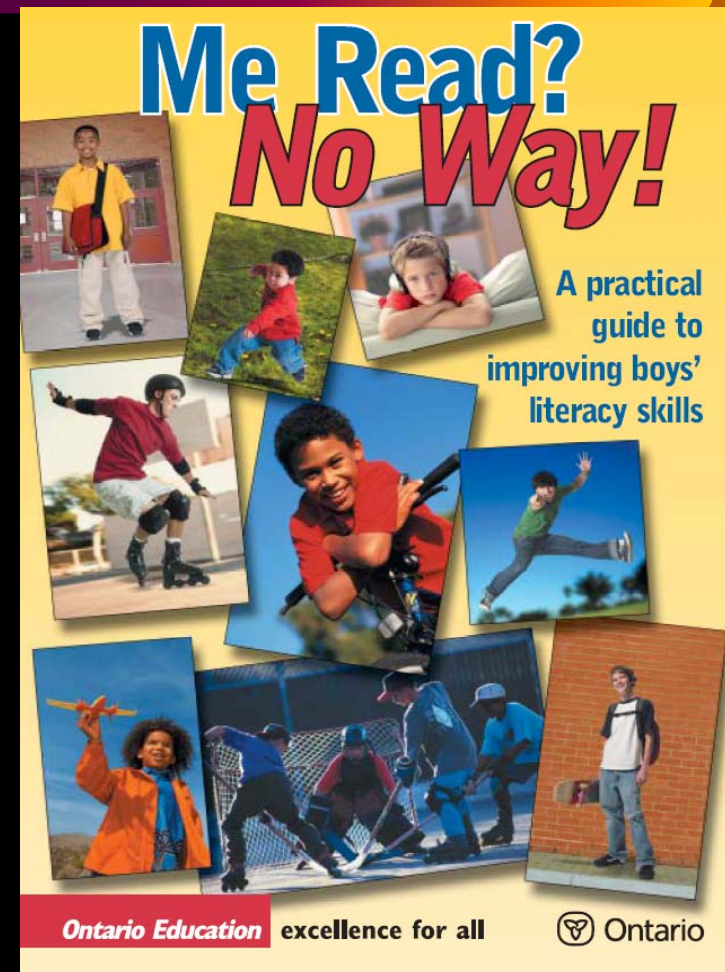
# *Resources: Subject Specific Literacy Strategies*

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/studentsuccess/specific.html>



## *Resources: Boy's Literacy*

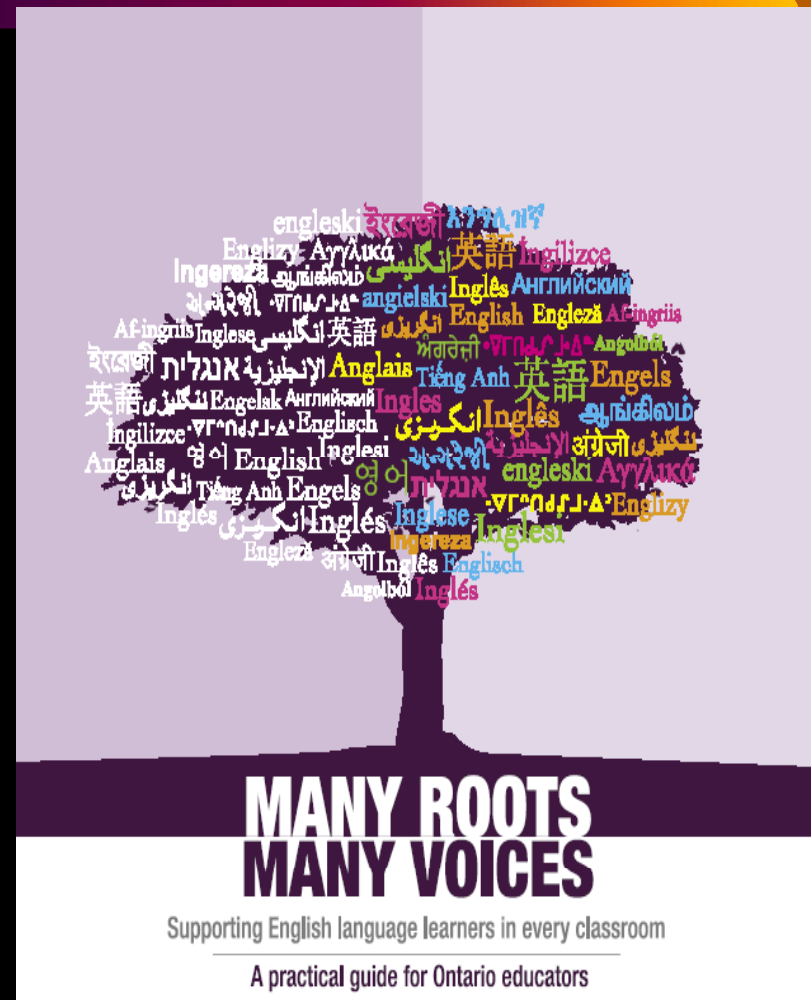
- <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/english/document/brochure/merread/merread.pdf>



# Resources: English Language Learners

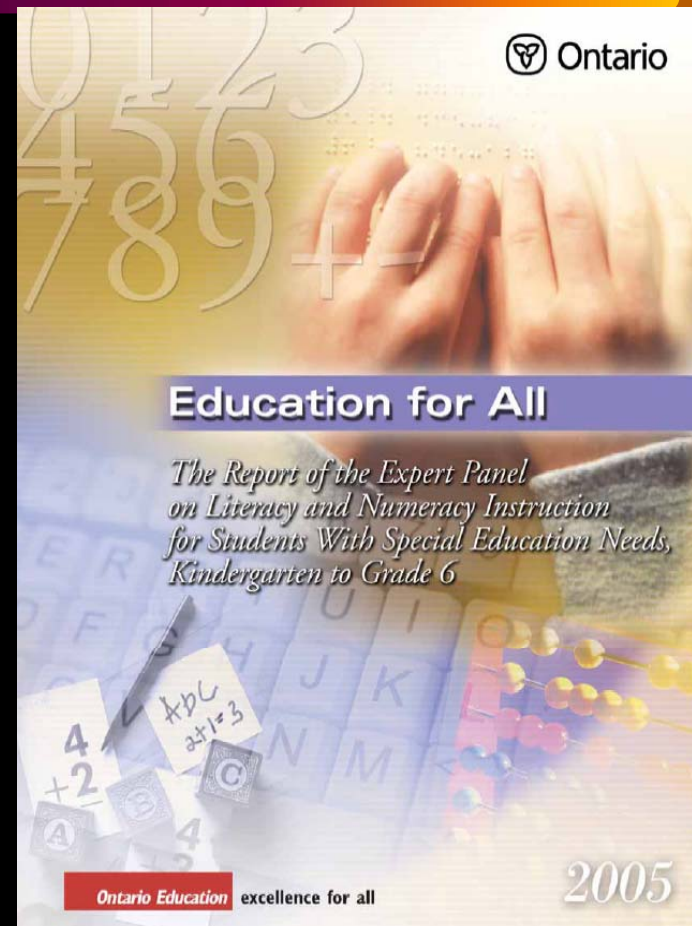
*Many Roots, Many Voices* is a rich source of practices and strategies that can be put to immediate use in the school and the classroom.

- <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/manyroots/manyroots.pdf>



## Resources: Special Education

- Expert Panel on Literacy and Numeracy Instruction for Students With Special Education Needs to recommend practices, based on research, that would allow Ontario's teachers to improve and reinforce effective instruction of reading, writing, oral communication, and mathematics to students from Kindergarten to Grade 6
- <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/reports/speced/panel/speced.pdf>



## *Vision of the Literacy Learner?*

The successful literacy learner:

- Recognizes literacy learning is an important, reflective, life long, life affirming necessity
- Is a confident, communicator with the requisite skills in key learning areas; i.e., can speak/write/represent and listen/read/view competently
- Appreciates the cultural impact and aesthetic power of literary, informational and media texts
- Understands that all texts advance a particular world view which the individual is encouraged to recognize and question (critical literacy)



# *Higher Level Thinking?*



## *Critical Literacy*

- A process of looking beyond the literal meaning of texts to observe what is present and what is missing, in order to analyse and evaluate the meaning and the author's intent
- Goes beyond critical thinking because it focuses on issues related to fairness, equity and social justice
- Questions a critically literate reader would ask:
  - What view of the world does the text advance?
  - Is this view acceptable?

## *Higher Level Thinking?*

### *Metacognition*

- The ability to be conscious of and, to some degree, control one's own thinking; the ability to know and apply appropriate thinking/literacy strategies when needed
- Literate students plan and monitor their literacy/thinking strategies at a metacognitive level
- At risk students need explicit instruction, modelling, practice and support to master these strategies

# *Higher Level Thinking?*



## *Critical/Creative thinking*

- Reason (inductively and deductively), compare, contrast, analyse, synthesize, abstract, evaluate
- Question and pose problems
- Apply past knowledge to new situations
- Think flexibly; maintain an open mind
- Think interdependently
- Think outside the box: create, imagine, innovate

## *Habits of Mind?*



- Motivation/Attitude/Engagement
- Higher level thinking
  - Critical/Creative Thinking
  - Critical Literacy
  - Metacognition

## *Habits of Mind?*

- Mental attitudes and ways of behaving that contribute to success in life:
  - Critical thinking (seek accuracy; seek clarity; maintain open mind; restrain impulsivity)
  - Creative Thinking (persevere; push the limits; generate, trust and maintain standards of evaluation; generate new ways of viewing “outside the box”)
  - Self regulation (monitor thinking; plan appropriately; identify necessary resources; respond appropriately to feedback; evaluate effectiveness of your actions)

Dimensions of Learning (Marzano)

## *Habits of Mind?*

- A disposition to behaving intelligently when confronted with problems; recognizing, choosing and applying an appropriate pattern of intellectual patterns to a perceived problem
  - Persisting; Thinking and communicating with clarity and precision; Managing impulsivity; Gathering data through all the senses; Listening with understanding and empathy; Creating imagining, innovating; Thinking flexibly, Responding with wonderment and awe; Metacognition; Taking responsible risks; Striving for accuracy; Finding humor; Questioning and posing problems; Thinking interdependently; Applying past knowledge to new situations; Remaining open to continuous learning

Costa/Kallick

## *Motivation/Attitude/Engagement*

- Motivation embraces: effort, self-efficacy, self-regulation, interest, locus of control, self-esteem, goal orientation, learning disposition
- Motivation for learning is understood to be a form of energy which is experienced by learners and which drives their capacity to learn, adapt and change in relation to internal and external stimuli

REEL

- Positive attitudes and perceptions about the classroom and learning have a powerful impact on student performance

# *Motivation/Attitude/Engagement*

- Gather data through all the senses
- Value and strive for accuracy and precision
- Persevere/persist
- Push the limits of your knowledge and abilities
- Respond with wonderment and awe
- Restrain impulsivity
- Respond appropriately to feedback
- Listen attentively to others' feelings and knowledge
- Take responsible risks
- Learn continuously