



## Secondary English Language Arts, Cycle One



# Introduction to the Secondary English Language Arts Program

## SELA Is a Literacy Program

The new Secondary English Language Arts (SELA) program for Cycle One is first and foremost a *literacy* program that has an important role to play in teaching the humanistic values and beliefs of our culture, as well as in cultivating the understanding that the courage to be human endures in the face of changing histories, stories and events. The noted Brazilian educator Paulo Freire described literacy as knowing how to “Read the world and the word.” This program is centred in the connection between the learner’s world and the social purposes that are served by language, discourse and texts, since language<sup>1</sup> is both a means of communicating feelings, ideas, values, beliefs and knowledge, and a medium that makes active participation in democratic life and a pluralistic culture possible.

## Social Purposes & Functions of Texts

In order for our students to develop literacy in a world of rapid social, cultural and technological change, we need to take the time to connect learning about the social purposes of language to the worlds of the students we teach, including special needs students, so that they understand language learning as the development of a repertoire of essential strategies, processes, skills, knowledge and attitudes that will make it possible for them to learn throughout their lives. For this reason, the SELA program for Cycle One is grounded in the *language, discourse<sup>2</sup> and texts<sup>3</sup>* that our students will encounter in the world and focuses on the development of fluent readers and writers of spoken, written and media texts. The goal of any literacy program must

be to provide opportunities for the learner to experience the power of language as a way of making sense of her/his experience and of breaking down the barriers that separate individuals. This program provides students with the opportunity to develop language competencies that respond to the realities of diverse situations, the interpersonal and communication strategies that they will require in order to become active, critical members of society, and to foster an appreciation of their rich literary and cultural heritage.

1. Language in the SELA program refers to the representational systems of spoken, written and media discourse. Therefore, language comprises words, images, signs, symbols, sound, gestures and body language, as well as hybrid combinations, such as word and image, or word and sign.
2. Discourse in the SELA program is language-in-use that gives expression to the social context and conditions in which it is produced or interpreted, i.e. different types of texts or genres. For example, communities distinguish themselves by creating a discourse that identifies members of that community and their relationship(s) to one another, including shared knowledge, values and beliefs, e.g. medical discourse, legal discourse, the discourse of schooling, etc. In the SELA program, the classroom community of readers and writers is also a discourse community.
3. A text in the SELA program is the product of a process of production and interpretation of meaning(s) expressed in spoken and/or written and/or media discourse, i.e. a product that serves a social purpose or function. Texts frequently combine different languages, discourses and genres, as would be the case with newspapers that combine images, words and symbols as well as written and media discourse, and editorial, feature-story and classified-ad genres. A text may be a class discussion, a poem, a magazine advertisement, a student journal, a Web site. Many texts today fall into the category of multigenre, including the novel, e.g. contemporary fiction often includes letters, poetry, visuals and “blends” of literary genres such as mystery, romance, fantasy and science fiction, all in the same text. The definition of text in this program also allows for nontraditional uses, such as an exchange between a teacher and a student as text, a fictional character as text, a shopping mall as text, etc.

## Social Messages & Meanings

Our new SELA program addresses a series of issues and concerns raised by our community since 1980. As such, it both revises and extends the content and orientations of its predecessor, the *Secondary English Language Arts I to V* program. The approach to language, discourse, text and genre<sup>4</sup> in the new SELA program for Cycle One is related to their *social purposes and functions*, so that students are aware not only of the structures and features of genre in different texts but of the inherently social messages and meanings they carry. Being able to read beneath the surface of the discursive and generic features of the different spoken, written and media texts we encounter in our daily lives is an essential skill.

### What's Familiar?

What are other *familiar* elements of the new SELA program? Among those we might list are: an approach that honours the principles of differentiation and inclusion; writing, responding to and interpreting texts as processes of making meaning; collaborative learning; spelling as a process of constructing patterns, rules and generalizations; learning-by-doing (i.e. rather than by hearing about it); and language used in contexts or situations that are relevant and developmentally appropriate.

### Connect Literacy to Life

A fundamental aspect of the *new* SELA program is the role of the student as an *active participant* in her/his *literacy education* that takes the form of teacher and student negotiating the curriculum. The sense of negotiation in matters of teaching, learning, assessment and evaluation is one in which the teacher plays a critical role as a highly literate individual, one who understands the *connection* between literacy *and* the student's life-world. The ways in which we promote our love of language, dis-

course and texts to the young is social practice, since it defines both what a teacher is, as well as the values the teacher associates with learning language, using language to learn, and the contribution of texts to a given culture. For example, the teacher plays an important role in making available to the young adolescent books and other texts that cultivate and support her/his interests, passions and literacy development, since the teacher knows that extending this respect to the student is crucial to nurturing a lifelong reader.

### Integrated Profile

As well, the SELA program for Cycle One introduces the concepts of an *integrated profile*<sup>5</sup> and of *immersion into texts* as a starting point for reading, speaking, writing and production. In the *Related Content* of the Talk Competency teachers will find additional information on the student's integrated profile. This profile contains a range of evidence about the student as a reader, writer and producer

4. Genre in the SELA program is a type or kind of text, defined in terms of its social purpose; it is also a dimension of context dealing with social purpose, e.g. in the latter case, when a genre is selected to suit a particular situation and accomplish a specific purpose, including the communication of meaning or sense, such as the special status of a legal brief or report card to a given profession. It should be noted, however, that texts are becoming increasingly multigenre in nature, so that the definition of genre here includes multigenre texts as well. (The relationship of "text" to "genre" is that the former includes all genres, as in "written texts.")
5. The integrated profile is a concept based on the principle that the development of competency, knowledge and skills in SELA will only become evident over time. The integrated profile is a "moving portrait" of the student's learning throughout Cycle One. It is "integrated" insofar as it contains evidence of the student working in contexts where the language arts are integrated, i.e. the four competencies of the SELA program are called upon in an integrated way. The actual form the profile takes is at the discretion of the teacher, but is shared with the student, insofar as s/he both organizes and maintains it, as well as draws on it in teacher-student conferences. Some forms an integrated profile might take are, for example, reading-writing-speaking-viewing folders, a collection of integrated projects, a portfolio, a digital portfolio.

of spoken, written and media texts. It is the responsibility of students to organize and maintain their integrated profiles throughout Cycle One and this task is also connected to their learning about how to work with information-based texts, in which their own texts represent information about their learning. The profile provides a “running record” of students’ development and growth, and is used in ongoing student-teacher conferences, as students work on a project or activity, and as a source for assessment, evaluation and reporting. As such, the integrated profile is the heart of the SELA program and is part of Competency 1(Talk) because it is a vital feature of the dialogue between the teacher as a literacy expert and the student.

### Immersion Into Texts

*Immersion into texts* is a feature of the SELA program that is developed in each of the four (4) competencies. A student who has not been directly taught the structures, features, codes and conventions of different genres, in a manner that connects the text to its social purpose and intent, is unlikely to learn this independently. When teachers immerse students in different texts before and during reading, interpretation, writing and production, *they take on the role of literacy teachers*, moving beyond the assumption that this knowledge will just “appear” if the student is given a text to read or to produce. Immersion into texts teaches students *how texts work* and this knowledge is the *foundation of literacy*. In addition to these two elements, the SELA program for Cycle One also includes: the notion of text as serving social purposes and functions; reader’s stance; reading and writing profiles; young adult literature; and the grammars (i.e. structures, features, codes and conventions) of spoken, written and media texts. As well, the SELA program emphasizes the importance of reading and writing to develop personal interests and for pleasure. Finally, the SELA program also

includes essential strategies for making sense of spoken, written and media texts, the use of technology in producing and reading texts, classroom drama activities as strategies, and formal occasions for self-evaluation as a means for the student to reflect on her/his learning and to set future learning goals.

## Continuity: The Elementary English Language Arts Program

### Prior Experience

The SELA program for Cycle One is part of a learning continuum begun by the student in the Elementary English Language Arts (EELA) program (2001) and is part of the *core curriculum* of the Québec Education Program (QEP). At the elementary level, the program focuses on competency in reading, writing, the media, and the use of talk to communicate and to learn. Both the EELA and SELA programs concentrate on building a core of knowledge about language, discourse and texts that is designed to endure the radical changes that have taken place in text genres since the 1980s. In other words, the SELA program “picks up the stitches” from the EELA program in a direct, explicit manner by continuing a learning process that began in the first years of schooling.

### Language to Learn

Students arriving in secondary school have developed essential reading, interpretive, writing, production and collaborative strategies appropriate for their age and for their cognitive and social development. Given the restricted time devoted to English Language Arts in elementary school in many school systems, students will have read, written and produced a *modest* range of different text types. Given their age and cognitive development,

students are still most comfortable with *narrative* genres. Since texts become more complex in secondary school, these strategies provide a starting point for further development in Secondary Cycle One. As well, students will be used to drawing on their own experiences and knowledge to make sense of different kinds of texts and will have developed their own reading tastes and preferences. They will expect their secondary school teacher to appreciate these prior experiences and to value matters of personal choice with regard to reading material, as well as topics and purposes for writing and the production of media texts. A *familiar audience* of family, friends and peers was the focus for writing and production in the elementary school and remains the focus until the end of Secondary Cycle One.

### **Making Connections: SELA and the Other Dimensions of the QEP**

The Québec Education Program (QEP) has *three (3) dimensions*. The *cross-curricular competencies* provide many opportunities for students to transfer their learning in the discipline of English Language Arts, such as extending their creativity and critical judgment, using information and effective work methods, and working cooperatively with others. By looking carefully at the key features of the cross-curricular competencies, teachers will find many ways to link learning in the SELA program to learning across the curriculum. In order to make connections between language, discourse and texts and the issues and concerns of the young, the *broad areas of learning* provide topics and issues that invite interdisciplinary study and exploration, including media literacy, citizenship and community life, and environmental awareness. The *SELA program* links to disciplines such as drama,

the social sciences, the sciences and, of course, Français langue seconde, enabling teachers to develop units of study and interdisciplinary projects that derive from the *broad areas of learning*. As well, the four (4) competencies of the SELA program promote connections between school and the community outside of the school. The three dimensions of the QEP stress the responsibility of teachers to connect learning about language, discourse and texts to using language to learn in ways that make it clear that *literacy is for life*.

### **How the Four (4) Competencies of the SELA Program Work Together**

As you examine the SELA program and think about literacy, please treat the *competencies as interdependent and complementary*. In addition, the *key features of each competency are non-hierarchical and non-chronological*. It is possible to enter the SELA program *through any one specific competency*, since the individual competencies are interrelated. Literacy is a whole system of communication and the separate competencies represent “the parts” that make up the whole. Since teaching to competency involves lots of time to practise, making links between competencies allows teachers to create multiple occasions for students to practise their growing fluency and to consolidate literacy strategies and skills. For additional information on the development of competency, teachers are encouraged to refer to the introductory chapters of the QEP. In the visuals accompanying each competency, we have demonstrated how the competencies work together and are complementary, in order to give you some ideas of how you might make these kinds of connections in your own classroom.

## Integrated Teaching-Learning-Evaluating (TLE) Context

### The Goal Is a Confident Learner

The goal of the SELA program for Cycle One is the development of a confident learner who finds in language, discourse and text a means of coming to terms with ideas and experiences, as well as a medium for communicating with others and for learning across the curriculum. The role of the teacher is, of course, a critical factor in helping the student to attain this goal. However, the student's role is also important; in this section of the SELA program, the role of the student in her/his learning is implicit in the various activities and learning goals described below. Specific expectations for students are described in the first three chapters of the QEP, in the conditions for assessment and evaluation at the end of this section, and in the individual SELA competencies.

### Classroom Environment

The student must be immersed in a rich, literate classroom environment that promotes the important value placed on language, discourse and texts in this culture, in her/his school and by her/his teacher(s). Personal preferences are developed and nurtured over the two years of the cycle. In order for this to take place, the student needs access to a classroom and/or school library that offers an excellent range of texts, including young adult fiction, popular and information-based genres, as well as other texts that appeal to young adolescent readers. This range of texts is critical to her/his development in each of the four (4) competencies of the SELA program for Cycle One. The student is encouraged to read for pleasure as well as for information and to learn. S/he is encouraged to read different genres for personal and other purposes in order to develop her/his fluency and a love of reading. Technology and other similar resources

must also be made available to the student, since the SELA program requires their use.

### Role of the Teacher

The development of literacy is both an individual achievement and a social skill, since we learn how language works in the social fabric of family, school, community and culture. In the Secondary Cycle One classroom, the teacher plays a number of important roles, one of the most important being that of a trusted adult who models literate behaviours and practices. It is important for the teacher to model the behaviours associated with readers and writers, since the teacher has a direct influence on the values the young adolescent associates with language, discourse and text, and upon her/his understanding of how language shapes meaning(s) and social relationships, both in school and out in the world.

The teacher is instrumental in setting the “tone” of a teaching-learning environment where the focus is literacy. Fluency and the capacity to adapt one's knowledge about language to new situations and more complex text types develop from the personal and expressive outward, until the capacity to draw generalizations that are increasingly abstract is developed at the end of secondary education. In the Cycle One classroom, learning language and using language to learn involves engaging the student in activities that speak to the issues, themes and experiences that mark early adolescence. We learn to read, write and produce spoken, written, media and multimodal texts by working with language from the perspective of BOTH a reader AND a writer/producer. The student also develops her/his fluency by examining the way spoken, written and media texts convey many of

the meaning(s) and relationships that are part of past and contemporary cultures and societies.

### Codes & Conventions of Spoken, Written & Media texts

In the SELA program for Cycle One, the student explores and works with new strategies and knowledge principally, though not exclusively, related to the codes and conventions of spoken, written and media texts through which the social purpose(s) and function(s) of different genres are introduced. This exploration becomes the foundation for what is expected of the student in the next cycle of secondary school. The content of the SELA curriculum is negotiated between the teacher and her/his students since, in a community where the power and beauty of language and text are valued and respected, the teacher is committed to engaging students in the hard work of learning by connecting the “what” of learning to their prior experiences and to the demands of the society and world in which they live. Similarly, the student's writing, production of media texts, and other language-based activities are closely connected to her/his interests and world of friends, family, school and community.

The tone of teaching-learning is also interactive and collaborative. The student begins to understand that the codes and conventions of language-in-use are both linguistic and social by participating in situations that demand s/he draw on prior knowledge and move to new uses of language, discourse and text. Collaborative projects and activities teach students to respect the different views of their peers, to express their own views with confidence and to use effective work methods. They also help the student to strike a balance between the

egocentricity that marks early adolescence and the social responsibilities that are part of life in a democratic society. Since talk is central to individual and social processes of meaning-making, the student learns to extend her/his views, preferences and knowledge in dialogue with the teacher and peers. Talking through her/his initial ideas or impressions and sharing her/his writing, reading, viewing and listening experiences make dialogue an essential resource for learning, reinforcing the sense of community in the classroom, the centrality of the meaning-making process, and the importance of exchanges with peers and teacher to the development of the student's literacy.

The communication process is a relationship that includes a sender and a receiver in a specific context or situation, and the message(s) and/or meaning(s) that are interpreted and produced in this setting. In the Secondary Cycle One classroom, each of the four competencies in the SELA program develops as the student both makes sense of what s/he reads, hears, views and experiences and constructs meaning by producing spoken, written and media texts. The audience or receiver is an essential aspect of social interaction for the young adolescent; the texts s/he produces are intended for a known, familiar audience, which means peers, friends, family, younger children, trusted adults and her/his teacher, in order to emphasize that language, discourse and texts always serve a social function.

### **Talk & Media Introduce Texts That Inform**

Language-in-use, in contexts where the student is encouraged to take risks and responsibility for her/his own learning, is the source for the development of versatile meaning-making processes and effective language strategies. The student learns these processes and strategies by experiencing a range of relationships from the perspective of both a sender and a receiver, as s/he produces and

interprets spoken, written and media texts that engage her/his interest, curiosity and sense of commitment. In addition, attention is paid to the transfer of strategies and knowledge from one communication medium to another, i.e. from the media to print and vice versa. However, given the developmental realities of students of this age, information-based texts are particularly challenging, since they are often written about subjects, topics and events that are far removed from the experiences of the young adolescent and, therefore, demand a greater level of abstract thought. For this reason, information-based texts are introduced in the Talk and Media competencies, since it is in these areas that young adolescents are most able to begin to grasp some of their features and messages, as they are frequently the target audience for these kinds of texts. The Reading and Writing competencies serve to reinforce and extend this initial learning by providing strategies that support students as they begin to manage information.

### **Monitoring Own Development & Setting Goals**

Students learn to reflect systematically on their literacy and learning in order to develop the essential skill of monitoring their individual performance and development in the language arts over the two years of Secondary Cycle One. Opportunities to reflect on this development and to self-evaluate progress, with the teacher's guidance and support, are frequent. A record of progress and development over the two years of the cycle is maintained in the student's integrated profile and represents samples of the students' use of language/talk to think and to learn; of their processes for interpreting, writing and producing spoken, written and media texts for familiar audiences and in different contexts, or situations; as well as samples of self- and peer-evaluations. The content for student-

teacher conferences, using each student's integrated profile as the focal point, is found in Competency 1 (Talk) and calls upon learning in all four (4) competencies of the SELA program for Cycle One.

### **How Criteria & Outcomes Work Together**

Just as the four (4) competencies of the SELA program for Cycle One work together, so too do the Evaluation Criteria and End-Of-Cycle Outcomes. Although written for each competency, they are not designed to be treated in isolation, so that reading, for example, should not be disconnected from talk and writing/production processes. To make it easier for teachers to make these connections, Evaluation Criteria and End-Of-Cycle Outcomes related to reading, writing, the media and talk include the following common dimensions of learning: processes and strategies; structures, features, codes and conventions of language, discourse and text; collaborative learning; developing a repertoire of familiar texts; contributing to the classroom community of learners; student self-evaluation; and the organization and maintenance of the student's integrated profile. The assessment and evaluation of the student throughout and at the end of Secondary Cycle One is to take place within the Framework that follows in order to support teachers as they integrate and interrelate specific Evaluation Criteria and End-Of-Cycle Outcomes to produce an authentic portrait of the student as learner.



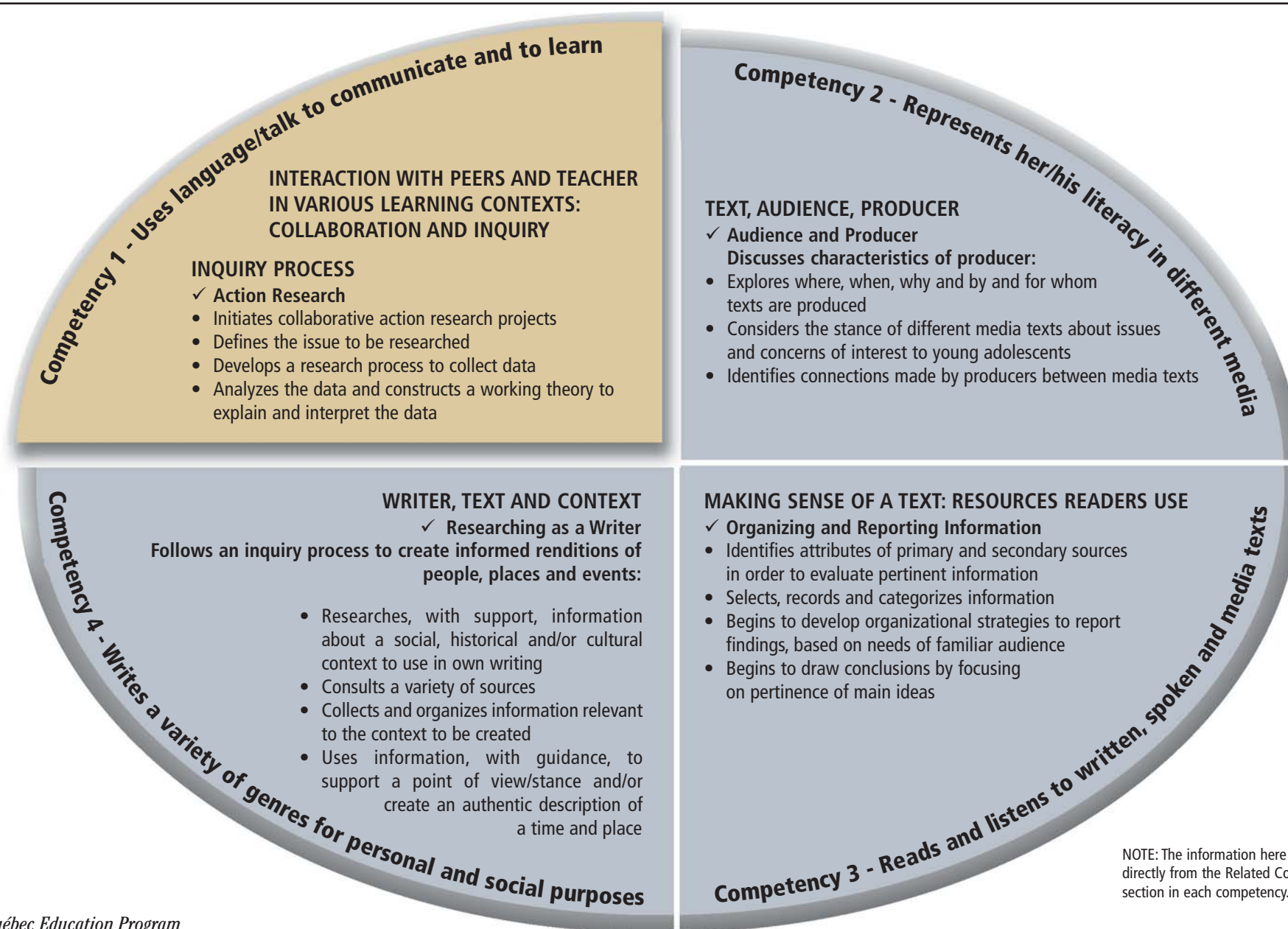
### Integrated TLE Context: Framework for Assessment and Evaluation in the Classroom

The specific conditions listed below, derived from the Integrated TLE Context, are applied in order to collect and analyze (i.e. assess), as well as to interpret and judge (i.e. evaluate) data concerning the student's progress over a period of time throughout the cycle and at the end of the cycle. They are used when the teacher needs information for the purposes of supporting learning, as well as when s/he is reporting and involved in the decision to promote students to Cycle Two. *Since the data are obtained over time, a single test or exam cannot be the only source of information collected about a student for assessing her/his learning, or for reporting and promotion purposes.* In other words, assessment, evaluation and promotion must be based on the data/samples collected over a period of time to comprise an integrated profile of the student (See Competency 1–Talk: Organizing and Maintaining an Integrated Profile). The framework has been designed to adapt to a range of integrated projects and activities throughout Secondary Cycle One, i.e. to allow teachers to make use of them on a number of occasions throughout the cycle. When the purpose is to support learning in the day-to-day life of the classroom, not all of these conditions may apply. However, when the purpose is the evaluation of the student's development and progress in relation to the Evaluation Criteria and End-of-Cycle Outcome Statements for each and/or all of the competencies in the SELA program, the following dimensions apply to the situations in which the student is placed and under which the data/samples in her/his integrated profile are collected.

The Integrated TLE Context:

- ✓ Calls upon the relevant key features of all four (4) competencies in an *integrated, balanced fashion*
- ✓ Applies the Evaluation Criteria and End-of-Cycle Outcomes specific to the competency/-ies
- ✓ Provides the student with information about the criteria the teacher will use *before* the student begins to work on the assignment/project/activity/task
- ✓ Allows for *differentiation and student choice* regarding the genres/text types and the topics/subjects for reading and/or writing and/or production
- ✓ Requires response and/or writing and/or production processes *as specified* in the SELA program
- ✓ Requires students to *both* respond to *and* write/produce the texts specified in the SELA program
- ✓ Requires students to work *both* collaboratively *and* individually
- ✓ Provides opportunities for the student to draw on prior knowledge of the texts, genres, multigenres and strategies that are specified in the SELA program *only* and with which the student is *familiar*
- ✓ Asks students to communicate to a *familiar audience of self, peers, or younger children only*
- ✓ Allows the teacher to see evidence of the student's individual learning goals and development, as discussed in *self-evaluation conferences* between the teacher and the student at regular intervals throughout the cycle. See Competency 1 (Talk): Integrated Profile.

## Example of Integrating Competencies Through Talk



NOTE: The information here is taken directly from the Related Content section in each competency.

## COMPETENCY 1 Uses language/talk to communicate and to learn

### Focus of the Competency

These two uses of language—to communicate and to learn—which were also the focus of the EELA program, continue to be increasingly important to the developing literacy of the student and to her/his success in secondary school and beyond. We make sense of our experiences in the world—what we read, write, view, talk about and think about—through language. We actively construct our view of the world, and we explore both our individual and social roles through language. A necessary and critical element in these processes is social interaction and the use of the kind of collaborative discourse called talk, and an important way of making meaning through talk is inquiry-based learning. This view of language and learning is the animating principle of the competency, and a classroom characterized by a spirit of collaboration and inquiry is the appropriate setting for this kind of active learning.

The student entering secondary school brings a repertoire of skills, abilities and literate behaviours. S/he is able to organize and carry out meaningful tasks and assume responsibility for her/his own learning in collaborative tasks. As well, s/he controls many of the linguistic structures and features of spoken texts necessary to develop and present ideas and information, and can plan and shape communication to achieve specific purposes. In the SELA program for Cycle One, this repertoire is recognized and extended. Learning contexts are designed specifically so that the student may develop strategies to gain more control of the production, collaboration and inquiry processes, and to make more conscious choices to achieve her/his purposes. Also, there is a new emphasis on audience and stance in all the processes.

If learning is viewed as the active interpretation and reconstruction of new information and ideas, then inquiry-based learning is an appropriate choice for the classroom. It moves the focus from the view of knowledge as ready-made and transmittable “as is” from teacher to student or from text to reader to an exploration and demonstration of how knowledge is really produced; for example, how questions are asked, data accumulated and generalizations made. And collaborative talk, with its tentative and exploratory qualities, allows for the use of questioning and hypothesizing, of searching for answers, of playing with ideas, and provides an important way for the student to assimilate and integrate new knowledge.

Both inquiry and collaborative talk as ways of meaning-making also have a central role to play in the other competencies of the SELA program for Cycle One. For example, the student works in collaborative groups to produce media texts; s/he shares her/his interpretive responses to texts being read; and s/he uses talk with teacher and peers to discover what s/he knows and wants to write about. Both inquiry and collaborative talk require that the student be immersed in a community of language users engaged in meaning-making processes in many different contexts and can thus serve as a bridge to a multimodal approach to learning that can accommodate a range of different abilities and learning styles.

A collaborative classroom allows for different styles of learning and sees diversity as a positive resource. All students, including those with special needs, benefit from an environment where teachers and peers offer support to

the learner. The processes of communicating and learning through language are central to this competency, and many different contexts for repeated applications of these processes are provided. Within the learning contexts, there are many opportunities to adjust or extend activities to suit individual learning modes, and the choices of topics to discuss, issues to explore, and resources to use are left open to teachers and students.

By using collaborative talk in numerous shared interactions with teacher and peers, in contexts where conflicting views, opinions and voices are heard, respected and included, the student gradually develops a repertoire of negotiating skills and discovers her/his own voice. By the end of Cycle One, with the support of teacher and peers, the student is a self-motivated, reflective learner who takes an active role in the classroom and school community and who may begin to use her/his emerging negotiating skills for democratic participation in social change, now and in the future.

### Thumbnail Sketch of the Key Features

One of the key features deals with the production of spoken texts for a familiar audience to communicate information, experiences, point of view and personal responses. Here the emphasis is on the communication process and its elements, and on the interrelation of these elements to produce a specific text. An important aspect of this key feature is its attention to the development of a sense of audience. In Secondary Cycle One, the student is still addressing a familiar audience of peers, younger children, teachers, parents and trusted adults, but the

characteristics of the audience and the relationship between producer of text and audience are now highlighted. Over the course of the cycle, the student develops the ability to characterize the intended audience, and to interpret the audience's expectations as these affect the student's choices. The student's ability to make adjustments to a text to suit an intended audience will demonstrate growth of this ability. Also, taking a stance in the role of producer of text is now emphasized, e.g. communicating a point of view, or assuming the role of expert. Again, this ability develops over the course of the cycle.

Social interaction through collaborative talk is the emphasis of another key feature. The collaboration and inquiry processes, their respective strategies and their interdependence are stressed, since the student must have control of the collaboration process in order to follow an inquiry process effectively. Problem solving and action research act as rich contexts for explorations of issues that have no predetermined answers, and procedural strategies for their use are detailed. As well, classroom drama activities such as improvisation and role-play are presented as different modes of learning as ways of exploring complex issues by embodying other voices and points of view and of providing imagined possibilities for inquiry and reflection. An important aspect of this key feature is a new emphasis on stance. Here the student learns to take the stance of a reflective inquirer in problem solving and action research; and in drama activities, s/he creates different roles to represent, for example, various points of view. The ability to take a stance develops over time as the student works through various situations and will show itself in cases where the student assumes a point of view on an issue or, in some cases, adopts different perspectives.

Another key feature deals with the exploration of the social practices of the classroom and community and the use of teacher-student dialogue in the classroom. With teacher support, the student assumes an active role in her/his own learning by developing a metalanguage to discuss her/his own progress and by engaging in a process of self-evaluation and reflection. S/he organizes and maintains an integrated profile containing work from all the competencies, and discusses it with the teacher in regular and ongoing evaluation conferences throughout the cycle. As well, the student explores the uses of language for debate and discussion in a democratic society. An important aspect of this key feature is its emphasis on the growing autonomy of the student as a learner who is gradually developing the ability to self-evaluate what and how s/he is learning, and to consider ways of putting this knowledge into action.

## Key Features of Competency 1

### **Produces spoken texts for a familiar audience in specific contexts**

Uses a communication process: examines the interplay of context, audience and purpose; chooses strategies; examines the relationship of producer, text and audience; considers code, style, register and usage conventions

- Explores some of the aesthetic qualities of language



**Uses language/talk  
to communicate  
and to learn**

### **Interacts with peers and teachers in specific learning contexts**

Uses a collaborative process to develop a repertoire of communication and learning/thinking strategies

- Uses an inquiry process in problem solving, action research and classroom drama activities

### **Explores the social practices of the classroom and community in specific contexts**

Organizes and maintains an integrated profile of work over the cycle

- Develops a process of self-evaluation and self-reflection
- Participates in regular and ongoing evaluation conferences with the teacher
- Explores some of the uses of language in a democratic society

## Evaluation Criteria

*It is understood that the evaluation criteria for this competency are used within the framework specified in the Integrated Teaching-Learning-Evaluating (TLE) Context for Cycle One. In addition, they are detailed in the End-Of-Cycle Outcomes.*

- Communication of information to a familiar audience
- Adaptation of strategies to purpose and audience
- Sharing of a point of view with peers
- Engagement in a process of collaborative inquiry
- Exploration of tentative solutions to a shared problem
- Self-evaluation of her/his development as a learner

## End-of-Cycle Outcomes

*It is understood that the outcomes for this competency are evaluated within the framework specified in the Integrated Teaching-Learning-Evaluating (TLE) Context for Cycle One.*

The student produces spoken texts for a familiar audience to communicate information, experiences and personal responses on topics of personal or social interest, such as explaining a familiar process to peers or recounting a personal experience. In group discussions, s/he shares a point of view on issues of personal or social significance. Using a communication process, s/he applies various strategies to generate, clarify and expand ideas, and to identify the characteristics of the intended audience, and uses this knowledge to consciously shape the text, e.g. adjust it to the audience's expectations. In the role of producer, s/he adopts a stance to the audience and text. S/he selects a structure that supports the function of the text, and chooses stylistic features and devices for special effect, e.g. humour to entertain the audience or emotional appeals to influence it. The student selects codes, conventions and registers which communicate the intended meaning and are expected by the audience in specific contexts, e.g. a more formal register for an audience of teachers and parents. S/he seeks and responds to peer and teacher feedback and uses it selectively. S/he evaluates the spoken texts of others, reinvesting this knowledge into her/his own texts.

The student interacts through collaborative talk with peers and teacher in inquiry-based contexts. S/he selects from a repertoire of strategies those needed to support and extend communication and collaboration within the group, such as listening critically and calling on prior knowledge as needed. The student engages in a process of collaborative inquiry as a way of learning and thinking through talk, and participates in problem solving, action research and classroom drama activities to explore problems and issues of personal and social interest, e.g. bullying, fads, current events. In these contexts, and with teacher support, s/he applies strategies such as making and testing hypotheses, e.g. asking "what if?"; collecting and interpreting data, e.g. constructing a theory; exploring tentative solutions to a shared problem; and dramatizing problems through improvisation and role-play, e.g. two characters with opposing points of view. By participating in such activities, the student develops the ability to adopt a stance or assume another point of view on an issue.

The student participates as a member of the classroom community by assuming an active role in her/his learning and by self-evaluating her/his development as a learner. S/he organizes and maintains an integrated profile of work done in all the competencies of the SELA program and presents it at regular and ongoing student-teacher conferences. S/he develops a process of self-evaluation and reflection to examine her/his progress over the cycle. S/he talks about the processes and strategies s/he uses for learning and thinking through talk, e.g. problem-solving strategies. As well, s/he explores the uses of language in a democratic society by examining how discourse is used in the classroom and in the community.

## Program Content

Please note that all of the resources, strategies, processes and texts that follow are *compulsory* for the end of Cycle One.

### Repertoire of Texts<sup>6</sup>

The spoken texts to be produced over the cycle are familiar to the student; they are the same as those given priority in the EELA program, Cycles One to Three. Now in the SELA program for Cycle One, the student works toward greater control of the production process, exercises a more conscious choice of strategies in relation to audience and purpose, and adopts a stance in the role of producer of texts. Also, priority is given to the production of information-based texts (see also Media: Text, Audience, Producer).

- Information-based texts: short explanations and eyewitness reports; presentations of plans of action, proposals and projects; informal talks and debates; interviews (live and recorded)
- Narrative-based texts: personal stories such as accounts of family life and autobiographical incidents; fictional narratives such as short stories, tall tales, myths and legends
- Dramatic and interpretive texts: improvisations, role-play, monologues, dialogues; scripts from these activities; performances of poetry; responses to spoken, written and media texts

### Production Process

- Uses strategies to generate, clarify and expand ideas such as brainstorming, exploratory talk, role-play, questions, drawing inferences and making predictions
- Explores a structure that will help the audience to receive the intended meaning:
  - Selects an organizational structure suitable to function of text
  - If necessary, combines one or more text structures to present more complex issues or to create specific effects
- Examines the relationship between context, producer of text and familiar, intended audience to identify potential problems in communication:
  - Interprets audience's expectations to determine which features are most important, e.g. the level of formality expected, given the context
  - Analyzes the characteristics of the audience by looking at factors such as relative status of producer and audience, level of knowledge of topic, shared and conflicting social and cultural values, e.g. audience of peers and trusted adults
  - Adopts a stance to topic and audience, e.g. as expert on topic
  - Chooses a level of language or register most suitable to the context
- Uses linguistic structures and features to communicate her/his meaning and to influence the audience in the manner intended:

- Prepares several drafts, if the context warrants it, and rehearses with peers as a simulated audience (see Competency 4–Writing: Writing Process; and Competency 2–Media: Production Process)
  - Uses language with the degree of precision and semantic and syntactic awareness required by the context
  - Selects relevant devices such as emotional or rational appeals to influence the audience
  - Uses transitional words and phrases, e.g. to connect parts to the whole or to rank ideas in order of importance
  - Experiments with intonation patterns, pitch and volume for desired effects
  - Uses stylistic features and devices such as repetition, parody, exaggeration and imagery for emphasis, interest and special effect, and to create a personal style
  - Selects the usage conventions suitable both to the text type and to the expectations of the audience
  - Presents the spoken text to audience (see Competency 3–Reading: Organizing and Reporting Information)
  - Uses selected feedback to revise own texts
  - In postproduction discussions, evaluates the spoken texts of others, using agreed-upon criteria
6. Not all of these texts need be taken through the complete production process as described here. Many may become part of the production processes of the other competencies. The eyewitness reports, for example, may be transcribed as written texts and amplified and revised to fit another context, and/or used in a media production on a similar topic. Such decisions will be made by the teacher and student(s), given the specific learning contexts. What is important is that the student has many opportunities over the cycle to produce these texts in different stages of completion, in different contexts, and for varied purposes.

## Aesthetic Qualities of Language

- Examines the sound patterns of poetry by performing a variety of poems to explore how poetry exploits some of the aesthetic qualities of language
- Discusses the use of rhyme and rhythm, alliteration, and other sound patterns such as assonance, consonance, and onomatopoeia
- Experiments with special effects in spoken texts, such as choral readings, rap, performance poetry and chanting

- Discusses the effect of these elements on the meaning of the poem, on the mood and tone, and on the responses of the audience
- Examines other uses of language for special effects such as advertising

## Interaction With Peers and Teacher in Various Learning Contexts: Collaboration and Inquiry

Collaboration is necessary for the use of language and the kind of active learning that the student needs to engage in to develop this competency. In the EELA program, the student worked in small groups in a variety of classroom projects, and practised some of the strategies necessary for effective collaboration. Here, collaboration takes on a critical role since it is the foundation for the kind of inquiry-based learning the student will be doing during the cycle. In other words, if the student has not developed strategies for effective collaboration, s/he will not be able to achieve success in inquiry-based learning projects so essential to this competency and to the SELA program.

### Collaboration Process

- Develops a repertoire of strategies and applies them so that these strategies become familiar and habitual:
  - Negotiates and assumes roles and responsibilities within group
  - Develops protocols for disagreeing constructively and cordially, making compromises, and encouraging and supporting the group

- Listens actively and critically to interactions of others, and supports their contributions:
  - Records important points
  - Questions, supports and defends the ideas of others
- Compares own responses with those of others to check their validity:
  - Makes connections by drawing on knowledge gained from Media, Reading and Writing activities
  - Generalizes from prior knowledge to new concept(s)
- Uses feedback to encourage and extend discussion, e.g. paraphrasing, summarizing at critical points (see Competency 4–Writing: Feedback)
- Revises communication strategies when necessary, e.g. if discussion reaches stalemate
- Develops positive and supportive attitudes towards peers

### Inquiry Process<sup>7</sup>

The student uses collaborative talk to participate actively in the inquiry process as a way of constructing knowledge in the face of new problems and situations and applies a repertoire of collaborative strategies in specific inquiry-based contexts: problem solving, action research and classroom drama activities.

### Problem Solving<sup>8</sup>

- Selects problems or issues or tests hypotheses that are of significance to the group and that may arise from Media, Reading and Writing activities:
  - Identifies the problem and its context
  - Analyzes the context, e.g. does the situation have social implications or is it of a more limited scope?

7. See Broad Areas of Learning, Chapter 2, for possible areas of exploration.

8. Often problem solving is not as focused on a single problem or issue as it may seem; it may begin with a hypothesis about an issue or event, or a guess or intuition. Thus, the process and strategies are open-ended and recursive. See also Cross-Curricular Competencies, Chapter 3: Uses information; Solves problems; Adopts effective work methods.

- Examines alternative points of view by using techniques such as “think aloud” protocols, making hypothetical cases (asking “what if?”), improvising, adopting a stance
- Reaches a tentative solution that respects the complexity of the problem and that is agreed on or mutually acceptable to group
- Tries out solution and carries out further inquiry, if necessary
- Presents findings, even if tentative, to the group/class for discussion and feedback

### Action Research

- Initiates collaborative action research projects, i.e. uses research as a tool for social action, to inquire into issues that have personal and social significance
- Defines the issue to be researched by asking questions such as: what are the questions that are critical to this issue? What should we do with what we learn? Who should we talk to or interview? What other resources should we seek?
- Develops a research process to collect data, e.g. researching, interviewing, videotaping, discussing, observing, connecting ideas across disciplines, and using the practical knowledge and experiences of the group (see Competency 3–Reading: Organizing and Reporting Information; and Competency 4–Writing: Integrated Projects)
- Analyzes the data and constructs a working theory to explain and interpret the data
- Questions and challenges different points of view, e.g. by improvisation or role-play
- Modifies the working theory, if necessary, and decides on a plan of action to address the issue
- Presents the plan of action to the group/class for feedback and discussion

- Evaluates and revises the plan of action as the project evolves over time

### Classroom Drama

Uses drama to explore complex problems and to extend the range of learning contexts

- Engages in on-the-spot improvisation and role-play, for example, at critical points in problem solving, in constructing hypothetical cases and responding to texts in order to:
  - Represent different views
  - Experiment with possible social roles and power relationships
  - Link several scenes to create a longer improvisation
- Experiments with drama exercises such as Forum Theatre<sup>9</sup>
- Uses physical movement and nonverbal language such as sounds, images, gestures, facial expressions
- Experiments with register and dialect in specific situations
- Responds immediately to offer feedback and suggestions for revision and follow-up

### Social Practices of Classroom and Community

#### Uses of Language/Talk in the Classroom

The student explores the social practices enacted in the classroom by teacher and peers. The teacher, as a model of literate behaviours, encourages the growing autonomy and individuality of the student. The student begins to take an active role in her/his own learning and evaluation by organizing and maintaining an integrated profile and discussing it with the teacher in evaluation conferences. This ongoing dialogue between teacher and student is a fundamental element in the student’s development as a learner.

### Organizing and Maintaining an Integrated Profile

The integrated profile is an essential part of the student’s learning and evaluation process over the cycle. This working collection of artifacts from all the competencies is owned by the student and is used by her/him as a learning resource. It represents a dynamic portrait of the student over time and not simply a collection of her/his finished or final products.

#### Contents of Integrated Profile:

- Artifacts from all the competencies and from learning contexts such as media production teams, interpretive response groups, literature circles, classroom drama groups, discussion groups, writing groups for peer editing and feedback
- Repertoires of texts read, viewed, written and produced, based on interests, purposes and preferences
- Evidence of the student’s profile as learner in each of the competencies, e.g. in reading, how sharing responses with others contributed to own interpretation of text
- Evidence of processes of selection, revision and reflection, e.g. about her/himself as a reader: explaining own changing reading preferences over time<sup>10</sup>

9. Forum Theatre draws on storytelling and improvisation to create scenes in which a protagonist is failing to achieve what s/he needs and the audience, as “spect-actors,” enter into the scene to discover or suggest solutions.

10. See Cross-Curricular Competencies, Chapter 3 re: creativity and actualizing potential



### *Organization and Use of Integrated Profile:*

The student:

- Collects and organizes data from the above sources
- Develops, with teacher support, a method of recording texts read, responded to and produced, e.g. a response journal or writer's notebook
- Chooses particular texts to work on further for own interest or for use in other projects
- Explores ways of extending own interests to the larger school community, e.g. doing surveys of reading habits, publishing and sharing class texts, organizing and holding a student literary festival
- Updates profile at regular intervals

#### • **Presenting and Sharing the Integrated Profile**

The student presents and discusses her/his integrated profile in student-teacher evaluation conferences. These conferences are not an end-of-cycle event, but are regular and ongoing throughout the cycle.

- Confers regularly with teacher and peers to discuss profile
- Begins to develop a metalanguage for talking about own development
- Explores a process for self-reflection and self-evaluation:
  - Talks about processes and strategies used to learn and appropriates own set of effective processes
  - Discusses the importance of self-evaluation and self-reflection for learning
  - Talks about self-monitoring strategies, e.g. how to manage own workload
  - Develops criteria to measure own sense of accomplishment
  - Sets personal learning goals

- Identifies strengths and weaknesses in different contexts
- Learns to transfer skills and knowledge to other learning situations
- Discusses own literacy development:
  - Makes reading-writing-producing connections between texts in profile
  - Talks about the uses s/he makes of different texts, e.g. pleasure, information, escape, background noise
  - Talks about choices of own texts to read, view, write, listen to and produce, based on interests, purposes and preferences, and accepts and gives recommendations about texts to read/produce and topics to explore
  - Talks about changing attitudes and tastes over time

#### **Uses of Language in a Democratic Society<sup>11</sup>**

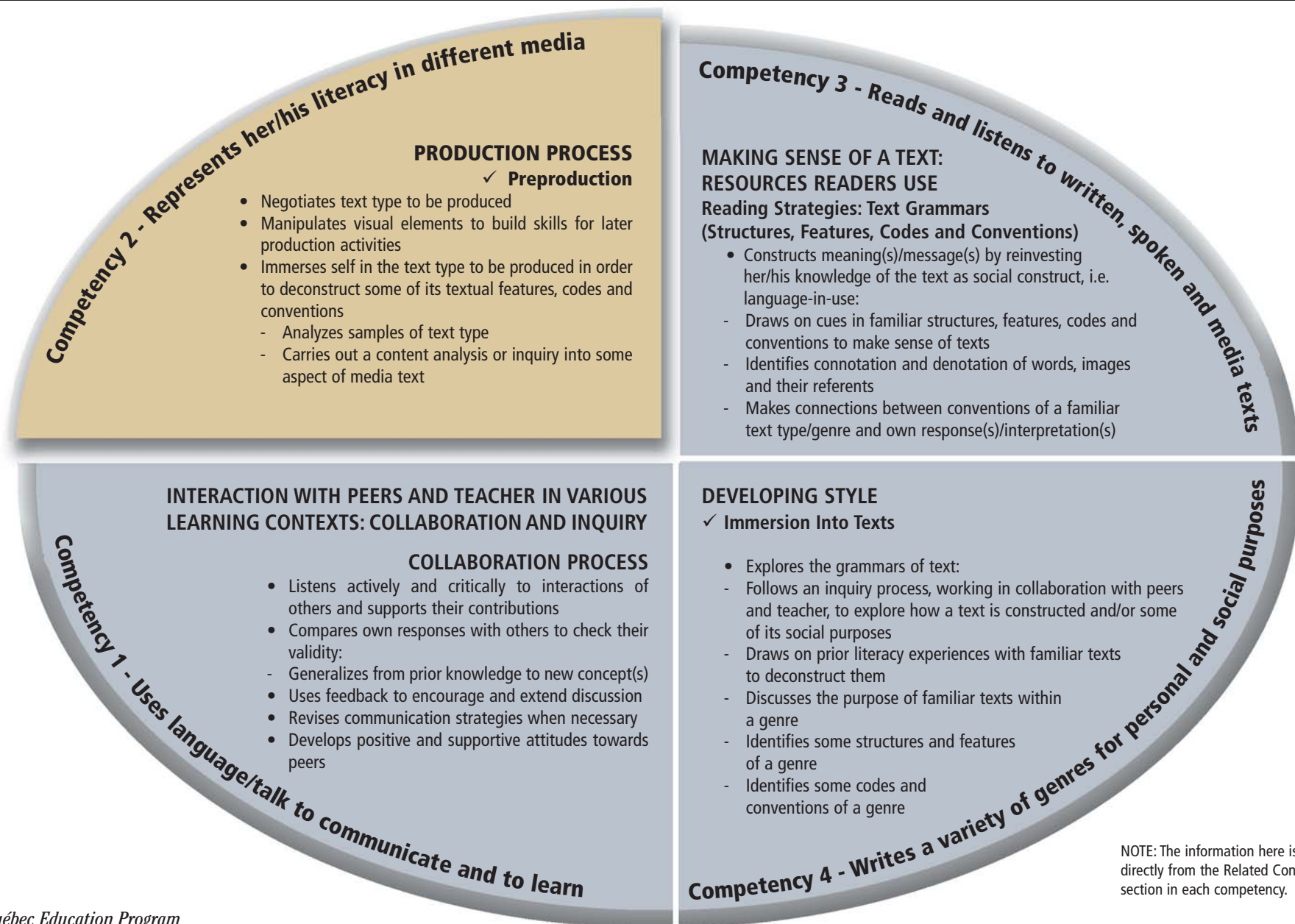
The student explores the public spaces/forums available in the classroom, school and community for debate and discussion.

- Examines school public spaces by asking questions such as: Who controls these spaces? Who is allowed to use them? What kind of discourse is used in them? Who is represented and why? What importance does this representation have?
- Examines the discourse used to present information in selected spoken, written and media texts (see Competency 2–Media: Textual Features, Codes and Conventions; and Competency 4–Writing: Immersion Into Texts)

- Examines the discourse of other disciplines, e.g. the kind of discourse scientists use to present ideas and information (see the programs of study of other subject areas of the QEP for secondary schools, such as Science and Technology)
- Examines the characteristics of familiar dominant discourses and minority voices: whose voices are heard and whose are silenced (see Media and Writing sections noted directly above; and Competency 3–Reading: Reader, Text, Context: Interpreting Texts)

11. See also Broad Areas of Learning, Chapter 2: Citizenship and Community Life, as well as History and Citizenship Education.

## Example of Integrating Competencies Through Media



NOTE: The information here is taken directly from the Related Content section in each competency.

## COMPETENCY 2 Represents her/his literacy in different media

### Focus of the Competency

The media represent an important element of our SELA program for Cycle One, since they allow our students to work with texts other than those that rely almost exclusively on the printed word. They also offer another channel of communication, or another pathway to knowing, thereby allowing students more access to the meaning(s)/message(s) the media construct. As well, all media texts are deliberate constructions that use combinations of print, visuals, logos, signs and/or images to create their own multimodal language, i.e. media discourse. The language of media discourse includes features or conventions, such as the tag line in a magazine advertisement, the slow fade in a television show, or eerie music in a horror film. And, just as a story has a structure, so too does a television advertisement; as well, there are conventions of media discourse that help us to recognize a newspaper article or an Internet site. By reading, interpreting and producing familiar media text types, students are involved in breaking the code of how the language(s) of different media work. This process of decoding and encoding is similar to that of reading and understanding print and writing, and complements the processes and strategies in all the other competencies in this program. And, it is through collaborative talk that students are able to clarify their ideas and extend their understanding of how different media text types work.

Our students come into the secondary classroom with thousands of hours of experience as readers of different types of media texts. They organize and use the media for both personal and social functions that may include: information, pleasure, entertainment, public dialogue, creation, individual expression, etc. In the EELA program, stu-

dents explored how the structures and features of texts help shape their meaning(s). They also produced media texts such as comic books, sound recordings, posters and photographs in school and/or at home. In the SELA program for Cycle One the emphasis of the media competency is on giving students the tools to understand how, why and by whom media texts are constructed and the impact this has on the meaning(s) and message(s) that they and other audiences derive from them. It is also via the media competency that information-based texts are introduced to Secondary Cycle One students, through genres with which they are already familiar.<sup>12</sup> Through all of the activities in this competency, students are better able to understand and connect to the evolving character of texts in the world around them. This is an essential skill, since language, which is ever changing, has given rise to genres, features, codes and conventions that integrate spoken, written and media discourse.

The media competency is designed to accommodate the needs, interests and experiences of all students, including those with special needs. Indeed, media texts act as a great equalizer, since they allow students to work from common experiences and to deal with issues that are immediate and relevant. Also, because of their familiarity with media texts, all students, even those who have difficulty reading and writing print, are able to participate in class and small group discussions and to collaborate with others on production teams.

#### Thumbnail Sketch of the Key Features

The key features of this competency provide a more precise definition of the nature of reading, interpreting

and producing<sup>13</sup> media texts. They include the process that the student follows as s/he produces media texts; an exploration of how media texts are constructed through examination of their codes and conventions; and an investigation into the situated nature of media texts. While the key features have been laid out separately, it is important to understand that they exist in *dynamic interrelationship* and are *neither hierarchical nor linear*. Each one is essential to the development of literacy. In the classroom, how the key features “play out” will be determined by the Integrated TLE context, the media text type being read or produced, and the intentions, interests and experiences of the students themselves.

The production process has three recursive stages: pre-production, production and postproduction. The students, working in a collaborative group, create media texts about topics or ideas of interest that have been negotiated with the teacher. By producing texts collaboratively with peers, students put into practice their knowledge of how the media work, and develop a more sophisticated understanding of this. Thus they extend their repertoires of media text types. In Secondary Cycle One, students are

12. For example, by producing a classroom newspaper, students better understand how news is constructed to present messages in specific ways. As they write, edit and layout their articles, they manipulate common codes and conventions of newspapers used to present information in an “objective” manner, such as the use of carefully framed, captioned photographs; quotes from experts or eyewitnesses; and a lead paragraph that directs our attention to what the writer considers important in the story. Students’ knowledge of how this sort of information-based text works is transferred to other information-based text types.

13. Please note that in this competency, the sender-receiver relationship is referred to as producer-reader.

still addressing a familiar audience of peers, younger children, teachers, parents and trusted adults, but, as in *Talk*, the characteristics of the audience are now emphasized. Over the course of the cycle, the students develop the ability to interpret the audience's expectations, as these affect their production choices. For example, a magazine produced for peers would not contain an article on luxury cars or advertisements for laundry detergent. Throughout the cycle, students have many opportunities to produce media texts in many different contexts. They use this production knowledge to read other spoken, written and media texts as well as multigenre and multimodal texts at a more informed level. The students develop this dimension of the media competency over time, and self-evaluation and reflection are vital components in their growth.

Before they produce a text, students investigate, with peers, how that text type is structured. A media text is structured through conventions and codes. Codes are sets of conventions understood in a predictable way (e.g. magazine covers generally include the title in a large font, a photograph advertising the lead article, a list of some other articles, a bar code and the price). By examining several different examples of the same text type, students are able to identify what they share in common and to develop an understanding of how structures, features, codes and conventions are used. It is through these discussions about the different media texts they read and produce that students become more aware of how the codes and conventions of media construct and represent meaning.

Since the meaning of all texts is constructed through a relationship between the producer, text and audience, students focus on how media texts are situated by considering how different sociocultural contexts influence meaning and understanding, e.g. representations of boys and girls, or how certain groups may be excluded in media texts. Through an inquiry process and immersion into texts on a subject of personal interest, students continue to expand their repertoire as they explore how, why, by whom and for what purposes these texts were made. They consider the choices the producers of those texts have made to target specific audiences. They also consider the impact of these texts on themselves, as well as on other familiar audiences who respond to them. This understanding of the situated nature of media texts is then transferred to their collaborative media productions, to other writing projects, as well as to their readings and interpretations of print texts.

## Key Features of Competency 2

### **Follows a production process to create media texts for specific purposes and audiences**

Makes personal links • Participates collaboratively in different recursive phases of the production process: preproduction, production, and post-production • Develops a more comprehensive understanding of the media from a producer's perspective • Reflects on strategies used to produce media texts and her/his own development as a reader and producer of media texts over time



**Represents her/his literacy in different media**

### **Deconstructs media texts to understand their meaning(s)/message(s) in specific contexts**

Identifies and deconstructs codes and conventions of media texts

- Becomes aware, through discussion with others, that media texts are constructed in specific contexts for specific audiences and purposes
- Considers own strategies used to read these texts

### **Explores the relationship between producer, text and audience in specific contexts**

Investigates how the media situate texts by considering the different forms of representation and/or exclusion of various groups • Examines how producer's stance and production decisions affect media texts • Begins to develop a profile of self as reader/producer of media texts • Considers the impact of media texts on self and on others

## Evaluation Criteria

*It is understood that the evaluation criteria for this competency are used within the framework specified in the Integrated TLE Context for Cycle One. In addition, they are detailed in the End-of-Cycle Outcomes.*

- Collaboration with peers to produce a media text
- Adaptation of process and strategies to production context
- Interpretation of meaning(s)/message(s) of a media text
- Identification of the characteristics of a target audience
- Self-evaluation of growth as reader and producer of media texts

## End-of-Cycle Outcomes

*It is understood that the outcomes for this competency are evaluated within the framework specified in the Integrated TLE Context for Cycle One.*

The student participates in a classroom community of readers and producers of the media. S/he collaborates with peers to produce media texts for familiar audiences by negotiating the texts to be produced, assuming production roles within the group, and giving and seeking feedback from peers. S/he adapts the process and strategies s/he uses to her/his specified production context, such as creating a pamphlet on an area of interest for younger children. During the production process, the student draws on preproduction strategies such as immersion into texts to understand their structures; calling on prior experiences with media in many contexts both in and out of school; and accessing resources, such as group expertise and technology. S/he selects textual elements and other resources to produce her/his text. Throughout the production process, s/he revises the text under production, such as checking the coherence between text and image, and clarifies and confirms the needs of her/his audience, e.g. by sharing drafts with classmates and intended audience. Through her/his productions, the student demonstrates what s/he knows about how written and visual language and the uses of sound work together to create meaning.

The student interprets meaning(s)/message(s) of familiar media texts, drawing on knowledge of known genres and production experiences. S/he identifies some of the common codes and conventions (e.g. news programs have a newscaster, weather-person, reporters) used to construct familiar texts. S/he identifies the way images, signs, symbols, pictures and printed text interrelate to communicate meaning(s) and message(s), such as techniques used in fast-food commercials to appeal to children. S/he identifies the characteristics of target audiences such as age, gender and interests, and describes how the media create texts for a specific audience such as toy commercials during Saturday morning cartoons. In small group discussions, s/he identifies and talks about the stance of different media texts toward issues and concerns of interest to young adolescents, such as current local events, matters of health and well-being, or well-known environmental problems. S/he identifies the stance taken in popular issues, for example, how an anti-smoking public service announcement and a cigarette advertisement each represent smoking, as well as how smoking is viewed in our society at this time.

Throughout the cycle, the student organizes and maintains an integrated profile of spoken, written and media texts that show her/him in the roles of reader, interpreter and producer of media texts, and as a member of a collaborative team. The student self-evaluates her/his growth as a reader and producer of media texts by presenting her/his profile in student-teacher conferences that take place regularly throughout the cycle, as well as at the end of the cycle. During these conferences, the student is asked to describe current media text preferences and to report changes over time in her/his interests, attitudes and tastes. S/he also explains how the media texts in her/his profile (collected over time) are shaped by purpose and context, as well as by the specific, familiar audiences to whom they are directed. Finally, s/he reflects on the contribution s/he made to a team production.

## Program Content

Please note that all of the resources, strategies, processes and text types that follow are compulsory for the end of Cycle One.

### Repertoire of Texts

The types of media texts produced over the cycle are familiar to the student; they are the same as those given priority in the EELA program in Cycles One, Two and Three. The student now works toward greater control of the communication process, exercises a more conscious choice of strategies in relation to audience and purpose, and adopts a position or stance in the role of reader and producer of media texts. Since media texts are abundant and varied, and new ones are constantly being produced, we have not included specific texts to be read and/or produced. Teachers should consult the *four (4) required media text types* listed below, as well as those listed in the Reading competency, and adapt specific texts to the interests and experience levels of their students.

- Print texts such as: magazine for peers, class or school newspaper, pamphlet
- Visual texts such as: poster, comic strip, photo story, advertisement, spoof ad
- Digital texts such as: computer-assisted presentation, Web page, graphic reproduction
- Audio-visual texts such as: television commercial, interview, news report

### Multimodal and Multigenre Texts

For ease of reference, the texts listed above have been categorized. However, it should be noted that several of these texts are, in fact, multimodal, i.e. they integrate elements of spoken, print and/or visual modes. Examples of multimodal texts include television texts, Web pages and

advertisements. Similarly, there are texts that combine genres, i.e. multigenre texts. Examples of multigenre texts include television commercials that unfold as mysteries, and local news reports which are visually set up as Web pages.

### Production Process<sup>14</sup>

It is understood that the production process is done in small groups,<sup>15</sup> under the guidance of the teacher.<sup>16</sup>

#### Preproduction

- Negotiates text type to be produced
- Manipulates visual elements to build skills for later production activities, e.g. framing and sequencing of photographs, adding sound to still photos, learning to storyboard
- Immerses self in the text type to be produced in order to deconstruct some of its textual features, codes and conventions (see Textual Features, Codes and Conventions below; and Competency 4–Writing: Immersion into Texts)
  - Analyzes samples of text type
  - Carries out a content analysis<sup>17</sup> or inquiry into some aspect of media text
- Rehearses production process:
  - Creates criteria for guiding production, e.g. features of an effective poster or advertisement
  - Discusses the purpose, context, target audience and their needs
  - Decides about medium, mode and code
  - Writes script, storyboard or rough draft
  - Shares draft with classmates and intended audience
  - Gives and seeks specific feedback from others in the class (see Competency 4–Writing: Feedback)

#### Production

- Communicates information, experiences, points of view and personal responses to a familiar audience
- Interrelates the characteristics of media text in a specific context drawing on:<sup>18</sup>
  - Specific communication strategies and resources
  - Images, symbols, signs, logos and/or words to communicate meaning(s)/message(s)
  - Knowledge of structures and features of other media texts brought into own productions
- Reviews and edits text to focus on meaning(s)/message(s)

#### Postproduction

- Presents text to intended audience
- Evaluates production process and text produced, with group and individually

14. The production process should not be seen as one set in stone. Students do not need to complete the whole process for each media text they undertake. Some texts may only be taken through the planning stage. Other larger production projects may be taken through to postproduction. What is important is that the student is immersed in the text to be produced and that s/he has the chance, in every case, to reflect on her/his production experience.

15. See Competency 1–Talk: Collaboration Process for more information.

16. See Integrated TLE Context for more information about classroom practices.

17. Content analysis is a quantitative method which may look at, for example, the number and kinds of commercials in a one-hour television episode or the number of ads and their placement in a teen magazine.

18. For example, when producing a magazine aimed at their peers, students will gear articles and ads to their target audience's interests. Because they have analyzed this sort of text and developed criteria before being asked to produce it, they know that besides the print, magazine articles include photos, captions, catchy titles and pull-out quotes to communicate information to their audience.

- Participates in teacher-student and peer conferences with an explicit focus:<sup>19</sup>
  - Discusses techniques used and decisions made to produce texts
  - Talks about how own media productions reflect understanding of other media texts
  - Makes reading-writing-producing connections between texts in own integrated profile
  - Sets attainable individual goals for future projects based on experiences producing, reading and interpreting texts

### Information and Communications Technologies (ICT)<sup>20</sup>

- Uses different available technologies in order to construct own texts
- Uses mixed media and multimedia resources to locate information, do research and communicate with others

### Text, Audience, Producer<sup>21</sup>

Examines the constructed nature of the media by exploring, through discussion or inquiry,<sup>22</sup> the discourse of texts that communicate information, tell a story, advertise or persuade:

### Textual Features, Codes and Conventions<sup>23</sup>

- Identifies and deconstructs codes:
  - Captions, credits and titles
  - Dialogue and voiceovers, e.g. how dialects enhance our understanding of character
  - Lighting and sound, e.g. dark lighting or music used to convey a particular mood
  - Camera language, e.g. importance of angles, composition of shots in conveying character or setting
  - Symbolic, e.g. diamond ring as portraying wealth
  - Narrative, e.g. turning point, development, resolution

- Sequencing, e.g. implied chronological order, passage of time
- Colour, e.g. what colours symbolize, how they are used to create a specific atmosphere
- Interprets media texts:
  - Uses media strategies to focus understanding: freezing frames, replaying the text, watching only the images, isolating sound
  - Draws on knowledge of production process and codes and conventions of texts produced
  - Explores the codes that construct media texts, e.g. headlines, captions and photographs in newspapers
  - Constructs message(s) and meaning(s) using familiar codes from media texts
  - Compares codes of familiar media text types, e.g. how codes of television news (reporter, anchor, camera footage) and newspapers (framed photo, captions, lead paragraph) impact the coverage of a local issue
  - Identifies functions of media discourse: to entertain, to persuade, to promote, to inform
  - Makes connection(s) between images, signs, symbols, pictures and printed text and meaning
  - Confirms, by talking with peers and teacher, that a media text can contain more than one message
  - Identifies and discusses some of the ways in which pictures, illustrations, symbols and images enhance the message
  - Explores the use of “formulas,” e.g. situation comedies and series literature both use predictable plot structures, stylistic devices, characters
  - Recognizes purpose and function of stereotypes, e.g. why do we often find similar stereotypes of teenagers in advertisements?
  - Examines ways in which bias occurs in various media texts

### Representation

- Analyzes the functions of familiar photographs (of self, family and community) to record events and memories
- Identifies some aspects of representation and exclusion, i.e. deconstructs:
  - Age, gender, family, culture, race, location, such as: portrayals of teens, depictions of a student’s neighbourhood in local news
  - Local news reporting in newspapers, TV and radio such as: role of the reporter/interviewer; treatment of same event, incident, issue, topic or person by different media
  - Heroes, heroines and idols such as: role(s) in popular culture and how they are constructed, publicized and exploited by the media

19. See Competency 1–Talk: Presenting and Sharing the Integrated Profile.

20. See also Cross-Curricular Competencies, Chapter 3: Uses Information and Communications Technologies. Content analysis is a quantitative method which may look at, for example, the number and kinds of commercials in a one-hour television episode or the number of ads and their placement in a teen magazine.

For example, when producing a magazine aimed at their peers, students will gear articles and ads to their target audience’s interests. Because they have analyzed this sort of text and developed criteria before being asked to produce it, they know that besides the print, magazine articles include photos, captions, catchy titles and pull-out quotes to communicate information to their audience. See Competency 1–Talk: Presenting and Sharing the Integrated Profile. See also Cross-Curricular Competencies, Chapter 3: Uses Information and Communications Technologies.

21. See Competency 3–Reading: Reading Strategies: Text Grammars; and Reading: Repertoire of Texts, for other media texts to be examined.

22. See Competency 1–Talk: Inquiry Process for more information.

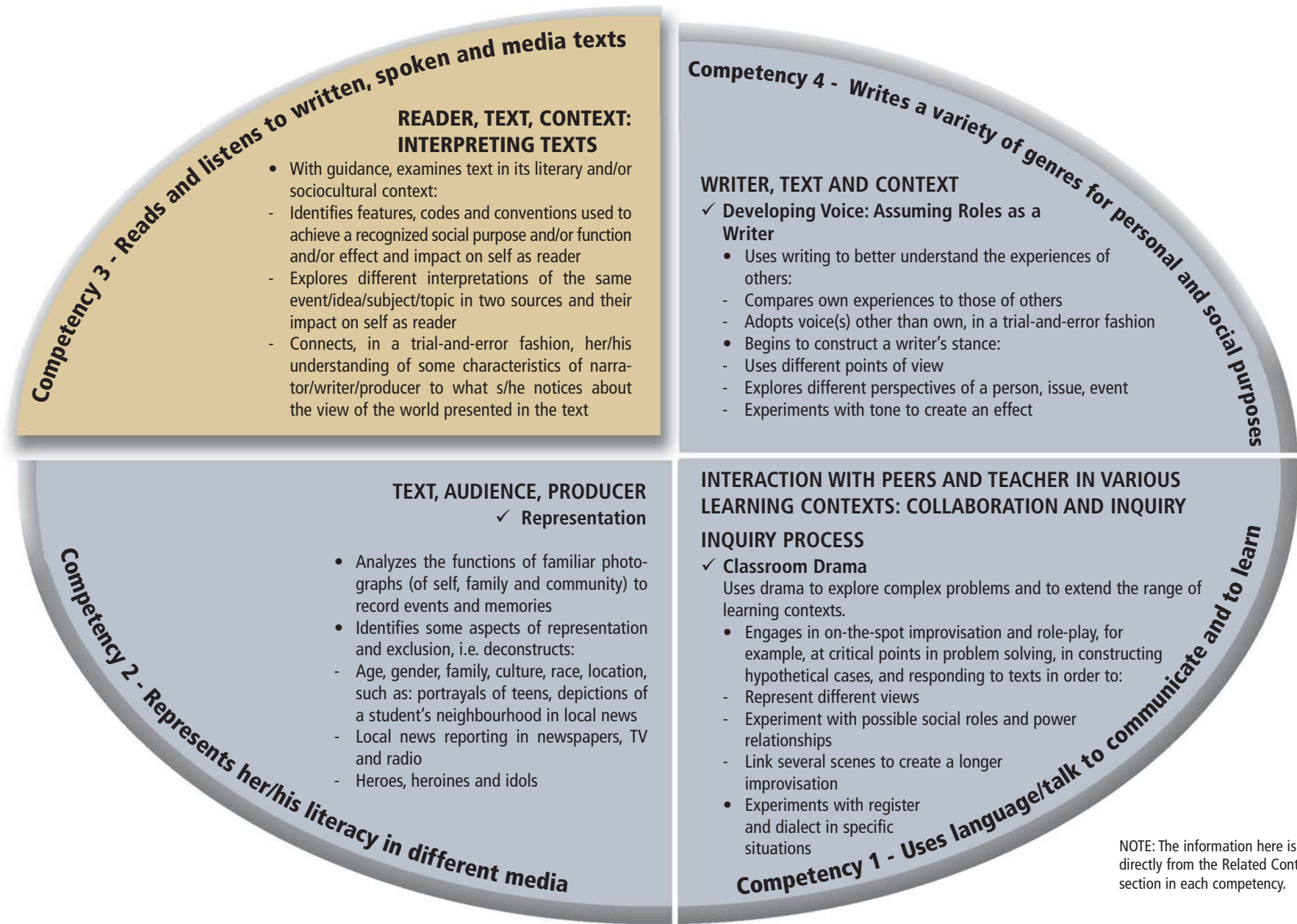
23. The codes and conventions that students use to deconstruct media texts are similar to those used when reading print texts.

### Audience and Producer

- Explores self as individual member of audience (use, personal biases, prior experiences) and as part of a larger target audience
- Chooses texts to read, interpret and produce based on interest(s), purpose(s), preference(s)
- Accepts and gives recommendations from/to peers and teacher about media texts to read or topics to explore
- Compares:
  - Own values with those presented in media texts
  - Different uses s/he makes of media texts, e.g. entertainment, information, escape, personal expression
  - Interests, attitudes, personal biases and tastes over time through survey of own reading habits
  - Own responses, reactions and consumption of media texts with those of peers and other age groups
- Examines how media target specific audiences:
  - Identifies ways that different familiar audiences use the media, e.g. entertainment, escape, information
  - Identifies and generalizes aspects of familiar audiences
  - Identifies subjects of interest for specific audiences, i.e. indicates the target audience
  - Explores how the structures and features of texts shape meaning for an audience, e.g. What do commercials do to make me want the product? How do colour and music affect my response?
  - Explains how own productions are adapted to interests of familiar audience chosen
- Discusses characteristics of producer:
  - Explores where, when, why and by and for whom texts are produced
  - Considers the stance of different media texts on issues and concerns of interest to young adolescents
  - Identifies connections made by producers between media texts, e.g. references to Disney in fast-food commercials
  - Identifies aspects of media industry related to marketing and promotion, e.g. how toys are marketed through cartoons, breakfast cereal, commercials, etc.
  - Examines the impact of marketing on common social concepts such as childhood, e.g. through inquiry explores the context and production of fads for different age groups; compares how current and past fads (from own childhood) reflect changing values, interests and tastes
  - Explores production choices made in own texts



# Example of Integrating Competencies Through Reading



NOTE: The information here is taken directly from the Related Content section in each competency.

## COMPETENCY 3 Reads and listens to written, spoken and media texts

### Focus of the Competency

Our experiences in the worlds of family, work and community are increasingly mediated by powerful types of discourse: texts that represent sociocultural values and beliefs, promote viewpoints, and influence our actions in society, from the way we vote to the food we eat. Reading today involves more than simply the capacity to decode. Whether the text in question is a mystery story, an advertisement or a television commercial, its codes and conventions communicate its genre(s), as well as its multiple meaning(s)/message(s). Reading is an activity that is both a necessity in our society, as well as a source of deep personal satisfaction. For this reason, we ask Secondary Cycle One teachers to concentrate on extending the love for reading begun by their elementary school colleagues by sharing their own reading interests with their young students. This is the heart of the reading competency: that we all work hard to return passion and pleasure to the reading experiences of our young.

The young adolescent entering Secondary Cycle One from elementary school is well on the way to becoming a lifelong reader who has developed a reading profile, comprised of the books and other texts that s/he likes to read. Used to exercising personal choice in reading material, s/he possesses a repertoire of reliable reading strategies that s/he applies with increasing control. In addition to personal favourites, the student has read literary, popular and information-based texts that are appropriate for her/him in the final cycle of elementary school. When responding to texts, s/he is beginning to work collaboratively with peers, listening to and commenting on their responses. S/he is able to identify the structures and features of some familiar texts, such as recognizing some of

the ways that a hero/heroine in a traditional adventure story, movie or television show is portrayed. When researching a topic or subject of personal interest, the student requires the guidance of the teacher to select pertinent information. In regular conferences with the teacher, the student is able to talk about her/his reading strategies and text preferences, and to set a few specific learning goals.

In the SELA program for Cycle One, *reading is understood to include spoken, written and media texts, in which listening and viewing are considered to be other forms of reading*. Since literacy involves the understanding that any text is a deliberate social construct, the Reading competency stresses the importance of teaching students the connection between the grammar(s) of a text (i.e. its structure, features, codes and conventions) and its social purpose. In order to provide a variety of situations in which students work with the grammar(s) of texts, the content of the Reading competency is designed to connect with the other three (3) competencies of the SELA program in direct ways. We become better readers in a rich, literate environment that encourages connections among all of the competencies in the SELA program.

The Reading competency accommodates the needs and interests of all students, including those with special needs. By respecting and supporting a love of reading and personal choice in the selection of reading material, by including spoken and media texts into the reading “family,” and by encouraging students to talk about the texts they read, individual students are supported in their development as lifelong readers. In turn, this emphasis

encourages teachers to create classroom communities where each student’s contribution is respected and valued.

### Thumbnail Sketch of the Key Features

In the Secondary Cycle One classroom community, the freedom to read and find personal satisfaction in the reading experience is critical to the development of strong, fluent readers who are prepared for the complexity of learning in the next cycle of secondary education.

The key features of this competency provide a more precise definition of how reading and listening to spoken, written and media texts are viewed in the SELA program for Cycle One. These include essential resources that readers use as they read, reader response that focuses on talking about texts with peers, and the interpretation of texts as a measured response that draws on both the world of the reader and the world of the text. While each key feature is critical to the development of strong, fluent readers, the ways in which they combine are to be determined by individual teachers in light of their students’ interests, prior experiences and needs.

An important characteristic of literate behaviour is the ability to connect one’s stance to the reading context, as well as to the text itself. The resources that readers call upon as they read include their reading *stance*, or relationship to the text being read. A reader occupies one or more of the stances described when reading a text, although the conscious development of this capacity takes place over time. Readers learn to shift and combine stances in classrooms that invite them to engage actively in making sense of different texts that are interesting and

relevant to readers of their own age and experience. The reader's stance—the relationship the student will favour in order to make sense of a text—is also determined by the context or situation in which s/he is reading. The “readings” that students produce are constructed as *they read*. When they begin to talk about the text, their responses will tell us what stance they took as they read and how this stance was influenced by the reading context. For example, if students are reading a series of instructions in order to follow them, they are unlikely to favour a stance that draws them deeply into the world of the text. Instead, they treat the text as though it is a kind of “shopping list” of data that they need to remember in order to produce an *effereant reading*. In contrast, students who are encouraged to sink into a story they find interesting will favour a stance that takes them into the world of the text, producing an *aesthetic reading*. Strong, fluent readers have learned that a story is not read as though it were a shopping list of data, even though it must be interpreted. Similarly, strong readers understand that reading instructions is not the same thing as reading their favourite spy thriller.

Readers also call on their *reading profile* when they read. This profile comprises familiar texts drawn from their reading experience, as well as the reading strategies that they have developed and that they rely upon. The student extends her/his reading profile in a classroom community where personal choice of reading material is valued, encouraged and respected. Fluency develops in direct proportion to the amount of time we spend reading, the variety of texts we read, and the degree to which we are encouraged to discover and extend the pleasures of the reading experience. It follows, then, that readers who are deprived of reading a range of texts will have a very slim reading profile, as will readers who have been encouraged to always read for the same purpose, such

as answering discrete questions, writing a test and so forth. In order for students to have success across the curriculum and to find a source of pleasure in reading, they require an extensive reading profile. For this reason, the “reading strategies” in this competency refer to both meaning-making processes as we read, as well as the way we use our knowledge about the purpose and function of the structures, features, codes and conventions of different genres *in different contexts*. Finally, this key feature incorporates a self-evaluation strand in order to support the student in using reading strategies deliberately and with increased control.

Response to texts is an important strategy in the development of critical readers, which means readers who are able to question the reasons for their responses. By considering textual details in light of their own experiences and knowledge, as well as the ways readers are situated or positioned by a text, students begin to develop critical judgment. As they continue to respond to texts through talk, young adolescents begin to develop the habit of questioning a text and themselves, in order to discover why they make sense of it as they do. *In effect, this questioning creates a different relationship between reader and text from the one that guided the initial reading*. These steps are important in the process of learning to interpret spoken, written and media texts, since they bring texts into a social and cultural context. In the interface between *reader, text and context*, the student constructs her/his interpretation of the text, *where interpretation is understood to mean a second reading that embodies both the world of the reader and the world of the text*. This interpretation may be expressed in any number of ways, including the less conventional, such as a debate, a video that is produced, or a diary written by a character in a narrative that the student has read. However, given the developmental realities of the

young adolescent, the ability to adopt the stance of a reader who stands back a little from the text in order to question the meaning(s) it holds for her/him *is limited and may only begin to emerge by the end of Cycle One*. For other students, this ability manifests itself only during Secondary Cycle Two.

## Key Features of Competency 3

### **Integrates reading profile, stance and strategies to make sense of a text in a specific context**

Reads for pleasure and to learn • Draws on prior experience and the features of text types/genres to make sense of a text • Adjusts reading stance and strategies to the context • Develops a method for locating and organizing information on different topics or subjects of interest • Maintains and shares an integrated profile



**Reads and listens  
to written, spoken  
and media texts**

### **Talks about own response to a text within a community of readers**

Makes connections between own experiences and the world of the text • Works with information in texts. Shares own responses in an individual voice • Accommodates the points of view of peers in shaping own response(s)

### **Interprets the relationship(s) between reader, text and context in light of own response(s)**

Considers constructed nature of text and its impact on self as reader • Draws on own reading profile and reading strategies in order to locate textual detail(s) that substantiate own sense of meaning(s)/message(s) • Constructs interpretation(s) that embody both own world and the world of the text

## Evaluation Criteria

*It is understood that the evaluation criteria for this competency are used within the framework specified in the Integrated TLE Context for Cycle One. In addition, they are detailed in the End-of-Cycle Outcomes.*

- Selection of texts to be read based on personal interests and preferences
- Use of reading strategies to make sense of texts
- Adjustment of reading stance to purpose or task
- Discussion of response(s) to initial reading(s) of a text
- Construction of interpretations of spoken, written and media texts for a familiar audience
- Self-evaluation of growth as a reader of spoken, written and media texts

## End-of-Cycle Outcomes

*It is understood that the outcomes for this competency are evaluated within the framework specified in the Integrated TLE Context for Cycle One.*

The student participates in a classroom community of readers, selecting young adult literature and other spoken, written and media texts intended and produced for young adolescents that reflect her/his personal interests and preferences. S/he talks about her/his own reading interests and reads for pleasure and to learn. The student uses reliable reading strategies to make sense of the familiar texts in her/his profile and builds meaning by reading the structures, features, codes and conventions of familiar texts to discover their meaning(s) and message(s). When reading less familiar texts, the student calls upon reliable “fix-up” strategies to sustain meaning, including asking the teacher for clarification. S/he reads familiar texts for sustained periods of time without losing the sense s/he is constructing.

As the student reads, s/he shifts and combines reading stances to adjust her/his stance to the context for reading—to the purpose, task and audience—in order to construct aesthetic and efferent readings of texts. When responding to a text, s/he demonstrates her/his understanding that reading for information and reading for appreciation involve different stances that focus her/his attention on certain details in a text rather than others, e.g. understands that reading fiction involves entering the world of a text, while watching the news involves reading images, codes and conventions that represent people, ideas and events in a particular way. The student talks about her/his responses with peers and teacher, interrelating details from her/his reading stance, profile and the grammar(s) of the text to determine themes and/or ideas and/or information for self. The student’s responses are expressed with clarity, openness and confidence. When working with information, the student adopts a reading stance that allows her/him to select, record and categorize information with a familiar audience in mind. The student is able to identify the attributes of primary and secondary sources in order to decide what is pertinent and to use an effective

## End-of-Cycle Outcomes (cont.)

note-taking strategy. The expectation is that the student will collaborate with her/his peers throughout the process when working with information. S/he applies these strategies, skills and knowledge in the context of using an inquiry process (see Talk: Inquiry Process); in producing media texts (see Media: Production Process); in developing an integrated project (see Writing: Integrated Projects); and in maintaining her/his integrated profile. S/he is able to present her findings orally, in the context of a group project or activity, or of a teacher-student conference.

Drawing on these discussions as a means of clarifying her/his initial responses, the student follows a process to construct an interpretation of a text that interrelates her/his own world and the world of the text in explicit, personal ways. With guidance, the student is able to talk about how some of the constructed structures, features, codes and conventions of familiar texts are used to achieve a recognized social purpose and/or function and/or effect and their impact on her/him as a reader (e.g. science fiction creates a future world in order to examine contemporary problems; feature stories use catchy headlines to position the reader; television melodrama uses codes for beauty, love and fidelity; a card expressing condolences uses particular conventions, etc.). S/he begins to weave this early understanding into her/his interpretation(s) with varying degrees of success. Intended for a familiar audience only, these interpretations take both conventional and innovative forms over the two years of the cycle and comprise a balanced representation of spoken, written and media text types by the end of the cycle.

Throughout the cycle, the student organizes and maintains a record of her/his development as a reader of the spoken, written and media texts that s/he has read. The student evaluates her/his reading development by presenting her/his Integrated Profile in student-teacher conferences that take place regularly throughout the cycle, as well as at the end of the cycle. During these conferences, the student is asked to describe current text preferences, to report changes over time in her/his interests, to indicate texts that have been recommended to her/him, and to discuss the reading strategies s/he uses and is developing to make sense of spoken, written and media texts.

## Program Content

Please note that all of the resources, strategies, processes and text types/genres that follow are **compulsory** for the end of Cycle One.

### Making Sense of a Text: Resources Readers Use

#### Repertoire of Texts

It is understood that within each of these required text types/genres, the student's own choice will be encouraged and respected, with the goal of cultivating a love of reading all kinds of texts (see also Media, Talk, and Writing: Repertoire of Texts).

- Young adult literature *with an equal representation of male and female authors and characters, and of diverse cultural groups*
- Narrative-based texts in different media (e.g. on radio or video, live performances, etc.) including: plays and poetry on topics/subjects of interest to young adolescent readers
- Nonfiction intended for adolescent readers, e.g. may also include some texts written or produced for adults on topics/subjects that are accessible to an average young adolescent reader, such as might be found in wide-circulation newspapers, community and alternative newspapers, television news, radio interviews
- Popular texts, such as teen magazines, school publications, catalogues, song lyrics

**NOTE:** For ease of reference, the texts listed above have been categorized. However, it should be noted that several of these texts are, in fact, *multimodal*, i.e. they integrate elements of spoken, print and/or visual modes and *multigenre*, i.e. they draw on different genres. Examples of multimodal texts include television texts, poetry and

classroom drama. Examples of multigenre texts include novels written in the form of letters, televised or radio interviews that use biography and narrative journalism.

#### Reading Profile

The student's reading profile includes her/his prior reading experiences, personal tastes, and text preferences, i.e. regarding spoken, written and media texts. It also includes her/his knowledge about how the structures, features, codes and conventions of different texts and genres work, as well as the reading strategies s/he has developed. To extend her/his reading profile, the student:

- Reads self-selected texts for pleasure and for learning purposes
- Participates in regular student-teacher conferences (see Competency 1–Talk: Presenting and Sharing the Integrated Profile)
- Maintains and shares an integrated portfolio that records representations of her/his reading development, e.g. record of texts read, response logs, productions that show what s/he knows about specific text types/genres

#### Reader's Stance: Constructing a Reading of a Text

The stance taken by a reader makes possible different interpretations of a text, since it focuses her/his attention on some elements more than others and is influenced by the demands of the context/situation in which reading takes place. See also the Thumbnail Sketch in this competency for further information. By the end of Cycle One, the student:

- Focuses on the world of the text to construct an *aesthetic* reading,<sup>24</sup> e.g. reads for pleasure, making sense of text by relating personally to characters and events, entering the world of the story fully, comparing feelings or actions or decisions with those of a character
- Focuses on making sense of information in a text to construct an *efferent* reading, e.g. reads print and visual information with the intention of remembering details/examples and/or of following instructions, rereads to verify meaning(s) s/he is making, relates to personal experience and prior knowledge
- Focuses on the relationship between own world and world of the text to construct an *interpretive* reading, e.g. elaborates on story world or information in text, connects literature or nonfiction to life experience(s), recognizes familiar textual features, codes and conventions that confirm own meaning(s)/message(s)

24. The three types of readings listed here are nonhierarchical. A "strong reading" of a text draws on elements of all three stances, such as the aesthetic and interpretive, while indicating where readers placed their focus. It is also determined by the situation or context in which students are asked to read, including purpose, what they know about how texts work, and the meaning(s) and sense they construct. These characteristics will only be evident in the students' responses, i.e. when they first talk about the sense they have made of the text, when they ask questions during reading, and so forth.

### Reading Strategies:<sup>25</sup> Text Grammars (Structures, Features, Codes and Conventions)<sup>26</sup>

- Constructs meaning(s)/message(s) by reinvesting her/his knowledge of the text as social construct, i.e. language-in-use:
  - Draws on cues in familiar structures, features, codes and conventions to make sense of texts
  - Identifies connotation and denotation of words, images and their referents
  - Makes connections between conventions of a familiar text type/genre and own response(s)/interpretation(s), e.g. reads photo in magazine ad for implicit meaning(s); calls upon own production/writing experience(s) of same text type/genre
  - Examines the constructed world of narrative text: uses her/his response(s) as the basis for connecting own meaning(s) to the conventions used to plot/construct the story, e.g. takes account of features of linear and nonlinear plotting; identifies how readers' or listeners' sympathies are directed to particular characters; sees that the order of events in a story are deliberately constructed to evoke our compassion or suspicion; notices elements of characterization (see Competency 4–Writing: Immersion into Texts)
  - Applies contextual understanding when meaning breaks down:
- Syntactic: to make sense of new words or to understand a few complex concepts/ideas /information, e.g. in a sentence
  - Sociocultural: draws on understanding of values and beliefs to make sense of incidents, events or message(s)

### Organizing and Reporting Information

The strategies and types of knowledge listed below are key resources that support the production processes in the Talk and Media competencies, as well as in the students' planning and research of their integrated projects (see Competency 4–Writing: Integrated Projects; and Writing: Researching as a Writer). In addition, they are complementary resources to the inquiry process and action research (see Talk) and to the maintenance of the student's integrated profile (see End-of-Cycle Outcomes in this competency). By the end of Secondary Cycle One, the student:

- Identifies attributes of primary and secondary sources in order to evaluate pertinent information
- Selects a note-taking strategy suited to the task, information source(s) and purpose
- Selects, records and categorizes information<sup>27</sup> on a topic or subject of personal interest with sustained teacher guidance
- Begins to develop organizational strategies to report findings, based on needs of familiar audience and context, with some teacher guidance
- Begins to draw conclusions by focusing on pertinence of main ideas

- Manages integrated portfolio by collecting, organizing and maintaining samples of own work, i.e. personal information
- Reports information/research orally to a familiar audience, using resources such as multimedia, classroom drama

25. The strategies in this section are drawn from research about the strategies used by proficient readers to make sense of text, such as skimming, scanning and using “fix-up” strategies when meaning breaks down. Therefore, these strategies are taught as students engage actively in processes of making meaning and of interpreting texts, with particular attention given to the social purposes and functions of different text grammars, i.e. not as discrete, isolated skills, facts or information. In addition, these skills cannot be viewed in isolation from the opportunities students have to read; their understanding about what reading is for; the freedom to select texts of personal interest; and their experiences with spoken, written and media texts.

26. Codes are representational systems of signs (word, image, sound, colour, etc.) governed by conventions or socially agreed upon meaning(s) that are known to both the speaker/writer/producer and to the listener/reader/viewer. For example, television news codes include the direct address and formal clothes of the presenter, the structure of stories and the use of accompanying visuals. The generic code of mystery includes a crime/problem, a detective, a series of possible suspects and a problem-solving process. Conventional grammar, as applied to written texts, is also a kind of code.

27. The term “information” refers to information contained in information-based texts in different media, including television, radio, newspapers and the Internet.

## Exchanges With Other Readers: Response Processes in the Classroom

It is through talk that the reader learns to measure her/his initial response(s) against the text. During the reading process, s/he discusses spoken, written and media texts with peers:

- Interrelates her/his reading stance, reading profile and the structural organization of text (i.e. its features, codes and conventions) to make sense of themes and/or ideas and/or information for self
- Calls upon reading profile, personal experience and the constructed world of the text when discussing responses with peers and teacher (see Reading Strategies in this competency)
- Discusses aesthetic and efferent readings of texts by indicating where s/he focused her/his attention and interest
- Situates her/his responses within the text, i.e. rereads
- Formulates questions that clarify, expand, reshape and confirm own response
- Assumes an individual voice in responding to texts:
  - Speaks with clarity, openness<sup>28</sup> and confidence in discussions with peers and teacher
  - Acknowledges and supports the different responses, interpretations and points of view of peers
  - Draws on discussions with peers to clarify and confirm own response(s)
  - With guidance, begins to step back and reflect on the significance the text holds for her/him

## Reader, Text, Context: Interpreting Texts

- Interprets the text for a familiar audience by drawing associations between own world of personal experiences and knowledge and the world of the text by considering:

- Own characteristics as a reader and the constructed world of a text, e.g. comparison of own values and experiences with those presented in the text; issues, ideas or questions the text raises for her/him; experience with similar texts; attitudes towards subject/topic/character; personal interests
- Predictions and inferences about the view of the world presented in text, i.e. in fiction, nonfiction, and narrative texts presented in different media
- Initial, tentative impressions about the statement(s) or view of the world the author/narrator/producer is making
- Features, codes and conventions of known text types/genres, i.e. drawn from own reading profile
- Texts s/he has written and produced that have similar structures, features, codes and conventions
- With guidance, examines text in its literary and/or sociocultural context:
  - Identifies features, codes and conventions used to achieve a recognized social purpose and/or function and/or effect and impact on self as reader, e.g. in a popular television commercial, in a suspense-mystery story, in a humorous text (see Competency 4–Writing: Immersion into Texts)
  - Explores different interpretations of the same event/idea/subject/topic in two sources and their impact on self as reader, e.g. current events in newspapers, on television, or radio (see Competency 2–Media: Audience and Producer)
  - Connects, in a trial-and-error fashion, her/his understanding of some characteristics of narrator/writer/producer to what s/he notices about the view of the world presented in the text, e.g. reads “between the lines” to locate apparent

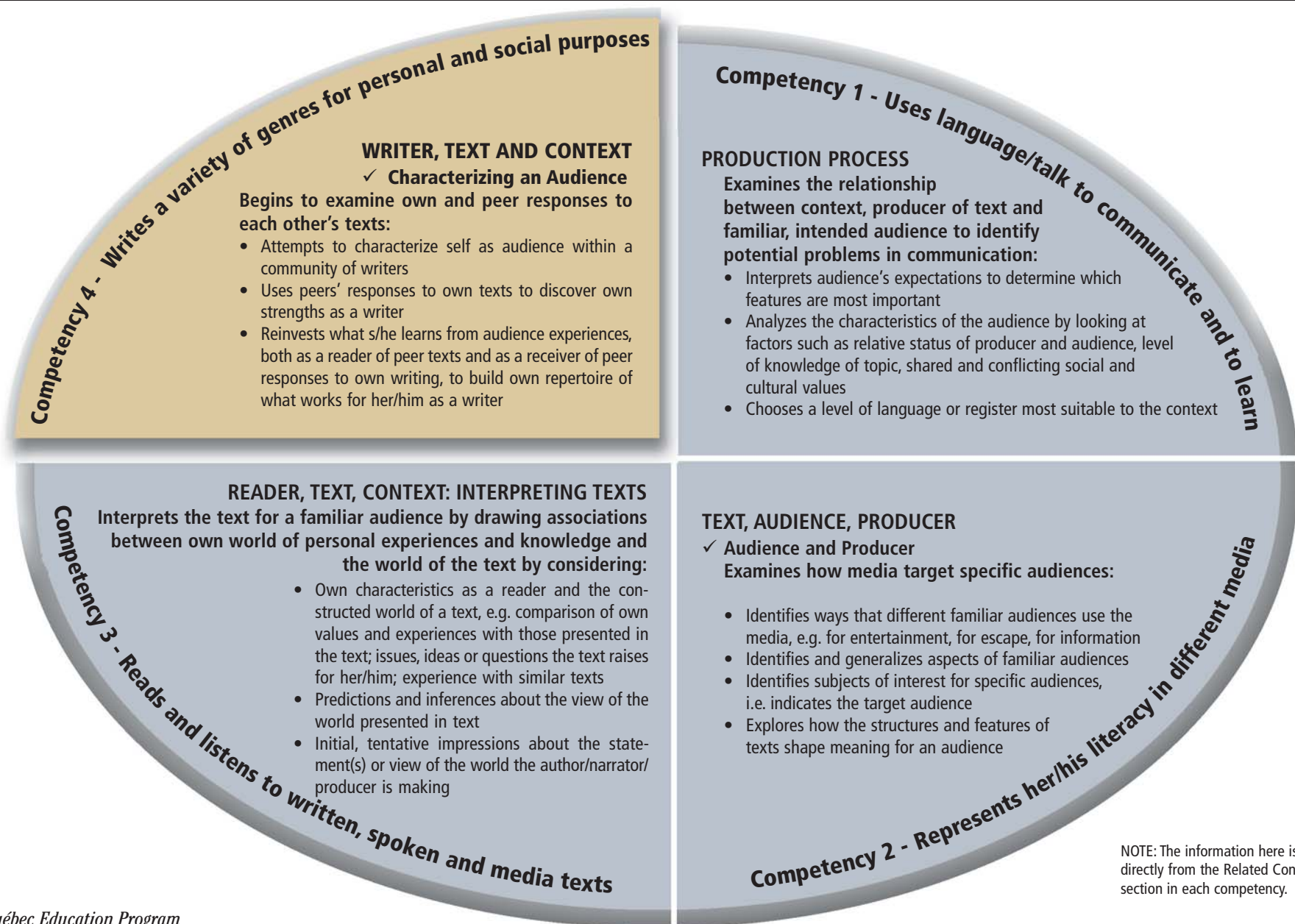
values/beliefs of a character/narrator in a story, understands the intent of a fast food ad, sees that an opinion excludes certain points of view (see Competency 2–Media: Production; Media: Audience and Producer; see Competency 1–Talk: Classroom Drama; and see Competency 4–Writing: Developing Voice: Assuming Roles as a Writer)

- Communicates interpretation(s) of a text in an individual voice, referring to prior experience, own reading profile and understanding of texts as social constructs:
  - Follows a process to compose, i.e. writes or produces own interpretation(s) of a text (see Competency 4–Writing: Writerly Practices)
  - Interprets the view of the world in the text in different media, including mixed media, for a familiar audience
  - Expresses own interpretation(s) with clarity, openness and confidence
  - Uses an inquiry process and action research in collaboration with peers to organize and report information in nonfiction and/or popular texts of interest to young adolescents for a familiar audience (see Competency 1–Talk).

<sup>28</sup> “Openness” means that the student begins to accommodate the ideas of an author/narrator/producer that differ from her/his own personal values, beliefs or opinions, in an effort to understand how another person sees the world. In addition, the student may begin to consider the different perspectives of peers on issues, events, conflicts or problems expressed by an author/narrator/producer.



## Example of Integrating Competencies Through Writing



NOTE: The information here is taken directly from the Related Content section in each competency.

## COMPETENCY 4 Writes a variety of genres for personal and social purposes

### Focus of the Competency

We write for many reasons, most notably to think, to communicate and to learn. In this way, we discover who we are and what we believe about the world around us, and our place in it. Writing helps us to understand the power of different genres to both reflect and construct our values, beliefs, stories and histories. It may also enable us to become more empathetic to those whose experiences differ from our own. For these reasons, genres are active and dynamic, both reflecting and shaping common communication processes within communities over time. For example, to express thanks we can send a thank-you note or give a speech, depending on whether the occasion is a friend's birthday party or an awards dinner. It is this understanding of the social purposes of language that shapes the way students see themselves as writers. This includes the reasons they write, the messages they convey, their consideration for audience, as well as the texts they produce, the stylistic devices they try, and the language registers they use. By starting with their own experiences with language-in-use, students are better able to make connections to how other genres operate. They can then manipulate codes and conventions to add impact to their work, and challenge existing genres. Ultimately, students learn the power and potential of genres through writing.

As involved participants in their learning throughout elementary school, students entering Secondary Cycle One understand that writing has a place in their own lives. These students see themselves as writers who choose their own topics and purposes for writing, and who value writing as a means of expression, of exploring ideas, of solving problems, and as a support for reading, talking

and working with media. These writers are only just beginning to select ways to shape meaning to influence a familiar audience. As in the EELA program, this familiar audience remains peers, younger children, family, trusted adults and teachers. Students have begun to develop criteria for good writing and can call on their experiences with familiar texts to inform their own productions. They read as writers to discover elements of the writer's craft such as familiar structures and features of texts, and attempt to incorporate these into their own writing. They have developed a writing process that involves writing daily, rereading and sharing drafts, making simple revision and editing decisions, seeking and giving feedback, selecting pieces to publish, and beginning to reflect on their progress as writers.

According to Virginia Woolf, "We write with the whole person." It is in this spirit that we recognize each student's evolving profile as a writer, i.e. the series of literacy and life experiences which contribute to her/his repertoire of significant themes, voice(s), preferred genres and stylistic devices, writing strategies and knowledge about how language, discourse and texts work. Here the teacher plays a critical role: s/he respects the profile of the writer and scaffolds her/his growth and development. S/he models literate behaviours and a passion for writing by sharing her/his work with students. In this way, the teacher serves as a valued guide and resource for students, since s/he is also a writer who has her/his own profile. In this negotiated,<sup>29</sup> collaborative relationship between students, peers and teacher, talk is critical to the development of the writer's own questions and purposes for writing, thereby ensuring that the writing experience

is always relevant and authentic. This is crucial to the writer's understanding of language as social practice and to the development of her/his own literate behaviours.

The individual is respected and valued as s/he functions and grows within a collaborative and inquiry-based environment, and which promotes differentiation. Thus, the Writing competency is designed for all writers, including those with special needs. Since students choose their contexts for writing in negotiation with the teacher, they are able to work at their own pace and challenge themselves to experiment and take risks when they feel comfortable and trust the support of their writing community. We can differentiate instruction through the genres and texts the students read and write, the contexts in which writing takes place, the topics they write about, the complexity of the strategies and processes they choose, the stylistic devices they use, as well as the quantity of texts they produce. It is fundamental for each student to be encouraged to behave like a writer in a variety of situations, so that s/he can develop confidence and a sense of her/himself as a writer within the culture of the classroom community. This enables the student to take ownership, responsibility and pride in her/his work.

### Thumbnail Sketch of the Key Features<sup>30</sup>

Developing a process to write, which will become increasingly more adaptable and individualized as students move through secondary school, is the main emphasis of this competency for Cycle One. Students continue to work and

29. For information on negotiating curriculum and other conditions of the classroom environment described, please refer to the Integrated TLE Context.

function as writers within a classroom community of other writers, including peers, teacher and other authors whose work they read. Writing daily, in a variety of contexts within this community, is how students learn to have confidence in their own ideas; develop their imagination and fluency; draft, revise and conference over their work; trust their instincts; and manage their own time. While it is true that we learn to write by writing, we also learn by observing and talking with other writers at work. This can happen in many ways, such as reading other writers' work (including peers), talking with peers about their writing decisions, or reading about how our favourite author goes about writing. Since the act of writing is a literacy event rooted in our lives, it reflects the myriad of concerns, ideas and situations for which we use it. As well, the writing process is almost never linear. We shift and change our ways of writing, what we write about, and how we use language to suit each situation. As students become more conscious of their habits as writers, they begin to identify and cultivate those processes, strategies and behaviours that work best for them, depending on the situation. This is part of learning to live the writer's life; it involves strategies such as keeping a writer's notebook and learning how to observe life; respecting the conditions under which they work best, such as how mood affects their writing or that they prefer to write when it is quiet; and monitoring and reflecting on their own progress as writers by comparing their work over time and consistently looking through their integrated profile to set new goals.

Part of becoming a good writer is being able to call upon the knowledge we gain through experience and that we develop over time as we read and write, i.e. our ability to make reading-writing connections. In Secondary Cycle One, writers extend this ability through immersion into texts, guided discussion about texts, and collaborative writing activities. This exploration and guided discovery,

known as "reading as a writer," allows students to experiment with the elements of the writer's craft; over time, they are able to build a variety of language uses and styles, as well as a repertoire of familiar genres which work for them as writers, i.e. which suit their own sense of expression, ideas and uses for language in their own lives. Students support, learn from and challenge each other when they share their writing with their peers, talk about how they came to make their choices, and take risks to try new stylistic devices to add impact to their work. This is an exploratory phase for Cycle One, which means that a "penalty free" atmosphere of trial-and-error is essential for students to develop confidence. While young writers may be likely to emulate their "writer models," this is simply the first step in attempting to make something your own. By experimenting with a wide variety of genres and styles, they can, with increasing control, develop their own style or recognizable way of using language, which is unique to themselves as writers. In this way, the writing community does not diminish the writer's independence and autonomy, but rather strengthens her/his own confidence and pride since her/his identity as a writer becomes recognized as special and distinct from that of her/his peers. Over time, students begin to respect and appreciate the uniqueness of their own style, as well as the style and characteristics of other writers, including their peers and teacher.

The writing community helps students build on their understanding of the relationship(s) between a writer, her/his audience and the text s/he is writing. To anticipate an audience's expectations and shape meaning(s)/message(s) to suit them, students begin by understanding their own patterns as writers and as audience members. *By consistently reading each other's work and discussing texts, with guidance, students become aware of the constructed nature of texts, how they position readers, and how readers position texts based on their own experiences.* They also begin

to realize the impact their voice can have on their peers. Therefore, depending on the student's chosen contexts for writing, s/he writes about her/his own interests/ideas/experiences with increasing confidence and control, and begins to assume other roles in writing by adopting a stance, whether personal or imagined, to achieve a purpose and to engage her/his audience. This ability to actively construct voice is developed through experimentation, a drive to get a reaction from peers, and plenty of opportunities to write about what matters to her/him. When writing about others and imagining their realities, the student begins to understand the responsibility of representing them with authenticity, so s/he researches as a writer to create informed renditions of other times, places and characters and their values and beliefs. S/he also begins to draw on the insight s/he gains through writing about others to learn more about her/himself and human nature. In these ways s/he is beginning to show that s/he understands the important part context plays in the interpretation and production of texts.

30. These key features are developed through integrated SELA activities and involve processes from the other SELA competencies, such as collaborative talk to help clarify ideas, working with others, and reflecting on their progress. Also, students read to collect information, craft texts and support their writing practices. And, students produce media texts to learn how they are situated, marketed and targeted to specific audiences. These key features also invoke and help to develop the Cross-Curricular Competencies outlined in Chapter 3 of the QEP. Some examples are: students *use information and information and communications technologies* to research as writers, immerse themselves in texts and establish their contexts for writing; they *exercise critical judgment* when expressing themselves in writing and when giving and receiving feedback to/from peers; they *use creativity and communicate appropriately* when designing their integrated projects and texts, and when writing to impact and influence a familiar audience; they *adopt effective work methods and solve problems* when planning, organizing and completing their integrated projects and in learning to adapt a writing process to different situations. In addition, students learn to achieve their potential by writing about what interests them, making their own choices, sharing their profile as writers, and by reflecting on their growth through maintaining an integrated profile. Finally, they *cooperate with others* by writing collaboratively, working in peer response groups and interacting with others with an open mind.

## Key Features of Competency 4

### **Follows a process to produce written texts in specific contexts**

Adapts process, strategies and writerly practices to suit own needs • Confers regularly with peers and teacher throughout the writing process • Uses feedback strategies to improve own writing and support peers • Practises revision as a recursive process • Reflects on own development as a writer over time

### **Develops style as a writer within a classroom community of writers**

Follows an inquiry process focused on immersion into texts • Reads to learn how language, discourse and texts work • Applies knowledge of language and familiar text grammar(s) to own writing

- Engages in collaborative writing activities
- Explores own style in relation to other writers



**Writes a variety of genres for personal and social purposes**

### **Explores the relationship(s) between writer, text and context**

Develops voice as a writer by assuming various roles in writing for personal and social purposes • Researches as a writer to become more informed and to create authentic contexts • Characterizes intended audience to shape meaning(s)/message(s) to suit context

## Evaluation Criteria

*It is understood that the evaluation criteria for this competency are used within the framework specified in the Integrated TLE Context for Cycle One. In addition, they are detailed in the End-of-Cycle Outcomes.*

- Selection of texts for writing based on own interests and preferences
- Adjustment of role as writer to purpose, audience, text and context
- Application of knowledge of language and familiar text grammar(s)
- Support of the classroom writing community in roles of writer and audience
- Adaptation of process and strategies to the writing context
- Self-evaluation of growth as a writer

## End-of-Cycle Outcomes

*It is understood that the outcomes for this competency are evaluated within the framework specified in the Integrated TLE Context for Cycle One.*

The student selects texts to write based on her/his own personal interests, preferences, purposes and experiences, e.g. children's story, memoir, journal. The student is required to write a variety of texts, including action-planning-based texts, reflective-interpretive-based texts and information-based texts, but s/he is most capable when writing narrative-based texts. Whereas her/his experience with these other genres/text types is still exploratory by the end of Cycle One, s/he already possesses an extensive repertoire of familiar narrative genres. The student uses narrative in a variety of contexts, moving from those that serve personal functions to beginning to write for more social purposes, i.e. the student gradually moves away from the intimacy of her/his own experience to write from a more distanced stance/point of view. For example, instead of simply telling a story about her/himself and her/his life, such as playing soccer, s/he invents a character who is a soccer player and tells the story from that point of view. Another example would be using narrative to explore the problems between teenagers and their parents, as told from the point of view of the parent. In this way, the student explores a variety of roles as a writer, e.g. self in a journal, child or parent in a story, own memoir or that of a fictional character. Because narrative genres are most familiar to the student, s/he is able to adjust her/his role(s) as a writer to suit the purpose, audience and context, shaping the text accordingly. As well, in negotiation with the teacher and with her/his ongoing guidance, the student is able to initiate, plan and develop a self-selected integrated project, which s/he completes over time and in depth. Within this inquiry s/he produces a variety of texts which are linked according to her/his curiosity, interests, tastes and goals for the project. Following an inquiry process adapted to the topic/subject of the project, s/he locates, organizes and synthesizes relevant information to create an authentic context, e.g. background information to re-create a historical period/character, own poetry to present in an anthology or order of information in a process. S/he is able to characterize her/his intended audience of peers in light of their knowledge and expectations about the topic/subject to either inform or entertain them.

The student applies her/his knowledge of language and text grammars when s/he writes, which is drawn from her/his immersion into different texts throughout the cycle. S/he selects familiar linguistic and textual structures, features, codes and conventions that meet the demands of her/his chosen text in light of its context, purpose and audience. The structures and features are also used to achieve special effects in her/his writing, such as creating suspense in a story and experimenting with these in a trial-and-error fashion. S/he is most familiar with narrative-based

## End-of-Cycle Outcomes (cont.)

texts and uses this knowledge in different ways, e.g. writing a fairy tale for children, combining autobiography and narrative in a journal.

When writing information-based texts for a familiar audience, her/his focus is on reporting information and ideas to them; s/he selects and orders information in a way that adds to the meaning(s)/message(s) s/he wants to convey, with varying degrees of success, depending on the complexity of the topic/subject and the context for writing. By writing about her/his own and others' experiences, the student is beginning to develop a few characteristics that her/his teacher recognizes as a writer's voice and style, e.g. use of humour, love of descriptive detail, affinity for action in a narrative or for certain genres.

The student participates as a member of the classroom writing community with confidence and commitment and supports her/his peers in the roles of writer and audience in a variety of contexts such as: sharing her/his writing regularly with peers and teacher; giving and receiving feedback; writing collaborative pieces; working with peers to help develop ideas and projects; and recommending stylistic devices and/or texts to try. S/he follows a writing process that includes adapting reliable strategies that s/he has learned over the two years of the cycle to draft, revise and edit a text. These include free-writing and collaborative talk to plan and draft her/his texts, revising by rereading both own and model texts, and editing for familiar, common conventions, such as paragraphing and punctuation. S/he monitors, with teacher support, her/his own work habits, e.g. time, task requirements and resources. S/he demonstrates her/his understanding of the writing process as recursive and flexible. The student adapts her/his process and strategies to suit a variety of writing contexts, i.e. not all texts require the same amount of planning, revision and polish (e.g. own journal writing and/or reflections as compared to an adventure story or historical narrative).

The student self-evaluates her/his growth as a writer regularly and in different contexts. In conferences with peers and teacher throughout the writing process, the student shows that s/he is consciously reflecting on the text s/he is developing, e.g. thinking about how best to reach her/his audience or about making the world of the text as real as possible. S/he is also able to articulate her/his choices and why s/he feels they are effective in her/his writing, e.g. talking about her/his intentions for the text, stylistic devices, risks s/he is taking, own strengths and preferences as a writer. S/he organizes and maintains her/his integrated profile, which, by the end of Cycle One, shows that s/he has developed a repertoire of familiar and some new texts that demonstrate aspects of her/his writing style; her/his ability to write in different contexts, and for a familiar audience of peers, friends, teacher and younger children; as well as evidence of her/his work methods, including her/his early attempts at written self-evaluation of a few texts. S/he shares her/his integrated profile and talks specifically about the ways her/his writing profile has been influenced by peers and teacher, the strategies s/he uses, and her/his own writing preferences and writerly practices, e.g. under what conditions s/he likes to write, why s/he chooses to write, how ideas come to her/him and how s/he records them.

## Program Content

Please note that the resources, strategies,<sup>31</sup> processes and genres that follow are compulsory for Cycle One.

### Repertoire of Texts

Within each of these required genres,<sup>32</sup> student choice and negotiation of texts to be produced<sup>33</sup> are encouraged and respected. Many of the texts to be produced throughout the cycle are familiar to the student, since they are the same as those given priority in the EELA program in Cycles One, Two and Three. However, as the emphasis is being placed on the student as an active and reflective learner, writing action-planning-based and reflective/interpretive-based texts will require more guidance and support by the teacher. The focus with other, more familiar texts is on working toward greater control of the communication process, exercising a more conscious choice of strategies in relation to audience and purpose, and adopting a variety of roles as a writer; thus students will show greater ability to use structures, features, codes and conventions for special effect when writing familiar texts for a familiar audience. When exploring new texts, students work both collaboratively and individually in a trial-and-error fashion, in a variety of contexts (see also Competencies 1 to 3–Talk, Media and Reading: Repertoire of Texts).

- Action-planning-based texts to plan, organize and/or monitor own learning, such as: notes, learning/process log, plan of action, rubric, checklist, time line
- Reflective- and interpretive-based texts to reflect, think, self-evaluate and/or wonder, such as: response, interpretation, self-evaluation, writer’s notebook, journal, diary

- Narrative-based texts to remember, record and/or story both real and imagined experiences, such as: personal narrative, children’s story, historical recount, poetry, myth, fairy tale, biography, personal letter, monologue, script, memoir
- Information-based texts to explain, persuade, report on and/or learn about new ideas/issues/events, such as: directions, report, procedure, letter, description

### Integrated Projects<sup>34</sup>

Students discover their interests, topics and questions for writing from their own lives. It is through real situations based on personal interests and experiences that they learn to develop their ideas, apply strategies and find satisfaction in the writing experience. The teacher negotiates topics/subjects with the student and supports her/him throughout the planning and development stages of the self-selected project, which can be done collaboratively or independently, and which involves writing texts which are always for a familiar audience. As well, since these projects involve contexts for learning and using language that have depth and take time, they draw on ideas, experiences and activities from all four competencies of the SELA program for Cycle One, and/or the broad areas of learning, and/or other disciplines. This emphasis on working with material and ideas that students are curious about, and may already be working with, is what gives them the impetus to initiate these projects, probe more deeply and follow through over time on topics/subjects they are passionate about.

- Initiates, with teacher negotiation and support, a self-selected integrated project

- Follows a collaboration process to plan, organize and complete an integrated project (see Competency 1–Talk: Collaboration Process)
- Talks about, in regular conferences with peers and teacher, development of project(s):
  - Shares interests s/he wants to pursue
  - Plans, organizes, changes the project
  - Monitors own work, sets time line, organizes workload
  - Sets realistic learning and writing goals

31. The strategies in this competency are those used by proficient writers to craft and shape a text. They are taught as students engage actively in processes of writing texts and not as discrete, isolated skills, facts or information. The development of these strategies and skills cannot be separated from students’ opportunities to write, their understanding about what writing is for, their freedom to select texts of personal interest, and their prior experiences with writing texts.
32. Genre includes the structures, features, codes and conventions traditionally associated with purposes such as reflecting and narrating, with specific texts, e.g. poems and letters, and with literary genres, e.g. romance and fantasy. While these texts are categorized into four families of genres, students take into account the nature of multigenre texts (e.g. narrative journalism, novels written as a series of letters) and multimodal texts (e.g. song lyrics, illustrated fiction) when writing.
33. Students need not complete the writing process for all the texts they work with; these may end up as journal entries, rough drafts or class modelling activities. Many may be part of the production processes of other competencies.
34. For example, students create their own anthology of writing, e.g. a collection of poems, exploring the structures, features, codes and conventions of a poetry anthology, such as an author’s biography, layout, table of contents. Similarly, students create a unit based on an aspect of a young adult novel, or do a genre analysis of the fairy tale, including its origins, some cultural differences from one country or civilization to another, and/or adaptations to media texts, e.g. popular movies.

- Follows an inquiry process, with teacher guidance and support, to research and discuss information (see Competency 1–Talk: Inquiry Process; and Competency 3–Reading: Organizing and Reporting Information)
- Drafts a plan of action:
  - Explains a research rationale, i.e. reasons for choosing this study, what they may gain from it
  - Proposes a methodology and a time line, even though the plan may change as the study develops
  - Reflects on changes to the project as it unfolds and how s/he and/or the group managed those changes
- Produces texts, within the integrated project, in contexts that are significant to her/him and/or the group for a familiar audience
- Uses strategies to work out ideas and to draft, e.g. free-writing, clustering, listing, mind-mapping
- Develops work habits such as keeping a writer’s notebook/journal, recording observations and ideas for writing
- Selects own pieces to develop into final drafts
- Attends to clarity, presentation style and personal expression when presenting final draft(s)
- Develops self-monitoring strategies:
  - Creates rubrics/checklists collaboratively, e.g. to show planning, self-evaluation, criteria for good writing
  - Tracks own writing process, e.g. troubleshooting, dealing with writer’s block
  - Learns to manage own workload, e.g. organizing own time, meeting deadlines
  - Adapts writing process to conditions under which s/he works best, e.g. mood, inspiration, environment
- Talks about how s/he adapts writerly practices to suit different writing situations and contexts

## Writing Process

Writing involves a process that is recursive rather than linear. Students need the time to think, draft, talk about writing choices, share work with peers, learn revision strategies and reflect on their progress. The writing community, including the teacher, models writing processes and strategies to help the writer develop and extend her/his writing practices. Over time and through experience, s/he is able to make a more conscious choice of strategies to suit different writing situations and genres and to adopt a unique set of practices that work best for her/him as a writer.

### Writerly Practices<sup>35</sup>

- Writes for sustained periods of class time<sup>36</sup>
- Produces draft(s) and adopts a drafting process that is context- and text-dependent:
  - Chooses the context(s) for own writing based on own interests, e.g. purpose, audience, genre, topic/issue
  - Talks with peers and teacher, e.g. to brainstorm ideas, clarify and extend thinking

- Selects feedback to improve text
- Talks about ways that peer/teacher feedback influences own choices, e.g. topics, development, process, strategies

### Revision<sup>38</sup>

- Develops techniques to indicate changes for drafts, e.g. crossing out, cutting and pasting, using symbols and/or arrows
- Uses self as audience, e.g. reads own text aloud, rereads often
- Questions own texts as a writer, e.g. Does this lead draw my readers in? Does the text say what I want it to say?

35. These are habits the writer learns and develops over time. It is a term analogous to “scholarly,” i.e. behaving like a scholar, behaving like a writer.

36. The use of class time depends on the writer’s own needs regarding her/his text in progress, e.g. time alone to write or think, time to confer with the teacher, time to work in a small group of peers to give each other feedback, time to do research in the library, time to reread models. The teacher supports this sustained time for writing through strategies such as: immersing students in texts/models, conducting mini-lessons, helping students brainstorm topics, demonstrating writing strategies, conferencing with individuals or groups, setting up peer response groups, circulating throughout the class and writing with students, e.g. journaling.

37. See also Talk: Collaboration Process.

38. Revision is a dynamic process that focuses on meaning. This process can be straightforward or complex, depending on the degree of sophistication of the text and the context. Therefore, students will not revise each text the same way or to the same extent, e.g. they may have more facility revising conventional narrative texts, but multigenre and/or multimodal texts may prove more challenging. Similarly, when writing a text that is relatively new to them, revision will be a more complex, trial-and-error process, involving much support from the teacher. Since students learn to revise by doing it and improve as writers by revising their work as often as they require, students need to have the opportunity to rework and resubmit writing throughout the term, including adapting existing pieces into new works. Editing or proofreading, on the other hand, is a static process that focuses on technical errors.

- Rereads similar texts/models for guidance, e.g. structures and features, author’s style, genre conventions
- Revises content, e.g. adding details, experimenting with leads, changing point of view
- Makes ready use of resources to enhance communication, e.g. dictionary, thesaurus, parents, peers
- Talks about own revision processes, e.g. how I make my writing more exciting, what I do when I am stuck
- Develops own editing strategies, e.g. creating editing checklists, focusing on a limited number of conventions, proofreading for known words, checking for new paragraphs, capital letters, punctuation when using dialogue

### Reflection

- Talks about self as a writer in conferences with peers and teacher, i.e. develops a metalanguage to reflect on own progress
- Talks about the development of her/his writer’s profile, e.g. traces own history as a writer, how s/he learned to write, the role of writing in own life, prior writing experiences
- Shares growing profile as a writer in regular student-teacher conferences, e.g. talks about text preferences and personal tastes, reasons s/he writes, strategies s/he uses, knowledge s/he has about language and text grammars (see Competency 1–Talk: Presenting and Sharing the Integrated Profile)
- Self-evaluates pieces of writing, e.g. explains intent, degree of success, other factors influencing the writing
- Maintains, organizes and shares an integrated profile that records representations of her/his writing development, e.g. record of texts written, which show what s/he knows about specific texts and genres and how they work, writer’s notebook or journal, evidence of her/his work methods (see Competency 1–Talk: Organizing and Maintaining an Integrated Profile)

### Developing Style

At the Cycle One level, developing style is an exploration into language and a discovery of different and new ways to enhance communication skills within authentic contexts and a classroom community of language users (see also Thumbnail Sketch in this competency). Style includes the choices writers make and the way they express themselves. Style develops from students’ experiences with language. As students learn more complex ways of expressing themselves through writing for real purposes, they begin to care about the language they use and the texts they write.

### Immersion into Texts<sup>39</sup>

Immersion is central to the writing competency because it is the reading-writing connection in action. It has two dimensions: guided inquiry into different kinds of texts and students’ selection of similar texts to look at both as they plan for writing and throughout the writing process. For example, a student who is writing a story as a series of letters might consult a novel that does the same thing. This is a necessary step to being able to fulfill the application dimensions of this Key Feature, as it is through immersion that knowledge about how language, discourse and texts work is constructed. The reading that students do is very focused, as they try to adapt elements of the writer’s craft from the texts they read to their own writing. Over time, students are able to internalize elements of this process and immerse themselves into texts independently, using texts as models for their own writing.

- Explores the grammars of text:<sup>40</sup>
  - Follows an inquiry process, working in collaboration with peers and teacher, to explore how a text is constructed and/or some of its social purposes (see Competency 1–Talk: Collaboration Process, and Inquiry Process)

- Draws on prior literacy experiences with familiar texts to deconstruct them, e.g. features of characterization in a story
- Reads, individually or as a group, more than one sample of the genre to compare stylistic elements and their impact on the audience (see Competency 3–Reading: Reader, Text, Context: Interpreting Texts)
- Discusses the purpose of familiar texts within a genre, e.g. Why do people write fairy tales, love letters, comic books? Who has access to these texts and why do people read them? How do these texts represent the values, beliefs, experiences of a discourse community, e.g. the folk song, the science report, the friendly letter?
- Identifies some structures and features of a genre, e.g. the narrative structure of a mystery, features such as foreshadowing and suspense
- Identifies some codes and conventions of a genre, e.g. mysteries have traditional conventions to characterize detectives and suspects, and often include the conventional scene where the detective gathers all the suspects into one room
- Discusses impact on self as a reader of the genre (see Competency 3–Reading: Reader, Text, Context: Interpreting Texts)

39. It is understood that guided inquiry does not mean directly and explicitly teaching discrete features of texts, but rather is an ongoing conversation about how texts are constructed, why they are used and the social purposes they serve. It is also understood that immersion into texts includes texts by all the writers in the classroom community, peers, teacher and other authors whose work they read.

40. For example, students work with a genre of children’s literature, investigating its origins and attempting to place these in a social context, which may include its social relevance or a sense of the author’s purpose or style. Or, students may examine comic book heroes, counting the ratio of male to female heroes, looking at archetypal hero-villain relationships, or examining the relationship of the original print versions to a TV or movie version to compare different codes and conventions of written and media texts.



- Explores the uses of language:
  - Discusses how a writer’s word choices affect the audience, e.g. “it was a dark and stormy night ...”
  - Begins to talk about, with guidance, how language can represent and/or exclude certain people, values, ideas as well as the power relationships evoked in the text, e.g. seeing that a book review doesn’t represent the tastes of adolescent readers, or looking at the relationships among the characters in a mystery, ratio of women to men, gender of the detective and how this is played out in the story, characterization of teens in the teen-movie genre (see Competency 2–Media: Representation; and Competency 1–Talk: Uses of Language in a Democratic Society)
  - Identifies how language is used to present ideas and information, e.g. comparing biases in lead stories on same topic in different newspapers, how information is presented in a historical time line, or in a math/science textbook (see Competency 3–Reading: Reporting and Organizing Information; and programs such as History and Citizenship Education and Mathematics, Science and Technology)
- Uses texts as models for own writing:
  - Consults different samples of the genre
  - Builds criteria for what makes the text effective
  - Develops a rubric/checklist for how to write a particular genre, in collaboration with teacher and peers
  - Keeps track of elements of style to explore, e.g. in writer’s notebook, journal

#### Applying Knowledge of Text Grammars<sup>41</sup> (Structures, Features, Codes and Conventions)

- Chooses a genre that suits own purpose and context, topic, audience, etc.
- Applies text grammars appropriate to the text chosen

- Develops control over familiar text grammars, e.g. structure of a story, dialogue, characterization
- Experiments with new structures, features, codes and conventions to specific effect in a trial-and-error fashion
- Begins to combine and/or manipulate different text grammars to suit own purpose(s), i.e. writes multi-genre texts (e.g. writes a story as a series of journal entries, uses features of a fairy tale in a news story)

#### Applying Knowledge of Language<sup>42</sup>

- Integrates new and familiar linguistic conventions into own writing in a trial-and-error fashion, e.g. makes approximations
- Makes appropriate and effective word choices to represent ideas, people, things, events, experiences:
  - Expands vocabulary repertoire and rules, generalizations and patterns for spelling
  - Uses specialized vocabularies learned from other disciplines when pertinent, e.g. math, science, history, ecology
  - Draws on different code systems, e.g. pictures, words, colours, logos
- Uses conventions of language to establish relationships, e.g. statements, questions, requests, conditions, commands
- Arranges information in the text(s):
  - Develops the text, e.g. sequencing by cause and effect, chronology, providing and prioritizing details
  - Uses cohesive devices, e.g. paragraphing, coordinating parts to the whole, using transitions, conjunctions, punctuation
- Adapts common linguistic conventions to a specific genre, e.g. using present tense in a report (see Competency 1–Talk and Competency 2–Media: Production Process)

- Begins to manipulate common linguistic conventions to achieve specific effects, e.g. using sentence fragments in a narrative, using slang in characterization (see Competency 1–Talk: Aesthetic Qualities of Language)

#### Comparing Own Style to That of Other Writers

- Engages in collaborative writing activities, e.g. writing group texts, setting up a writer’s circle, publishing class texts
- Accepts and gives recommendations from/to peers and teacher, e.g. about style, voice, texts, topics
- Extends repertoire of stylistic elements, e.g. alternates dialogue with description of character’s thoughts
- Recognizes elements of own style and that of peers and other writers:
  - Notices differences between own stylistic choices and those of peers
  - Compares effects on readers of own stylistic choices and those of peers, and revises accordingly
  - Develops tastes as a writer by consciously adopting elements of the writer’s craft
- Develops an appreciation of the uniqueness of own style in relation to that of other writers
- Recognizes strong points of peers’ styles and praises, supports them

41. See also Reading: Repertoire of Texts, and Text Grammars as well as Media: Repertoire of Texts, and Textual Features, Codes and Conventions for other texts with which students are working and for more examples of text grammars.

42. Grammar is about language-in-use; it involves the social and cultural aspects of language and text within a particular context, i.e. how context shapes the meaning of words to reveal attitudes, beliefs and values. Therefore, grammar is learned in relation to students’ use of and experience with language both in and out of school, and with a variety of spoken, written and media texts. Grammar is learned in the context of the student’s own writing, not as a set of discrete skills taught in isolation. Some strategies to support this include: immersion into texts/models, mini-lessons, feedback on drafts or in conferences, inquiry into resources such as style books in the classroom, and teacher and peer modelling throughout the writing process.

## Writer, Text and Context

Context embodies the factors influencing writing, i.e. how texts are produced and interpreted. These include the writer's own experiences, values and knowledge of language and text, as well as those of the audience; writing decisions such as genre, style and topic; and how the classroom writing community operates, including the writing and peer conferencing processes. When students write to a familiar audience about something that matters to them personally and when they share their work often with each other, they begin to see how their writing influences their peers, and therefore can begin to shape meaning(s)/message(s) accordingly. By applying this contextual knowledge within the confines of the writing process in class, students gradually become aware of the socioculturally constructed nature of texts.

### Developing Voice:<sup>43</sup> Assuming Roles as a Writer

- Uses writing to better understand own experiences:
  - Writes about issues, events, interests, beliefs that are important to her/him
  - Draws on feedback from peers to deepen or extend own thinking (see Reading: Exchanges With Other Readers: Response Processes in the Classroom)
  - Identifies common issues/themes in own writing, e.g. reviews journal entries and/or finished pieces such as poems over time, compares own work with peers'
  - Reflects on significance of themes in own writing, e.g. why they are recurrent and how they have changed over time
  - Expresses her/himself with clarity, openness,<sup>44</sup> and confidence

- Uses writing to better understand the experiences of others:
  - Compares own experiences to those of others, e.g. peers, characters in a book (see Reading: Reader, Text, Context: Interpreting Texts)
  - Adopts voice(s) other than own, in a trial-and-error fashion, e.g. a journal in voice of a grandparent or a sports hero
- Begins to construct a writer's stance<sup>45</sup> (see Talk: Classroom Drama):
  - Uses different points of view, e.g. first person, third-person omniscient
  - Explores different perspectives of a person, issue, event, e.g. multiple voices in a narrative, bias in news writing
  - Experiments with tone to create an effect, e.g. hostile, empathetic, sarcastic

### Researching as a Writer

- Follows an inquiry process to create informed renditions of people, places and events (see Talk: Inquiry Process):
  - Researches, with support, information about a social, historical and/or cultural context<sup>46</sup> to use in own writing (see Reading: Reading Strategies: Text Grammars; and Reading: Reader, Text, Context: Interpreting Texts)
  - Consults a variety of sources, e.g. lyrics of songs, art, articles, history books, news, interviews
  - Collects and organizes information relevant to the context to be created (see Reading: Organizing and Reporting Information; Writing: Integrated Projects; and Writing: Immersion Into Texts)
- Uses information, with guidance, to support a point of view/stance and/or create an authentic description of a time and place

43. Voice creates a speaker and her/his relationships through text. It is an embodiment of a writer's own experiences and her/his freedom to express them; in this way, we are all texts to be examined, shared, learned from and questioned as we are heard in and contribute to the classroom community with confidence and openness. Voice is also a complete construction of the roles we assume as writers, e.g. self in a journal, child in a story, expert in a report. We actively participate in re-creating parts of ourselves and our world every time we write, furthering our understanding of ourselves and others through language. As our experiences are multifaceted and ever-changing so too are our voices. As such, voice is never finished or static but develops over time and through different situations.
44. Openness means that the student begins to accommodate ideas, values and beliefs that differ from her/his own in an effort to understand how others see the world. This includes ideas/issues expressed by writers in texts, as well as peers' reactions/perspectives on such issues, events, conflicts or problems.
45. Stance in writing, as in the other competencies, is defined as the relationship a writer has to the topic and audience, as characterized by distance in time and space; i.e. how close the writer is to the events and people portrayed, whether s/he is involved and writing about her/his own experiences, or is removed from the characters and events, either being told about them, hearing about them, or reading about them and imagining what it's like to be them. This ability to construct a stance grows as students gain experience with writing about the self and others until they are able to write for increasingly more distant audiences in Cycle Two.
46. Texts exist in contexts; as such they represent the attitudes, values, beliefs and experiences of those involved. By reading or writing a text out of its context, we disconnect it and the experience from anything dynamic, alive and relevant; and, we ignore the human factor involved in creating and interpreting texts. Therefore, for example, as a student creates a family memoir, s/he must interview family members, learn about their histories, country of origin, memories. Or if the student is immersed in the historical context of the sixties, as in a young adult novel, s/he researches the peace movement, women's liberation, civil rights. It is through building this kind of contextual understanding that the writer is able to represent these people, places and times in an authentic way in her/his writing.

### Characterizing an Audience

- Interprets the expectations of a familiar audience (see Talk: Production Process)
  - Looks at similarities between self and audience, e.g. gender, age, experiences
  - Begins to look at potential differences, e.g. differences of opinion, experiences, values
  - Thinks about knowledge the audience has on the topic and adjusts writing accordingly
- Experiments with register:<sup>47</sup>
  - Considers the formality/informality of the context, e.g. an informal class presentation versus a student council meeting
  - Explores the relative status of the writer and audience in a familiar setting, e.g. same, higher or lower
  - Shifts the use of language/diction depending on audience and context, e.g. jargon, slang, formal
  - Adapts register to genre for specific effect, e.g. dialogue between high school principal and teenager in a story
- Begins to examine own and peer responses to each other's texts (see Media: Audience and Producer):
  - Attempts to characterize self as audience within a community of writers, e.g. what interests/engages her/him as a reader
  - Uses peers' responses to own texts to discover own strengths as a writer
  - Responds with interest and openness to points of view expressed by peers (see Reading: Exchanges With Other Readers: Response Processes in the Classroom)
  - Reinvests what s/he learns from audience experiences, both as a reader of peer texts and as a receiver of peer responses, to own writing, to build own repertoire of what works for her/him as a writer

47. Register: tailoring the language to suit the intended audience and context, e.g. writing for younger children as opposed to parents. Register also varies according to text and content, e.g. relating scientific facts to an uninformed audience, delivering a sports commentary on an all-sports show.

## A Selected Bibliography: English Language Arts

---

### Literacy

- Barton, D., Mary Hamilton and Roz Ivanic. *Situated Literacies: Reading and Writing in Context*. New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Christie, Frances and J.R. Martin, eds. *Genre and Institutions: Social Processes in the Workplace and School*. London: Continuum, 2000.
- Cook-Gumperz, Jenny, ed. *The Social Construction of Literacy*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Cope, Bill and Mary Kalantzis, eds. *Multiliteracies: Literacy Learning and the Design of Social Futures*. London & New York: Routledge, 2000.
- . *The Powers of Literacy: A Genre Approach to Teaching Writing*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993.
- Dunn, Patricia A. *Talking, Sketching, Moving: Multiple Literacies in the Teaching of Writing*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers Inc., 2001.
- Freire, Paulo. *Education for Critical Consciousness*. New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1998.
- Lee, Carol D. and Peter Smagorinsky, eds. *Vygotskian Perspectives on Literacy Research: Constructing Meaning Through Collaborative Inquiry*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Moffet, James. *Teaching the Universe of Discourse*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1983.

### Language

- Fairclough, Norman. *Language and Power*. London: Longman Group UK Limited, 1989.
- Halliday, M.A.K. and Hasan Ruqaiya, eds. *Language, Context and Text: Aspects of Language in a Social-Semiotic Perspective*. Geelong, Australia: Deakin University, 1985.
- Hymes, Dell. *Ethnography, Linguistics, Narrative Inequality*. London, England: Taylor & Francis, 1996.
- Kress, Gunther. *Linguistic Processes in Sociocultural Practice*. Geelong, Australia: Deakin University, 1985.

Vygotsky, L.S. *Thought and Language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1962.

———. *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978.

### Media

- Alvarado, Manuel and Oliver Boyd-Barret. *Media Education*. London, England: British Film Institute, 1992.
- Australia. Curriculum Corporation. *Teaching Viewing and Visual Texts: Secondary*. Victoria: Prepared by Robyn Quin, Rod Quin and Barrie McMahon, 1996.
- Buckingham, David and Julian Sefton-Green. *Cultural Studies Goes to School*. Bristol, Pennsylvania: Taylor & Francis, 1994.
- Kress, Gunther R. and Theo Van Leeuwen. *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. London, England: Routledge, 1995.

### Literature

- Bakhtin, M. M. *The Dialogic Imagination*. Translated by Carolyn Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1981.
- . *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Translated by Veronica Gee. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1986.
- Eco, Umberto. *The Role of the Reader*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984.
- Freedman Aviva and Peter Medway, eds. *Learning and Teaching Genre*. Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Boynton/Cook Publishers, Heinemann, 1994.
- Green, Bill, ed. *Metaphors and Meanings: Essays On English Teaching By Garth Boomer*. Australian Association for Teaching of English (AATE), 1988.
- Pedagogy
- Barnes, Douglas. *From Communication to Curriculum*. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1976.
- Barnes, Douglas and Frankie Todd. *Communication and Learning Revisited: Making Meaning Through Talk*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers, Inc., 1995.

- Boomer, G., ed. *Negotiating the Curriculum: A Teacher-Student Partnership*. New York: Ashton Scholastic, 1982.
- Elbow, Peter. *Everyone Can Write: Essays Toward a Hopeful Theory of Writing and Teaching Writing*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Greene, Maxine. *Releasing the Imagination: Essays on Education, the Arts and Social Change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1995.
- Hornbrook, David. *Education and Dramatic Art*. 2nd edition. London: Routledge, 1998.
- Wells, Gordon, ed. *Action, Talk and Text: Learning and Teaching Through Inquiry*. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 2001.
- Wells, Gordon. *Dialogic Inquiry: Toward a Sociocultural Practice and Theory of Education*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999.