

# COLLAPSING SILOS

## The Educational Potential of Cultural & Linguistic Diversity

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Werklund School of Education

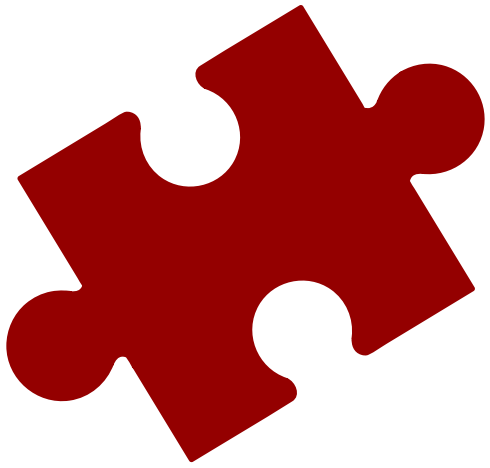


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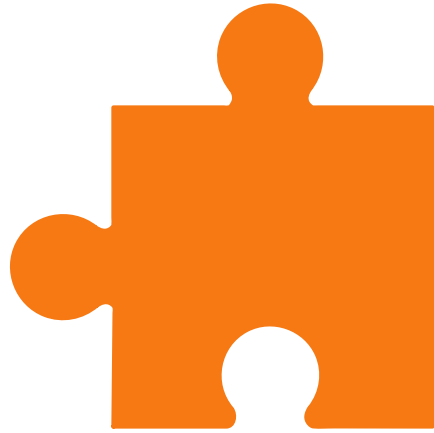
[www.rahatzaidi.com](http://www.rahatzaidi.com)

January 31, 2022

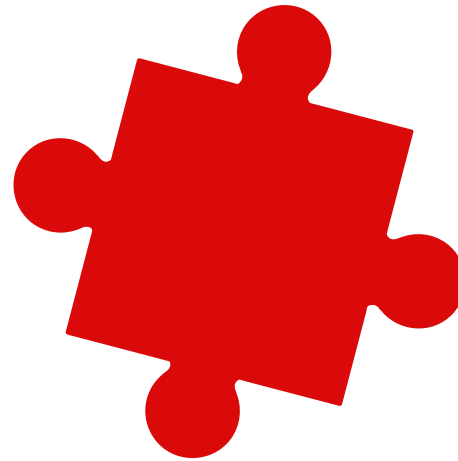
## PRESENTATION SYNOPSIS



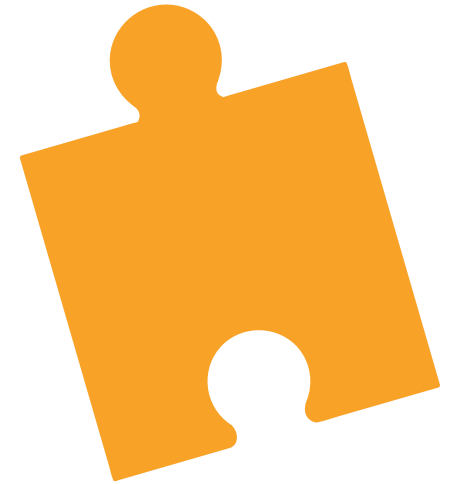
Who am I?



What does my research  
stand for?



What is the impact of  
my work?



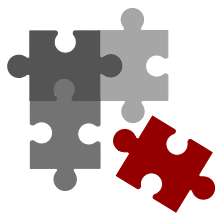
What is my vision as a  
Werklund Research  
Professor?



## WHO AM I?

- A mother of two beautiful daughters
- A wife to a wonderful man
- A scholar activist
- A professor at the Werklund School of Education





## MY STORY



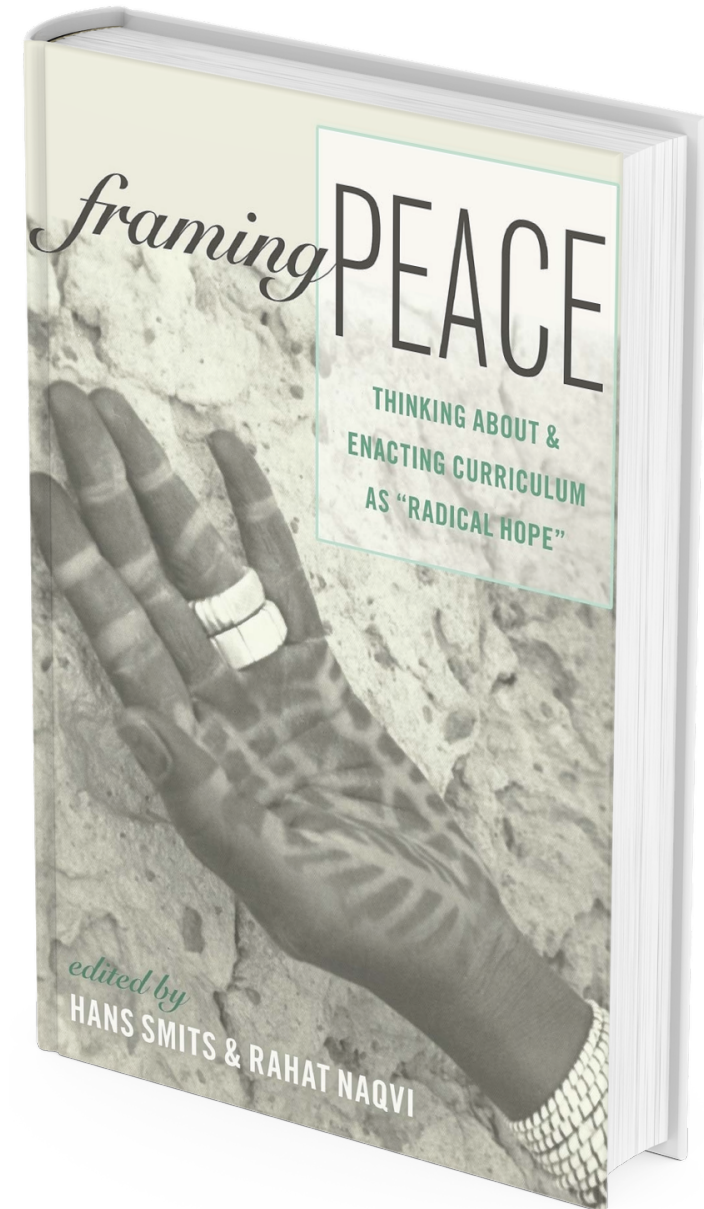




## RADICAL HOPE & IMAGINATION

The notion of radical hope is requiring certain ways of being and acting in the world: the exercise of practical reason, of courage, of imagination, and of acting well toward others.

Smits H. & Naqvi R. (Eds.). (2015). Framing peace: Thinking about and enacting curriculum as “radical hope”. New York: Peter Lang.





## WHAT DOES MY RESEARCH STAND FOR?

Within the education process I...

- explore the potential of cultural and linguistic diversity.
- seek to collapse cultural and linguistic silos.
- address inclusive language and literacy learning pedagogy.
- investigate collaborative/intergenerational involvement.





## THEORETICAL POSITIONING

- Rethinking the Education of Multilingual Learners (Cummins)
- Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies (Paris & Alim)
- Immigrant children and youth in transcultural spaces (Orellana)
- Critical Language Awareness (Garcia, Helot & Young)
- Critical language education (Luke)
- Expansive notions of what literacy is and can be in informal and formal learning spaces. (Rowse)
- Identity investment (Norton)
- Third space (Bhabha, Lefevre & Soja)



# WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF MY SCHOLARSHIP?

My scholarship has resulted in...

- The transformation of teacher practice and student perceptions of cultural and linguistic diversity.
- The demystification of cutting edge language/literacy learning methodologies.
- The unmasking of collaborative and intergenerational involvement.
- The reframing of educators' critical consciousness of "the other".



# IMPACT OF MY SCHOLARSHIP

THE TRANSFORMATION OF TEACHER PRACTICE AND STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY.



**Multilingualism**



**Language**



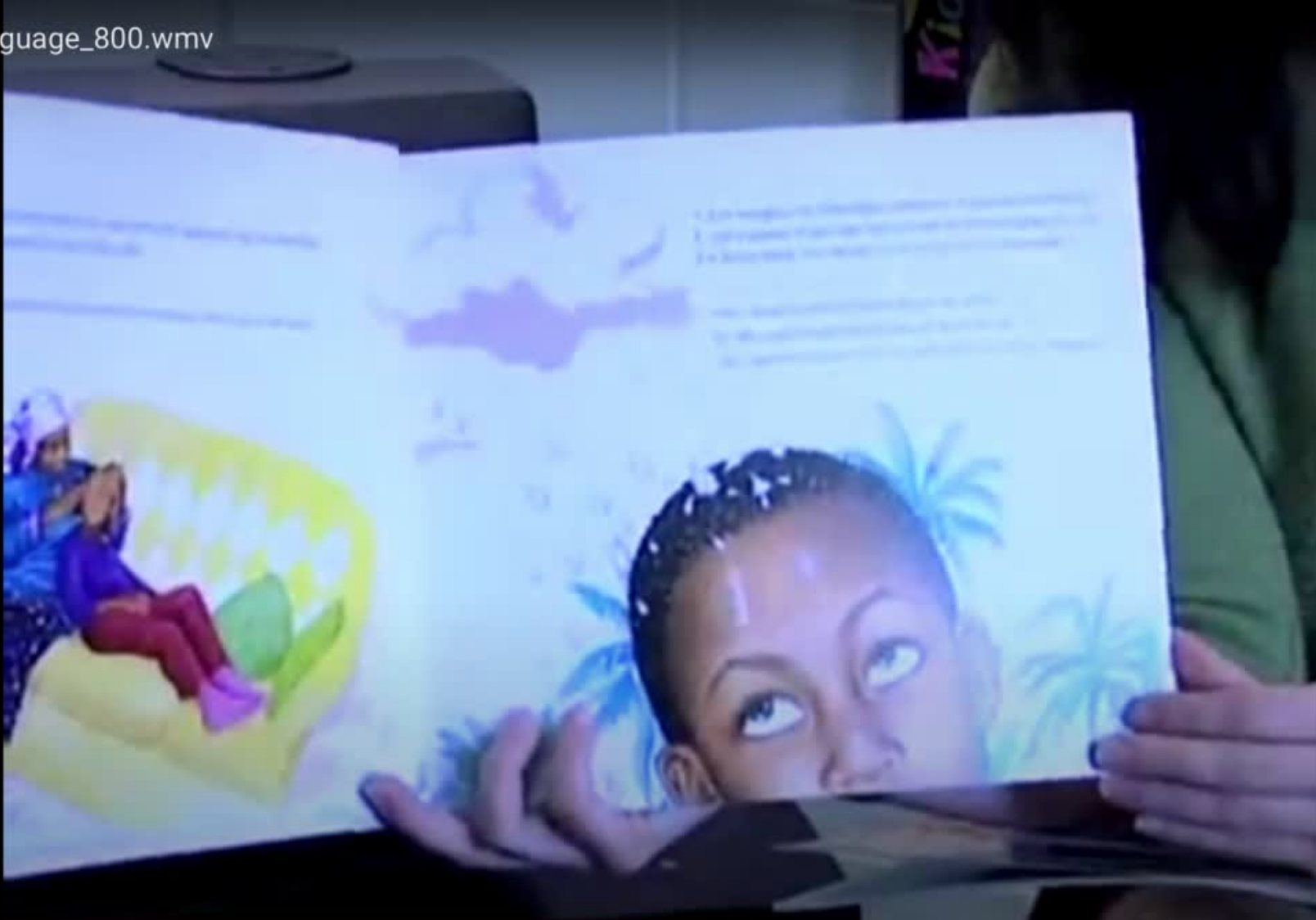
**Culture**





## IMPACT ON PRESERVICE TEACHERS

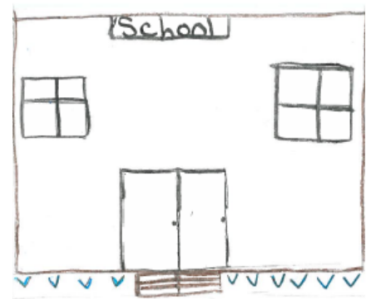













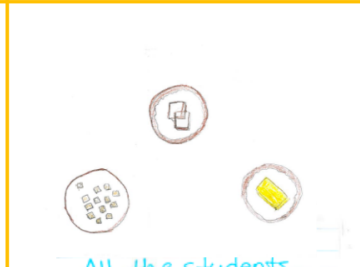



DualLanguage\_800.wmv



5:12 / 9:03



STUDENT IMPACT

 <p>Sara comes to school and only speaks German</p>	 <p>Sara tries to play at recess but doesn't understand.</p>	 <p>Sara feels sad and lonely.</p>	 <p>At lunch Sara sits all alone.</p>	 <p>Sara tries to talk to the other kids but they don't understand.</p>	 <p>Sara feels (سلي) and alone.</p>	 <p>Sara wonders if she will ever understand.</p>
 <p>Mrs. Applebee notices that Sara feels sad.</p>	 <p>Mrs. Applebee talks to the class about learning other languages.</p>	 <p>Sara doesn't feel so sad and alone.</p>	 <p>The class learned some German and other languages.</p>	 <p>Sara doesn't feel sad or alone anymore.</p>	 <p>Sara begins to understand.</p>	
 <p>Sara starts a new German club.</p>	 <p>The kids learn a new language and Sara is سعيد.</p>	 <p>All the students have a special day where they bring in a job food from their culture.</p>	 <p>This starts to become a yearly event.</p>	 <p>National culture Day!</p>	 <p>Sara is Happy!</p>	



## TEACHER IMPACT



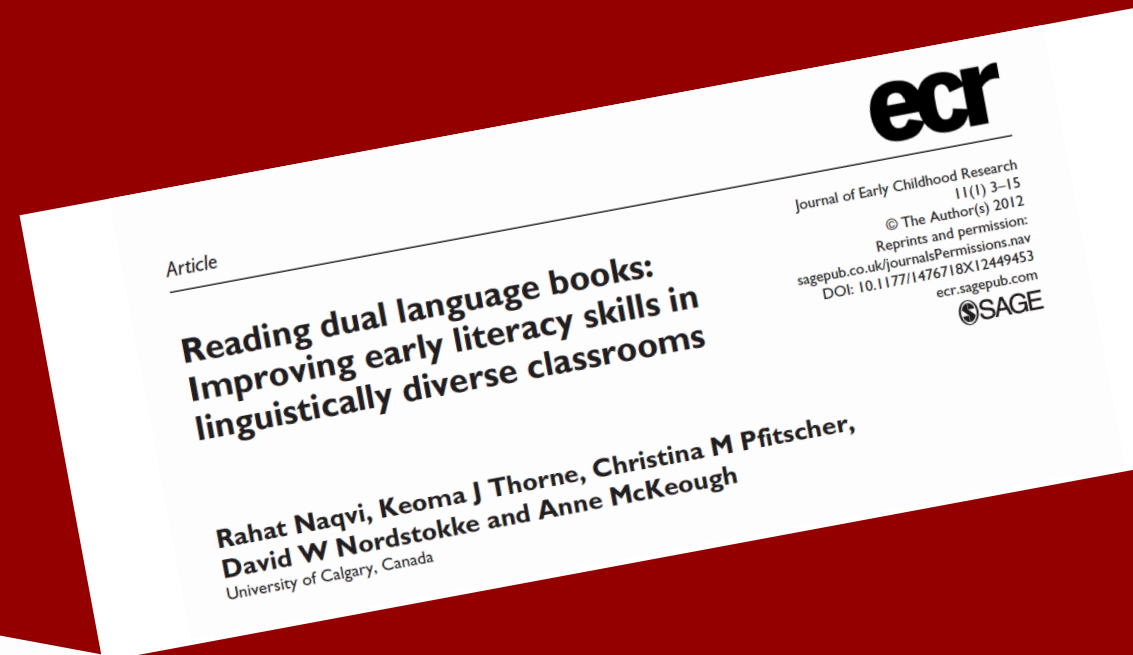
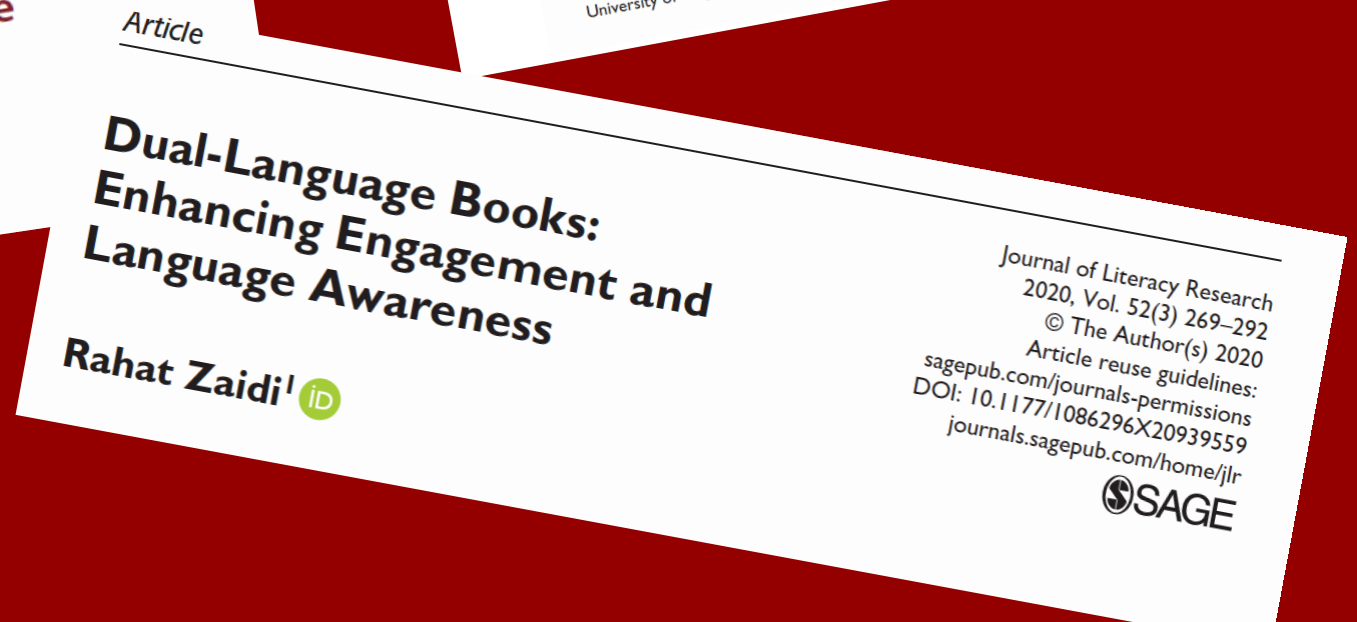
The kids learn a  
new language and  
Sara تو نثر ۱۵





# IMPACT OF MY SCHOLARSHIP

THE DEMYSTIFICATION OF CUTTING EDGE  
LANGUAGE/LITERACY LEARNING METHODOLOGIES.





# IMPACT OF MY SCHOLARSHIP

THE DEMYSTIFICATION OF CUTTING EDGE  
LANGUAGE/LITERACY LEARNING METHODOLOGIES.

LEARNING NOT TO SPEAK IN TONGUES:  
THOUGHTS ON THE LIBRARIAN OF BASRA

*David Jardine & Rahat Naqvi*  
*University of Calgary*

3.16

DISRUPTING XENOPHOBIA  
THROUGH COSMOPOLITAN  
CRITICAL LITERACY IN  
EDUCATION

*Rahat Zaidi and Suzanne S. Choo*





# IMPACT OF MY SCHOLARSHIP

THE UNMASKING OF COLLABORATIVE AND  
INTERGENERATIONAL INVOLVEMENT.



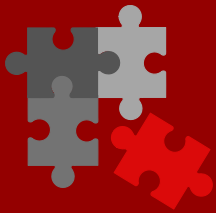
**Immigrant Families**



**Students**



**Schools**



# IMPACT OF MY SCHOLARSHIP

THE UNMASKING OF COLLABORATIVE AND INTERGENERATIONAL INVOLVEMENT.



## Language

"Every time I go there is no interpreter, so now when they send for me in writing I do not go anymore..... What is the purpose of me going in?"



## Collaboration

"The child is my communication link between me and the school,"



## Overall Difficulties

"I feel like I'm falling through a well and need a rope to hold on to so I can get out. It's difficult to speak to school staff and doctors with the language barrier. I have 9 children."





# IMPACT OF MY SCHOLARSHIP



"Dr. Zaidi is recognized for the theoretical innovation and extraordinary impact of her scholarship in the field of multilingual literacies. her conceptualization of teacher-led dual language reading strategies and commitment to informing teacher practice grounded in culturally relevant teaching expand our visions of teaching for equity and social justice."

*Committee: Mayida Zaal, (Chair), Darla Linville, Jillian Ford  
Fernando Naiditch, Margary Martin, Patricia Lopez.*



## The 2020 Calgary Awards



LITERACY  
RESEARCH  
ASSOCIATION

Rahat Zaidi

Board Director 2021-2024

## U of C researcher receives Educational Research Award

ATA News Staff

The Alberta Teachers' Association has named [Dr. Rahat Zaidi](#), from the University of Calgary, as the recipient of its 2020 ATA Educational Research Award.

Zaidi is an associate professor and chair of Language and Literacy at the U of C's Werklund School of Education. Her research study was conducted with an interdisciplinary team and in collaboration with the Calgary Board of Education, whose efforts were led by Christine Oliver, system principal with the district's ELL and Diversity Services.

Optimizing Parent-Teacher Collaboration in Refugee Children's Learning, completed in April 2020, examined the challenges and barriers for refugee families and their children's teachers in establishing the relationships critical for student learning and success.

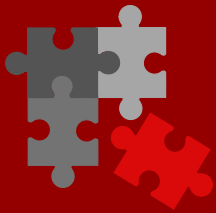
"To build a strong, positive parent-teacher relationship requires time, trust and effective communication," said ATA president Jason Schilling. "Dr. Zaidi's research is important because it lays out what needs to happen when our students and their families are refugees. The challenges in those situations are very different and we need the resources to address them."

In her study, Zaidi cites the time obligation required to attend English language classes, lack of knowledge and experience with Alberta's education system, and lack of access to technology as a few of the challenges hindering the ability of parents who are refugees in forming relationships with their children's teachers.



SUPPLIED  
Rahat Zaidi's research on collaboration between teachers and refugee parents has earned the ATA's 2020 Educational Research Award.

The [ATA Educational Research Award](#) is valued at \$5,000 and is presented annually to a faculty of education member or sessional lecturer at an Alberta university or university college who has undertaken high-quality research on classroom teaching and learning. ■



# IMPACT OF MY SCHOLARSHIP

THE UNMASKING OF COLLABORATIVE AND  
INTERGENERATIONAL INVOLVEMENT.

Alberta

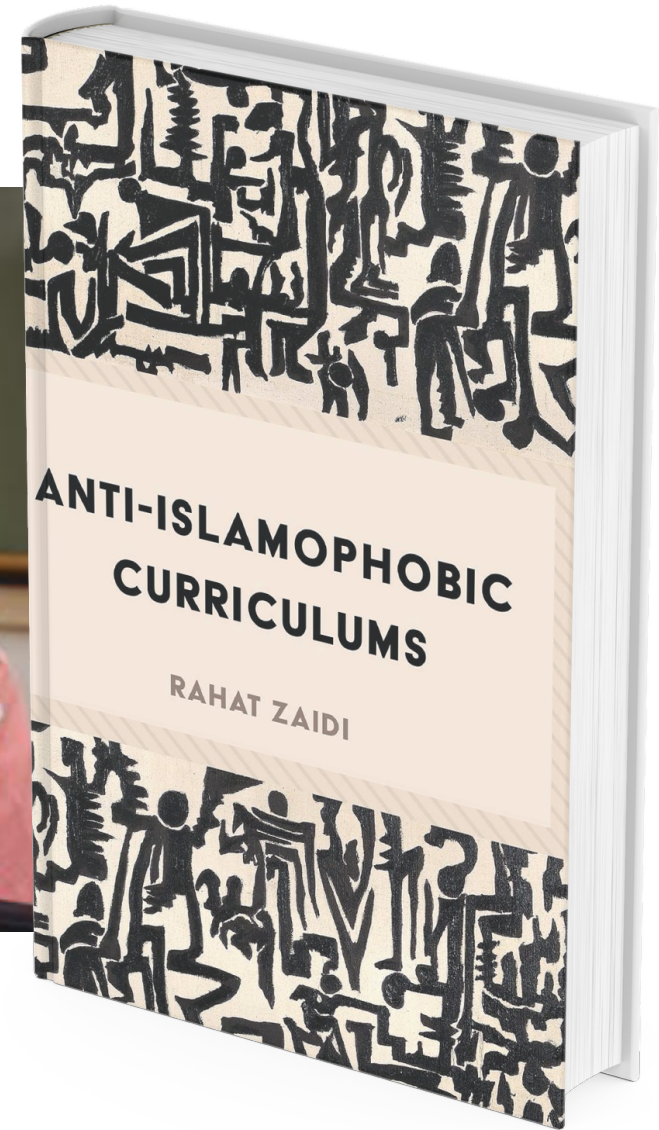






# IMPACT OF MY SCHOLARSHIP

THE REFRAMING OF EDUCATORS' CRITICAL  
CONSCIOUSNESS OF "THE OTHER".





# IMPACT OF MY SCHOLARSHIP

THE REFRAMING OF EDUCATORS' CRITICAL  
CONSCIOUSNESS OF "THE OTHER".

## SHIFTING LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPES



UNIVERSITY OF  
CALGARY

WERKLUND SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

SSHRC  CRSH

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council  
Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines



Age 5-6: Symbols & Celebrations





## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROVINCE-WIDE INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT REFUGEE & IMMIGRANT STUDENTS AND FAMILIES IN OUR SCHOOLS

### **Leadership & Teacher Training and Resource Development**

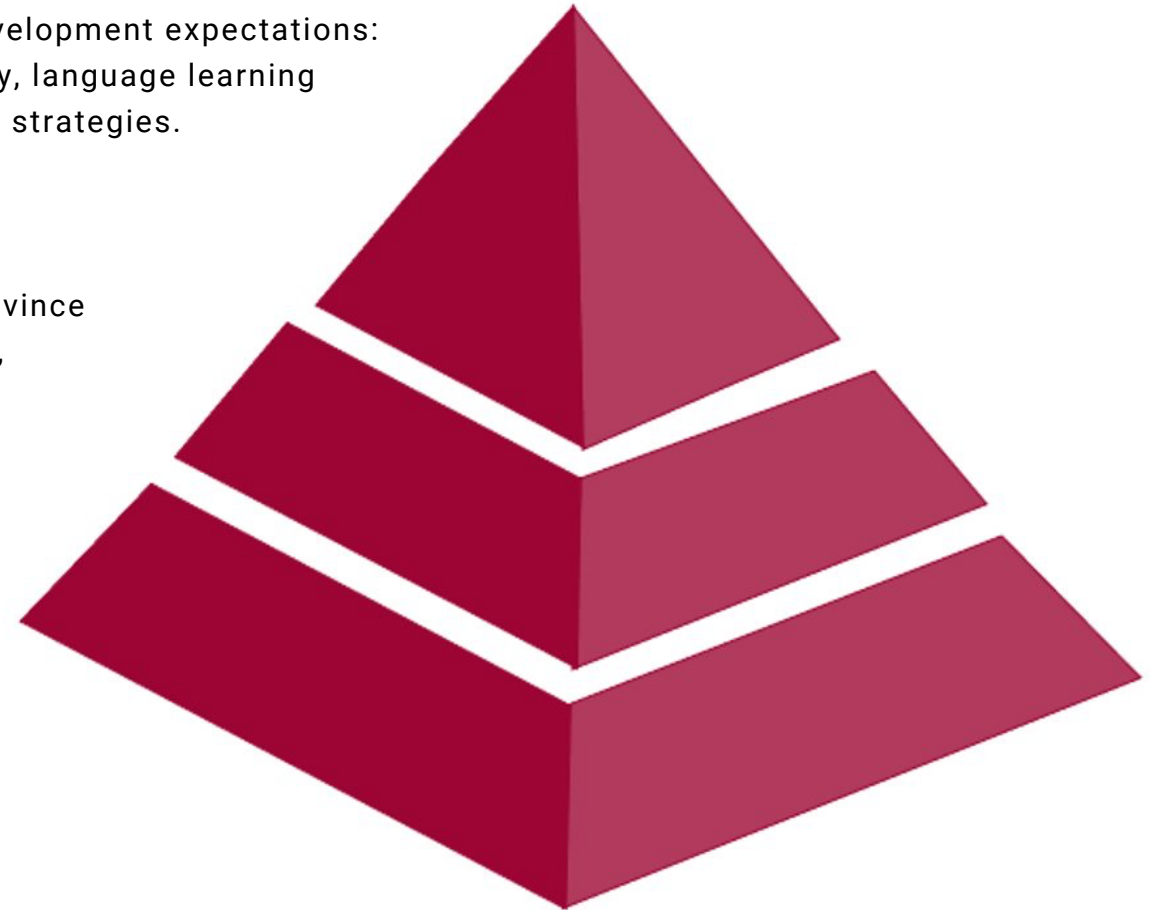
Develop pre-service and in-service professional development expectations: including empathy & culturally responsive pedagogy, language learning resources, trauma sensitive initiatives & leadership strategies.

### **Local School Board Support System**

Establish & expand board & in-school settlement best practices province wide: including interpreting services, in-school settlement program, diversity support workers, assessment & welcoming centres.

### **Explicit Programming to Support Refugee and Immigrant Youth**

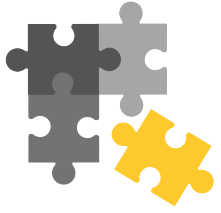
Mandate province-wide standardized programming staffing qualifications: addressing linguistic & psycho-social needs of newcomer youth & their families





## MY VISION AS THE WERKLUND RESEARCH PROFESSOR





## MY VISION AT THE MICRO LEVEL

Social Justice Initiatives that empower newcomer students and families within the classroom.

SSHRC  CRSH

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council  
Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines





## MY VISION AT THE MICRO LEVEL

- Recognizing teachers as knowledge generators.
- Optimizing newcomer students' experiences.
- Addressing unique backgrounds and challenges.
- Learning from stories of resilience.
- Affirming identity.





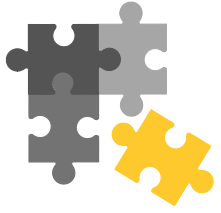
## MY VISION AT THE MICRO LEVEL

"Sometimes people can ask kind of weird, not necessarily invasive, but interesting questions. Like when someone wears a hijab, they're like, 'Why do you dress like that? Don't you get super hot? Do you even have hair under there?' Then the questions get more offensive, like veering into just stereotypical territory.

I think that it's not necessarily our jobs to educate people on why we do what we do, and Google and free resources exist for you to do that. But I also think that it's important that maybe the school, or just necessarily like student council or something, can take steps to enlighten other people as to why we do what we do, because ***it shouldn't be everyone's individual job. It should be the job of the community around us.***"







## MY VISION AT THE MESO LEVEL

Giving a voice to newcomer families, educators, and educational stakeholders within a **whole school context**.

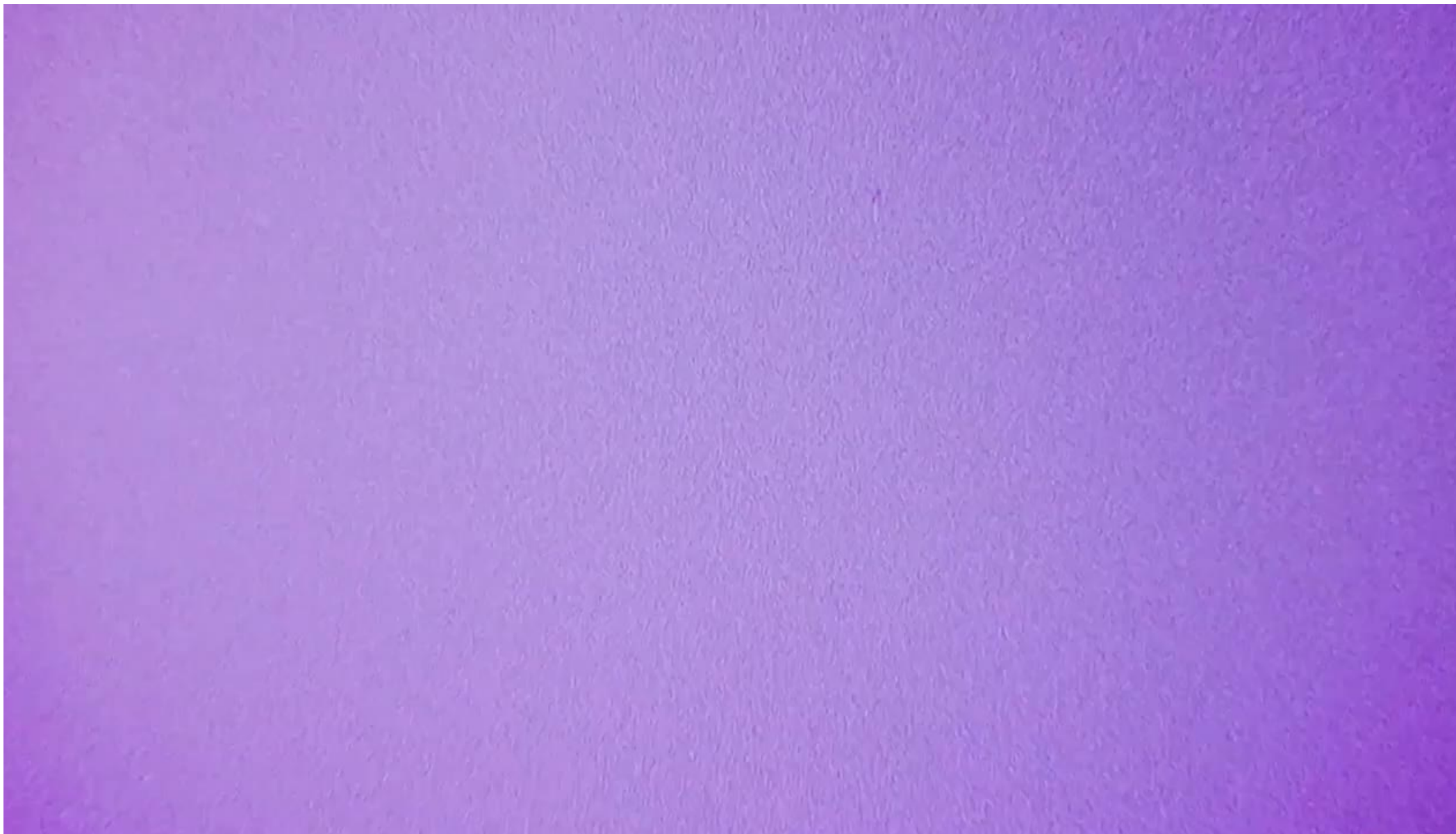




## MY VISION AT THE MESO LEVEL

- Incorporating methodological innovation and community engagement.
- Engaging with tools like social media.
- Reinforcing the sharing of cultural differences.









## MY VISION AT THE MACRO LEVEL

Reinforcing Werklund School's role on the **community and world stage**.

SSHRC  CRSH

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council  
Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines

Documentary film project  
highlights voices from  
communities too often  
overlooked



BRIDGING  
THE GAP

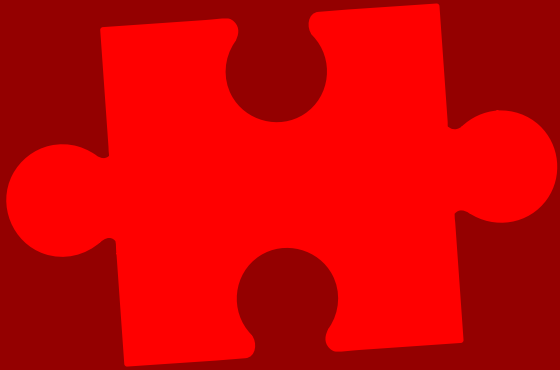
Your support will help us create this film  
for educators and policymakers.



Rahat Zaidi uses art, film and storytelling to foster positive relationships between resettled families and educational partners.



## HOW WILL I ENACT THIS VISION AS WERKLUND RESEARCH PROFESSOR?



**ENGAGE**



**EMPOWER**



**EVOLVE**



## EXPANDING UPON THE VISION

**ENGAGE** in methodological innovation.

**EMPOWER** people with training for advocacy in a post-pandemic world.

**EVOLVE** our understanding of the shifting linguistic landscapes of our education systems.





I think bridges have a special meaning in our life. I think a book is a bridge. Any type of art is a bridge that allows different cultures to connect. You may not understand your neighbour's way of seeing life, but you sure understand your neighbour's joy in painting or dancing.

– Paulo Coelho



# THANK YOU

Rahat Zaidi (Naqvi), PhD  
Professor & Chair of Language & Literacy  
Werklund School of Education



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