

# Living literacies

**Ulukhaktok Literacies Research Project  
Nunavut Knowledge Exchange  
February 7-8, 2009**

# Background to the project



# Ulukhaktok



# Our ways





# What are 'our ways'?

Ways (skills) by which people engage in the world, such as

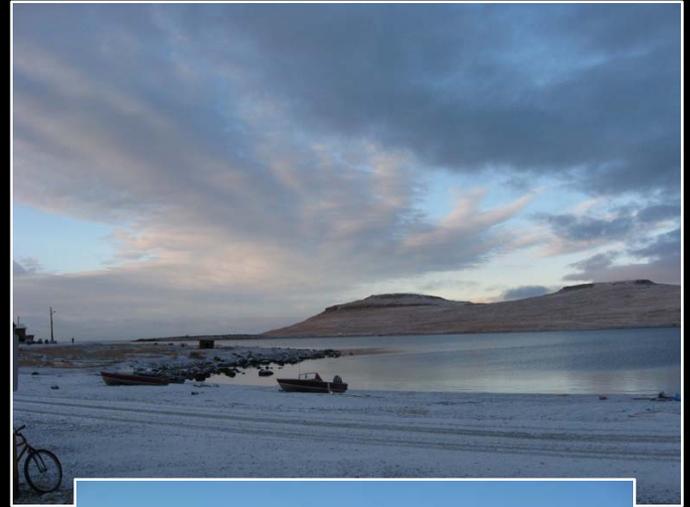
- Dancing
- Singing
- Speaking
- Sewing
- Drawing, carving
- Travelling





# What is text?

- ◎ [Text] ...“refers to any chunk of meaning that can be shared with others...a novel, a piece of art, a play, a dance, a song, a mathematical equation...”  
(Short, Kauffman & Kahn, 2000)



# Texts in the world 1

## ◎ Hila

For example:

- Ubluriat – constellations
- Nuvuyat – clouds
- Ulinniq – tides
- Paarutiit – sundogs

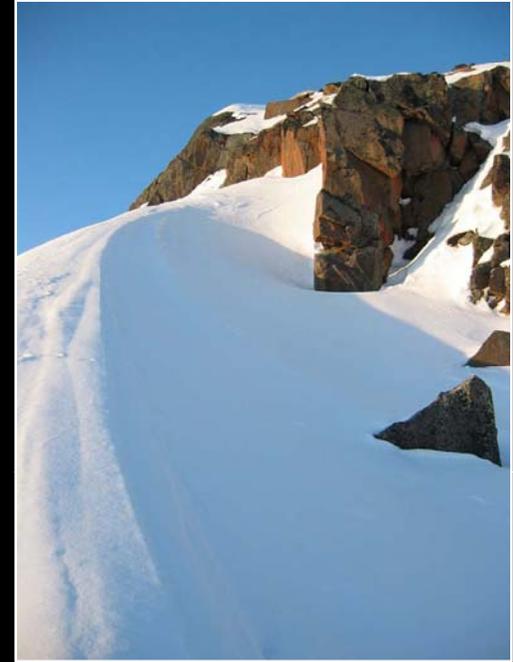


# Texts in the world 2

## ◎ Nunakput

### ◎ For example:

- Anngutit – animals
- Iniit – trails
- Qimukyuit – snowdrifts
- Nautiat – plants



# Created or crafted texts 1

- Numiutit – dances
- Annuraat – clothing
- Pihit – songs
- Atiit – names



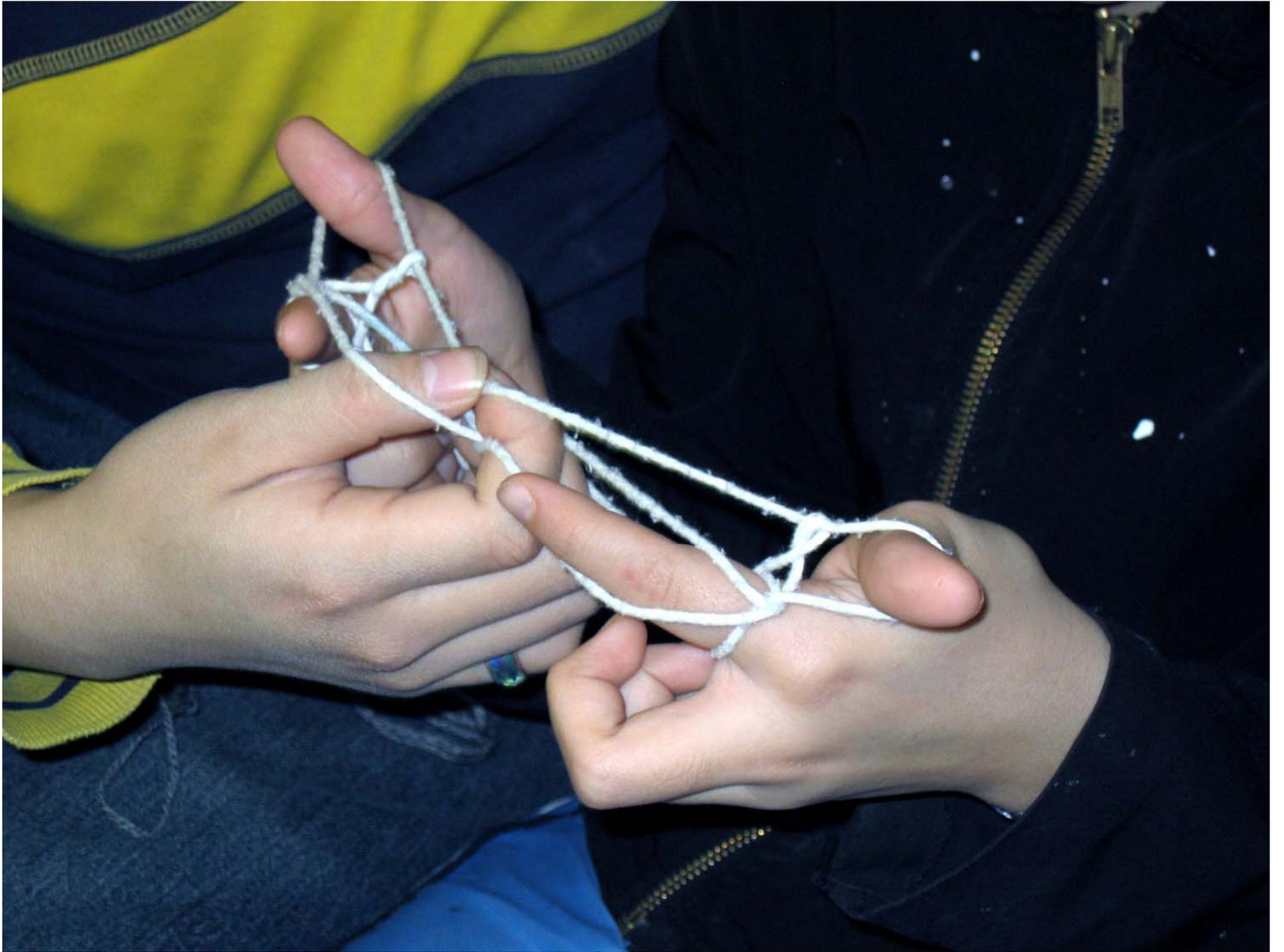
# Created or crafted texts 2

- Ulapqitdjutit – games
- Inukhuit – markers
- Titirauyaangniq – drawing
- Kiinnap itdjuhiit – facial expressions
- Unipkaat – stories





MADE IN CANADA  
SINE SERRAVALLO  
1978



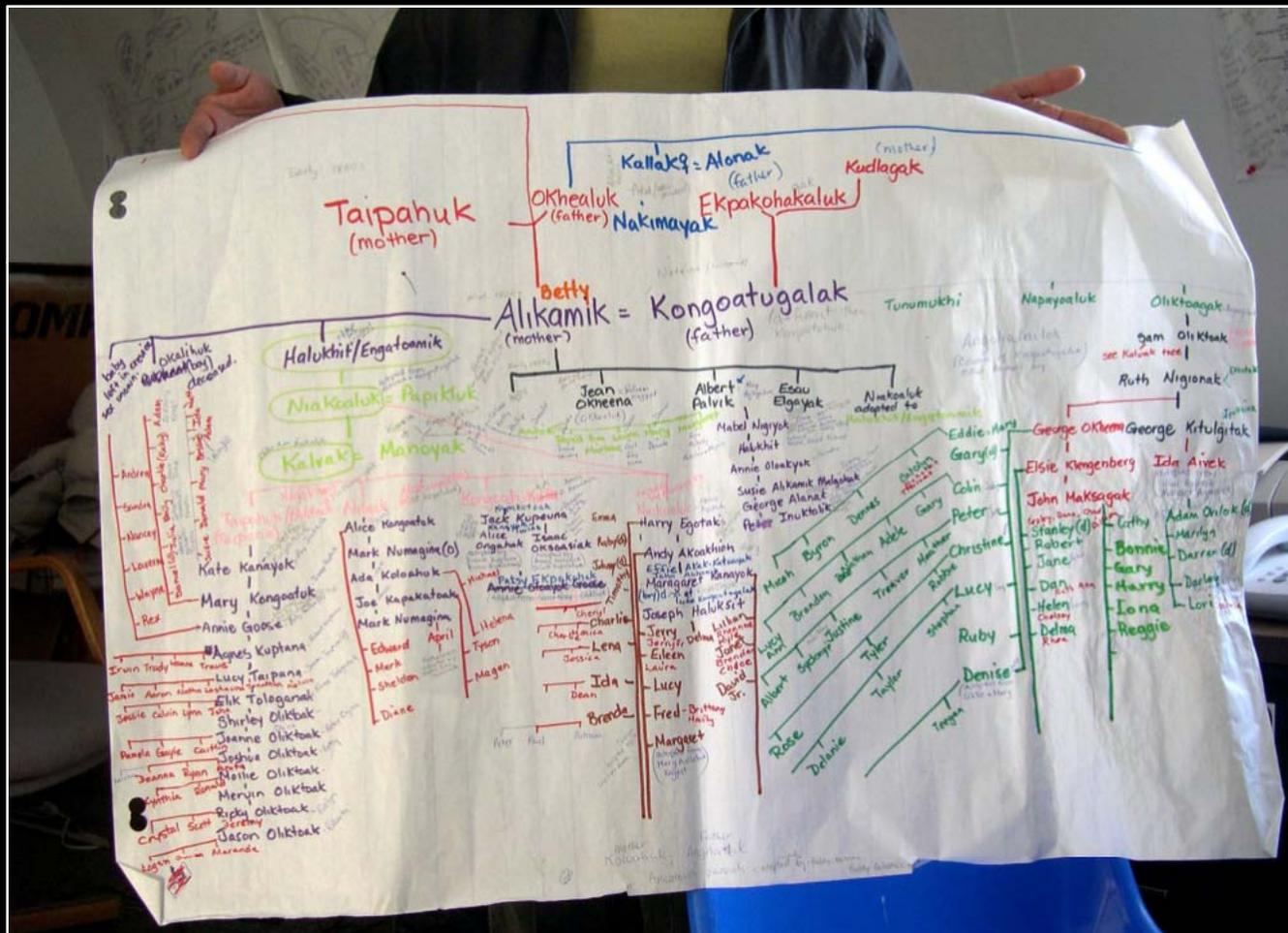
# 'Our ways' are living literacies

- ⦿ Skilled practices
- ⦿ Learned through experience
- ⦿ Knowledge and skills combined

# Skilled practice: Intentionality



# Skilled practice: Embedded in a whole system of relations



# Skilled practice: Care, judgement & dexterity



# Skilled practice: Learned through practical, hands on experience





# Skilled practice: creativity



# Western literacy practices are primarily

- ⦿ Alphabetic and print-based
- ⦿ Linguistic
- ⦿ Ways to TRANSMIT knowledge
- ⦿ Context INDEPENDENT



# Ulukhaktok living literacies are primarily

- ◎ Pattern-based
- ◎ Multi-modal
- ◎ Embedded within the world
- ◎ Context DEPENDENT



# Critical dimensions of literacy

English or Western	Ulukhaktok
Alphabetic & print-based	Pattern-based
Linguistic or meaning-based	Multi-modal
Vehicle to transmit knowledge	Practices that generate knowledge
Points to the text	Points to the world
Context-free	Context-dependent
Individual	Relational

# What might 'living literacies' mean for language?

## Embedded

- ⦿ Language is a living literacy
- ⦿ You learn language through these



# What might 'living literacies' mean for language?

## Identity

- ◎ You become who you are through these



# What might 'living literacies' mean for language?

## Vitality

- Language and the literacies continue through use



# What might 'living literacies' mean for language?

## Apprenticeship

- ⦿ Novices learn language from skilled practitioners
- ⦿ They practise in a supportive environment





# References

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