To accompany the
Aboriginal Language
Program Planning
Handbook ...

# The Aboriginal Language Program Planning Workbook

Prepared for the
First Nations Education Steering Committee
Aboriginal Languages Sub-Committee

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August, 1999

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## List of Activities

Table of Contents

# 1. Introduction

This workbook has been prepared by the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) as a companion to the *Handbook for Aboriginal Language Program Planning in British Columbia*, written by Dr. Marianne Ignace. The response to that *Handbook* was overwhelmingly positive, and many people have requested a workbook that can be used to implement the ideas it contains.

This workbook is meant to be used in conjunction with the *Aboriginal Language Program Planning Handbook*, to facilitate group discussions and activities related to the development and implementation of a language program. The content of the workbook is based upon the information outlined by Marianne Ignace.

While we hope that this workbook is helpful, we stress that it is intended as an *aid* to planning a language program; it is not meant to be an absolute guide to Aboriginal language program planning. Please feel free to use and adapt the parts of this workbook that you find appropriate, and combine the ideas outlined in this workbook with any other resources and materials you find useful.

We wish you all the best with your important efforts to maintain and revitalize your languages.

**People in Our Community Who Can Help Develop a Language Program**

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# 1.1  Getting Together to Talk About Your Language

This handbook is intended to be used by a group of people who are committed to working together to promote the development of a language program in their community or Nation.  If you have an existing Language Authority or Language Committee, that may be the group dedicated to this task.  Your existing Language Authority may also choose to broaden its membership, to include other people whose expertise and experience can contribute to the development of a comprehensive language program.  If no Language Authority or Committee exists in your area, you may begin your work by organizing a group of people who are interested in and committed to revitalizing your language.

*In this handbook, the group working on your language program is referred to as your "Language Committee."*

## Activity One
## How We Will Work Together

First, organize a meeting of people who you think might be interested in forming a Language Committee.  To bring people together, try to advertise the meeting as much as possible, through posters, pamphlets, and notices posted in public places.  A community newsletter could also be used as a vehicle to publicize the meeting.  People with a range of skills and expertise can all help to develop a language program.  You may also find it useful to approach some people with particularly useful skills directly, and ask them to join you in your efforts to revitalize your language.

Sometimes, when starting a project as a group, it is useful to discuss your ideas about working together.  At the first meeting of your group, ask everyone to join in a discussion about how you will work together.   For example, you may want to discuss the amount of time and energy each person on your Language Committee is expected to contribute to your language revitalization effort.  Your may also talk about things such as attendance at meetings, and suggestions for discussions.

It is useful to review these guidelines periodically to make sure that the ideas listed are still relevant, and to add any new suggestions as they arise.

## Activity One;   How We Will Work Together Continued:

**Examples:**

√ Meetings will be held at least twice a month, **or** meetings will take place every second Monday, **or** meetings will be held once a week ...

√ We will try to end meetings by 9:00 so that no one goes home exhausted.

√ Each group member will make a strong effort to attend meetings.

√ Everyone is welcome to attend our meetings, even if they cannot make a long-term commitment to our Committee.

√ During discussions, all ideas are important.  Brainstorming includes adding every idea you can think of and accepting them all uncritically.  Each idea can be considered in more depth later.

√ Everyone should have a chance to speak and be heard.

√ Out of respect to others, please be on time.

## Our Ideas:

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# 2. Why Talk About Language Programs?

## 2.1 Background

In BC, there are between 27 and 34 Aboriginal languages, represented in eight distinct language families or isolates. Since the introduction of oppressive government legislation and policies in the late 19th century, many of these languages have declined to an endangered or critical state. Most of the Aboriginal languages in BC are now spoken by a minority of community members, many of whom are elderly.

## 2.2 Elements to Consider

Your Language Committee has likely come together because you believe that your language is in need of revitalization. In working towards your goals, you may want to keep in mind the following points:

√   The effort required to rejuvenate an Aboriginal language is tremendous. Participation from your entire community will result in the greatest level of success.

√   Before any other work is started, it may be useful for your community to decide why your language is important and why it must be revived.

√   It may also be useful to begin by realistically assessing the state of your language, and by identifying people who are fluent in the language and people who might be able to contribute to the revitalization effort.

√   It may be important for some people, young and old, to begin by expressing their grief about the loss of your language because of Residential schools.

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## Activity Two:
## Brainstorming initial considerations that are important to you and your community?

As a group, identify some of the considerations that are important to you as you begin your work to revitalize your language.  List all of the considerations, including any challenges you might have to face, as well as possible solutions.

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# 3. Why Revitalize Your Language?

## 3.1 Background

Aboriginal languages provide First Nations communities with an important connection to their culture, roots and identity. For many First Nations communities the revitalization of their language means a revitalization of their culture and their community, and serves as a way to contribute to healing from the traumas of the past.

> "To speak your Aboriginal language means more than speaking. Our languages are tied to knowing who you are in the core of your soul."
>
> *First Nations Congress, 1991*

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**Activity Three:**
**Positive Effects of**
**Language Revitalization**

As a group, discuss the value of your language and consider what positive effects will be realized with its revitalization. Using the examples provided on the next page, explore some of the positive effects of language revitalization. Each person can state why they value their language, and share their ideas with others in your group. In small groups, including people of different ages, imagine yourselves in the future, and think what the world would be like without your language. Then imagine what your community will be like when your language is in full use. On large poster paper, illustrate or use words to describe your vision of such a community. Share the ideas of each small group with one another.

For more ideas about language revitalization, please see the *Aboriginal Languages Handbook*, pages 24 - 29.

**Activity Three continued:**
**Our Ideas About the Positive Effects of**
**Language Revitalization**

Examples:

√     Positive effect on personal and collective self-esteem, identity and sense of cultural and personal belonging.

√     Strengthening of the community and its members through the improvement of spiritual, mental, physical and emotional wholeness.

√     Acceptance and understanding of the connection between language and cultural well being.

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## 3.2 Symbolic and Communicative Functions of Language

After considering some of the positive aspects of language revitalization, you may want to consider the difference between the symbolic and the communicative functions of a language. The following examples demonstrate the difference between these functions.

### Symbolic Function

➢ Makes me different from others.

➢ Gives me a sense of pride.

➢ Connects me with my culture, past, roots.

### Communicative Function

➢ Allows me to speak with my family, friends and Elders.

➢ Allows me to express my feelings.

➢ Lets me ask for things I want, from my people or from my Creator.

It is important to remember that simply valuing a language as a **symbolic** emblem of group membership does not automatically translate into an enhanced use of the language. Although many First Nations people may value their language as something that distinguishes them from non-Aboriginal people and makes them unique, it is important that the language be recognized as a **communicative** tool that is used for practical purposes, as this will strengthen efforts to perpetuate the language.

> It is crucial that community members recognize the importance of the practical, communicative function of the spoken language in everyday life and in ceremony in order to increase its use.

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## Activity Four:
## Language Functions That Are Important to Us

Brainstorm what role your language plays in your community. On what occasions is it used? Who speaks it? What role can your language play and what role it should play? Then spend some time discussing the difference between the symbolic and communicative functions of your language. In pairs or small groups, build upon the examples of the symbolic and communicative functions listed above, and add factors that are important to you. Then have each small group report back to the entire Committee.

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## Communicative Functions That Are Important to Us

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# 4. Identifying Language Resources in Your Community?

## 4.1 Background

All First Nations languages in BC can be revitalized, whether that involves improving the status of an "enduring" language, or rescuing a "critical" language from extinction.

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) reported in 1990 and 1992 that there is an important relationship between the status of a language and the level of its use in public settings.  Languages that are used in a wide variety and on a number of occasions, such as at community meetings, at the Band office, in schools, and at social events, generally have a higher status. Languages rarely used in public are generally seen to be "declining,"  "endangered," or "critical."

## 4.2 Language Use in Your Community

Determining the level of language use in your community is a significant undertaking, but also an important step in planning a revitalization program.  It is useful to realistically assess the number of fluent speakers, their age groups, and whether any young adults speak and use their language. The following is an example of a process used by one language group to measure the status of its language.

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**The AFN has identified the following categories for language status:**

**Flourishing:**  over 80% of all age groups are fluent and many are able to read and write the language.

**Enduring:**  over 60% of almost all age groups are fluent in the language.

**Declining:**  at least 50% of the adult population and a lesser percentage of young people are fluent in the language.

**Endangered:**  less than 50% of the adult population speak the language and there are few if any young speakers, or, if over 80% of the older population are fluent but there are no speakers under 45 years of age.

**Critical:**  there are less than 10 speakers, or there are no known speakers living in the community.

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Fluency is discussed more in the _Aboriginal Languages Handbook,_ pages 16-17.

## An Example of Language Status Determination

Research was carried out by a group of Elders and language resource people for the Secwepemc language.  The research team held hearings with Elders, speakers, educators, parents, chiefs, councillors, and others.  The Elders counted the number of language speakers.  They used four categories to define the fluency of the speakers and to determine the status of their language.

> ➢ **Fluent:**  people who can carry on and understand a conversation in their language for as long as the situation requires, with vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation that is deemed acceptable by the Elders and other speakers.

> ➢ **Understanders:**  individuals who can follow the details of a conversation, but who cannot speak the language save for a small number of words or phases.

> ➢ **Familiar:**  people who understand the gist or fragments of the spoken language, but who can only say a few words.

> ➢ **No Fluency:**  individuals who basically have no knowledge of the language, except for a few words.

## Activity Five:  Defining Fluency

To begin exploring the status of your language, you may want to develop your own definition of fluency.  You can use the example of the Secwepemc definition to begin your discussions, and ask Elders in your community to adapt that definition for your use.

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### Activity Six:
### Determining Fluency Levels

After you have defined fluency, you can then use your definition to begin determining the status of your language.   There are many approaches you could take to accomplish this step.

One useful exercise could involve a fluent speaker going door-to-door in your community to deter- mine the fluency level of each community member. The speaker could be accompanied by a recorder if that would be helpful.  A chart like the one on the next page could be filled out, based upon the door- to-door visits.

A second approach could involve asking people to self-identify their level of fluency.  You could post a notice in a well exposed location, such as a bulle- tin board in the band office or community hall, describing why you are asking about fluency lev- els, offering your definition of fluency, and asking people to indicate on a sign-up sheet what they believe their level of fluency to be.  An example of such a sign up sheet is included on the following page.

**Sample Chart:**

**Going Door to Door to Determine Fluency Status**

**Sample Chart:**

**Posting a Notice About Language Fluency**

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# The "Button Activity"

If using either of the approaches described in activity four, you could combine an idea used by a Montagnais (Innu) community in North Eastern Quebec. That community used coloured buttons to identify people's levels of fluency. For example, wearing a blue button could identify a fluent speaker; a red button could identify a person who understands but is still learning to speak the language; a white button could identify someone who is still learning to understand and speak the language. People wearing blue buttons should try to speak to those with red and white buttons to increase their understanding of the language. People wearing red buttons should practice speaking with people wearing blue buttons. People wearing white buttons are showing their interest in learning the language, and can try to spend time with people wearing blue buttons ...

## Where Can You Get Buttons?

Distributors located in the Vancouver area:

The Badge Maker      (604) 688 - 4747
      (100 buttons @ $.68 each)

Buttons Factory of Vancouver      (604) 873 - 3117
      (300 buttons @ $.53 each)

Kerr's Keys and Trophies   (604) 325 - 0721
      (100 buttons @ $1.05 each)

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"The importance of language as an expression of a culture, of who we are as a people must be upheld by each individual, each family, each community and each nation. Language is the mind, spirit and soul of a people. Every effort must be made to protect, preserve, promote and practice our Aboriginal languages. We must gather into the circle all the knowledge and wisdom we possess to ensure their survival. The documentation has been done and what is left is action. The last generation of fluent speakers are with us. Without their help, the work toward survival of the languages will be more difficult. "

*Verna Kirkness, 1998. Aboriginal Languages: A Collection of Talks and Papers. Vancouver: Author*

## 5. How to Set Goals for Language Revitalization

My Notes

Your goals for language revival will be specific for your community.  Your goals may reflect a variety of factors, including the current status of your language, and your community's vision for your language's use.

Some of the following possible goals for language revitalization have been identified:

**Full or significant bilingualism:**  This goal may be appropriate for communities with a significant number of language speakers, including Elders, middle aged and younger adults, and perhaps even children (that is, communities with "flourishing" or "enduring" language status).  These communities may focus on things such as:

> ➢ expanding the use of the language in homes and in the community; and

> ➢ exposing young children to their language, through such things as language nests and other programs (described further in section 7.1).

**Restore and revitalize language use among people who still have the ability to speak it:**  communities with a "declining" or "endangered" language status may focus on this as a short-term goal, at least.  These communities may:

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Goal setting is discussed more in the *Aboriginal Languages Handbook,* pages 41-43.

## My Notes

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> create settings and formal classes in which fluent speakers can practice speaking their language in a non-threatening environment; and

> promote efforts in the home, the community, and the education system to promote young speakers of the language.

**Preservation of the Language:** For languages in a "critical state," an immediate goal may be to preserve as much of the language as possible. Accomplishing this goal may include:

> recording and archiving the vocabulary and grammar of the language, as well as oral histories, stories, songs, speeches, and other examples of language use; and

> restoring the use of the language in limited settings, such as public ceremonies, and planning to expand the use of the language over time.

**Your short and long term goals may range from:**

community appreciation of the importance of language revitalization ⟷ full fluency of all community members

**However, appreciation alone will not necessarily mean that people will learn and use the language.  <u>To ensure the survival of your language, you must set your goals higher than community appreciation.</u>**

**Activity Seven:**

*Organizing a Meeting to Consider Your Language Program Planning*

Setting goals for your language will ideally involve as many members of your community as possible. You may want to consider organizing a large community meeting, perhaps involving a dinner or other social activity to encourage attendance. At the meeting, share the results of some of the work started by your Language Committee, such as the status of your language, or the list of people who have made a commitment to restoring your language's use. You can also begin a discussion of possible goals for your language.

Some other ideas you might want to consider for your meeting include:

√     share examples of other languages that have been successfully revived;

√     invite guest speakers from other communities, to share their plans and programs for language revitalization, and to discuss possible challenges and successes; and

√     invite Elders to speak about the importance of your language, and their vision for its revitalization.

Please remember, some people may need to "heal" old wounds when they begin discussing their language and how to increase its use. Supporting people through this process is imperative.

**Activity Seven continued ...**
**Notes for Our Language Planning Meeting**

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# 6.  What is Language Planning and What is Meant By Language Shift?

## 6.1  Language Planning

Language Planning involves setting goals, objectives and strategies to change the way a language is used in the community.  Two components of language planning are:

**Status Planning:**  which means improving the role the language plays in the Nation or community.  This might include:

> ➢ giving the language official status within the community or Nation;
>
> ➢ ensuring that the language is used in meetings and gatherings; and
>
> ➢ teaching the language in the education system, both in public and First Nations schools.

**Corpus Planning:**  which refers to planned changes in the nature of the language itself, which might include:

> ➢ creating and standardizing vocabularies; and
>
> ➢ creating a writing system for the language.

**\*\*    For endangered languages, it is important that both of these components are carried out.**

**My Notes**

More information about language planning is included in the *Aboriginal Languages Handbook,* pages 30-40.

## Some of Our "Status Planning" Goals

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## Some of Our "Corpus Planning" Goals

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## 6.2 Reversing Language Shift

Language shift can be defined as the systemic exchange of one's distinct historical language for a different, often more contemporary one. Language shift has occured in almost all First Nations communities in Canada.

Many people believe that reversing language shift should not focus on increasing the number of second language speakers. Instead, efforts to reverse language shift should focus on reviving your Aboriginal language as the primary language used by people in their daily lives.

## 6.3 Stages in Reversing Language Shift

Famed language planner, Joshua Fishman, has proposed an eight stage plan designed to bring a language back into common usage. You may want to consider some of Fishman's ideas in implementing your program. Fishman's ideas are described in more detail on the following pages.

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### Fishman's Eight Stage Plan for Reversing Language Shift

**A:**
**Ensuring Intergenerational Transmission**

**Stage 8:** Reconstruct the Language

**Stage 7:** Mobilize Fluent Speakers

**Stage 6:** Restore the Intergenerational Transmission

**Stage 5:** Teach the Language in the School

**B:**
**Extending the Usage**

**Stage 4:** Implement Immersion and Strong Bilingual Education

**Stage 3:** Use the Language in the Work Environment

**Stage 2:** Offer Government Services in the Language

**Stage 1:** Use the Language in Higher Education, Media and Government.

## 6.3.1   Reconstructing the Language

This stage involves recording and compiling as much knowledge of the language as possible.  This can include knowledge from Elders and fluent speakers in written, audio, and video form, and can include information about:

| | |
|---|---|
| √   vocabulary | √   stories and legends |
| √   expressions | √   life histories |
| √   grammar | √   songs |
| √   phonology (sound system) | √   proverbs |

> "… it is important for us to make an all out effort to "bank our languages." …
> It is critical that the language of this generation of Elders be taped and stored for our future reference, as this may be our last opportunity of getting the language in its purest form. "
>
> Verna Kirkness, 1998. Aboriginal Languages:  A Collection of Talks and Papers.  Vancouver:  Author

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**Activity Eight:
Reconstructing Our Language**

Your Language Committee can spend some time discussing the recording and compiling of information about your language.  This work may involve a linguist if that is possible.  **While this task may be time-consuming, it is an important stage in reversing language shift.**

## Activity Eight continued ...
## How We Can Reconstruct Our Language

**Examples:**

√ meet with Elders and other fluent speakers to record on paper, audio tape, and/or video tape words and phrases, as well as their meanings, sounds, and usage.

√ record songs, stories, histories, and speeches that are important examples of our language.

√ find, catalogue, edit, and duplicate materials that can be kept and used for teaching our language. These materials may be found:

➢ with Elders;

➢ with other community members;

➢ in the Band office;

➢ in regional, provincial, or federal archives;

➢ in Church archives;

➢ in Universities or Colleges;

➢ in museums; or

➢ with professionals who have previously worked in your community.

## Our Additional Ideas for Reconstructing Our Language

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## Our Ideas for Reconstructing Our Language Continued ...

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**  Please remember:  in undertaking this work, it is imperative that a governing body ensures that all of the work and materials gathered belong to your community, particularly if you hire someone to assist with this work.  Also, <u>keep all of the materials in a place that is safe from fire, theft, or flooding to ensure their survival!</u>

## 6.3.2 Mobilizing Fluent Speakers

The next stage in reversing language shift involves:

√    encouraging Elders and other fluent speakers to speak your language with their children, grandchildren, and other young people;

√    encouraging Elders and speakers to teach your language in formal and informal settings, and providing them with skills to help them do so; and

√    encouraging people who **understand** your language to start **speaking** the language, as well.  These people often learn their language quite quickly.

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### Activity Nine:
### Mobilizing Speakers

Through activity 6, you may already have identified the fluent speakers and understanders of your language.  You can now ask fluent speakers how they might be involved in your language revitalization effort.

You may also ask fluent understanders how they might help with your efforts, and their level of commitment to revitalizing your language.

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The Elders who know and speak our languages are our most valuable and irreplaceable resource. It is essential that these people be involved in our language revitalization processes … The best gift that Elders and grandparents can give to their children and grandchildren is to use their Aboriginal language with them as much as possible.

*M. Ignace. 1998. Handbook for Aboriginal Language Program Planning in British Columbia.*

# Sample Charts to Record People Who Can Help

### FLUENT SPEAKERS

| Name | Contact Number | I am Committed to . . . |
|------|----------------|-------------------------|
| T. Brown | 555 - 1234 | Making time to speak my language with my grandchildren. |
| M. Orange | 555 - 1235 | Taking part in a school class to speak with the children. |
| N. Yellow | 555 - 1236 | Teach an evening class to adults. |
| D. Blue | 555 - 1237 | Working with the Language Committee to record the stories and legends I know. |
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### FLUENT UNDERSTANDERS

| Name | Contact Number | I am Committed to . . . |
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### 6.3.3 Integenerational Transmission of the Language

The next stage in reversing language shift is related to promoting the use of the language in families and in your community.  Increased usage of your language in everyday life and in public gatherings can help tremendously with the transmission of your language from generation to generation.

This stage of reversing language shift is very important.  Fishman notes:

> "if this stage is not satisfied, all else can amount to little more than biding time."

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**Activity Ten:**
**What People Can Do to**
**Promote Language Transmission**

Members of the Language Committee can collectively brainstorm about some of the many things people can do to promote language use.  You may want to use the examples provided on the next page to start your discussions.  After you have developed a list of ideas, share it with family and friends.  Ask other people to add their ideas, and to make a commitment to trying  some of the ideas.  Review the list from time to time, to consider which ideas are working well, and to add new ones.  When attending meetings outside of your community, share some of the ideas being implemented in your community, and ask other people about things they are doing to promote the use of their language.

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Several relevant ideas are in the *Aboriginal Languages Handbook,* pages 44-48.

# Activity Ten continued ...
## Example of Ideas for Promoting Language Use
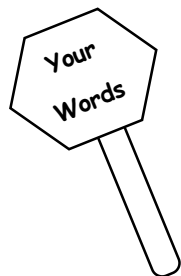
**In the Community**

√ Make posters and distribute pamphlets promoting the importance of using your language.

√ Put up traffic and street signs in your language.

√ Organize Bingo games that are played using your language.

√ Produce a newsletter in your language.

√ Organize weekend language classes or even an immersion weekend.

√ Put up signs showing traditional places.

√ Use your language at all public dinners and other social events.

√ Support the use of your language in First Nations government, such as in meetings and letters sent to community members.

√ Encourage youth groups and Elders groups to meet together as often as possible.
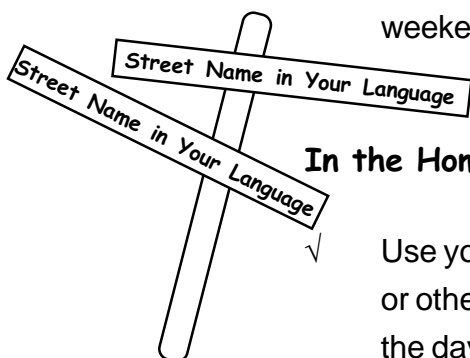
**In the Home**

√ Use your language at meal times or other regular activities during the day. This may take patience. Don't give up!

√ Learn the words your children are learning at school.

√ Use your language when talking with toddlers and small children. Teach them all the words you know.

√ Spend time socializing with Elders and other speakers.

√ Encourage your children to spend time with their grandparents and other people who speak the language.

√ Ask Elders to practice speaking the language with young adults and new parents.

√ Integrate language use into games and entertainment in the home.

√ Attend a language class, and stick with it!

*Your Words*

*Street Name in Your Language*

*Street Name in Your Language*

*Youth and Elders Centre*

# Activity Ten continued ... Our Ideas for Promoting Language Use

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### 6.3.4 Teaching Your Language in the School

Stage Five in reversing language shift involves education programs, such as Aboriginal language programs in schools, evening classes, and weekend classes.  Many programs already exist, but could perhaps be strengthened.  Ideas about this stage are discussed further in section 7.

### 6.3.5 Implementing Immersion Programs

Some nations may consider implementing immersion or partial immersion programs in an effort to reverse language shift.  Section 7 of this workbook describes these activities in more detail.

### 6.3.6  Integrating Your Language into the Work Place

Encouraging the use of your language in community businesses and other workplaces can be very useful.  This may involve literacy training for workers so that they can use and understand their language, translating documents, and creating opportunities for people to use their language as much as possible.  Perhaps you could even begin the first 10 or 15 minutes of a staff meeting using your own language.

## Activity Eleven: Promoting Language Use in the Workplace

Members of your Language Committee can meet with representatives of local businesses and employers. Discuss how to promote the use of your language in their workplace, and perhaps outline gradual steps that can realistically be implemented. Your Committee may be able to help with things such as building enthusiasm for the plans for increasing language use, assisting with language classes for employees who want to increase their ability to speak and/or write the language, and any translation required.

Keep a record of the commitments made at your meetings, and periodically review the progress being made. A sample chart for doing this is included on the next page.

## What Can Be Done?

**Our Ideas for Promoting Language Use in the Workplace**

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# Sample Chart for Recording Your Ideas:
## Promoting Language Use in the Work Place

| Activity | How Our Language Committee Can Help |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Invite Elders or other speakers to join employees at lunch time to speak the language and help employees learn and practice using their language (providing appropriate honoraria for their time and expertise). | Help identify people who can attend the sessions and encourage employees you know to attend and be enthusiastic about the opportunity. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Allow employees an afternoon off to participate in a language class. | Help identify an existing language program for the employees, or organize a new one, inviting all employers to cooperate. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Put up posters and signs in your language throughout the workplace. | Help prepare the posters and signs. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Translate materials used in the workplace into your language. | Help translate the materials if necessary. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

### 6.3.7 Offering Government Services in Your Language

You can also consider ways to integrate your language into government services that are in direct contact with community members. This could involve including your language on informational pamphlets, letters, and forms.

### 6.3.8 Using Your Language in Higher Education, Government, and the Media

You may also think about promoting the use of your language in First Nations Post-Secondary institutes, in governing bodies, and in the media. For example, you can try to use have your language used in newspapers, newsletters, and on the internet. If possible, a community radio station that broadcasts in your Aboriginal language could also have an important role in promoting the use of your language.



## My Notes

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## Our Other Thoughts About Promoting Language Use

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# 7. How to Plan a Formal Language Education Program

While language revitalization efforts must include a focus on language use in the home, family, and community, the formal education system can and should play an important role in reversing language shift. There are several options for introducing a formal program into the school setting, ranging from full immersion in pre-school classes to language courses for adults. Whatever option you choose, remember to think carefully about realistic timeframes and the resources you will need.

## 7.1 Early Childhood Programs

Linguists have found that learning a language is easiest for children between infancy and the teen years. It is important to expose young children to their Aboriginal language as early as possible. One method shown to be successful is through **language nests**.

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### Activity Twelve:
### Thinking About a Language Nest

Your committee can take some time thinking about whether developing a language nest is possible in your community. Some of the ideas on the next page may help with your brainstorming.

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### A Successful Example of Language Nests

Language nests were developed in New Zealand in an effort to revive the Maori language. In the beginning, small groups of children were cared for in the homes of fluent speakers, who constantly spoke to the children using the Maori language.

The goals of the Maori language nests were to promote Maori as the language of everyday use, to promote their culture through learning in an extended family arrangement, and to promote community renewal through sustained interaction of parents, children, and Elders.

The Maori language nests were quite successful. However, young students who left the language nests and did not have other opportunities to practice lost their ability to speak their language. The Maori experience showed that is important that children have opportunities to speak their language in their homes, schools, and communities.

## Activity Twelve continued ...
## Thinking About Developing a Language Nest

**Suggested ways to develop a language nest:**

√    You can turn an existing daycare centre into a language nest:

    ★    directly, if the daycare workers speak their language;

    ★    by pairing up certified daycare workers with fluent Elders to work as a team;

    ★    by encouraging certified daycare workers to become more fluent in their language, perhaps through providing language training; or

    ★    planning and implementing, cooperatively with a community college, an accredited early childhood education program for fluent speakers.

√    The options described above may require funding and other resources.  You can also achieve the language nest concept by arranging in-home daycare with a fluent speaker, or a speaker supported by a younger childcare worker.  This program can gradually be expanded to include other interested parents.

**Our Additional Ideas:**

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_____        Language Nests are

_____        discussed more in

_____        the *Aboriginal*

_____        *Languages Hand-*

_____        *book,* pages 48-52.

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## 7.2 Language Immersion Programs

Like language nests, immersion programs for school-age children are modelled on the advantages of maximum exposure to the language.  Research has indicated that there are a number of benefits and challenges associated with immersion programs, including the following:

> Successful immersion programs can teach a wide variety of skills and subjects based on and related to Aboriginal traditional ways, that also are relevant to the modern world.

benefits:

- ➢ leads to excellent listening and speaking skills in the language;
- ➢ enhances academic development; and
- ➢ improves self-esteem and cultural pride.

challenges:

- ➢ language acquisition is not natural in those situations;
- ➢ speech may be grammatically flawed by English influence; and
- ➢ language use often does not carry over to the home or play.

**\*\*      Despite some of the negative aspects, however, an effective immersion program is better able to produce fluent speakers than are those that focus on teaching as a second language.**

See the *Aboriginal Languages Handbook,* pages 53-60 for more information.

## My Notes

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A number of key issues relate to the planning of Aboriginal language immersion programs:

√  Learning outcomes and objectives should include incentives, rewards and measurements of the degree to which immersion students bring back the use of the language into their community.

√  Instruction should emphasize **oral language skills**. Reading and writing can then serve as a complement to the instruction of the spoken language.

√  Instruction should include ways to correct speech errors. There should be methods to enforce and reward the correct use of grammar and words. It is important that fluent speakers have patience with beginners, and not make too many corrections when they are practicing. People may become discouraged and give up otherwise.

√  Realize that immersion programs require a tremendous amount of planning, curriculum development, and written resources. Plan accordingly, and consider realistic timeframes and resources needed.

√  Immersion teachers must be **fluent** in their Aboriginal language and be able to carry out the entire day's program without lapsing into English. Teachers must also have the stamina and classroom management skills to be able to enforce the use of the language in the school. This requires effective program, unit and lesson planning on the part of the teachers.

√    Elders, parents and the community need to support the program, not only in principle. They must be willing to give their time and energy in the classroom, and more importantly, outside of the classroom and in the home.

√    It is useful if adult language programs are available so that parents can keep up with their children in learning their language, and be able to use it with them in the home.  Also, make enough copies so that kids can bring home their learning materials and practice with their parents.

There are also some common pitfalls of immersion programs that you can avoid to help ensure that your program is effective. The most important of these are:

✘    Parents and the community may fail to recognize their role in transmission of their language, entirely deferring this task to teachers. An immersion program alone will not revive your language; it should be supported by strategies that extend and reinforce the use of your language in the home and community.

✘    **Parents must not believe that immersion in the Aboriginal language will deprive their children of opportunities to advance academically, due to a "lack of English."  Studies have shown that bilingualism does not hinder, but enhances, a child's development.***

* (A video produced by the Secwepemc Cultural Education Society includes a good overview of this issue.  Call the SCES at 250 - 828 - 9779 for more information).

**My Notes**

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Other considerations related to the development and implementation of immersion programs include:

√ curriculum development is an important component of an Aboriginal language immersion program. Many language teachers have expressed an urgent need for more planning, resources and materials for use in language instruction;

√ a compromise for some subjects may be required. Full immersion can be offered until grade 4 or 5, followed up by a partial immersion in the later grades where some of the core subjects (Math, Science, etc.) can be taught in English;

√ effective language immersion programs require honest assessment and evaluation to ensure that both the short and long term objectives are being met. A broad range of people should be involved in that evaluation, not only the people who set up the programs. Evaluation should include an assessment of whether:

➢ the linguistic and academic objectives set for the school and its grade levels are being met;

➢ community satisfaction is adequate; and

➢ language use is being carried from the school into the home and the rest of the community.

> Fishman suggests that the only valid assessment criterion for Aboriginal language programs is whether they promote the continuity of intergenerational language transmission. This means that the programs:
>
> a) provide students with a level of proficiency so that he/she can use the language in the community with confidence and ease and with his/her own children, and;
>
> b) provides incentives and measures for re-integrating the actual use of the language outside of the school, in the home and community.

Effective follow-up to early-age immersion programs is essential to continue the exposure of students to their Aboriginal language after the early primary grades. Some of the long-term goals for continued language programming might include:

√     expanding grade levels each year to allow the program to "grow up" with the students. This will also require expanding human and financial resources;

√     introduction of a full immersion program at the secondary school level;

√     a core language program in intermediate and secondary grades to help maintain competence in the Aboriginal language;

√     a community-based after-school program for intermediate and secondary students to provide continued practice in and use of their language; and

√     a "buddy" program, that involves older children reading and teaching to younger children.

**My Notes**

# Our Ideas About Immersion Programs

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## 7.3 Second Language Programs

An alternative to full immersion programs in schools might be a First Nations Second Language program. There are many more of these programs in British Columbia than immersion programs. However, most language teachers have observed that **First Nations as Second Language programs have *not* produced proficient speakers of the language.**

There are several factors that are suggested to ensure the success of Second Language programs, including the following.

✔  Sufficient instruction at the primary and elementary level is important.

✔  Funding, teaching, curriculum, and material resource issues are key.

✔  Improved quality of instruction and increased length of exposure to the Aboriginal language at all levels is useful.

Second Language Programs are discussed more in the *Aboriginal Languages Handbook,* page 61.

**My Notes**

# Our Ideas About Second Language Programs

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## 8.  Language Programs in the Public School System

A new policy for language programs in BC schools was issued by the BC Ministry of Education in the Fall of 1996 (see side panel). The Language Education Policy supports the use of Aboriginal language programs in BC public schools.  However, in order for programs to be approved, funded, and implemented, the language curriculum must be approved by the Ministry through the submission of an **Integrated Resource Package** for grades 5 to 12.

See the *Aboriginal Languages Handbook,* pages 61-75 for a detailed discussion of Language Programs in the Public School System.

*The provincial government acknowledges the need to promote Aboriginal language and culture programs in British Columbia schools because they are indigenous to this province and are endangered. These languages should receive the benefit of extraordinary policy consideration. The government supports the need for understanding among cultures and encourages access to these languages for all students wherever possible. ... School boards are encouraged to support the language preferences of the local Aboriginal peoples. Boards should consult with Aboriginal communities to determine which languages may be offered in schools. The Ministry of Education will consider requests to financially support curriculum development for Aboriginal languages in addition to existing language and cultural funding already provided.*

*BC Ministry of Education Policy Statement*

## 8.1 Integrated Resource Packages and the Language Template

In order to develop approved curricula for an Integrated Resource Package, you can use a generic **Language Template** issued by the Ministry of Education in 1997.

The Language Template for Punjabi may be used as one example of an IRP written for a non-European language (http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/pun512/puntoc.htm). The Punjabi IRP may include teaching strategies that are more adaptable to teaching Aboriginal languages than some of the strategies suggested in the generic Language Template.

> **The language template can be ordered from the Ministry of Education (phone (250) 356-2317 or fax: (250) 356-2316) or downloaded from its Internet site (http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/langtoc.htm).**

>   ** **For languages that are approved by the local School Board and by the Ministry of Education for instruction at the Grade 5 to 12 level, the funds for language instruction will come out of *district* core funds for instruction, rather than *targeted* funds.**

**Please note:** The offering of language instruction in this manner is subject to continuous school board approval which, according to the Ministry, is to be based on sufficient enrolment and other factors.

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### Activity Thirteen: Developing An IRP

If your Language Committee is interested in having your language program approved by the Ministry of Education for use in public schools you may want to think about some of the following steps  (please note that pages 91 – 96 of the *Aboriginal Language Program Handbook* include a more detailed description of the IRP organization and more information on how to get approval for your IRP):

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√   Contact your School Board/District or the Ministry of Education for a copy of the *Language Education Policy* and a copy of the *Language Template*.

Notes:  who will call for the information?    response?

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**When you've received the template:**

√   Discuss the policy and assess your community's needs, including input from Elders, parents, and as many other stakeholders as possible.

Notes:  will we hold a meeting about this?  when?  who will we invite?

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## Activity Thirteen continued ... Developing an IRP

√   Contact representatives from other First Nations communities that share your language to discuss the situation and determine if any programs or IRPs have been developed in the past or are currently being developed.

Notes: should we contact anyone else?  who?  who will contact them?

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√   Meet with the School Board/District to clarify and discuss the issues.

Notes:  who will contact the School Board?  when should we meet?  ?

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** At the meeting with the School Board you may want to discuss:

√   Your formal request for the development of an Aboriginal language IRP.

√   Engaging the School Board in a needs assessment.

√   Having the School Board initiate the IRP development and notify the Ministry's Curriculum and Resources Branch.

## Activity Thirteen continued ... Integrated Resource Package

√   You may want to work with the School Board to establish a development team to draft the IRP.  It is in the best interests of your community to provide as much input into this process as possible. This will ensure that the IRP reflects the distinctive language and cultural characteristics of your community.

Notes: who should be included on a development team?

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√   Take the completed IRP back to your community to allow them to "take ownership" of it.

Notes: what are our plans for having the IRP reviewed in the community?

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√   Have the draft IRP approved by the School Board.

√   Ensure that the School Board forwards the IRP to the Ministry for review and response.

## Activity Thirteen continued ... Other Notes Regarding the IRP

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**\*\* Note:** In 1997 the Ministry of Education issued a Ministerial Order which declared that languages could be approved without IRPs. This was intended as an emergency measure to protect existing Aboriginal language programs which were starting that fall from the strict requirements of the template. It is still recommended that First Nations language programs be approved through the IRP method in order to obtain approval and recognition of the First Nations language in the BC school system.

## 8.2 What About Students with Special Needs?

**My Notes**

The Ministry of Education's Language Education Policy states that "students with special needs should not be exempted from learning a second language unless they cannot meet the expected learning outcomes of that language course".  Other considerations related to including special needs students in language classes are:

- ➤ Being taught the language, often by an Elder, provides comfort and a positive experience for most students with special needs, who are reported to function better in the Aboriginal language classroom than in classes of other subjects.

- ➤ Learning the language can help a student's intellectual, emotional, and social development at the primary grades, supporting the further development of memory skills and analytic skills at later grade levels.

However, it may be helpful to remember that ...

- ➤ Special needs students can raise challenges for language teachers, who are often not trained to work with special needs children.

- ➤ Difficulties with memorizing and other skills may make learning a second language more difficult for special needs students.

- ➤ Special needs children usually benefit from learning assistance while learning an Aboriginal language.

Special Needs students are discussed more in the *Aboriginal Languages Handbook,* pages 75-77.

**UBC Registrar's Office ph: (604) 822-3014**

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**UVic Registrar's Office ph: (250) 721-8121**

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**SFU Registrar's Office ph: (604) 294-8600**

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**UNBC Registrar's Office ph: 1-888-419-5588**

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## 8.3 Should We Think About Post-Secondary Requirements?

It is important to consider whether language programs will fulfil the language requirement for students going on to post-secondary education. Currently, Community colleges and University colleges generally do **not** have a secondary school language requirement for admission. However, BC Universities (UBC, UVic, SFU, and UNBC) all require students to have completed **"a provincially recognized Grade 11 language course."**

To date, these institutions **do** consider Aboriginal languages as meeting language requirements, but only on a case by case basis, and upon special request to the University's Office of the Registrar. You can contact each University for more information about their policies.

## 8.4 Language Programs for Adults

Aboriginal language programs for adults can have many benefits. One of the most important of these is that they will help parents to speak the language with their children and in community settings.

In the past several years, there has been a movement towards collaborative efforts between First Nations communities and Universities in offering adult credit courses in Aboriginal languages. These courses have several advantages:

✔ They offer structure and a framework for language learning.

✔ They have defined objectives and ways of assessing participant progress.

✔ Participants can use the credits achieved as a part of a certificate, diploma or degree in First Nations Studies, Education or other discipline.

✔ The programs tend to be taught by a fluent speaker with a background in education or by a team of fluent speakers and linguists.

The only disadvantage to these courses is that they tend to be costly and require substantial administrative/ organizational work. While these courses may not be the best solution for every community, they have proven to be popular where they have been offered.

**My Notes**

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Please see the *Aboriginal Languages Handbook* pages 78-86 for more information.

# 9.  Language Curriculum

A curriculum refers to a "program of studies" or written plan for what students should learn and in what order. Regardless of whether an Aboriginal language program is directed for children or adults, it is vital that there is a useful curriculum in place.

*Language Curriculum is discussed in detail in the Aboriginal Languages Handbook,* pages 87-100.

Curriculum development for any educational program has a number of common components and steps.

It is often useful if curriculum development is preceded by a language planning or needs assessment process.  Much of this work may already have been completed in your community.  You can now consider how your earlier discussions might relate to curriculum development.

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### Activity Fourteen: Thinking About Curriculum

Your Language Committee can have significant input into the development of curriculum for an Aboriginal Language Program.  If possible, it would be useful to involve someone with experience in curriculum development in your discussions, but your ideas about your language program are very important for the design of effective curriculum.

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## Activity Fourteen continued ... Thinking About Curriculum

Some of the common components of curriculum include:

**Mission Statement:** an overall philosophy from which goals and objectives emerge.

Our ideas:

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**Goals:** what you want to accomplish with your language program.

Our ideas:

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## Activity Fourteen continued ... Thinking About Curriculum

**Objectives:** particular aspects of the goals.

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**Rationale:** the reasons why your project and its goals and objectives are valid and important.

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## Activity Fourteen continued ... Thinking About Curriculum

**Approach:**   how you are going to deliver your language program (i.e.: full immersion or second language program; oral skills only or inclusion of reading and writing; etc.).

Our ideas:

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**Learning Outcomes:** what you expect students to be able to do and know during and by the end of the program. These may focus on a number of different tasks and areas, but should be specific, precise and clear in terms of the skills they address. Learning outcomes may begin with a phrase like, "it is expected that students will…" and will provide some goals for what the students will be able to say and understand at the end of the program.

Our ideas:

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# Example of Unit Learning Outcomes from Secwepemc Language Package, Grade 11/12 Secwepemc Cultural Education Society

## Learning Outcomes

After this unit, it is expected that the student will:

* understand and follow 30 commands accurately;

* understand Secwepemc numbers 1 - 100 and count from one to 100 in Secwepemc;

* identify number of objects up to ten;

* carry out simple arithmetic operations (addition and subtraction in Secwepemctsin);

* say and respond to Secwepemc greetings and questions about name; engage in a brief dialogue introducing themselves or someone;

* understand and say three pointing words (ye7ene, yerey, yeri7) and respond to, as well as say, simple sentences using pointing words;

* understand and say the terms for at least 10 objects in the classroom;

* begin to understand a few words and simple phrases and questions about season, weather and time of day (these will be presented during the introductory unit, but mastery is not expected until near the end of the year);

* pronoune with good accuracy all Group A sounds of the language, as well as with limited accuracy Group B and Group C sound (this skill will be worked on throughout the year);

* recognize written Secwepemc and be able to begin to sight-read simple words and phrases;

* locate words in the English-Secwepemc dictionary and Shuswap-English word list, and have an idea of how to find English meanings of Secwepemctsin words in the Shuswap-English dictionary;

* with emergent reading and writing skills, record words in their journals; and

* where possible, try out new words and phrases with elders/fluent speakers.

## Activity Fourteen continued ... Thinking About Curriculum

**Units:** a unit is an organization of the various activities, experiences and intended learning that is built around a central problem. Units are often developed around a particular theme that can integrate learning within a number of learning areas. Units should accomplish the following.

➢ Outline the language content that is to be taught (including grammar, vocabulary, phrases and cultural concepts), keeping in mind possible dialect differences and the need for vocabulary that can be used in conjunction with others in the home and community.  It is **essential** that Elders and fluent speakers are included in this area to ensure that pronunciation and meaning of words is correct, and to legitimize the development of the content.

➢ Provide a timeline that the unit will follow. This may take into consideration the different cultural activities during the year (hunting, fishing, trapping, etc.) and give culturally meaningful sequence to themes and content.

➢ Describe the teaching strategies that will be used. Some useful examples are listed in the Language Template; as well, teachers should research the literature for other language teaching strategies.

➢ Determine the resources available for teaching and which ones need to be developed, updated or replaced. With some creative work on the part of the teacher (and community members), very good instructional resources can be produced without extensive funds or development. These might include:

→ props (real or representations of items);

→ written resources in your Aboriginal language. If unavailable then these can be created from English language resources through "cutting and pasting;"

→ audio-visual materials such as tapes, videos, photographs, and CD ROMs which depict the use of your language and/or participation in cultural activities by Elders; and

→ interaction with members of the community, particularly Elders and other fluent speakers of your language.

## Activity Fourteen continued ... Thinking About Curriculum

Our ideas:

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**Assessment Strategies:** ways to gather information about student progress and performance. At the primary level, assessment should be based on ongoing observation in the classroom and on evaluation of student's work. At higher grades evaluation and assessment may become more formal and include tests, oral presentations, journals, portfolios of art or creative work, and self and peer review. Assessment is only effective if based on goals for learning that are set at the start of curriculum development.

Our ideas:

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**Sample -- Scope and Sequence for the Sm'algyax Language \*\***

\*\* reprinted with permission from the author.

# Sample -- Scope and Sequence for the Sm'algyax Language continued

**Sample -- Scope and Sequence for the Sm'algyax Language continued**

**Sample -- Scope and Sequence for the Sm'algyax Language continued**

**Sample -- Scope and Sequence for the Sm'algyax Language continued**

**Sample -- Scope and Sequence for the Sm'algyax Language continued**

**Sample -- Scope and Sequence for the Sm'algyax Language continued**

## Activity Fourteen continued ... Other Notes Regarding Curriculum

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## Activity Fourteen continued ... Other Notes Regarding Curriculum

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## My Notes

# 9.1 Issues Of Copyright

A major concern related to the development of curriculum or other resources is ownership of information. This concern exists due to past **appropriations** of First Nations knowledge.

**Copyright** grants owners the sole and exclusive right to reproduce, perform, or publish a work, and gives them the control over the use of their creations and the ability to benefit monetarily or otherwise from its use by others. **Intellectual Property Rights** address the issue of rights to original knowledge and its uses, but currently only addresses the area of patents, industrial designs, trade secrets, and trademarks.

First Nations communities and organizations are best advised to secure a measure of control over their language curricula and resource materials by obtaining the exclusive copyright to them. Consultation with a lawyer familiar with copyright law is recommended for all First Nations developing curriculum or other resources.

# 10. Certifying and Training Language Teachers

In 1990-91, the BC College of Teachers (BCCT) and representatives from First Nations communities revised the existing by-laws of the College to allow certification of Aboriginal language teachers without extensive university instruction. Teachers meeting certain criteria were issued a **First Nations Language Teacher Certificate**.

There are two main criteria to be eligible for a First Nations Language Teacher Certificate:

1. The applicant must be a proficient speaker of your language.

2. The local First Nations Language Authority must declare the applicant proficient in your language and possessing a broad understanding of the First Nations culture and society (First Nations Language Authorities are discussed in Section 10 below.)

**To receive the First Nations Language Teacher Certificate applicants must:**

√ complete and submit an application form to the BC College of Teachers (see pages 80-83 for a sample application).

√ submit two confidential letters of reference.

√ submit official transcripts from institutions attended (if applicable).

√ submit a verified copy of a birth certificate.

√ pay the application fee ($150).

√ authorize the College to conduct a criminal record search.

An *interim* certificate, valid for 4 years, is then issued to the Aboriginal language teacher. The teacher can qualify for a *permanent* certificate after:

· completing 1.5 years of teaching experience;

· receiving a recommendation by a school superintendent, assistant superintendent or administrative officer who has supervised and evaluated the teacher's classroom teaching experience.

## BCCT Application for Language Teacher Certification *

**\* please contact the BCCT at (604) 731 - 8170 to have an original application forwarded to you.**

**BCCT Application for Language Teacher Certification continued**

**BCCT Application for Language Teacher Certification continued**

**BCCT Application for Language Teacher Certification continued**

## 10.1  Teacher  Training

The First Nations Language Teacher Certificate only requires proficiency in the language and does **not** require a university degree in teacher education. However, many Aboriginal language teachers have realized that just being a fluent speaker of the language does not mean that you are a good teacher.  To address this issue, a number of public and Aboriginal post-secondary institutes have initiated courses and programs to give Aboriginal language teachers skills to be effective in the classroom. Some of these programs are listed on the following pages.  **Please note:**  the current status of the programs must be confirmed with the institutes, as some changes may have taken place since the publication of this workbook.

Beginning in the fall of 1999, First Nations will also be able to organize Aboriginal Language Teacher Training Programs that can be accredited by the BC College of Teachers. Please contact the FNESC office at (604) 990 - 9939 for more information about this possibility.

For more information,
please refer to the
*Aboriginal Languages
Handbook,* pages 100-105.

**1. Secwepemc Education Institute**

- Offers an Aboriginal Language Teaching Summer Institute as part of the SCES/SFU program in Kamloops, Lillooet, Merritt, Williams Lake, Chilliwack and Mount Currie.
- Courses for language teachers are also included in the SFU Certificate in First Nations Language Proficiency.

**2. Yinka-Dene Language Institute**

- Offers a one-year language teacher training program.
- Components in curriculum, language teaching methods, literacy, language structure, and working within the school system.
- *Non*-credit certificate (does not count towards other teaching degrees).

**3. En'owkin Centre**

- Offers language literacy, adult immersion and other training courses.

**4. University of British Columbia**

- Offers a comprehensive First Nations Teacher Education Program, but no specialization in teaching an Aboriginal language.

**5. SFU Prince Rupert Teacher Education Program**

- Offers a four and five year degree program, including the Professional Degree Program in collaboration with the North Coast Tribal Council, the Tsimshian Tribal Council and First Nations of the Northwest coast.

**My Notes**

## My Notes

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**6.  Association of Aboriginal Post-secondary Institutes**

- Offers the Native Adult Instructor Diploma, which includes 120 hours of instruction in curriculum development and teaching methods.
- *Not* specific to language teacher education.
- *Not* recognized by most institutions as transfer into a teacher education program or degree.

**7.  University of Northern British Columbia**

- Offers First Nations Studies courses in Nisga'a language in co-operation with Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a.
- *Not* specifically a language teacher training program, but can form part of a certificate or Bachelor of Arts degree in First Nations Studies.

## 10.2 Training Second Language Speakers

Improving the fluency of second language speakers so that they can become Aboriginal language teachers in the future is becoming a more pressing issue since many fluent speakers are nearing retirement. The  programs listed above and other classes offered in First Nations communities are improving the understanding and speaking of younger speakers.

A more intensive method for revitalizing speech among adults is **Language Mentoring**, which involves a student working one-on-one with an Elder or fluent speaker to improve listening and speaking skills. Mentoring works best for people who already have a basic understanding of their language and are attempting to improve their vocabulary, grammar, and speech sounds.

Another method of improving second language speakers' proficiency is summer Immersion Camps for adults and families. These programs provide valuable cultural enrichment for second language speakers; however, they must be well designed to prevent immersion from becoming "submersion" (where the participants are overwhelmed and/or revert to English to communicate).

> The Secwepemc Education Institute's SFU program is currently piloting a language mentoring program. This program can also count for university credit.

## 11. What is a Language Authority?

Some of the sections above refer to the responsibilities of a Language Authority. There are two main reasons to create a formal Language Authority in your community or Nation.

A Language Authority can be the group of people dedicated to assisting with the revitalization of the language through the documentation and authorization of vocabularies, writing systems, spelling, and pronunciation of words. A Language Authority can also authorize the addition of new vocabularies to "modernize" the language. In many cases, Language Authorities within the same language family or group can jointly develop or borrow new vocabularies from one another.

Language Authorities can also certify Aboriginal language speakers. As mentioned earlier, Elders and other fluent speakers can recognize who is proficient in your language, and can set standards and criteria for proficiency.

Language Authorities can include all communities that share a common language and dialect. Since, in some cases, dialect differences are profound, it is recommended that Language Authorities represent a single language and/or dialect. This will help avoid problems in the legitimizing of vocabulary and other speech components.

*Language Authorities are discussed more in the* Aboriginal Languages Handbook, *pages 48-52.*

## Activity Fifteen: Establishing a Language Authority

Your Language Committee can help to establish a Language Authority by meeting with Elders, fluent speakers, and other interested individuals to determine who is qualified to judge proficiency in your language.  Those people can be assisted by individuals willing to provide administrative support to the Authority members.  Once your Language Authority has been established, don't forget to inform the BC College of Teachers that it exists.

## Our Language Authority

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# Sample Language Authority Documentation

## Upper St'at'imc Language and Culture Authority **

### Background

The authority was formed by the Upper St'at'imc Communities in 1993. The Authority was formally recognized by the BC College of Teachers in July 1994 as the language teacher certification body for the Upper St'at'imc. The Authority operates under the auspices of the Upper St'at'imc Language, Culture and Education Society.

### Roles and Responsibilities

One of the main roles of the Authority is to certify Upper St'at'imc Language teachers. it is also responsible for reviewing and approving language and cultural materials that are developed by the Society and the School District for use in the schools. Since 1994, the Authority has certified seven language teachers. Five teachers are now teaching St'at'imcets in School District No. 74 (Gold Trail), one is serving as a language coach and the other person is teaching in a community school.

### Membership

The Upper St'at'imc Communities represented by the Authority are Nxweysten (Bridge River), Sek'wel'was (Cayoose Creek), Cacl'ep (Fountain), T'it'q'et (Lillooet), Ts'k'waylacw (Pavilion) and Tsal'alh (Seton Lake). Each band appointed one representative. The Authority members are speakers of the Upper St'at'imc dialect and all but one can read and write the language.

### Terms of Reference

The Upper St'at'imc Language and Culture Authority operates under the auspices of the Upper St'at'imc Language, Culture and Education Society.

** reprinted with permission from the Upper St'at'imc Language and Culture Authority. Please contact the Authority for further information.

# Sample Language Authority Documentation continued

The Authority will:

√    represent the six Upper St'at'imc bands of Bridge River, Cayoose Creek, Fountain, Lillooet, Pavilion and Seton Lake;

√    consist of six members formally appointed by their bands;

√    be comprised of St'at'imc who are fluent speakers of the Upper St'at'imc dialect;

√    judge the ability of other St'at'imc speakers respecting their suitability to serve as Upper St'at'imc language and culture teachers/educators;

√    review language and culture curriculum plans, guides, materials, resources and teaching strategies prior to their implementation in the schools and/or communities;

√    propose language and curriculum policy to the Board;

√    the quorum required for the conduct of any meeting will be three members present; and

√    meet once a month or as required.


Appointments will remain in effect until such time as the member resigns or the band appoints another person to serve as its representative.


**Interim Certification Requirements Established by the Authority**

1.  Language Proficiency and Cultural Knowledge

A.    The candidate will be required to pass an oral examination consisting of a five (5) to ten (10) minute presentation in St'at'imcets.  Suggested topics will be given a week before hand to allow the candidate to prepare for the presentation.  In addition, the candidate will be required to successfully answer questions in St'at'imcets during a follow-up interview.

B.    The candidate will be required to pass a written examination consisting of an original St'at'imcets composition based on a personal experience.

    i.    The topic may be the same as the one selected for requirement A above.

    ii.    The composition may not be one written previously, eg., as a class project.

# Sample Language Authority Documentation continued

C.     The candidate will be required to pass a written examination involving translation from St'at'imcets to English and/or English to St'at'imcets.

The oral and written examinations will be conducted and reviewed by at least three(3) members of the Authority who will assess the candidate for comprehension, pronunciation, and grammatical fluency.  The Authority may select a linguist to form part of the assessment team.

### 2.   Teaching Proficiency

The candidate will be required to take or have taken an intensive Language Teaching course (SFU Linguistics 360 or equivalent) and pass with at least a C+ standing.  In addition, the candidate must be approved by both the Upper St'at'imc Language and Culture Authority and the employer as a competent teacher and appropriate role model for students in the school system.  On completion of these requirements, the Upper St'at'imc Language and Culture Authority will recommend that a First Nations Language Teacher Certificate be issued to the successful candidate under the British Columbia College of Teachers Bylaws, effective February 14, 1994, Bylaw 2.B.01(d), page 13.

### 3.   Special Exemptions

Candidates who fail to complete the requirements 1 and 2 above may receive a special exemption which will allow them (at the discretion of the Upper St'at'imc Language and Culture Authority and the employer) to co-teach a class with either another "special exemption" language teacher or a fully qualified language teacher.  Special exemptions are granted under two circumstances:  the first (detailed in A below) pertains when a potential language teacher needs classroom experience prior to completing formal requirements; the second (detailed below in B) pertains when a particularly fluent speaker who lacks literacy skills may assist either a qualified teacher or language teacher trainee (as in Section 3.A) as a classroom resource person.

# Sample Language Authority Documentation continued

A.  Provisional qualification:  In lieu of requirements 1 and 2, a potential language teacher may receive a recommendation for temporary certification (for up to two years from the date of issue) by special permission of the Upper St'at'imc Language and Culture Authority and on receipt of a letter of undertaking to complete the requirements by the end of the temporary certification period.

B.  Special expertise:  In lieu of requirements 1 and 2, a potential language teacher with strong oral fluency may be qualified as a language resource teacher, at a level equivalent to that of a fully certified language teacher, on receipt of a letter of intent to continue taking adult courses in St'at'imcets with the intent of completing the written requirements of the language proficiency exam.

### Application Form for Evaluation
### By the Upper St'at'imc Language and Culture Authority

I am applying to the Upper St'at'imc Language and Culture Authority for the First Nations Language Teacher Certificate under the BC College of Teachers.

Request for evaluation for:

A.  Oral language proficiency          B.  Written language proficiency

C.  Translation proficiency

Applicant:

Name:          _____

Address:          _____

Telephone:          home:          _____          work:          _____
                            fax:          _____

Signature:          _____          Date:          _____

# Sample Language Authority Documentation continued

**Bylaws of the British Columbia College of Teachers state that:**

(d)  The First Nations Language Certificate
- (i)  The First Nations Language Certificate shall require the applicant to be a proficient speaker of the First Nations language; and
- (ii)  The First Nations Teacher certificate may be issued to individuals who have been recommended by the appropriate First Nations Language authority.

**BC College of Teachers**
**First Nations Language Teacher's Permanent Certificate**

Steps Toward Attaining a Permanent Certificate

1.  Write a letter stating your intention to apply for the Permanent First Nations Language Teacher's Certificate to:

    Upper St'at'imc Language and Culture Authority

2.  Write a letter to the Principal of your school requesting a teacher evaluation report as per the Collective agreement.

3.  Write a letter to the Upper St'at'imc Language and Culture Authority requesting an evaluation by a member of the Language Authority.

    √  Language Authority:  evaluation purpose to ascertain the teacher's language teacher competence.

    √  At least three observation visits will be made to the candidate's classes, two of which will coincide with the principal's observation visits to accommodate a three way discussion between the candidate, principal and Language Authority member, regarding their observations during the session.

4.  Upon completion of the evaluation reports, and prior to forwarding it to the BC College of Teachers, ensure that you have a signed paper from School District No. 74 stating that you have completed at least one and a half years of teaching in the District.

5.  Obtain the recommendation of the Upper St'at'imc Language and Culture Authority.

# Sample Language Authority Documentation continued

**Extension of the Interim First Nations Language Teacher's Certificate**

The Upper St'at'imc Language and Culture Authority attaches the following professional development requirments to its recommendation for an Extension of the Interim First Nations Language Teacher's Certificate.

Professional development within the period covered by the Interim Certificate extension should consist of participation in the following:

√ a mentoring program before the end of extension period

√ a St'at'imcets conversation only class to enhance understanding and fluency in daily conversation situations

√ language teacher courses

√ language literacy courses

√ classroom management courses

√ curriculum development courses

√ teacher training courses

√ academic courses

Language teachers need to make every effort to improve their own language and teaching skills to ensure that St'at'imc students receive the best possible chance to learn, retain and pass on St'at'imcets to future generations of speakers.

# Our Thoughts Regarding Our Language Authority

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## Our Thoughts Regarding Our Language Authority

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## Concluding Comments

We hope that this workbook provides you some assistance as you undertake the important task of revitalizing your Aboriginal language.

One of the key aspects of making your work successful will be your ability to involve as many people as possible in your efforts.  In this workbook, we have tried to offer some suggestions to help you accomplish that goal.  Revitalizing Aboriginal languages will require a strong commitment from a wide range of people -- the speakers, Elders, parents, young people, teachers, school administrators, and anyone else who is willing to offer their time and skills to help.

It is important to remember that revitalizing your Aboriginal language will not be an easy or straightforward task.  However, we are confident that your efforts will prove to be worthwhile, and that you can achieve your goals.

If you have any suggestions for the improvement of this workbook, please forward them to the FNESC office at (604) 990 - 9939.  We would appreciate any feedback and ideas to help make this workbook more useful.

Thank you.

# Additional Notes

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