

*Nurturing
Native
Languages*

edited by
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Introduction

It has been a decade since the first Stabilizing Indigenous Languages conference held at Northern Arizona University brought together community members and university researchers interested in Indigenous language revitalization. The 10th annual conference held in 2003 and hosted by the Ho-Chunks broke new ground as the first conference sponsored by an Indian Nation. Over the last decade more and more tribes have expressed interest in language revitalization and have hosted regional language conferences. For example, in 2003 the Colorado River Indian Tribes hosted a Yuman language conference and in 2002 the Mashantucket Pequots hosted an Algonquian language conference. This upsurge of interest in Indigenous language revitalization bodes well for the future of Native languages.

This publication is a sixth in a series of monographs published by Northern Arizona University focusing on the revitalization of Indigenous languages and cultures. Jeanette King in this volume writes about the various metaphors used to describe Native languages and revitalization efforts. One of the most powerful metaphors about language revival comes from the Maoris of *Aotearoa*/New Zealand who called their initial efforts *kohanga reo*. This name for their preschool “language nests” evokes an image of parents feeding their young their mother tongue. Another powerful metaphor often used is of language as a living being needing nurturing to ensure growth. We, the editors of this volume, think that this metaphor is especially appropriate, and want to thank Angayuq Oscar Kawagley of the University of Alaska at Fairbanks for suggesting the title to this volume, *Nurturing Native Languages*, in his keynote speech to the 2001 Stabilizing Indigenous Languages conference that begins this volume. Kawagley in his speech expresses eloquently how “as we lose our Native languages, more and more of us begin to take part in the misuse and abuse of Nature” and cautions about blindly embracing new technology. In the second keynote speech presented here from the 2001 conference, Gary Owens, Education Specialist with the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community O’Odham-Piipashsh Language Program, describes how his people resisted the suppression of their language and how new ideas are needed to nurture its growth.

As indigenous language activists and teachers share their experiences, it is becoming increasingly apparent that immersion language programs provide the most effective ways to implement language revitalization in schools, and this volume’s first section focuses on this topic. The first paper in this section by Jon Reyhner gives an overview on the emerging field of language immersion. In the second paper, “Assessing the Impact of Total Immersion on Cherokee Language Revitalization,” Lizette Peter and her colleagues focus on the planning required to establish a total immersion language program. In the third paper Wayne Holm, Irene Silentman, and Laura Wallace describe immersion teaching methods that promote students’ conversational fluency.

The second section focuses on the use of technology in language classrooms. While technology is not a substitute for well-prepared immersion lan-

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guage teachers and extensive curriculum materials, it can be used as a supplement. Courtney B. Cazden discusses how the Internet can connect language students and be used to promote indigenous language use while Ruth Bennett describes how computers, tape recorders, and radio can be use as language teaching tools.

The final section of this book discusses a variety of issues surrounding language revitalization programs. Leanne Hinton in “How To Teach When the Teacher Isn’t Fluent” focuses on the difficult situation faced where languages are severely endangered and fluent speakers are difficult, if not impossible, to find to teach the language. In the second paper in this section, Heather A. Blair, Donna Paskemin, and Barbara Laderoute focus on establishing a program to prepare language teachers. In the next paper, Jeanette King discusses the various metaphors used to describe indigenous languages as treasures, as nourishment, and as growing plants. She finds that as more people learn a language the more it is seen as benefiting the learner while where there are fewer speakers, the metaphors used tend to emphasize how the language benefits as it gets more speakers. In the fourth paper Evangeline Parsons Yazzie and Robert N. St. Clair describe the critical role of elders in language revitalization efforts. In the fifth paper Florencia Riegelhaupt, Roberto Carrasco, and Elizabeth Brandt show how even so-called international languages can be regionally threatened. The sixth paper by Walter P. Kelley and Tony L. McGregor discusses American Indian sign languages and one particularly threatened Pueblo sign language. In the next paper Sara L. Begay, Mary Jimmie, and Louise Lockard describe how primary students used their Navajo language to learn the history of their community. The eighth paper by Qwo-Li Driskill describes how the theatre can be used to promote Native language use. The final paper by Navajo language teacher Evangeline Parsons Yazzie looks at Protestant Christian Navajos’ attitudes towards teaching their Native language in schools.

Interspersed with the papers are quotes collected by Jennie DeGroat from the 1994 Native American Language Issues conference held in Glorieta, New Mexico. These quotes express eloquently the concerns of conference participants in regard to nurturing their languages. In addition, there are inserts of advice for language teachers developed by the Navajo Nation Language Project.

As editors of this volume, we hope that these new papers along with the papers from the previous five monographs will afford language activists and teachers ideas that they can use in their communities and classrooms to nurture their children through the teaching of Native language and culture. We want to conclude with a quote from Leanne Hinton who is co-hosting the 2004 Stabilizing Indigenous Languages conference: “Believing in the language brings the generations together.... If there are any seeds left, there’s an opportunity to grow.”

Jon Reyhner
Octaviana V. Trujillo
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Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley

Many Americans are intolerant of diversity, be it cultural with its concomitant languages, or biodiversity in an ecological system. Instead, we see notions of human and cultural superiority with designs for a monolingual and monocultural society in which the English language and its associated culture presumes to become the language and culture of the world. Thus indigenous cultures have to contend with a language and its ways that has a very “voracious appetite,” as phrased by Richard Little Bear (1996). We, indeed, have a formidable enemy which absorbs our Native languages and cultures very readily, unless we are cognizant of its hunger and take protective steps. This mass culture can be most appealing to young people. Its behaviorisms, codes of dress, languages, and sometimes destructive proclivities inveigle young people to its world.

In contrast, Susan Griffin’s observations about nature ring true to me because my Yupiaq language is nature-mediated, and thus it is wholesome and healing. She writes,

We know ourselves to be made from this earth. We know this earth is made from our bodies. For we see ourselves. And we are nature. We are nature seeing nature. We are nature with a concept of nature. Nature weeping. Nature speaking of nature to nature. (1978 , p. 226)

Nature contains the creatures, plants, and elements of Nature that have named and defined themselves to my ancestors and are naming and defining themselves to me. My ancestors made my language from Nature. When I speak Yupiaq, I am thrust into the thought world of my ancestors.

Let me cite two examples of the elements of nature naming and defining themselves. The first is *anuqa*—the wind. It is telling its name and telling me what it is. It is the moving air which is needed for life. The other is *lagiq*—the Canadian goose. Its call is “lak, lak, lak,” giving its name to us and by its behavior telling us its habitat and its niche in the ecological system. “We are nature with a concept of nature.” Truly!

We, as Native people, have seen our languages become impoverished in the last several centuries. Many of us now speak our Native languages at the fourth and fifth grade levels (if such a grading system existed for us). We look at the wounds in our minds, and we see that the wounds also exist in Nature itself. “We know ourselves to be made from this earth,” and it makes us weep when we see the destruction and pollution around us. We realize that the relationship between ourselves and our places is a “unity of process” (Halifax, 1994, p. 1). We know that there cannot be a separation between the two.

As we lose our Native languages, more and more of us begin to take part in the misuse and abuse of Nature. We use English predominately in our everyday lives today. We don’t realize that English is a language contrived by the clever rational mind of the human being. The letters were derived by the human mind.

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The words are a product of a mindset that is given to individualism and materialism in a techno-mechanistic world. For us to think that we can reconstruct a new world by using English and its ways will not work. We need to return to a language that is given to health and healing. To try to make a paradigmatic shift by using the consciousness that constructed this modern world is bound for failure. Albert Einstein stated something to the effect that “you cannot make change in a system using the same consciousness used to construct it.” This should be very clear to us as a Native people.

In my Yupiaq ancestral world egalitarianism was practiced. In this form of governance, no creature, no plant, or no element becomes more important than another. All are equal. In my great State of Alaska, I can incontrovertibly state that racism is alive and well, and seems to be gaining strength. This is a circumstance which is unconscionable and reflects a very destructive and alienated stance in the larger society.

How is it that we “stabilize indigenous languages”? I think that we must once again speak the Native languages in the home a majority of the time. If we expect only the school to do it, it will surely fail. The school must become a reflection of a Native speaking family, home, and community. During the waking hours of the day, the children must hear the Native language being spoken—in the home and in school. The one-to-one and family conversation in the local language must be the standard of the day. The community, family, parents, and especially the children must begin to know place. How is this to be done? By the elders, parents, and community members speaking to one another in their own language and from the Yupiaq perspective.

To know self, one must learn of place. How does one learn of place? You begin by telling *quliraat*, the mythology, stories of distant time, which are powerful teaching tools still applicable to the present. You learn of the times when our ancestors were truly shape-shifters. It was easy to change from one form to another, and one was in control of self. Values and traditions are taught by these stories which are so ancient that we call them myths. From these you can tease out problem-solving tools and discern characteristics that make for a healthy and stable person living in a healthy and sustainable place. Told by an elder whose inflections, facial, and body language add to the words, these myths teach not only discipline for the members but more importantly self-discipline. We must re-inculcate self-discipline in our people as a matter of survival.

The *qalumcit* must be told, as they are the stories of us as a Native peoples. They tell us how we got to be at this place, our movements, problems encountered and resolved, years of plenty and scarcity, how to read the signs foretelling events, how we made sense of time and space, how trade and exchange of goods and services were accomplished, and how genetic diversity in the community was maintained.

The rituals and ceremonies must be relearned and practiced. The loss of these have developed schisms in our lives. We have become fractured people. These rituals represent revival, regeneration, and revitalization of our Native people.

The *yuyaryarat*—the art and skills of singing, dancing, and drumming—brings one to a spiritual level. Our word “*yuyaq*” means to emerge into a higher plain, a higher consciousness through concentration on the movements when singing and drumming.

We must also seek to relearn the Native names of places. It is incomplete knowledge for us to know the distance between two places in miles. It is also important to be able to guesstimate the time it will take to go from point A to point B and to know the history and place names between the two points. Then it becomes whole and useful knowledge.

At the 1999 World Indigenous Peoples Conference-Education (WIPCE) in Hilo, Hawai'i I was a participant in a planning meeting for revitalizing the Hawaiian language and culture. One interesting side trip was a visit to a Native Hawaiian charter school a few minutes from Hilo. I learned that the local Native people had begun landscaping unkempt property and refurbishing dilapidated buildings. This was initiated even before grant funds were made available for the project. This is true determination and motivation to reconstruct education which is meaningful and effective for Native people. When my hosts and I arrived, we were met by the students at the entrance to their school. They sang in their own language, and several students made welcoming remarks again in their own language. When protocol called for my response, I responded in my Yupiaq language. To see and hear the protocol that had been practiced for millenia by their people made my heart feel good. This happening after hundreds of years of barrage to change their language and culture gave me hope that we too can save our Alaska Native languages.

It was refreshing and energizing of spirit to look at the landscape and see the work that had been done. The best part was a plot of land where only the original fauna of Hawaii had been planted—a very ambitious endeavor which required research and feedback from the few elders still with them to determine which plants are native to the land. One building had photovoltaic panels on its roof to power some of their computers and filter pumps for their fish hatchery tanks. At another location, young men were preparing food in the traditional manner of heating rocks with the ingredients placed in baskets on top and covered over with banana leaves and canvas. The food was eaten prior to the graduation exercises.

If you find yourself in a situation where there is a minimal number of myths, stories, rituals, and ceremonies available, then I would suggest that you find sources that are well written and your elders deem to be true. Translate these into your own language with the help of elders and knowledgeable community members that may be familiar with the technical language contained in that treatise. When satisfied with the final translation, read it to the group for approval. Then it would behoove us to read it to the youngster who will become the historian of the community—the future keeper and practitioner of sacred knowledge.

To bring the above back into practice is to know who you are and where you are. This would contribute broadly to the important notion that it is alright to be

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Native, to speak the Native language, and to use Native tools and implements in play and work. After all, our technology was made by our ancestors to edify our Native worldviews. Please, what ever you do, do NOT give to the youngsters the idea that modern technology has an answer for everything. It does not. Use it merely as a tool, and use it minimally and judiciously. Remind the students, that technological tools are intensive in the use of natural resources and energy. To accept technology blindly is to negate the painful works to revitalize our Native languages and cultures. I wish you all the wisdom of the *Ellam Yua*, the Great Mystery in your continuing efforts. “We are Nature.” *Quyana*

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Meld k e'esto ge a'aliga

Gary Owens

The words in the title above translate, “Run, hide your children.” These words represent a time in American Indian history that occurred with my grandparents. Not too long ago, I might add. I refer to the time when government agents would come to the reservations and take our children away. We remember the stories, do we not? Children being hid in the woods, under houses, and in some instances in baskets and pottery jars. Education was the sole reason for this. The aim of the United States government was to take the “uncivilized” Indian and make him civilized. A major route through which this process of assimilation was accomplished was education in the government schools. There were other routes as well, including organized religion, treaties, confinement to specified land bases, and depletion of natural resources. All done to “kill the Indian and save the man.” Noble intentions, but at what price.

It is ironic that the American education system currently used on many reservations today that was created under the past policies of cultural assimilation by the federal government, the education system that provided indoctrination, is now becoming a major route in the restoration of the Native languages, languages so vital to the survival of Americans Indians. However, this new system can come under attack. Arizona voters passed Proposition 203 in 2000 allowing only English as the language of instruction in the public schools. What does this mean to the native language programs of the state? The new law is still being worked out in practice, but the Arizona attorney general stated that there will be no disruption of Native American language programs based upon the passage of this law.

The question that I brought to the 2001 Stabilizing Indigenous Languages conference is: “Can language learning breath outside the curriculum box?” Is it possible to take the indoctrination process (a process that can be argued as to whether it is valid to the Native way of instruction) and make it suitable for teaching the languages in the school? How about this question? By developing language curriculum and placing it amongst the subjects, such as math, reading, and social studies, does it become yet another subject that our children are not learning? I want you to think about that.

Here is the catch. There needs to be freedom to use the language *inside* the schools. ***Take it outside of that curriculum and set it free to run and scamper all over the place. Take it away from the lesson plans, the worksheets, and please...do not have the gall to test our children on what they know in regards to learning the language. Instead create a place where they can show you what they have learned.*** Create a language learning environment.

Wherever it is possible, in this institute of instruction where our children spend on an average 35 hours a week, create a place for the language to flourish. These are your children, and in some cases, these are your schools. Act like it. Use the language, and I don't mean that it has to go total immersion, use the language as a counterpart to English: how about dual-language instruction? Use

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it to take attendance, at lunchtime, in physical education. Use it for activities inside and outside the classroom. Where there is use of English, then use the Native language as well. We need to broaden our view of language learning. If there is a successful language program in the school, even with all of the indoctrination process going on, then it needs also to go home with the children as well. Expand your language learning to the community. Take that language learning environment and blanket the community. Go public with it. This will take effort. I will not kid you and paint a picture of people barely breaking a sweat and smiling all the time. Oh no!

This will take dedicated labor from committed people. Halfhearted attempts at this task? Don't bother, we don't have the time. To quote Lucille Watahomogie from the Hualapai Nation: "We are in trouble." We have had many different kinds of governmental programs piled upon us in the past two centuries and into the present. They have been used by strangers to our land, to define us an oppressed people. Add to this the fact that our involvement in the last century with government programs, universities, linguists, and anthropologists has been mostly based upon a different societal view of what we should be and who we are. And underneath it has been the lingering audacity that without them, without their help, we will fail

How dare they! **And**, to top it off, our own people have bought into this as well. We are not victims. We can and will no longer accept that role. We have done that for far too long. Thank goodness for our grandparents, great grandparents, and elders who refused and continue to refuse to accept the role of impoverished, illiterate people. The moment has come to focus our language revitalization and maintenance efforts in a much wider sense. Use the language in the communities; plan to use the language in the communities. Take it out for a walk when you go to the clinic or the store. Push your tribal councils for language use in tribal departments.

If you must have lessons in the schools, then send them home with the children so they can own it there. Use your imagination, draw from community resources. Again, we need to expand our language learning to all of the people in the communities, especially the children. And be aware that the catchy phrases and sound-bites that permeate the classroom may have come from a different societal view of life. Our language program was asked to translate a phrase "stepping stones to the future" for one of our kindergarten classes that was to be painted on their float in our community parade. The result sounded like we were going to use the children as rocks to step on and get to the future. How can you equate our little ones like that? We translated for them instead: "*Pi a:jik da a'aliga pi sha'i himdag*: Without the children, we have no future."

Remember that the education system is not the know-all, be-all, and end-all of language learning, revitalization, and maintenance. It's a tool. It **can** play an important part. However, if we just rely on schools, then after school, when the building is locked up, so is the language.

To quote Darryl Kipp, "***Just do it.***" And to quote my mother, Mrs. Christine Owens Sr., "***Never apologize or feel sorry for who you are.***"

Native Language Immersion

Jon Reyhner

Immersion teaching methods have shown a marked improvement over earlier language teaching approaches, such as the grammar translation audiolingual methods of the 1960s. The central characteristic of immersion is the teaching of language, content, and culture in combination without the use of the child's first language. Students are taught a second language they initially don't understand through the use of a variety of context clues provided by the teacher. Since immersion methods were first used in the 1960s to teach French to English speaking students in Quebec, they have become increasingly popular. Test scores show that immersion students can learn the same academic content as students in English-Only classrooms along with a second language without losing fluency in English (de Courcy, 2002; Johnson & Swain, 1997; Genesee et al., 1985; Genesee, 1987). Immersion students as they proceed together through the grades also develop a strong sense of camaraderie and often form a "values community" that reflects the positive aspects of the language and culture that they are learning.

Immersion language teachers provide ideally at least half-day (partial) immersion for students in the language they are targeted to learn and often students receive full-day (total) immersion. The less students are likely to be exposed to a new language they are learning outside of school, the more they need to experience it in school. Children will learn to speak a high prestige language that is omnipresent in their community and the media, such as English, even if it receives no support in the school, however they will need instruction to use it for academic tasks.

Total Physical Response

A popular approach to immersion for beginning language learners is TPR or Total Physical Response. The psychologist James J. Asher (2000) popularized TPR in the 1970s. TPR begins with "silent period" where learners respond physically to simple requests by the teacher who uses gestures to help get across to the students what the teacher wants them to do. The acting out of the requested behaviors helps students remember the meaning of the new phrases they are hearing. While students initially respond silently to their teacher's requests, after just a few lessons they are asking other students to perform actions, including recombining vocabulary that the teacher has been using and making requests that they have never heard before.

Asher (2000) describes step-by-step how to use TPR to help students learn another language without stress and includes a sequence of 53 sample lessons beginning with simple requests like "stand up," "walk," "jump," and so forth and ending with a skit involving students acting out a trip to the supermarket as they are given verbal instructions. Richard Littlebear (1992) found TPR an effective way to teach his Northern Cheyenne language, and Preston Thompson (2003) has also found it very effective in teaching his Ho Chunk language.

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One of the problems with TPR is getting past asking students to respond to simple “commands” found in Asher’s book *Learning Another Language Through Actions*. To help teachers with more advanced instruction, Ray and Seely (1997) have developed what they call TPR Storytelling (TPR-S) that involves students acting out stories with written scripts. Cantoni (1999, p. 54) has written about using TPR-S to teach American Indian languages. TPR-S lessons “utilize the vocabulary taught in the earlier [TPR] stage by incorporating it into stories that the learners hear, watch, act out, retell, revise, read, write, and rewrite.” Driskill (this volume) discusses using the Theatre of the Oppressed to promote Indigenous language learning.

Math and science are typical content subjects taught through immersion in the primary grades as they are best taught through the use of manipulatives and hands-on activities. In higher grades there is often less time spent in second language immersion and the subject taught is often tribal history and government because of the difficulty of obtaining appropriate curriculum for other subjects.

Indigenous mother tongue immersion and foreign or second language immersion differ in terms of the commitment to culturally transforming the student. Mother tongue immersion seeks to transmit the children’s Indigenous culture while foreign language immersion seeks to create an understanding and appreciation of the culture associated with the new language.

Maori and Hawaiian immersion programs

The Maori and Hawaiian mother-tongue language immersion programs are well developed. The Maori began with preschools, their “Language Nests” or *Kohanga Reo*, in 1982 taught by Maori speaking elders. The main features of the *Kohanga Reo* are that Maori is the sole language to be spoken and heard, no smoking is allowed in the environs, they are to be kept scrupulously clean in the interest of the health, and decisions are the prerogative of the parents who have children in the *Kohanga Reo* along with the care-givers (Te Kōhanga Reo, 2003).

Under pressure from parents who wanted their children’s Maori education continued in the public schools, the New Zealand government established Maori immersion elementary and secondary schools. Maori Language Commissioner Timoti Karetu was impressed by a visit to Navajo Community College, now Diné College, in 1976 and subsequently helped move his university to offer Maori immersion teacher training.

Learning, from the Maori example, the Hawaiian language immersion program began with family-based preschools in 1983 and in the public schools in 1987 after Hawai’i’s English-Only law for schools was changed. A parent described to me his involvement in his child’s *Punano Leo*, “This is a way of life ...you have to take it home.” He described how the Hawaiian immersion brings back the moral values of the culture and how the culture mends families. The English translation of the *Punana Leo* mission statement reads:

The Pūnana Leo Movement grew out of a dream that there be reestablished throughout Hawai'i the mana of a living Hawaiian language from the depth of our origins. The Pūnana Leo initiates, provides for and nurtures various Hawaiian Language environments, and we find our strength in our spirituality, love of our language, love of our people, love of our land, and love of knowledge. (Aha Pūnana Leo, 2003)

In 2003 there were twelve preschools and 23 public schools with Hawaiian immersion classes. The first immersion students graduated from high school in 1999, and the University of Hawai'i at Hilo has a Hawaiian immersion teacher-training program to staff new immersion schools (William Wilson, personal communication, July 31, 2003). An excellent videotape titled *E Ola Ka 'Olelo Hawai'i* (1997) is available in Hawaiian with English subtitles that describes the renaissance of the Hawaiian language. It tells the story of over a century of decline for the Hawaiian language and the revival of its use in the past two decades. Through interviews, archival footage, and visits to Hawaiian language immersion classrooms, it makes a powerful statement about the value of the Hawaiian language and culture for Native Hawaiians. It describes how Hawaiian language activists learned about Maori "language nest" immersion preschools, implemented them in Hawai'i, and then expanded Hawaiian language immersion instruction into the public schools of Hawai'i by getting state English-only laws changed. Indigenous mother tongue immersion is in its infancy in the mainland United States, relegated mainly to preschool and primary examples such as the Arapaho language immersion program on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming (Greymorning, 1997 & 1999).

Indigenous mother tongue immersion programs are voluntary and require parent involvement. In Hawai'i parents are required to help in the preschools eight hours per month and to take classes in Hawaiian so they can support the instruction given in the schools. A nonprofit corporation supports the preschools, provides post-secondary scholarships for the study of Hawaiian, and develops Hawaiian language curriculum and materials for use in the schools.

An example of a small experimental immersion school on the mainland is the Cut-Bank Language Immersion School that teaches the Blackfeet language in Montana. From his experiences, co-founder Darrell R. Kipp (2000) gives the following advice to people interested in revitalizing their languages:

- Rule 1: Never Ask Permission, Never Beg to Save the Language. Go ahead and get started, don't wait even five minutes. Don't wait for a grant....
- Rule 2: Don't Debate the Issues
- Rule 3: Be Very Action-Oriented: Just Act
- Rule 4: Show, Don't Tell. Don't talk about what you will do. Do it and show it.

Some immersion teachers are learning the language they are teaching as a second language (see Hinton, this volume), and their speaking ability can be

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criticized. One indigenous language teacher noted “I don’t speak like my grandmother, but I speak the language of my grandmother.” Another teacher commented that we need to “Get beyond the notion you can only be smart in English.”

The Natural Approach

The best way to acquire a second language is the same way children acquire a first language: Immerse students in a second language rich environment rather than the traditional teaching-learning situation. As Judith Lindfors states, “What’s good for the first-language learner is good for the second.” A well worked out approach to immersion education is Stephen Krashen and Tracy Terrell’s (1983) Natural Approach, which is based on four principles:

1. “Comprehension Precedes Production”
 - The teacher always uses the language he or she is teaching;
 - The lesson (what is talked about) is focused on a topic that the students are interested in; and
 - The teacher works continuously to help students understand using gestures, visuals, and real objects.
2. Students learn new languages in stages, beginning with a “silent period” where they just listen and then by starting to speak single words, then a few words, then phrases, and finally moving to sentences and complex discourse. Errors in grammar and pronunciation that do not interfere with understanding should not be corrected.
3. The objective of learning a language is to be able to carry out a conversation in that language. Lessons should center on an activity rather than a grammatical structure.
4. Classroom activities need to lessen student anxiety. They need to focus on topics of interest and relevancy to the students and “encourage them to express their ideas, opinions, desires, emotions, and feelings.” The teacher needs to create a warm, friendly, welcoming classroom to insure language learning. (Adapted from Reyhner, 1992, pp. 75-76)

While the Natural Approach focuses on getting students to the point where they can carry on a conversation in the language they are learning, teachers can focus on topics of interest such as hands-on science lessons and develop students’ academic as well as conversational language proficiency using immersion teaching methods. Whatever the method of language instruction, learning a language takes time. Leanne Hinton (1994) estimates it takes about 500 hours to achieve a basic conversational proficiency in a new language.

Cautions

It should be noted that while Jim Cummins, Stephen Krashen, and other prominent supporters of bilingual education strongly support teaching children their heritage languages, they also continue to emphasize the need to introduce

English early-on in bilingual programs in the United States. Cummins (2000) questions a “rigid” separation of languages in bilingual programs, “a near-exclusive emphasis” on the home language in the early grades, and the idea that literacy skills can transfer automatically from the home language to English (pp. 20-21). While immersion is a good teaching method, the idea that one should never speak English can be overdone. One cannot, for example, do an effective job of comparing and contrasting grammatical features of say Blackfeet and English in the language that students are just learning, and such an explanation might be very helpful for older students.

Cummins (2000) especially questions “delaying the instruction of English literacy for a considerable period” (p. 176). In regard to the well-known threshold and interdependency hypothesis he writes that “*Neither hypothesis says anything about the appropriate language to begin reading instruction within a bilingual program nor about when reading instruction in the majority language should be introduced*” (p. 176, emphasis in original). He writes,

I believe, and have strongly argued, that a bilingual program should be fully bilingual with a strong English language arts (reading and writing) program together with a strong L1 [first language]...language arts program (pp. 24-25, emphasis in original).

Cummins sees a special problem with delaying the introduction of English in Indigenous language programs because of the current lack of written literature for older students in many Indigenous languages.

Note: Information in this article is partly from a conference and workshop on Advancing Immersion Education sponsored by the National Foreign Language Center at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa in July 1998. For more information on immersion go to the Teaching Indigenous Languages web site at <http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/TIL.html>

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Assessing the Impact of Total Immersion on Cherokee Language Revitalization: A Culturally Responsive, Participatory Approach

Lizette Peter with Ella Christie, Marilyn Cochran, Dora Dunn, Lula Elk, Ed Fields, JoAnn Fields, Tracy Hirata-Edds, Anna Huckaby, Margaret Raymond, Deputy Chief Hastings Shade, Gloria Sly, George Wickliffe, Akira Yamamoto

Attempts to measure the effectiveness of language maintenance and revitalization efforts have been slow to follow the emergence of these programs, for a variety of reasons. On the one hand, the knowledge that the results can yield politically, socially, or economically significant consequences may steer groups away from any kind of systematic attempt at program evaluation. Or, there may be a general mistrust in the ability of formal measurements to convey all that can and needs to be said about the qualities of a given language revival program. On the other hand, communities that are successful in mobilizing the much needed resources to launch a program are sometimes less concerned with the end results than with the day to day implementation of their plan, which can often be challenging enough. To some, the fact that the program ever got off the ground in the first place may be enough evidence of success.

But, given this dearth of formal program evaluations, how are we to know if children are successfully learning heritage languages in school programs, immersion centers and camps, or language nests? And, how are we to know if revitalization efforts have resulted in an increase in the number of contexts in which the heritage language is used? In short, how are we to know if endangered languages have any hope of being transmitted to younger generations? In order to answer these questions, program objectives, processes, and outcomes *must* be assessed. But this does not mean that communities need to hire outside evaluation experts, spend enormous amounts of time and money on surveys and language test development, learn how to collect data and write statistical reports, or be subjected to evaluation procedures that focus on things deemed unimportant to the community, while neglecting to consider elements the community deems integral to their lives.

This paper illustrates how one group, the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, is exploring a new paradigm of evaluation that is responsive to the claims, concerns, and issues of the stakeholders involved. Known as Culturally Responsive Evaluation, this alternative conceived by the Initiative for Culturally Responsive Evaluation (ICRE) is more appropriate than conventional models for evaluating language revitalization efforts because it is respectful of the dignity, integrity, and privacy of the stakeholders in that it allows for their full participation, parity, and control. And, because the course of action is negotiated and honors the diversity of values and opinions among the stakeholders, individuals are more likely not only to have reason to support it, but to be satisfied with the outcome as well.

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The case of the Cherokee Nation

Currently, the Cherokee Nation in northeast Oklahoma enjoys strong tribal administrative support of programs designed to preserve and revive the Cherokee language, and about 25 beginning language classes have been implemented that serve approximately 400 community members. High school 'Cherokee as a Foreign Language' classes have been established, and have served over 300 students. Additionally, a Cherokee language curriculum has been developed and is constantly being updated to provide schools within the 14-county jurisdictional area materials to teach the Cherokee language to students. And most recently, the Cherokee Nation began work in earnest to plan and implement its very first full Cherokee language immersion preschool that opened on August 13, 2001.

To the Cherokee, language revitalization is an act of self-determination and of cultural and linguistic empowerment. By providing an opportunity for children to become bilingual in Cherokee and English, the Cherokee Nation is taking steps not only toward recognizing the basic human right of linguistic freedom, but acting on it as well. But the Cherokee realize that a truly empowering language revitalization program engenders participant engagement through both pedagogical *and* evaluative processes, and so any language program that promotes cultural empowerment must also include an equally empowering plan for assessment and evaluation. Hence, as part of their planning for a Cherokee language full-immersion preschool, the Cherokee Nation has also engaged participants in envisioning a culturally responsive model of assessment and evaluation. The final result of this ongoing process will be the emergence of a holistic evaluation/assessment instrument that is respectful of the dignity and integrity of all who have a stake in the results of such an inquiry.

The Immersion Team established to develop and carry out the goals and planning of the Preschool Immersion Center is comprised of a talented and caring group of individuals dedicated to the reversal of language loss among the Cherokee people. Under the leadership of Dr. Gloria Sly, the Interim Director of Language and Cultural Affairs for the Cherokee Nation, the Team has spent innumerable hours envisioning immersion, planning for the reality, and implementing that plan toward realistic and attainable goals. Team members from the Cherokee Nation include Deputy Chief Hastings Shade, Marilyn Cochran, Ed Fields, Anna Huckaby, George Wickcliffe, and teachers Ella Christie, Dora Dunn, Lula Elk, and JoAnn Fields. Several University of Kansas team members have also been involved in the program throughout its planning and first year of implementation. Lizette Peter, who holds a Ph.D. in education with an emphasis in second language learning and ethnolinguistics, serves as an evaluation facilitator by guiding the participants of the project through the evaluation model we have already begun to develop. Tracy Hirata-Edds, a doctoral student in child language acquisition, is assisting with the language assessment component, working with the team to develop oral assessment tools in English and in Cherokee that are responsive to the needs of the participants of the Preschool Immersion Center. And Akira Yamamoto, professor of linguistics and anthropology, continues to provide his expertise and support in all aspects of the program.

As partners in the Immersion Team, the University of Kansas members are committed to maintaining the integrity of a collaborative partnership with the Cherokee Nation. This commitment means that while their university affiliation obliges them to engage in scholarly work, sensitivity toward their Cherokee partners' wishes and needs is indeed a priority, and so any scholarly work resulting from the project must meet with the approval of all the members of the team. The evaluation model that emerges from the work of the Immersion Team by its very nature ensures that no one person's subjective constructions of the Pre-school Immersion Program become the sole source of findings or the single point of view reflected in the final reporting. They have strived for a *joint* construction that includes as many viewpoints as possible in the construction of evaluation tools, in the collection of data, and in member checks that allow for individual participants to judge the overall adequacy of the information collected.

The framework of culturally responsive evaluation

Culturally Responsive Evaluation has its roots in critical theory, naturalistic inquiry, anthropology, ethnolinguistics, bilingual advocacy, and multicultural education. It challenges more 'conventional' types of evaluation characterized by an over-dependence on formal quantitative measurement, a dyadic separation between the researcher/evaluator and the subject of evaluation, a preoccupation with "value-free" objectivity, and the underlying belief in ability to tease-out "truth." Proponents of a culturally responsive paradigm view this conventional approach to evaluation and research as inherently reductionist, and, as a result, coercive in its practical implications. Their search is for a new paradigm of research and evaluation, one with participatory and emancipatory goals in which the evaluator moves from the role of controller to that of collaborator.

A substantial literature exists in the educational and social sciences offering a critique of conventional modes of research, evaluation, and assessment in both theory and practice. Since its early conception with Jürgen Habermas (1968, 1984) and the Frankfurt School and furthered by the work of prominent thinkers representing a wide range of disciplines, such as Michel Foucault (1972, 1969), Paulo Freire (1971), Stephen Jay Gould (1996), and Elliot Eisner (1979), this criticism shares a common conviction that the scientific paradigm is ill-equipped as a model to adequately describe the complexities of human nature. The more favored alternatives are models such as Culturally Responsive Evaluation that fully consider and take advantage of the local constructions of reality in their planning and implementation. Lincoln and Guba, for example, advocate what they call "Fourth Generation Evaluation," an approach that has emerged as an alternative to the positivist paradigm with consequences "startlingly different from those we have come to expect from scientific inquiry" (1989, p. 44).

Multicultural literature, especially that which pertains to Native Americans, provides another source of criticism in response to years of "top-down" approaches designed to resolve so-called Native issues. Dementi-Leonard and Gilmore (1999), as a case in point, describe the plight of rural Native Alaskans

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who only recently have begun to undo years of top-down mandates that have left them no better off than they were prior to any intervention. Through grassroots community initiative and autonomy, however, the Athabascan language preservation project in Western Interior Alaska has met with much success in that the project has “recognized the significance of native ownership and control and facilitated a process that would preserve the integrity of that principle” (1999, p. 44). Certainly, this grassroots approach is a new experience for many communities more accustomed to the top-down efforts of non-natives and outsiders. But once community members overcome their initial frustration of chipping away at decades of hegemonic practices, participants involved in indigenous language revitalization are beginning to see that community-led language and cultural revitalization activities have the ability to renew a sense of pride, cultural identity, and self-determination.

The model being implemented by the Cherokee Nation starts from these premises and engages in the paradigm search by employing as its conceptual framework a “constructivist” method with a responsive focus that, in the words of Lincoln and Guba,

recognizes the constructed nature of findings, that takes different values and different contexts (physical, psychological, social, and cultural) into account, that empowers and enfranchises, that fuses the act of evaluation and its follow-up activities into one indistinguishable whole, and that is fully participative in that it extends both political and conceptual parity to all stakeholders. (1989, p. 11)

Toward these ends, the University of Kansas members who have joined the Cherokee Cultural Resource Center Staff and immersion preschool teachers to form the “Immersion Team” are “subjective partners” in the creation of a consensual construction among stakeholders.

Given the framework outlined above, the Cherokee Immersion Team has begun to see evaluation in a new light. Rather than think of evaluation in negative terms, as something that is done to us for the sake of exposing weaknesses, the Team finds that it is more productive to use evaluation as a way to give “value” to (or, if there were the word, to *envalue*) whatever it is that is observed—both positive and negative—about the Preschool Immersion Program. In this approach, evaluation is something not done to them, but rather *by* them, *with* them, and *for* them. Such a culturally responsive, participatory model of evaluation has the following characteristics:

- 1. It is ongoing.** It starts at the beginning, from the initial planning, and continues daily until the end of the program year or cycle.
- 2. It takes many forms.** Evaluation tools might be interviews, discussions, observations, surveys, self-reflections in daily journals, progress assessments, or any combination of these things.

3. **It is inclusive.** It includes the perspectives of all the *stakeholders*, meaning anyone who has something to be gained by the program.
4. **It is culturally responsive.** It is sensitive to the values and traditions of the Cherokee People because it originates from the reflections, observations, and perspectives of those who are most intimately involved in the process. It responds, therefore, to their needs, issues, and concerns—not to those of someone from outside the group of stakeholders.
5. **It is useful.** Even things that do not work well are valued because of the ability to learn from mistakes and make them right. Only by honestly reflecting on perceived problems individually and as a group can those problems be remedied to build a stronger foundation for the future.
6. **It is thorough.** It takes into account the *whole* picture. Every aspect of the program, from the moment of conception to the end of the year, presents at least one indicator of success that needs to be observed, explored, and given value to.

The culturally responsive evaluation process

The Cherokee Immersion Team has been engaged in an evaluation process that combines elements from the “Fourth Generation Evaluation” model developed by Yvonne Lincoln and Egon Guba (1989) and “Empowerment Evaluation” techniques developed by David Fetterman (2001). What makes the design truly unique, however, is that it has been shaped by the Cherokee themselves, and christened *I-di-go-li-ya-he Ni-da-duh-na-hu-i*, or “Let’s take a look at what we are doing.” The steps that the Immersion Team has developed are as follows:

1. **Identify the stakeholders.** Stakeholders are anyone who has either something to gain or to lose as a result of the program, and whose perspectives must therefore be taken into consideration. The premise taken in a culturally responsive approach is that evaluation can never be conducted by one person working in isolation. Through their involvement in the evaluation process, stakeholders are empowered and are more likely to respond positively to the outcomes.
2. **Develop a mission, vision, or unifying purpose.** This entails involving an identified cross-section of the stakeholders in the generation of key phrases that capture the vision or mission of the program. It is likely that, as the progress is made, the mission will evolve to better reflect the reality of the situation. This is a natural and necessary part of the process, and so participants should be encouraged to refer to the mission regularly and assess its merits.
3. **Take stock.** This involves generating a list of the key activities that the stakeholders see as crucial to the functioning of the program. Ideally, the result will be a comprehensive list that can be organized into specific categories and used as the basis for future discussions about what is and is not working. The more comprehensive the list, the more likely the source of problems can be identified, and targeted for improvement.

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- 4. Develop stakeholder perspectives.** At this stage, a cross-section of the stakeholders is interviewed to get their impressions on the key activities that were listed in step 3, above. In a culturally responsive approach, the interviewer strives to avoid tainting the interview process with his or her own biases. As such, interviews should be as loosely structured as appropriate so that the individual stakeholder has more control over the topics and issues discussed, allowing for his or her true feelings to come through. At the end of the interview, the notes are carefully checked with the interviewee for accuracy, and as a means to get further elaboration on the issues that he or she raised.
- 5. Check and enlarge stakeholder perspectives.** The purpose of this stage is to introduce other information that could raise the stakeholders' constructions to a higher level. That information might include notes made during observations of program activities, issues, perspectives, and concerns raised during the interviews, professional literature regarding second language acquisition and the like, results of language proficiency screening, and new ideas generated from visits made to other Native American language immersion sites.
- 6. Negotiate.** This is a crucial part of the empowerment process as it allows for open discussion in the spirit of mutual empowerment, leading to a final product that all can agree represents a valid description and analysis of the situation. With an identified cross-section of stakeholders together in one room, the perspectives generated in steps 4 and 5 are brought to the table for the development of a consensus on the key aspects listed in step 3. While this stage is best accomplished in a forum with a cross-section of the stakeholders present, care must be taken to ensure anonymity of participants who may have shared their ideas and concerns during the interview stage. The goal is for a productive sharing of ideas that fosters the broadening of perspectives, not to pit one idea against another and alienate individuals who may see things differently.
- 7. Report.** Once a joint perspective is ratified in step 6, the group must decide on a mode of reporting that will best reflect the outcome of the evaluation while meeting any program requirements (such as dictated by the primary funding and supporting agency, for example, or themselves, if it is their own initiative). While one person may be designated with the job of writing the report, each member checks and ratifies it when it meets their satisfaction.
- 8. Plan for the future.** It is not enough to come to a consensus on the strengths and weaknesses of a language revitalization program; there must also be a realistic plan for improvement before the next cycle begins. At this stage, goals may be refined that take into consideration the conditions, motivation, resources, and dynamics of the program as presented in the report. Participants must also select and develop strategies to accomplish these newly set goals.
- 9. Share the results with others.** The Indigenous Languages Institute (ILI) formed in 1997 has identified as one of its major tasks the gathering of information on strategies that work and on challenges in establishing an effective

community language program (Linn et al., 2000). Without sufficient information on what is being done by various communities to revitalize their languages and whether they have met with success in their efforts or not, new programs being launched in other parts of the country, in essence, must reinvent the wheel.

Sources of documentation

The best illustration of the process described above comes from the Cherokee initiative, exemplified in the activities the Cherokee Immersion Team has included as part of the planning and implementation of their total immersion preschool (see Peter 2003 for a detailed description). During the eight months of planning time prior to the opening of the Immersion Preschool, the Immersion Team met regularly to engage in discussions about language learning, participate in language immersion demonstrations, practice introducing concepts through immersion techniques, and develop lessons and materials suitable for three-year old learners. In addition, the Team began giving shape and value to their efforts through a culturally responsive evaluation process that included the documentation of perceptions, issues, and concerns at the onset.

The team began with an “Envisioning Immersion” exercise that challenged them to create the ideal Cherokee Language immersion preschool, describing the extent of their imaginations without constraints of any kind. The result was a six-page document (included at the end of this article) that has since served as the group’s unifying purpose, to which it refers regularly as the “reality” of the preschool evolves. At a later meeting, the Immersion Team identified the stakeholders in the immersion preschool project to include parents, teachers, students, Immersion Team members, and the Cherokee Nation community. Since the Team feels that these are people who have some connection to the project, we agreed it will be important to document their perspectives as the first year of the project progresses. The Team also spent a large part of one afternoon listing all the elements we found key to the workings of the Immersion Preschool. The extensive list they generated reflects the wide range of elements that have an impact on the success of the overall program, and that need to be considered as part of an ongoing program evaluation. They call these aspects “indicators of success” because the overall success of the Immersion Preschool depends on the strength of each of its integral parts. The indicators generated comprise the following categories:

Planning:

- how much progress is made
- how much learning takes place
- how sufficient it is
- how well it prepares us for the next step
- how inclusive it is
- how well it incorporates everyone’s point of view

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Training of Teachers:

- how well it meets the teachers' expectations
- how satisfied the teachers are with it
- how well it prepares the teachers to meet the challenges of the classroom
- how consistent it is
- how well it is attended
- how timely it is

Immersion Team

- how much input is given according to individual styles
- how satisfied they are with the progress of the program in meeting the goals they set
- how involved they are according to their individual capabilities
- how well they endorse the program
- how well they cooperate and use teamwork to get tasks completed

Immersion Preschool Teachers

- how much enthusiasm and pride they have in their work
- how dedicated they are to the program
- how patient they are with the children and themselves
- how much they use Cherokee both in and out of the classroom
- how much they feel supported and assisted by the immersion team, the parents, and the Cherokee Nation
- how satisfied they are with: materials, classroom environment, progress of their students, their own teaching abilities, the hours of work they put in every day, the respect they get from others for the special work that they do, their emotional state, the training they receive, and the expectations set for them and their students

Caretakers/Parents

- how satisfied they are with their child's development
- how involved they are in their child's learning, both in the classroom and at home
- how enthusiastic they are in endorsing the program
- how satisfied they are with the quality and quantity of orientation they were provided
- how satisfied they are with the communication they receive from their child's teachers about upcoming events
- how much they learn about Cherokee language and culture
- how much they participate in the center activities
- how much they participate in children's language and culture development outside the center

Children

- how well they can understand and converse with others in Cherokee
- how well they identify with Cherokee culture
- how much their English continues to develop outside of the classroom as their bilingual skills grow
- how well they develop: social skills, motor skills, cognition, emotion

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Parent Language Teachers (those who work with parents on Cherokee language learning)

- how much progress parents make in Cherokee as a result of their teaching
- how much enthusiasm and pride they have in their work
- how dedicated they are to the program
- how patient they are with their students and themselves
- how much they use Cherokee both in and out of the classroom
- how much they feel supported and assisted by the immersion team, the parents, and the Cherokee Nation
- how satisfied they are with: materials, classroom environment, progress of their students, their own teaching abilities, the hours of work they put in every day, the respect they get from others for the special work that they do, their emotional state, the training they receive, the expectations set for them and their students

The Cherokee Nation (CN)

- how satisfied CN officials and community members are with the program processes and results
- how much interest CN officials and community members have in the success of the program
- how much they demonstrate interest in and knowledge of the state of the Cherokee language and the need for language revitalization efforts
- how much support they provide the language immersion team in their efforts

Places for Language

- how the contexts for language use outside of the classroom expand

The Center

- how well organized it is
- how suitable it is for our needs in terms of space, conditions, structure, etc.

The Evaluation Process Itself

- how effective it is in identifying strengths and weaknesses in the program and the degree to which it is ongoing, variable, inclusive, culturally responsive, useful, **and** thorough.

Collecting the perspectives of stakeholders (Stage 4) on each of the above indicators throughout the course of the Immersion Preschool's first year required consistent and continuous documentation, observation, discussion, and self-reflection, as well as a considerable commitment on the part of the Immersion Team to the goals of the program. Toward these ends, the Team took part in several loosely structured "surveys," and one more formal questionnaire during the planning stage of the program. These activities were intended to allow Team members to express their concerns in both open-forum and anonymous formats, a triangulation of methods designed to arouse different kinds of responses.

For example, after one 3-day work session, Team members were asked to respond anonymously to a written survey that included such questions as: "What do you see as potential challenges to implementing the immersion plan that we

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have all developed so far?” and “What do you think needs to happen between now and August 13th to get ready for the first day of class?” The written format gave the members the opportunity to have time to reflect on their own perspectives, without being biased by other Team members’ opinions. And, the anonymity of the exercise allowed for more honest and heartfelt responses than we may have otherwise obtained.

In contrast, at a much later work session, Team members were asked to rate, on a scale from 1 to 10, their feelings about questions regarding their preparedness for the opening day of the center, such as: “How prepared are we to teach all in Cherokee?” “How prepared are we to develop appropriate materials?” “How prepared are we to make the preschool fun and engaging?” “How prepared are we to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the ongoing program?” Conducted in an open forum, this exercise instilled a great deal of enthusiasm in the group as each team member reported that they felt overwhelmingly confident on every one of the indicators.

The Immersion Team made even further progress in developing stakeholder perspectives by asking a cross-section of stakeholders to attend Friday morning planning meetings (the Immersion Preschool operates Monday-Thursday, giving Friday for reflection and planning). Using the key indicators as a point of departure, they use this valuable time together to view videotapes made during the week of the classroom activities and share experiences with immersion techniques and observations of the children.

At the time of this writing, then, the Cherokee Immersion Team finds itself well into Stage Four of its evaluation process. They will be in this stage for a couple of months, as new experiences emerge and their discussion evolves. Collaboration on an ongoing evaluation of the Immersion Preschool has entailed opportunities for the KU members to join the Cherokee team members in the construction and administering of evaluation tools such as interviews, surveys, questionnaires, and assessments. KU members are responsible for entering the data, and providing written updates on the results to all team members for their perusal and approval. But in the end, the entire Team will collaborate on the final report, which will be an extensive description of every aspect of the program from the perspectives of all the stakeholders. All Team members will have joint ownership of the data collected and the reports that are written. The ultimate goal will be the development of an evaluation tool uniquely suited to the needs of the Cherokee Nation, one that can be replicated for a variety of contexts within their language revitalization projects. And, in the final stage, the hope is that the Cherokee Nation’s experience with their full Immersion Preschool will be widely shared with other Native communities seeking to revitalize their languages, as a model to be adapted to other equally unique situations.

Conclusion

Culturally Responsive Evaluation is an open-ended, inductive approach in which the impact of the program being evaluated is discovered empirically rather than mechanistically. The Cherokee Immersion Team members believe that such

an approach, more than its conventional counterpart, is appropriate for both evaluating and enhancing the Cherokee Immersion Preschool Center, and that it meets the Initiative for Culturally Responsive Evaluation's call for evaluators to,

recognize the legitimacy of diverse cultural patterns and perspectives...develop awareness of their own values and perspectives, accept children's culturally conditioned behavior without evaluating it as wrong, and develop a sense of security about evaluation with ethnically diverse populations. (Pewewardy 1997, p. 5)

From the outset, the Cherokee Immersion Team has recognized and taken advantage of the important role of community initiative, autonomy and ownership in the success of language preservation projects, and has facilitated a process that would preserve the integrity of that principle. Throughout the rest of the inaugural year, the Immersion Team will continue to refine this evaluation tool, making it not only an efficient and effective way to evaluate all future language revitalization activities, but one that is uniquely Cherokee as well.

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Appendix

Envisioning Immersion Planning Workshop

The ultimate goal of the Center is for the children to acquire the Cherokee language in such a way that it will become an integral part of their lives and their knowledge about the world around them. The Center will have seventeen 3-year-old children as its first students with four immersion teachers (one lead teacher and three assistants). The Center will be located in one of the rooms at the present CDC/Headstart Center.

The scope of the Cherokee First Immersion Center has been further refined. The goal of the Center is to teach the Cherokee Language by doing things with the children in the language so that they can interact with people around them in Cherokee. The children will also be able to recognize the Cherokee Syllabary.

Since the Center is the place for Cherokee, it will integrate the traditional and contemporary cultures so that children will be full-fledged Cherokee. The first thing we will prepare for children is to identify who may have Cherokee names and who may not. We will find out the appropriate way to find names for those who do not have one, who and how we give new Cherokee names. For those who already have Cherokee names, we should find a way to incorporate their names in this “naming ceremony.” This should be the official and exciting way of opening the Center each year! **AND we will do this in all Cherokee in the Cherokee way!** We need to think of other ceremonial occasions for the Center. It is always good to have several of these occasions to invite caretakers, tribal leaders, teachers from the Preschool Complex, the tribal people, and all kinds of people.

In order to achieve these goals, the Center will have the following resources:

I. Equipped classroom with:

- one large room with a large TV screen, video player, tape recorder, computer with internet connection, screen, slide projector, computer projector, a miniature stage (setting up activity centers)
- each center will be equipped with toys, books, blocks, etc.
- one section with tables and chairs
- one section carpeted for sitting around (different colors, different patterns, seasonally changed)
- one section traditional house style with traditional items (this is a possible place for napping)
- one section for changing diapers (?), clothes (several changes for each child): this section should have towels, soaps, first-aid kits, shelves and drawers)
- one cupboard for cups, bottles, napkins, spoons, forks, etc.
- one section (partitioned?) for teachers to rest and prepare: computer, internet connection, telephone, copying machine, slide projector, video player, camcorder,

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- low sinks
- toilets for children to be able to use by themselves

Which of these elements is unrealistic? How can it be modified to be more realistic?

II. Budget

The budget needs to be based on local needs and resources.

Which of elements are unrealistic? How can it be modified to be more realistic?

III. Planning

Planning must continue based on evaluation of what has been implemented and how effective it has been. This entails:

- planning: with the Resource Center staff, Immersion Team, teachers, and, later, children’s care takers
- plans must be shaped so that the Resource Center staff and teachers can actually carry out their parts
- in this process at all levels, evaluation must be on-going [evaluation procedure and instrument must be developed—this will be a part of the May Seminar. See below for “evaluation”]

Which of these elements is unrealistic? How can it be modified to be more realistic?

IV. Curriculum

A. Goals: Speaking/Recognition of Syllabary: The students will be able to communicate with teachers, classmates, and other persons in Cherokee. This means that they will be able to perform the following acts:

1. Naming: orally identify the following. The range of vocabulary and expressions need to be identified. These should not be a simple word list. They must be presented in a context in which children feel comfortable (See VI below): clothes, shapes, size, relatives, body parts, animals, numbers, colors, transportation, classroom objects, food and drink, and bathroom and personal hygiene
2. Expressing Needs: Need to think of what language is needed here and produce creative materials.
 - a. psychological conditions: feelings
 - b. physical and health conditions: sick, pain, hot, cold, etc.
3. Conversation/Interaction: children. What are the routine expressions that should be used in classrooms and playground? “Good morning,” “My, you look pretty this morning,” “Are you OK?,” “Good,” “Beautiful,” “Nice,” “What’s the matter?,” “Where does it hurt?,” “Let’s go outside,”

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“Nap time,” “Snack time,” etc. This includes asking questions, request/response, negotiation & sharing, greeting & leave taking, following directions, personal hygiene, and turn taking

B. Evaluation: Evaluation is an integral part of planning, modifying, expanding, and any changes that may be made. It is also important to show the effectiveness of the Center to parents, caretakers, tribal administrators, and to the people in general. Evaluation should extend to the overall program, curriculum, materials, language, methods, and parents’ and caretakers participation.

Which of these elements is unrealistic? How can it be modified to be more realistic?

V. Language environment: When the caretakers come to the Center, one step inside the Center,

A. No English!!! (This is perhaps one of the most difficult tasks for teachers, although it sounds simple enough. In order to show that this can be done, the Cultural Resource staff need to “speak Cherokee” at their work place, yes, that is where things begin! See E below.). Cherokee needs to be spoken between teachers, between teachers and children, between teachers and visitors, between children and visitors, between teachers, students, and any other staff, between children

B. Learning Centers: Need to prepare the place and the environment for these centers. (See above #1)

C. Abundant Resources

1. Materials: learners need to be surrounded by “good” materials. The Resource staff need to be producing as many of the following as possible. Remember that these resources derive from the curriculum and lessons. Resources should include books, visuals, tapes, multimedia, realia, and things from the environment.
2. Human resources: the Cultural Resource Staff and the Immersion Team, all of whom will be participating in the preparation of curriculum, activity plans, materials development, evaluation of the program and of the language development, and training of teachers (and themselves). **There needs to be some formal plan for the smooth working and mutually supporting relationship between teachers, the staff, and the immersion team.**

D. Caretakers need to be a part of the Center activities. They need to continue the language at home. **Remember that this will depend on the curriculum and the activity plan for each week.** There need to be weekly meetings, notes home, audio taped recordings of lesson, and learners of the language

E. Opportunities to Use Cherokee: **The staff and teachers need to demonstrate that Cherokee first is the norm at work place. Can we find any other place for Cherokee? If not, where and how can we create one?**

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F. Beyond the Classroom:

1. read and practice the language materials (the staff, teachers, and children themselves need to be producing language materials to take home)
2. in the community (**field trips**), including visits with elders, and trips to dances & cultural events.

Which of these elements is unrealistic? How can it be modified to be more realistic?

VI. Children: They are unique with a variety of learning styles and learn best through:

A. Games & play: including use of manipulatives, pretend play, and traditional games

B. Storytelling/music: including videos, dramatization, puppets, flannel board, oral stories, and stories through music.

C. Hands-On Activities: including arts & crafts, sand box, water table, and playdough.

D. Physical activity: including dance, running, tricycle riding, and exercise.

Thus, the team, staff, and teachers need to incorporate as many of the above as possible in language development activities.

Which of these elements is unrealistic? How can it be modified to be more realistic?

VII. Teachers, the Cultural Resource Department Staff, and the Immersion Team

A. Teachers:

1. characteristics: nurturing, caring, enthusiastic, dedicated, willing to try new things, committed to Cherokee language maintenance
2. fluent speaker of Cherokee (required)
3. literate in Cherokee (preferred)
4. certified in Cherokee (preferred)
5. CDA (required)

B. The Staff and the Immersion Team:

We need to be doing continuous evaluation, re-examining the effectiveness of the program, modifying it (program itself, curriculum, lesson plans, activity plans, materials, setting, etc.), and re-evaluating them. **This process itself will be the on-going mutual training of the teachers, the staff, and the immersion team.**

1. May training seminar for the Cultural Resource staff and the immersion team (about two and a half days). The lead teacher will be identified by then and s/he will be a part of the training seminar. The result of this should be a preparation for another training by the staff and the immersion team for the remaining teachers (3 others) — by doing this, we hope

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that it will continue to train the staff and the immersion team as well.

2. The staff and the team will continue to develop the curriculum, lesson/activity plans, teaching materials, and teaching methods and techniques.
3. June training seminar (before the summer camp). By then all teachers will be identified and the training seminar will be planned for at least a few days—ideally week-long. This is where the curriculum and activity plans for the summer camp should be completed (especially for K-2). The curriculum and activity plans should be an expanded version of a segment of the Center curriculum.
4. Teachers (the staff and the team) should be able to participate in the summer camp and experiment with the curriculum, activity plans, materials, and teaching methods and techniques.
5. Post-summer camp seminar must be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan. Based on the experience, refine the curriculum, activity plans, materials, and teaching methods and techniques.
6. By the end of July, complete at least the general layout of the curriculum (what will be taught when and how), detailed curriculum for at least two (2) months, detailed activity plans, notes (and materials) to caretakers, evaluation instruments and procedures, etc. [This is in addition to the physical settings of the Center.] Teachers and the staff should feel comfortable speaking only in Cherokee at their work places!
7. Perhaps, the staff should be prepared to step in when a teacher becomes sick or absent due to some emergency business.

Which of these elements is unrealistic? How can it be modified to be more realistic?

Statements made by representatives of the most endangered languages at the 1994 Native American Language Issues (NALI) conference held in Glorieta, New Mexico.

Cry those tears of shame out. You have no time to be ashamed, wait or avoid it. You need to go forward and speak. Empowered to become our own experts to learn our language. We must become responsible, No linguist, no universities, no language policies will give your language back. It's up to us.

—Nancy Richardson, Aruk

It's sad to be the last speaker of your language. Please, turn back to your own and learn your language so you won't be alone like me. Go to the young people. Let go of the hate in your hearts. Love and respect yourselves first. Elders please give them courage and they will never be alone. Help our people to understand their identity. We need to publish materials for our people to educate the white people to us and for indigenous people.

—Mary Smith, last speaker of Eyak

Situational Navajo: A School-Based, Verb-Centered Way of Teaching Navajo

Wayne Holm, Irene Silentman, Laura Wallace

Those who work in Indian-controlled school programs have had to learn that, in talking to educators in other programs, what we see as a ‘solution’ in our situation may well be seen as a ‘disaster’ in someone else’s situation. We have had to learn not to tell others ‘the’ way—our way—to do things. Instead, we begin by explaining our situation in some detail. We explain why we do what we do. We talk about our successes and failures to date; we may talk about our residual problems. But we leave it to our listeners to decide how their situation is similar to (and different from) ours—and what parts of our program they may decide to try or reject.

This is also true of Native-language immersion programs. What works in one situation may or may not work in others. A native-language immersion program must come to terms with, among other things, the structure of the language they are trying to teach. Navajo is very much a verb-centered language. Navajo verbs are intricately complex. But they are absolutely necessary. We have struggled to find ways to make Navajo verbs accessible to non- or limited-Navajo-speaking students. Our approach may or may not be useful to those who are trying to teach other languages. Their program must give their children access to the crucial features of their languages.

Two Demonstrations

We realized only after submitting this paper for publication that it is probably necessary to give readers some sort of ‘feel’ for what we’re talking about. In oral presentations, we have often prefaced the longer expository portions of this paper with two brief demonstrations.

A noun-based calendar lesson

In the first demonstration, Laura usually takes a small group of adults from the audience to act as students (These may or may not be Navajo-speakers; she has done this both ways). She brings them in close to her to teach what we have come to call “the calendar lesson.” Using a mockup of an ‘enriched’ calendar, she leads them through the months of the year, the days of the week, and the numbers of the dates. The ‘children’ respond energetically and in chorus. They may go on to colors, directions, shapes, and the like. And, if they are Navajo-speakers, she may take them on to clothing, body-parts, age/gender terms; she may take them on to kinship terms and Navajo place names.

The ‘students’ usually respond well. They are ‘interested.’ They respond readily—and in chorus. They are getting feedback that tells them they are doing well. At the end of this lesson, we usually ask the audience what they thought of

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this lesson. Some give cautious approval. Some are quite impressed. Some—as at Bozeman—tell us quite candidly that this was not a very good lesson. And if they don't tell us, we tell them: this was intended to demonstrate a 'bad' lesson. Laura is a good teacher; she can make even a bad lesson look good. But this lesson didn't give children any real ability to **communicate**. We gave them very very limited ability to communicate *their* needs or reactions to others. We only gave them some ability to label (with nouns) and maybe to describe (with neuter verbs). The reason that even non-speakers do as well as they often do with this lesson is because, for them, they are basically reading text—even if they don't understand what they are saying.

A verb-based lesson

In the second demonstration, Irene also takes a small group of adults to act as 'student-learners.' Here it's better if most in this group are non-Navajo-speakers. She teaches a very small portion of the Navajo 'handling verb' system. (In Navajo, there is no generic verb for 'to give.' In asking that someone transfer (an) object(s) to you, you are forced to use one of perhaps a dozen verb stems that have to do with the shape of the object: small-bulky, thin-rigid, flat-flexible, open-contained, etc.

In Irene's lesson, she might start with two classroom objects. Say a pencil and a sheet of paper. These require the slender-rigid and flat-flexible stems. She might lead students to say the equivalent of '(object) to-me you-give' with the two stems. If they do well, she might lead them to the reciprocal '(object) to-you I-give.' We might end by having each student both request the two objects in turn and also give the objects requested by another student to that student while saying that s/he is doing so (The names of the objects are not necessarily important. The Navajo names of a number of common classroom objects are relatively complex nominalized verb-phrases—descriptions. We can pronominalize them or we can say them in English. The important thing is that the children begin to respond to the stems: to 'see' or 'feel' the shape of the action being talked about).

Unlike the earlier lesson, this is not necessarily a 'fun' or an 'easy' lesson. By lesson's end, each student is expected to 'perform his/her competence.' At the end of a 'good' lesson with a 'good' group, the students may have learned only four short verb-sentences: two commands and two action-related responses. If they were non-Navajo-speakers, they still have had to work hard to do so. Their command of these four verb-sentences is still shaky.

But, when we ask the participants for their reactions to *this* lesson, most respond that they feel that they have actually acquired some small ability to communicate. And they see that, if this were kept manageable and they felt supported by the teacher, they could continue to build on this in the days to come. It is this satisfaction of self-perceived mastery that is so often overlooked as a powerful motivator in second language learning. This, then, is the experiential background with which we hope you will approach the expository portion of this paper that follows.

Where We Are At

Given the declining proportion of students now entering school with some ability to talk Navajo, it appears to us that *only* immersion-type programs have any hope of enabling these students to acquire enough Navajo to join the adult Navajo language-world. And, given the growing demands of state “standards,” it appears that such programs are going to have to concentrate heavily on pre-school, kindergarten, and maybe the first grade. What we are calling here “situational Navajo” might be the core of Navajo Language programs at those levels.

In the end, it’s a question of what we really want for our children. If all we want for our children is to ‘appreciate’ (the relative difficulty of?) Navajo or to ‘know a few phrases’ in Navajo, then any Navajo-as-a-Second-Language program will probably do. But if we are serious about having our children learn to actually communicate in Navajo, then nothing short of full immersion seems likely to succeed. Some suggestions to help teachers to “stay in Navajo” and provide an immersion experience for their students are given in Appendix A.

In an immersion program, we attempt to recreate, for a given length of time and in a school setting, the situation in which their Navajo Language teachers acquired Navajo as their first language. In that situation, as children, they needed Navajo to communicate with those they lived among and loved.

We cannot recreate that situation in full. Most of our students already have a language—English. These students are already able to communicate in that language. We can recreate only *part* of that situation by **creating a situation in which the students need Navajo to communicate**. As Joshua Fishman told us repeatedly in his oral presentations here on Navajo, if we want our children to become able to communicate *naturally* in Navajo, we are going to have to do some *unnatural* things—in order to make up for lost time in radically different circumstances.

There are those who say that having students go to school all in Navajo (at least in the lowest grades) is to simply reverse the situation in which their monolingual Navajo parents/grandparents were forced to go to school in English only. But it is not that simple. In that earlier situation, in which Navajo students went to school in English only, students and teachers could barely understand one another: few students began with any English and few teachers knew any Navajo. Students were able to communicate with their teachers only to the extent that they had learned the English needed to do so. That was ‘submersion’; it was sink or swim. And, academically, many of those students did not learn to swim very well or very far.

In current ‘immersion’ programs, the teachers know both Navajo and English. They know the kinds of problems that English-speakers are likely to have with Navajo. Unlike the (mostly) Anglo teachers that taught only in English, these teachers understand what the students are saying in English; they understand what the students are trying to say, in Navajo. They simply refrain from using—or responding to—English with the students.

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Then too in the earlier ‘submersion’ programs, the students were *compelled* to go to school in English; there was no choice. Most students were away from home—sometimes quite far from home. But all contemporary ‘immersion’ programs are programs of choice. Parents choose to place their children in such programs; they can remove them at any time. And most of these children go home every afternoon.

Situational Navajo

“Situational Navajo” is simply one kind of immersion program. It is “situational” because it takes many of the recurring situations in the school setting—and hopefully in (extended) family settings as well—and makes those the core of the Navajo Language program. We use many of these situations as opportunities to use and learn Navajo.

At the pre-school/kindergarten/1st grade, this may be the ‘core’ interpersonal communication component of a more comprehensive Navajo Immersion program. We may add singing, word-play, and the like. We may add verb-centered (pre-)reading and (pre-)math instruction; we may teach to (some of) “the standards.” But the verb-based interpersonal communication would be the core of the total program. We deal only with that interpersonal communication ‘core’ in this paper.

Situational Navajo might be the stand-alone Navajo Immersion component of an otherwise English-language elementary-level program. For a given period of time each day, we would conduct class all in Navajo—focusing on verb-centered interpersonal communication. This will not be as effective as “full immersion” instruction, but it should be much more effective—and more useful—than most Navajo-as-a-Second-Language instruction at this level.

At the junior high/senior high level, we might use situational methods to convert otherwise book-based instruction into immersion instruction. Again, for a given period of time, we would conduct class all in Navajo. The book-based instruction would be placed in an interpersonal matrix of oral Navajo.

At its simplest, “situational Navajo” simply means ‘using’ the recurring situations in the school day as opportunities to teach or practice verb-based phrases or sentences. We say ‘use’ advisedly; this doesn’t ‘just happen.’ We work hard to organize and conduct instruction to get the most meaningful talk we can out of these situations.

Other kinds of language

Before talking about some of the nuts-and-bolts of situational instruction and practice, we need to talk about some of the other kinds of instructional language that are needed in a situational program. Here we will talk about “formulae,” “gestures,” “meta-Navajo,” “survival Navajo,” and (for lack of a better term) “background Navajo.” The distinctions may be somewhat arbitrary; they

are intended to try to get teachers to try to think critically about the language they use to guide instruction.

To put it rather bluntly: if teachers talk ‘over the student’s heads,’ students are going to ‘tune out.’ In self defense, they come to perceive the teacher’s talk as just so much ‘static.’ To keep the students ‘tuned in’ with them, teachers really have to think about and control what they say.

1. Formulae: There are going to be situations where the student needs to say things to the teacher that the student hasn’t learned to say in Navajo yet. There needs to be formulae by which a student is enabled to communicate successfully in Navajo. One such formula is the one used early on in the Navajo Immersion program at Fort Defiance:

- The student says to the teacher, “Shiká anilyeed” (‘Help me’)
- The teacher acknowledges that s/he has heard the student.
- The student makes his/her request in English.
- The teacher ‘chunks’ the child’s request into short Navajo phrases.
- The child repeats these phrases (in Navajo).
- Only then does the teacher respond to the child’s utterance.

The unspoken message is ‘Here things get done through Navajo—and only through Navajo.’ No nagging. No preaching. This is conveyed by actions, not by words; this is simply the way things are done hereabouts.

Of course, other formulae are possible. But what we need to establish, early on, is that (almost) all communication will be in Navajo, and we need to give students a way of communicating when their Navajo is not yet adequate to meet their immediate needs.

To take the risks required for successful second language acquisition/learning, the students have to trust their teacher. The teacher has to earn their trust. The teacher has to ‘be there’ for the students—in Navajo; the students have to sense that the teacher will ‘be there’ for them—in Navajo.

In time, as students learn more Navajo, they become wiser about ways of obtaining assistance. They may learn to compress or ‘chunk’ their English requests. If they know the teacher will support their efforts, they may try what they know is less-than-perfect Navajo. They may, in time, learn to ask just for the word/phrase they need: saying (in Navajo) ‘How do you say X’—where X is the English word/phrase for which they are seeking an equivalent. Or they may learn to go to another, more knowledgeable, student first.

We are not language ‘purists.’ As noted earlier, the Navajo terms for a number of common classroom objects are relatively complex descriptions. Many contemporary foods do not have even commonly-accepted descriptions. We have no problem with students—intent on communicating—using some English nouns in otherwise Navajo sentences. After all, English accepts thousands of nouns from other languages without ceasing to be English. But we *do* have problems with students using English verbs in place of Navajo verbs—or of combining the two.

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2. Gestures: At the beginning, students may not understand the directions the teacher gives to elicit, or direct, the child(ren)'s production of Navajo—what we call 'meta-Navajo.' This happens in all second-language learning: the learners have difficulty distinguishing between the content and the directions; the learners repeat both:

- Teacher: "Here I am." You say that.
- Student: "Here I am; you say that."

It helps, particularly at the outset, to develop a set of gestures to help students with gestures for such directions as: "Wait," "Listen," "Watch my mouth," "Repeat (after me)." "[Tell me] more." Also such things as "Tell me" or "Ask him."

As time goes on and the students become better able to sort out the instructional content from the meta-Navajo directions, the teacher would do well to discontinue using gestures. After all, in the end, we want the students to become able to respond to the oral meta-Navajo *without* the gestures: to use (Navajo) language to help learn (Navajo) language.

3. 'Meta-Navajo': We need to be able to use Navajo to direct the students' Navajo talk. At first, we must relay heavily on gestures (above). But, as teachers, we need to find ways of giving directions to students about what to do/say without having to revert to English. 'Meta-Navajo,' then, is the Navajo used by the teacher to direct the Navajo obtained from the students; just those Navajo phrases that are used (frequently) to elicit Navajo from the students. These may be simple:

- speech-related commands like: "Say [what I say]"; "Repeat [what I said]"; "[Say it] again"; "[Talk] louder"; "[Say it more] carefully"; etc.
- directions like: "Tell me"; "Ask him"; etc.
- questions used to elicit given forms, like: "What are you doing?" "What is s/he doing?"; "What is this [action/thing] called?"; etc.

As Navajo language teachers we need to consciously select the meta-Navajo phrases that we will use, explicitly teach them early on, and be fairly consistent (particularly at the outset) about using the same forms.

4. Survival or interactional Navajo: Teachers need to ask things of students and students have to say things to the teacher(s) that do not necessarily involve the whole group (at least not all at the same time). These are not situational Navajo; they have to do with individual needs/wants and (at first) they usually involve only the use of the 1 sg [singular] ("I") forms. These might have to do with:

- recurring but individual situations: sharpening a pencil, getting a drink, going to the restroom, looking for a lost item, etc.
- sickness, discomfort, or pain: a headache, a runny nose, a cold, an injury, etc.

- feelings: tiredness, homesickness, appreciation, etc.

At first, the teacher may simply teach the necessary 1 sg (“I”) forms of survival phrases. But, as the students acquire more Navajo, and it becomes apparent that more students need a given verb, the teacher may teach other forms of that verb—for example, the 2 sg (“you-one”) or the 3 sg (“s/he”) forms. In this way, the students begin to get some insight into the structure of the previously unanalyzed forms; what had been ‘survival Navajo’ is now taught more systematically as ‘situational Navajo.’

5. ‘Background Navajo’: We probably need a better term but, for now, let’s use the term ‘background Navajo.’ In an immersion situation, restricting ourselves to just that Navajo the students can say can lead to a relatively sterile language-learning environment. Most good immersion teachers are able to closely control the language they expect the students to fully understand and respond to. But many good immersion teachers also talk a good bit of what we’re calling ‘background Navajo’: language which is situationally appropriate but which the students are not expected to fully understand or explicitly respond to. This may be approbation, this may be encouragement, this may be further explanation, this may be ‘chatter’; the students sense it as supportive ‘background.’ The students may ‘get the drift’ because of the situation, but they may not—and are not fully expected to—fully comprehend or respond to the actual wording.

Good ‘background Navajo’ is a balancing act. If there is no ‘background Navajo,’ the environment may seem too language drill-like; it may become a little too stressful. But if there is too much ‘background Navajo,’ or students can’t tell the difference between what they are expected to attend/respond to and what is simply ‘background Navajo,’ they may become inattentive.

The Navajo educator Anita Bradley Pfeiffer pointed out (in observations at Rock Point many years ago) that second language learners cannot be expected to ‘attend’ to all that is said all the time. In a harmonious teacher-student relationship, the students sense when to attend intently and when they may relax a bit. This can seem, she said, as natural as breathing: inhale - exhale - inhale.... Good immersion teachers are able to communicate rather clearly to students when the students are expected to attend/respond to what the teacher is saying and when what the teacher is saying is just ‘background.’ This may be signaled by tone of voice; it may be signaled by slowing down and speaking more deliberately; it may be signaled by eye-contact. However, it is signaled, and the students of a good immersion teacher usually sense which is which.

Good ‘background Navajo’ is not necessarily lost. Good background Navajo makes for a more natural language environment. And it may contribute to developing the latent Navajo language abilities of the students.

Characteristics of Situational Navajo

Having gone through all the other kinds of language that are used in Navajo language teaching, we are at last ready to discuss the characteristics of situational Navajo. Situational Navajo may be thought of as a way of trying to orga-

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nize instruction to give students a growing sense of how Navajo verbs work by giving them incremental mastery of specific verbs that are needed for communicating needs/wants.

1. A focus on verbs: Impressionistically, the English language-world seems to be a world of things: things do things or things happen to things. The Navajo language-world seems much more “a world in motion”: everything is moving, even if some things are (temporarily) at rest.

Navajo is a language of verbs. But Navajo verbs are difficult. As a result, many teachers—and students—avoid verbs. They teach students mostly concrete nouns, maybe some abstract nouns, and maybe a few (adjective-like) neuter verbs. But with just these words, students can only point and/or describe. They can’t really communicate much information that their native-speaker listeners don’t already know. If we want students to become able to communicate through Navajo, we are going to have to enable them to use verbs for communication.

2. ‘Predictability’: Navajo verbs are complex—often very complex. The final element is usually the verb stem—the element that specifies the general ‘shape’ of the action. But preceding the stem are a large number of prefixes, each one specifying a little more about the shape of the action. These prefixes go together in analyzable but complex ways; the sounds of these prefixes are compressed and/or altered; there are a number of sound changes or deletions that often seem to mask the underlying forms.

Navajo verbs are intricately regular. The great linguist/ lexicographer Robert Young has said in oral presentations at Diné College that there may be no more than 18-21 regular conjugations—no more, he says, than in Spanish. But there are also a much larger number of morpho-phonemic rules that govern how those prefixes are combined. Given one form of a verb, learners of Spanish can often ‘predict’ many of the other forms of that verb. This is much harder for learners of Navajo; given one form of a verb, it maybe rather difficult to predict many of the other forms of that verb. And because, in a sense, many Navajo verbs are sentence-like, some individuals may come up with slightly different forms of what seems to be the same verb (They may be thought to be following slightly different rules, or to be applying those rules in slightly different order).

Yet in the long run, this is what we want our students to be able to do: to make good guesses about verb-forms they may have never heard. To ‘know’ a language means—in some sense—that one has so internalized the underlying ‘system’ of the language that one can (often) produce (correctly) sentences one has never heard (Remember: Navajo verbs are often sentence-like). Students learn to talk Navajo not so much by *hearing* Navajo as much as by *trying to talk* Navajo—and getting supportive feedback. They learn to talk Navajo by making guesses—correct guesses more often than incorrect guesses—about regular and not-so-regular forms.

3. Identifying verb content: Here we will talk about how we select what verbs to teach and what forms of that verb we will teach. In practical terms, this emphasis on verbs strongly suggests that **we identify—for a given school situ-**

ation—the verb that seems to be most useful in that situation (This might be washing hands, it might be hanging up coats, it might be writing one’s name, it might be asking for food, etc., etc., etc.).

We identify a situation in which we think it important that the children become able to talk and respond; we pick out the one verb that we think will be most useful in that situation. We can add other verbs later on: verbs that contrast with or supplement the first verb. But for starters we identify one most useful verb (Nouns—or neuter verbs—can be taught in the context of verb-ful sentences; teaching nouns or neuter verbs in isolation is of little value unless they can be fitted in to verb-ful sentences).

Navajo has a number of modes—Navajo modes are something like tenses in English and Spanish. In the beginning, we will work almost entirely with verbs in the imperfective mode—with forms in which it is not specified that the action has been completed. These are the forms of most face-to-face here-and-now interaction in Navajo. These are the forms with which one gets things done in Navajo. In contrast, one of the problems with approaches based on writing/reading ‘stories’ is that the verbs are usually in the *perfective* mode—the forms with which one gives accounts of what happened *after* they happened. These are not the forms of most use in face-to-face interaction. Dialog-based materials may be an exception. **We need to explore ways of concentrating on imperfective forms** and of deferring most perfective or more-distant future forms—not to speak of iterative, semeliterative, usitative, or optative forms—until later on.

Most Navajo verbs may be thought of as having ten/twelve basic forms in a given mode-and-aspect. It doesn’t seem to make much sense to try to try to teach all twelve forms of each verb at the outset—some forms are not used very frequently.

	singular	dual	plural
1st person	“I”	“we-two”	“we-three-or- more
2nd	“you-one”	“you-two”	“you three-or-more
3rd	“he/she/it”	“they-two”	they-three-or-more”
4th	“one”	(oblique) “they-two”	(oblique) “they-three-or-more”

Example: ‘to wash’ (an object, such as hands)

1st person	tánásgis	tániigis	táádeiiigis
2nd	táán(í)gis	tánáhgis	táádaohgis
3rd	tánéigis	tánéigis	táádeigis
4th	tájígis	tájígis	táádajigis

So, we might do well at the outset to limit ourselves to just the three forms shown in the box: the 1 sg (“I”) form, the 2 sg (“you-one”) form, and the 3 sg (“s/he”) form. It may be useful, for some verbs, later on, to teach the 1 plural and 2 pl forms: these are used when the teacher gives commands to a class and the class respond as a group. The so-called 4th person forms are not much used by limited speakers except in set phrases. Neither are the dual forms; and many

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dual forms can be ‘predicted’ by removing the da- prefix from plural forms. So we might limit our initial teaching to just three of the possible ten/ twelve forms.

But most Navajo verbs involving the motion of people take different stems for the singular, dual, and plural. These include verbs for such actions as coming in (an entrance), sitting down, lying down, standing up, walking, running, and (by extension) helping. We can often set aside the dual and the 4th person forms as less commonly used; but we may still have to initially teach at least six of the twelve possible forms:

‘to go’	singular	dual	plural
1st person	déyá	deet’áázh	deekai
2nd person	díníyá	dishoo’áázh	disoohkai
3rd person	deeyá	deezh’áázh	deeskai
4th person	jideeyá	jideezh’áázh	jideeskai

In Situational Navajo, we try to select high-utility forms of those verbs. Utility is the criterion. Where possible, we select verbs that can be used for a number of related situations. We try to avoid forms that can refer to a relatively limited or uncommon actions: we try to select forms that can apply to a number of different situations. For example, we might select a transitive form of the verb ‘to wash (X)’ because it can be used not only with washing hands but with other body parts and other objects as well.¹ We might select a form of the verb ‘to make (X)’ as in ‘to make (i.e. write) one’s name because the verb ‘to make’ can be used much more widely than the verb meaning (only) to write (A time may come when we will be able to identify some of the verbs most needed in school-like settings, analyze the paradigms those verbs take, and then try to group together verbs taking similar paradigms to facilitate generalizations. We’re not ready for that yet).

Navajo verb forms supply a great deal of information specifying the shape of the action. Fluent speakers tend to analyze actions semiconsciously. But unless Navajo Language teachers carefully monitor which forms they use, they may slip into so many different situation-specific forms that few students will sense the underlying regularities. Instead of saying “He’s washing his hands,” the teacher might say, “He’s washing his hands again” or “He repeatedly washes his hands” or “He washed his hands.” For this reason, we have found that **it helps the teacher to actually write out the paradigm of the verb s/he intends to teach.** Not for the children but to enable the teacher to keep from ‘slipping off-paradigm.’ To help the teacher use fairly consistently the forms that are most likely to lead the students to ‘sense’ the way that verb works.

4. What we teach: We do not teach students to ‘conjugate verbs’ as such. We do want them—more like native speakers—to ‘sense’ or ‘feel’ which verb

¹But, it turns out, only with ‘impermeable’ objects like hands, face, dishes, etc.; not with ‘permeable’ objects like clothes that require a different conjugation.

goes with *my* doing the action, with the person I'm talking *to* doing the action, or with some third person I'm talking *about* doing the action. This is built up by having considerable and varied experience in using the appropriate forms while *the action is actually going on*.

We want students to be able to do more than just answer the questions we having considerable and varied experience in using the appropriate forms while *the action is actually going on*.ask. Of course we want them to do that, but we want them to be able to do much more. At the very least, we want students to be able—for a growing number of high-utility verbs—to be able to:

- make simple statements in all three persons:
He's washing his hands.
- negate simple statements in all three persons:
He's not washing his hands.
- ask aoo'/dooda-type questions in all three persons:
Is NAME washing his hands?
- answer aoo'/dooda-type questions in all three persons:
Yes, s/he's washing his/her hands.
- correct mistaken aoo'/dooda-type questions in all three persons:
No, s/he's not washing his *face* ; s/he's washing his/her *hands*.
No, *John's* not washing his hands; *Mary's* washing her hands.
- ask ha-type questions
that query the actor:
Who's washing his/her hands?
to answer such a question:
NAME is washing his/her hands.
that, in some cases, query the object:
What's s/he washing?
to answer such a question:
He's washing his *hands*.

Note that the generalized questions: *What am I doing? What are you doing? What is s/he doing?* are considered to be meta-Navajo—they can be used with any demonstratable verb.

In time, we may teach students some of the simpler ways of relating or combining two sentences. But the ability to use the simple sentence-types noted above will give students considerable ability to converse and communicate.

Teaching situationally

We make a basic distinction between what we call verb-based '**instruction**' and verb-based '**practice**' or 'use.' In the one we concentrate on consciously teaching the use of two or more verb-forms. In the other, we try to exploit recurring situations during the day to practice the forms we have just been teaching. But before we discuss these two basic activities in more detail, we need to talk about some of the characteristics about teaching situationally.

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1. Thinking/talking out loud: Some would say that there is a tendency in everyday Navajo life to focus on getting things done (right) with a minimum of talk about those actions as we do them. And some would say that there is a tendency in everyday Navajo life to avoid doing things in public—including talking—that one does not do well. Carried into Navajo language classrooms, these attitudes can lead to semi-verbal or almost nonverbal classrooms. In these classrooms, teachers—or aides—tend to set up for academic-type instruction as quickly—and as non-verbally—as possible. Getting ready for such instruction may not seem important; it's the 'real' (academic) instruction that they see as being important. The classroom routine may be pretty much the same day after day. So they may just gesture to tell the students what they are to do next. Or they may literally move the first child to get the others to follow on. We expect those students who do not know what to do next to follow those students who do. Or, when all else fails, these people may give very brief oral instructions—in English.

These attitudes and actions actually make it *more* difficult for students to acquire Navajo in a school setting. If we are really serious about enabling students to acquire/learn Navajo situationally, we're going to have to bracket or suspend such actions. Instead, we are going to have to take Navajo language learning as important—maybe more important—than the academic content. Every activity can be exploited for its language-instruction or language-practice potential. It turns out that the language of 'getting things done' is often more 'real' and more 'useful' than print-based language instruction. We have to learn to exploit these recurring situations for their language-learning/-practice potential.

We learn to talk by talking. We learn to attend—listen intently—when we are mentally preparing to respond with talk and/or action. We have to turn our classes into talking classes. Everything we do there is something we *could* talk about. The real problem is not finding something to talk about but deciding which things to teach—and practice—now, and which things we may have to let go until later. We have to concentrate on a few things at a time, teaching them and practicing them well. Then, while continuing to practice those things, we can concentrate on new things, constantly accumulating more language and more 'feel' for how the language works.

2. Talking 'verb-fully': A corollary of talking about what we are doing as we do it is that we focus on verbs. We are not concerned with Miss Fidditch's insistence that we talk in "complete sentences" or "full thoughts." In Navajo (as in, say, Spanish) it is possible to make sentences without separate subjects or objects; these can be contained as pronomial elements within the verb phrase. We are talking about giving students lots of meaningful practice with verb-forms to help them acquire a 'feel' for the appropriate forms in given situations.

When a native-speaker responds to a question with Aoo' or Ndaga' or even a one-noun answer, we assume that the speaker could, if need be, supply the appropriate verb forms and whatever else may have been 'deleted' or left out. Other native-speakers will understand what has been 'deleted' but is 'implied.' But this is not necessarily the case with second-language-learners of Navajo.

They may not be able to supply what has been deleted—which often includes the verb-form. These learners need lots and lots of practice in coming up with the right verb-forms. So we insist that students respond—in all but the most trivial cases—using a phrase/sentence with a verb-form [Once learners become reasonably proficient, they are able (in more natural out-of-class situations) to ‘delete’ as native speakers do].

3. ‘Response-ability’: When a native speaker of Navajo is asked to do something, s/he may acknowledge in some way that s/he has heard the speakers. But s/he is not too likely to state explicitly that s/he is performing that action while doing so. It seems ‘unnatural’ to do so. But the real strength of the situational approach is that **talk and actions are coordinated**. Students come to ‘sense’ which form to use because it ‘feels’ right. So when we ask a student to do something, we expect the student to *say* what s/he is doing. If we ask a question, we expect the student to respond with a statement containing the appropriate form of the verb. The same is true in instructional or practice where one student commands or questions another. This may seem ‘unnatural’ to the teacher. But they will accept it if the teacher is consistent, keeps things manageable, and is supportive.

Incidentally, part of ‘survival Navajo’ should include what a student should say if ‘caught napping.’ We should (almost) always expect a student called upon to respond. We teach the students requests such as: “Would you repeat?” comments such as “I don’t understand” or “I don’t understand X,” and excuses such as “I wasn’t listening.” If sitting tight and saying nothing gets you out of such situations, we shouldn’t be surprised if more and more students do so. We should actively ‘expect’ an answer from a student called upon. This means waiting until s/he can formulate one. This is not ‘punishment’; it is simply ‘communication.’

4. Reception/production: We also make a distinction between language we expect students to respond to and language we expect students to produce themselves. As will be seen below, we might give a 2 sg (“you-one”) command to students to perform a given action on one day. We would expect the students to respond with the appropriate action and a 1 sg (“I”) statement that they are performing the action. We would not, at this stage, expect them to *produce* the 2 sg (“you-one”) form, only to *respond* to it. But in the next session, we might move on to have the students command one another using the 2 sg (“you-one”) form. Having responded to this in previous sessions, this should not be perceived as completely ‘new.’

5. Contrast/choice: In the earliest stages of presenting a new form or new material, we may have students simply repeat what we model. But we want to move fairly quickly into situations where we are *contrasting* one verb-form with at least one another. We manage the situation so that students show us whether they (probably) understand the contrast by making an appropriate choice. This may be as simple as using the 1 sg (“I”) form of the verb when carrying out an action one has been commanded to do but using the 2 sg (“you-one”) form when commanding another student to carry out this same action. We build up three-way (and larger) contrasts incrementally, by introducing only one new verb-

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form at a time and contrasting it with those forms already taught. We think that **the importance of this incremental buildup by two-way contrasts cannot be overestimated.** A frequent response to adults-as-learners of another language in demonstrations in Christine Sims stimulating cross-language workshops is, “You were trying to teach us too much!” While students may master initial three- or four-way contrasts over a number of sessions, not all students are likely to do so in a single short session. In more school-like settings, this is likely to lead to unnecessary student frustration.

The same principle is at play in introducing new vocabulary. Where possible, we should introduce nouns—or neuter verbs—in the context of known verbs. For example, once having learned the forms of the verb to handle a solid bulky object, we might introduce the words for ‘ball’ and maybe ‘book.’ And, later on, maybe the words for ‘red’ and ‘yellow’—and the words for ‘large’ and ‘small.’ Thus, we would (eventually) teach object-names, colors, sizes, etc. But we would do so in the context of verb forms for ‘object small-bulky at rest,’ ‘picking up small-bulky object,’ ‘setting down’ small-bulky object, ‘giving small-bulky object,’ etc. These neuter verbs would become useful in specifying *which* objects one wants moved. In isolation, these neuter verb-forms are practically useless.

Organizing for instruction

In teaching situationally, we distinguish between two basic activities: **verb-based ‘instruction’** and **verb-based ‘practice’** or ‘use.’ We may select a given verb that we think important and work on that for a week. We set some time aside each day to ‘**instruct**’ students in forms of that verb, cumulatively building up their mastery of the forms of that verb. And every time a situation can be used—or contrived—which requires that verb, we have students ‘**practice**’ one or more of the forms we have been teaching. In a sense, the ‘instruction’ is more like theory; the ‘practice’ more like application. We want students to go back and forth between theory and application—between ‘instruction’ and ‘practice.’

We also have to provide for on-going review of verbs already taught. From time-to-time, we need to review (or reteach) certain verbs that were taught in earlier ‘instruction’ sessions. And, from time-to-time, we need to provide for review of verbs used in the ‘practice’ sessions.

As the year goes on, students should begin to accumulate facility with a growing number of verbs in a growing number of situations. Part of the teacher’s role is to keep adding to that accumulation while providing on-going practice and review of verbs taught earlier.

Verb-based instruction

We suggest setting aside a certain time or times each day in which we explicitly teach verb-forms. The length of these sessions would vary with the age and background of the children. With younger children, it might be better to have several shorter periods. This should be done earlier in the day, when the students are still fresh. Groups should be small; if there is an aide, the aide can

either act as a second teacher or conduct other activities that allow the teacher to work with smaller groups (If the teacher and the aide ‘team-teach,’ then they can model both ‘parts’ of an exchange, and the one can ‘coach’ the children’s responses to the other). We want to be able to check—at (almost) every step along the way—that each student can do what we are expected all to do. It is extremely important that we seriously try to “leave no kids behind”—no lambs either.

In the simplest form of a verb-based unit, as taught to non-speakers at the preschool level:

- We might teach the 1 sg (“I”) form on Monday. Once we have taught this, we might elicit it from the students in a number of different ways: gestures, commands, questions, etc. But all that the students would actually have to say in that first session would be the 1 sg (“I”) form. Before we quit, we should test each student’s ability to do so.
- We might teach the 2 sg (“you-one”) form on Tuesday. The students may have been expected to *respond* to this form in their responses to 2 sg (“you-one”) commands and questions on Monday. But they weren’t actually expected to *produce* the 2 sg (“you-one”) form—yet. Now, on Tuesday, we might expect them to *produce* the 2 sg (“you-one”) form. And to contrast the 1 sg (“I”) form with the 2 sg (“you-one”) form in a number of different sentence-types: responses, commands, questions, etc. Again, before we quit, we should test each student’s ability to use *both* forms appropriately.
- We might introduce the 3 sg (“s/he”) forms on Wednesday. We might have student one (S1) give a command to student two (S2) and have S2 mine the action while saying what s/he is doing. The teacher might then ask the group, “What is S2 doing?” and then lead them to say, “S/he is X-ing.” But we have learned working at Lukachukai, and it may be better to postpone a close three-way contrast until the following day.
- On Thursday then, we might move to a close three-way contrast. S1 commands S2, using the 2sg (“you one”) form. S2 mimes the action and responds, using the 1sg (“I”) form. Student three (S3), asked by the teacher (or S1) what S2 is doing, responds with the 3sg (“s/he”) form. This requires very close attention. If the three way contrast collapses, the teacher may have to go back and build it up as a series of two-way contrasts.
- Head Start runs on a four day week. But in other situations, a Friday session can be used to give additional practice on the three-way contrast of verb forms, introduce appropriate nouns or neuter verbs, and review (and reteach if necessary) in a relatively systematic way verbs taught earlier.

In sum, there are simpler and more difficult ways of eliciting verb-forms in given persons. We *don’t* want to limit this all to teacher-ask-and-student(s)-respond(s). We also want to have students ask; we want students to learn to initiate. Part of becoming a good immersion teacher is learning many ways of eliciting given forms and making this elicitation appear relatively natural.

Characteristics of verb-based instruction

We will talk briefly about specific eliciting techniques in the Appendix B. But before we discuss verb-based ‘practice,’ we would like to make several additional points about the conduct of verb-based instruction.

1. Realism: We want the students’ talk to be meaningful. And we want to get as much meaningful talk from the students as possible. But by “meaningful,” we mean plausible: that the language fits the (imagined) situation of the speakers. Some teachers become so intent on what they think of as realism that they set up elaborate time-consuming situations out of which they get only a little student-talk. These are not very efficient. Setting up the situation may take more time than the actual talking; and usually only a few students actually get to talk. Too much ‘realism’ can actually distract from language learning. For example, students being taught computation with pieces of candy may become more interested in getting some candy than in learning either language or computation.

On the other hand, some people become so intent on giving the students lots of ‘practice’ that they allow that practice to devolve into mere repetition of what the teacher—or other students—just said. That is not *meaningful* practice. We constantly have to find a balance between ‘realism’ and ‘practice.’ It’s usually better to find ways to have students ‘act out’ actions symbolically—to mime the actions—in ways that are reasonably meaningful but which allow considerable practice for all.

2. Participation: At the Linguistic Institute at the University of New Mexico in 1995, Berkeley language-educator Lily Wong Fillmore showed and commented on a number of classroom videos. One of these involved a contrast between a relatively open classroom in which the teacher worked one-on-one writing stories from student dictation and another rather structured classroom in which students moved in groups between the teacher and the aide in oral activities in which each student in turn was expected to respond. Asked which group learned the most (second language—as shown by end-of-the-year testing), most assumed that the students in the relatively open class did. Some of the more outgoing students in that class did well, but some of the shyer students did not. In the relatively structured class, almost all students had done reasonably well. They had been *expected/required* to talk in situations in which outgoingness/shyness was not a factor. Without necessarily being quite as structured, we do have to find ways to assess what we have tried to teach (almost every day)—and proceed on the basis of that assessment.

In the instruction sessions we try to end almost all lessons by setting up little test-situations that require each student in the group ‘perform’ what has been taught. In the little during-the-day practices, we also expect each student to ‘perform’ what has been taught.

It is one thing to ‘say’ that we expect every student to learn. It is another to actually do so. The actions are ever so much more powerful than the words. We have to select what is really important. We have to ‘chunk’ it so that all can learn it. We have to actually check to see if all have learned it. And if some have not,

we have to find other, more effective, ways to teach it. Again, self-perceived success is a very powerful motivator. Too many students don't experience it often enough to come to expect it.

3. Expectations of success: One of Lily Wong Fillmore's studies was described above. We feel very strongly that teachers should not only *expect* all students to succeed, they should also organize and conduct instruction so that the students *actually do master* each day's objective—or if they don't, that the teacher comes back in the next session to enable them do so. Here again the teacher's actions speak so much more loudly than their words.

Some of the implications of teaching for mastery in the verb-based 'instruction' sessions are as follows. Teachers should:

- select verbs that they think are the most important;
- start the lesson with an explicit objective: what is it that they actually expect each student to be able to do by the end of this lesson?
- make it clear—by their actions—that they actually *expect* each student to master the material taught that day (In time the students come to realize that if they as a group have not mastered the material, the teacher is going to give them more time/assistance);
- present material incrementally in small 'chunks';
- lead students to sense contrast and to choose;
- teach in ways that all students get relatively meaningful practice;
- teach in ways that enable the teacher to tell—at each stage—if all the students are 'getting it';
- continually adjust their presentation on the basis of this feedback;
- by the end of the lesson, assess—formally or informally—that each student has achieved the objective of that lesson;
- plan the next lesson(s) on the basis of what how well the previous lesson(s) went.

4. Assessment: Some teachers simply 'broadcast' questions to the class; those who (think they) know the answer respond. These teachers may not notice that only a relatively small proportion of the students are answering most of the questions; some students almost never volunteer to answer a question. While calling for volunteers may be appropriate when introducing new material, or when the teacher is trying to find out what the students as a group already know, it is inappropriate throughout language lessons.

Language learning tends to be cumulative. The less the students have mastered to date, the more difficult it is going to be for them to proceed. The teacher owes it to the students to try their best to bring *all* the students along. The teacher does this by not only having an explicit objective for the lesson but by often breaking even that objective up into even smaller 'chunks' in 'building up' mastery of the objective. The teacher assesses students' mastery of these smaller chunks as they go along and adjusts their instruction on the basis of this feedback.

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This need not be overly formal testing. It can be contriving a short simple situation in which each child in turn has to use appropriately the forms being contrasted in that lesson (The teacher should *start* the lesson with this assessment in mind; most of the lesson should be involved in preparing the students to become able to do that). And if some don't, it's not the end of the world. Assessment is part of every lesson. In time, the students come to realize that if they can't do what is expected (yet), the teacher will not scold or punish them: they will be given them more time and attention until they all do achieve the objective. This is perhaps the hardest thing for new immersion teachers to do. It is often humbling to learn that, after we have worked so hard, that *some* of the students still cannot do what we said they would be able to do by the end of the lesson. We want to move faster. We would like to believe that because we have worked so hard and *some* of the students can do it, that 'they *all* know it.' But this kind of self-deception usually leads to growing confusion and discouragement on the part of those students that just don't get it.

Second language learning is difficult. Learning Navajo as a second language is particularly difficult for English-speaking children. Second language learners often tend to feel that, no matter how hard they try, they are never quite right. Breaking language-learning down into small discrete activities helps students to succeed. And perceiving themselves to be successful is important: coming to expect that they will usually succeed motivates students to learn—and to want to learn—Navajo.

We as teachers also need to succeed. If we teach any old way, many students will not progress beyond the beginner level. We, too, get discouraged. Setting small but explicit objectives, teaching toward those objectives and assessing those objectives helps both the children and the teacher succeed. This need not become 'mechanical' or 'clinical.' There is great scope for creativity in finding ways that help all students succeed. And good teachers can present lessons as a series of challenges in which most of the students succeed most of the time.

Time and space do not allow us to elaborate here all the ways in which we can have students use the forms of given verbs in statements, negations, corrections, aoo'/dooda-type questions, ha-type questions, responses, etc. This is where language teaching as engineering ends and language teaching as art begins. Good teachers can make this both challenging and fun. Students come to realize that, while this is challenging, the teacher is there for them and will assist and support them until they are able to do what is expected. While getting lots of relatively meaningful practice with specific verbs, the students are beginning to get a 'feel' for how that particular verb works and, ultimately, a sense of the underlying 'system' for many similar verbs. And the students will begin to get a 'feel' for the ways in which the basic underlying sentence patterns are transformed into negations, questions, corrections, etc.

Having a growing ability to understand and communicate in Navajo, students are better prepared to 'attend to' the Navajo around them that most had not really 'tuned in' to before. And, we hope, to start participating. That is the hope

of school-based Navajo instruction: that it will serve as a catalyst to enable students to begin to participate in the ongoing Navajo language-world around them.

Verb-based practice

We talked earlier about two kinds of activities: verb-based ‘instruction’ and verb-based ‘practice’ or ‘use.’ We have already discussed verb-based ‘instruction’; now we will talk about verb-based ‘practice’ or ‘use.’

We talked, in verb-based ‘instruction,’ about selecting a single verb form and working on at least a few of the forms of that verb for a week (or more). We teach the forms of that verb in the ‘instruction’ sessions. But, in addition to the ‘instruction’ sessions, we must also seek opportunities throughout the school day to ‘practice’ or ‘use’ the verb-forms we have been teaching. This means that every time we have an opportunity for students to use some form of that verb, we do so. We look for—sometimes we *contrive*—situations where we can have the students ‘practice’ one or more of those verb-forms we have been teaching in the ‘instruction’ sessions that week. We are looking for short simple exchanges in which we can get (at least) one form of that verb from each child *while* the action is being performed

Let’s take as an example working with the verb ‘to wash (one’s hands).’ In Head Start, there’s a lot of hand-washing. There are seldom enough sinks for all; the children have to take turns. During the week that they are being instructed about that verb, these times are opportunities for teachers to conduct various kinds of exchanges with the students in line. Some examples:

- Teacher (T) COMMANDS Student (S): Wash your hands.
S RESPONDS WHILE WASHING HANDS: I’m washing my hands.
- T LEADS Gr TO COMMAND S: Wash your hands.
S RESPONDS WHILE WASHING HANDS: I’m washing my hands.
- T LEADS S TO COMMAND S AT SINK: Wash your hands.
S RESPONDS WHILE WASHING HANDS: I’m washing my hands.
- T ASKS S WASHING HANDS: What are you doing, NAME?
S RESPONDS WHILE WASHING HANDS: I’m washing my hands.
- T LEADS Gr TO ASK S WASHING HANDS: What are you doing?
S RESPONDS WHILE WASHING HANDS: I’m washing my hands.
- T LEADS S TO ASK S WASHING HANDS: What are you doing?
S RESPONDS WHILE WASHING HANDS: I’m washing my hands.
- T ASKS S WASHING HIS HANDS: Are you washing your hands?
S RESPONDS WHILE WASHING HANDS: Yes, I’m washing my hands.
- T LEADS Gr TO ASK S WASHING HIS HANDS: Are you washing your hands?
S RESPONDS WHILE WASHING HANDS: Yes, I’m washing my hands.
- T LEADS S TO ASK S WASHING HIS HANDS: Are you washing your hands?
S RESPONDS WHILE WASHING HANDS: Yes, I’m washing my hands.

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Here we have shown nine relatively simple exchanges: three each, based on a command, a ha-type question, and an aoo'/dooda-type question. When students become more proficient. They can begin to deal with somewhat more difficult situations such as:

- T ASKS S WASHING HIS HANDS: Are you washing your feet?
S RESPONDS WHILE WASHING HANDS: No, I'm not washing my feet; I'm washing my hands.
- T ASKS S WASHING HIS HANDS: What are you washing?
S RESPONDS WHILE WASHING HANDS: I'm washing my hands.
- T ASKS Gr ABOUT S WASHING HIS HANDS: Who is washing his hands?
Gr RESPONDS: (NAME) is washing his hands.

Each of these could be asked by the teacher, by the group, or by an individual student—another nine exchanges. We have shown eighteen different ways of eliciting a 1 sg (“I”) statement of students. The teacher could also lead students to ask somewhat more unusual 1 sg (“I”) *questions*:

- S ASKS Gr WHILE WASHING HIS OWN HANDS: Am I washing my hands?
Gr RESPONDS: Yes, you are washing your hands.
- S ASKS Gr WHILE WASHING HIS OWN HANDS: Am I washing my face?
Gr RESPONDS: No, you are not washing your face; you are washing your hands.
- S ASKS Gr WHILE WASHING HIS OWN HANDS: What am I doing?
Gr RESPONDS: You're washing your hands.
- S ASKS Gr WHILE WASHING HIS OWN HANDS: What am I washing?
Gr RESPONDS: You're washing your hands.

Each of these is a very brief exchange in which each S is expected to utter a single sentence. Each is short and (relatively) simple. Most/all could be done in the time the students are waiting their turn to wash their hands. In this way, we continue to give students ‘practice’ on the verb forms that we have been working on in the ‘instruction’ sessions.

We have shown here more than 20 ways of eliciting just the 1 sg (“I”) form. There are more, and there are as many ways of eliciting 2 sg (“you-one”) and 3 sg (“s/he”) forms. We could use half a dozen different ways of ‘practicing’ (the three forms of a given verb) every day for a week without ever repeating ourselves. While in any given activity, some students may ‘catch on’ that they should say from what other children have said/done, still the choice between forms and the cumulative practice should help lead them acquire a ‘sense’ of how that particular verb works.

Summary

In “Navajo Immersion” we attempt to recreate—to the extent that we can in a classroom setting—a situation in which the student *needs* Navajo to communicate. Not only all instruction but all interaction goes on in Navajo. “Situational Navajo” is intended as a relatively simple approach to Navajo Immersion in which we take the recurring situations that occur during the class as the curriculum. It is not necessarily a total Navajo language program, but it would be the core of such a program.

The teachers select a recurring situation in which they think it is important for their students to be able to communicate. The teachers identify the verb(s) most needed in that situation. They block out—for themselves—the imperfective paradigm of that verb, identify which forms they will teach, and when they will teach them. They then set out to teach those forms of that verb in such a way that they add only one form at a time, contrasting each new form with the forms already taught. The teachers insist that students speak verb-fully and that they use the appropriate form of the verb in all but the most trivial utterances. They lead students to use and contrast those forms in statements, negations, *oo’/dooda*-type questions, *ha*-type questions, and responses (including corrections).

Over time, the students begin to accumulate more and more Navajo. Hopefully, they begin to ‘sense’ some of the regularities involved in Navajo verb formation and some of the regularities in making and transforming sentences in Navajo. These verb-forms are taught in the verb-based ‘instruction’ sessions in which the teachers focus on the verb being taught that week. These same verb-forms are actively expected in ‘practice’ situations throughout the day. Teachers use—and/or contrive—situations throughout the day in which to *practice* the forms being taught in the *instruction* sessions.

In the ‘instruction’ sessions, it is important that:

- the teachers have a clearcut expectation (objective) of what they expect each child to become able to do by the end of that session;
- they give all of the students varied practice with those verb forms, contrasting them with other forms of that verb and of other, related, verbs;
- at the end of the session, they assess—formally or informally—whether or not *each* child can now do what was expected;
- they plan the next lesson based on the results of the assessment of this lesson.
- This doesn’t need to seem mechanical or clinical; students can be led to see this as a challenge—one in which they will, if they try, usually succeed.

In the ‘practice’ activities, the teachers find ways to have each child use at least one form of the verb being taught that week in a situation in which that activity is a part. These activities must be short and sweet. Well-run activities get a bit of language from every child in little more time than it would have

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taken to conduct those activities non-verbally—or in English. These activities are continually varied. And actively ‘expected’ of each child.

In sum, then teachers try to set up “talking classrooms” in which *students talk about what they are doing as they do those things*. The emphasis is on verbs. Nouns and other parts of speech are taught in the context of verb-ful sentences. The assumption underlying “Situational Navajo” is that Navajo verbs are very difficult but absolutely necessary for meaningful communication. They are deeply and intricately regular, and it is those underlying regularities that will ultimately allow new speakers to say things they have never heard before. That is our long-range objective: to have our students become able to say things (correctly) that they have never heard. Learners are more likely to begin to ‘sense’ some of those regularities in situations in which the verb-forms we expect students to acquire are selected and presented and practiced in ways that make some of those regularities more accessible to students.

Note: As the Navajo Nation Language Project I, the three authors of this paper worked three summers with small groups of experienced Head Start Teachers to produce three resource books: *Situational Navajo*, *Interactional Navajo*, and *Instructional Navajo* (pre-arithmetic only). These are not textbooks but resource materials; teachers wanting to teach language in a given situation may find suggestions about selecting and teaching a specific verb in that situation. If we were to do this again, we would include the full paradigms in the text, and we would be more explicit about the eliciting techniques. But Navajo Immersion teachers may still find these helpful. The first book has been reprinted several times at Diné College-Tsaile. At the end of the Navajo Nation Language II project, in the fall of 2002, there were still a limited number of copies of all three books in the Office of Diné Culture, Language, and Community Services in the Division of Diné Education in Window Rock. Appendix A contains a summary of suggestions for staying in Navajo (Navajo immersion) from the 2003 *Directory of secondary Navajo language programs* published by the Navajo Nation Language Project in the Division of Diné Education that was funded by Administration for Native Americans (ANA) Grant No. 90NL0125.

Appendix A¹ A Teaching Technique for Situational Navajo

Staying in Navajo

One of the most important techniques is **staying in Navajo**.

If the teacher lets on that she will talk—or accept—English, she should not be surprised if the children continue to talk English to her. They want to communicate, and they will do so in the language that is easiest for them.

To stay in Navajo, the teacher often has to simplify radically. Think through what you are going to do. Think through the verb or verbs that are absolutely necessary in this situation. Gesture, mimic, act out, and work through those children/students who understand the most—whatever it takes to ‘get through’. Try to be consistent—try to use the same verb-forms in the same situations. For example, if you are going to teach the verb *áshlééh* begin with the form in the Imperfective (present tense). Following is the verb paradigm for *áshlééh* in the Imperfective:

Dikwíí?→	Singular (1)	Dual (2)	Distributive Plural (3+)
↓Háí?			
Shí	áshlééh	iilnééh	ádeiiilnééh
Ni	ánilééh	óhłééh	ádaohłééh (ádaahłééh)
Bi	iílééh	iílééh	ádeiiilééh

Here is an example of a suggested first lesson using only the verb *áshlééh*.

- T: Dijií saad át'inií *áshlééh* wolyéhií bídahwiidíil'áá. Hághoshíí shikék'ehgóó ádaahł'íi dooleet. As you pretend to write your name in the air, tell the children/students, Shízhí' *áshlééh*, dadohní.
- S: Shízhí' *áshlééh* [while writing name in air].
- T: K'ad atso nihízhí' ádeiiiyaa jiní [all put hands down]. Again T will do same thing.
- Shízhí' *áshlééh* [writing name in air]. NAME, ni nízhí' ánilééh. Ha'át'íi baa naniná?
- S: Shízhí' *áshlééh* [while writing name in air].
This activity will continue until all children are called upon following the procedure above. At the end T will ask: Ha'át'íi bídahwiil''éé'?
- S: Respond with, Shízhí' *áshlééh*.

The following are the paradigms for the verb *áshlééh* in the Perfective (past) and the Future:

Perfective:

Dikwíí?→	Singular (1)	Dual (2)	Distributive Plural (3+)
↓Háí?			
Shí	iishłaa	iilyaa	ádeiiilyaa
Ni	iinilaa	óohłaa	ádaohłaa (ádaahłaa)
Bi	áyiilaa	áyiilaa	ádayiilaa

Future:

Dikwíí?→	Singular (1)	Dual (2)	Distributive Plural (3+)
↓Háí?			
Shí	ádeeshłíít	ádiilníít	ádadiilníít
Ni	ádiíłíít	ádoohłíít	ádadoohłíít
Bi	iidooolíít	iidooolíít	ádeidooolíít

¹From: Navajo Nation Language Project, Division of Diné Education. (2003). *Directory of secondary Navajo language programs* (Funded by ANA Grant No. 90NL0125, WH NNLP 10/01), pp. 30 & 68.

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Specific Techniques

Although teachers are often admonished to “stay in Navajo”, many are not shown/told techniques for doing so. Here are some specific techniques; there are many more. We strongly recommend teachers ‘practicing’ these techniques with each other to be better prepared to deal with situations where the students try to draw them back into English.

a. Teacher’s use of Navajo

- i) Think through **directions** carefully. Keep them short and simple. Try to use the same verbs/verb forms fairly consistently. Don’t translate!
- ii) Have the students **repeat the directions** when and where this is possible. To do so, you have to really keep directions simple so that they will be repeatable. Try to limit the directions to no more than three, at the most four, steps. After giving the directions, try to elicit these in the first person (I or we plural). Then have all the students repeat the directions.
- iii) **Meta-Navajo**. Think through the Navajo you are going to need to elicit talk from the students, e.g., repeat after me, say what I say, ask me/him/her, tell me/him/her, again, etc. Teach some of these each week until students know and use most of them. Don’t translate!
- iv) **Gestures** can be used in place of a number of common meta-Navajo directions. You can use gestures to convey ideas like ‘wait’, ‘listen’ or ‘talk’.
- v) Try to **demonstrate meaning**. Act it out, draw pictures, use synonyms or near synonyms, etc. Do almost anything but shifting back to English. Don’t translate!
- vi) Teach the students appropriate **survival phrases**. One useful one is *Da’ bik’idiitijih?* or *Bik’i dinitáqash?* Tell students that you expect them to reply honestly when asked if they understand. Avoid acting exasperated.
- vii) Teach the students to **ask confirmation questions**. Teach them to repeat directions (as in ii above) and later, to ask confirmation questions about directions, or about content.

b. Responding to students’ use of English

- i) Teach the students **survival phrases** like *Shiká anilyeed* to ask for help indicating that student doesn’t know how to say a phrase in Navajo. The teacher acknowledges the student’s request for help. The student tells the teacher what s/he has to say in English. Only then does the teacher respond. The implicit message is: ‘You have to say it in Navajo to get things done around here.’
- ii) Accept **gestures** from the students in place of words/phrases they don’t know. But then help them by converting these gestures into Navajo (as above) and respond to what the student has said only when it has been said in Navajo.
- iii) Simply say, quietly and naturally, *Diné k’ehjí*. No nagging. Just a quiet reminder.
- iv) **Inquire**. Ask the student (in Navajo) what he is saying. Use *Ha’át’íi?* or a similar phrase. No nagging. Said quietly naturally, the message is: ‘try again—in Navajo this time.’
- v) Intentionally act as if you **‘don’t hear’** what a student has said in English. Wait for the student to rephrase what s/he has said in Navajo. If the student persists in English, you might ask *Ha’át’íi?* (as above).

c. Correcting or extending students’ Navajo

- i) Ask a **confirmation** question—as if you were trying to be sure you understand what it is the student is trying to say. This can be made to sound quite natural. But the student’s question may be in the wrong person. If so, the teacher may have to supply the correct form the student would use.
- ii) Quietly **correct** what the student has said. Most teachers can do this in a different ‘voice’ so that the student knows this is a correction, not a response. Avoid the appearance of exasperation.
- iii) Simply **gesture** that the student needs to tell you more. This is particularly useful in situations when the student has failed to supply a verb. Most people use a palm up gesture flexing the fingers to ‘invite’ more talk.
- iv) If, after having received gestures to supply more, it appears that the student is unable to do so, the teacher may try to **supply the rest** in the form of a question. If the student accepts the teacher’s addition, have the student say the whole thing (with the addition).

Appendix B Eliciting Techniques

We focus primarily on the 1 sg (“I”), 2 sg (“you-one”), and 3 sg (“s/he”) forms of most verbs. There are many different ways of eliciting a given form of a verb without requiring the students to produce forms of verbs they have not been taught yet. These are not the only ways of presenting and developing these forms; they may not even be the best. They are shown here to give Navajo Immersion teachers some sense of what we’re talking about.

In teaching, we find that the way we present a given form—for the first time—may be somewhat different from the way(s) in which we develop the student’s comprehension of that verb form.

Below, we show ways of both presenting and initially developing comprehension of the 1 sg (“I”), 2 sg (“you-one”), and 3 sg (“s/he”) forms of a given verb—here, to wash one’s hands. With some modifications, these methods should work with most verbs—although imperfective verbs in momentaneous aspect can present some problems.

A. 1 sg (“I”) forms.

Probably the simplest way of presenting the 1sg (‘I’) form is for the teacher to mime the action while making the statement that s/he is performing that action. The teacher then leads the students to mime washing hands while making the statement that they are doing so. (It may help if the teacher points to himself/herself at the beginning to make clear that s/he is talking about himself/herself. Later on, we might use a circular motion suggesting inclusion to indicate 1 pl (“we-three-or-more”).

Presentation:

- T: MIMICS WASHING HANDS, POINTS TO SELF,
SAYS: “I’m washing my hands.”
GESTURES TO STUDENTS TO DO THE SAME
- T/Gr: MIMIC WASHING THEIR HANDS, POINT TO SELVES,
SAY: “I’m washing my hands.”

Development

- T: COMMANDS [GROUP]: “Wash your hands [2 sg form], addressing *each* Student”
- Gr: MIMIC WASHING HANDS, RESPOND: I’m washing my hands.
- T: SIGNALS ‘WAIT’ WITH HAND-SIGNAL,
COMMANDS: Wash your hands
PAUSE; THEN CALLS ON A STUDENT BY NAME: John
- S: RESPONDS: I’m washing my hands.
- T: CONTINUES, RAPID FIRE, CALLING RANDOMLY ON ALL STUDENTS

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By the end of the development, students should be able to *respond* to the 2 sg (“you-one”) command. But they are expected to actually say only the 1 sg (“I”) form at this stage. Pauses are important because teachers often call on a student and then give a command or ask a question. Once the teacher has called someone’s name, all the other students are ‘off the hook’ and can quit paying attention. By giving the command or asking the question first, the teacher is getting all of the students to attend to the oral directions. Even if s/he calls on only one student, all of the others should have ‘rehearsed’ their responses in their heads. In this way, we begin to get the students to ‘think’ in the language.

In time, the students should be able to use the 1 sg (“I” forms) in a variety of situations. But, as much as possible, they should do so either while actually mimicking the action (in ‘instruction’) or while actually doing the action (in ‘practice’).

B. 2 sg (“you-one”) forms

Perhaps the simplest way of presenting the 2 sg (“you-one”) form is to lead one student to command another to carry out the action. Having been commanded by the teacher with the 2 sg (“you-one”) form in the previous day’s activities, the students are now led to give, as well as respond to, 2 sg (“you-one”) commands. The teacher begins by working with a single student but moves on into a “chain drill.”

Presentation: review

T: COMMANDS [TO S1]: Wash your hands.

S1: MIMICS WASHING HANDS AND RESPONDS: I’m washing my hands.

Presentation: new

T: GESTURES TO S1, THEN TO S2

INSTRUCTS [S 1]: Tell S2, “Wash your hands.”

S1: COMMANDS [S2]: Wash your hands.

T: INSTRUCTS [S2] Tell S1, “I’m washing my hands.”

S2: MIMICS WASHING HANDS AND RESPONDS: I’m washing my hands.

T: GESTURES TO S2, THEN TO S3

INSTRUCTS [S2] Tell S3, “Wash your hands.”

S2: COMMANDS [S3]: Wash your hands.

T: INSTRUCTS [S3] Tell S2, “I’m washing my hands.”

S3: MIMICS WASHING HANDS AND RESPONDS: I’m washing my hands.

...TEACHER CONTINUES WITH EACH PAIR. EACH S HAS TO GIVE
A 1 SG RESPONSE AND THEN GIVE A 2 SG COMMAND

Development: chain

T: GESTURES TO S1, THEN TO S2

INSTRUCTS [S1]: Tell S2 “Wash your hands.”

S1: COMMANDS [S2]: Wash your hands.

- S2: MIMICS WASHING HANDS AND RESPONDS: I'm washing my hands.
T: INDICATES BY GESTURE OR COMMAND FOR S2 TO COMMAND S3
S2 COMMANDS [S3]: Wash your hands.
... [ONCE THE CHAIN DRILL IS STARTED, T SHOULD NOT HAVE TO TELL EACH S WHAT TO SAY.
THE GROUP CONTINUES UNTIL ALL STUDENTS HAVE TAKE BOTH 'PARTS']

Alternative presentation: review

- T: COMMANDS [S1]: Wash your hands.
S: MIMICS WASHING HANDS AND RESPONDS: I'm washing my hands.

Presentation: new

- T: GESTURES TO S1, THEN TO HIM-/HER-SELF
INSTRUCTS [S 1]: Tell me, "Wash your hands."
S: COMMANDS [T] Wash your hands.
T: MIMICS WASHING HANDS AND RESPONDS: I'm washing my hands.

T: PAIRS OFF S1 AND S2
GESTURES TO S1, THEN TO S2
INSTRUCTS [S1]: Tell S2 "Wash your hands."
S1: COMMANDS [S2]: Wash your hands.
S2: MIMICS WASHING HANDS AND RESPONDS: I'm washing my hands.
... [TEACHER CONTINUES PAIR BY PAIR. BUT ONCE CHAIN DRILL IS STARTED, T SHOULD USUALLY NOT HAVE TO TELL Ss WHAT TO SAY]

This sort of cooperating pair activity can be further developed as a group activity where (all) the "1's" command (all) the "2s" and vice versa. "Tell him/her" or "tell me" are not specific to a particular situation. They are considered to be meta-Navajo; they can be used in situations with almost any verb.

C. 3 sg ("s/he") forms

Probably the simplest way to elicit a 3 sg ("s/he") form is in response to the question "What is s/he doing?" (It might be remembered that this question is also considered meta-Navajo since it is used with any and all verbs). The teacher begins with a pair of Students.

Presentation: review

- T: COMMANDS [S1]: Wash your hands.
S1: MIMICS THE ACTION; RESPONDS: I'm washing my hands.
T: GESTURES TO S1 AND THEN S2
INSTRUCTS [S1]: Tell S2, "Wash your hands."

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S1: COMMANDS [TO S2]: “Wash your hands.”

S2: MIMICS THE ACTION, RESPONDS: I m washing my hands.

Presentation: new

T: ASKS [S1 ABOUT S2]: What is S2 doing?

T: SUPPLIES ANSWER: S/He’s washing his/her hands.

RESPONDS: S/he’s washing his/her hands.

Development [modified chain—students in (semi-) circle]

S1: COMMANDS [MORE DISTANT S3]: Wash your hands.

S3: MIMICS THE ACTION, RESPONDS: I’m washing my hands.

S1: ASKS [CLOSER S2] What is S3 doing?

S2: RESPONDS: S/he’s washing his hands.

Here again, there are many ways of eliciting 3 sg (“s/he”) forms. The more ways the student learn to respond, the more likely they are to respond to the *language* rather than just imitate what others do in that situation. We hope the reader can infer how the 1 pl (“we-three-or-more”), 2 pl (“you-three-or-more”), and the 3 pl (“they-three-or-more”) forms might be elicited. Key to this is some sort of inclusive gesture intended to show that we are talking about a group rather than an individual.

Sustaining Indigenous Languages in Cyberspace

Courtney B. Cazden

My title phrase is from Rex Jim, Navajo poet and teacher. He started two Navajo language electronic conferences for students at Diné College's Kneel Down Bread conference for his social studies education students, and *Alhini Yazhi* ("little children") for teachers in reservation Head Start centers and their Diné early childhood faculty. Both conferences develop the users' fluency in written Navajo. Because of their specialized topics, both also "expand the Navajo language's capacity to embrace life in the contemporary world" (personal communication, 2001).

There is a paradox in suggesting that technology can be useful in revitalizing indigenous languages and cultures. After all, one kind of technology, television, has been influential in language and culture loss. An article in my hometown newspaper, *The Boston Globe*, subtitled a story from Arctic Village, Alaska, "Proud Alaska tribe links loss of its traditions to arrival of televisions":

It was January 1980 when members of the Gwich'in tribe stood in the snow and waited for a plane from Fairbanks to drop off the thing everyone was so curious to see.... "I couldn't sleep I was so excited by that TV," said Albert Gilbert...who, at 25, got his first taste of late-night comedy the day the future dropped out of the sky.

"I wanted to watch it and watch it and watch it," he said. "I woke up at 6 am. to watch it more. I did this for two weeks. When I went out in the country to hunt, all I could hear was the TV in my head" (Lewan, 5/29/1999, p. A7).

The article's author quotes Michael Krauss of the Alaska Native Language Center: "Television is a cultural nerve gas...odorless, painless, tasteless. And deadly."

This article will describe some positive counter-examples of how other kinds of electronic technologies—specifically CD ROMs, computerized data bases, and telecommunication networks—are being incorporated into language and culture revitalization projects in the Southwest and around the Pacific (This discussion draws on Cazden, 2001, especially Ch. 6).

A decade ago, Joshua Fishman cautioned about relying too much on cyberspace:

Although cyber-space can be put to use for RLS [reversing language shift] purposes, neither computer programs, e-mail, search engines, the web as a whole, chat boxes or anything directly related to any or all of them can substitute for face-to-face interaction with *real family imbedded in real community* (1991, p. 458, emphasis in the original).

The examples that follow are all intended as supplements, not substitutes, for all-important face-to-face interaction.

CD ROMs and Computerized Data Bases

Two examples come from Alaska. First, in the Yup'ik language area of south-western Alaska, the Lower Kuskokwim School District has produced a bilingual CD ROM for the traditional story, "How the Crane got Blue Eyes." Both the story itself and the interactive reading, spelling, and writing games based on it are available by clicking on either Yup'ik or English.

Professionally produced in sound and full color, questions can be raised about some aspects of the modes of presentation. Does the presentation of the story and the isolated words in the games suffer from too little cultural context? According to one Alaskan teacher, "How the Crane Got Blue Eyes" has been used in Alaskan schools for 25 years, typically without regard for its Yup'ik language and cultural context (Barker, 1995). In a recent article about her own language learning, Athabaskan university teacher Beth Leonard critiques the resources available to her as she learns the Deg Xinag Athabaskan language of her home village, such as a dictionary of nouns:

In reviewing this dictionary with my father, I found that the literal translations were not included. For a beginning language learner, literal translations provide a great deal of fascinating cultural information and further impetus for investigation into one's own culture. For example, the Deg Xinag words for birds, fish, animals and plants reflect complex and scientific beliefs and observations (Leonard, 2001, p. 4). [The Deg Xinag word for yellow pond lily is *vichingadh ethog*, literally "muskrat's plate."]

I assume that the Yup'ik words in the mini-dictionary lists for the Crane games also carry cultural meanings. But like story interpretations, these are missing in the non-cultural presentation on the CD ROM. In future CD ROMs, based on other stories from other traditions, can more indigenous knowledge be incorporated—perhaps in a separate section for teachers—while keeping it simple enough for primary school children to use?

In the Tlingit language area in southeast Alaska, in Glacier Bay National Park, park ranger and archaeologist Wayne Howell is working with Tlingit elders to create a "talking map" of sites in the Glacier Bay area of historical and cultural significance to the people of the Native village of Hoonah. Eventually, the computerized data base will have maps in various scales, historical information, and oral literature—all to be heard and read in both Tlingit and English.

The goal is to create a data base usable in school and community, and Hoonah students have already been participating in its creation (personal communication, August 2000). Tlingit leader Andy Hope (2001) describes briefly the larger Southeast Alaska Native Place Name project, now in process, of which this Glacier Bay work is a part, "in which tribes and school districts work in partnership to develop multimedia educational resources."

Telecommunication Projects

A very different use of electronic technology is telecommunication: students using computers to write *about* their Native cultures and *in* their Native languages for distant audiences.

Exchanging writing in English about Native culture: In writing about Native life, the most interested audience may be distant in geography and culture. At least that has been the experience of some teachers whose students have participated in such exchanges. Here's a condensation of a report by Rosie Roppel, an English teacher in Ketchikan, a town in Southeast Alaska where one-fourth of the residents are Tlingit, Haida or Shimshian. Her eighth grade unit on local Tlingit history began with a field trip to Saxman, a Tlingit village one mile south of town, for a performance of "Tlingit Boy of the Eagle Clan Becomes Chief."

I scan the audience for Lawrence, a Tlingit boy from Saxman, usually quiet and apathetic in my classroom. I had hoped that this trip would somehow stimulate his interest in school. Lights dim and a spotlight finds Tlingit Boy of Eagle Clan crouching in traditional red and black ceremonial clothing. Wearing the carved ceremonial mask of an eagle he acts out the ancient story of a young man who becomes chief.

Roppel retells the story and describes the young actor's excellent acting and dancing. As the reader comes to anticipate, the actor who removes his mask at the end is the missing student, Lawrence. Greeting the audience in Tlingit, he proceeds to instruct them in his Native culture, leading them outside to a 40-foot cedar totem "where he recounts stories represented by the carving on it."

The next day in the computer lab, when the students were typing their assigned essay about Tlingit culture, Lawrence's apathy returned: "Why do I have to write this?" Lawrence complained. I already told all this information yesterday. Everyone in Ketchikan already knows all this stuff." Yesterday he'd had a real audience of peers to speak to, and he'd spoken marvelously; today he had only his English teacher waiting for him to finish his assignment. How does one create such an audience in an academic environment?

The teacher's answer came in a request on the electronic network of the Bread Loaf School of English from students in the Laguna (Pueblo) Middle School in New Mexico, requesting responses to their stories about their elders. An electronic exchange of student writing developed between the two classrooms. Roppel concludes, "I didn't know it at the time, but the Laguna students would turn out to be the audience that would motivate some of my students [including Lawrence] to do their best work".

For this purpose of sustaining interest in the indigenous culture and doing the hard work of describing it in writing for an audience of distant peers, the Laguna students provided an ideal audience: readers interested in the same topic but from a place distant and different in interesting ways, in this case geographical (temperate rain forest Ketchikan vs. hot, dry Laguna) as well as cultural.

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Exchanging writing in indigenous languages: Where the purpose of the telecommunication exchange is to provide expanded reasons for using the indigenous language by communicating in it, then the electronic exchanges need to be between classrooms of students who share that language, who are like each other in being part of the same language group.

The Hawaiian language movement has been especially active in this way. Hawaiian-medium schools are dispersed around the islands, so the virtual community of language users is many times larger than the face-to-face community in any one school. Exchanging writing with members of that larger distant audience can give added incentive, and authentic reason, for Hawaiian language use. Starting in 1992, the Hawaiian language center at the University of Hawaii at Hilo has been developing an electronic network, *Leoki* (“powerful voice”), for both data base resources and telecommunication exchanges—all in the Hawaiian language. (Donaghy, 1998, details *Leoki*’s history; Warschauer, 1998, 1999 offer an outsider’s analysis of the Hawaiian experience). The same conditions of considerable distance among indigenous-medium schools exist in Maori New Zealand (Benton, 1996) and in virtually all the language groups in Alaska, where travel even among nearby villages can be difficult.

The successful electronic exchanges that I know best, those between teachers using the network of the Bread Loaf School of English—like the Navajo language conferences and the one between Ketchikan and Laguna—are not just postings on a website. They are exchanges to a limited and specific audience, flowing back and forth many times in a school term or semester, between groups of students who come to know each other well. Judging from reports of participating teachers, both the repeated exchanges and their personalized quality seem to be essential to their success.

Final Comments

Extending indigenous language use into cyber-space will of course depend on local conditions. The reliability of telephone lines may be a problem in some rural areas, and the preferred orthography may need some adaptation for easy computer use. Where such problems can be solved, electronic technologies can be not only useful but symbolically significant. According to K. Kawai’ae’a, who first conceived and planned *Leoki*,

Without changing the language and having the [computer] programs in Hawaiian, they wouldn’t be able to have computer education *through* Hawaiian, which is really a major hook for kids in our program. They get the traditional content like science and math, and now they are able to utilize this ‘ono (really delicious) media called computers! Computer education is just so exciting for our children. In order for Hawaiian to feel like a real living language, like English, it needs to be seen, heard, and utilized everywhere, and that includes the use of computers (quoted in Warschauer, 1998, pp. 147-8).

For maximum value, the use of the Native language in cyberspace must always be part of, and related to, its use in the face-to-face space of the classroom. In the telecommunication projects, this will be the case if the exchanges are not totally individualized (as with pen pals) but part of a class curriculum unit on historical investigations, or interviews with elders, or transcriptions of oral literature. Then there will be class discussions before anyone touches the keyboard, and additional discussions after the partners' messages are received. With CD ROMs and data bases, there is more danger that use of such material will be too individualized, with subsequent loss of potential gains from reinforcement and transfer.

The ultimate goal for all these projects is for whatever is learned by one or a few to become part of the shared common knowledge of a larger community, in the classroom and beyond. After all, all languages and cultures are communal possessions, not individual, and that status must be maintained in the classroom.

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Statements made by representatives of moderately endangered languages at the 1994 Native American Language Issues (NALI) conference held in Glorieta, New Mexico.

We have limited access to our tribal ways. Our oral tradition is overshadowed by the English language and thought. We ignore our traditions and our tribal intellectuals. We need to go back to the elders.

—Rosemary Christensen, Ojibwe

One point eight million dollars [provided by the Native American Languages Act] for language is not enough. We cannot depend on money; we need to depend on ourselves to save the language. We acknowledge our culture, but our language is the way. We need to reestablish the language, stand strong, and identify ourselves as strong people in a sovereign nation. Many cannot see themselves to be learning the language. Adults need to see and be more involved in saving the language.

—Larry L. Kimura, Hawaiian

Saving a Language with Computers, Tape Recorders, and Radio

Ruth Bennett

Every language is a window on the human soul, and whenever one is closed forever, that narrows our outlook much more. (Editorial, 2001)

In California, efforts to save indigenous languages have a century long history. The use of technology in ever-new ways is a part of that history. The earliest technology to encounter an indigenous language was the wax cylinder. This instrument was used for recording the sounds of the languages from native speakers' voices. The newest technology involves new media uses, new recording equipment, and new multi-media software among other innovations. Teachers, students, and others communicate in their native languages through e-mail messages, faxes, and web pages. Web pages exist for the Hupa, Karuk, and Kumeyaay languages of California. A Yurok language teacher sends language audiotapes to her grandson in college in Oregon (Hinton, 2001a). In the Hoopa tribe's *Aht'ine Ch'o:yatts'it* Education Department, the Hupa Language, Culture, and Education program records language classes with a digital tape recorder and burns CD recordings.

Attitudes toward technology within indigenous language programs range from the belief that technological is significant in language survival to the view that technology is unnecessary. It is useful to look at research covering the entire range of attitudes since the success of technology in a language program depends upon who uses it. Advocates (see e.g., Arthurs, 2001; Reyhner, 1999) for the benefits of technology for the language classroom cover areas ranging from individual learning styles to strategies for teacher training and materials development. Most recently, educators have advocated the use of technology for community education in the form of newsletters, newspapers, radio, and television.

Studies, such as Adley-SantaMaria's (1997), discussing positions unfavorable to technology have generally concerned native people's attitudes and beliefs toward documenting their languages. These attitudes do not seem to be toward technology, *per se*, but rather toward any sort of recording. Some native speakers have objected to having their languages written down in the apparent belief that writing weakens a language meant for speaking. Others do not want their languages written because they do not want to provide access to non-indigenous peoples. Still others feel that there are things in this world best left uninvestigated, unsaid, and not revealed (Adley-SantaMaria, 1997).

My own experience has shown that disadvantages of technology are unrelated to the potential of the technology as tools, but rather owing to the fact that having technology involves expenditures of funds, which can generate conflicts. Because of the value in pursuing instructional issues rather than political issues, I discuss technology from an instructional point of view. I first describe some of the studies involving the use of technology in Indigenous language preserva-

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tion. Second, I describe the state of the Hupa language as it affects the use of technology in the language program. Third, I present a technology-assisted process for creating language lessons.

Research on technology and Indigenous languages

Research on technology and indigenous languages includes a variety of modes of technology, including computers, recording equipment, and broadcast media. The following sections are concerned with the use of technology in relation to the following issues: getting community attention for an indigenous language, improving the quantity of quality language, documenting spoken language, creating sociocultural learning contexts, improving study skills, and expanding reading comprehension skills (see Bennett, 1999).

Getting Community Attention: Hawaiian language programs provide models of indigenous languages gaining community attention. When web pages and computer software are in both Hawaiian and English and students use and study the Hawaiian language, they become part of a movement that has brought the Hawaiian language to the “tip of the spear” (Wilson & Kamana, 2000, p. 32). Through the efforts of native people urging preservation of the Hawaiian language, Hawaiian has become an official language in Hawaii. According to Hawaiian language teachers Wilson and Kamana, the driving force is the desire for children to regain their Native language. With this impetus, adults as well as children are learning. Children, as well as young adults and elders in the community, participate in a computerized Hawaiian-medium school system extending from preschool through graduate school, stretching across the state of Hawaii. The Hawaiian language is on the Internet, e-mail messages are sent in Hawaiian, and language instruction utilizes Hawaiian language software. The significance of the Hawaiian program is to demonstrate how technology can help an indigenous language to become a statewide movement

In Northwest California, technology has been used to capture community attention among Karuk people. Beautiful full-color bilingual newsletters in Karuk and English with audiotapes were created for Karuk communities (Hinton, 2001b). These efforts help build pride in the Karuk language among community people and to promote continuous awareness of the importance of maintaining the language.

Increasing Quantity of Quality Language: The amount of authentic language available to language classes is an issue with endangered language programs. When there are a limited number of speakers and a limited amount of written language, teachers think about increasing the amount of language available to them. Quantity of language relates to having objectives that extend from vocabulary and grammar into communication. Teachers increase the amount of language their students are exposed to by designing projects that require students to reach for new words. Some interesting research in this area deals with radios in the classroom. Radio programs generate an increase in language and promote the use of quality language in propelling students to be aware of an audience of listeners.

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Ninno (1999), in an article on radios in the classroom, emphasizes the importance of radio over other forms of technology in a language program. Drawing from research on many schools across the USA and around the world, He asserts that radio programs generate more language while providing practice with listening and speaking skills. Students use and practice language when preparing for radio shows. Real-time radio conversations allow students to practice listening and speaking in a context where they are motivated to do their best. Ninno points out how radio programs also provide another level of motivation. Students link with students in other schools, as well as with communities. The community aspect of radio programs expands the classroom audience into a community audience that involves parents and educators.

Hollenbeck (1997) studied the use of radio in middle school language classes in Andover, Massachusetts. Students started an amateur radio club, designed a radio program, and held radio classes for people in the community. The students learned how to use their interest in radio to build a “community-school partnership.” The significance of this study is to show that in using broadcast media aiming to develop community language proficiency, students developed their own communication skills while directed toward those of their audience.

In other research (Consodine, 1995) on language learning and broadcast technology, teenagers enrolled in media classes and interviewed community members. The students learned to evaluate information they were receiving, develop communication skills, and improve critical thinking. They were exposed to and produced a greater amount of language owing to the demands of their interview tasks. The more questions the teenagers asked, the more information they listened to, the more information they then had to evaluate, with the consequence that they had more information to talk about. This study demonstrates that critical listening is a component of developing language proficiency and that conducting media interviews can increase language output.

Documenting Spoken Language: Documentation of spoken language has benefits for both teachers and students in indigenous language programs. Assuring that endangered language programs operate with an optimal measure of authentic language is often the province of the language teacher. Often, teachers require training in language documentation and related areas. In a discussion of a teacher-training model for indigenous languages, Littlebear maintains that recording elders not only advances a language, but that language documentation is essential to curriculum development:

Those who are serious about preserving their languages must act now. They have to start tape-recording and video-taping their elders, to begin developing curriculum for language development. (Littlebear, 1996, p. 236)

Littlebear combines the issues of language fluency, technology, and teacher training in a discussion of four indigenous language teacher training models: Ketchikan and Galena in Alaska and Lame Deer and Busby in Montana. He relates the

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importance of collecting language data to assuring that a body of language is available for teachers. He then presents a plan for providing teachers with the necessary classroom knowledge to use this body of knowledge effectively. This teacher-training model utilizes technology in areas such as writing lesson plans and materials development. Audio- and video-taping provide audio and visual data, while computers enable teachers to organize lessons for classroom instruction. Teachers benefit by knowing in advance what they are going to teach, and students benefit from the teachers' planning. Littlebear's discussion of teacher training models shows the importance of these programs, and technology can enhance them when used to build curriculum.

Weber and Tardiff (1991) found that video tapes provided an important methodological tool for language teachers in a French immersion kindergarten. They demonstrated that videotapes supplied "pertinent information on social context, shared meaning, and paralinguistic dimensions of sense-making" (p. 95). In this study, the classroom teacher benefited from being a research participant, developing and refining her teaching methods based upon more complete observation and review.

Creating Social Learning Contexts: Another area of research on language documentation deals with language learning within social contexts. Research by Shirley Brice Heath and others (Heath & McLaughlin, 1998) indicates that when adolescent youth from disadvantaged communities in the United States were trained to audio-record the everyday language they were using in an interactive task, their language skills improved. The youth increased their use of language both within and outside the training environment through conducting interviews with local speakers and keeping daily logs and journals. This study cites social interaction as a factor that can enhance student learning in difficult tasks. In taking on responsible roles in rich language environments of challenge and practice, students improved their language skills while attempting to fulfill high expectations and accomplish new achievements.

In the Voice Through Diction Audio Project conducted by the Fresno Unified School District in California, Dennis Sayres (personal communication, April 29, 2001) reported a project emphasizing social learning contexts for bilingual language learning. In this observational study, bilingual Spanish-English elementary school students compiled a bilingual dictionary with the aid of computers. Students from 2nd grade through 8th grade defined words in text, added their own voices for spoken definitions, and designed illustrations for dictionary entries.

This Spanish-English dictionary project was a difficult task because it required defining and translation of definitions. It became possible for the younger students to succeed owing to their interaction with the older students. Preliminary results showed differences in language strategies between age groups, with younger children modeling behaviors of older children. Social interaction is cited as a significant factor in producing enthusiasm about a difficult, technologically challenging task. The project planned to expand participation to include parents in the social learning contexts.

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In "Wheels for the Mind," a bilingual dictionary research project conducted with Yurok language students at Jack Norton Elementary School at Pecwan on the Yurok Indian Reservation in Northwestern California, students in grade 3 through grade 8 participated in a cooperative project writing a dictionary of plants on computers. In this community, the oral language tradition predominates, and when students wrote down the Yurok language definitions for plants, it was the first time that some of the Yurok words had been written.

The idea for the project evolved from elders in a Yurok language class, expressing a need to include computer activities in their program. This cooperative dictionary project combined cooperation with peers, as well as with elders and other community members. In completing their dictionaries, the children demonstrated that cooperative learning can get difficult tasks accomplished. The significance of the research is that new technology can be useful within culturally compatible learning contexts.

Improving Study Skills: Research in areas of computer-assisted instruction, as well as in the use of audiotapes, videotapes, and film, shows that a crucial study skill is the ability to work alone. This ability involves acquiring language skills in academic contexts: moving along the continuum of what Cummins and Swain (1982, p. 34) define as Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) to Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). The relevant area in academic language proficiency improvement is for students to learn how language is used not only by classroom teachers, but in textbooks and workbooks as well.

In a study of second-grade students representative of many transitional Spanish-English bilingual classes throughout the USA, Díaz-Rico and Weed (1995) found that audiotapes used in learning centers improved the use of patterned language by students. The researchers related the need for patterned language to the students' need to acquire a deeper conceptual and linguistic proficiency required for independent study.

One type of patterned language presented to the second-grade students was in the form of instructions for performing language tasks. Audiotapes of patterned language assisted the students in learning to differentiate grammar distinctions. Gradually the students demonstrated the ability to conceptualize on their own, as demonstrated in their understanding of increasingly complex instructions. The significance of this study is that audiotapes can be useful for developing language proficiencies needed for independent study.

Research by Strichard, et al. (1998) on improving study skills dealt with the use of lessons presented on a computer word-processing program. In this study, conducted with upper grade public school students with learning disabilities in the United States, teachers made a diskette accompanying a lesson plan for students' independent study. Students carried out self-testing by typing in answers to questions at the end of the lesson plan. A post-lesson test showed that students who used the diskette independently improved their study skills more than students who did not use the diskette. This study shows that basic computer software can be useful in self-testing and that self-testing improves study skills.

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Expanding Comprehension: Research on classroom use of computer technology for expanding reading comprehension includes a wide range of ages, socioeconomic classes, and geographic locations. A study by Lessow-Hurley (1996) on the “language experience” method for second language learners discusses the use of students’ own stories as the basis for reading texts. The language experience method has its origins in the experiences of teachers of non-English speaking second language children in the United States where “students who score well on a language assessment test are not capable of using the language in real life situations” (p. 55). She reports that making audiotapes of everyday discourse and taking live dictation were shown to improve students abilities to developing real life communication skills.

In writing about elementary school children in the United States who wrote down their own life stories, Kelly (1993) discusses the use of technology for another group of second language learners. Her study also used the “language experience” method, but involved students who could speak English, but could not read it. These students overcame limitations in reading by learning to read the language that they themselves use in speech. The researchers attribute improvements in reading to an increase in attention to how words are segmented and sequenced. The significance of this research is that technology can contribute to expanding speaking as well as reading skills for second language learners.

In a “Children Teaching Children” project, students of a Hupa language high school teacher recorded the stories they told, and then developed CD’s based on their story texts. The students used audiotapes to record their stories and computers to write them. They developed reading as well as writing skills because a component of the project involves reading the stories to other children. This project shows how to incorporate technology in combining instruction in reading, speaking, and writing skills.

Other multiple purpose language research (Wakshul, 2001) concerns the use of multimedia curricula. At least two indigenous language programs, in Cherokee and Sencoten (Brand, Elliott & Foster, 2002) are aiming at improving reading comprehension through multimedia projects. In the Cherokee language, *Little Linguist* introduces a 2nd language to kids, from 1 through 6, those critical years when children most easily learn languages. Designer Don Thornton has put the Cherokee language on a reading toy and has combined colorful figures and “smart-chip” technology to create an interactive, multisensory learning experience that adjusts itself to the level of the child and offers visual, auditory and tactile stimulation (*Little Linguist*, 2000; Wakshul, 2001). Although Thornton acknowledges the inherent danger of students spending more time with computers than with native speakers, he believes that the benefits of the brightly colored computerized toys outweigh the disadvantages. This study shows how computers can have an attention-grabbing capacity that can filter down to even the youngest audience.

In using newly developed multimedia software for the Sencoten language program, students and community-based staff at Lau Welnew Tribal School on Vancouver Island, Canada, create multimedia presentations in the Sencoten lan-

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guage incorporating text, sound, a word list with translations, video, pictures and hyperlinks (Brand, et al., 2002). Like the Cherokee language toys, their multimedia presentations are developed with the premise multimedia reading created with computers entices students into reading and that this improves reading comprehension. The significance of the project is in developing new reading tools with technology using collaborative community efforts.

Research on the effectiveness of multimedia presentations has looked at how reading improves with the addition of color and sound. Anderson-Inman and Horney (1998) report a number of studies where electronic versions of traditional text materials promote improved comprehension in children with learning disabilities, in students with limited English proficiency, and in students from environmentally or economically disadvantaged backgrounds. They demonstrate the importance of “supported text,” electronically altered text made to support increased reading comprehension for second language learners. In reading supported text, readers proceed until coming across a word or phrase that they want to see in translation. In one format, a reader can access both literal translations and free translations, choosing between a meaning with a grammatical component and a meaning that continues fluency.

With the addition of sound and graphics, supported text can become a multimedia presentation. Among these are alternative text displays that include cueing textual information by flashing, providing immediate alterations of the text such as highlighting and layering, the additions of animated graphical displays, (Reinking, 1987), visual images, sounds, and hypertext (Willis, Stephens & Matthew, 1996). This research demonstrates some of the technical considerations in designing multimedia presentations that affect reading comprehension.

Other research has been concerned with how computer-created texts improve students’ language processing skills. Reinking (1987) describes how interactive computer programs build reading strategies such as learning to make predictions while reading and developing strategies for managing comprehension. He describes a program for young readers in English that encourages readers to make predictions by controlling the presentation of text so that a question that the students must respond to is not answered immediately in the text, but rather through a series of segments. Each segment provides new information that allows the reader to confirm or disregard predictions made earlier. The significance of Reinking’s research is that computers can model reading processes associated with experienced readers for younger readers, thereby helping them to mature as readers.

State of the Hupa language

A Hupa language class for the community met every week on Wednesday evenings on the Hoopa Valley Indian Reservation. It has been the longest running class in the tribe’s Center for Hupa Language, Education, and Culture.¹ This community class focused on question-and-answer with an emphasis on proper speaking and correct writing of everyday Hupa. Students gained language experience by asking questions of elders and had the opportunity to present

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language lessons. Students and younger teachers used computers for the preparation and presentation of lessons and used taperecorders for documentation.

Because Hupa is still a spoken language, the Hupa language class maintained an oral focus, with technology being a tool rather than an end to instruction. In addition, classroom tools include pre-technological era aids such as marker boards, dry markers, paper, pencils, and puppets. The goals of the classes were documentation and to produce younger speakers through a continuing process of interaction with elders. Tapes with transcriptions and a Hupa language data base provided an ongoing record of language introduced by fluent speakers.

The Hupa language found its way to a weekly program on KIDE, the Hoopa Valley Tribe's radio station. The program offered weekly bingo games, cultural information about the history of the Hoopa, and reviews and previews of vocabulary in the community language class. It drew on community interest in the language, the incentive of winning Bingo prizes, and the support of a local high school Hupa language class.

Language Meaning: In order to better understand how technology has been used in the Hupa Language Program, it is important to understand both how meaning is communicated in the languages and the circumstances under which language loss has occurred. This part of the story of the Hupa language is illustrative of other indigenous language as well.

Hupa belongs to one of three groups of Athabaskan languages spoken in California, Oregon, Washington, Western Canada, Alaska, Arizona, and New Mexico. California Athabaskan languages, spoken by tribes either presently or formerly in the Mendocino and Humboldt counties, fall into three broad groups of closely related dialects: Hupa-Chilula, Mattole-Bear River, and Eel River [including Cahto and the "Kuneste" (from *koneest'ee*, person) dialects: "Lassik," Nongatl, Sinkyone, Wailaki]. Another California Athabaskan language, Tolowa of Del Norte County, is closely associated with Oregon Athabaskan languages .

The Hupa language is one of the many visually descriptive languages with its unique way of description. The descriptive features of the language reveal aspects of the Hupa worldview. We find these visual descriptions in the literal meanings of words where literal meanings evoke visual images. For example, the Hupa expression, meaning "pour some for me," is *wha: na:k'iditwul* (for me-you throw it back). The literal meaning of this expression is closest to the English meaning of "spill it out for me," in English, we would say, "Pour me some." The literal description carries a metaphorical meaning associated with asking someone to serve food in such overly casual way as to be sloppy. This meaning carries with it a humorous intent.

Many other words in the language also illustrate how visual description functions. For example, the Hupa word for pear is *me'ist nehwa:n na:ng'e:t'* (pounding rock-like-it hangs there). The literal meaning is a visual description depicting a hanging acorn-pounding rock. An acorn-pounding rock is used in pounding acorns for making acorn soup, an important activity for any traditional Hupa feast. In evoking an acorn pounding rock when mentioning a pear illustrates how a speaker can communicate cultural meanings through literal visual description.

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The descriptive nature of the language has influenced the way that the language was presented. User-friendly computer programs have made it possible to write the language so as to explain the descriptive levels of the language. The use of computers in the Hupa language community program focuses on language documentation and preparation of lessons, including lesson plans, teaching aids, and evaluation activities.

Language Loss: An accelerating loss of languages came about with the deluge of gold miners and settlers in the mid-19th century. Their conquest of the region resulted in the virtual extermination of many of the California languages, along with the people who spoke them. Only the Yurok, Karuk, Tolowa, Hupa, and Wiyot survived in sufficient numbers to preserve their speech and traditions. Some speakers of dialects related to these languages became absorbed into the larger group. But ensuing generations have felt social, economic and political pressures to replace their native tongues with English in order to assimilate and earn a living. These efforts were institutionalized in Indian boarding schools where children were punished when they spoke their own languages. English gained ascendancy, and the old speech became stigmatized.

Many of the remaining Hupa speakers were taken to boarding schools, which resulted in a loss of fluency and the need to introduce linguistic structure to the language classes. Presently, there are only a few remaining Hupa speakers who learned Hupa as a first language. One of them is James Jackson, born in 1908. He reports that from the time he was nine years old, he was not allowed to speak the Hupa language except at home.

I was away at school where they were teaching us English. They didn't want us to speak the Indian language because they said the Indian language was wrong. And they scared us off. Everybody was afraid to say something in their language. If they had just kept out of it and let us speak the language in school, everybody would know it today. **They** took it from us. Now **we** have to try to get it back. (James Jackson, personal interview, January 3, 2001)

Because of the traumatic nature of loss of the language, the presence of technology has evolved in ways that are consensual for the participants, especially the elders. The first technology in Hupa language classes involved cooperative learning projects where elementary school Hupa language students jointly used a Macintosh computer to do language practice activities. Two or three students used one computer, with those who were not at the keyboard giving advice to the one who was, while elders were present as advisers (Bennett, 1987).

Creating Language Lessons in a Community Language Class

Language teachers in California will ask, "Do you have any curriculum for my class?" Since each indigenous language is different and there are various levels of teacher and student language proficiency, I will offer a process for developing a language curriculum that teachers can adapt to their own classroom situation.

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The language lesson is the heart of this curriculum. Creating lessons involves organizing language texts with the aim of defining curriculum objectives in the areas of reading, speaking, writing, and listening. Technological tools include audio recorders (or other recording devices) and computers. Using experience with the Hupa language class as a guide, the steps involved in preparing a language lesson are:

Create a Context for Language:

- Establish a Setting
- Tape Record Relevant Information

Present a Language Lesson in the Classroom:

- Make Literal Translations
- Explain the Translation Process
- Document Translations
- Move on from One Task to the Next
- Introduce Practice Activities
- Bring in Rewards

Develop a Series of Lessons:

- Decide on Topics or Stories for Future Lessons
- Design Instructional Objectives
- Keep Thinking of New Ideas

Over six years, class members developed more than one hundred topic-centered or story lessons based on Hupa expressions and vocabulary having cultural relevance, including topics as diverse as “light,” “work and school,” and “birthing” having significance for Hupa people, each approved by elders. The stories are Hupa narratives from an era when animals could communicate with one another and creation was evolving in preparation for the coming of the current indigenous people. In addition, more than 10,500 Hupa-English words and phrases have been entered into a dictionary database.

In discussing the lesson-building process, examples are given in the Hupa language. Readers are encouraged to substitute examples suitable to their particular language.

Create a Context for Language

Establish a Setting: A setting for tape-recording is any place where language use will occur. For Hupa, the weekly community class has provided an ongoing setting. A community class can begin by announcing a topic for the evening. Turn on the audio tape recorder, announce the topic, and write the topic on the chalkboard. When you prepared the topic, you will have also prepared a list of words and expressions relevant to this topic. Write the topic along with these words and expressions on the chalkboard. If the list is complete, hand out a computer-generated list of these words and expressions. Then, introduce each of the words and expressions in English and ask elders and other class members how to say them.

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In the Hoopa community class format, elders decided how to say things in Hupa.. Often the elders found more than one way to say a given expression. A topic for a given lesson varies. Topics ranged from highly specific such as , “The Hupa Jump Dance,” to general such as “Talking to Young Children.” Topics could also be linguistically oriented, such as “Commands At Mealtime.”²

Tape Record Relevant Information: Record with a tape recorder and write down the words. If more than one way is proposed write at least one of the ways. You will have a recording of all of the ways that you can listen to later. In a follow-up session, you can bring this list and present the range of expressions and use this as the basis for discussion.

Present explanations based upon features of the language to the students, which will differ depending on the language. For example, if you were teaching commands relating to passing food in the Hupa language, explanations and examples would be as follows: *Dixwe:di cho:yawhe*, pass it, when we are talking about bread?” Meaning: “How do we say, ‘pass it,’ when we are talking about bread?” Then the elders will answer: “*xowung’awh* [you pass it to him/her (round object)] “Pass it.” or “*which’ing’ yung’awh*” [to me you pass it (round object)] “Pass the bread to me.” Elders in the Hupa language class typically provided more than one response. In the examples above, the expression, *xowung’awh* is a more general expression, stating, “Pass it (to someone),” whereas *which’ing’ yung’awh* states specifically, “Pass it to me.” Both are examples of a command using a classificatory verb. They combine the classificatory verb and the command form ending in -’awh. This ending is appropriate for any round object, and the speaker in this instance identified bread to be round. However, the elder may also answer with other expressions including: “*de:diwiliq’ xowung’awh*” [bread you pass it to him/her (round object)] “Pass the bread to him/her.” or “*de:diwiliq’ which’ing’ yung’awh*” [bread to me you pass it (round object)] “Pass the bread to me.”

All of the above examples are correct. In the last two examples, the command includes the word, “bread.” There are situational differences that determine when one form would be used rather than another form. When there is only bread on the table, there might not be a need to mention bread, whereas a speaker would want to include the word “bread,” when selecting from an array of items on the table.

Other considerations might influence a speaker to use a different classificatory ending. Whereas, the -’awh ending refers to a round object, if the speaker is thinking of the doughy quality of the bread, the ending would be *hiq’* (doughy object). Further, if the bread were in the form of separate slices, and the speaker were thinking of these different objects, the ending is *-liwh* (several) objects). Some illustrative examples follow:

xowutiq’ [pass it to him/her (doughy object)]
“Pass it to him/her.” or
which’ing’ yutiq’ [to me pass it (doughy object)]
“Pass it to me.”

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xowuniliwh [pass it to him/her (several objects)]
“Pass it to him/her.” or
which’ing’ yuniliwh [to me pass it (several objects)]
“Pass it to me.”

Finally, if the speaker were requesting the basket the bread was being served in, but the bread is all gone, the speaker would request,

xowuntiwih {pass it to him/her (long object)]
“Pass it to him/her.” or
which’ing’ yuntiwih [to me pass it (long object)]
“Pass it to me.”

In the Hupa verb classificatory scheme, the ending –tiwh for long objects, includes empty baskets regardless of their shape. Thus, there are more forms a speaker might use.

Present a language lesson in the classroom

Make Literal Translations: Using supported text, beneath each indigenous language expression write the literal English translation. Beneath this, write the free English translation. This builds in a way of discussing the grammar of the expressions.

In Hupa there are many expressions for one English expression as simple as “everyone sit down,” which can confuse students. Hupa is descriptive, and there are frequently more than one way to say a simple expression. In addition, a simple expression can be interpreted different ways. There is only one letter difference in English, for example, between the phrases, “Everyone sit down,” and “Everyone sits down,” but a difference in meaning between a command and a reported event. And, if there are five ways to describe a definite act, there are sometimes many more ways to describe one word. For example, the word “day,” can be said in the following ways: *Xatt’e’ding yisxa:n*, *yitxay*, *jingkyohding*, *de:je:nis*, *xa:t xoling*, *xatt’e’ding silinteht*, and *xohtiq’ay tehsyay*.³ For the benefit of second language speakers, it is important to explain the various meanings of the native words. In Hupa, this process begins with partitioning the elder’s oral language into written words and writing down the literal meanings of words and parts of words. *Aht’ine* means “everyone,” while *no:nohdit* means “you all sit down.”

Hupa verbs have conglomerate parts consisting of pronouns, directional prefixes, verb stems, and identifiers for person, tense, and number. Some of the syllables in the Hupa verb are recognizable as syllables filling in the place of the form. In the Hupa verb *no:nohdil*, the parts are as follows: *No:* is the part of the verb that means “down” *noh-* is the pronoun “you all” and *-dil* is the plural present stem for “sit down.” But in the verb, *no:ninde:t’*, they sat down, *no:* means “down,” *nin-* takes the place of the standard 3rd person plural form “*ya-*,” and *-de:t’* is the plural past stem for “sit down.”

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Explain the Translation Process: As you are writing down the literal translations, explain the components of the translation process. Avoid confusion when presenting component parts of words by explaining that literal meanings of native words do not necessarily make it possible to predict free English translations. Present illustrations as they come up, for example in Hupa: *wha:na'a:k'iditwut* (for me-throw it in) or "Pour it for me." This expression can be a request for something to be poured, as when someone wants their coffee cup filled. The literal translation, "throw it in," leads to the free translation, "pour it for me, only to someone familiar with Hupa idioms.

There are many common Hupa expressions such as the one above where meaning is not apparent from literal translation and many words translate metaphorically. Computers make the process of translation easier. With *Word*, or another word-processing program, develop a format for supported text. Think of creating translations in layers. If you follow a supported text format, there will be three layers consisting of the native word, followed by a literal English translation, and then a free English translation.

To create visual clarity with a supported text, vary font type, font typeset, font size, and font color in arranging text. Arrange the text with native language and translations either in a vertically or horizontally.⁴ Use supported text in language lessons, on flashcards, and in dictionaries.

Document Translations: To make language work accessible, put together a language dictionary database. Use *Corel Paradox* or another infinitely expanding database format. Create printed dictionaries in a variety of formats suitable for complicated dictionary entries, including colored entries, and consider the option for adding illustrations and photos. *Paradox* will re-sort data with one click of the mouse that will create a Native Language-English or an English-Native Language dictionary. For cross-referencing database entries, *Paradox* will link dictionary entries to other databases. Provide instructions to students for using the database, such as the following:

- Designing database with designated number of characters for each of three categories: Free English translation, Hupa verb or Hupa noun, and literal English translation
- Entering words according to the three designated categories contained in the *Word* files into the *Paradox* database:
- Sorting after adding a group of words to restore alphabetical order. Sort to arrange the database alphabetically by Hupa words if you are looking for a Hupa word or phrase. Then follow the same procedure as for an English word in the Free English translation category.
- Writing instructions to database users so that they will have a guide to the specific design of your database.

Move On from One Task to the Next: After one set of expressions, then go on to the next expression. Keep the lesson on track while being respectful to elders' contributions to a current expression. Allow students to question the el-

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ders on various aspects of the translation. Ask if others have questions, check in the Hupa language dictionary, and then move on to the next expression

Introduce Practice Activities: When there are few or no questions from students, practice activities are a way to get participation. Practice activities require a facilitator and often helpers and involve the entire class. A sample practice activity for a lesson on “Commands at Mealtime,” is a practice activity centered on food. Instructions are as follows: Divide the class into three tables and pairs students at each table. Place food items at each table, as well as place settings. Ask for two students to volunteer as helpers. Give the pair a command and a response. The command and response can include expressions previously introduced, such as variations of the Hupa verb form *xowung’awh*, “pass me,” for the command. The response can be simply, *jo’*.

Have one student speak the command and the other speak the response. Then ask for other pairs and repeat the command and response routine. Then add other words to the practice routine. Instruct the first student (S1) in the pair to say “*tehqonch’e’ xowungxawh*” [salt you pass it (filled container) to him/her] or “Pass the salt.” And instruct the second student (S2) to answer “*jo’tehqonch’e’*” (here salt) or “Here is the salt.”

Give each pair in the room has an opportunity to practice this command and response. After a few demonstration practices, ask the pairs at the tables to practice simultaneously with the commands and responses he has written on the board. Another example follows: S1: “*which’ing’ yungxawh*” toward me you pass it/Pass it to me.” (pointing to juice pitcher). S2: “*jo’ nich’ing*” “Here toward you/Here you are. S1: “*xosah na:lit which’ing’ yungxawh*” her-his mouth-it burns to me pass it (filled container) pepper/Pass the pepper. S2: “*jo’de: xosah na:lit*” here-this her-his mouth-it burns/here pepper/Here is the pepper.

Bring In Rewards: Introduce games, bring out food, or talk about upcoming special events. Especially in a lesson on “Commands at Mealtime,” food is a welcome reward. Include the Indigenous language whenever possible during the reward process. If serving food, for example, introduce Hupa language expressions relating to passing items or words relating to foods or to table settings while serving. While eating, introduce conversation in the Indigenous language.

Develop a series of lessons

Decide on Topics or Stories for Future Lessons: Announce the topic for the next class session and tell students you are giving them something to think about between classes. Thinking of a topic can take some time. A topic needs to capture the interest of the people in the class, and it is more likely to do this if it concerns a central cultural issue. In a few weeks, the class has a series of lessons, each with a topic and including a list of expressions around that topic.

Design Instructional Objectives: Consider objectives in terms of state content area standards. Develop instructional objectives according to grade level. In California, the state’s K-12 Language Arts Curriculum Standards identify instructional objectives applicable to indigenous languages, including, phonemic

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awareness, demonstrating listening comprehension, oral communication, reading accuracy and fluency, writing conventions, and discourse organization.

Specific practice activities accomplish the goal of integrating instructional objectives with program objectives. For example, a language lesson with an activity of passing various types of food and eating accoutrements provides a sociocultural learning context with an opportunity to demonstrate listening comprehension. Students engage in sociocultural learning as they demonstrate their understanding by passing foods and demonstrate oral communication skills using Hupa expressions.

Integrate instructional objectives for the language proficiency areas with program objectives, such as those identified in the research: Getting community attention, increasing quantity of quality language, documenting spoken language, creating sociocultural learning contexts, improving study skills, and expanding comprehension. Integrate these objectives with state curriculum standards. Some states do not have language standards for indigenous languages. In California the applicable standards are those for Language Arts curriculum from Kindergarten through Grade 12.

Keep Thinking of New Ideas: By writing down the expressions from each lesson, compile a group of lessons, including expressions associated with each topic. Put stories into booklets as well as topic-centered expressions. Create activities that correspond to curriculum standards for teaching the indigenous language within Language Arts. Define instructional objectives according to grade level.

Finally, keep on thinking of new ideas to keep the process going. In the Hoopa valley there was a weekly Hupa Language radio show. The show presented translations from Hupa to English, Hoopa valley stories, and weekly Hupa language bingo games. This program encouraged students to think about how to present the language to the community. The efforts of the program's coordinator and teacher resulted in interactive language activities for language students and the community. The program offered incentives for listeners to learn Hupa through bingo games that require winners to speak in Hupa when claiming victory and in order to receive prizes (Supahan, 2001). The radio program featured people from the Hupa Language community class as language speakers. Hupa language speakers present material gleaned from language lessons developed in the community class. This radio show is demonstrated that if a language program responds to community need, it will continue to evolve.

Significance of technology in Hupa language instruction

Technology is available for saving indigenous languages, but acceptance of technology among fluent speakers of an indigenous language influences how successfully technology is used. In the Hupa language program, computers and tape-recorders contributed to lesson preparation and were used in classes. A step-by-step process for preparing and conducting lessons was presented as a guide for indigenous language programs to model. Linking language lessons to objec-

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tives identified in prior research in technology as well as state curriculum standards made language lessons more likely to be accepted by public school educators. Besides looking at prior research, language program designers need to be looking ahead and developing new ideas. The newest idea to involve technology in the Hupa language program is the weekly community radio program.

Notes:

¹There are other Hupa language classes as well. For three years, the tribe, in conjunction with Hoopa Elementary School, a public school on the reservation, conducted Hupa Cultural Arts classes and assisted with Hupa language classes in a six-week summer school. The Elementary School conducts Hupa language classes during the regular school year on a weekly schedule that varied depending on grade level and program. Other tribally sponsored language events are held for children and youth for a few days at a time, including day camps or overnight camps. Hupa is also taught at Hoopa High School where there have been as many as three levels of Hupa Language: Hupa 1, Hupa 2, and Hupa 3. These classes were held daily, with 50 minutes per class devoted to oral and written language.

²A list of topics can be requested from the Ethnographic Researcher, Center for Indian Community Development, Humboldt State University, Arcata, CA 95531

³Xatł'e'ding , morning time, yisxa:n, it dawned, yitxay, it dawns, jingkyohding, daytime, de:je:nis, today, xa:t xoling, still-it becomes, and xatł'e'ding silintehtł, morning time—it is about to be, xohłiq'ay tehsyay, whiteness—it goes along.

⁴Variations for formatting supported text can include varying font type, size, and color and arranging translations in horizontal order.

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Statements made by representatives of least endangered languages at the 1994 Native American Language Issues (NALI) conference held in Glorieta, New Mexico.

My first encounter of people making fun of me for speaking my language was my own Lakota people. The school made it worse. When you teach the language, teach the good and the bad of the language.

—Albert White Hat, Lakota

Christianity has had a devastating effect on our language. We need to talk to people who say they are Christians and do not want the language. We shouldn't say that. Speaking the Navajo language has nothing to do with believing in a different creator. We need people who can understand the elders, so we can learn from them and we need to help them.

—McQueen Redhouse, Navajo

How to Teach when the Teacher Isn't Fluent

Leanne Hinton

The majority of the indigenous languages in our country are no longer being learned at home, and the last generation of native speakers are growing older and older.¹ At the same time, there are increasingly strong efforts by communities to keep their languages alive by developing teaching programs of various sorts in the schools and in the community. The problem is, who will teach the language? Some communities are lucky enough to still have young and middle aged adult speakers who also have or can get training in language teaching practices. But as the speakers age, increasingly, the energy and the burden for language revitalization is among the younger adult generations who are not fluent in their language. It is sad, but it is true, and we can do no less than honor and support those with the drive and the bravery to take on this task. This paper is an attempt to support these efforts by discussing the problem that such heroes must face: how to teach a language when the teacher isn't fluent.

It is very easy for a non-fluent speaker (or often, even a fluent one) to fall back on a form of language-teaching that involves word-lists taught through the written word. This, after all, can be done with extremely minimal knowledge of a language. However, learning words in writing, in isolation, translated and explained in English, is not an effective way to learn a language. If the goal of teaching the language is for children to become conversationally proficient, then it is important to teach conversation. Programs that have been effective in actually producing fluent speakers generally use immersion techniques, where no English is allowed in the classroom, and teaching takes place through conversation in the Native language and other forms of discourse embedded in interesting activities. Such models as Total Physical Response, or even just a combination of rich language input and common sense, tend to be the most successful ways of bringing students to conversational proficiency. How can a non-fluent speaker possibly do this form of teaching?

In order to approach some possible ways that a non-fluent teacher can teach effectively, I will focus primarily on the situation that many communities are in today: there are elderly fluent speakers in the community—too old to teach a class full of energetic children, but still able to be of great help as a partner in language teaching. These elders can also be the “language mentors” to the teachers who are not (yet) fluent. We will call the non-fluent teachers the “teacher-learners,” since they are both teaching and learning the language. These teacher-learners may also frequently utilize the help of linguistic materials that are available in the language, and sometimes enlist the help of linguists as well.²

First of all, if it is at all possible, the teacher-learner should be given the opportunity to spend some months or even years attending to the development of his or her own fluency before intensive teaching duties are foisted upon her (or him). Mentored language learning with an elder is a good way for the future teacher to develop her own conversational fluency (Hinton et al, 2002). Working additionally with linguistic documentation can help with increasing vocabu-

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lary and developing grammatical accuracy. If the trainee must teach, it would be best for the teaching duties to be light for the first year or so, to avoid getting trapped in a situation where so much time must be spent on the development of lesson plans that the teacher cannot attend to her own language development. The more the teacher can develop her language competency and confidence, the easier it will be for her to teach effectively. However, even if the trainee is lucky enough to have a year or so of language learning before she goes into the classroom, she will still probably not be fluent.³

A teacher who is learning the language at the same time will have to select the topics for her learning efficiently, to keep one step ahead of her students. In order to help determine what the teacher-learner might focus on, let us name the typical components of a language lesson, and then go over these one by one—what will be taught in the classroom, and therefore what should be learned in preparation. The most common kind of program right now is a lesson of half an hour to an hour in length. This is not as ideal as a “language survival school,”⁴ where the Native language is the language of instruction, and no English is heard the whole school-day through. However, a half hour or an hour a day is pretty much the maximum that many communities can commit, and is probably the most realistic time period for a non-fluent teacher. Therefore, I will assume this for the purposes of this paper and suggest the following components of the language lesson:

- A. **The lesson proper**—the words or phrases that you are focusing on for a given day, and any activities, tests, etc. that relate to the lesson.
- B. **Rituals**—repetitive language events that will occur every day or at least on a regular basis; for example, greetings, perhaps a daily discussion of the weather, snack time, etc.
- C. **Review** of previous lessons
- D. **Classroom management language**—language such as “Come in,” “Sit down,” “eyes forward,” “listen to me,” “Don’t hit!”, “Everyone take a piece of paper,” “What’s wrong? Why are you crying?” , etc.
- E. **Classroom patter**—the informal language that comes in between everything else.

It is important for all components to take place in the target language rather than have some in English. Often classroom management language and chitchat take place in English even if the other three components are in the target language. To avoid this mistake, the teacher-learner should make a conscious effort to master the use of the target language for *all* components. It may not be possible for a given teacher-learner to do *everything* in the target language; but that should be the *goal*. And one way to reach this goal is to notice whenever you are speaking English and make a mental note that you will ask your language mentor how to say that very thing in the target language. I will now go over the five components in some detail, and discuss how a teacher can manage her own learning process in order to handle each of these components successfully:

A. The lesson proper. There is good news for the teacher-learner: a lesson may consist of only a few words or phrases, which are repeated and practiced through various activities. Wayne and Agnes Holm (2003) suggest that as little as two words could be taught in a lesson. It is extremely common for teachers to try to teach too much in a single lesson, so relax, and just choose a couple of words or phrases that you will focus on in a given day. But what kind of words should they be? Think VERBS! Avoid the common error of focusing on nouns all the time. A person cannot communicate if all he knows is nouns — but give him a few verbs and he can actually do communicative acts. Unlike English, where a sentence has to have a noun or pronoun in it (such as “**He** is sleeping”, most Native American languages can make an entire sentence out of a verb alone. For example, in Havasupai⁵ one way of saying “He (or she) is sleeping” would be **smagyu**. It is just as easy to teach a child a verb as it is to teach him a noun, and when you teach him a verb, he can actually use it to communicate something. The verb **smagyu** is a complete sentence that describes something that is happening. If you had taught your student the word for “chair” instead, he wouldn’t have a way to make a sentence or communicate anything. You can’t just say “chair” and have it be a meaningful communicative event. Here is a part of a lesson that teaches students two verbs, again using Havasupai as an example. This whole lesson would be done entirely orally; no written form of the words are presented to the student. No English would be used in this lesson—the teacher makes herself understood through nonverbal communication. You and the children (let us call them Martha, Horace, and Violet) can use your imagination to expand the class to more students) are sitting on chairs in a circle.

Speaker	Utterance ⁶	Nonverbal communication	Explanation
Teacher	Martha, mskwii!	Teacher looks at Martha and gestures with her hand to communicate that Martha should stand up	Mskwii is a command that translates as “Stand up!”
Martha		Stands up	Student understands because of the gesture. She is not being asked to speak yet
Teacher	(Haniga!) Muwah!	Teacher gestures with her hand to communicate that Martha should sit down	Haniga! =“good!” Muwah! =“sit down!”
Martha		Sits down	
Teacher	Horace, mskwii!	Teacher now turns to Horace and gestures	
Horace		Stands up	
Teacher	(Haniga!) Muwah!		

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Speaker	Utterance	Nonverbal communication	Explanation
Horace		Sits down	
Teacher			Same commands repeated to Violet and other students
Teacher	Martha, mskwii!	This time the teacher does not use gestures, to see if the student can understand the command	
Martha		Stands up	
Teacher			Tell Martha to sit down again, then do the same sequence with Horace. But then:
Teacher	Violet, mswkii!		
Violet		Stands up	
Teacher	Mskwii!		This is a trick. The Students may not really be listening; they just know that when the teacher says something they stand; when she says something else, they sit. But now the teacher has just told a standing student to stand!
Violet		Probably starts to sit	
Teacher	(Eeeh! Opa! M'eva!) Mskwii!	Smiles, points to her ear when she says "M'eva!" ("Listen!"); gives gesture to stand up when she says "Mskwii!"	Eeeh means something like "Ha ha, gotcha!" Opa = "no," M'eva means "Listen!"
Violet		Stands up	
Teacher	Mskwii!	(No gesture this time)	
Violet		This time Violet probably stands her ground	Now the students are really listening. They won't make the same mistake Violet made.

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The teacher continues to go around the class playing this game, where the student must actually listen to the word being said in order to follow the command correctly. Sometimes while the student is sitting, the teacher will say “Stand!”, but other times she’ll say “Sit!” After doing this for a little while, the students have truly learned to distinguish between the two commands as they hear them.

Next, the teacher begins to get the students themselves to say the words, and tell *her* (and afterwards, other students) what to do. Here’s how this part might go:

Speaker	Language	Nonverbal communication	Explanation
Teacher	Horace, (Maj ñimjgnaja) “muwah!” “Muwah.”	This new exercise needs lots of gestures at first. While saying “you tell me,” point to Horace with your lips (this is the Havasupai way of pointing at someone), then point to yourself with your finger.	“Horace, you tell me: Muwah!’ ‘Muwah!’” ⁷

If this is the very first lesson that the students have ever received in the language, it may take a couple of minutes before they understand that they are now expected to tell *you* what to do. For this first attempt to get someone to speak, choose a student who is not shy or easily intimidated. This command may have to be repeated, and said in different ways before Horace understands and responds appropriately. It is important that the teacher *not* switch into English here. Just keep trying in different ways, always speaking in the Native language and using nonverbal communication to get the student to say “**muwah!**” Then the moment he says it, the teacher sits down (as she was just told to do by the student), and praises the student. Then look at the next student and tell that student to get you to stand up. Continue at least part way around the room, or if there are really only three students, continue all the way around the room a few times. After a bit, stop verbally telling the students which command to use, and just gesture that they should speak. If they can say the right thing without hearing you tell them what to say first, they are well on the way toward mastering these words.

Then change it again—get the students to tell *each other* what to do. You can do this first by using another flurry of gestures as you speak, to get Violet to understand that she is supposed to say one of the commands to Horace, and then get Horace to say a command to Martha, and so on. This is a time where you and the students can improvise a bit. Have a student say more than one command to the next student, such as “Sit!”, then, “Stand!”, then, “Sit!” If one student starts playing the game you were playing earlier, of saying “sit!” to a student who is

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already sitting, laugh along with the class, praise the creative student, and help get that game going. And/or, have one student come to the front of the room and be the teacher for awhile, telling the students what to do. Or have the students break into pairs or small groups, and have them practice the verbs independently. Or take out a couple of hand puppets, put them on your hands and demonstrate one telling the other what to do, and the other responding to the commands; then pass around the hand puppets and have the students perform.

To summarize, then, this is all you need to do for this one lesson. This lesson and a couple of rituals (such as greetings and goodbyes) can take the whole period by itself. In order to do this lesson, the teacher doesn't have to know all that much language—she only has to know the *right* language. Thus in preparation for the lesson, she needed to learn from her mentor (or from written materials) the following words and phrases:

Muwah! “Sit down!”

Mswkii! “Stand up!”

and for the classroom management talk and chit-chat, she needed

Haniga! “Good!”

M'eva! “Listen!”

mij “say it!”

(Maj) nyimgwaawa! “You speak!” (The pronoun **maj** “you” is only used for emphasis or contrast; the rest of the time, this command, like the others, can be used without the pronoun.)

Opa! “No!”

Eeh! joking exclamation

The teacher could handle this lesson knowing only 8 words and phrases — 2 for the lesson proper, and 6 more for classroom management and patter. But she must truly *know* these words in order to do this class — she cannot teach this class effectively by looking at the words on paper; she must know them by heart, just as she is trying to get the students to do. She can only come to know the words well by practicing them, either alone, or with her mentor, or with friends, relatives or colleagues that she can capture for awhile.

The next lesson would build on this one, perhaps with just one or two other verbs thrown in, such as “Turn around!” and “Walk!” Either in the second lesson or soon thereafter, the teacher will start using a different form of the words:

'wa'yu “I'm sitting.”

'skwii'yu “I'm standing.”

And to make this lesson work, she needs to know a question:

Gwe gmwiingmi? “What are you doing?”

In this lesson, she first introduces the two new verb forms, **'wa'yu** and **'skwii'yu** by demonstration. She sits when she says **'wa'yu** and stands when she says **'skwii'yu**. Then she gives the command form to Violet, **Mskwii!** and then, shrugging shoulders and giving other appropriate gestures to indicate that she is asking a question, she asks **Gwe gmwingwi?** Violet won't understand yet, so the teacher will tell her what to answer—**"'skwii'yu"**. So this lesson will have many different activities just like the last one, and by the end of it the students should be able to understand the difference between commands and first person verbs, and be able to use them appropriately (for these two verbs, anyway). Note that you are teaching them grammar—how to form a command and how to put a verb into first person. But you are not teaching it through English explanations, but rather through actually using the language. At first the students are just mimicking the words without understanding their grammatical structure, but eventually you will be able to give them a new verb in command form, and then ask them what they are doing, and they will respond in the first person form correctly even though they never heard you say it. When that happens, they know the grammar!

And one more step: in another lesson, if Horace is standing, look at Violet, gesture toward Horace, and ask Violet **"gwe wigwi?"** (meaning "What is s/he doing?") and start teaching the third-person form of the verbs in this manner (The answer Violet will learn to say is **"skwiikyuu."** meaning "He is standing up."). Note something else about the lessons that you are giving in this manner: the students are learning how to actually communicate with you and with each other in the language. Since communicating in the language is the ultimate goal, you have already reached that goal in the very first lesson, albeit in a limited way.

So you see, now, that what this means for the teacher's own learning process is that she must work with her language mentor or her language materials to learn verbs (and classroom management language and patter, but we'll talk about that in sections C and D). Learn the command forms of a lot of verbs first and master them by practicing with your mentor just like you will later do in the classroom. Have your mentor tell you what to do; then tell her what to do. Play games with hand puppets; bring in friends and practice on them; do anything you can think of to use those commands. Later, start learning the first person forms of the verbs, and questions like "What are you doing?" which allows a short conversation to ensue between two people. Once you know the command forms and first-person forms of a lot of verbs, start learning and using the third person forms ("He/she is standing, etc."). Probably it is best to just focus on these three forms—commands, first person and third person—for quite a while. Don't bother with the plural forms (which, unlike English, will probably be different from the verbs in singular), or for the lesser-used "You are standing," etc. You'll want to learn all these eventually, but you can go through months of lessons without teaching them to the children.

What about nouns, you say? Well, sure, you can and must insert nouns into your lessons, but you will always be talking about nouns inside full sentences.

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So when you are teaching nouns—let’s say animal names—have stuffed animals or pictures of the animals present, and you’ll be saying things like this (pretend the next sequence is all in Havasupai or in your language, not in English):

“This is a **coyote**.” (hold up the stuffed coyote toy)

“Violet, take the coyote.” (handing her the stuffed toy)

“Give the coyote to Horace.” (said with appropriate gestures)

“Horace, bring the coyote to the table and put it down.”

(Have a second animal that you teach the name of at the same time, and then;)

“Martha, is this a coyote?” (pointing to a bear); Martha says “No.”

“Is this a coyote?” (pointing to the coyote); Martha says “Yes.”

and later:

“Horace, is this a bear or a coyote?” (pointing to the coyote as you say it); Horace answers “Coyote”.

Later still, you might have several copies each of a picture of a bear and of a coyote, with some of them sitting, some standing, some sitting, etc.

“Violet, do you want a bear or a coyote?”

Violet might answer “Coyote,” and so you give her a picture. Once you have gone around the room and everyone has a picture, you can ask

“Martha, what is the coyote doing?” and Martha might answer “He’s running.”

So even when you are teaching nouns, the verbs are prominent in the lesson. Thus when the teacher is developing her own knowledge of the language in order to teach it, she should learn verbs that will help her talk about nouns—verbs like “put,” “give,” “bring,” “shake,” “throw,” “drop,” and so on. The verbs that we discussed above, like “stand” and “sit,” can also be used to describe what the animals are doing.

All this just scratches the surface of what kinds of things you will teach, and therefore learn in advance—but the main points here are these:

1. You only need to teach two or three new words in a given lesson
2. Focus on verbs a lot
3. Teach with a great deal of repetition, achieving it through many different activities
4. Learn from your mentor in the same way you will teach

B. Rituals. Verbal rituals are very pleasant, because their repetitive nature means that after awhile the language comes automatically and easily. However, don’t get complacent: classroom rituals are also great occasions for new learning as well. Let us take the example of a greeting. At first you might teach children how to say “How are you?” “I’m fine” in the target language. But that can also be expanded to other emotions, such as “I’m sad,” “I’m hungry,” “I’m

tired," "I'm angry," "I'm happy," etc. So after the children have developed a mastery of "How are you?" "I'm fine?", you could start adding these other responses, teaching them through facial expressions and gestures, and games such as having a bunch of cards with a face on each one showing such emotions as happiness, sadness or anger, passing them out to the children, and when someone asks them "How are you?" they must respond by naming the emotion shown on the card.

If you do role call, use some language there too, beyond peoples' names. Instead of just calling out names, try learning how to say something like "Violet, are you here?" in the target language, and teach the students to respond with something like "I'm here," or "No, she's not here."

Another ritual would be to talk about the weather. Teach the children the words for various weather patterns (using pictures, not translations), such as sunny, rainy, snowy, windy, etc., and make it a daily ritual to ask the students to tell you what the weather is like outside. (Ancillary activities can include putting up a calendar and having a student put a sticker on the appropriate day showing which weather-type it is today; later you can talk with the students about how many sunny days there have been this month, and so on.)

So for the teacher-learner, you can figure out what rituals will be taking place in your class—greetings, goodbyes, weather, perhaps putting coats away, having a snack, and so on—and try to learn everything you can that relates to the rituals. For weather, besides learning to say "It's sunny," "It's raining," etc., you would also need to learn how to ask questions like "What's the weather like today?" Don't overwhelm yourself by trying to learn all the language about all the rituals right away; just master one, then add another, etc.

Another way you can learn to do linguistic rituals is for you and your mentor to develop your own. Of course you will greet each other, perhaps get a chair, make some coffee, get out a pencil and paper, etc. All of these are rituals that you can learn the verbal aspects of in your language. For getting a chair, learn how to say "Sit down," or "Let me get you a chair," or "Bring that chair over here," or "Are you comfortable?" and so on. Make sure that as the learner, you are part of the coffee-making ritual if that is part of the mentor's day. Ask the mentor to tell you what to do to make the coffee (in the Native language, not in English!), ask her if she would like some coffee, if she would like sugar, if she would like cream—later ask if she wants more, or if you can take her cup to the kitchen, etc.

C. Review. For the teacher-learner, once again there is good news. One reason why you only need to teach a few new phrases per lesson is that a class also needs a great deal of review. It takes a lot of repetition for students to master new material, and more repetition to make sure they don't forget it once it is learned. So make sure that every day they are given opportunity to practice what they learned before.

Review need not be separate from the lesson proper, but instead can be part of it. For example, if yesterday you taught the class "stand up" and "sit down," today you can do the same kinds of activities and add "hop" and "turn around"

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to the list. You might play a game like “Simon says” (which would usually be turned into something like “Coyote says”) with the growing set of verbs. We also saw that if you are teaching nouns, such as animal names, you can provide additional practice of the verbs by asking what the animal is doing. Thus everything you do in class combines old and new vocabulary, and therefore constitutes both review and new learning at the same time.

The implications for the teacher’s own learning are mainly that you should always think up new activities that will allow review, in order to keep the review interesting, and so you would need to learn the vocabulary and phrases that will go with the new activities. For example, if you decide to review the verbs through a new game such as “Coyote says,” you’d have to learn how to say phrases like “Coyote says ‘stand up’”. These are *formulas*: the formula in this case is “Coyote says “_____”, and then you just put in whatever vocabulary you like. (In Havasupai, it would be **Hatbaahj** “_____” **’ig’i**, where the verb for “say” comes after the quote.) Perhaps you are going to have a test where you have pictures of animals doing various things, and you will ask the students to circle the correct picture—then you have to learn how to say “Which coyote is sitting?”

D. Classroom management language. A common problem in language-teaching is that the lesson might all be in the Native language, but the teacher might break into English whenever some discipline issue comes up, or some other event that is outside the lesson proper. Since the goal is for *everything* in the classroom to take place in the Native language, not in English, one thing the teacher-learner should focus a good deal of time on learning is *classroom management language*. I mentioned a few such utterances in the sample lesson above—words like “Good!” or “Listen!” or “Draw a circle around the right answer” are examples of classroom management language. Here are a few of the many classroom management utterances that Juliette Blevins (2003) put in a delightful manual for the Yurok tribe for preschool teaching.

‘oyekwi’! ¹⁸	Hello!
‘o’lomah!	Come on in!
Chini neskwewchoo’m!	You’re early!
Nohse’nes k’e-ch’wona’.	Take off your coat.
Wonik soo’nes k’e-chewes!	Raise your hand!
Chpe’royos!	Listen!
Mos komchowok’.	I don’t understand.
Skuyaapele’m.	You are being good.
Ch’umey ‘we-noorew ku k’e-kwrhl!	How pretty your picture is!
Kowecho pelemew!	Don’t fight!
Noson k’e-chwegin!	Stop it!
Cho’chpurko’m!	Be careful!
Kiti ‘ahke’m hes’	Do you need to pee?
Kich ‘i roo ki ‘ne-kemeye’moh.	It’s time for us to go home.
Chuu’.	Goodbye.
Kowecho kahselume’m k’e-ch’wona’.	Don’t forget your coat.

It would be wonderful for every language program to develop a phrase-book with phrases like this for the teachers to learn. As this illustrates, one thing the teacher-learner needs to focus on with the language mentor is all the various utterances that will need to be said for classroom management. The more you can learn before you start teaching, the better. Once again, though, it is not enough to put these phrases down in a list—you must actually *know* them, and be able to use them spontaneously when the situation arises. Mastering the utterances well enough to be able to respond to emergencies (e.g. “Horace, don’t hit!!” or “Quick, run to the bathroom!”) takes a lot of practice, and practicing them with your mentor through various kinds of role-playing and fantasy scenarios will help enormously.

But things are certain to come up in the classroom that you didn’t expect and that you don’t know the response language for. In those cases you can try to respond non-verbally, but sometimes you may be forced to switch to English. If you do, get right back into the Native language immediately. The moments when you find a situation you don’t know the language for are important to keep track of; those utterances are the very next thing you are going to ask your mentor about. Keep a pocket notebook handy to jot down words and phrases that you must ask your mentor about the next time you get together.

E. Chit-chat or classroom patter. There is not a strong distinction between classroom management language and classroom patter; some phrases have both functions. But in general, classroom patter is the hardest component for the non-fluent teacher-learner, because it is generally improvised and not focused on any particular formula. It is the kind of language that we put between everything else—things like “Let’s see, what shall we do now?” or “Well, I had an adventure yesterday....” Classroom patter in the target language may not be possible for a non-fluent teacher, especially at first. The only way I can see for a teacher-learner to get good at classroom patter is to practice informal conversation with the mentor. So every time the two of you get together, spend some time just talking about things in your Native language. Have your mentor tell you little tales of things s/he did yesterday or when she was young, to develop your understanding. Learn how to talk about places you’ve gone or meals you’ve cooked, or some plan you are making for a trip, or something that happened to you when you were a child.

Also, learn from your mentor what to say when you don’t know what to say! In English, we have “hesitation words” like “Um,” or “Let’s see,” or “Well,....” We also might use words like “So,” “and” or “but” after a pause, or even something like “Okay”. What do native speakers of your language say in situations like that? There is a whole range of vocabulary items called “discourse markers” that include these hesitation words, and other things that come in between sentences. Interestingly, it is very common for people who are otherwise fluent in their Native language to slip into English for these discourse markers. Wouldn’t it be great to learn how to use them in your language rather than English?

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Storytelling.

One kind of “lesson proper” is storytelling. Even a non-fluent speaker can tell a story, although it may not have the rich fluency of a story told by a native speaker. Think in “units” consisting of several or many sessions, rather than just miscellaneous lessons. A story can be a unit for weeks or months. My colleague Nancy Richardson Steele (Karuk) incorporates storytelling into her curriculum. The following sketch of how you can use storytelling is based on her work:

- a. Have your mentor tell you a story, and record it. Ask her to translate it for you. You won’t use this story in your class for a long time, but it will be a reference for you as you develop your unit.
- b. Learn vocabulary associated with the story. For example, there is a Karuk story that Nancy Steele uses in her language classes. The story is about Robin, whose mother wanted him to marry, and she kept bringing in girls wearing traditional skirts made out of different things: pine nuts, abalone, juniper berries, etc. To teach this story, one would learn vocabulary and simple sentences relating to these themes: e.g. how did the story talk about “getting married”, and how would you say the different items like “pine nuts,” “abalone,” “skirt”—how do you say “Robin?” Learn simple sentences like “The man and the woman are getting married.” “The girl is wearing a skirt.” “The skirt is made of abalone.”
- c. Incorporate the vocabulary and sentences into lessons. In a lesson about clothing, include the name of the traditional skirt. When talking about birds, include Robin. Bring in abalone shell pieces, pine nuts, and juniper berries and teach the names of those. Bring in pictures of people doing different things, and have one of them be of two people getting married.
- d. One day, tell the story in English—perhaps using the Indian words for the vocabulary the students have already learned, such as Robin, skirt, abalone, etc. Ask the students to make pictures about the different parts of the story (e.g. Robin’s mother telling him she wants him to get married; a girl coming in wearing an abalone dress; another girl wearing a juniper berry dress; etc.). Have them practice the words that they know in the language that are part of the picture. Collect those pictures for use in the next steps.
- e. Play the Native language recording of the story, while showing the picture; the memory of having heard it in English along with seeing the sequence of pictures will help them understand the story. Afterwards ask them what words they heard that they know. From then on, play the story occasionally when students are arriving, or having snacktime or drawing or doing some other quiet activity.
- f. Meanwhile, you are building up your own knowledge, week by week, of how to tell the story (in simple sentences, probably—not exactly the way the speaker might have told it). Keep incorporating more vocabulary, phrases and sentences from the story into your activities.
- g. For a special occasion, the speaker can come to class and tell the story herself, while you show the pictures in sequence. (The speaker is a very

- special person, so make sure the students do special things for her, greeting her in the language, bringing her snacks, etc.)
- h. Develop a play with your class, which will be narrated and performed by the students. Over a period of time, the students can work on making puppets or costumes, backdrops, etc., and develop the lines that everyone will be using.
 - i. Invite parents and community and perform it!

Conclusion

In this paper, I have tried to give some basic ideas of how to teach conversational language, and how a teacher who is not fluent in the language could develop effective lessons. The key points for good language teaching are to:

1. Speak in the language as much as possible, and avoid switching to English to translate what you are saying, focusing instead on nonverbal communication to make yourself understood;
2. Focus on teaching just a few words per lesson; vary the activities in your lesson and in subsequent lessons to allow lots of practice of the vocabulary and sentences;
3. Make sure that the communication outside the lesson proper is in the target language as much as possible. Don't switch to English for classroom management talk and teacher patter;
4. Use language rituals—things your class talks about every day, such as greetings, or the weather, or snack time. These are helpful in part because they are real communication, thus giving your language a role to play in the community;
5. The teacher-learner should work with a fluent elder to learn the language necessary for a given lesson. Whenever the teacher-learner realizes in the classroom that she doesn't know how to say something, retain it in memory or jot in down, and ask the language mentor how to say it.

Finally, language teaching is hard whether you are fluent or not. And for the non-fluent teacher there is a great deal of preparation to do in advance of the lesson. But the reward comes both inside and outside the classroom, when you hear children greeting each other or otherwise using their ancestral language out in the air.

Notes

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²Sometimes there are no fluent speakers at all, and a teacher has written or taped documentation as the only resource. I will not focus on that situation here, but much of material I will talk about here could be learned by the teacher-learner from written documents.

³“Passive speakers” or “latent speakers” as they are sometimes called (Basham & Fathman, 2001) may surprise themselves at how much they learn in a year, though; there is much knowledge there, and it only needs to be activated.

⁴In a bill currently before the Senate, Resolution 575, the term “language survival school” is introduced, and defined as a school “that provides a complete education through a Native American language with the specific goal of strengthening, revitalizing, or reestablishing a Native American language and culture as a living language and culture of daily life.” These are also often called language immersion schools.

⁵Havasupai is a American Indian language spoken in Northern Arizona. I spent a number of years studying Havasupai, and I am thankful for all I was taught there. However, I am by no means a fluent speaker, so my attempts to create lessons in Havasupai should serve as a good model of teaching by a non-fluent speaker! I am sure I have made some grammatical and spelling errors, for which I hope I will be forgiven, as any non-fluent teacher hopes to be forgiven.

⁶Words in parentheses are part of classroom management language or chit-chat (see D and E) and are not the words actually being focused on in the lesson. But by inserting this extra speech to the extent that the teacher is able, the language input is enriched, and the students are unconsciously learning some of the extra vocabulary being introduced in this way.

⁷This isn’t entirely correct grammar; a direct quotation is normally ended with the word *mic!* “Say it!” But I find that if I include that, students try to copy the *mic* along with the rest of the quote. So for the first few rounds, I just leave off *mic*, but start putting it in softly once the students have understood and started repeating after me.

⁸This is the linguistic version of Yurok spelling. Blevins is presently redoing the manual using the Yurok official writing system.

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**Preparing Indigenous Language Advocates,
Teachers, and Researchers in Western Canada**
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Language is the outward expression of an accumulation of learning and experience shared by a group of people over centuries of development. It is not simply a vocal symbol; it is a dynamic force, which shapes the way a man looks at the world, his thinking about the world and his philosophy of life. Knowing his maternal language helps a man to know himself; being proud of his language helps a man to be proud of himself. (National Indian Brotherhood, 1972, pp. 14-15)

As is evident in this statement, the Indigenous peoples of Canada recognize the value of their languages and have been concerned for some time about the possibility of the loss of this resource. Our intentions in this paper are to discuss the context of Indigenous language education in Western Canada, the hope of language revitalization, and the role of the Canadian Indigenous Languages and Literacy Development Institute (CILLDI) in the reclamation and stabilization of these languages. We outline the goals of the Institute; describe its development, administration, and funding; give examples of curriculum and pedagogy; and discuss how they are contributing to the development of these “languages as resources” (Ruiz, 1990). Finally, our ongoing issues and concerns will be addressed.

In the Western Canadian provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan the shortage of teachers, curriculum developers, researchers, and community linguists prepared to work in Indigenous language education is critical. Although there have been Indigenous teacher education programs at several of the universities and community-based programs in these provinces since the 1970s, with the exception of the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College at the University of Regina, limited attention has been paid to the preparation of bilingual and biliterate teachers (Ahenakew, Blair, & Fredeen, 1994).

During the 1970s and early 1980s many of the bilingual graduates of these programs taught in provincial, federal, and band-administered schools where the children came to school speaking their mother tongue. At that time many of these bilingual teachers used both their mother tongue and English to assist the children in their English language acquisition through ESL instruction and programming. Indigenous languages were also taught as a subject in some schools (Littlejohn & Fredeen, 1993). During the early to mid 1970s there was an interest in Indigenous language and bilingual program development (Lac La Ronge Indian Band, 1983; Manitoba Department of Education, 1975). Several bilingual-bicultural programs were initiated following the publication of the National Indian Brotherhood position paper “Indian Control of Indian Education” in 1972, in which the authors acknowledged the importance of these languages and petitioned for support for Indigenous languages in schools:

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While much can be done by parents in the home and by the community on the reserve to foster facility in speaking and understanding, there is a great need for formal instruction in the language. There are two aspects to this language instruction: (1) teaching in the native language, and (2) teaching the native language.” (p. 15)

At approximately the same time there was a growing awareness of bilingualism and Indigenous languages in the United States. The Rough Rock Demonstration School (Menninger, 1968) and Rock Point Community School (Vorih & Rosier, 1978) were recognized as models for programming that could benefit the retention of Indigenous languages. Some community members from Western Canadian schools visited these schools in Arizona and brought back ideas that they thought they could implement in their communities and schools.

Over the past three decades the Canadian language context has changed radically, and the children from most of these First Nations communities were no longer coming to school with much, if any, fluency in their Mother tongue (Blair & Fredeen, 1995; Government of Canada, 1996; Saskatchewan Indigenous Languages Committee, 1991). Many teachers working in First Nations schools stopped using Indigenous languages for classroom instruction as they had in the previous years and reverted to English as the primary language of instruction. It was thought that if these children were no longer mother tongue Indigenous language speakers and English was no longer a second language, then why not just use English? The changes were slow, and few community members recognized that their languages were at risk (Blair, 1997). This language shift, similar to that which has taken place among many minority language communities throughout the world (Wurm, 1991), placed these languages at the extreme risk of disappearing. Currently, in many schools in Western Canada the Indigenous languages continue to be taught primarily as a core subject or second language, with 40 to 90 minutes of instruction per week.

During the mid 1990s and with the publication of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People (Government of Canada, 1996), there has been a growing recognition in Western Canada of the urgent need for preservation of Canada's Indigenous languages, many of which face extinction if current trends continue. Over the past five years, there have been several Indigenous language immersion programs (Billy, 2000; Blair, 1997; Bull, personal communication, October 2, 2002; Jimmy, personal communication, September 16, 2002; McKay-Carrier, personal communication, September 19, 2002; Seegerts, 2002) springing up in Western Canada, and it has become evident that we need to provide speakers, teachers, community linguists, language planners, and curriculum developers for these programs if they are to be successful and these languages are to be maintained.

The newly founded CILLDI is our effort to address the issue of Indigenous language revitalization in Western Canada through providing summer courses to prepare teachers, researchers, and advocates to work in these Indigenous communities. Planning for the revitalization of these languages will require exper-

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tise and action to address the status of the languages, the corpus of the languages, the preparation for implementing appropriate programming, and the research and evaluation of these endeavors (Ruiz, 1994).

The emergence of CILLDI

The Canadian Indigenous Languages and Literacy Development Institute was established in 1999 by a collective of language advocates and educators who saw the need for continued professional development for First Nations people as they struggle to stabilize their languages and provide effective language programs in communities throughout Alberta and Saskatchewan.

The CILLDI Advisory council members¹ recognized the need to provide opportunities for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians to gain the linguistic, language, culture, and pedagogical expertise to work toward the preservation, development, and promotion of the Indigenous languages of Western Canada. The members of this council believed that Indigenous languages are extremely valuable resources and central to the retention of Indigenous knowledge. Battiste (2000), a well-known Canadian Indigenous scholar, said it this way:

Aboriginal languages are the means of communication for the full range of human experiences, and they are critical to the survival of the culture and political integrity of any people. These languages are a direct and powerful means of understanding the legacy of tribal knowledge. They provide the deep and lasting cognitive bonds that affect all aspects of Aboriginal life. Through sharing a language, Aboriginal people create a shared belief in how the world works and what constitutes proper action. The sharing of these common ideals creates a collective cognitive experience for tribal societies that is understood as tribal epistemology. (p. 199)

In both provinces several agencies such as the Indigenous Languages Retention Committee in Saskatchewan (Okimasis & Wolvengray, 1999) and the Departments of Education in Alberta and Saskatchewan have been taking on new initiatives to support languages and raise the awareness among those working in this field. The Retention Committee has provided some support for local and regional language festivals, newsletters, and supplementary materials production such as CDs and audiotapes of Indigenous languages and songs. The Departments of Education have begun to coordinate Indigenous languages curriculum across Western Canada. The CILLDI Advisory Council, recognizing these efforts, saw the need for a coordinated effort on a larger scale and began to look at the professional needs of language teachers and community language leaders in the adjacent provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta. This council saw the need for postsecondary education opportunities for individuals working in schools, community agencies, and postsecondary institutions. Several of the council members attended the American Indian Languages Development Insti-

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tute (AILDI) in Tucson, Arizona, and the Annual Stabilizing Indigenous Language Conferences, and through these efforts recognized the need for a coordination of efforts at home. CILLDI was modeled on the American counterpart, AILDI, which had started 20 years earlier when community members and teachers from Peach Springs in Northern Arizona, who were in the process of initiating an Indigenous language program in their school, recognized their need “to use linguistic knowledge to improve curriculum and practice in Indian schools” (McCarty, Watahomigie, Yamamoto, & Zepeda, 1997, p. 85). This group attended the first Yuman Languages Institute at San Diego State University, and AILDI was one of the outcomes. AILDI has provided a valuable professional development opportunity for many Canadians involved in Indigenous language over the years, and the CILLDI council members believed that it was time to look at ways to provide this for our people at home.

The Canadian Indigenous Languages and Literacy Development Institute Advisory Council’s efforts were also inspired by the work of individuals such as Dr. Freda Ahenakew, a Cree linguist and recipient of the Order of Canada, and Dr. Verna Kirkness, a Cree scholar and language advocate. Dr. Ahenakew’s extensive linguistic research and her publications have contributed significantly to the body of work in this field (Ahenakew, 1987; Ahenakew & Wolfart, 1992; Wolfart & Ahenakew, 1998). Dr. Kirkness, as a teacher, teacher educator, curriculum consultant, and language advocate, has been an inspiration and mentor for many Indigenous language teachers across Western Canada (Kirkness, 1998). These two Indigenous language advocates assisted us in understanding the importance and magnitude of the work we needed to do.

At CILLDI we believe that the knowledge inherent in Indigenous languages and cultures and the voice of Indigenous people is critical for the maintenance of linguistic and cultural diversity in Western Canada and that the loss of these languages and cultures will have dire consequences for both the Indigenous groups and Canadian society as a whole. Similarly, Zepeda and Hill (1991) have suggested that these languages are “one of the great treasures of humanity, an enormous storehouse of expressive power and profound understanding of the universe” (p. 45). These ideas are also supported in other Indigenous communities, as is evident in this statement by Maori researcher and educator Smith (1999) when she stated, “The past, our stories local and global, the present, our communities, cultures, languages and social practices—all may be spaces of marginalization, but they have also become spaces of resistance and hope: (p. 4). The Canadian Indigenous Languages and Literacy Development Institute is becoming such a space.

Administration and funding

CILLDI has been a joint project between the University of Alberta, the University of Saskatchewan, and the local host Indigenous communities. From the outset the CILLDI Advisory Council decided that the members of the Institute needed to meet annually and that the meeting should be hosted in a First Nations community. It was also decided that it would be alternately delivered

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between Saskatchewan and Alberta because the needs are great in both provinces, but resources are limited. The individuals on the committee from the University of Alberta and the University of Saskatchewan agreed to host and sponsor the institute in alternative years. CILLDI 2000 was held at Onion Lake First Nations in Saskatchewan during July 2000 and received financial support from the Office of the President and the Indigenous Peoples Program through the Faculty of Extension at the University of Saskatchewan, as well as the Faculty of Education and the School of Native Studies at the University of Alberta. The Indigenous Peoples program at the University of Saskatchewan facilitated the registration and budget, and this first summer the CILLDI council co-administered the delivery of the program. Fifteen students attended from the three Prairie provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. CILLDI 2001 was hosted at Blue Quills First Nations College at St. Paul, Alberta, with funding primarily from the President, the Faculties of Education and Arts, and the School of Native Studies at the University of Alberta. Some support was provided by the Indigenous Peoples Program at the University of Saskatchewan. CILLDI 2001 was primarily administered by the council members from the host province. The 32 students at CILLDI 2001 came from Alberta, Saskatchewan, and the Northwest Territories of Canada.

A great deal of effort went into the planning, promotion, fund raising, resource surfacing, and overall preparation for each year of the Institute. This was complicated by the fact that the council was dealing with two universities and numerous departments within each university. Each year the following administrative planning needed to be done: the selection of appropriate courses, the development and approval of new courses through both universities, the coordination of special events, the facilitation of Elder involvement, the recruitment of faculty and language lab assistants, the promotion of the Institute, and the recruitment and registration of students. The Advisory Council members from each university collected and compiled the courses and Institute information for publication in their respective summer sessions calendars. These same council members also liaised with summer sessions personnel throughout student registration and as other administrative issues arose. Council members also sought funding from both universities, targeting offices of the presidents as well as the Faculties of Arts, Education, and Native Studies. The council found that working with many departments and two universities in two provinces was difficult and time consuming. Although the council initially saw it as beneficial to have numerous funding sources, there are some concerns about a lack of ownership and financial responsibility on the part of each major institution. We are currently in the process of reviewing these administrative issues and looking for more permanent funding.

Curriculum and pedagogy

At CILLDI we are committed to developing courses and a program that are responsive to the needs and concerns of Indigenous language teachers and First Nations communities. The CILLDI Advisory Council recognized the need for a

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program that included courses in Indigenous languages, linguistics, language education curriculum, pedagogy, and research; and we are continuing to work through how we develop, coordinate, and alternate our course offerings. We have established a core of classes offered each year, and then new courses in areas of need as identified by faculty and students.

CILLDI 2000 began with one undergraduate course designed for speakers of Cree that focused on language and literacy development. The students were primarily classroom teachers and undergraduate students who felt that they needed to learn more about their language and use it more extensively in order to become better Cree language teachers. This course included an extensive oral Cree language component, a Cree vocabulary and grammar module, and an introduction to Cree literary practices. It was delivered in an immersion context on reserve, and students were encouraged to ask and respond to all discussions and questions in the Cree language. The course was based on cultural thematic units with cultural arts incorporated into each theme. The oral language module provided a range of oral communicative activities: conversations in personal and professional contexts, traditional cultural practices, and Elders' story telling. The written language module was based on holistic literacy practices; journal writing, personal narratives, autobiographies, and short story writing; as well as reading across the genre.

That year an informal language use policy was established that encouraged all participants to speak Cree both inside and outside of class. In order to extend the immersion opportunities, we organized cooking groups, and each group of students prepared one lunch for the rest of the students, faculty, and Elders. This task was to be done completely in Cree; it included writing the shopping list in Cree, writing the recipe in Cree, speaking Cree while preparing the meal, and speaking Cree throughout the lunches. If anyone reverted to English during the lunch, they then had to stand up and tell a story or a joke. This became the focus of a great deal of fun and was a small reminder of the importance of reinforcing the status of Indigenous languages in all contexts and on all occasions.

At CILLDI 2001 we offered four undergraduate courses and one graduate seminar. These were as follows: An Introduction to the Structure of the Cree Language for Cree Speakers; An Introduction to Dene Language and Culture; Introduction to Linguistics; Literacy and Drama in Aboriginal Language Education; and a graduate seminar on Reversing Language Change: Planning for Indigenous Language and Literacy Development. Each course was co-taught with at least one fluent speaker so that the students would have the opportunity to hear as much natural Indigenous language use as possible. In the Cree language class, where the students had a fair degree of fluency in Cree, the instructor and teaching assistant, both of whom were bilingual, delivered the class using immersion practices. The Dene language and culture students were either nonspeakers or receptive bilinguals, and the course was taught by bilingual co-instructors in a bilingual fashion. The cultural component of these two courses was addressed on a daily basis with the assistance of Elders. The Introduction to Linguistics course was taught in English by the instructor, who provided Dene

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examples, and a Cree-speaking teacher assistant, who provided Cree translations and examples. The Literacy and Drama in Aboriginal Language Education course was taught bilingually by an English-speaking instructor and a bilingual Cree actor.

Throughout the Institute we had a series of guest speakers on the following topics: Computers in First Nations language education, total physical response as a method in Aboriginal language classrooms; and integrating Cree language and culture into provincial social studies curriculum. These events were attended by all students and faculty and provided a range of ideas for further deliberation.

At CILLDI 2002 we expanded our course offerings to include Intermediate Cree Language, Culture, and Literacy; Introduction to Linguistics for Dene and Cree Speakers; Literacy and Drama in Aboriginal Language Education; Teaching Second Languages in Elementary Education; and Ethnography: An Inquiry Into the Social Contexts of Aboriginal Language, Literacy, and Learning. This Institute's setting in Northern Canada provided students with the opportunity to meet with Elders in an isolated setting, travel by boat to observe ancient petroglyph sites, and be immersed in Northern Bush Cree language and literacy.

Strengths and contributions

Central to each of our Institutes has been the cultural component, and the Elders and community members have contributed a great deal. We believe that the traditional beliefs and practices of each of the Indigenous communities with whom we work need to be respected and followed. At each Institute we have ensured that local community Elders are involved and traditional protocol is followed, and the Elders' blessings and involvement are an integral part of the Institute on a daily basis. According to Paskemin & Paskemin (2000):

Protocol in the Nehiyaw/Plains Cree society is conducted in virtually every capacity of livelihood.... Practicing protocol reflects on the components of acquiring knowledge and skill, personal and professional, specifically in the academic mode. There is no exact Nehiyaw/Plains Cree interpretation of the English translation of protocol. By definition, the concept of protocol, to the Nehiyaw/Plains Cree people would be: the correct way of doing things (p. 1).

During both of our Institutes the Elders were also our language informants, cultural leaders, historians, counselors, and spiritual guides. Elders and community members have facilitated tipi-raising ceremonies and when possible have brought in traditional drummers and singers. Each Institute has begun with a talking circle and prayers from the Elders. We have tried to live a part of the circle throughout our Institute as we follow the beliefs and philosophies of the Indigenous communities in which we are working. One of our ongoing goals is to integrate the Elders as teachers more fully into our Institute.

At CILLDI we expect full participation from all of our students and faculty. We have student and staff meetings to organize a range of activities to do to-

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gether outside of class time. We value each person's contribution and believe CILLDI to be a shared responsibility among all participants. We encourage our students to know and value their cultural background and provide opportunities for them to be able to find the words in the language of their choice to articulate what these mean to them.

Throughout the Canadian Indigenous Languages and Literacy Development Institute we have documented the process of program and curriculum development, observed classroom interactions, videotaped classroom practices, and compiled field notes in order to document the process of supporting Indigenous language revitalization. We have interviewed CILLDI Advisory Committee members, instructors, students, Elders, and visiting guests. The students' responses to the Institute have been overwhelmingly positive and support what we believe about planning for languages at risk of obsolescence. At CILLDI 2000 a student made the following comment: "Continuing to speak the Cree language was most useful to me; listening to Elders speaking in Cree was just as important. The cultural component was very beneficial for me." Another student commented, "Everything was great. I especially liked the cultural component. I have never experienced this kind of instruction; it is very interesting and keeps you focused." CILLDI 2001 students commented on their overall satisfaction:

I actually took this course because I had heard this instructor was 'awesome.' I was not disappointed.

People from the university level, people with PhDs or Masters, they're getting involved with more or less the grassroots people and I think that's a very good move.

I'm really glad to see an Institute such as this one because for years I've been looking to improve myself in the area of language work and curriculum and so forth as it relates to Native languages. It has been difficult to find courses in Canada that offer this. I hope it grows into something bigger.

Keep it up! Let's all bring one more person next year.

One of the most powerful experiences for all participants at CILLDI 2001 was a creative theatre production called *Waniskâtân*. Diane Steinhauer (2001) described it as follows:

Waniskâtân is a play about revitalization of the Cree language with the powerful message that if we love our children, we will teach them our language. Creating 'waniskâtân,' is about the power of storytelling and developing relationships. Relationships and storytelling are so intertwined that you can not have one without the other. (p. 1)

She went on to discuss the importance of understanding the stories of language:

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A community's history is encapsulated in story; it speaks of their resiliency, perseverance, and âhkamayimowin. We are still here. Despite the hardships, the very fact that we have stories to share states that we are still here. Through contextual theatre, people are moved to act. The players are empowered by giving voice to their stories in a meaningful context. The audience is moved to respond by owning the issue and seeking solutions. (p. 1)

CILLDI has become for students and faculty alike a place to regroup after a busy year, to take on new ideas, and to share new understandings with like-minded people who care about these issues. As CILLDI continues to develop and grow, as we continue to refine our pedagogical practices, find ways to ensure that our language planning is supported, and provide language courses and resources for practitioners, we expect to see CILLDI become a significant factor in language retention efforts in Western Canada.

Ongoing resource development and issues

After two years of CILLDI it has become even more apparent how great the need is for ongoing resource development. CILLDI participants have talked about what is happening in their own communities and what they think needs to be done in the areas of curriculum and teacher development. In recent years throughout the Canadian prairie provinces there have been several initiatives on the part of First Nations peoples in the area of Indigenous language and curriculum development, and the Western provinces and northern territories have agreed to a common curriculum framework for all Indigenous languages (Western Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education, 2000), with each province producing its own curriculum resources (Saskatchewan Education, 1994; Western Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education, 2000) These curriculum efforts, however, are focusing primarily on teaching Indigenous languages as a subject, and CILLDI participants have identified the need for resources for the communities and schools that are planning more comprehensive language programs such as immersion or bilingual classes. These fledgling initiatives are an important and hopeful step to save the Indigenous languages of Western Canada from possible extinction, and some of the students at CILLDI have been teachers in the programs; others are community members interested in the development of community linguistic expertise, the extension of language promotion efforts, and adult language programming. Participants from CILLDI are active community members who in many cases are involved in working toward planning for their language by sharing ideas that they have gained from their colleagues and instructors at CILLDI with those in their school and community context. In the past there has been a lack of a framework for interprovincial networking and collaboration for these intensive language retention efforts, and at CILLDI there is a growing recognition of the need for those involved in innovative practice to share expertise and build a professional cadre of language teachers, curriculum developers, teacher educators, researchers, policy planners,

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and advocates for Indigenous languages. This is what we see happening at CILLDI.

Potential Indigenous language leaders are finding the opportunity at CILLDI for more intensive learning experiences regarding language education, linguistics, curriculum, and research. Through this continual professional growth, we hope that we will be able to build a base of Indigenous languages, linguistics, and pedagogy necessary to support language policy and program development. In order to have successful comprehensive language development programs, this kind of leadership development is essential. We believe that this leadership development is an invaluable resource, and it is a resource that is just beginning to be tapped, due in part to CILLDI.

Although we are very pleased with the development and success of CILLDI, there is a great deal of work yet that needs to be done. Postsecondary institutions need to recognize the urgency of these issues and examine their mission statements to support these concerns of Indigenous people. Along with mission statements, there is a need to actively plan programs that will address these specified language development concerns of Indigenous Peoples. In order for this to happen, there is a need for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal institutions to support the work of their Indigenous language educators, teacher educators, and linguists; and one important way to do this is to support CILLDI by providing adequate resources on an ongoing basis. The institutions that grant higher education degrees must take an active role in this process. As Indigenous communities see themselves in mainstream universities, these institutions need to validate and recognize Indigenous knowledge and language and therefore create a space, a new partnership, to encourage teachers, researchers, and curriculum developers to move into this specialized field of professional development.

With three years behind us, the CILLDI Advisory Council looks forward to the challenges ahead, recognizing that our efforts to date are a very small beginning. As we reflect on our students' feedback, we realize that, although small, we have made important steps. CILLDI 2003 was expanded to include courses in Introduction to Linguistics; Practical Literacy and Drama in Aboriginal Language Education; Phonetics; Teaching Second Language in Elementary Education; Ethnography: An Inquiry into the Social Contexts of Aboriginal Language, Literacy and Learning; An Introduction to Dene Language and Culture; and Web-based Resource Development for Indigenous Languages. CILLDI 2003 was held at the University of Alberta in Edmonton with an enrolment of some 80 students from across Western and Northern Canada. As CILLDI continues to develop in response to the growing needs, we encourage any interested participants to join us in our language resource building efforts; and, as one of our students said, "Let's all bring one more person next year."

Note

¹Donna Paskemin, Professor of Native Studies, University of Alberta; Dr. Heather Blair, Professor of Language Arts and Reading in the Faculty of Education, University of Alberta; Dr. Sally Rice, Professor in the Department of Linguis-

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tics, University of Alberta; Mary Cardinal-Collins, Alberta Learning, Province of Alberta; Priscilla Settee, Director of the Indigenous Peoples Program, University of Saskatchewan; Edie Hygen, Indian Teacher Education Program, University of Saskatchewan; Brenda Ahenakew, Director of Education, Saskatoon Tribal Council; Dolores Sand, Principal of Kihew School in the town of Marcelin, Saskatchewan; and Dr. Sam Robinson, Associate Dean, Faculty of Education, University of Saskatchewan.

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‘Whaia Te Reo: Pursuing the Language’ How Metaphors Describe Our Relationships with Indigenous Languages

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Metaphors are widely employed to describe relationships with indigenous languages. In Aotearoa/New Zealand, native speakers of Maori tend to describe language as an object, whereas newly-fluent speakers of Maori prefer to employ metaphors of process, describing language as a journey, or as food or water. Comparing these metaphors with variants used by Native Americans reveals an inverse relationship: the more speakers and learners there are of a language the more the metaphors focus on the benefits the language has for the individual, and conversely, the fewer speakers and learners there are of a language the more the metaphors employed tend to focus on the benefits language learning has for the future of the language.¹

What is a metaphor?

“Metaphors are really statements based on some kind of analogy where two things are compared to each other” (St. Clair, 2000, p. 85). We use metaphors everyday in talking about all sorts of things. When we describe our boss as ‘a big pussycat’ we know he isn’t really a cat, but a pushover, a softy. When someone is ‘going up in the world’ they are not literally moving upwards, but gaining a more advantageous position either through better pay, job, or marriage. These two examples illustrate two of our perceptions about metaphors. Metaphors such as the one about the pussycat are often perceived as extra niceties of a language, not central to meaning or thought processes. If this sort of metaphor wasn’t available to use we would be able to use other words to explain what we mean. Conversely, metaphors like the one about ‘going up in the world’ are so ingrained in our language that we hardly recognize them as metaphors until they are pointed out to us.

Over the last twenty years metaphor has received a great deal of attention in the field of cognitive linguistics. In their seminal work *Metaphors We Live By*, Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p. 2) explain that, “metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature.” Work done by them and others shows that our use of metaphor is much more pervasive than we realize (see St. Clair, 2000, p. 86) and there are complex and internally consistent interrelationships between groups of metaphors. These analyses bring to light how metaphor can “create a reality rather than simply to give us a way of conceptualizing a preexisting reality” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 144). In other words metaphors not only reflect our ideas but also shape the way we think. Accordingly, metaphors have an important role in shaping our epistemological framework.

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The following discussion is centered on the Maori language, the indigenous language of *Aotearoa*/New Zealand, a group of islands in the South Pacific. The population of *Aotearoa*/New Zealand is nearly 4 million, and 530,000 people, about 15% of the population, are of Maori descent. Approximately 60% of the Maori population are able to speak some Maori (Te Puni Kokiri, 1998). But the majority of Maori adults (84%) have little or no ability in the language. Only 16% (some 18,000 individuals) are proficient speakers, and 73% of these people are aged 45 years or over.

This research stems from my interest in Maori adults of my generation and younger who have grown up as non-speakers of Maori and who have since decided to learn the language and gain a measure of proficiency. It is this generation who have provided most of the impetus for language revitalization programs such as the Maori language immersion preschools, *Kohanga Reo* and subsequent schooling initiatives. The initial idea in these revitalization efforts was for the language to be passed directly from older native speakers to young children. But the reality is that most teachers in these institutions are second-language speakers of Maori. It is these proficient second language speakers, as 'newly-fluent' speakers of Maori, who are the focus of this study because of their importance in language revitalization initiatives.

My data has been gleaned from interviews conducted over the last few years with 32 male and female Maori informants aged between 19 and 44. In discussing their commitment to becoming fluent speakers of Maori they employed a range of metaphors to explain how they perceived the language. Their images have been supplemented with information from a variety of other sources such as contemporary rhetoric, proverbs, and song. The following sections will examine in turn the four principal metaphors employed in talking about the Maori language and compare them with similar metaphors used in the Native American situation in particular. Most, if not all the metaphors mentioned in this paper, are used both in English and the respective indigenous language but, for convenience, will primarily be discussed in English.

'*He taonga te reo*' – language is a treasure

Maori language is commonly referred to as a *taonga* (treasure).² This powerful image has embedded itself in Maori rhetoric and song in recent years, particularly since its enshrinement in New Zealand law in the 1987 Maori Language Act (New Zealand Government, 1987). The preamble to this Act states that Article Two of the Treaty of Waitangi³ "confirmed and guaranteed to the Maori people, among other things, all their *taonga*" and that "the Maori language is one such *taonga*."

The Maori Language Act instituted the Maori Language Commission, also known as *Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Maori*. This Commission has taken the *taonga* image enshrined in its founding Act and promulgated it widely, using it in titles to several of their publications (*Te Taura Whiri i Te Reo*, 1995-96, 1998, 1998-02). The phrase *he taonga te reo* became the Commission's official slogan for Maori Language Year (*Te Tau o Te Reo Maori*) in 1995. In employing this meta-

phor, language is talked about as being a treasure, *he taonga te reo*, something which has been handed down, *he mea tuku iho*, from the ancestors to present generations, *he taonga tuku iho no nga tipuna*. Indeed it is this principle which is the basis of the *Kohanga Reo* philosophy. *Kohanga Reo* were set up on the basis of the language being handed down from native speaking elders to their grandchildren.

When language is talked of in this way people are urged to hold on and retain this treasure, *kia mau ki te reo Maori*. Sometimes the language is referred to as an adornment to the body, such as a head adornment, pendant or earring, *hei pare kawakawa...mapihi maurea, whakakai marihi*.⁴

In the North American situation, Lang says "our language is a gift from the Indian Gods" (2000, p. 15). Navajo poet Rex Lee Jim makes a similar comment, saying, "the gods have...given you the Navajo language; all you have to do is tap into it" (as quoted in Wallace 1996, p. 106). Greymorning describes Native American languages as being sacred, in that the, "parable [of the Biblical talents] has served to illustrate to me what is happening with our languages. We have been given something sacred, and we recognize its sacredness" (1999, p. 11). The image of language being a gift from the gods is also occasionally used in the Maori situation.

In both the 'language is a treasure' and 'language is a gift' metaphors language is spoken of as if it were a thing, a tangible object, something capable of being physically passed from one person to another. This idea is encapsulated in the etymology of the phrase 'heritage' language which evokes the idea that language is an 'inheritance' passed down from generation to generation. Lowenthal (1985, p. 43) describes how important heirlooms, of whatever kind, are to the human psyche, since, "possession of valued relics likewise enhances life.... To have a piece of tangible history links one with its original maker and with intervening owners, augmenting one's own worth."

The basic idea behind the metaphor 'the language is a treasure (or a gift)' is that language is an object. In other words, this metaphor *reifies* the language. Reify means to convert a concept into a thing, an object with material form. In other words, this metaphor 'thingifies' language. Societies often reify certain aspects of their culture, especially as a response to colonization (see Meijl, 1996, p. 313) so it's not surprising to see language treated in this manner.

It is the image of language as an object which is employed when we talk about marketing indigenous languages, in that marketing views language "as a product" (Cooper quoted in Nicholson, 1997, p. 207). Encapsulated in the idea that language is an object is the prospect that you can lose it, and as Margolin (1999, p. 45) recognizes, there are several different images behind the use of the word 'loss,' with the

use of the term "language loss"...evoking both the image of language as a prized object and as a deceased loved one. The solution to the loss of an object is "recovery," or verbally, "to find" the object. Such terms are not found in the literature, however, implying that this is not the primary image suggested by "loss."

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In teasing out the different experiences of native speakers and newly fluent speakers we can make a distinction between the way native speakers and second language learners of a language visualize 'losing' a language. This will help clarify the language that is then used for reversing the loss process, for as Margolin notes, the language of recovery differs to that which describes the loss.

Sujata Bhatt (1997, p. 32) in a poem about her first language, Gujarati, expresses the pain of loss of a native speaker when she says,

You ask me what I mean
by saying I have lost my tongue.
I ask you, what would you do
if you had two tongues in your mouth,
...
And if you lived in a place where you had to
speak a foreign tongue –
your mother tongue would rot,
rot and die in your mouth

Here Bhatt describes her language as a prized object, literally the tongue in her mouth. As a native speaker she finds that she 'loses' her language when she isn't able to use it. She explains the word 'loss' as meaning 'dying,' evoking the image of a deceased loved one.

Bhatt goes on in the poem to discover that her native language is not dead after all, as one night, as she is dreaming,

it grows back, a stump of a shoot
...
the bud opens, the bud opens in my mouth,
it pushes the other tongue aside.
Everytime I think I have forgotten,
I think I have lost the mother tongue,
it blossoms out of my mouth.

Her 'dead' language comes to life again and grows back. That is, after she 'loses' her language, she doesn't go looking for it, it finds her again unexpectedly. Her use of the word 'loss' must be understood in the context of 'dying' with the reverse process being 'coming back to life,' as her language does.

Second language learners are also affected by language loss, but their experience of this loss is different to that of native speakers, and they use the word in a different way. Donna Awatere Huata, a member of the 1970s protest group *Nga Tamatoa*, and now a Member of Parliament in New Zealand, recalls the situation which galvanized her and others to political action,

You have to lose something before you value it,
And we were the first generation that really lost it all.

It was the fact that Hana couldn't speak Maori language,
her loss,
the land loss that we all had,
the cultural links that we were all by that stage losing.
We were so aware of what we'd lost,
and in the losing of it was that rage,
that we didn't want to lose it. (Awatere Huata, 2001)

Many of those in *Nga Tamatoa* didn't have the language to 'lose' like a native speaker does. The loss Awatere Huata refers to the loss of not having the language in the first place, of being bereft. Therefore the solution to this type of loss is to go looking for the language. The language will not rise up again spontaneously and unconsciously within those who don't have the language as it can for a native speaker. Second language learners must determinedly and consciously take action to find and learn their language. Hence the images they use in countering that loss will encapsulate these ideas, as we will see below.

Another distinction between native speakers and second language learners can also be drawn around the 'language is an object' metaphor, at least in the situation with the Maori language. This metaphor can be traced back through the decades in New Zealand rhetoric and the beginnings of the idea emerged in the 1920s, a time when most Maori adults were first-language speakers of Maori. Continuing through to the present day those who use this metaphor are largely native speakers of the Maori language. The Maori language is indeed something that has been handed down personally to them. While the newly-fluent Maori informants in this study would generally agree that language is a treasure, they didn't use this metaphor spontaneously in their interviews in describing their own interaction with the Maori language. If we deconstruct the 'language is an object' metaphor we can see why this image doesn't fit their experience. The 'language is an object' metaphor implies:

1. that language is immutable and timeless;
2. that language can be passed down like an heirloom from ancestors to their descendants. In other words, it describes intergenerational transmission.

The first point runs counter to the experience of the newly-fluent speaking informants who, as we shall see, describe language as a process or transformation. This transformation is an internal, personal one. The metaphors they employ describe change, which is in conflict with the idea of an immutable and timeless object.

With regard to the second point above, since the informants in this study are newly-fluent speakers, they have not acquired any appreciable fluency in the language directly from their parents or extended family. They have learned the language later in life as an adult. Intergenerational transmission, therefore, is not part of their experience. Accordingly, the 'language is a treasure' metaphor

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does not resonate as strongly with them. The three metaphors preferred by my newly-fluent Maori-speaking informants have the following format, in that they describe:

- a. an initial state of languagelessness,
- b. an engagement with the language, and
- c. a continuing relationship with the language.

As St. Clair (2000, p. 99) notes, the tension between epistemologies which focus on products rather than processes has ancient antecedents. The Roman culture, expressed in the Latin language was “part of a product culture. They saw things” whereas Greek language “deals with process. It belongs to a process culture.”

In pointing out how metaphors which reify indigenous languages can be used to remove ownership and control from speakers, Fettes (1997, pp. 303-4) contends that “a theory of language renewal must begin with the speakers, with people ‘doing language’ together in meaningful ways.” In other words, process and engagement with the heritage language is important.

In the following sections we will investigate the three metaphors of choice used by my newly-fluent Maori-speaking informants, comparing them to the Native American experience.

‘Whaia te huarahi’ – following the path

One of the most popular metaphors used by Maori in Aotearoa/New Zealand describes language as a journey. There are two versions of this metaphor. In the first, language is seen as a pathway, *huarahi*. Before learning the language informants speak of being lost, *ngaro*, or not on the right path, *kaore i runga i te huarahi tika*, or deviating from the path, *kotiti haere*. In learning the language they see themselves as following the language, *whai i te reo*, or ‘the path,’ *whai i te huarahi*. This ‘path’ is their ongoing engagement with the language and culture. The pervasiveness of this metaphor is reflected in the fact that the image of a person following a path features on the cover of the newly revised main adult Maori language textbooks (Moorfield, 2001a & b).

Journey metaphors seem common in many cultures, but as Ahlers notes, sometimes the manifestations can be different. She cites the Hupa journey metaphor, which, unlike the Maori one, is not linear and ongoing, but is circular with the traveler returning back to where they started (Ahlers, 1999, p. 61-2). The circular nature of the journey metaphor seems common to the Native American experience, and language is cited as being a vehicle to completing the circle. Norma Jean Pole (1995, p. 40) describes native language as being “words to mend the circle of life.”

Liz Dominguez, in describing her great-great-great-grandmother, Maria, recording her Chumash language with Harrington, imagines Maria thinking at the time that “maybe one day, as sure as the circle will complete itself there will be one of my relations that will find these treasures” (1998, p. 17).

The idea of a more linear journey in which the indigenous person treads the steps of the ancestors is mentioned both amongst Australian Aborigines (Patrick McConvell, personal communication, June 11, 2002) and Native Americans, as shown in this section of a poem by Malcolm Benally (1996, p. 139), which says,

Grandfather, bring the path which is made of corn pollen and
I will no longer walk in two worlds
but in your path

The image of ‘following the ancestors’ is also used occasionally with Maori language,

te whai i te huarahi o oku matua
following the path of my elders

But on most occasions the thing people are following is the language, culture, or ‘the path.’

The relation with ancestors frequently occurs in the Native American situation with Native Americans seeing themselves as following along behind ‘the ones who’ve gone before’ with language being a bridge to the right ‘way,’ as Fillerup explains, when describing a Navajo immersion program as providing,

a medium through which Navajo children can communicate and thereby connect with the Elders. This linguistic bridge to the past will also form a bridge to the future as subsequent generations of Navajo children learn to speak, read and write the language of their ancestors. (2000, p. 26)

Rex Lee Jim explains “that his goal is to use Navajo language in everything he does, so he can reach the right way” (as quoted in Wallace, 1996, p. 106). Indeed, the word ‘way’ features strongly in Navajo epistemology with ceremonies such as the Blessing Way, the Mountain Way and the Shooting Way.

These ceremonies are referred to as ‘ways’ because they involve journeys. Campbell (1988, p. 101-2) describes the initiate participating in the Blessing Way Ceremony as identifying with the “mythological adventure of the pollen path in its threshold crossings into and through a sacred space and out into the world transformed.” Those witnessing the ceremony also partake in the journey but “their participation will have been not of identification, but of a relationship...whereas the initiate...will have become identified with the adventure.”

The idea of the ‘way’ is deeply ingrained in other American Indian epistemologies. The religion of the Native American Church is also known as the Peyote Way and the leader of ceremonies is “often referred to as the Roadman because he leads the group along the Peyote Road (that is, the Peyotist way of life) to salvation” (Slotkin, 1975, p. 97).

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St. Clair (2000, p. 92) notes that amongst oral cultures that the “legitimization of knowledge is commonly referred to as the way of the people.” As we have seen above there is a similar phrase used in the Maori experience *whai i te huarahi* which refers to following a pathway. Although more deeply rooted in Native American epistemology the basic idea is the same. Both refer to a way of living which is more than just behavior but a way of being, a way of experiencing the world.

In the New Zealand situation, there is a second version of the ‘language is a journey’ metaphor in which the informant or the language is a canoe, *waka*. Informants speak of either getting onto the canoe, *piki/eke ki runga i te waka*, and/or heading their canoe in a forward direction, *ahu whakamua*, or in a straight line, *haere tika*. Again, the informants see themselves as following a pathway, a journey. Obviously, with the importance of water transport in an island country such as Aotearoa/New Zealand it is not surprising that canoe imagery is used.

In considering the journey metaphor with respect to newly-fluent speakers of Maori, it seems that the destination, while important, is not the prime focus. Informants place more importance on the process of moving along the pathway, undertaking, and continuing to undertake the journey. They talk of ‘pursuing’ the language in a lifelong journey and it seems that, at least at this point, they don’t envisage actually reaching the destination. The purpose, or the process, is the destination.

While the journey metaphor is also used in the Native American situation, there the emphasis is on the circular nature of the journey and of the purpose being to join or close the circle and follow ‘the way’ of the ancestors. Despite this difference, emphasis is also on the experiential process.

‘Ruku ki te wai’ – dive into the water

In this metaphor, which is not as commonly used, language is seen as water. Newly-fluent speakers of Maori describe their involvement with the language in terms of diving into the water, *ruku ki te wai*, water which is often described as deep, *hohonu*. They talk about being thoroughly immersed in the water, *rumaki*, and swimming, *e kaukau ana*.

The metaphor of ‘language as water’ seems particularly related to the idea of immersion. Over a decade ago, the term ‘bilingual’ in the New Zealand education context was almost completely replaced by the words ‘immersion’ and its Maori equivalent ‘*rumaki*.’ This change occurred in recognition that the word ‘bilingual’ is typically applied to a program which is designed to move children away from using their heritage language. The purpose of immersion programs is to enhance and expand children’s ability in the Maori language (Keegan, 1996, p. 1). The widespread use of the word ‘immersion’ in the education context has obviously precipitated the use of this metaphor in describing the newly-fluent speaker’s experience.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to investigate the origins of the metaphors discussed here for they are a complex mix of traditional Maori belief, heavily influenced by Christianity. A mix, one suspects, that is probably com-

mon in the Native American experience. But I would like to dwell for a moment on the biblical aspects of this particular metaphor, where language is seen as water in which the speaker is totally immersed.

Being immersed in water conjures up the image of adult baptism. Sheldrake notes that

the Baptists retain the practice of baptizing adults through the ritual of total immersion, and... place...[great] emphasis on the experience of being born again. Indeed, their form of Christianity is centered on this conversion experience. (1991, p. 188)

Similar to the baptism experience, many of the informants in this study have found their experience in becoming a fluent speaker of Maori to be life-changing and enhancing. Several informants became involved with the Maori language through alcohol and drug rehabilitation Twelve Step programs which are spiritual and practical life-changing experiences. The similarity between language learning and recovery has been noted by many, including (Reyhner, 1999) and Antone (2002). On a continuum there are obviously similarities between the recovery experience and a similar sort of experience that often accompanies becoming a fluent second-language speaker of a heritage language. As Antone (2002, p. 52) writes:

Some [Native people], however, were able to steer themselves away from the drug-and-alcohol road and find wholeness and identity.... They found that they needed to learn their ways and learn their own languages from the Elders and to practice the ceremonies performed long ago by their grandparents. This was the new way to regain the lost identity of this new-found people.⁵

The ability of one's language and culture to help prevent social ills is also commented on by Dawn Stiles (1997), who concludes that successful programs need to link language and culture and that successful programs can fight gang activity, alcohol and drug abuse, and high dropout rates in indigenous communities. Similarly Rex Lee Jim believes "that Navajo language can prevent alcoholism and other problems" (quoted in Wallace, 1996, p. 106). What this link suggests is that the individual's experience with the indigenous language can be akin to the sort of spiritual change which occurs in the life of a recovering addict, in that the prime focus and motivation is a personal, spiritual and emotional relationship, in this case, with the language and culture. The significance of this focus on the individual will be discussed again later.

***'Ka whangaia kia tipu'* – being fed and growing**

The fourth metaphor which is used widely in New Zealand, expresses language as sustenance (namely food) and also as growth. My newly-fluent Maori-speaking informants talked about how before learning Maori language they were

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hungry, *matekai*, *hiakai*, or not being fed the language, *kaore i whangaia*. In learning the language they are being fed, *e whangaia ana*, and becoming alive and healthy, *e ora ana*. Informants see the possibility of, in turn, feeding their own children or school pupils, (if they are teachers), with the language.

In this schema the informant's original diet without the language was lacking; Maori language is seen as a special food necessary to their survival. This metaphor fits in with the concept of *Kohanga Reo*, which are, literally 'language nests.' The purpose of a real nest is to raise baby birds. When we think of nests we most often envisage them full of hatchlings vigorously demanding food. Translating this image we see that a *Kohanga Reo* is a place where babies and young children are 'fed' the language.

The idea of one's indigenous language being some sort of food, especially a spiritual food, also features in descriptions of Native American languages, with Richard Littlebear (1990, p. 8) seeing "our native languages nurturing our spirits and hearts." The result of being so fed is a feeling of completeness and health. Walters (quoted in Wallace, 1996, p. 106) feels that "the ability to speak language is critical to being whole and well."

Sometimes it's not the person who is nurtured to health but the language. Littlebear (1999, p. 1) notes in saying that "if we just spoke our languages, all of our languages would be healthier." We can apply Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1970) to the use of this metaphor describing language as food.⁶ His hierarchy ranks needs that motivate human behavior, with physiological needs such as food, water, air and heat being most important to people, followed by the need for safety, then belongingness, esteem and self-actualization. Under this theory, physiological needs are more powerful than safety needs, and so on.

While, strictly speaking, language needs probably fall into the belongingness category, what is interesting about the 'language as food' metaphor is that it metaphorically moves language up into the most basic of needs categories. That is, in using this metaphor people are stating very categorically how important language is to them – it could not be higher, in that physiological needs must be satiated before all others.

When we need food, "if the body lacks some chemical, the individual will tend (in an imperfect way) to develop a specific appetite or partial hunger for that missing food element" (Maslow, 1970, p. 36). This describes the often-noted determination and commitment of those involved in learning their indigenous language.

In a second related manifestation of the 'language is food' metaphor, the newly-fluent Maori-speaking informants talked about 'growth', as if they themselves were plants. Before learning the Maori language they were not growing, *kaore i tipu*, but learning the language has made them grow, *e tipu ana*, blossom and flower, *e puawai ana*.

Sometimes the language, or desire to learn the language, was seen as a seed which had been planted and is growing inside them, *i whakatongia te kakano*, and it is the seed which is growing, blossoming or flowering inside them. This image is related to a well known Maori whakatauki, or proverb, which states,

E kore au e ngaro; te kakano i ruia mai i Rangiatea
I shall never be lost; the seed which was sown from Rangiatea⁷
(Mead & Grove, 2001, p. 30-31)

The meaning being that Maori identity through genealogy from time immemorial will provide succor in today's changing world.

The image of the language learner being a growing seed was used on the cover of the main Maori language textbook, the *Te Whanake* (literally, 'the growing') series. The cover of the first book, *Te Kakano* ('the seed') features a seed with eyes under the earth just beginning to sprout (Moorfield, 1988). The soil surrounding the seed consists of words and phrases in Maori. The image is telling us that the seed, that is, the learner, will grow in this fertile soil of the language. The second book, *Te Pihinga* ('the sprouting') shows the seed sprouting out of the earth (Moorfield, 1989). On the third book, *Te Mahuri* ('the sapling'), the seed is now a sapling, rooted firmly in the soil of the language (Moorfield, 1992). On the final book, *Te Kohure* ('the maturing') the plant is now a fully formed flowering native tree (Moorfield, 1996).

The growth metaphor, as employed in the situation of the Maori language, places emphasis on the individual's growth. This image has also been used in the Native American situation where Cheyenne people without the language have been described as empty husks, which would presumably be plump and full if they had access to the language. Northern Cheyenne elders opine that when children

reach us, when they are born, they are going to be relegated to being mere husks, empty shells. They are going to look Cheyenne, have Cheyenne parents but they won't have the language which is going to make them truly Cheyenne. (quoted by Littlebear in Reyhner, 1997, p. vii)

Most commonly though the 'language is growth' metaphor appears in other indigenous language contexts with quite a different application. We have seen its use earlier in the Sujata Bhatt poem where the poet describes her native language, atrophied through lack of use, growing back and blossoming in her mouth. In this case what is growing is Bhatt's language, Gujarati, whereas in the previous examples it is the learner who is growing.

Fishman (1996b, p. 197-98) in describing the struggle in his family, and those of other 'activists' over several generations to revitalize Hebrew, quotes the image from the Bible of the plowman being overtaken by the reaper,

And the planters [will be overtaken] by the ones treading the grapes, new wine will drip from the mountains and from all the hills, they will plant new vineyards and drink their wine. They will make gardens and eat their fruits.⁸

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That is, the hard work of language revitalization as part of a group, will come to fruition and bear fruit to the community at large. The people aren't the fruits but they will benefit from the fruits, that is, language revitalization.

Another use of the image of seeds has also been used in the Native American situation. House and Reyhner (1996, p. 143) note some of the strengths of adult language programs describing "small classes as seeds with the likelihood of rich harvests in the future." Here it is the class which is the seed which will grow and flourish in the future. The harvest mentioned is the revitalization of the respective language.

Here we see a parallel between the way a native speaker like Bhatt and those involved in Native American language revitalization and Hebrew often use the metaphor of growth. They tend to apply the image to the language, focussing on the growth of the language and on revitalization benefits for the on-going health of the language. The benefit to the individual is not stressed as much as in the New Zealand situation where the growth image is applied to the individual language learner.

Some language activists go so far to completely identify themselves with their languages. In her workshop at the Ninth Stabilizing Indigenous Languages Conference, L. Frank Manriquez introduced herself by saying, "my language is extinct, you are looking at an extinct person." It became clear that what she meant was because she can now speak some of her language, her language is not extinct. In other words she represents her language, and is a vehicle for it. This is not to say that the benefits of language learning are not applied to individuals in the Native American situation. Nancy Steele (personal communication, June 12, 2002) describes how involvement in the Master-Apprentice program often bestows the benefits of a revitalized life both on the elders and apprentices.

Leanne Hinton, talks about the personal benefits of the Master-Apprentice program in "bring[ing] the generations together" and in making the elders feel valued through getting "the care, attention, and respect...that he or she so richly deserves" (1994, p. 14) and "reducing the 'generation gap'" (1999, p. 10). However, when using the image of 'growth' there is a substantial focus in the Native American rhetoric on the growth of the language, culture, or people as a whole rather than individually.

Discussion

For those of us involved in revitalizing indigenous languages we can recognize the symbiotic relationship between language and individuals in the adage:

language revitalizes the person
the person revitalizes the language

No matter what the situation we can see that both processes occur in language revitalization. In being involved in language revitalization through speaking a indigenous language both the individual and the language benefit. However, in studying how we use metaphors to describe our relationship with indigenous

languages we see that in different situations one part of this maxim will be stressed more than the other.

Amongst the relatively numerous newly-fluent speakers of Maori in New Zealand, there is a tendency to emphasize the benefit to the individual of learning the language. The metaphors such speakers employ emphasize their individual, personal and on-going relationship with the language, a relationship which has transformed them, either through being fed and growing, or through following a new path, or being immersed in the water that is that language.

When asked why they wanted to learn Maori, respondents in a national survey consistently replied “because we are Maori, because our children are Maori” (Te Puni Kokiri, 2002, p. 31). They are not primarily motivated by personal responsibility for the language but by perceived benefits to themselves as individuals, and their families. With so many Maori learning the language, survival of the language does not depend on the efforts of any one individual. Therefore learners will express their motivation in a more personal way.

Similarly, when asked, my newly-fluent Maori-speaking informants did not see themselves as part of a language revitalization ‘movement.’ They were learning the language for themselves, as one informant, Rau (a pseudonym), described in this exchange:

Interviewer: Do you feel like you’re part of a movement or not?

Rau: No. This is for me. *Noku tenei ao* [This is my world]. Mm. *So noku tenei reo* [this is my language].

Interviewer: So you see it sort of as a personal reclaiming?

Rau: Yeah.

Rau indicated that learning the Maori language was her life choice, a decision made for her own benefit and that of her children.

Conversely, when native speakers who are estranged from their language talk about the language (as in Sujata Bhatt’s poem and in situations, such as that which prevails with regard to many Native American languages, where there are few speakers) the emphasis of the metaphors tends to be on the benefits for the language.

Hathorn (1997, p. 232) reports from a Echota Cherokee language survey, when asked why respondents wanted to learn Cherokee they rated “keeping Cherokee tradition alive” most frequently as their primary incentive. That is, respondents recognized and emphasized their role in keeping their language and culture alive. Indeed, in the Californian Master-Apprentice program, one criteria for selection of apprentices is their commitment to passing on the knowledge they will learn to others (Nancy Steele, personal communication, June 12, 2002). In these sorts of language situations, with smaller numbers of speakers and learners, any learner will be quite aware of their role in revitalizing their language.

Fishman has also commented on how people feel a responsibility towards their language, and say,

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“I should do something. I should do more for it. I haven’t done the right thing by it. I’m glad I’m working for it,” as if there were a kind of a moral commitment here and a moral imperative. (Fishman, 1996a, p. 83).

In other words, with regard to metaphors employed in describing relationships with indigenous languages, the more people that know and are learning the language, the more the beneficial effect on the individual is emphasized. On the other hand, the fewer people that know and are learning the language the more the beneficial effect on the language is emphasized.

Another example is provided in the genesis of the nomenclature for the Californian ‘Breath of Life: Silent No More’ program to resurrect languages which have had no speakers for several generations. L. Frank Manriquez in a workshop on the Californian language situation at the Ninth Stabilizing Indigenous Languages Conference told how when the program began, the senior linguist, Leanne Hinton, wrote a poem about the devoted individuals working hard to resurrect their languages, describing them as a kind of ‘Lonely Hearts Language Club’ (Hinton, 1992, p. 31). However, in choosing a final name for the program the participants themselves preferred the name ‘Breath of Life: Silent No More.’ Here the language is likened to a deceased loved one, being brought back to life and speaking again. What is interesting is that the participants themselves chose a name for their program which emphasized the benefits to the language, in preference to an image centered on the experience of the individual.

Advocates like Timoti Karetu, former Maori Language Commissioner, continually emphasize the importance of the individual’s effort in revitalizing the language, saying that “the revitalization of a language is dependent on the will of its speakers” (Karetu, quoted in Kirkness, 2002, p. 19). The present Maori Language Commissioner, Patu Hohepa, similarly states that “the ultimate moral responsibility for [the Maori language’s] continuation as a spoken language is with us who are Maori.... Use it or lose it.” (Hohepa, 2000, p. 14).

Although this rhetoric is focussed at the individual, it may be falling on deaf ears when addressed to newly-fluent speakers of Maori as it stresses the importance of the individual’s role in the future of the language, an emphasis, as we have seen, not recognized by these people themselves. In the Native American situation the fewer speakers there are of a language, the more one is aware of the importance of one’s individual efforts, hence the focus on the wider perspective, the survival of one’s indigenous language.

In determining language promotion strategies in New Zealand it may be beneficial to differentiate the experiences of different sets of speakers in differently targeted campaigns. For the native speaker of Maori the emphasis should be on the image of language as a treasure and passing the language on, and the role of native speakers in ensuring the Maori language survives. That is, their important role in intergenerational transmission should be emphasized.

Intergenerational transmission has been an important emphasis in New Zealand with recent research saying that it “lies at the heart of the overall move-

ment to revitalize the Maori language” (Te Puni Kokiri, 2002, p. 4). According to Fishman’s (1991, p. 395) influential eight stage schema, the Maori language has jumped from level 7 (limited use of the language amongst older generations) to level 4 (setting up schooling in the Maori language in both mainstream and Maori-controlled schools). In concentrating on schooling initiatives, fostering the use of the Maori language intergenerationally in the community and at home (level 6) has received little direct attention. Fishman (1996b) describes this intergenerational vernacular interaction as the key to successful revitalization. Current rhetoric in New Zealand emphasizes this important point in saying that it “is most important that children start learning and speaking Maori in their homes as their first language so that it becomes their mother tongue” (Hohepa, 2000, p. 14).

The newly-fluent Maori-speaking adult also has a key role in intergenerational transmission as parents of the children being educated in the Maori language schooling system. But the strategy for fostering their participation in language revitalization might benefit from emphasizing their experience of being empowered and transformed spiritually and emotionally through their involvement with and use of the Maori language. The metaphors newly-fluent speakers of Maori use themselves are metaphors of process. They cover the whole process of being without Maori language through to an ongoing engagement with the language. They recognize that being a second language learner of an indigenous language means that you are engaged in lifelong learning. That is, the metaphors they employ perfectly encapsulate the newly-fluent speaker’s experience. As Hohepa notes, newly-fluent speakers are important as “the statistical group with the most needs is in the 20-55 age ranges” (Hohepa, 2000, p. 12).

We don’t really know as yet how younger speakers brought up with the language envisage the Maori language. A recent campaign ‘*Te Hono ki te Reo*’ (which includes television advertisements in Maori language) aims at the younger demographic, focussing on how ‘it’s cool to *korero*’ (it’s cool to speak the language) (Simpson, 2000, p. 1).

Conclusion

We have seen how metaphors are important in expressing relationships with indigenous languages, in shaping and reflecting how we envisage that language. Metaphors reflect the unique experience of speakers and, accordingly, native speakers, second-language learners and those working with languages with few speakers will use different metaphors in different ways.

In New Zealand the current metaphors used with regard to the Maori language fall into two categories:

1. The ‘language is a treasure’ metaphor reifies the language. This is an important metaphor in the vaunted aim of returning to a state of intergenerational transmission. As we have seen, this metaphor may well appeal more to a native speaker as it reflects their experience of receiving

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the language from parents and elders in a community situation. This metaphor is also used in the Native American situation in the form ‘language is a gift from the gods.’

2. The language is food or growth, or a journey, or water metaphors are used to reflect engagement with the language in a personal, conscious relationship. These metaphors reflect the experience of the newly-fluent speaker of Maori in New Zealand and, as metaphors of process and transformation, are important in stressing the ongoing, transformative nature of language learning.

Both the food/growth and journey metaphors are also used to refer to Native American languages. The Native American journey metaphor is most often circular rather than linear, reflecting Native American epistemology. The journey metaphor is expressed culturally in ceremonies and religious practices called ‘ways’ which reflect experiential ‘ways of being’ similar to what is referred to in the Maori situation with the phrase *whai i te huarahi* (following the path).

The use of the ‘growth’ metaphor in the North American situation is slightly different to its use in New Zealand where it is the individual who ‘grows’ in learning the language. In Native American languages it is most often the languages themselves which are described as ‘growing.’ With many Native American languages having low numbers of speakers it is not surprising that emphasis is placed more on the benefits accruing to the individual language, and that the metaphors used emphasize the importance of the speaker’s role in revitalizing the language.

While the ‘language as water’ metaphor does not seem to be used in the Native American situation, its links with ideas of spiritual transformation reveal that both Maori and Native American languages have perceived benefits in protecting people and helping them recover from social ills such as drug and alcohol dependency.

Studying how we use metaphor to talk about indigenous languages reveals differences between various languages according to the number of speakers or learners a language has. Differences also exist between types of speakers and learners, such as native speakers and newly-fluent speakers. Such analysis can help us understand epistemological underpinnings to people’s relationships with their indigenous languages and more precisely focus language revitalization strategies, particularly with regard to marketing and rhetoric.

Notes

¹Acknowledgements to those who attended this workshop at the Ninth Stabilizing Indigenous Languages Conference and contributed comparisons with the Native American experience. I am obliged to Joyce Silverthorne for the apt term ‘newly-fluent’ to describe a second-language speakers who have gained a significant measure of fluency. Thanks also to Wayne Holm for contributing the word ‘thingify.’ University of Canterbury research grant U6265 enabled field work vital to this research.

- ²The word *taonga* means “property, anything highly prized” (Williams, 1971, p. 381).
- ³The Treaty of Waitangi is the founding document of the nation of New Zealand, signed in 1840 by Maori chiefs and a representative of the British Crown.
- ⁴These lines are from a song by Te Kahautu Maxwell, entitled *Nei ra te kaupapa*.
- ⁵Note the use of the journey metaphor in this quotation with the words ‘steer away,’ ‘road,’ and ‘new way.’
- ⁶See Walker (1993) for an application of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs to language shift. Also Palmer (1997, pp. 274-5).
- ⁷Ra’iatea (a version of Rangiatea) is an island in the Society Group.
- ⁸Amos, 9:13-14.

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Honoring the Elders

Evangeline Parsons Yazzie, Robert N. St. Clair

Before the fifth Annual Symposium for Language Renewal and Revitalization held in 1998 at the University of Louisville we met in the lobby of the conference center at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff to discuss the focus of the next conference at the University of Louisville. One of the first topics to emerge was our joint concern for the loss of indigenous languages and cultures. We began the discussion in a global way. We mentioned various tribes and the loss of their own languages and cultures. Very quickly, the abstract was made real. Evangeline began to mention many elders that she personally knew. Each had come to the end of their life and with their passing, she personally experienced the loss of their language and culture. These were not just elders; they were the keepers of cultural traditions; they were the last speakers of their languages. When they left this earth to join the spirit world, they left no one behind to carry on the tradition.

The discussion regarding the loss of the elders was not a mere commentary on the past. It was a lengthy and prolonged discussion of individuals that Evangeline Parsons-Yazzie had known for many years. We both had personal experiences to share regarding the elders, but the depth of this experience as articulated by Evangeline was profound. As she spoke, our voices lowered. It was as if we were attending the funerals of each and every one of those that we have known. Many times, there were long moments of silence. There are times when words cannot even begin to capture the depths of our feelings and experiences. As we continued to discuss this area of mutual concern, our voices cracked and our eyes began to water. Although the sun beautifully articulated the landscape that surrounded the campus of the university, we did not notice it. Although there were many people around us discussing various aspects of the conference, we did not see them. We were both encapsulated in a cone of silence, moments of heaviness, and the events that we discussed were emotionally difficult. It remained with us not only during the remainder of that day, but for months after.

How do we honor the elders? How do we say thank you for just being the wonderful person that you are? How do we recognize that those who are still with us are our living libraries and language teachers? How do we say that we are ashamed for not doing something about making them the centers of our lives? As we discussed these possibilities, Evangeline came up with the brilliant idea that we would choose one of the elders as a representative of all of them. We would choose a living representative of those who have gone beyond. She mentioned the name of Ted Vaughn, a Yavapai. We chose him as our keynote speaker. His presence at the conference was impressive. Ted Vaughn is very articulate. He brought with him a wealth of experience and years of wisdom. He became our archetype for the honoring of the elders. We all had the opportunity to meet with Ted during the conference. He was among us during the various

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meals, during coffee breaks, and during the various conference papers. We are grateful to Ted for his participation in our conference.

When we closed the conference in Louisville, Evangeline openly shared her vision of honoring the elders. She introduced Ted Vaughn again and asked those in the audience to bring forth an elder and to honor that person. The moment was magical. There they were, young and old, standing together. We had created our own ceremony. We found a way to say thank you and we all shared in that experience. We showed that we loved our elders by embracing them and tightly holding on to them on stage. The heavy moments of silence that we experienced in Flagstaff during the planning stage emerged into new moments of happiness. The process was a healing unto itself. We only ask that we continue to honor the elders during our annual meetings. We ask that what was a new ceremony will become an annual ritual.

The Hawaiians are coming

Another topic that we discussed during the planning stages of our conference was the concept of highlighting a cultural group. The rationale behind this was to share the depth of contributions made by that group. We were not sure just what group that would be. After a few months, Robert St. Clair asked Evangeline Parsons-Yazzie if he could bring in the Hawaiians as the cultural group to recognize at the conference. She concurred and he began the process of working with the past participants from Hawaii to make it a reality. There are some very personal reasons for his participation in this event. St. Clair was born and raised in Hawaii. His native language is Portuguese, but he learned many of the languages in his neighborhood while growing up there. He learned English by age five and spoke with his childhood neighbors in Hawaiian, Japanese, and Hawaiian Creole. He personally knew of the rich traditions that emanated from Polynesia. He knew of the *Ka Huna* tradition, the chants, the hula dance, and the richness of the language.

The members of the Department of Hawaiian and Indo-Pacific Languages at the University of Hawaii were very helpful in introducing its language and culture to the Louisville conference. Emily Hawkins was our main contact. She arranged for the dances and chants that we all enjoyed at the closing session of the conference. We wanted to not only highlight Hawaii, but Polynesia and we were fortunate to have papers from Timoti Karetu of New Zealand and Mary Jane Fox of Yap.

Since many did not know the Hawaiians, we decided to do something very different with the program booklet. We included cultural information throughout the booklet. We included Hawaiian tapa motifs in our banners; we provided cultural information on the islands of Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia; we introduced our participants to the meanings behind common Hawaiian names; we included maps of various Polynesian locales so that one could visualize just where Hawaii, New Zealand, and the Marshall Islands are located; we provided the names of the lunar calendar; and we explained the meaning of the *kumulipo*, the Hawaiian chant. To balance this focus on the Polynesians, we also included

maps, cultural information, and famous quotations from other indigenous groups. We hope that from time to time, our conference will continue to highlight a group from among themselves.

Concluding remarks

The 1998 conference was the embodiment of several ideas as with the other conferences held in this series of annual indigenous language conferences started in 1994. One was the honoring of the elders and the other was the foregrounding of the Hawaiians. We were honored to be given the privilege of being co-directors of this conference. With you, we all experienced the moment that was. We know that being co-directors of a conference gives one the impression that we did all of the work. We had lots of help. Jon Reyhner played a major role in guiding us. So did Gina Cantoni. They are the avatars, our conference grandparents. We also thank Ted Vaughn for participating in our quest of honoring the elders. We had much help. We also worked closely with Barbara Burnaby during the operating stage of the conference as she was preparing for her own conference in Toronto, Canada. In the contemporary culture of the business world, there is the illusion of the self-made person. This is just an illusion. For every successful person, there are layers of assistance, people in the background who are vitally important in the creation of events. We know who these people are and we thank them for their help. Many of these people can be found at our own institutions, the University of Louisville and Northern Arizona University. Many are personal friends and relatives. Many of them are our colleagues and our own students. We thank you all. We are not alone. Everything that we do, we do with others and we do them because of others. We all share in the making of these events.

Dos and Don'ts in Language Teaching

- Make opportunities for learner to talk.
- Expect them to talk or respond to you (WAIT).
- Do not laugh at their attempts. Be serious.
- Shape and Expand their responses to be more adult-like.

Shaping

- Ask questions as if to confirm understanding of what learner has just said. Learner will repeat the 'improved' statement as if it was his/her own.
- A language is learned by speaking it.
- Adult may just say the phrase correctly.
- Learner may repeat once or twice.
- With continued 'shaping' language becomes more and more adult-like.
- Commands and Directions are okay.

Expanding

- Expand words or short phrases into more complete sentences.
- Try to get learners to use phrases/sentences **WITH VERBS**. (If s/he doesn't use a verb, supply one for her/him. Do this by asking a confirmation-type question to which a response is made with a longer answer.)
- Be matter of fact. Do not make a big deal out of it.

We have to transfer language behavior that often seems to come naturally in parent/child interaction into teacher/child interaction.

- Talk to learners only in Navajo.
- Expect a response in Navajo.
- Teach them what to say if they don't understand.
- Do not punish them if they should not understand.
- Set up situations where learners talk to the teacher and other learners in Navajo.
- Set up situations where learners ask questions to the teacher and other learners in Navajo.

ABOVE ALL, BE PATIENT!!!

From: Navajo Nation Language Project, Division of Diné Education. (2003). *Directory of secondary Navajo language programs* (Funded by ANA Grant No. 90NL0125, NNLP 97/08/27), Inside front cover.

Spanish: A Language of Indigenous Peoples of the Americas

Florencia Riegelhaupt, Roberto Luis Carrasco, Elizabeth Brandt

Editors' Note: It might seem strange to have an article on Spanish in a publication focusing on endangered languages, but even a "world language" can be endangered regionally. Passage of English-only, anti-bilingual education propositions in California, Arizona, and Massachusetts in the last few years underscores the fact that any language can suffer repression, and that the "tyranny of the majority" can threaten any minority language if the conditions are right. Based on how political democracy works, it is critical that language minorities that want to see their languages survive and thrive must band together to oppose oppressive legislation that limits their freedom to have their languages and cultures represented in the curriculum of public schools.

This article demonstrates that the great majority of U.S. Spanish speakers and speakers of Indigenous languages share Indigenous roots, speak marked languages that are threatened, are bilingual, have similar linguistic and pedagogical needs, and speak languages that predate English in the Americas. Spanish is viewed as an asset for U.S. Indigenous peoples in the Southwest as it can promote indigenism and expand the base of cultural and political exchange.

Spanish, while clearly not an Indigenous language of the Americas, has become one of and sometimes the only language of Indigenous peoples. Since its introduction in the early stages of the Spanish conquest when it was used as what Antonio Nebrija labeled "the language of empire," Spanish has gained a strong foothold among Indigenous peoples who are frequently bilingual in their native languages as well as in Spanish.

The Spanish originally brought to the Americas and the Spanish of today is significantly different, principally owing to its contact with Indigenous languages. The Spanish of the Americas today can be said then to be a truly unique variety reflecting the Indigenous presence found throughout the Americas at the time of the conquest to the present. As English has penetrated and changed Indigenous languages, Spanish language contact also influenced Indigenous languages. Languages evolve into unique identities owing principally to language and culture contact (Silva-Corvalán, 1995; Barkin & Brandt, 1982; Barkin, Brandt, & Ornstein-Galicia, 1982).

In this paper we propose that Spanish, and more specifically varieties of it found in the United States Southwest, Mexico, Central and South America, is an important vehicle for cross-cultural Indigenous dialog in the Americas. In her plea for recognition of the common history, traditional values, linguistic, and cultural goals of Chicanos and Indigenous peoples, Jaimes (1988) proposes the term "indigenism." Indigenism involves the conscious and consistent (re)assertion

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and adherence to the traditional cultural values upon which both American Indian and Chicano societies were formed.

Indigenism means consciously strengthening the links among ourselves that presently exist, and reestablishing those which have been eroded or broken by the colonial process. It means once again to rely upon one another rather than that which oppresses and seeks to destroy us. And it means seeking to widen our circle, to meet and forge bonds with other, ongoing Indigenous societies around the world (p. 19).

We demonstrate how American varieties of Spanish are for some people their only surviving tongue, while for others Spanish is one of the languages spoken by multilingual populations. We present the perspective that bilingualism/multilingualism in Spanish, English and Indigenous languages contributes both to the maintenance of Indigenous languages and cultures and to the dissemination of information related to Indigenous cultural and political issues across the Americas. In addition, we demonstrate similarities between linguistic, pedagogical, historical, and cultural characteristics of Indigenous peoples and monolingual and bilingual Spanish-speakers of the Southwest in their quest for language and cultural preservation. Knowledge about these commonalities helps to contribute to efforts to maintain, preserve and continue to transmit heritage languages and cultures to future generations.

We begin with a discussion of language shift and policy in the early years of the Spanish colonies. This historical overview of Spanish language policy provides a backdrop for understanding the spread of Spanish as a language of monolingual and bilingual Indigenous peoples throughout the Americas, with its incorporation of Indigenous lexical items, phonological realizations, and although less commonly, morphological and syntactical structures. In addition to an historical overview of Spanish colonial language policy, the following topics related to the role and importance of Spanish for Indigenous peoples in the Americas are discussed: Indigenous peoples and Spanish as a *lingua franca*, shared history as conquered people, Indigenous roots of Spanish speakers in the United States, mutual revitalization and stabilization efforts, affective connections to language and culture, teaching and learning Spanish and Indigenous languages, Spanish for Indigenous research, and loanwords and mutual language influences. These topics underscore 1) the mutual linguistic and cultural issues and concerns of native Spanish and English speaking Indigenous bilinguals in the Americas, 2) the similar cultural and linguistic needs for language and cultural preservation of native Spanish speaking and Indigenous language bilinguals in the United States, and 3) the importance of Spanish as a language for Indigenous peoples.

Language shift and language policy for America's Indigenous peoples

Spain's presence in the Americas dates back to 1492, an important date both for Spain and for the Spanish language for a number of reasons. Ferdinand

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and Isabel, the “Catholic King and Queen,” who united the kingdoms of Castilla and Aragón declared Castilian, *castellano*, the official language of Spain, and Antonio de Nebrija published the first Grammar of the Spanish Language and advised monarchs that Spanish should become the official language of the Spanish empire. At the same time the Spanish Inquisition was in full force, requiring all non-Christians to either convert or to be exiled; Jews were expelled in 1492 followed by Moslems in 1503. They were forced to leave the land that had been theirs for hundreds of years, taking with them their Spanish language and customs.

Motivated by a desire for gold and land, the Spanish conquered the Indigenous people of the Americas and converted them to Catholicism. The clergy used Spanish to teach the Bible and by extension it was also conceived by native people as the language of Christianity. It often incorporated religious symbols and rituals from the various Indigenous religions with which it came in contact. The Spanish language rapidly became the *lingua franca* and the official colonial language of the conquered. Spanish was taking its place as the language of “empire.”

Today, 500 years later, throughout Latin America (which includes the United States Southwest), Spanish remains the major *lingua franca* among Indigenous people. The people of Mexico and the Southwestern United States are called Mexican usually in reference to their political nationality. But in many parts of Mexico people refer to themselves also as “mejicanos” (Mexicans) meaning Mexica people (Aztecs) who speak Nahuatl. Others will say they are Mexican and speak Spanish. They could also be Maya, Mixteca, Cora, Huichol, Otomí, Yaqui, or another of the hundreds of Indigenous groups living in Mexico.

The notion that the people of Latin America today are a mixed blend of Spanish blood with Indigenous people is more myth than truth. The Spanish caste system viewed such a mixture as lower class although it did occur to a certain extent. The real *mestizaje*, the real mixture, is among native peoples of Latin America (Jaimes, 1988) who still use Spanish as their *lingua franca*. Intertribal marriages have made English the *lingua franca* among the US Indigenous peoples much as Spanish has taken on this role in Latin America.

When the Spaniards began to colonize the Americas, they knew that they would profit, both in terms of wealth, as well as conversion to Christianity. Ferdinand and Isabel, after all, had fought hard to reconquer Granada, the last Moslem stronghold of the Reconquest which ended over 700 years of Moslem rule in Spain. Christian fervor was at its height. They believed conversion to be their role so that the “heathens” would be saved and extended this ideology to newly conquered territories. With Christianity came Spanish, for it was in Spanish that Christianity was to be initially introduced to the Indigenous peoples. Various linguistic approaches to proselytizing began to take form. King Charles V, for example, insisted on Spanish to be the language used, while Philip II felt that Indigenous languages were more suited to encouraging converts to Christianity. He also suggested that Nahuatl be used as a *lingua franca* for the purpose of converting the various Indigenous peoples of Mexico to Christianity.

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The 16th and 17th centuries were of conquest and conversion and these goals were considered far more important than the dissemination of Spanish. During this period, Franciscan friars learned Indigenous languages, and Nahuatl was also used. Philip IV's liberal language policy recognized the difficulty in insisting in the learning of Spanish prior to and during the conversion process. He supported an Indigenous language policy for conversion.

Toward the end of the 17th century, under the rule of Charles II, insistence upon the learning of Spanish grew stronger. The 18th century was characterized by linguistic repression. Spanish again was to be the language of empire and of Christianity. Indigenous languages were seen as an obstacle to reaching such goals.

The 19th century was the century of autonomy; most of the colonies became independent states. The former Spanish Empire was now wrought with political and economic unrest. No longer was Spain a world power. Efforts to require Spanish for educational and religious purposes were weakening in the remaining colonies, such as Guam and the Philippines, while Christianity maintained its stronghold throughout the former Spanish Empire. Prior to the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo of 1848, when the Southwestern United States was under Spanish rule and later under Mexican rule, Indigenous peoples such as the Pueblo people of New Mexico and Arizona often spoke Spanish as their first or second language. Bilingualism prevailed and Indigenous languages were still spoken when the Americans acquired this region.

When the Americans acquired this territory in 1848, both Mexicans and Indigenous groups were considered conquered peoples. Immediately, an American policy of linguistic and cultural eradication was imposed for both Spanish and Indigenous language speakers. This form of cultural and linguistic genocide included what Jaimes (1988) refers to as autogenocide. Autogenocide is a process by which groups lose their identification with their culture. The American policy was to "Americanize" the conquered people through segregated schools for Mexicans and boarding schools for Indians. In these schools, Mexican and Indigenous students were punished for speaking their languages. Carrasco recalls how he was punished in Los Angeles schools for speaking Spanish. "I was often sent to the back of the classroom to face the wall all day with a small bar of soap in my mouth." Until the late 1960s, if teachers heard a language other than English in Mexican and Indigenous classrooms, they would hit their students' fingers/hands or their heads with a ruler. While there is no official language policy in the United States Constitution, there was clearly an English language policy imposed on these conquered people, who were given U.S. citizenship through the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo.

Spanish documents during various *entradas* (incursions) into the Southwest suggest that the Spanish did not have a problem communicating with Indigenous peoples here. Often these documents mention the use of sign language, but sometimes they suggest that they spoke to the people, though what language(s) was used is unknown. This suggests, however, that in the Southwest during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which mark the beginnings of Spanish ex-

ploration and settlement, Spanish and Indigenous languages were used and multilingualism prevailed. The entire span of territory from the U.S. Great Basin south to Tenochtitlan (The Aztec capital that became Mexico City) was populated by speakers of Uto-Aztecan languages and dialects. The Spanish always traveled with Indigenous servants and slaves who spoke many languages. Also, the time period between the establishment of the Aztec state and the arrival of the Spaniards spans only a few hundred years, not a long time when it comes to language change.

Indigenous peoples and Spanish as a *lingua franca*

Indigenous peoples have inhabited what is now the southwestern United States for over 40,000 years, speaking their Indigenous languages. Spanish as a *lingua franca* across Indigenous groups has existed for over four hundred years, while English is a newcomer to the linguistic tapestry. With the end of the Mexican American War, and the Gadsden Purchase, Spanish and Indigenous languages of the U.S. Southwest became part of the linguistic fabric of the new U.S. Territories.

Spanish missionaries rarely learned the languages of the U.S. Southwest, but did set up schools to teach Spanish. They used Indigenous people who became fluent in Spanish as catechists all over the Southwest, and Spanish became increasingly imposed and important in Indigenous communities. Spanish became the *lingua franca* of the U.S. Southwest, and English had little penetration into rural contexts well into the 20th century after the American invasion of the Mexican northwest (today the U.S. Southwest) in the 1840s. A case in point is the persistence of a variety of Spanish in Northern New Mexico and Southern Colorado that contains archaisms from the Spanish spoken by early settlers. Charles Lummis, a journalist who lived at the New Mexico Pueblo of Isleta in the mid-1880s, spoke Spanish to the people and they to him, even corresponding in Spanish for decades, although he did learn a lot of Isletan Tiwa as well. As late as the 1960s, most Pueblo Indian communities in New Mexico were trilingual in their native language, Spanish, and English. Navajos, Apaches, Yaquis (Trujillo, 1997) and other tribes in the Southwest were also similarly trilingual. But this began to change, with English replacing the native language and Spanish. Today in these communities, the native language is spoken primarily by those who are 50 years old and above, with a few exceptions such as remote Keres and Tiwa-speaking villages, and Spanish is also limited to older speakers. Still today, Apaches, Hopis, Navajos, Yaquis (Trujillo, 1997; Spicer, 1943) and other Indigenous tribes have vestiges of Spanish borrowings and loanwords due to Spanish language contact.

Among the Pueblo Indigenous towns in the Southwest, there has been tremendous attrition as a result of the processes of colonization. Huge numbers of villages simply disappeared. The community of Ysleta del Sur, located in the El Paso, Texas area, was originally Tiwa-speaking. It began as a group of refugees who were brought by the Spanish to "Paso del Río" (today, El Paso, Texas) during the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. The language became for all purposes extinct

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by the late 19th century, though a few words are still preserved even today. Spanish became the language of Isleta del Sur and today is the language most commonly spoken in this border community, though English is also spoken. The same is true of what were originally Piro speaking communities. Available evidence indicates that Piro was a Tanoan language, closest to Tiwa, and now extinct. So Spanish has become the language of many Indigenous communities. In Arizona, the Tohono O'odham nation has been divided by the relatively recent U.S./Mexico border. While there are quite a number of speakers of O'odham, Spanish is the language of wider communication for this Indigenous nation, when tribal members from both sides are together in public contexts.

Spanish remains the *lingua franca* among Indigenous peoples of the Americas; it unites them in their mutual efforts to defend their rights as Indigenous peoples. Even in cases when the Indigenous language is their principal language, Indigenous peoples throughout Latin America must use Spanish when communicating across national and cultural boundaries. Indigenous peoples in the United States who wish to communicate with those in Latin America need to know Spanish.

In the sections that follow, we demonstrate the shared plight of Hispanics and other U.S. Indigenous groups. We compare these populations and provide reasons why combining efforts to stabilize and revitalize Spanish and Indigenous languages in the U.S. Southwest could help insure for their mutual protection. While Spanish is not considered to be an endangered language and boasts a significant number of native speakers, its loss is of concern to U.S. scholars and educators who recognize the link between knowledge of culture and language and overall academic success. Both populations are suffering language loss within their communities. Both groups are struggling for equal rights. Both are suffering from higher dropout rates, alcoholism, suicide, and health problems, such as diabetes and heart disease.

Shared history as conquered people

Ironically, considering the role of the Spanish as conquerors up to the nineteenth century, today Spanish and Indigenous language speakers in the United States now share a history of injustice, racism, and colonialism; they are now both a conquered people. Jaimes (1988) provides examples of similarities in Chicano and American Indian culture, politics and community. She discusses 1) their common heritage of collectivity or “communalism, 2) their similar history and experiences with land fraud, 3) the implications of federal “official English” with regard to both groups’ cultural integrity, and 4) human rights considerations in view of Euro-American cultural/political and economic hegemony. She states that “Regardless of the outcome, it is plainly evident that culture, politics and community among Chicanos and American Indians in this contemporary U.S are not only related, but inseparable matters” (19). These facts should become a unifying force for these linguistic minority groups. Linguistic policy related to the use of Indigenous languages should include Spanish as part of the

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agenda for language revitalization and stabilization, since Spanish also has been shown to be experiencing loss among the younger sectors of both populations.

On the surface it may appear that Spanish is vital and strong and will remain so. Evidence used to create this impression generally includes recent immigrant populations from Mexico and Central America. While it is true that the United States is the fifth largest Spanish speaking country in the world with 35.3 million (U.S. Census 2000), Hernández-Chávez (1993; 1999) and Rivera-Mills (2002; 2000a; 2000b) have shown that Spanish is giving way to English at a rapid pace, especially among youth in both urban and rural areas. While immigration increases numbers of Spanish speakers in the U.S., children of Spanish-speaking immigrants are learning English and their children often choose English rather than Spanish as their home language. Given this scenario, intergenerational transmission of the mother tongue, the key element for language maintenance, is improbable. Loss of language and culture has been shown to have negative academic and cognitive affects. Lower achievement often contributes to lower self-concept. Lack of knowledge of one's language often alienates children from their parents and grandparents, and from their sense of cultural rootedness.

Mutual revitalization and stabilization efforts

Since these groups NOW share a common history as a conquered people, they speak marked languages and are considered to belong to marked cultures. Marked languages and cultures are stigmatized by the majority culture, leading its members to have negative attitudes toward themselves, their cultures and the languages they speak. It has been demonstrated that the lower status of minority languages and cultures can negatively affect their language maintenance and acquisition. Joining forces in political attempts to legitimize the role of minority languages and bilingual education as well as to revitalize these native languages can only help efforts on behalf of both U.S. Indigenous groups.

Owing to the fact that Spanish and Indigenous languages are both experiencing loss, similar revitalization and stabilization efforts are also required. What tends to differentiate the groups is the fact that there are far greater numbers of Spanish speakers. Their mere numbers present a picture of linguistic security. However, as mentioned above, numbers often cloud the issue and present a case for linguistic stability rather than loss. Just as in the case of Indigenous U.S. populations, Spanish is losing ground, especially among youth and young adult populations who are using English as their only or principal language even at home.

Indigenous roots of Spanish speakers in the United States

Most Spanish speakers throughout the Western Hemisphere are either monolingual or bilingual Indigenous peoples. Spanish-speaking immigrants to the U.S. are mostly Indigenous peoples, and bilingual in their mother tongue and in Spanish. Their children may be trilingual, with English as their third language. Often, U.S. school and government officials assume that immigrants from Latin

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America speak fluent Spanish, which is not always the case. For example, Barbara Flores (Personal communication, October 1, 1987), a professor of bilingual education, observed a migrant bilingual English-Spanish school in Madera, California, at a time when the school was concerned about the effectiveness of the bilingual program and low academic achievement. Through linguistic observations in the community and the schoolyard, it was discovered that while the students and their parents were indeed from Mexico, they were native “Mixteca” speaking people and Spanish was their second language. The school was attempting to teach these students a new language, English, while using Spanish instead of their mother tongue. Fernando Peñalosa (Personal communication, April 20, 1995), a sociolinguist, also observed that the children of immigrant Mexican “Mayan” communities in Los Angeles, California were frequently misplaced in Spanish-English bilingual programs. Many Mexican immigrants are bilingual in their native language and in Spanish, with Spanish being their weaker language. Others may be monolingual in an Indigenous language. Frequently, they are not literate in either the Indigenous language or in Spanish. Literacy in their Indigenous languages is rare.

Affective connections to language and culture

Native learners in both contexts express emotional and affective connections to their native cultures and languages and often wish to establish strong links to their heritage, families and communities. An additional reason for including both Spanish speakers and Indigenous speakers in a similar category when it comes to language preservation efforts is that both groups, when asked about the importance of their language and their culture, express emotional and affective connections and reasons for maintaining them. They often choose to continue to learn their languages so that they can establish or maintain links to their heritage, families and communities. Luis Ruan (Personal communication, May 29, 2002), a California Chicano youth counselor, informed us of that his knowledge of Spanish allowed him to gain entry into his grandparents’ Indigenous Purepecha bilingual community in a remote area of Michoacán, Mexico. Because of his Spanish, he was able to discover his Indigenous roots. He even began the formal study of Purepecha while in Mexico. A Chicana student, in an intermediate Spanish Composition for Native Speakers, reported how her newly acquired Spanish language skills led her to communicate with her monolingual grandfather in Mexico, allowing her to reconnect with her Indigenous cultural roots.

Teaching and learning Spanish and Indigenous languages

Language learning strategies and reasons for learning their languages are significantly different among heritage language learners when compared to second language learners. Efforts toward establishing university language programs for these heritage learners should involve both Southwestern “Indigenous” groups. After all, their continued acquisition of their heritage languages requires an entirely different approach to language teaching/learning than exists in typical sec-

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ond language programs. Spanish for Native Speakers courses are far more similar to heritage language programs in Indigenous languages, such as Navajo, than they are to second language programs.

Pedagogical approaches for teaching heritage languages generally utilize language and culture contexts and knowledge as take off points for the further acquisition of native/heritage languages. Important links with home and community are often required for successful implementation of such language programs. Community knowledge is integrated into the classroom and elders may also be brought into the classroom to speak the language to recount stories and legends, and to teach concepts better expressed in their native language.

Spanish for Indigenous research

Today, Spanish is also a necessary tool for investigating Spanish colonial documents. Many of these documents contain important information related to Indigenous culture and language, as well as land ownership issues. Scholars, in collaboration with Indigenous leaders, need to know how to read Spanish as they continue to uncover new information about what is now the area comprising the Southwestern U.S. Many pertinent Spanish historical documents describe Indigenous languages and cultures with which they came into contact. These documents also shed light on land disputes and related issues. While these documents can be found in various archives throughout the Spanish speaking world, Spanish is clearly needed to access this information. One valuable source of original colonial documents is the famous Archives of the Indies located in Sevilla, Spain.

Spanish, as a heritage language in the Southwest, links both native Spanish speakers with Indigenous people to a past where both groups learned each other's languages. In a study of Spanish and Chamorro (the Indigenous language of the Chamorro people) language policy in Guam, Carrasco and Riegelhaupt (1989) found that the status and use of these two languages were frequently determined by Spanish royal decree. Spain's language policy dictated that either Spanish, Indigenous languages, or in the case of Mexico, the *lingua franca*, Nahuatl, was to be used. By the middle of the 19th century, Spanish was clearly the official language used in education and government of colonies that had won their independence from Spain. U.S. acquired territories, won either during the Mexican American War of 1845 or the Spanish American War of 1898, continued to use Spanish and Indigenous languages, while English was being introduced. Bilingualism in Spanish and Indigenous languages, followed by a transitional period of trilingualism with English as the third language, appears to be the case from the beginning to mid 20th century. Spanish, therefore, represents one of the heritage languages of all former Spanish colonies, including those now part of the Southwestern United States.

Languages in contact, loanwords, and mutual language influences

Indigenous languages that have experienced significant contact with Spanish have numerous Spanish loanwords. Many of these refer to objects, concepts,

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and animals introduced by the Spanish. It is interesting to note the various adaptations loanwords have taken based on the various Indigenous phonological systems. Many of the loanwords from Spanish are related to the same word in Spanish, yet they have taken on distinct forms from language to language. Spanish colonization introduced new domestic animals, new food crops, tree crops, and the mission grape. All of the names for these were incorporated into the Indigenous languages. In some languages, such as Yoeme, there has been significant relexification of the lexicon based on Spanish models. Only Athapaskan has been quite resistant to Spanish loans. There appear to be only three k pp s 'potatoes', pish 'fish', and beso '*peso*, money, dollar'. There are large numbers of Nahuatl words that have become part of a universal Spanish lexicon, such as *chocolate* (chocolate), *aguacate* (avocado), etc. Other Indigenous borrowings into Spanish have remained regionalisms. For example, *chile* (chile) is common in the Southwestern U.S. and Mexico, while *ají* (chile) is used for the same plant and food in the Andean region, and in other areas of South America.

Spanish and Indigenous languages have influenced each other extensively. The Spanish of the Americas is clearly not the same as the Spanish of Spain. Many of the differences are specifically related to contact with Indigenous languages. Hidalgo (2001) refers to this process as one of "koineization," a process by which languages change through contact. It can be argued that at least certain Spanishes spoken in the Americas have so thoroughly and completely incorporated Indigenous language vocabulary and structures that they have become the Indigenous language of these people.

Goodfellow and Alfred (2002) argue that rather than looking at language change in a negative light, and saying it is really language death, we should remember that linguistic change is inevitable and constant and that when cultures meet and their members speak different languages, pidgins will inevitably result. These pidgins will then go through a process of creolization, thereby becoming the native (and first) language of the next generation. New dialects of English may even be mixed languages (Bakker & Muysken, 1995). Goodfellow and Alfred (2002) offer an example of a North American Indian Language (Kwak'wala) that has come in contact with English and has transformed into a new language that deserves to be preserved. In many cases, for example, there are few or no native speakers of the Indigenous languages left, and access to these individuals is very limited. The actual "native tongues" of these groups, are the contact varieties. Some of these may be based lexically on one, or more native languages, a European colonial language other than English, and English, as well. Goodfellow and Alfred (2002) offer a case in point with Chinook Wawa, a language spoken along the Northwest Coast of North America from southern Oregon to Alaska. Chinook Wawa which has aspects of Chinukan, Nootka, Salish, Kwakiutl, and (later) French and English, and even Hawaiian, Chinese, and other languages. Goodfellow and Alfred note that there have been efforts to revitalize it as a community language, principally because it represents the only known language that carries the traditional ceremonial aspects previously found in the various languages of the various cultural groups

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that came into contact with each other. Revitalization efforts that redefine the concept of “standard” language to include other viable languages, and their dialects, are far more likely to succeed. Goodfellow and Alfred encourage Indigenous communities today to recognize and accept these new languages since they clearly represent the link between these Indigenous cultures and their traditional ways.

Conclusion

We have presented a case for acquiring, maintaining, and including Spanish as an important language for both heritage speakers of Spanish and Indigenous peoples of the Southwestern United States. We have discussed numerous cultural, historical, political and linguistic similarities between U.S. Spanish speakers and speakers of Indigenous languages. These populations share Indigenous roots, speak marked languages, are bilingual, possess strong cultural ties to their families and communities, have similar linguistic and pedagogical needs, and speak languages that predate English in the Southwest. There are even U.S. Indigenous peoples who today speak Spanish as their only mother tongue!

Spanish should be seen as an asset for U.S. Indigenous peoples. It promotes indigenism because Spanish allows one to communicate, to exchange ideas across other Indigenous groups in the Western Hemisphere, including the Chicanos of the Southwest, and immigrant Latin Americans, who are for the most part also Indigenous peoples. It allows for cultural exchange among groups with common interests and similar agendas, and allows Indigenous people to present themselves, and their social, cultural and political circumstances, to a larger international community.

Although its presence only dates back to the Spanish colonial period, Spanish was spoken in the Southwest prior to English. It coexisted with Indigenous languages and bilingualism among Indigenous peoples was often the case. Mutual efforts to ensure for the revitalization, stabilization, and continued use and acquisition of these important languages spoken in the U. S. Southwest can only strengthen political power on behalf of the peoples who continue to speak them. While we believe in the importance of the autonomy of each nation and ethnolinguistic group to make decisions about how to insure for the preservation and continuation of its language, we also believe that while we're thinking locally, we should also be thinking globally. The goals are the same—to protect the vitality of our languages and cultures in this diverse nation.

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Keresan Pueblo Indian Sign Language

Walter P. Kelley, Tony L. McGregor

In one small Keresan-speaking pueblo in central New Mexico 15 out of 650 tribal members have severe to profound hearing loss, which is a little over twice the national average and reflects a generally high rate of hearing impairments among American Indians (Kelley, 2001; Hammond & Meiners, 1993; LaPlante, 1991). American Indians have been found to be almost three times more likely to be hospitalized for conditions of the ear than the general population (Hammond & Meiners, 1993). Estimates range that 20 to 70% of American Indians have been found to have middle ear problems such as otitis media (McShane & Plas, 1982). Otitis media is the inflammation of the middle ear cavity (behind the ear drum), usually resulting from the closing of the Eustachian tube due to swelling and to loss of ventilation and fluid drainage in the middle ear cavity (Scaldwell, 1989). Otitis media continues to affect Southwestern Indian tribes at high rates leading to hearing loss, especially among children (Johnson, 1991). The failure to detect hearing loss has caused many Indian children to miss opportunities for appropriate educational and therapeutic interventions.

Keresan Pueblo Indian Sign Language (KPISL) is a means of communication developed and used among many of the residents of this one New Mexico pueblo. It is one of many North American Indian sign languages found in the United States, and one of two in Southwestern United States that have been studied and documented—the other being Navajo (Davis & Suppala, 1995). A literature review suggests that signed languages were also used among Apaches and Hopis (West, 1960). KPISL is believed to have developed on one pueblo by family members in order to communicate with their offspring, siblings, and relatives who were deaf (Kelley, 2001). It is not at all uncommon for deaf children and their family members to invent a home-based sign system for such a purpose. However, KPISL does not fit the framework for home-based sign systems set forth by researchers such as Frishberg (1987) who states that home signs do not have a consistent meaning-symbol relationship, do not pass on from generation to generation, are not shared by one large group, and are not considered the same over a community of signers. KPISL was passed on from one family's eldest brothers and sisters to their hearing and deaf siblings, nephews, and nieces. KPISL is also used among non-family members living on the pueblo. It has been found to function in two significant ways: (a) as an alternative to spoken language for hearing tribal members and (b) as a primary or first language for deaf tribal members.

KPISL didn't originate for the same purposes as the well known Plains Indian Sign Language (PISL), which was primarily developed to facilitate intertribal communication between the American Indian tribes that spoke different languages in the Plains region of the present United States and Canada—a region extending from what is now the state of Texas northward to Canada and, at its widest point, stretching from Arizona through Oklahoma (Taylor, 1978). Signs were used during hunting and trading among the different tribes and were also

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used for storytelling and a variety of ceremonies. Plains tribes known to use signed language included the Cheyenne, Comanche, Kiowa, and Sioux. Signed languages were also used as a means of communication by the Iroquois in the state of New York, the Cherokee in the Southeastern United States, the Eskimos in Alaska, and the Mayan in Mexico (Johnson, 1994; Scott, 1931; West, 1960).

Signed language is reported to have been carried from Mexico to the Southwestern region of the United States by the Kiowa (West, 1960). The Spaniard Cabeza de Vaca recorded the earliest accounts of signed languages in the sixteenth century (Tomkins, 1969). De Vaca made a brief mention of a meeting in the Tampa Bay area of Florida with American Indian people who could communicate in a signed language. As he traveled, he was able to ask questions and receive answers through the use of signs with various Indian tribes who spoke different languages. Francisco de Coronado, another Spanish explorer, reported signs being used in the western part of Texas (Tomkins, 1969). In 1540, he encountered the Tonkawa and Comanche people and was able to communicate with them, using signs without the assistance of an interpreter. As the Spanish returned back to their mother country, priests went along and are thought to have shared the signs that they had learned from American Indians people. Perhaps, from the priests, monks who had taken a vow of silence picked up signs and used them between themselves for they were not allowed to speak with each other inside their monasteries (Fischer & Lane, 1993). From the monks, the signs were probably borrowed by educators who saw it as a tool to communicate with the Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing in Spain and neighboring France. And, perhaps the signs followed travelers from France to America where it evolved into American Indian Sign Language (ASL).

With the arrival of the United States military in the Plains region in the late 1800s, formal studies were conducted on the signed language used among various Indian tribes on the Plains (Clark 1885/1982; Dodge, 1882/1978; Seton, 1918). In the late 1900s, Cody (1970) and Tomkins (1969) among others developed a comprehensive dictionary of the signs. Recently Farnell (1995) and McKay-Cody (1998) have conducted studies on what is left of PISL.

Both KPISL and PISL have become endangered languages. KPISL is not much used among the pueblo's younger generation owing to their learning school English, ASL, or signs that follow the spoken English word order. Before the 1990s, American Indian Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing tribal members usually left home to attend a residential school for the deaf located far away (Baker, 1997; Lane, Hoffmeister, & Bahan, 1996). At the school, there was usually no formal instruction of American Indian or American Indian culture and signs; only Deaf culture and ASL were taught, leading many American Indian students to join the "Deaf World." After graduation, the students had to make difficult decisions about where and how to establish themselves: on the pueblos with hearing families and friends, in urban areas with other Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing people, or in border towns with limited access to both groups.

English has now become the dominant language for many Pueblo Indians. Its use, as well as continued contact with and influences of the dominant culture,

has served to erode some of the traditions and values of the Pueblo Indian culture (Downs, 1972). As a result, KPISL, a valuable piece of American Indian heritage, may be slipping into extinction as well. An immediate step to record this unique language would be to develop illustrations of the signs found on the pueblo for a dictionary that can be placed in the pueblo's library and museum. Many individuals in the pueblo are willing to demonstrate the signs to be illustrated. Documentation of the signs will assist in preserving KPISL and will provide an opportunity for studying it within its historical and socio-cultural context. Understanding KPISL can provide a more complete understanding and appreciation of the cultural heritage of the people living in this small Keresan-speaking pueblo. Examples are given in the appendix of some KPISL signs (Figures 1a, 2a, 3a, and 4a) as compared to one PISL signed language, that of the Cheyenne (Figures 1b, 2b, 3b, and 4b), and to ASL (Figures 1c, 2c, 3c, and 4c). Linguistic differences among the three languages are indicated. The chosen meaning-symbol relationship signs (corn, dancing, eagle, and singing) are widely used among the Pueblo people, especially during feast days and holidays.

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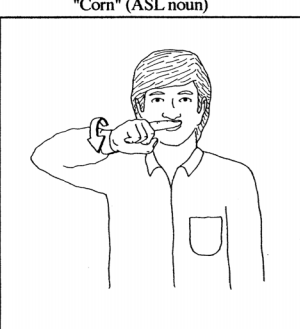
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Appendix

<p>"Corn" (KPISL noun)</p>  <p>2001 Copyright © Tony Landon McGregor</p>	<p>Figure 1a Keresan Pueblo Indian Sign Language (KPISL) "Corn" (noun)</p> <p>Linguistic Analysis of KPISL</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Handshape: closed "S" handshapes 2. Location (place of articulation): in front of signer's chest level 3. Movement: "S" hands with an alternate upward motion indicating ears of corn on the stalk 4. Palm Orientation: toward mid-sagittal plane 5. Point of Contact: none
<p>"Corn" (CISL noun)</p>  <p>2001 Copyright © Tony Landon McGregor</p>	<p>Figure 1b Cheyenne Indian Sign Language (CISL) "Corn" (noun)</p> <p>Linguistic Analysis of CISL</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Handshape: closed "G" handshapes 2. Location (place of articulation): in front of signer's chest level 3. Movement: dominant hand in twisting motion as if shelling corn 4. Palm Orientation: toward mid-sagittal plane 5. Point of Contact: touching each other
<p>"Corn" (ASL noun)</p>  <p>2001 Copyright © Tony Landon McGregor</p>	<p>Figure 1c American Sign Language (ASL) "Corn" (Noun)</p> <p>Linguistic Analysis of ASL</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Handshape: open "1" handshape (one hand) 2. Location (place of articulation): in front of signer's mouth area 3. Movement: rotate back and forth 4. Palm Orientation: facing down 5. Point of Contact: none

"Dance" (KPISL noun)



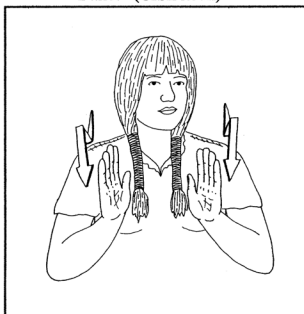
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Figure 2a
Keresan Pueblo Indian Sign Language (KPISL)
"Dance" (verb)

Linguistic Analysis of KPISL

1. Handshape:
"A" handshapes
2. Location (place of articulation):
in front of the signer's chest level,
in a slightly outward position
3. Movement:
upward and downward motion
alternately
4. Palm Orientation:
toward mid-sagittal plane

"Dance" (CISL noun)



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Figure 2b
Cheyenne Indian Sign Language (CISL)
"Dance" (verb)

Linguistic Analysis of CISL

1. Handshape:
closed 5 handshapes
(upward position)
2. Location (place of articulation):
in front of signer's chest level
3. Movement:
slightly upward and downward
simultaneously
4. Palm Orientation:
toward mid-sagittal plane

"Dance" (ASL noun)



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Figure 2c
American Sign Language (ASL)
"Dance" (verb)

Linguistic Analysis of ASL

1. Handshape:
"V" handshape and closed 5
handshape
2. Location (place of articulation):
in front of signer's chest level
3. Movement:
dominant hand moves back and forth
in swinging position
4. Palm Orientation:
facing each other with little open
space between dominant hand
facing downward and
non-dominant hand facing
upward

"Eagle" (KPISL noun)




Figure 3a
Keresan Pueblo Indian Sign Language (KPISL)
"Eagle" (noun)

Linguistic Analysis of KPISL

1. Handshape: closed 5 handshapes	5. Point of Contact: thumb tips of both hands touching
2. Location (place of articulation): in front of signer's chest level	
3. Movement: wavy upward path	
4. Palm Orientation: facing away in forward direction and partially downward	

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"Eagle" (CISL noun)




Figure 3b
Cheyenne Indian Sign Language (CISL)
"Eagle" (noun)

Linguistic Analysis of CISL
 Note: a) beak and b) wings

1. Handshape: a) closed 5 handshapes b) "G" handshapes	4. Palm Orientation: a) facing down b) toward mid-sagittal plane
2. Location (place of articulation): a) in front of signer's shoulder level b) in front of signer's face level	5. Point of Contact: a) none b) eyes to upper chin area
3. Movement: a) "flapping" motion b) downward curve, indicating curved bill of the eagle	

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"Eagle" (ASL noun)




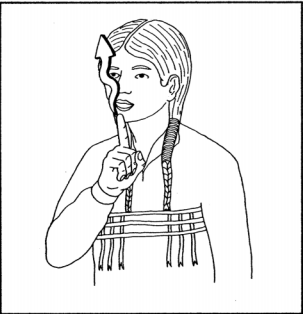
Figure 3c
American Sign Language (ASL)
"Eagle" (noun)

Linguistic Analysis of ASL

1. Handshape: "X" handshape	5. Point of Contact: back of bent index finger touches tip of nose
2. Location (place of articulation): nose	
3. Movement: None (Possible minimal movement away from and to contact like a "bouncing" of the sign)	
4. Palm Orientation: facing away from signer	

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"Sing" (KPISL verb)



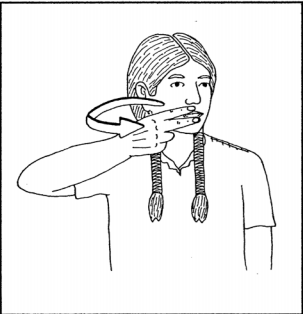
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Figure 4a
Keresan Pueblo Indian Sign Language (KPISL)
"Sing" (verb)

Linguistic Analysis of KPISL

1. Handshape: "I" handshape	5. Point of Contact: slightly touching the lips
2. Location (place of articulation): in front of signer's face level	
3. Movement: wavy upward path from lip to just above head	
4. Palm Orientation: facing toward face	

"Sing" (CISL verb)




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Figure 4b
Cheyenne Indian Sign Language (CISL)
"Sing" (verb)

Linguistic Analysis of CISL

1. Handshape: "V" handshape	5. Point of Contact: none
2. Location (place of articulation): in front of signer's face level	
3. Movement: dominant hand moves briskly in a circular position	
4. Palm Orientation: toward mid-sagittal plane	

"Sing" (ASL verb)



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Figure 4c
American Sign Language (ASL)
"Sing" (verb)

Linguistic Analysis of ASL

1. Handshape: closed 5 handshape	5. Point of Contact: none
2. Location (place of articulation): in front of signer's chest level	
3. Movement: dominant hand moves back and forth above non-dominant hand	
4. Palm Orientation: non-dominant hand facing upward and dominant hand slightly toward signer	

Oral History Shares the Wealth of a Navajo Community

Sara L. Begay, Mary Jimmie, Louise Lockard

This paper describes a collaborative project where Navajo students in grades K-3 used oral history interviews, archival photos, and primary documents to explore the rich history of their communities. As they explored place names and questioned community members, students identified their Navajo language as an important resource in interpreting local historical events. The project was initiated by the students' teachers: Sara L. Begay at Leupp Schools Inc. and Mary Jimmie at Little Singer Community School in Bird Springs, whose schools are located in two communities on the Little Colorado River 45 miles northeast of Flagstaff, Arizona, on the Navajo Nation. Both schools are implementing the Diné [Navajo] Language and Culture teaching perspective, which is based on the premises that education is best when it reflects a sense of place, education should be based on the philosophy and values of those being educated, and the preparation of teachers should reflect the Diné perspective of education. At each school there is a reciprocal relationship between the school and community, involving the community in identifying themes to be explored and involving students in field research, and a series of relational learning opportunities has been developed in which the values of "place" and culture (see Deloria & Wildcat, 2001) are reinforced.

The students and Mr. Nelson Cody, the Navajo Culture Resource Teacher at Leupp Schools Inc., visited community sites, which he told the students stories about in Navajo. Then the students used interviews, archival and recent photos, and primary documents to document these sites and the changes that have occurred in them over time. The students identified proficiency in the Navajo language as a resource in conducting this research. Mr. Cody and the community members the students interviewed often spoke in Navajo in response to the students' question. The Navajo language place names were an important link to the history of the community, names, and stories that had lost their connection to the past in translation. The students wrote:

The purpose of our research project was to document the oral history of the meaningful landmarks in the Leupp community. We collected this information to increase our historical knowledge and increase our sense of pride in the community where we live. It is one way of preserving our Navajo language and culture.

In response to the question, "How did we gather information?" they wrote:

We visited landmarks in the community with Mr. Cody. We read books and articles about the history of these places. We used the Internet to download images from the Northern Arizona University Cline Library Special Collections.

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Students learned the history of their community through the medium of the stories told in the Navajo language. Third grader Le Ron Horseherder narrated the history of Black Rock that Steals Tseeézhiiin' ani iihí:

The Navajo used to put their sheep in a big lava rock that was like the shape of a corral. The geological term for the black rock is basalt: lava that has cooled. Every time they put their flock in there, a sheep or goat would be gone in the morning. The Navajos would put 23 or 54 sheep or goats in there. When they got up the next morning there would be 22 or 53. One was always missing. The thing that made the sheep disappear was a bobcat that lived in the black rocks. At night it crawled out to get a sheep or goat to drag it to its cave that was right inside the corral. The Navajos did not know it was the bobcat that was eating their sheep. So they blamed it on the black rock and called it 'The Black Rock that Steals.'

The students used this dramatic story to help them understand a place in their community and to understand that their culture is constantly changing. They continued:

Mr. Cody also told us that, a long time ago, the sheep corral was not built all the way around with a gate. They were built only halfway and the rest was left open. The Navajos did not use gates and the sheep never wandered off. Nowadays, when you don't put a gate on the corral or leave it open, the sheep will run away. If the sheep wander off, you have to look for them and you can't come home until you find them.

Navajo stories span a historical period from the arrival of Navajos in the Little Colorado River basin, to the arrival of Euro-Americans, to the present. An understanding of these roots is necessary in order to understand possibilities for the future of the community. It is the stories that these teachers and students are able to recover and pass on to their children that will survive. The students visited sites of initial contact with Euro-Americans. General Fremont's fort was built on the Little Colorado River as Navajos returned to their ancestral homeland from Ft. Sumner. The students wrote:

In the Little Colorado River gorge between Grand Falls and Black Falls is an island on which a 'fort' was erected around 1868. Gun holes surrounded the thick 3-foot walls evenly spaced about 4 feet apart. General Fremont and his troops were stationed there to maintain peace and order among the Navajos after their release from captivity at Fort Sumner. If anyone has any additional information about this fort, please contact us.

Oral History Shares the Wealth of a Navajo Community

Throughout the last hundred years, the Leupp community has changed not only in terms of social and economic institutions that have grown and flourished and then declined and vanished but also in terms of the natural environment, which has been affected by changing land use and climate. In *Community Culture and the Environment: A Guide to Understanding a Sense of Place*, the sense of place is an important component of environmental education which “is most effective when it speaks to local issues, problems and priorities” (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2002, p. 16)

Lavelle Walker, a Third Grader, wrote:

Many years ago a lot of cottonwood trees grew along the Little Colorado River valley. The trees were very tall. When it rained, the trees grew more. One day it stopped raining. Then the branches curled up because there was no more water. When the branches curled up, the Navajos called them ‘T’iisnabas’ or ‘Tree Round.’ Local resident, Mr. Jackie Thompson said he used to see many cottonwood trees growing everywhere along the river, but there are only a few now. Mrs. Eunice Kelly, the Third Grade teacher at our school told us that the cottonwood trees were planted along the river to control flooding and erosion.

Donovan David, a student, continued:

In 1984 there was a farm called the Beaver Farm. The cornfield was very big. We found a shed near the farm. Just outside the shed was a diesel tank that gave power to run the diesel engine that was inside the shed. The diesel engine pumped water through the big water pipes to the field to help the crops to grow. The people grew watermelons, cantaloupe, corn, and squash. The big farm was almost as big as the city of Leupp. The farm was named after a white man called Herman Wolf, the first trader on the Reservation. The Navajos used to call him ‘Beaver Man’ because he liked trapping beavers. But now there is no more corn because nobody plants anything there anymore. It is sad that a good thing like this farm has to end just because people do not think the same way about things.

Students visited the Tolchacho site north of Leupp and photographed the still standing adobe walls. They compared their photos with one of the first school in Tolchacho and wrote:

Tolchacho was the first community established on the banks of the Little Colorado River. Mr. William Riley Johnston founded the community in 1900. Johnston, a Methodist Missionary from Kansas, lived with his family in a tent for two years until permanent building could be built. Tolchacho was the site of the first post office, church, trading post, and

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the first school in the region. Tolchacho burned in 1918 and the community was relocated in Old Leupp 10 miles south. Mrs. Pauline Riggs, an employee at Leupp, told us that her father attended the Tolchaco Mission School. John Walker, a graduate of the Hampton Institute in Virginia, became a trader at Tolchacho in 1906. In 1910 he moved across the river to Leupp where he established the Leupp Trading Post that he operated from 1910 to 1912.

Johnston opened a training school for Navajos (Johnston, 1936; Dolaghan & Scates, 1978). The Leupp Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Agency was established in 1910, and Leupp Boarding School was completed in 1912—named for Frances Leupp Commissioner of Indian Affairs from 1905-1908. Leupp was the site of the first Navajo chapter (the Navajo unit of local government) and was the home of Philip Johnston who successfully proposed that the Navajo language be used to make an unbreakable code during World War II.

The students describe changes in the course of the Colorado river and in their community. In 1920 the BIA constructed a steel bridge across Canyon Diablo. Students wrote:

In 1920 H.W. Smith and the Babbitt Brothers Trading Company established the Sunrise Trading Post at the north end of the steel truss bridge. The bridge crossed the north end of Canyon Diablo where it met the Little Colorado River.

The location of this new trading post influenced yet another change. In the 1920s the Leupp community provided health care at the Leupp hospital and K-12 education, including sports. The Agency had a central heating plant and a coal-burning generator. Cottonwood and tamarisk were planted throughout the town to prevent erosion. Students wrote: “There was a devastating flood in 1927. Mr. Cody shared a story about a wagon that was carried downstream for four miles. When the wagon was swept ashore, someone looked inside and found a kitten.”

Eight foot dikes were built to protect the town from future flooding. However, despite the efforts to control the river through planting and the construction of the dikes, in 1938 a catastrophic flood weakened the school building, and the school was closed. Students were transferred to boarding schools in Tuba City or Keams Canyon. In 1941 empty agency buildings were selected as the site of a penal colony for Japanese-American World War II internees identified as troublemakers.

Just as the changing banks of the river defined the changing institutions of the Leupp community for over 100 years, efforts to retell its rich history often focused on uncertainty in the face of change. Students photographed two rock houses that were built in the early 1900s. The houses were built as police substations. The students wrote:

Oral History Shares the Wealth of a Navajo Community

Mrs. Elva Nez of Birdsprings told the students how her father Earl Johnson and a friend Casey Curley ran away from the boarding school and were apprehended by the police and locked in the police station. The boys removed a sandstone block and escaped through the hole in the wall of the police station. Pursued by the policemen, Earl tried to hide by covering himself with dirt in a ditch. Earl and Casey were apprehended and returned to the boarding school.

In the 1950s buildings that had housed the school and hospital, and then the penal colony, were razed. In the 1960s the BIA school was rebuilt on the west bank of the Little Colorado River in the community of “New Leupp” or “Sunrise.” Leupp BIA School gained local autonomy as Leupp Schools Inc. in 1974 and it continues to operate as a boarding and day school today. The students wrote:

Talk about a long trek to finally arrive where the school is at today! The present-day school buildings were completed in 1960. At that time, Leupp Boarding School was one of the largest schools on the Navajo Reservation because it was open to any Navajo students from across the Navajo land. The school continues to serve the students of Canon Diablo, Tolani Lake, Bird Springs, Grand Falls and Black Falls. The school serves over 200 students in grades K-12. One of the school’s strengths is its initiative to retain Navajo Culture and Language as reflected in the school’s mission statement and philosophy. The school’s mission statement is ‘Building the future, keeping the past.’

Students climb to look through gun holes at General Fremont’s station and continue to question community members about these places and the historical events that surround them. In their investigation of the past students found much to understand the future of their community. Their research took them outside the classroom to listen to stories in the Navajo language and gain an understanding of the need to retell these stories to share the wealth of their community for future generations. Knowledge learned in one language paves the way for knowledge acquisition in a second language (Cummins, 2001). The curricula at Leupp and Little Singer are contextualized with the knowledge, skills, and experiences the students bring to class, and these Navajo language oral history projects provide students with experiential learning in which the values of “place” and culture are reinforced in a community setting.

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Mothertongue: Incorporating Theatre of the Oppressed into Language Restoration Movements

Qwo-Li Driskill

As we dangle precariously on the edge of loss, First Nations people claw our fingers deep into earth to pull ourselves up, to dis-cover what has been destroyed and hidden during 510 years of European occupation of our homelands. Miraculously, we have survived mass genocide of our peoples and attempts to burn our lives and languages off the face of the planet. But it is not a survival that we carry without wounds, without scars of loss criss-crossing our skin. Sometimes we bare open wounds we find too terrifying and bloody to look at, and neglect them until they fester. In order to dis-cover and (re)learn the languages of our peoples, we must grapple with the history of genocide and compulsory assimilation that paved the road to language loss. We must use all the tools available in order to heal from and/or understand historical and personal trauma, to loosen the stones tied to our hands and blocking our mouths. Theatre of the Oppressed (TO), a movement of radical theatre and popular education founded by Brazilian actor and educator Augusto Boal, is one of many tools that holds promise for First Nations people to dislodge these stones and to return to and stabilize our Mothertongues.¹

As educators, activists, writers and community members involved with language restoration movements, we continue to come up against obstacles in stabilizing our Mothertongues. For many First Nations people of the Americas and Hawai'i, relearning our languages is more than a study of verbs, nouns, and the ability to converse with other language speakers: It is a confrontation with histories of shame and fear surrounding our Mothertongues. It is grappling with the legacy of boarding/residential schools, missionaries, and colonial governments. It is healing from physical, sexual, psychic, and spiritual abuse as Native people. It is de-internalizing what we have been taught by white supremacy about our languages and our cultures and finding ways to resist racism, colonization, and the destruction of our traditions. Our efforts at learning and teaching languages is substantially different than educators and students teaching dominant languages such as Spanish, French, or German. We are not only hoping to effectively teach languages, we are working for the survival of our lifeways, our cultures, and our spiritual knowledges and hoping to help our people heal from invasion and genocide. Language revitalization projects working with youth and adult populations must not only work teaching Native languages, but must also engage in multidimensional approaches to the healing of our communities. Barbara-Helen Hill (Six Nations, Grand River Territory) writes in her important and powerful book *Shaking the Rattle: Healing from the Trauma of Colonization*, "To renew the spirit and heal the communities, we must start on an individual basis to heal the self" (p. 13). To add to Hill's statement, I believe that within First Nations contexts, healing of the self must happen within community. As an organizer and educator, I find TO a crucial tool for our individual and collective healing.

Theatre of the Oppressed and First Nations' struggles

While TO is being used in Native communities to articulate our struggles, little has been published about the ways we can use this brilliant body of work within our contexts.² Unlike traditional European forms of theatre, TO asks its actors to tell their own stories, express their own emotions, and discuss issues of importance with their communities. It is an interactive, rather than a presentational, form of theatre and is rooted within the individual and collective wisdom of its participants. Further, TO is a pedagogical tool that requires physical engagement with topics it is used to breach. TO requires “total physical response” and thus lends itself to language acquisition (see Cantoni, 1999).

Many language teachers realize the importance of integrating theatre into language curriculum as a pedagogical strategy, and TO spirals this concept out to another level: it enables its participants to tell their stories to one another in an aesthetic and visceral manner that cuts through over-intellectualization and strikes at our emotions and spirits. TO is an exceptional tool to help create social change, because it so often challenges our assumptions of the possible and helps us imagine non-oppressive realities. Craig Womack (Mvskoke/Cherokee) reminds us that, “the process of decolonizing the mind, a first step before one can achieve a political consciousness and engage oneself in activism, has to begin with the imagining of some alternative” (p. 230). Theatre is an instrument to help us envision those alternatives. If we can understand liberation in our bodies, we can take that understanding to every aspect of our lives. Not only can TO be used within language study, but also as a tool to examine the internalized emotions around our languages that often prevent us from returning to them. Because colonization takes place on a physical level, body-work³ is critical to the transformation and decolonization of our bodies/minds/spirits. With its emphasis on body-work, and the many ways it challenges us to examine our realities, TO is a genre of theatre that holds an immense amount of promise for those of us working for our collective mending.

Highly influenced by Brazilian activist and popular educator Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), Boal's goal was to create radical popular theatre that could bring about social change. Freire's concept of *conscientização*, which refers to the development of critical consciousness in regard to oppressive systems and the actions needed to take place to change them, is integral to Boal's theatre work. In 1964, Brazil fell to a military dictatorship, and in 1971 Boal was arrested and tortured for speaking out against the regime. Subsequently, he lived in Argentina where he continued to develop TO techniques until being exiled to Europe in 1976.

During the next ten years, Boal continued his TO work, trying to find ways to adapt it so that it could be utilized in European contexts. It was here that Boal began to develop techniques that were based on a more therapeutic model than previous TO work and created a new body of work, “Rainbow of Desire,” sometimes just called “Rainbow,” to further expand TO. In 1986 Boal returned to Brazil and continued his theatre work, and in 1992 was elected to the legislature

and began developing his newest theatre experiment, Legislative Theatre, which uses theatre as a vehicle for people to directly impact on democratic process.

TO is being widely practiced in the Americas and other continents. As practitioners come up against the ways Boal's original design must be changed in TO's shifting contexts, TO is redesigned to fit the needs of specific communities and cultures. In his foreword to *Theatre of the Oppressed*, Boal (1985, p. ix) writes that "...theatre can...be a weapon for liberation. For that, it is necessary to create appropriate theatrical forms." We must ask, "How appropriate are theatrical forms that are rooted in European traditions in Native contexts?" We must find ways to adapt TO techniques, or create new techniques, that embrace the complexities and struggles of Native lives. Working within contemporary theatre movements means we must subvert and re-invent theatre in order for it to be an effective tool of liberation. We must find theatrical forms that are rooted in tribal understandings, national struggles and pan-native concerns.

Those of us who are Native and involved in TO or other radical theatre work must strive to ensure that theatre evolves from radical Native aesthetics that can encompass our traditions, our experiences under colonialism, the ways in which we have been abused and the ways in which we have resisted exploitation. It is necessary that Native theatre be used to help the stability of future generations. It must be rooted in our histories and struggles, it must be conscious of its intent to heal and promote continuance and it must be connected to our communities.

Traditionally, Native theatrical forms take place within contexts of community survival and the sacred. In my own Cherokee tradition, the Booger Dance exists to help ritualize shifting realities for our tribe in the face of colonialism and gives us a chance to laugh at what we most fear.⁴In the Booger Dance, Boogers appear in the middle of a gathering wearing comical masks representing various outsiders to the tribe. The term Booger comes from the word English word "bogey," a ghost. I mention the Booger Dance here, because I feel that in many ways it is a perfect metaphor for the needs in contemporary Native theatre. The Booger Dance is rooted in Cherokee struggles, Cherokee fears, and Cherokee community. Its purpose is to heal. In fact, the Booger Dance is sometimes prescribed by medicine people to help overcome sickness (Speck & Broom p. 37). Booger Dances, like other Cherokee dances, dramas and rituals are a community event. They emerge from the needs of the community in order to ensure survival and continuance.

By using TO as a tool for language restoration and other needs of Native communities, we help create theatre that serves similar multiple functions. My work as a Native TO facilitator working with other Native people continues to teach me an immense amount about the potential of this work to heal our communities and the specific realities First Nations people face using TO. In my own experiences, I find that facilitating TO with other Native people tends to be more intense, more emotional and more transformative than when facilitating TO with people not sharing a common oppression. This is not only because TO was created for communities facing a common oppression, but also because

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Native people are survivors of intense tribal and personal histories under colonial governments and TO sparks powerful feelings and reactions to these histories.

I had a fairly surprising experience the first time I facilitated TO with an all-Native group. There is a fairly standard warm-up exercise often called “Cover the Space,” in which participants are asked to walk around the space fairly briskly and try to make sure no space is left uncovered while remaining equidistant from other participants (Boal, 1992, p. 116). There are several variations of this exercise, and I asked participants to be aware of their own bodies, and to notice how they felt within them as they walked around the room. I then asked participants to create a vocalization on how they were feeling at that moment and to exaggerate their emotions through their bodies. The result caught me off guard: All of the participants began to moan or scream, and their movements became heavy and slow, as if they were carrying huge weights on their limbs. While I asked them to shift directions and embody the opposite of that emotion, I still found we needed to have a discussion to process the first exercise, which is usually considered low impact. Some of the participants, I found out later, began crying as soon as I asked them to be aware of themselves in their bodies.

I believe that collectively Native people suffer from severe Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, which is further impacted by our personal experiences with trauma. Simply asking us to be present in our own bodies can be a frightening, and also healing, experience. Many of us were taught that we have no right to our own bodies, which directly relates to being taught that we have no right to our homelands, languages, or lifeways. For me, this experience was further evidence of how important TO work is within Native communities. In the case of language restoration, for example, how can we hope for our peoples to learn our languages if we are not able to be present within our bodies? How can we heal these deep wounds so we can embrace our *Mothertongues*? Conversely, how can our *Mothertongues* be used as medicinals on our journey toward personal, community and cultural restoration?

I began developing a workshop called *Mothertongue: Healing from Patriarchy and Colonization* for a conference in Eugene, Oregon called *Against Patriarchy* in January 2002. I wanted to create a space for people of color (Native and non-Native) to examine the ways patriarchy and colonization are intertwined forms of violence and how returning to our *Mothertongues* can help us repair the personal, spiritual and psychological damage that are the results of systemic violence. I conducted a shorter version of the workshop at the Ninth Annual Stabilizing Indigenous Languages Symposium in Bozeman, Montana in 2002, the first time the workshop was done in a context of people already concerned with issues of language restoration and stabilization.

The workshop had 35 participants, far more than I expected to attend a workshop involving theatre, and contained a vastness of stories that would have been impossible to hear in such a short amount of time without using a tool like TO. I asked participants to break into small groups and create human sculptures⁵ around their relationships with their ancestral languages. Through TO,

we were able to see deeper complexities in our relationships with our languages than we would have in a simple discussion. One group of women from a community that feels their language is in a strong place stood in a circle, palm to palm in a celebratory gesture. Another group was sculpted to show the way a participant felt as an advocate for a language for which there are no fluent speakers. One woman sculpted the pain she felt as someone who doesn't know her language by sculpting herself with her hand over her mouth. There were infinite layers to our relationships with our Mothertongues varying from joyous to devastated.

One of the stories that surfaced during the workshop was from a woman who explained how her community is split over the issue of language restoration. To illustrate this conflict, she created an image of two people facing away from two others, placing herself in the middle. TO, she observed later, would be a key instrument in resolving conflicts that exist in her Nation and communicating the underlying emotions around these conflicts in an effort to create fertile ground for language stabilization. Others observed that Image Theatre is valuable because it doesn't use spoken language, making it an important resource to bridge language barriers within their communities.

Because I work with multi-tribal groups, my TO workshops usually don't incorporate Native languages but rather examine our relationships to our languages, traditions, and histories. However, there is no reason that TO shouldn't incorporate our Mothertongues. In 2001 a course called "Literacy and Drama in Aboriginal Language Education" was offered through the Canadian Indigenous Languages and Literacy Development Institute (see Blair, Paskemin, & Laderoute, this volume) which incorporated what Diana Steinhauer (Cree) describes as "contextual theatre" into its curriculum, resulting in a community performance in Cree called *Waniskâtân*. Instructors Maureen Belanger and Lon Borgerson used a process similar to TO in order to create play based on the stories of participants to share with the community (Stienhauer, 2001).

In my own work and in the stories I hear from other Native folks, theatre is a potent approach to language stabilization, and a genre such as TO lends itself to our work by helping us repair the damage caused by colonization and abuse and pushes us to envision our futures.

On the Edge of the Field I Dance About: Trickster solutions to daunting obstacles

In Cherokee and other First Nations traditions of what is currently being called the Southeastern United States, our trickster figure is Tsis'du (Rabbit). Like all of our stories, trickster tales offer important lessons for our lives, and I believe they should be turned to in times of crisis in order to create solutions to the problems we face in our communities.⁶

Now, Tsis'du is always getting into some sort of trouble. Tsis'du can be just minding his own business and trouble will come tapping on his shoulder and wanting to play. Once, Tsis'du (who is a great dancer) was dancing in

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a clearing of a forest when a whole pack of hungry wolves surrounded him. They wanted to eat him all up with their sharp teeth. "Howa,"⁷ said Tsis'du. "But don't you first want to learn this wonderful dance?" The wolves agreed, they love dancing, and Tsis'du began to teach them. He stomped his feet and started singing,

Tlage'situn' gali'sgi'sida'ha

Ha'nia lil! Lil! Ha'nia lil! Lil!

(On the edge of the field I dance about

Ha'nia lil! Lil! Ha'nia lil! Lil!)

"So," said Tsis'du, "When I sing 'On the edge of the field I dance about,' I will dance toward those trees, and when I sing 'Lil!,' y'all are supposed to close your eyes and stomp with all of your strength! Got it?" And with that, Tsis'du began singing and dancing, all the while moving closer and closer to the trees while the wolves stomped loudly with their eyes closed. Tsis'du danced, the wolves stomped. Tsis'du danced, the wolves stomped. Tsis'du danced, the wolves stomped. Tsis'du danced, the wolves stomped until finally Tsis'du was at the very edge of the clearing and dashed into the trees with the angry wolves close at his paws. He found a hollow in a tree and squeezed inside of it. One of the wolves stuck his head into the hollow, trying to pull Tsis'du out and Tsis'du spit right in his face. Thinking Tsis'du was trying to put a curse on them with his spit, the wolves backed away from the tree and let Tsis'du alone. That's all."⁸

This story is an example of a creative solution to crisis. Trickster thinking involves clever and imaginative responses to situations that seem impossible. As language activists we must integrate trickster thinking into our lives and vocations. We must think like Tsis'du and other tricksters to effectively respond to our present crisis.

Those of us doing language work in urban contexts have challenges that reservation communities may not face. We are working with Native people from many Nations, many of whom are living away from our homelands. Considering the high population of Native people living in cities, language restoration movements within the "urban rez" must be able to provide language resources for as many Native languages as possible. For instance, one of my personal obstacles in (re)learning my languages in Seattle is that most speakers of my Mothertongues live in Oklahoma or North Carolina. Many of the Native people I use TO with through Knitbone Productions⁹ in Seattle are in similar situations. While I am still learning Cherokee through books and tapes, they are no substitution for language classrooms and language immersion.

One of the many obstacles that we face with Native languages in the United States is the fact that dominant US culture does not support multilingualism. Because we are not taught to learn new languages as children, and there is a prevailing attitude that there is no reason for Americans to learn any other language than English, learning a new language is a daunting concept for many people. I find that many of the Native people I speak with believe it is almost

impossible to learn their languages, and I believe that notion is rooted in the idea that learning languages can't be done as adults. This is not the attitude I find in people from many other places in the world who are raised multilingual and pick-up new languages throughout their lives. We must find ways to ease the fears people have about learning languages if we are to hope our languages will remain vigorous.

Promoting the use and stabilization of Native languages must not become an isolated, academic field if we truly hope our Mothertongues will continue and flourish. We must collaborate with other movements happening in the Native community in order to share resources and tactics. For instance, many Native psychologists, therapists, and activists are looking at the ways we can heal from historical trauma and are pursuing new fields of study and practice that can encompass colonization and decolonization. The Northwest Indian Prevention & Intervention Research Core (NIPIRC) of Oregon Social Learning Center, for instance, sponsors an annual conference called "Healing Our Wounded Spirits."¹⁰ The work that occurs in this conference is directly connected with our work as language activists, and it is imperative that we all begin to coalition around issues facing our communities. What, for instance, would it look like to create a form of therapy that specifically integrated language restoration? Disciplines such as music therapy, art therapy, and psychodrama already exist. What would language therapy look like and entail? This is just one idea that comes to my mind when I think of the ways our movements can share knowledge with each other.

Trickster thinking leads us to ask, "What haven't we tried yet? What solutions are waiting within us that we haven't realized?" In the story above, Tsis'du uses his skills and talent as a singer and dancer to escape a life-threatening situation. Creative solutions rest on the talents we already possess, even if we don't understand immediately how they relate to the present problem. Trickster thinking involves manifesting creative solutions in response to seemingly impossible situations. This is one of the reasons TO carries hope to our language struggles: it requires innovative thinking and action and taps into knowledge we already carry inside of us. TO enables all of us to think like tricksters by allowing us to organically convey our emotions and ideas within the moment. TO is flexible to the needs of our classrooms and communities. It is a device that can be used to promote language acquisition through total physical response, address issues of historical trauma, and communicate effectively across differences. Like Tsis'du, we sing and dance our way from the dangerous edge of loss into the warm shelter of our Mothertongues.

Notes

¹I have decided to use this term, rather than "mother tongue," to point out the specific relationship First Nations people have with our languages, regardless of whether or not we speak them as our first language. Though our Native languages may not be, in a linguistic sense, our mother tongues, they are nevertheless the languages from which we originate. In addition, I use this term to

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draw attention to the vital roles mothers play in carrying language from one generation to the next. ²The only work I am familiar with published about Native communities and TO is “Out of the Silence: Headlines Theatre and Power Plays” by non-Native theatre artist David Diamond in *Playing Boal: Theatre, Therapy, Activism*. (Schutzman and Cohen-Cruz, pp. 35-52) While Diamond’s essay is an important contribution, I long to see more published work about TO in Native communities by First Nations people.

³I understand body-work as being any knowledge obtained on a kinesthetic level.

⁴European anthropologists that have researched my tribe often claim that the Booger Dance was instigated after contact with European invaders, because white people and other non-Cherokee people (including Asians, African-Americans and non-Cherokee Native folks) are portrayed in the Booger Dance. According to our own historical knowledge, however, the Booger Dance was given to us long before colonization as a way to protect ourselves from invasion. For more on the Booger Dance, Frank G. Speck and Leonard Broom’s *Cherokee Dance and Drama* (University of Oklahoma) is informative, though very Eurocentric.

⁵See Boal’s (1992) section on Image Theatre in *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* (pp.164-201).

⁶In a personal conversation with Daniel H. Justice (Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma), he pointed out that Tsis’du is a very different character than other First Nations tricksters such as Coyote. Tsis’du doesn’t have the generative power other tricksters possess to rebalance foolish choices. Tsis’du’s bravado and arrogance eventually gets him stuck on the other side of an ocean, perhaps in the Ghostland. I think this is an important consideration with all trickster stories and the lessons they give us as cultural workers. Sometimes tricksters teach us how to behave and sometimes they teach us how *not* to behave. Our stories take on meaning through what we can learn from them and I believe we can learn vital lessons from trickster stories that aid us in cultural restoration and continuance, especially in states of crisis. It is also important to note that Tsis’du plays a more favorable and central role within my own Black Cherokee oral traditions than he may in other Cherokee traditions. Wa’do to Denili/Daniel for this conversation.

⁷Okay.

⁸This version of the story is my own, drawn from the versions told by Gayle Ross (Cherokee) in *How Rabbit Tricked Otter and Other Cherokee Trickster Stories* (pp. 24-28) and James Mooney in *History, Myths, and Sacred Formulas of the Cherokees* (p. 274).

⁹Knitbone Productions is an organization I founded in Seattle for First Nations people of the Americas and Hawai’i to use writing, theatre and story as tools for healing, decolonization and continuance.

¹⁰NIPIRC can be reached at 160 East 4th Avenue, Eugene Oregon, 97402.

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Recommended Texts

- Boal, Augusto. (1998). *Legislative theatre*. New York: Routledge.
- Boal, Augusto. (1995). *The rainbow of desire: The Boal method of theatre and therapy*. New York: Routledge.
- Rohd, Michael. (1998). *Theatre for community, conflict & dialogue: The hope is vital training manual*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Additional Resources

- [The Centre for Indigenous Theatre](#), 401 Richmond Street West - Suite 260, P.O. Box 75, Toronto, Ontario M5V 1X3, Canada. www.indigenoustheatre.com
- [Headlines Theatre](#), #323-350 East 2nd Ave., Vancouver, BC V5T 4R8, Canada. www.headlinestheatre.com
- [The Mandala Center for Awareness, Transformation and Action](#), 1221 49th St., Port Townsend, WA 98368. www.mandalaforchange.com
- [Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed](#), P. O. Box 31623, Omaha, NE 68131-0623. www.unomaha.edu/~pto/
- [Knitbone Productions](#), 1816 Bellevue Ave., #205, Seattle, WA 98122.

Ten Tips for Teaching in Navajo Immersion Programs

- 1. You gotta believe!** A timid self-conscious use of Navajo communicates to the students that the teacher doesn't really believe in what s/he's doing. If the teacher doesn't believe in this, or doesn't really expect the students to be able to do this, the students will sense this. They will rise only to the teacher's low level of expectation. You've got to communicate confidence and expectation—even if you don't quite feel them yourself at first.
- 2. Stay in Navajo.** Teacher uses only Navajo. Teacher not only teaches in Navajo but also gives directions in Navajo and interacts with students in Navajo. The teacher creates a fully-Navajo language-environment.
- 3. Expect Students to talk Navajo.** Teacher must create a situation where students need Navajo: not just for instruction but also in communication with the teacher and interacting with the teacher. Teacher should set up instruction where students *must* talk Navajo to each other as well. The teacher should *encourage* students to communicate and interact with one another in Navajo as well.
- 4. Focus on doing things here and now.** Describing things is all right—but isn't terribly useful in getting things done. Recounting stories is all right—but telling what happened in the past doesn't help you know how to get things done now. Writing stories is all right—but it has the same problems as telling stories do plus students aren't talking while writing. Focus on the language needed to get things done here and now.
- 5. Focus on verbs.** Too many teachers teach only lists of nouns. Teachers should focus on verbs that are needed to get things done here and now: the action words of commands and requests.
- 6. Focus on only a few verbs**—sometimes only one—in a given lesson. Over several lessons, give students several forms of that verb. You want them to 'sense' the system of making verbs. You want them to try out verb-forms they've never heard. Some of the time—hopefully most of the time—they'll be right. But you don't really learn language until you strike out on your own.
- 7. Expect all students to talk meaningfully.** In some classes, teachers do talk all Navajo. Students respond in chorus if at all. One sees few students initiate communication in Navajo. Insist that students respond when spoken to, even if only to ask for help. It may be 'boring' to a teacher to make time for everyone to 'say it' in a meaningful situation. But if the teacher focuses on helping the students say and understand these things for real communication—s/he won't have time to become bored.
- 8. Keep it simple/consistent.** It's hard for many Navajo-speakers to realize just how hard all this is for non- or limited-Navajo speakers. Take small chunks; build on them. Be fairly consistent. Being consistent doesn't mean you can't make it fun.
- 9. Support and encourage students** to try new verbs-forms in their own sentences. Students learn by trying to communicate. In trying out a new language, students will make mistakes. But if they're too embarrassed to even try, they won't learn much. Don't laugh at students' mistakes. Use tactful ways to correct students. Really encourage students to 'take risks.'
- 10. Plan/assess/test.** In laying out a lesson, be explicit what you expect students to be able to do at the end of that lesson. Teachers are often surprised at how small they must 'chunk' these expectations. In the course of a lesson, or at the end of the lesson, formally or informally test all the students. Have the courage to plan the next lesson based on how the assessment of the last lesson turned out. If it's important, don't go on until almost everyone can do it. [WH NNLP 09/98]

—Navajo Nation Language Project, Division of Diné Education. 2003. *Directory of Secondary Navajo Language Programs, 2000-2001*, pp. 116-.

Missionaries and American Indian Languages

Evangeline Parsons Yazzie

American Indians have suffered greatly in the name of religion and education, which were enforced for the purposes of “civilization.” Colonists arrived in search of freedom of religion, a new life, and happiness. While, these newcomers were oppressed in their former land, they became the oppressors in the new one. Their oppression made its mark on the American Indians. However, in spite of all the years of cruel and harsh treatment in an attempt to strip generations of American Indians of their lands and identity, America has not seen the disappearance of American Indian cultures, lifestyles, languages, traditions, and religions.

Missionaries were acculturative agents who aimed not only at producing converts, but sought to completely transform Indians. Missionaries acted on the principle that Christianity must precede civilization if the latter was to be of any real value (Berkhofer, 1971). In spreading the Gospel, missionaries not only preached for the purpose of an individual becoming “born again,” but for the purpose of the rebirth and remaking of the American Indian societies (Krass, 1979).

Missionaries did not only enter Indian societies when they received the “call of the Lord” but also when the government directed. As early as 1636, “Plymouth Colony enacted laws to provide for the preaching of the Gospel among the Indians” (Pearce, 1965, p. 27). The Trade and Intercourse Act of 1802 included a plan to provide social and educational services to civilize the Indians. In 1819, Congress established a civilization fund to provide financial support to religious groups and others willing to live and teach among the Indians (Reyhner & Eder, in press).

Missionaries became a fixture in Indian societies after the Civil War when President Grant instituted a Peace Policy to ensure the success of the reservation system. A Board of Indian Commissioners was appointed in 1869 to supervise the appointment of Indian agents to maintain peace by mediating disputes, to supply teachers, and to settle Indians in agricultural communities. The Indian Commissioners believed missionaries would effectively facilitate the peaceful assimilation of Indians into the dominant “civilized” community. By 1888, Congress was appropriating more than \$1,000,000 a year to educate Indian children, where nearly half of the appropriations were contracted to missionaries. Direct government funding of mission schools was phased out in the 1890s, but missionaries were encouraged to work with government school students into the 1960s (Reyhner & Eder, in press).

Christianization for civilization: The American Indians & the missionaries

There can be a considerable amount of anguish produced in individual households as its members become converted to the many different missionary churches. There could be persons of three or four religious persuasions within one household and severe arguments may occur (Jimson, 1977). Berkhofer (1971)

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describes how the social disruption created by missionaries resulting from conversion to Christianity took place. The acceptance of new values followed by persecution by the unconverted demanded new social relationships and a break between Native Christians and their Native society.

The message preached by missionaries that is found in Mark 10:21 reads, "One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me." Missionaries took it upon themselves to decide what the American Indians were to give up; they preached that the Indians had to give up their culture, their identity, and, in doing so, they were picking up their cross and following Christ. New converts found it necessary to "distinguish between those things which must immediately and totally be forbidden; those which are undesirable, and that which could gradually die out" (Neill, 1979, p. 12), but the outside domination of the missionaries' insensitivity to the needs of the American Indians forced them into isolation; isolation from their family members, and isolation from the "superior missionaries" who converted them (Mastra, 1979).

The missionaries did not know the respective cultures of the American Indians. The words, in a conversation my father had many years ago with a missionary, still ring in my ears where he said,

Let us Navajo pastors who know our culture decide where to draw the line between culture and religion. You are drawing the line out of fear that you will lose your converts to their traditional ways because they practice their culture. There are many things that are good about being Navajo. The Navajo culture and being Navajo has sustained us for many years. It is who we are that has helped us survive all these years through many hardships. (Bruce Yazzie, personal communication, 1970)

Cultures that were different from those of the missionaries were viewed as inferior (Kraft, 1979). The result is a great wedge that has been driven between the convert and his culture. This is a reason why missionaries have not been more successful among the American Indians in the United States (Pearce, 1965). Missionaries could not conceive of any difference between the Gospel and their own culture and could not imagine Native Americans following Christ within their tribal culture.

Syncretism and contextualization

Missionaries who did not know the culture of their Indian converts were afraid they would practice syncretism, a concept defined by the Webster dictionary (1937, p. 1690) as the "union of principles irreconcilably at variance with each other, especially the doctrines of certain religions." The fear of syncretism caused missionaries to draw the line between the culture and religion of converts. Native Christian leaders (1999, p. 2) defined syncretism as "the subtle attempt to integrate Biblical truth and faith in Christ with non-biblical Native

religious beliefs, practices, and forms.” The native leaders (1999, p. 1) developed a biblical position regarding syncretism, stating:

We believe that Christ should have preeminence and permeates all aspects of our lives and, through us, all aspects of our cultures, to promote the glory of God. God will not share His glory with anything in creation. To do so is idolatry. To combine elements of Native religion and Biblical truth is syncretism. We must renounce and avoid any form of idolatry and syncretism, because they are forbidden in Scripture [the Holy Bible].

The leaders further believe syncretism is the birth of another gospel. Because so much of their culture is embedded in religion, many American Indian Christians avoid certain aspects of their culture that contain religious components to avoid syncretism.

A far less destructive approach to missionary work would have been contextualization, which is “based upon mutual respect in the relationship between races, religion and cultures (Mastra, 1979, p. 355). Osei-Mensah (1979, p. 384) illustrates contextualization: “The gospel does not throw out culture,” instead it “comes into our culture, it settles there, it brings its impact on our total life within culture.” He concludes with, “God does not want us to be aliens to our culture—only aliens to sin.” In contrast, most missionaries preached a complete separation from Native American culture, where their converts became alien to their own people, culture, and lifestyle. It is no wonder why the missionaries have seemed to fail when working among the American Indians (Winter, p. 2000). In civilizing the Indians, Protestant missionaries imposed the wrath of God upon them, while saving the love of God for themselves. Oppression, in the form of religion and education, has made its mark on the American Indians. At stake is a person’s birthright—their language and culture.

In 1999, an association of Christian Native leaders described Native culture as “the dynamic learned lifeways, beliefs and values of our people as revealed in our languages, customs, relationships, arts and rituals.” They further explain that, “In native culture, religion permeates all aspects of life and is often identified as being the culture, even though it is only an aspect of it (Native Leaders on Native Spirituality, p. 2).

The plight of many American Indians who accepted Christ and made the decision to follow His teachings was that there “was no halfway point”; instead, separation was required. When an Indian fully surrendered to Christ, he observed the Sabbath, attended church, dressed in white man’s clothing, sent his children to school, and built a house (Berkhofer, 1971, p. 124). The missionary reduced the Gospel to a verbal proclamation only, where the culture of the convert was disregarded. When the Gospel becomes only a verbal proclamation, “it gives a feeling of superiority of the Christian religion and culture over the non-Christian religion and culture” (Mastra, 1979, p. 366). Kraft (1979) believes missionaries did not see biblical meaning as absolute but were always affected

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by their own “culturally inculcated understandings of life in general (287), and yet the same missionaries failed to appreciate the cultural differences of the people to whom they were sent. According to Mastra (1979), too often the Christian message has hurt the community because many community members feel they have been insulted by the message and actions of Christians and missionaries. The result of this insult is not people respecting and loving Christ, but resenting both Christians and missionaries. Missionaries can place the American Indian convert in a precarious situation within his own community with the new convert viewed as an accomplice of the missionaries, traitors to their own people, betrayers of their identity, and ones who have denied their own culture and ancestral religion (Mastra, 1979).

Importance of maintaining Indian languages

Our native language presents us with an identity, and describes a culture with which to identify. Marshall (1979, p. 22 & 26) defined culture as “the human response to the environment” embedded in a set of values, and he states, “language is a part of culture, which helps to shape it.” Explaining how words shape a culture, Witherspoon (1977, pp. 6-7) writes, “culture is an ideological system by which the world is defined, described, and understood,” and the “best entry into another culture is through the language.” Fishman (1994) gives life to the relationship between language and culture in his statement: “A language that has grown up with a culture best describes that culture.” In my doctoral research (Parsons Yazzie, 1995), I found Navajo elders were adamant in declaring their culture cannot be practiced with the use of a stranger’s words, therefore when a language is in jeopardy, the culture is also at risk. The statements I have collected from some Protestant Christian parents about their thoughts about the importance of their language are given in Appendix A. I found from my interviews that these parents felt both a responsibility and a desire to determine how their children would be educated. By expressing their concerns about how Navajo is taught in the schools, these parents are claiming the right to determine how their children are taught.

Concerns of Christian parents in regard to teaching Navajo in the schools

The fear of some Christian parents is that as their children learn the language along with the religion, the innocence and naivete of their child will lead to syncretism. Davis (1994, p. 15), an advocate of a “True Education” based on Navajo knowledge, wrote:

The teaching [of the Navajo language] is not a religion; it is not a belief of a man-made philosophy. It is real. It is a spiritual reality; it is not a man-made system. It is real because we are made of the sacred elements of Divine Creation. We are made of the water, we are made of the fire, we are made of the air. Herein is a true spiritual empowerment principle that restores Navajo-specific teaching and also simultaneously restores spiritual harmony individually and collectively.

Benally (1988, p. 12), a Navajo language and philosophy instructor at Diné College, identifies the “Navajo philosophy of learning as an organized way of learning that allows the individual to obtain a state of serenity called *hozho*.” Davis’ and Benally’s statements cause Navajo Christians to approach classrooms based on this philosophy with caution because they tread on religious ground. Hozho smacks of religion and immediately causes a Navajo Christian to avoid it because it interfaces with Navajo religion. Benally describes “*Hozho*” as “a state of much good, peace, happiness, and plenty” (1988, p. 12). He further believes the language, culture, and spirituality are intertwined where it is difficult to know where one ends and the other begins. This concept is evident in his statements concerning Navajo philosophy, teaching, and learning. He finds that knowledge is spiritual and the goal of Navajo knowledge is peace, harmony, and the attainment of greater spirituality and happiness (1988).

Davis (1994, p. 15) claims a Navajo child is empowered by the Navajo language to a “spiritual self-identity” through Navajo origin stories, one’s family clan system, and self awareness. Christian parents can object to this declaration that Navajo language teaching in classrooms falls into this spiritual realm. Davis and Benally have good intentions in their teaching, however Christian parents have a right to have their children learn their language in school without jeopardizing their faith. The objections of Protestant Christian parents to teaching Navajo language in schools that I have collected are given in Appendix B.

Mindell and Gurwitt (1977) discuss how Indian parents were stripped of their parenting responsibilities in the name of education, and Kahn (1970, p. 33) observes that, in the past, Navajo people called a federally funded boarding school “Washington’s school”; with a public school referred to as the “little white children’s school.” A mission school was called “the missionary’s school.” Parents did not claim these schools. Today, the distinctions are made for the purposes of identification of funding sources only, and for a few parents, schools are referred to as “our children’s school.” Christian parents also claim the school as their children’s school, which is the reason for their objections to language teaching.

Shonero (1989, p. 19) identifies “the natural tendency of all societies to view their way of doing things as best” as a major problem in education, where a religious or philosophical difference is viewed as a deficit. In this case, the Navajo Language Teachers Association, the Navajo Language and Culture Curriculum Committee, and the Department of Navajo Education believe that as Navajo children learn their language, they should also learn about Navajo culture, philosophy, and traditional religious beliefs. Everyone feels the need to be accepted. Children are no exception. They want to feel accepted in the schools and with this acceptance comes a respect for the child’s background and religious preference. Respect is absolutely essential for further learning, according to Shonero (1989).

In 1988, Benally was critical of curriculum development when he wrote, “Curriculum development in our present educational system has been one-sided, and all attempts to integrate traditional knowledge have been heavily influenced

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by dominant Western thinking” (1988, p. 12). It is obvious that conditions have changed. Presently, it is the Navajo Christians who are voicing the concern that curriculum development is “one-sided,” where requests to separate the teaching of language and culture from traditional religious beliefs have been disregarded by traditional Navajo teachers, administrators, and curriculum developers.

Over a decade ago, Benally (1988, p. 12) posed an important question at a time when “dominant Western thinking” influenced the integration of traditional (Navajo) knowledge. He asked, “Which aspects of mainstream and traditional culture should be integrated?” Today, Navajo Christians request that there be a separation between language and religion and culture and religion. These parents are concerned that their children will not have the freedom to study their Native language in school without having to compromise their own religious preferences. In essence, these parents are concerned that their children, not knowing enough of where to draw the line between religion and culture, will incorporate Navajo traditional beliefs into their own faith—leading toward syncretism. A child should not be expected to learn aspects of another’s religion in order to study their language of inheritance. The responses I have collected of Navajo Protestant Christian parents’ thoughts about how Navajo language should be taught are given in Appendix C. These responses include their recommendations for teaching the language, the content that should be taught, as well as the grade levels that Navajo should be taught in. There was an overall consensus on Navajo literacy, where all the respondents believe their children’s Navajo language learning experience would be enriched by literacy. One parent epitomized the responses of all the parents saying, “The parents are responsible for the kind of language that our children speak, be it kind or harsh. The parents are also responsible for teaching their children their Native language. Parents have been neglectful” (S. Franklin, 2002). The following recommendation was also mentioned by others: “The Navajo language should be taught by certified teachers. Just because there is a shortage of Navajo language teachers does not mean you lower your standards and hire non-certified people” (B. Yazzie, 2002).

Recommendations for teaching the Navajo language

McLaughlin (1988, p. 22) in addressing Navajo literacy wrote, “The minority student’s language must be incorporated into the process and content of schooling; community members must be involved collaboratively in making curricular and administrative decisions as well.” This recommendation echos the statements of the Protestant Christian parents given in Appendix C. In describing a Navajo language teaching program at a school on the Navajo Reservation, Arviso and Holm (1990) characterize the program as one that successfully offers the Navajo language throughout the curriculum and grade levels. No mention of religion was made. However, they have found many of the parents and grandparents are ambivalent concerning the value of the Navajo language. Although they regret the loss of the language, the elders do not view the language as necessary or desirable for their children. Elders credited their formal education and English language abilities for enabling them to obtain work, and there is a

tendency to value Anglo education and the English language over traditional Navajo learning and the Navajo language.

In a later study, Holm (1993) found parents transmitting to their children the view that “Navajo-ness” as a deficiency toward, and a deterrent of, success socially, economically, and educationally. He recommended that as these children become adolescents, then adults, strong social and cultural identities need to be developed within them to counter these attitudes. Arviso and Holm (1990) recommended that as students learn a language, real communication should be the purpose. Real communication contains meaningful information that is transmitted between a speaker and listener. They recommended talking about personal experiences as an excellent way to develop one’s language abilities.

Fishman (1991, p. 236) offers an important recommendation for Native language preservation and maintenance, placing the responsibility of language transmission back in the home environment. He states, “The parents need not shoulder the entire responsibility of transmitting the Navajo language. Grandparents are an avenue to language acquisition because they constitute the major corps of active and fluent speakers and provide intergenerational interaction.” The parents I spoke to also recommend this process of language development. They want their child to be able to converse with their elders, which is “real communication.”

Conclusion

Religion and education continue to take their toll on American Indians. Parents and elders were deprived of parenting while their children attended boarding schools and were deprived of their inheritance—their right to be an American Indian with a language, a song, a prayer, a culture, a home, and most importantly love. Just as freedom of religion was not a right generations of American Indian children enjoyed, reservation schools should not further oppress and ignore the religious preference Christian parents have for their children. Students need to be able to trust their teachers and feel safe in the schools, but if children are made to feel they are being disloyal to their parents and their religious beliefs, this trust is threatened.

Linguist Clay Slate (1993) claims a child’s Native language is their birthright. The Navajo language and culture are beautiful. The same goes for all Indian languages and cultures. I believe Christian parents should not allow indifference or resentment of other religious beliefs to continue to deprive us of our identity. It is imperative for Christian parents to: 1) solidify their child’s religious foundation, 2) teach their children what is “religiously safe” and “good” about their native language and culture, and 3) get involved with their children’s education and help decide what is “culturally safe” to teach. Most teachers and administrators have the best interests of their students at heart and want to educate in an atmosphere of equality; therefore they are open to parental input.

I am thankful to the handful of Christians who helped to clarify the reasons they are apprehensive about the teaching of Navajo in the schools. I am confident their concerns and recommendations can be generalized to other areas of

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the Reservation, other school districts, and other Reservations. It is my hope that this information is useful to parents, teachers, administrators, and school board officials. It was important to me that the public realize that native Christians can want their children to learn their native tongue without having to compromise their faith and trust in God.

Note: It was my intention to report and educate my readers on the evolution of the role of missionaries in the settlement and education of this country. It was important to me that the public realize that native Christians have also been oppressed by the missionaries. I was raised on a Baptist mission and educated by missionaries, and I experienced and saw equality and inequality firsthand. It was obvious by their daily lives which missionaries chose to exhibit the wrath of God and which chose to demonstrate the love of God. Owing to the dedication of my parents (my father having been a pastor in the Baptist Church) to teach the Love of God, I have the satisfaction of teaching my language, the Navajo language, at a major university. I do not compromise my belief in God because I was taught by my father how to contextualize my belief in God with my Navajo culture.

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Appendix A

**Responses to the question “Is the Navajo language important?”
by Navajo Christian parents**

“Navajo is so beautiful, it is hard to get that same feeling in English. You get stronger if you talk in Navajo. If you speak Navajo and English, you are a very powerful person. When you speak your language, it strengthens your identity” (B. Robinson, 2000).

“The language is the people. If you understand the language, then you understand the people” (B. Robinson, 2000).

“We Christians can’t keep something good [referring to the teaching of Navajo in the schools] from our children” (A. Franklin, 2002).

“Things have been ruined. There is so much poverty and so many parents are in debt. So many parents just want Navajo taught in the schools because they want to give their children something they believe is good. The parents are looking for hope. Our language gives us hope” (S. Franklin, 2002).

“We cannot condemn them [non-Christian parents] for offering what they feel is best for their children. They have compassion for their children too” (R. Begay, 2002).

“The overall intent of teaching Navajo is to give our children a sense of well-being. Our language gives our children confidence, confidence to function well in both worlds” (B. Yazzie, 2002).

“Our children need to learn Navajo because the elders are disappointed and offended when their grandchildren cannot speak to them in Navajo. Respect has been forgotten. If you respect someone, you will communicate with them. We have forgotten that we will get old. We have to teach our children the way the elders taught us so we will not be forgotten by our grandchildren” (B. Daw, 2002).

“When we do things as Navajos and in Navajo, we do things as a unit, such as the clan system, the planting of the cornfields, the building of a ramada or a home. There is no such thing as not succeeding in Navajo, but with the white man’s way, everyone is an individual. It makes it easy to fail” (W. Begay, 2002).

“If we lose our language, what will we be remembered by? To not forget one’s language is to have respect” (M. Begay, 2002).

“Our children need to be able to communicate with their grandparents because the elders are the ones who still remember what it means to be a real Navajo. The elder is the one who practices the culture and not just one who only speaks the language” (A. Yazzie, 2000).

Appendix B

Navajo Christian parents' objections to the teaching of Navajo in the schools

"The same things that are taught in English are what should be taught in Navajo. They do not teach religion in English so why should they teach it in Navajo? There needs to be a separation of church and state. I learned Navajo without the Navajo religion so that's how I want my kids taught. To learn Navajo, you don't have to learn about religion. A parent should be able to choose for their child" (V. Gordy, 2000).

"I would take my daughter out of the Navajo class when religion is taught. It is like teaching Mormonism in the schools. I want it [Navajo religion] in its place. If Navajo religion is sacred as they say, and if it is taught in the schools, then it won't be sacred anymore. If you are respecting your religion, it should not be taught in an everyday classroom. I was not brought up in the Navajo religion but I still learned the language, so they can do that in the schools too" (B. Robinson, 2000).

"Where will it stop? If we, Navajo parents, do not draw the line [between culture and religion], something else will be added that we Christian parents do not want our children exposed to. There is no place for religion in school; well, maybe as an elective, but [it] should not be taught with the Navajo language. Christians do not have anything against the Navajo language. The problem is the religion aspect that is being included" (A. Yazzie, 2000).

"We need to let the Word of God help us make up our minds. The Lord says you are separated unto me. I will bless you if you keep my commandments. I have sympathy for them [the children]. I have compassion for them. Our children are not trained to recognize the Navajo religion. Navajo philosophy and Navajo religion will bring confusion into my child's life. Learning about the Navajo religion will place doubt in my child's mind about God. I want my children to learn about God. I want them to build their Christian faith. I do not want my child to be misled on what to believe" (S. Franklin, 2002).

"The Christian parents know how much the language is tied to the culture and the religion, but their children are unaware of the fine line that exists between the culture and the religion. Further, when cultural concepts are taught, these parents believe there is a conversion attempt toward a traditional belief." (B. Yazzie, 2002).

"There is nothing we have against the tradition. It is because of what happened when we became Christians. I left all the traditional ceremonies, songs pertaining to the ceremonies, and prayers behind. I have a new way of worship now. We have to watch out for our children. The Lord says we should not have idols. But Navajos teach about the sacred mountains. We should not worship those" (C. Daw, 2002).

"Christian parents withhold [traditional] stories from their children because they see them as beliefs and not as teachings" (W. Begay, 2002).

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“The culture can be taught, yes, but the traditional beliefs cannot be taught in school because our children do not know enough about it. How will our children know what is culture and what is religion? They will not be able to withstand the traditional ways” (M. Begay, 2002).

“Navajo Christians should be the ones to determine where culture and religion are separated. But, how many of us are willing to go to a meeting and stand up and declare where the separation should be drawn? Even with the traditional religion, things keep getting added. For those of us who left that [traditional religion] to become Christians would not know about these new things that have been added. One example is the Native American Church. That is not something that is traditional, and yet, many people who claim to be traditionalists attend the Native American Church meetings. That just makes the line that separates culture and religion even fuzzier” (W. Begay, 2002).

“We cannot assume that everyone has the same religious beliefs. The Navajo language teachers should also should not assume that everyone has the same beliefs.” (J. Yazzie, 2002)

“Many traditional Navajos do not want us to preach to them or to their families about the Lord. Why should they insist on teaching our children about their religion when they teach the Navajo language in the schools?” (M. Begay, 2002)

“I did not teach my child well enough about the Lord. I am afraid that he will easily be swayed and will begin to mix both religions—the traditional and Christianity. It is my own fault that I did not teach my child Navajo and it is my fault that I did not teach him more about God.” (M. Yazzie, 2002)

Appendix C

**Recommendations of Navajo Christian parents
for teaching Navajo in schools**

“They [Navajo language classes] should be run just like English language classes. Religion is not addressed unless it is part of the literature introduced. If they teach Navajo from Kindergarten through the 12th grade, our children will not have an English accent when they speak Navajo” (L. Manuelito, 2000).

“If they are going to also teach religion then it will have to be an extracurricular activity because of the religion aspect. In high school it could be taught as an elective, so my child and I could choose, rather than asking her to sit in the library during the Navajo class and be treated as if she was being punished. You can teach the language without putting religion into it. The songs can be taught as long as they are pertaining to everyday things, things all of us deal with. The language should be taught from Kindergarten through high school, if it is planned with equality in mind” (B. Robinson, 2000).

“It will take someone who knows both sides [traditional and Christian] to teach it. How are the traditional people going to know what Christians do not want taught? I have respect for Navajo teachings and stories. Just as the teachings from the Bible have been passed down through many generations, so have the Navajo stories and teachings. It will take someone who has respect and compassion for all people and beliefs who will be able to teach my language. We cannot condemn the people who believe differently, it only hurts the people and it hurts the children. It should be taught to all children of all ages because we are losing our language fast. The Navajo clan system should be taught so our children will be rich in relatives. Christian parents should get involved with planning [curriculum] but not take over, leave it to the professionals” (S. Franklin, 2002).

“The way it is presented is the key. If the intent is to teach the culture so the students can become ‘full Navajos’ so that they can participate in ceremonies, then the intent is wrong because you can’t channel children in religion. That is the parents’ responsibility. Parental involvement is important because they can determine what contents are taught. Each community needs to determine for themselves how each school will behave, because some communities have varying degrees of traditionalism. Some communities are traditional, some are Christian, some are predominantly Native American Church. There are all these entities in each community. The parents know their community. They can read the community and decide how much traditionalism should be taught in their school. Christian parents need to allow their children to learn about Navajo cultural concepts not necessarily learn them” [No preference given for the grades Navajo language classes should take place in] (B. Yazzie, 2002).

“Our children need to learn Navajo values, such as kindness and the environment. Education is number one. If we can use education to get back into the Navajo ways and lifestyle then our children will remember their elders. They

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can ask questions of them and learn from their families and the school. What they don't learn at school they can learn at home" (B. Daw, 2002).

"The stories from the past are not being told. Navajo teachings are going to have to be taught. The culture should be taught, but not the religion, no. What was true Navajo is not known anymore. Things just keep getting added. Small communities have unity, even between the traditionalists and the Christians. Navajo Christians who speak the language well should be the ones to help decide where the separation between language and culture is made. The basics should be taught such as the Coyote Stories because there are a lot of moral teachings involved with it. The stories make the children think. All grades should have Navajo language" (W. Begay, 2002).

"We cannot assume that everyone has the same beliefs. The Navajo language teachers should also not assume that everyone has the same beliefs. Navajo language should be taught to all grades because our children have so much to catch up on" (M. Begay, 2002).

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- Dr. Courtney Cazden is retired after teaching for 30 years at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. All her work has been on languages as an individual and collective resource. For several summers in Alaska, Santa Fe, and Diné [Navajo] College, she has taught a course on programs for nurturing native languages in the US, Canada, and New Zealand.
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- Dr. Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley was born in Bethel, Alaska. He entered school knowing only the Yup'ik language. The first three grades were spent attending a BIA school in a segregated school system. He graduated from high school in Bethel as his grandmother would not allow him to attend a boarding school. He went to the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, and earned his Bachelor's of Education. He has been president and CEO of a Native corporation, and executive director of a non-profit corporation. He is presently an associate professor of education and co-director of the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative. He sits on the Alaska Native Science Commission.
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- Louise Lockard is a visiting assistant professor in the College of Education at Northern Arizona University.
- Dr. Tony L. McGregor is a freelance visual artist and has exhibited his works at many national and international art shows. He is also an illustrator of children's books, such as *Deaf Culture A to Z* and *Hearing Loss: An Alphabet Book*.
- Gary W. Owens Jr. is an education specialist with the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community O'Odham-Piipassh Language Program (OPLP). He has

Biographical Information

been working with the community based language program for the past six years. Alongside his friends in the program, he is helping revitalize and maintain the languages of the Onk Akimel O'Odham and the Xalychidom Piipaash in the community. Currently he is working with the Early Childcare Center on the reservation. The goal is to surround the children with the language and the culture in order to create a language-learning environment. Under the direction of the OPLP, he worked at the Salt River Elementary School for four years, teaching grades K-6. From his experience in the elementary school, he was able to help develop a basic model of language acquisition. He resides in the Lehi district of the community and is a graduate of Westwood High School in Mesa. The American Indian Language and Development Institute on the University of Arizona has played an important part in the formalization and launching of his views, but it is the family atmosphere of the language program and most importantly the children of the community that have given him the experience of a lifetime.

- Dr. Evangeline Parsons Yazzie is an associate professor of modern languages at Northern Arizona University where she teaches her Navajo language.
- Donna Paskemin is an assistant professor at the University of Alberta in the School of Native Studies. She teaches introductory, intermediate and advanced Cree language courses at the University of Alberta. She received her Masters of Education at University of British Columbia in the First Nations House of Learning. Donna is a co-founder of the Canadian Indigenous Languages and Literacy Development Institute.
- Dr. Lizette Peter recently received a Ph.D. in foreign language education and ethnolinguistics from the University of Kansas. She currently works for the Institute of Educational Research and Public Support and teaches courses in language acquisition and multicultural education at KU. For the past three years she has been part of several language projects with the Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma, the Oklahoma Native Languages Association, and the Indigenous Language Institute.
- Dr. Jon Reyhner is author of the 2001 ERIC Digest on *Teaching Reading to American Indian/Alaska Native Students*. He is co-author of *Language and Literacy Teaching for Indigenous Education* (2002), co-editor of *Indigenous Languages Across the Curriculum* (2002) and *Learn in Beauty: Indigenous Education for a New Century* (2000), and editor of *Teaching Indigenous Languages* (1997) and *Teaching American Indian Students* (1992). He has also written over 30 book chapters and journal articles. He taught junior high school for four years in the Navajo Nation and was a school administrator for ten years in Indian schools. In 1986 he started teaching at Montana State University-Billings, and in 1995 he came to Northern Arizona University where he currently professor of bilingual multicultural education, teaching undergraduate and graduate courses.
- Dr. Florencia Riegelhaupt is a professor of Spanish and educational foundations at Northern Arizona University. She has published numerous sociolinguistic research papers on bilingualism, codeswitching, Spanish of the Southwest,

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Spanish for heritage learners, and first and second language acquisition. Her current work centers on Spanish heritage language and culture acquisition and re-acquisition theory.

Irene Silentman is currently employed by the Navajo Nation in the Division of Diné Education for the Office of Diné Culture, Language, and Community Services as a Senior Education Specialist. Irene has worked in the area of Navajo language education, bilingual education, and Navajo linguistics for the last 30 years. Presently she is developing a curriculum guide for Diné government for grades 9 through 12 to be made available to all high schools in and near the Navajo Nation.

Dr. Robert N. St. Clair did his doctorate on Eskimo at the University of Kansas. He has also done field work on Salish and Sahaptian languages in the Pacific Northwest. He was part of the team that developed the bilingual educational program for the Yakima Nation. He currently teaches at the University of Louisville in Kentucky.

Laura Wallace works for the Navajo Nation's Division of Diné Education's Johnson O'Malley Office.