# Table of Contents

Chapter One ........................................................................................................ 1
Introduction
Anne Marie Goodfellow

Chapter Two ........................................................................................................ 25
Multilingual Past and Futures: An Examination of Language Shift at Fort Belknap Reservation, Montana
Mindy J. Morgan

Chapter Three ...................................................................................................... 47
Prospects for the Navajo Language
Evangeline Parsons-Yazzie and Jon Reyhner

Chapter Four ....................................................................................................... 70
Aboriginal Languages and Literacies: A Reflection on Two Cases
Barbara Burnaby

Chapter Five ....................................................................................................... 99
Language Maintenance in a Cree (Mushkegowuk) Community
John S. Long and Jim Hollander

Chapter Six ....................................................................................................... 126
Yours, Ours, and Mayan: Preservation in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico
Christina Abreo

Chapter Seven .................................................................................................... 149
The Reintroduction of Nahuatl into the Aztec Dance Tradition in New Mexico
George Ann Gregory

Chapter Eight ..................................................................................................... 166
Creating Our Future: Creating a Computer Corpus of Written Choctaw
George Ann Gregory
Table of Contents

Chapter Nine ......................................................................................................................... 184
A Language to Call My Own
Hana O'Regan

Chapter Ten .......................................................................................................................... 199
It Takes a Community to Revitalize a Language:
Honoring the Contributions of All
Marta Hotus Tuki

Chapter Eleven .................................................................................................................... 212
Native Language Education and Participatory Action Research:
The Lummi Tribe of the Pacific Northwest
Michael A. Shepard

Chapter Twelve ..................................................................................................................... 238
Relearning Athabascan Languages in Alaska: Creating Sustainable
Language Communities Through Creolization
Gary Holton

Chapter Thirteen .................................................................................................................. 266
A Community-based Gù'í'íala Language Program
Anne Marie Goodfellow

Contributors ......................................................................................................................... 288

Index ..................................................................................................................................... 293
CHAPTER ELEVEN

NATIVE LANGUAGE EDUCATION AND PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH: THE LUMMI TRIBE OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

MICHAEL A. SHEPARD

Native languages are viewed with special reverence in many Native American communities, even if few or no members of the society speak the language. The respect those languages enjoy today represents a shift in attitude that has changed dramatically in the last fifty years. This evolving perspective toward Native languages is evident at the governmental level, on a societal level and at the level of the individual. The changes in attitude relate to macro level policy changes in the federal government’s approach toward Native American education and governance, as well as the successes of broad-based, late twentieth century social movements. This reappraisal for the importance of Native languages cannot be understood outside of the context of the Civil Rights Movement, the American Indian Movement and Native self-determination. The struggle toward Native language revitalization can be framed in the larger struggle of Native people reclaiming their political and cultural sovereignty lost due to colonization.

Many of the continental experiences with Native language shift and recovery are visible on the Lummi Nation. As with every Native community, the factors of language shift and strategies for recovery at Lummi are unique. The Lummi community (described by Stern 1934; Suttles 1954; Boxberger 1989) includes over 5,000 enrolled members on the Lummi reservation in northwest Washington State. The tribe controls the reservation-based Head Start preschool, a daycare, the public K-12 school and a tribal college. The Lummi Nation has taught their language in educational institutions for over thirty years; however, those efforts are failing to reverse the trend toward monolingual English dominance.

Any changes to something as culturally significant as language education should be consistent with the community’s views on their language’s viability and favored strategies of dissemination. Community perspectives on Lummi language have been elicited through a Participatory Action Research (PAR) project that used a series of activities to generate dialogue about community opinions on the current state of Lummi language education, determine interest in modifying those programs, and inform the nature of those modifications.

A firm understanding of the historical context surrounding Northwest Native language shift and recovery is an important foundation upon which programmatic modifications may be based. A brief explanation of the history of Coast Salish language shift, the Native Language Revitalization Movement and the PAR methodology will be discussed prior to the research project and its results.

Language Shift and Recovery—Late Nineteenth Century to Present

The factors responsible for creating language shift can be viewed on a continental scale. Colonization is the primary cause of Native language shift in North America (Nettle and Romaine 2000). With colonization came European diseases and the resulting decimation of Native populations including large numbers of the speakers of their languages. Population declines accompanied by cultural disruption facilitated by territorial usurpation, forced migration, genocide and the destruction of traditional economies and cultural practices are other major causes of language shift (McCarty 2003). Compulsory English-only school programs, which existed in the United States and Canada for over two centuries, are consistently cited as particularly detrimental and effective agents of cultural assimilation (Crawford 1989). Students were forced to speak English and prohibited from using their mother tongue in the boarding or day schools run by the federal government or private religious groups. The schools imparted fluency in English and a lasting stigma of shame and disinterest in Native languages that resulted in a break in intergenerational Native language transmission.

For example, the findings of a 1868 United States federal commission on making peace with the Plains Indians concluded:
were expected to become extinct. Boas's 1911 *Handbook of American Indian Languages* sought to document and classify vanishing languages, not for the purpose of revitalization but for curation (Kinkade 1990:98-106). By the late twentieth century, many Native American populations had not become extinct and instead were developing active self-governance with interests in language and cultural revitalization. Unfortunately, the linguistic documentation available did not readily facilitate tribal community revitalization interests. Much of the data are either academic linguistic treatments or exist as unfiltered field notes, both of which require extensive linguistic training to decipher.


This early documentation of language families including Salish by anthropologists and later by linguists had been directed toward categorizing Native American languages and creating orthographies and descriptions of syntax. According to Kinkade (1990), Native American language classification systems are numerous and were developed in the late 1800s by scholars such as Powell (1891) and later by Sapir (1929).

In the Pacific Northwest, Salish is a large language family extending into British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana. The Salish language family contains five language branches, at least twenty-five languages and nearly eighty-five major and minor language dialects (Czakowska-Higgins and Kinkade 1998:65). The language of the Lummi people fits into the classification system as a minor dialect of the Northern Straits Salish language, which is in the Central Coast Salish language branch of the Salish language family. Academic research and writing began to shift focus from documentation and categorizing to revitalization after the 1970s (Champagne 1983:754-63; Veltman 1983:1-4).
Rationale for protecting language diversity has been articulated by Fishman (1991), Hinton (1994), Reyhner (1999), Dalby (2003), Goodfellow (2005), Demmert et al. (2006), among others. Reyhner (1999:xiv) argues that languages are “conduits for indigenous cultures” which can assist Native people encountering the cultural “no man’s land” between an assimilated European-derived North American identity and a Native identity. His view mirrors that of Sharon Kinley, Director of the Coast Salish Institute at Northwest Indian College, who says, “You cannot know your culture without knowing your language and you cannot know your language without knowing your culture” (personal communication, 2006). Loss of language can result in the loss of cultural integrity, including a people’s knowledge systems with unique philosophical worldviews, musical traditions, and environmental, medical and artistic knowledge (Hinton 2001; Dalby 2003).

Goodfellow (2005) cites her own research and that of Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz (1982), Bucholtz (1995), Kroskrity (1998) and others to state that language and identity are closely tied (Goodfellow 2005:13-15). Her work shows that language is used to define and project one’s ethnic identity to others. In particular, a language will be used as a “marker of cultural identity” when the language is suffering “a reduction of function due to the impact of colonialism” (2005:13). Language is one of the most identifiable markers of cultural difference and language ability often translates into access to, and respect and identity within a culture.

In the 1970s numerous factors including the Civil Rights Movement, the American Indian Movement (AIM), the Boldt Decision and federal self-determination legislation resulted in children once again being taught that their culture and its language were valuable (Grinde 2004). The Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 ended the United States government’s 30-year tribal termination policy and gave tribal governments greater control over the affairs of their reservations, including education (Castile 1998:xvii). The Act committed the federal government to encouraging “maximum Indian participation in the government and education of the Indian people” (Castile 2006:16).

In the Pacific Northwest, over one hundred and twenty years passed between treaty signing and tribal control of Indian education. Soon after tribes gained control of their education systems, some became interested in language revitalization. The Lummi began school-based language revitalization efforts in the late 1970s. Like many tribes, they found that numerous linguists and anthropologists had documented their language by creating recordings and word lists, and formalizing grammatical rules and sentence structures. These linguistic data are invaluable; but most tribes did not possess trained linguists and could not utilize this information to build curriculum (personal communication, Sharon Kinley 2006). Placing control of education in the hands of the tribes represented a major shift in federal Indian education policy, but did not result in a revival of Native languages. Since the late 1920s federal legislation and reports have directed attention to the unique academic needs of Native American students.

**Native American Education Legislation and Theory**

The first piece of legislation that articulated the United States government’s position on Native languages was the *Native American Languages Act (NALA)* of 1990. The Act did not create any new programs or provide funding, but states:

> The law recognizes the right of Native Americans to use their traditional languages as a medium for instruction in the schools, recognizes the right of Indian tribes to give official status to their Native American languages for conducting their own business, and encourages all educational institutions to allow the same academic credit for proficiency in Native American languages as for proficiency in foreign languages. (Hinton 1994:181)

Many aspects of the 1990 Act are symbolic gestures of support for the use of Native languages where applicable, such as in universities, tribal governments and government schools. The Act specifies that teachers of Native languages may be exempt from teacher certification processes and that high school course credits completed in a Native language are transferable just as credits completed in “foreign” languages are. The Act also promotes Native language use in schools to encourage and support language survival, increase student performance, provide greater student awareness of their culture, and foster increased self-respect and community pride (NALA 1990).

Prior to the NALA of 1990, two important reports shaped federal Indian education policy. The Meriam Report (Meriam et al. 1928) documented problems with federally mandated boarding school education for Native children and recommended that tribes have greater autonomy and control of tribal education. Forty-one years later, the Kennedy Report of 1969 described the continuing failure of the United States educational system to meet the needs of Indian children and again called for greater control and involvement by tribes in the education system (Strang et al. 2002:2). The findings of these reports led to a series of acts that established United
States government directives on Native American education. The efficacy of these education acts were then revisited by White House committees organized by presidents Clinton and Bush.

The 1972 *Indian Education Act* provided the first federal legislation that mandated the government to be responsible for "meeting the culturally related academic needs of American Indian students" (Beaulieu 2006:54). This concept is again found in the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* of 1994, the *Improving American Schools Act* of 1994 and Title VII of the *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001 which affirms the government’s continuing commitment to providing elementary and secondary education to meet the “unique educational and culturally related academic needs of these [Native] children” (Beaulieu 2006:54). Meeting the cultural and academic needs of Native students in the public school system has been a challenging mission, especially in situations where poverty is combined with extensive influence of white American culture and the English language. The passage of the *NALA* also created interest in improving Native American academic achievement. Groups such as the Indian Nations at Risk Task Force and several White House committees have addressed the issue of Native student achievement and have influenced the passage of Native American education acts.

In 1991, the Indian Nations at Risk Task Force documented noticeable progress in Native American education between 1970 and 1990, but determined that the education systems in Indian nations were still at risk. The 1992 White House Conference on Indian Education made conclusions similar to the Indian Nations at Risk Task Force and developed a series of recommendations pertaining to tribal sovereignty, tribal control of education, funding, and research (NCAI and NIEA 1997:2-7). The recommendations specifically detail the importance of supporting Native language and culture curriculum in both tribally and non-tribally controlled schools with significant Native populations. In 1998, President Clinton signed Executive Order 13096 that required the development of a Research Agenda for American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) Education and committed the federal government to improving academic performance of AI/AN students and reducing their dropout rates in public schools (Strang et al. 2002:2). The Research Agenda identified the most pertinent research priorities with the objective of better understanding how to improve AI/NA educational achievement and retention (2002:3-9).

The use of public schooling as a medium for Native language dissemination, rather than oppression, represents a major change in a long-standing federal educational philosophy. The trend toward Native language education is increasing, but the impact of compulsory English continues to be felt. In many cases it took only one or two generations of exposure to compulsory English schools to disrupt a ten thousand year plus intergenerational transmission process. Research on both language acquisition and Native American education practices is relevant in determining effective Native American language education strategies today.

**Language Acquisition and Native American Education Research**

Lenneberg (1967) postulated that a critical period of language acquisition exists between early infancy and puberty and if no language is learned during that period it can never be learned in a normal and fully functional sense. Lenneberg’s Critical Period Hypothesis which has become widely accepted describes how a child’s ability to learn language is related to age. Chomsky (1976) and others have published extensively on children’s innate ability to learn language and the benefits of second language acquisition at an early age. Second language acquisition is a discipline on its own and a review of its literature is outside the scope of this chapter. However, the importance of access to Lummi language education for children at a young age is crucial and should be utilized fully.

Demmert et al. (2006) cite a 2003 Northwest Regional Education Laboratory report (Demmert and Towner 2003) that outlines the need for Native education pedagogy based on Native language and culture. Their research "shows a direct relationship between Culturally Based Education (CBE) and improved academic performance among Native students” (Demmert et al. 2006:9). Three educational theories that describe Native experiences with education are also presented. Cultural Compatibility Theory states that higher levels of congruence between student interactions in the classroom and those interactions in the community translate to increased ability for schools to meet their educational goals. The ethnic make up of a school’s staff and students and their accustomed styles of interaction are less likely to mirror minority students’ home lives and can create additional educational challenges. Cognitive Theory is a long established philosophy that originated with Jean Piaget in the early 1970s and is now widely applied in education. It claims that learning occurs when new knowledge is introduced in association with pre-existing knowledge and long-term memories. Minority students may be at a disadvantage if new knowledge is taught based on the assumption that
those minority students will share similar pre-existing knowledge or memories with their peers from the majority culture.

Cultural-Historical-Activity Theory (CHAT) is a developmental theory that describes how language and cognition are developed through activity. CHAT also reveals that patterns of activity have a cultural basis (Demmert and Towner 2003:15-16). CHAT is based in the work of the psychologist Vygotsky (1944). Demmert and Towner elaborate:

Cultural activities among members, primarily through semiotic processes, create in learners internalizations of knowledge, values, and cognitive routines. Because culture (and its accompanying psychology) is created through historical time spans and processes, traditional culture is more likely to contain an extended body of elaborated, meaningful material. (Demmert and Towner 2003:16)

According to all three theories, inclusion of CBE increases the chances of Native student success in both tribally and non-tribally controlled schools.

**Participatory Action Research in Native Communities**

The Participatory Action Research (PAR) methodology was used to design and implement the Community Perception of Language Project on the Lummi Nation between 2005 and 2007. PAR is a tool of applied anthropology for organizing community-driven research endeavors, generally with the goal of addressing some social problem through analysis and social action. Use of PAR has become increasingly popular in applied anthropology since the 1970s. The model has been used in North America since the early 1980s (Hall 1981; Jackson et al. 1982; Tandon 1988; Elias 1991; Hoare et al. 1993) and is particularly well suited for application in Native American and First Nations communities (Ryan and Robinson 1990:61; Davis and Reid 1999:757; Westby and Hwa-Froelich 2003:300). PAR is one of many varieties of action research that have evolved in the last half-century (Herr and Anderson 2005:2-3). To varying degrees, the many forms of action research attempt to relocate control from the academic-based researcher or expert to the study group itself. Hoare et al. (1993:51) state:

PAR methodology is preferred over others because it integrates especially well with Native culture ... it relies on the experience of the people, it values the culture and it builds human capacity within the community.

Examples of the use of PAR in Native communities are land use mapping of the Dunne-za Indian Band of northeastern British Columbia (Brody 1988), a study of northern Canadian Native employment and training programs (Abele 1989), the Dene Mapping Project (Norwegian and Cizek 2004) and a sobriety study with Native Alaskans (Mohatt et al. 2004). PAR has also found specific application in projects documenting Native language and oral histories and determining action strategies for implementing Native language education programs. Ryan and Robinson (1990) applied PAR to a multi-year study of the Gwich’in Language and Cultural Project, which documented oral histories and linguistic information from Native Gwich’in speakers. Using a participatory process, community members created a plan for producing curriculum, selecting language teachers, integrating elders into classrooms and networking with local schools and governments (1990:60-62).

Tandon (1988:13) provides a list of three essential elements of PAR:

1. local people have a role in setting the agenda of inquiry,
2. they must participate in data collection and analysis, and
3. they must have control over the use and outcome of the whole process

PAR is a dynamic cycle of planning, action, and reevaluation lasting between one and five or more years (Heron and Reason 2001:180-1). Focus groups were part of our project and are frequently used in PAR research. Grounded Theory is an important methodology for analyzing focus group data and is appropriate for use in Native communities.

**Grounded Theory**

Grounded theory research is used to determine relevant themes from transcript data to make conclusions and/or develop theories that are grounded in those data. It is described as an inductive approach that accurately reflects the accounts and observations provided by focus group participants (Bernard 2002:462-3). The theory was “discovered” by sociologists Glaser and Strauss in the late 1960s and has been widely used in the past four decades. According to Creswell et al. (2007:249), grounded theory is a systematic qualitative research technique in which the researchers generate a general theory or explanation for a “process, action or interaction shaped by the views of a large number of participants.” Glaser and Strauss have elaborated on the theory in Glaser (1978), Strauss (1987), and Strauss and Corbin (1998).
According to Thomas and James (2006:768), grounded theory is the most widely used “qualitative interpretive framework in the social sciences today.” Grounded theory research is well suited for use in PAR projects because it provides researchers and participants opportunities to interact with the data both individually and collectively. Teram et al. (2005:1129) specifically argue that “the integration of grounded theory and PAR can empower clients to inform professional practice.” The Teram et al. study is in relation to the mental health field, but its application to anthropology and this study in particular is appropriate. Grounded theory research was used to analyze interview data on attitudes in our Community Perception of Language Study.

Analysis Methodology

Research participants for our project represented multiple segments of the Lummi Nation community. The participants included Lummi community members from a variety of occupations, ages, language fluency levels, tribal affiliations and education levels. Participants did not have to speak their Native language or be of Lummi ancestry, although we attempted to include people of Lummi ancestry when possible because this project is focused on their language.

The response data from our study were obtained from four focus group interview sessions held between September 2006 and May 2007 on the Lummi Nation reservation. The derived data are primarily qualitative in nature, though some basic quantitative comparisons can be made based on frequency of common response themes. Data analysis followed the six-part process of grounded theory research. The project succeeded in capturing rich ethnographic information from three important Lummi language user groups: Northwest Indian College (NWIC) students, Lummi language teachers, and administrators from NWIC and the Lummi Language Department. The project was successful in that it:

- Derived information describing the opinions of selected Lummi community members in relation to their language and its past, present and future practices of dissemination.
- Recognized participants as possessing important knowledge and expert opinions.
- Confirmed that community perspectives of language have never formally been gauged within the Lummi community.
- Provided a basis for the recommendations made.

- Was conducted in a culturally appropriate manner following the tenets of PAR.

Participant responses to the focus group session experience were overwhelmingly positive and included assessments such as the following: “This is the type of research Northwest Indian College should be involved in,” and “Can we do this every month?”

The project had important limitations as well:

- The sample size was small and data cannot be used to make generalizations about community-wide beliefs.
- Participants should have been financially compensated for their time. Compensation would have increased the number of people surveyed and would have encouraged more collective analysis of data.
- Participants with ties to NWIC were over sampled.

Further sampling of Lummi community members using the same focus group activities could occur to generate data representative of the entire community.

Five activities were used to engage community participants and generate responses: Baseline, Concept Association, Matrix, Dream Big, and Fish and Boulders. The project stakeholders and I developed all activities with the exception of Fish and Boulders. Each activity was designed to be interactive, fun and thought provoking. In accordance with PAR guidelines, participants were given an opportunity to discuss the results and implications of each activity during every focus group session. Activities were presented in small one- to six-person focus group meetings and generated written participant responses on activity posters or construction paper. Descriptive notes were also taken. At the request of the community audio/visual recordings were not taken. I will briefly describe each activity, the types of data generated and then discuss our conclusions and recommendations. All themes are discussed in order of the response frequency.

Baseline Activity

The Baseline activity was used to keep a record of who participated in each focus group session and to determine the general fluency level of participants. Participants rated themselves on a scale between zero and ten, with zero representing no Native language ability and ten signifying
fluency. The activity always occurred first and was also used to introduce the interactive style of the activities. The 17 project participants selected a total mean fluency rating of 3.4.

**Concept Association Activity**

In the Concept Association activity, participants were asked to write down words or sentences or draw pictures describing their reaction to the phrases “Past and Present Lummi Language Education” and “Future Lummi Language Education.” Dividing the activity into two parts allowed us to see how participants perceived the larger concept of Lummi Language Education over multiple time continuums.

Response data from this activity show that participants recognize a large number of existing resources in Lummi language education programs and believe that those resources will be applied as educational methodologies in the future. Participants are aware of the work that has been done to create the programs that currently exist and expect to see both new and enhanced programs. Participants recognize a variety of historical injustices and current problems, but also believe more effective language education will alleviate some of those problems. Overall, participants have positive attitudes and exhibit a high degree of hope for future Lummi language education.

**Matrix Activity**

While the data for this section varied between sessions, a strong general trend can be seen. Eight questions were used for participants to rate the importance of language acquisition compared with the practical ability of that acquisition. Responses were rated on a scale of one to ten, with one signifying not important/impractical and ten signifying very important/very practical. Participants believe it is most important for their grandchildren to learn their Native language, slightly less important for their children to learn that language and even less important for themselves to learn that language. Participants felt that Native language education was important to their parents, but less important than it is to the participants themselves. Participants recognized their grandchildren possessing the highest practical ability to learn Lummi compared to their children and themselves. The perceived ability of their parents to teach the languages was the lowest.

There is an interesting dichotomy between perceived level of importance and practical ability. Practical ability was about three points lower than importance in each of the categories. This trend is consistent with findings from other activities that show optimism and strong support for language education, but uncertainty about how to realize that success. The data are also consistent with historical practices of Native language prohibition.

**Dream Big Activity**

In this activity participants wrote words, sentences or drew pictures describing how Lummi language education would change if they were in charge and anything was possible. Three major themes with three subthemes that further describe the major themes were identified. Change was the most prevalent theme in this activity and no participants indicated that no changes to the educational system were needed. Most changes related to the major themes of Educational Institution Based Change and Community Based Change. Responses in the Needs category represent specifically identified necessities for programmatic success. The subthemes of a Central Language Center, Curriculum, and Immersion Education were the most commonly identified changes or needs.

**Fish and Boulders**

This activity is a well-used and adaptable PAR tool that is described in Yan et al. (2001) and Evans (2004). Participants were asked to use the metaphor of fish swimming to a goal of meaningful language acquisition to determine things that enable (Fish) Lummi language acquisition and things that represent obstacles (Boulders) to language acquisition. This activity provided useful information on strengths to capitalize on and issues that require attention.

**Things That Enable Lummi Language Acquisition (Fish)**

From the response data, I identified the following five themes that enable language acquisition: Educational Methodologies, Resources, Individual Attitudes, Support, and Access. The Educational Methodologies theme represents pedagogical strategies that participants recognized as successful. Resources, which were also identified in the Past/Present Concept Association activity, are existing assets that enable language education success. The theme Individual Attitudes includes responses that address personal or group attitudes that enable language acquisition. The Support theme contains responses that describe the importance of support
in language education. The theme Access contains responses that describe people’s ability to utilize educational resources. The themes Resources, Individual Attitudes, Support and Access all occur as both Fish and Boulders.

**Obstacles to Lummi language Acquisition (Boulders)**

In the Boulders part of the activity six themes were identified. The theme Resources represents responses that describe a lack of resources necessary for language acquisition. The four sub-themes Money, Time, Teachers, and Curriculum were the most commonly identified resource needs. The Individual Attitudes theme encompasses individual or group attitudes that are obstacles to learning language. The Access theme contains responses related to lack of access to language education. The theme History contains responses similar to those in the Negative Change section of the Past/Present Lummi Language Education section of the Concept Association activity. The History theme responses describe past injustices that continue to negatively impact language education efforts.

The items that enable (Fish) language acquisition are important indicators of what is being done well and the strengths already possessed by the community. These should be celebrated and expanded. The obstacles (Boulders) are as, if not more useful because they identify what issues require immediate action. Strategies for overcoming many of the obstacles mentioned in this section are part of the recommendations to increase programmatic efficacy.

**Summary**

The Lummi Nation already possesses a crucial ingredient to successful language revitalization: committed and passionate individuals. Response data also identified a large number of resources that Lummi already possess to enable successful Lummi language acquisition. Many of these resources are the result of hard work and have been made possible by the generosity of community elders. Responses from the Matrix activity and to a lesser degree the Concept Association and Dream Big activities show a high level of support for future language education. Those same three activities also exhibit the expectation that language education, primarily focused toward school-based learning, will continue, those programs will expand and new programs will be added. The Concept Association and Dream Big activities described a wide variety of benefits that participants see resulting from increased language acquisition. Participants also identified appropriate educational methodologies for application of those resources.

Many of the educational methodology related responses echo the theories of prominent experts in Native American education, such as Demmert, Towner and the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory (Demmert and Towner 2003; Demmert et al. 2006). When participants state they want to see more language education grounded in cultural teachings, they are recognizing the value of teaching new information in association with pre-existing knowledge and long-term memories as specified in Cognitive Theory. In identifying the importance of experiential based learning through utilization of song, storytelling and dance, participants envision learning environments where language and cognition are developed through activity, as is explained in Cultural-Historical-Activity Theory (CHAT). In describing the use of culturally based curriculum through having families involved in the education process and bringing elders into the classroom, participants are using aspects of Cultural Compatibility Theory. Most participants would not recognize these theories by name, but were able to apply tenets of each theory in relation to Lummi language education. Study participants determined that:

- Changes are needed to make language education efforts more successful.
- The Lummi community already possesses many language resources that result from 30 years of hard work on the part of numerous individuals.
- There is strong support for increased/enhanced language education programs.
- There is hope that language education will be successful.
- Language education must take place in the home, community and in already established educational institutions, the greatest focus being on institutional education.
- Learning Lummi is increasingly more important for future generations and the ability to learn the language will increase in the future.
- Successful educational methodologies for language acquisition are already known, such as immersion education and culturally based education.
- Identified needs include language training for teachers, curriculum development, more language teachers and increased funding for programs.
• Individual attitudes and support greatly affect the success of language education.
• Access to language education must be increased in schools and the community.
• Participants are uncertain how to implement programs that will facilitate language education success.

Overall, the activities confirm both a need and interest in changing the existing language education programs to improve efficacy. There were no responses that indicated nothing should change and no responses showed the expectation that the language will succumb to extinction.

**Recommended Modifications to the Lummi Language Education Program**

Participatory Action Research relies on a cyclical cycle of planning, action and reevaluation (Heron and Reason 2001:180-1). The recommendations discussed below are made from a combination of community perspectives shared through the focus group sessions as well as those opinions I have reached through more than five years working at Northwest Indian College (NWIC).

**Primary Recommendation**

Our main recommendation is for Lummi to create a committee that authors a 15-20 year comprehensive plan for language revitalization. Language recovery requires action in any situation. At Lummi the question is not if action should be taken, but how. Focus group data show that participants not only support language education policy change, but expect it. The Lummi community already has much of what it needs for success; what is missing is an agreed upon plan and support to get there. A long-range comprehensive plan could do just that.

The past 30 years of Lummi language revitalization efforts are a testament to the difficulty of the task. Language revitalization is a slow, complicated and politically-charged process requiring a coordinated, multifaceted strategy. Most major institutions, businesses and nongovernment organizations have long-range comprehensive or strategic plans that chart their future. Long-range planning breaks overwhelmingly large tasks into manageable increments and sets benchmarks to check progress. It can also highlight existing governmental resolutions and school policies that mandate language revitalization efforts.

**Critical Issues**

1. **Increase Teacher Training and Endorsement Certifications**
   Participants clearly recognized the need for more language teachers and increased training for existing instructors. Immersion education was also consistently mentioned in the sessions. The need for teacher training should be a top priority and could provide an excellent avenue for attempting immersion based education.

2. **Create Comprehensive Curriculum Based on 13 Moons Model**
   The Salish calendar, similar to calendars of numerous indigenous groups, was traditionally based on a thirteen-moon cycle (Ballard 1950, Claxton 1993). The thirteen-moon calendar charted times to harvest various resources, times for ceremony and times for travel. The calendar formed the basis of the traditional Salish education system and was the “original curriculum template” (personal communication, George Adams 2007). The calendar can be applied as an education model for many age levels in cultural, linguistic and natural resource management applications (Fletcher 2000; personal communication, George Adams 2007). Multimedia-rich Kindergarten through higher education language curriculum materials are immediately needed at Lummi.

3. **Increase Access to Lummi Language Education**
   Participants believe that interest in language education services will increase in the community and in educational institutions. Access to language education should be increased in the Ferndale Public School District (adjacent to the reservation where many Lummi children attend school) and in Lummi schools and programs. Participants favored a combination of incentives and requirements for increasing language acquisition through schools.

4. **Centralize Lummi Language Education Leadership**
   Participant responses stated interest in a central language center. Responses also indicated confusion over the direction of future language education strategy. Inconsistent instruction between the educational institutions that provide Lummi language instruction further complicates the process of Native language dissemination. Instructional inconsistencies are found due to intermittent access to Lummi language instruction in the Ferndale Public School system, differences in the pedagogical focus of Lummi language instructors, and use of dissimilar orthographies.
Language planning at Lummi could benefit from central direction guided by the Lummi Language Department office.

5. Orthography Standardization

In the late 1970s Charles et al. (1978) acknowledged that the Lummi Tribal Council had not yet decided upon an orthography. Thirty years later, a decision still has not been made. Orthography standardization should be an early goal of any committee created to direct language planning at Lummi. Orthography standardization was not mentioned in any focus group session, but I believe it will be necessary to accomplish other recommendations.

There is little disagreement that a vast proportion of the languages indigenous to North America face imminent extinction unless expeditious and well-articulated strategies for language revitalization are implemented. Many tribes have the ability to save their languages, but must take action as the number of fluent practitioners consistently declines. The prospects for success may look bleak, but high levels of enthusiasm exist for language revitalization and many tribes have already dedicated staff and funding for language programs. Recommendations based on participant data have been provided to transition this project’s success to future action. Lummi is currently working to implement the recommendation of creating a 15-20 year comprehensive plan for its language revitalization efforts.

References Cited


  —. 1982. The Syntactic Functions of Person Marking in Lummi. Paper Presented at the 17th International Conference on Salish and Neighboring Languages, Portland, OR.


