

LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION: USING COMMUNICATIVE PRACTICES TO INSPIRE LEARNERS TO SPEAK

Dr. Diana Steinhauer¹ and Marlene Quinney²

¹ Compassionate Schools, Treaty, Language, & Culture Coach

² UnBQ

Abstract

The landscape of language revitalization in K-12 schools is described using the parameters of a practical learning opportunity with the Tribal Chiefs Education Foundation's Language and Culture Cohort. The Language Cohort is comprised of nine language teachers/instructors representing six schools in the First Nations catchment area. The Cohort meets quarterly over the school year to share their experiences and to acquire language methodology and exchange resources for use in their classes.

Through an Independent Study course within the UnBQ's Masters of Indigenous Languages, a student becomes a resource person over the winter term demonstrating various methods of communicative language instruction for the Language Cohort. Communicative acts comprising contextualized language activities were used to achieve communicative competence and to engage students within five areas: spoken, interactive speech, listening, reading, and writing. Students responded to the communicative methods with enthusiasm in all grades during the 2017 winter term.

In all respects, the Independent Study was very successful in fulfilling the initial concept of language revitalization using several communicative approaches. This presentation provides hands on learning opportunities for participants as they experience communicative approaches to Cree/Dene language revitalization. All materials presented are available for sharing with participants who bring a memory stick.

Biography



Dr. Diana Steinhauer, Cree, from Saddle Lake Cree Nation in Treaty No. 6 Territory, is an educator with experience in teaching, curriculum development, and administration in K-12 schools and post-secondary institutions. Most importantly, she is a mother and first teacher of her two children. She is grateful to Elders and Knowledge Keepers who have guided and mentored her in Indigenous Knowledge and ways of being as a *kise iskwew*. Recognizing the value and work of *iyiniw pimātsiwin*, Diana's work as a change agent in language, education, and governance is grounded upon her late father's adage, *pimātsitotetân kimiyikowisiwininaw*, Let us live life the way our Creator intended us to live.



Marlene Quinney is Cree and lives in Saddle Lake Cree Nation. She has six years of teaching language immersion at the elementary level and is currently completing a Masters in Indigenous Languages degree at the University of Blue Quills. She received training in Total Physical Response from the Thompson Rivers University and Chief Atahm School partnership in Chase, B.C.