DIALECT PRESERVATION AND ITS CHALLENGES

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Abstract

This workshop introduces participants to the 'n' dialect Swampy Cree from Pimicikamāk Manitoba. Our hope is by bringing the obstacles around cultural revival and language after colonization and how while these are challenges, it will provide opportunities to create models for other communities around language preservation, the importance of having it written and taught. The workshop will have two sessions. In session one we will immerse the participants in small groups to do an exercise in transliterating, after participating in the exercise, the participants may notice some commonalities of the many dialects. In session two we will inform participants of our school's participation in its preservation in rebuilding our heritage. After session two, we hope the participants will exchange ideas about how they can help preserve and or rebuild in their own communities. In order to effectively preserve our language, it is not only the responsibility of formal educators. It is equally the responsibility of parents to work diligently at home to help preserve our language and heritage.

"Traditionally our whole community is involved in raiding our children; therefore, it only makes sense that our whole community should be involved in preserving our language."

ēkosāni, kinanāskomitināwāw kākī- pē- n'tōtawiyēk
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Biography

Originally from Pimicikamāk First Nation, my commitment to teaching has spanned over several years. My journey took me to Brandon University where I received Bachelor of General Studies and Bachelor of Education degrees. After University, I taught in Elementary grades in my reserve, I then decided to enroll in the Bachelor of Arts – Cree Linguistics program in Regina, Saskatchewan. After graduation, I moved on to other endeavours but remained close to home.

As a Cree Language Instructor at University College of the North in Thompson, I use my personal knowledge of the Swampy Cree dialect. Other courses taught are Introduction to Cree 1 and 2, Cree Syllabics, Selected Topics in Aboriginal and Northern Studies – Residential Schools, First Nations Languages and Governance, and kayās ācanōkēwina/Legends of Long Ago. I enrolled at Blue Quills University in their Master's program on Indigenous Languages. This commitment of education is ongoing and I hope to receive a Master's degree in five years.