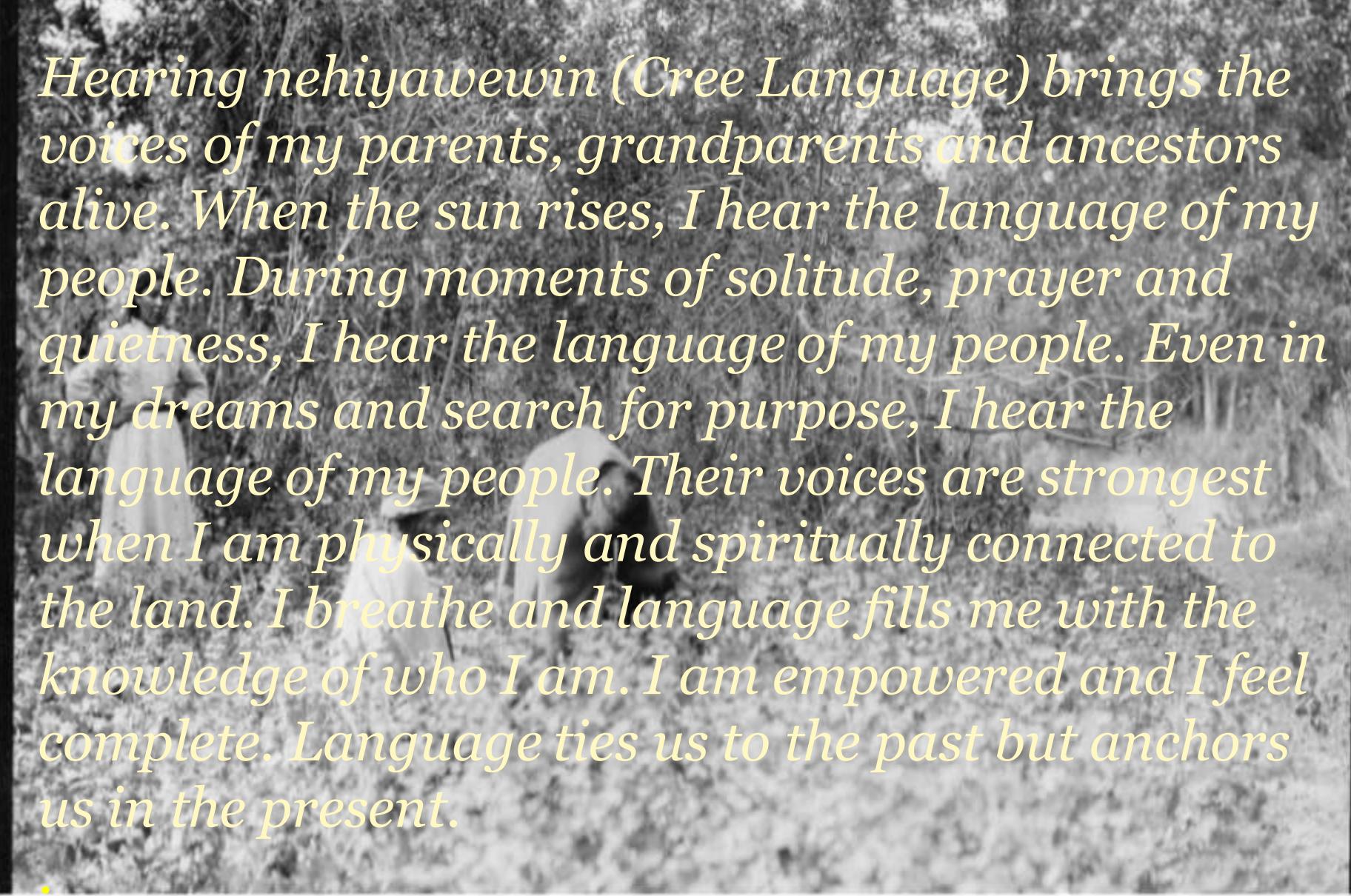


The nehiyawak Language Experience - Working collaboratively in a community.

Belinda Daniels – Sturgeon Lake First Nation, SK

Stabilizing Indigenous Languages Symposium
University of Lethbridge
Lethbridge, AB. June 7, 8, & 9, 2018



Hearing nehiyawewin (Cree Language) brings the voices of my parents, grandparents and ancestors alive. When the sun rises, I hear the language of my people. During moments of solitude, prayer and quietness, I hear the language of my people. Even in my dreams and search for purpose, I hear the language of my people. Their voices are strongest when I am physically and spiritually connected to the land. I breathe and language fills me with the knowledge of who I am. I am empowered and I feel complete. Language ties us to the past but anchors us in the present.

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The *nehiyawak* Language Experience (13 years): Creating awareness and developing a safe space for language learning.



THIS STARTED WITH A PRAYER, A CEREMONY
AND A VISION



Why not create a Cree camp with Cree people and speak Cree?

So simple, yet...



Beginnings

What do you want the Language experience to look like?



- Finding (who) fluent speakers of a nehiyaw worldview.
- Involving *kehteyak* who are willing and able. (knowledge keepers/carriers).
- Figuring out which *nehiyawak* teachers are specialized in specific areas such as: linguistics, language methodologies, traditional & environmental knowledge.
- Asking is each teacher is trained in a specific language method?
- Location – Land and Water
- Being clear on the fundamental aspects of the experience, ie. Beliefs, protocols, ‘is it another culture camp?’

Getting started – Questions to ask ourselves



- Where to start?
- Who will join me? Join us?
- Where shall we go?
- How can others help?
- Where is there easy access to facilities?
- What is the Vision and then the Mission? Objective(s)?
- What can we accomplish in a week when it comes to language?
- What are the costs if any?
- Where to find funds if necessary?
- How do we advertise? Do we need to advertise? Who is this for? Community? The Public? The School? PD? Etc?

Cree-teachers/Creetures



- Applicants for the positions of ‘Creetures’: All must be passionate about language revitalization.
- All must be familiar with language revitalization theory and training.
- All must have a positive self image.
- It is more than just ‘teaching’ a language, it is about making human and nonhuman connections for others to the environment and a specific worldview.
- okiskinwahamakewak, kehteyak and other resource people should be showing & sharing various ways of knowing and being at all times.

Participants? Who are they?



- adults.
 - Youth.
 - School aged children.
 - Family.
 - All ages?
-
- Waivers are important.
 - Insurance – liability.
 - Parental volunteers needed if school aged.
 - Special custody cases if incarcerated youth are attending, need chaperones.

Time? nipin – Best time to learn with the land.



Deciding who is going to do what?



Gifts



Talents



Teachers: Linguistics and philosophy



Teachers: Language technician



Teachers: Language revitalizationists 2017



More on Language Acquisitioning Techniques



- There are a number of techniques/methods in teaching and learning a language:
 - Communicative- approach.
 - Total physical response + sign language
 - Suggestopedia.
 - ASLA-accelerated second language acquisition.
 - Role-playing/Drama.
 - Sign Language
 - Immersion

Learning Language - Cree



- Make learning meaningful.
- Make learning practical.
- Make it fun.
- Make it easy and repetitious.
- Make it rigorous
- Most important make it safe.

ASLA outdoors



“Role – Playing & Drama”



More role-playing & drama



TPR with sign language



metawetan



Finally- The Language Experience!



- Coordinating, collaborating, planning and discussing is an ongoing annual thing.
- Use the environment of the outdoors, it is full of spirit and full of emotional intimacy in rain, wind or shine.
- Take advantage of the weather, take advantage of the morning, night, the moon and stars, the animals, and most importantly the food! Learn the language-Connect.
- Make learning moments of all of this. A teaching I learned a long the way from an uncle was that, why do we expect the weather to accommodate us, why not accommodate the weather?

Appreciation of ‘spirit’



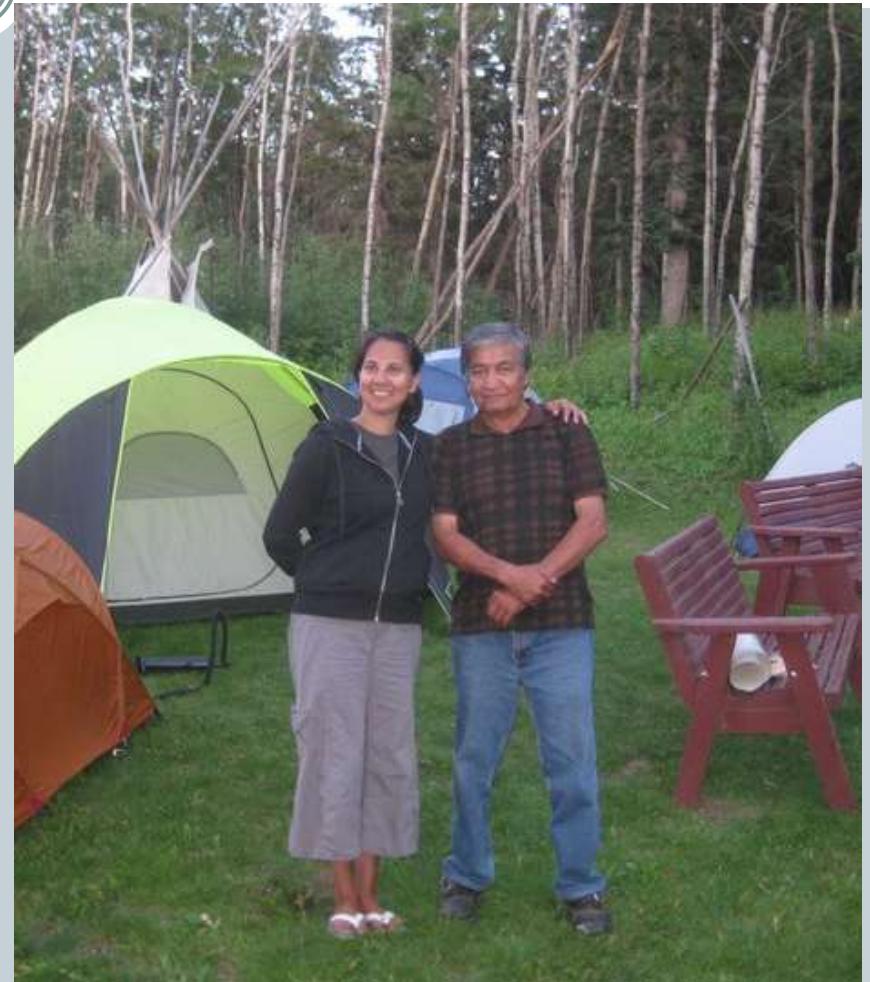
**There is the spirit of nature, the spirit of the river,
the spirit of the mountain.
There is the spirit of the animals, of the water,
the spirit of the ancestors.
Spirit is everywhere.**

- African oral tradition

Resonating



Relationships



wahkohtowin



In language learning
there is no TOP
student, it is
COLLECTIVE
learning!!! - Let's
teach each other

Scheduling



- From Sun rise to Sun set- (The first day should very much look like your last day).
- Keep scheduling simple.
- Keep Repetition in mind. Remember to Scaffold the learning of learners. It is highly technical and procedural.
- Using nehiyaw values as learning moments: Prayer is a teaching of faith, humility and oneness. Setting up camp and sitting in circles is another teaching of connectedness. Fire keeping is yet another teaching ... etc. All of this seems to happen naturally in a culture bound space.

Example of more scheduling



- Details, details, details, but keep it simple.
- Day 1 morning rising, prayer, song, cook, eat, clean up together, make this a class! Make this a session! (it will take a big chunk of time).
- Use the language.
- Morning routine... after breakfast. Start with language building activities...verbs, feelings, weather.
- Break... just to download new words. (20 mins or so)
- Do morning routine again!
- Go for a walk, hike, swim, but in the language.
- Lunch – menu's make this a part of class, work in teams and take turns cooking for the group.
- Break.
- Go over morning routine again.
- Add new vocabulary, more verbs, nouns, repeat!
- Play a game, tell a story, (but remember it has to be the same for tomorrow and the day after).
- Break
- Review all vocabulary throughout the day.
- Quiet time for reflection and writing.
- Supper- again make it a class, food is a communal process-learn vocabulary again for cooking, preparing, eating and cleaning.
- Sunset activities.. Songs, stories, games, practice simple dialogues... and repeat for the next day.
- Make time for special planned events such as: basket making, deer skinning and preparing, picking sage or sweetgrass, blueberry picking (depending on season), etc. one special activity a day is efficient.

Tracking trails, checking snares, searching/finding teaches patience and wisdom – Learning the vocabulary for these excursions/experiences.



kwaskwepicihikewin



Key points to remember for teachers



- Repetition is key!
- Use the language, be in the context. Teach what is relevant.
- Don't be afraid that others won't understand what you're saying, (don't give in to English), that's what you are there for.
- Don't criticize, however correct in a respectful kind way. Learning a 2nd language is 'risky' to those learning, provide a safe environment.
- Language loss is emotional, be prepared to be supportive because learners may feel vulnerable and incredibly sad.
- Make the language camp exciting, motivating, and busy!
- Keep groups small.

Why are people coming? Why are they interested? Learners



- People are coming because they are interested in the language.
- People are coming because they want to understand the language of Cree.
- People are coming because they want to learn how to say words and phrases.
- People are coming because they want to talk to their relatives.
- People are coming because they want to reconnect or find their nehiyawin and get some insight into how they belong and connect.
- People are coming because they realize the value of one's ancestral language.
- People are wanting to find an identity.
- People are coming because there are no other options like this.

Listen to current pod-cast



- <https://soundcloud.com/nccah-ccnsa/sets/voices-field>

More video clips



- <http://saskatoon.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=404632>

Survey said:



- I rated this camp at a 10! For the camp size perhaps a camp deputy is required to help keep the camping logistics on track better and to help garner key conversations with campers (if needed).

Do you have any other comments, questions, or concerns to share about the Nehiyawak Summer Language Camp Experience?

- I would like to say that this experience gave me many ideas as a Cree teacher, it helped me understand language learning from a student perspective and enabled me to learn from fabulous experts in teaching our language. All while creating a support for continued learning back home and in the community. It was a fabulous learning experience, and I hope to go back again next year.
- I enjoy the experience and camp so much. I miss it and wish I was still there.. I wish I could be there now.
- Kinanaskomitin- I am great-fully thankful
- Great Job. Keep up the great work!
- Great camp! Great learnings! Great experience! I am humbled and in great gratitude for the planner and organizers doing this work! Keep up the great work Belinda and team!

nehiyawak Summer Language Camp-Beginnings



July 2005

Sturgeon Lake 2005



Sturgeon Lake 2010



Saskatoon –Oskayak High School 2012



Little Pine First Nations 2014



nehiyawak Summer language camp 2015



nehiyawak summer language experience gets bigger/larger every year, interest is snowballing!



Another nehiyawak summer language experience



nehiyawak summer language experience, La Ronge, Sk. 2016



nehiyawak Language Experience 2017 – La Ronge, SK.



Where are we going?



- Award winning program – Just recently received a Provincial Lieutenant Governor Award.
- Moving into a not for profit organization.
- Gst registration is in the works as we speak.
- Board of governors.
- Language House/Space is the new vision.
- We can go where we are needed.
- We can share!

-Toronto May 2018 -



Feedback after the first road trip!



-Belinda's switching from methodology to methodology in her teaching was amazing, made sure everyone learned.

- -such a generous and non-intimidating teacher! (this from everyone)
- -loved the warmth and safety of communal learning
- -love being able to pronounce Cree words finally
- -love the emotional resonance of the images on the flash cards, it helps to remember the words
- -learned far more than any other language course in the same amount of days
- -I can introduce myself in Cree now and am doing it! (Danis did it in the US and Kent did it in Paris)
- -would like to learn more sentences
- -would like to learn more root words, or parts of words that are added at the end, and beginning to affect a word's meaning
- -would like to break down the long words to understand little parts
- -length of days good, maybe learn simple phrases for eating together to practise and lunch or dinner?
- -love the location
- -have 2 of the 4 days be over the weekend
- -learn a song day

Creating a Resurgence, an awareness, a comeback!



T-shirts for sale



Logo design

