



**Culture Camps  
for  
Language Learning**

# **An Immersion Handbook**



**First Peoples'  
Heritage, Language &  
Culture Council**

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## BACKGROUND

This handbook was created by the First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Council (FPHLCC) Language Program. FPHLCC has strongly supported First Nations language and culture revitalization and maintenance projects in British Columbia (BC) since 1990.

The Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation (MARR) and New Relationship Trust (NRT) provide support and funding, allowing FPHLCC to distribute language and culture immersion camp grants to many BC First Nations communities. In addition, FPHLCC provides ongoing support to communities with resource development, and program planning, development and reporting.

Language and culture immersion has proven to be the most successful method for the transmission of language and culture from generation to generation. For this reason, FPHLCC and BC First Nations communities highly value language and culture immersion camps, where participants learn by being surrounded by their traditional culture and language.

## PURPOSE

This handbook is intended to be a practical tool for camp organizers, staff, Elders, community members, teachers and anyone else involved in language and culture immersion camps. It includes key points and details for each step of the entire process of planning and carrying out a language and culture immersion camp.

The purpose of this handbook is to serve as a resource from which communities can gather ideas and guidance for planning and carrying out language and culture immersion camps.

Please note that the examples of daily conversations, fluency assessments etc. in this handbook are given in English. These examples are provided to help generate ideas, and are not intended for translation into First Nations languages. Often direct translations are impossible, and one language cannot express exact meanings from another language.

# CONTENTS

As we see it, there are ten major areas to consider when planning and carrying out a language and culture immersion camp. Each of these ten areas is explained in a section of this manual.

Although each section roughly corresponds to a step in the process of planning and carrying out a language and culture immersion camp, it is not necessary to read and follow the sections in order.

Acknowledgements and Preface	⇒	pg. 1
1. Introduction	⇒	pg. 4
2. Language is Culture & Language is Communication	⇒	pg. 7
3. Camp Goals & Passing on the Language	⇒	pg. 9
4. Camp Focus & Participants	⇒	pg. 11
5. Planning & Budget	⇒	pg. 13
6. The Camp	⇒	pg. 19
7. Immersion	⇒	pg. 23
8. Fluency Assessment	⇒	pg. 25
9. Challenges and Solutions	⇒	pg. 29
10. Life After Camp	⇒	pg. 31
References	⇒	pg. 33



## WHY LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION?

Language revitalization means bringing a language back to life and preventing it from being lost. In many BC communities there are only a few First Nations language speakers left, and often those speakers are elderly and do not use the language in daily life. The loss of First Nations languages must be stopped before there are no speakers left.

Each language contains an immense system of cultural knowledge including philosophy and spirituality, oral history, songs and dances, art, environmental systems and biodiversity, technical skills for survival, fishing, hunting and plant use, medical expertise, and significant cultural practices. The loss of a language is the loss of an enormous wealth of knowledge (Hinton, 2001).

First Nations language revitalization is crucially important for far too many reasons to list here. Some reasons considered most important are as follows.

### Revitalizing a First Nations language:

- allows First Nations people the opportunity to regain access to traditional cultural practices and traditional values;
- assists in increasing First Nations peoples' sense of identity which can lead to higher levels of overall educational, social and cultural success;
- bridges gaps between Elders and younger community members;
- helps to prevent the loss of cultural knowledge and spirituality;
- has a positive impact on personal and collective self-esteem and sense of cultural and personal belonging (Ignace, 1998);
- helps First Nations communities create more speakers who use the language in many different situations; and
- is the key to identity and retention of one's culture... (Assembly of First Nations, 1992).

Language revitalization starts with a group of committed people who have a common goal of bringing their First Nations language back to life.

### Revitalizing a First Nations language requires:

- providing community members with opportunities to learn and use the language;
- encouraging community members to use the language on a daily basis; and
- increasing the types of situations where the language can be used.

# INTRODUCTION

## WHAT IS IMMERSION?

Immersion is a method of learning language; it is a way to pass language from one generation to another. It is considered to be the most effective way to create new speakers and improve the fluency of semi-fluent speakers. Immersion is also the best way to learn a language while also learning a culture.

Immersion means that language learners are completely surrounded (immersed) by the language they are learning. This means that during immersion, the only language used at all times is the language being learned. The trickiest part of learning language through immersion is that the language is not “taught” in a formal way. In true language and culture immersion there is no classroom setting, no teachers, and no textbooks for reading nor pencils and paper for writing.

In immersion, language is learned through natural communication and by living life in the language. In immersion, language can be learned through listening, speaking, interacting and doing activities with fluent speakers using the language. Immersion activities are culturally relevant daily activities done in the language. “Immersion is intended to be a fun, interactive program that encourages and supports language learning through Elders modeling best practice methodologies” (Greenway, 2009).

Language immersion is not a new idea. Young children have always learned their first languages through immersion. For children, language is learned automatically through natural communication, without conscious learning or teaching (Hinton, 2002). For example, by the time a child is three years old he/she will know around 1000 words and be able to use complicated grammar such as forming questions, making negative sentences and talking about the past even though he/she has had no language instruction at all. Children learn because their families and the people around them use language in many different daily activities.

Youth and adults are still able to learn languages the way they did as young children! In fact, children, youth and adults can all learn a language in a natural way. If provided with a supportive, comfortable, trusting and FUN learning environment, opportunities to listen and interact with fluent speakers and an English-free setting, anyone can learn language through immersion.

## WHAT IS NOT LANGUAGE IMMERSION?

Language immersion is not language classes where reading and writing are emphasized more than speaking and listening, where language is studied as a subject in school, or where language is translated to/from English.

## WHY IMMERSION?

The key to revitalizing a language is creating more speakers and improving semi-fluent speakers' ability. This means that people of all ages, especially younger generations need to learn the language and use it daily. Most often, languages in need of revitalization are spoken only by Elders, so the language must be learned from them.



It is through immersion that language and culture are transmitted from generation to generation, and more speakers of a language are created. Through immersion generations can learn to communicate in the language and use it in culturally relevant situations.

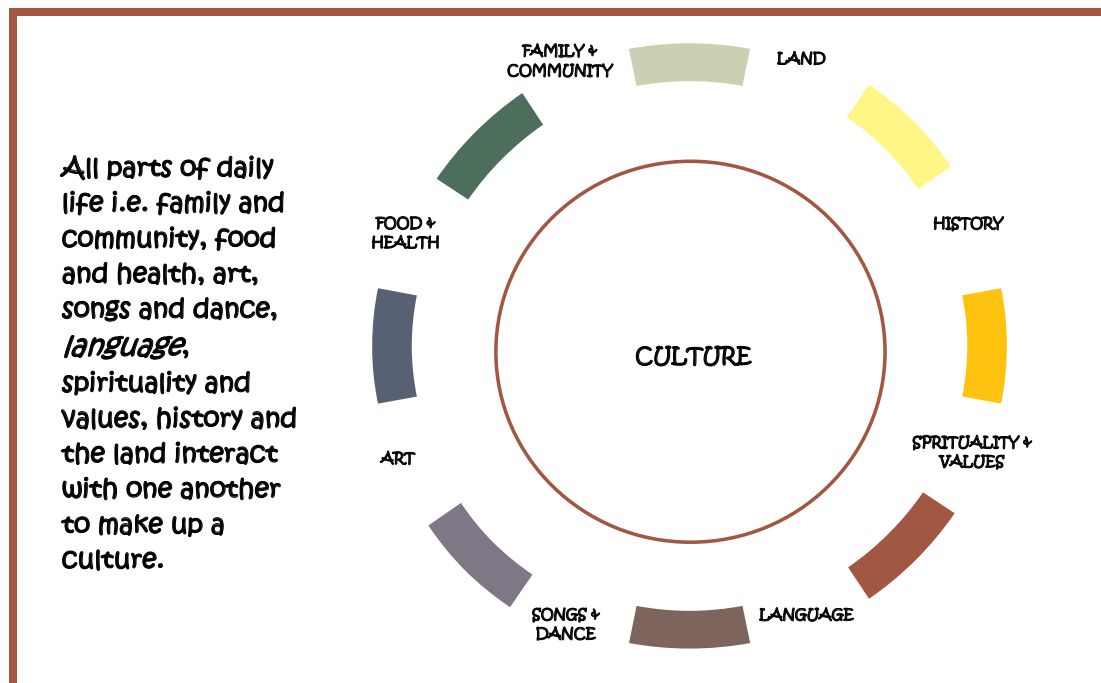
Language and culture immersion is effective in many ways:

- People learn a language best when they are surrounded by the language, when they don't hear any English, and don't use translations (Hinton, 2002). Language is learned by hearing it and understanding the meaning through context, gestures, and activities.
- Language learning through immersion activities takes less effort than in a typical classroom. If learners and speakers do things together and talk about what they are doing, then the learners automatically understand what is being said. During immersion activities, learners are absorbed in activities rather than straining to consciously learn the language. During their concentration and absorption in activities is when language learning truly happens (Hinton, 2002).
- Learners need to hear words and phrases many times and eventually learn to say those words and phrases themselves. By repeating daily routines in the language, learners have the opportunity to hear the same words and phrases repeated in the context of natural communication.
- Immersion is the best way to learn a language and culture at the same time. Since language and culture are completely interconnected (and one cannot be completely understood without the other), language should be learned along with its culture. It is by living the culture and doing hands-on activities while speaking the language, that the language and culture will be learned and fully understood.



# LANGUAGE IS CULTURE

## LANGUAGE AND CULTURE ARE INTERCONNECTED

-  Learning a First Nations language requires learning First Nations culture and learning First Nations culture requires using the language.
-  We use language in all day-to-day activities, which make up a culture i.e. food, clothing, art, songs, dance, family, friends, relationships, technology and spirituality.



## NATURAL AND CULTURALLY RELEVANT LANGUAGE

-  Language is most meaningful when used in natural communication and in daily activities.
-  Successful camps have been carried out in remote settings, outdoors and on traditional sites.

For example: In one camp, participants were taken by boat to an old village site where they camped and lived off the land for several days. During another camp, participants visited traditional sites where they learned the place names and uses of different plants.

*"... camp was held in a very remote traditional site and the isolation and cultural history of the area were helpful in achieving our goals. Participants were able to live the language while they learned it."*


-Glaglxisistala: Heiltsuk  
Language & Culture  
Immersion Camp




# LANGUAGE IS COMMUNICATION




## LEARNING A LANGUAGE MEANS LEARNING TO COMMUNICATE

 **The best way to learn and speak a language is through activities using real communication in the language.**

 **Participants learn language best through activities related to the language and culture.**

Participants can learn the language by watching, listening and practicing activities such as cleaning and cutting salmon, tanning hides, sewing moccasins, or playing bone games.

 **Participants need many opportunities to practice and ask questions in the language during real-life activities.**


Participants can talk about berry-picking with Elders as they are picking berries, rather than study the names of the berries in a classroom.

"Teaching in the natural environment ... students understand better because you are doing things, pointing to things and watching things for real."


-Glaglxisistala: Heiltsuk Language and Cultural Immersion Camp

*"It was such a pleasure speaking to our children in the natural context of Koeye, away from radios and tape players. It was like the old days because you could teach by showing and campers seemed to understand what you were saying by what you were doing."*

-Glaglxisistala: Heiltsuk Language and Culture Immersion Camp

 **English is not needed in immersion language learning.**

Gestures, facial expressions, objects, pictures, and repetition will help understanding. For example, a happy facial expression can be used to teach the word for happiness.

 **English combined with another language is called a pidgin language.**

If English is used at the same time as the language being learned, it will be an incomplete version of the language.



Chase, BC - Melpatkwa Matthew cutting deer meat

*"While students were engaged in the activity, the elder teachers spoke only in the language to describe the various aspects of the resources being harvested and the terms associated with it. The students were expected to respond only in the language"*

-Dakelh Language Teacher Diploma Program Language and Culture Immersion Camp

# CAMP GOALS

*A goal is a specific outcome or result that you are working towards and that you hope to achieve in a specific time period.*

## HAVE CLEAR IMMERSION GOALS

### Example Goals:

To increase the fluency of camp participants by carrying out all daily activities in the language

To provide immersion opportunities for culture and language learning across generations by carrying out a camp for youth and Elders

### Each community has different goals.

Set goals that address your community's language and culture priorities and needs.

For example: Based on community priorities, the goal of one camp was to improve the fluency of teachers while another camp's goal was to increase the language fluency of youth through cultural immersion.

## SET REALISTIC GOALS

### Choose reachable goals.

During a camp, most learners improve their fluency and learn new words and phrases. It is not realistic to expect that everyone will learn to speak the language perfectly after just one camp.

Carry out a few good quality activities that can be completed instead of trying to complete many rushed activities.

Ensure that the camp activities are directly related to your immersion camp goals.

For example: Preparing and eating meals in the language every day will help improve fluency, but studying vocabulary from a book will not.

### For most effective immersion it's best not to include too many participants.

During a camp, focused attention and time with a few learners has the greatest effects.

You can choose to teach everyone just a bit about the language, or teach a few people to speak the language well.

*"Build a strong foundation first, then expand. Start small-steady and strong."*


—I.L.I. Handbook | P.14



**\*REVISIT YOUR GOALS OFTEN THROUGH THE ENTIRE PROCESS\***

# PASSING ON THE LANGUAGE

## USE THE CAMP AS A VEHICLE TO PASS ON THE LANGUAGE TO LEARNERS

-  **Speakers pass on the language to learners by speaking to them and giving them opportunities to practice.**


Many language and culture immersion camps have given youth and Elders opportunities to interact and to learn/pass on the language through traditional cultural activities.

For example: In one camp Elders taught younger participants how to drum and sing traditional songs.

Elders often interact with youth through story-telling.

*"I want to be able to understand elders at feasts and gatherings.... I want to be able to teach my kids and grandkids how to talk Smalgyax."*

-Kitselas Language and Culture Immersion Camp

-  **Young children naturally learn language from their parents and grandparents. Camps should mimic this natural situation.**

During the camps, learners will pick up the language through natural communication with fluent speakers.

*"It is good for our children to be out of the village and in their natural environment. It reminds me of our old food gathering camps where I learned to speak the language from my grandmother."*

- Glaglaxistala: Heiltsuk Language and Culture Immersion Camp



Watson Lake, BC - Elder and child together

## FLUENT SPEAKERS & SEMI-FLUENT SPEAKERS



### CREATE NEW SPEAKERS

New speakers from younger generations can learn to speak the language and continue to pass it on to future generations.




### IMPROVE SEMI-FLUENT SPEAKERS

Community members and teachers who know some of the language can improve their fluency and continue to pass on the language.

# CAMP FOCUS


## WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE CAMP?

 **Consider the needs of your community. Look for specific gaps or areas of need in your community and fill them.**

For example, in some communities children learn the language in school or daycare, but at home their parents don't know the language so can't speak it with them.

In this case, your camp could focus on helping parents learn the language in order to communicate with their children.

## WHAT KIND OF CAMP WILL IT BE?

 **Camps can be carried out in different seasons or be based on different themes.**


Camps can take place in the summer, fall, winter or spring, and can include traditional cultural activities that take place in that season:

- traditional seasonal camp: ice fishing in the winter, cedar gathering in the spring
- food gathering/preparation camp: berry-picking, salmon cutting and drying

Camps can include activities based around a certain theme:

- outdoor survival camp: building an outdoor shelter, living off the land
- parents & children camp: providing opportunities for families to interact in the language
- all ages camp: children, youth, adults, and Elders learn/teach the language together

## IS THERE COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION AND SUPPORT?

 **A core team working together to carry out the camp is necessary.**

From beginning to end a committed group of organizers, volunteers, Elders and staff need to meet, consult and take responsibility for the camp planning and implementation.

More support and motivation will come from community members as they see the success and value of the project.

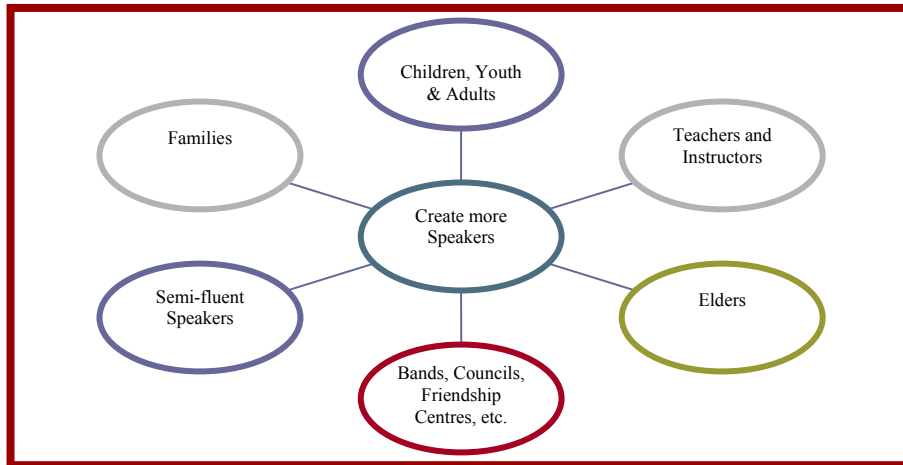


Quesnel, BC -Elder story-time

## WHO WILL THE CAMP PARTICIPANTS BE?



Many different groups of people can benefit from and contribute to the camp.



*Anyone in the community is a language learner if they choose to be. Age, level of education, and occupation do not matter.*

—I.L.I. Handbook 5

## WHAT RESOURCE PEOPLE ARE AVAILABLE IN YOUR COMMUNITY?



Community members who are willing and able to be language resources:

- Elders who are fluent speakers and are able to participate;
- Community members or teachers who are fluent; and
- Community members or teachers who are partially fluent.



Other resource people in your community:

Community members with wisdom, cultural knowledge or skills can provide support and teach cultural activities such as traditional dance, food preparation, drumming, and singing.

## WHO WILL THE LANGUAGE LEARNERS BE?




Learners can be new to the language or partially fluent already. They might be:

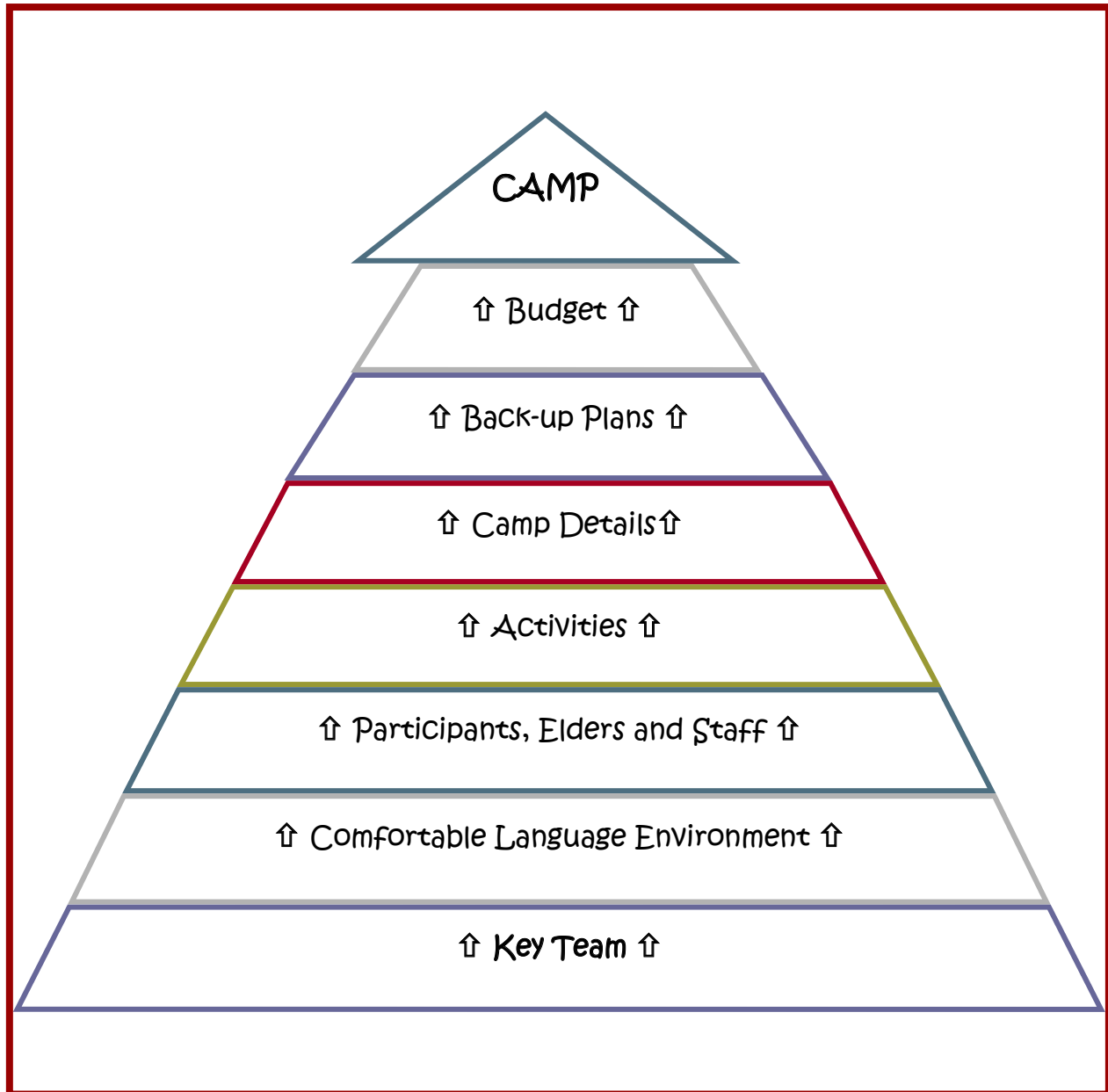
- School teachers improving their fluency so they can promote and teach the language and culture at school;
- Semi-fluent adult speakers who want to improve their fluency;
- Community members who do not speak the language, but have a strong desire to learn;
- Children who speak little or none of the language;
- Youth who may know a little or none of the language;
- Parents who want to be able to communicate with their children in the language; or
- Band staff and chief and council who are committed to the language.



# PLANNING

 Planning a camp requires a strong foundation: **THE KEY TEAM**




 All other parts of the camp can be built on this strong foundation.



*Make an effort to include all communities within your territory in planning and implementing a language and culture immersion camp project.*

*This means there needs to be consultations and invitations to participate and help plan. A nation working together will have enough strength and commitment to revitalize a language.*





## KEY TEAM -Supports the entire camp

-  The key team is a group of committed people who share the same vision of language and culture immersion and who are dedicated to ensuring the success of the camp.
-  The key team should share and support common goals for the camp project.
-  The key team will commit to meet regularly with Elders, speakers and cultural resource people for their input and direction.



Makah- Cape Flattery, BC - group of camp participants

## COMFORTABLE LANGUAGE ENVIRONMENT



-  Promote a positive environment for using the language.
-  Create a fun atmosphere where all participants, including learners and speakers, are at ease to speak and actively learn the language.
-  Make sure participants are aware of and agreeable to the planned activities.
-  Participants will be more willing to participate and will benefit if they know what to expect at the camp.






Alexis Creek, BC -gathering pine cones for hide-tanning

# PLANNING




## **PARTICIPANTS** -Motivated to learn

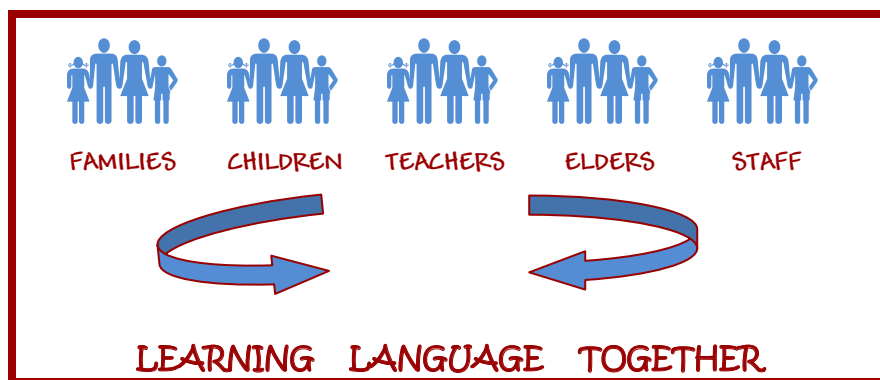
-  Recruit participants who are committed, have clear language learning goals and a strong desire to learn to speak the language.
-  Immersion is most effective in small groups; a good ratio is 1 fluent speaker to every 3 learners.

## **ELDERS** -Invaluable in all camps


-  Encourage Elders to provide leadership and input into the immersion activities at the camp.
-  Ensure that Elders, camp staff and organizers agree on the project planning and implementation.
-  Help Elders to feel confident about their roles as language and culture resources in the camp.


## **STAFF** -Organizers, assistants, cooks, chaperones, volunteers and administration.


-  Orient staff to be clear about their roles and responsibilities.
-  Make sure all staff has the necessary training i.e. first-aid, food-safe certificate, criminal records check etc.
-  Make an effort to hire staff who are interested in and committed to revitalizing the language and culture.



## ACTIVITIES -Language immersion through culturally relevant activities.


 **Daily Routines:** Each day repeat basic routines such as eating meals, cleaning up, and washing up. Have simple conversations about each activity. This is the most natural way to learn language.


 **Simple but Relevant:** Activities can be basic and culturally relevant such as preparing a meal.

 **Meaningful:** The language learned in each activity should be related to participants' daily lives.

Learning words about the family like grandma, grandpa, mom, dad, uncle, aunt etc. is useful for every-day life.

It is especially meaningful to learn to introduce yourself and talk about who you are, where you are from and who your family is.

 **Interesting and Fun:** Participants will become enthusiastic about language learning if activities make them laugh and are relaxing and memorable.

 **Supplies and Equipment:**  
Make sure you have the materials and supplies you need for each activity. Some supplies and cultural materials are easy to come by, while others such as canoes & life jackets, or recording equipment require lots of planning.


\*Video and audio recordings are expensive and require special planning. Good quality recordings often require professional equipment and expertise.

 **Culturally Relevant:**

Each community has different traditions that are culturally relevant and appropriate.

Consult with your community members & Elders about different cultural activities.

For example: traditionally, some dances and speeches are only done by one gender; and only certain family members participate in some activities.

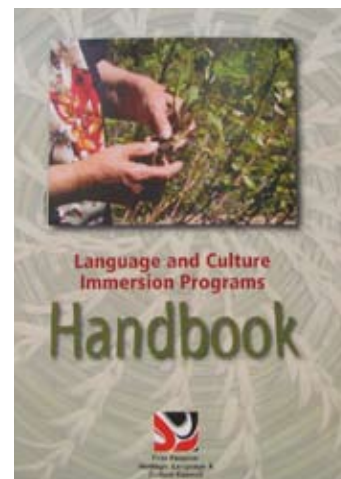
 **Appropriate For Age and Level:** Different activities work better for certain age groups and fluency levels.

Tanning hide would not be an appropriate activity for very young children.

Learning to carve a dugout canoe using the language might be overwhelming for new language learners.


### FOR ACTIVITY IDEAS SEE:

FPHLCC Language and Culture Immersion Programs Handbook.




# PLANNING

## CAMP DETAILS -Think ahead about all the details to get the most out of your camp time.

 **Length of Camp:** How long will the camp last? How many days/weeks? Will it be too short to achieve the goals of the camp?


For example: A camp that only lasts a day or two will likely have little impact on participants' language ability.


On the other hand, a camp that lasts an entire week or two will allow participants to really improve their language fluency.

 **Location:** Where will the camp take place? Will it be an outdoor setting?  
old village site / river camp / food-gathering site




Lillooet - USLCEs camp

 **Accommodation:** If it is an overnight camp, where will participants sleep? Will participants bring their own tents or will a shelter be built? Will everyone be comfortable?

 **Meals:**

- Will all meals be provided or just some?
- What will the meals be?
- Who will be in charge of cooking the meals and cleaning up after?
- Where will the food be stored and how will it be transported to the camp location?
- Are there any special dietary restrictions such as food allergies?

 **Transportation:** How will participants travel to and from the camp?

- by bus
- by car
- by truck
- by boat
- on foot
- private vehicle
- rented bus/vehicle

## BACK-UP PLANS

 It is important to be prepared in case something unplanned happens.

- an emergency situation
- unpredictable weather
- participants don't show up
- an Elder can't make it
- activities don't go as planned
- activities take too long

 Be flexible; the camp can be successful even if it doesn't go exactly as planned.



# SAMPLE BUDGET

**COSTS** -Make sure to set aside money for all the expenses of the camp.

**Staff** - Decide how much you will pay each staff member and count the number of days each staff member will work.

For example: 2 cooks will get paid \$125/day..... $2 \times \$125 = \$250$   
The cooks will work for 7 days..... $\$250 \times 7 \text{ days} = \$1750$   
1 chaperone will get paid \$150/day..... $1 \times \$150$   
The chaperone will work for 7 days..... $\$150 \times 7 \text{ days} = \$1050$

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**Training** - Some staff and participants may need special training before the camp.

For example: 1 cook needs Food Safe training..... $1 \times \$175/\text{training} = \$175$   
3 staff need first-aid training..... $3 \times \$200/\text{training} = \$600$

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**Honorariums** - Fluent speakers, cultural resource people and Elders usually receive honorariums for their participation.

For example: Honorariums will be \$200/day for 7 days..... $\$200 \times 7 = \$1400$   
4 Elders will receive honorariums..... $4 \times \$1400 = \$5600$

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**Food** - Include all meals that will be provided during the camp. Food should be healthy and hearty for active language learning sessions.

For example: 3 meals will be served each day for 7 days..... $3 \times 7 = 21 \text{ meals}$   
14 learners, 3 staff and 4 Elders will be at the camp..... $= 21 \text{ participants}$   
21 meals will be eaten by 21 participants..... $21 \times 21 = 441 \text{ servings}$   
Each meal serving costs about \$7..... $441 \times \$7 = \$3087$

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**Transportation** - If you are providing transportation add it to your budget

For example: 1 bus and driver to and from the camp location..... $= \$500$

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**Materials/Equipment for Activities** -Get quotes and shop around for low prices.

For example: leather for moccasins costs about \$20/pair  
14 learners will each make a pair of moccasins..... $14 \times \$20 = \$280$

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When you have calculated the costs for each category, add them together for the total.

For the example categories above, the total is:

$\$1750 + \$1050 + \$175 + \$600 + \$5600 + \$3087 + \$500 + \$280 = \$13,042$

# THE CAMP

## CURRICULUM AND PLANNING

-  **Organizers, staff and Elders plan out all the activities before the camp begins** (see PLANNING Section).
-  **All camp activities should be done in the First Nations language.**
-  **What will participants learn at the camp?** Decide what language skills (conversation, vocabulary, and phrases) participants will learn and practice in each activity.  

For example: In a summer camp, participants learned how to cut salmon and learned all the vocabulary and phrases related to cutting salmon.

To reach this goal, participants:

  - Learned vocabulary ahead of time by using picture flashcards related to cutting salmon.
  - Watched Elders cutting salmon and talking about the process.
  - Participated "hands-on" by cutting salmon and talking about it.
  - Reviewed what they had learned by playing a game the next morning using the flashcards with pictures related to cutting salmon.





Watson Lake, BC - learning to cut meat



Fort St. James, BC - learning to cut salmon

## IMMERSION ACTIVITIES

-  **Include everyone.** The best activities are the ones that include all participants. If participants are not involved in some activities they may feel discouraged or isolated.
-  **Keep it positive, fun and enjoyable!** Activities are most effective when participants are relaxed, engaged and having fun.

## DAILY SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

### Plan routines to follow each day.

Repetition is necessary in learning a language. Learners need to hear and practice the same words and phrases every day.

Participants will feel comfortable if routines (morning/evening prayers, songs, rituals, daily activities) are consistent through the camp.

After setting the daily routines, fill in the rest of the time with different cultural activities.



Lillooet, BC - berry-picking.

### Keep the schedule varied, but simple.

If the daily plan is too complicated it will end up feeling rushed and incomplete; on the other hand if the daily plan is not varied enough, participants may feel bored.

### Keep daily schedules full but not rushed. Allow for regular break times.

Many learners (especially young children) need to change activities often.

Young children may lose interest if they don't start a new activity about every 15 minutes.

It is always a good idea to have extra activities planned in case something finishes earlier than expected.

If everything that is scheduled does not end up happening, the camp will still be a success.

Focus on finishing a few good quality activities rather than rushing to stay on schedule.

Remember that Elders may tire faster than younger participants. It is a good idea for Elders to take turns having breaks.

### Sample routine conversations to repeat each day:

#### Sample Conversation 1

A: Good morning!  
B: Good morning to you too!  
A: How do you feel today?  
B: I feel good. and you?  
A: Great. What do you want to do today?  
B: Let's walk to the river /go fishing /go swimming / play a game.

#### Sample Conversation 2

A: Are you hungry?  
B: Yes, very hungry.  
A: Do you want to eat an apple or an orange?  
B: An apple please.  
A: OK, I'll have one too.  
B: Mmm, this apple is delicious!

# SAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULES



## Daily Schedule Sample 1

8:30 - wash up and get ready for breakfast  
 9:00 - breakfast served  
 9:45 - wash own cups, plates and utensils  
 10:00 - activity: daily walks  
 10:45 - activities: chores - cut fish etc.  
 12:00 - lunch  
 1:00 - wash own dishes  
 2:00 - activities: cut fish, play games, learn stick games  
 3:00 - snacks  
 3:30 - craft activities  
 5:00 - supper  
 6:00 - wash own dishes  
 7:00 - activities/snacks/camp fire stories/ games



## Daily Schedule Sample 2 (half-day camp)

<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Other Information</u>
12-12:45	Lunch	All participants
12:45- 1:30	Open Language Session Fishing story Language Lesson Fishing Game	Elders Language team
1:30-1:45	Recess - Nature Walk	
1:45 - 2:00	Drum Making Demonstration	Language team
2:00-2:50	teams separate into groups to make drums	Language team
2:50 - 3:00	hand out sheet with Words and Phrases	Elders Language team
3:00	Closing	Elders
3:30	home time/billets	

# SAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULES



## Daily Schedule Sample 3

- 8:30 wake up – practice morning greetings and brush teeth, wash up and get dressed
- 9:00 breakfast –practice meal time conversation about food, discuss plans for the day
- 9:30 clean up –clear tables, wash dishes
- 10:00 language game – start the day having fun, laughing and getting learner to feel comfortable
- 10:30 outdoor activity – nature walk, gathering food, visit a sacred site, fishing etc.
- 12:00 lunch and clean up – repeat words and phrases used at breakfast time, clean up
- 1:00 afternoon activity – nature walk, gathering food, visit a sacred site, fishing etc.



## Daily Schedule Sample 4

- 8:00-9:30 get up and ready for the day – wake up, wash up, have breakfast
  - 9:30-10:00 go over plans for the day – participants choose their activities
  - 10:00-12:00 morning activities – berry picking, beading, or hide tanning
  - 12:00-1:30 lunch time – everyone eats lunch and helps clean up
  - 1:30-2:30 language learning games – Simon says..., BINGO etc.
  - 2:30-3:00 snack time and break – eat a snack, chat and rest, then everyone helps clean up.
  - 3:00-5:00 outdoor activity – swimming, nature walk, plant identification, visit a sacred site.
  - 5:00-7:00 dinner and rest – everyone eats dinner, rests and helps clean up
  - 7:00-9:00 storytelling – Elders tell stories
  - 9:00- ? free time – participants can go to bed or stay up
- \*The language is spoken all the time throughout the day and during each activity.





# IMMERSION

Imagine how it feels not understanding any of the language around you. To learn it, you need people to repeat what they say many times and use very simple language – just words and a few basic phrases at first.


*-Be patient and use simple language because learning a language can feel overwhelming and confusing.*


## LANGUAGE IMMERSION CREATES MORE SPEAKERS

 If the goal is to revitalize the language for use in daily life, then learners must communicate every day in the language.


 Make the language useful in everyday life: focus on language that can be used immediately for every-day activities.


## LANGUAGE IMMERSION DOES NOT INCLUDE ANY ENGLISH

 If English is used in addition to the target language, then there will no longer be an immersion situation.


 “Immersion means simply doing everything in the language, from brushing our teeth to eating, from playing to praying- all the time”  
-I.L.I. Handbook 1, pg 12.


## MAINTAINING COMPLETE IMMERSION IS A CHALLENGE, BUT STICK TO IT


 Keep English out of it; use pictures, gestures, facial expressions and body language to help understanding.

 Follow the 20X20 RULE: To learn a new word or phrase, learners need to hear/see/say it twenty times in twenty different situations.


## LEARNERS NEED TO BE ACTIVELY INVOLVED

 The only way to improve fluency is to speak the language. Give learners many opportunities to speak.

 Language learning is not a passive activity; immersion participants should be active in all activities.

 Engage learners by making the language relevant and interesting to them. Find out learners’ interests and focus on related language.

## CREATE A SAFE AND COMFORTABLE ATMOSPHERE

-  **Learners need to feel safe to make mistakes and comfortable to use the language without feeling embarrassed.**

An atmosphere of acceptance encourages learners to take risks in trying out the language and not worry about being judged for their mistakes.



Chemainus, BC - playing a language game

*"...when learning,  
nobody makes  
mistakes, the fact  
they're willing to try  
means they know more  
than before..."*

-Kitselas Language and  
Culture Camp


-  **Speakers need to feel safe to speak the language.**


A positive attitude towards the language helps speakers feel comfortable and respected.

-  **Create an atmosphere where learners and speakers are at ease.**

In a positive, relaxed learning environment, learners, speakers and Elders will be more open to speaking the language and will encourage each other's hard work.

Learners should be challenged, but not forced beyond their abilities.

-  **Create ground rules for participant behavior, especially in an outdoor setting.**

-  **Make language learning fun!**



Watson Lake, BC - learning about the forest

# FLUENCY ASSESSMENT

Fluency assessments are important because they help measure participants' learning and demonstrate the overall success of the camp.

## How much of the language do participants know before the camp?

A pre-camp assessment can be given at the beginning of the camp.

## How will you know what participants learned from the camp?

A post-camp assessment can be given at the end of the camp.

## ASSESSMENTS

### Informal interviews - Ask participants if they know any of the language or not.

"Do you speak any (LANGUAGE)?"

"Can you say a few words or phrases?"

"How much (LANGUAGE) can you speak?"

"How much (LANGUAGE) do you understand?"

-OR-

### Demonstration of ability- See how participants respond in the language.

Ask participants questions in the language to see if they can respond.

Give participants words and phrases in the language to see what they know.

-OR-

### Self-reported surveys - Have participants check off how much they know.

How much of the language do you understand?

- ☐ none
- ☐ a few words
- ☐ some phrases
- ☐ parts of conversations between speakers
- ☐ everything

How much of the language can you speak?

- ☐ none
- ☐ a few words
- ☐ some phrases
- ☐ partial conversations
- ☐ I'm fluent

#### REFLECTIVE PRACTICE:

organizers, staff, and teachers assess themselves.

If participants do not appear to be learning as much as you hope, it is not their fault. It is important to self-reflect- How can the camp curriculum, teaching or activities be improved to help learners?

# FLUENCY ASSESSMENT

## HOW TO KNOW IF PARTICIPANTS ARE LEARNING DURING THE CAMP?

 Each morning participants can be asked about what they learned the previous day.

For example: At breakfast time use the phrases from the day before to see if learners remember and understand them.

"Please pass me the salt" -if the learner does not respond, you'll know he/she hasn't fully learned that phrase yet.

*Keep evaluations as non-threatening as possible.*

 Ask participants to do certain actions to see if they understand.


Without doing the action yourself, tell the participants to "stand up", "walk towards the water", "point at the sky" etc.

-if participants can do the actions you say, then you'll know they understand.

 Start conversations with participants by asking questions.

Ask participants "Do you like \_\_\_\_\_?", "How are you today?", "Are you hungry?", "Do you know what \_\_\_\_\_ is called?"

- see if participants can answer the questions and continue with the conversation.

 Show participants how to do something in the language and ask if they understand.

Demonstrate how to do an activity using the language, then ask if participants understand. If they don't, then you can repeat the demonstration.



Quesnel, BC - watching a demonstration


*Assessments do not have to be formal exams; they can be informal speaking interviews.*

# SAMPLE FLUENCY ASSESSMENTS


 After the camp, participants check the boxes that apply

Compared to before the camp:

- ☐ I know more about my culture and language.
- ☐ I can speak and understand a few more words and phrases.
- ☐ I can speak and understand much more.
- ☐ I want to learn more about my culture and language.
- ☐ I am interested in participating in more camps in the future.

 In the language, ask participants the questions, and mark off how well they respond.  
This type of assessment can be done before and after the camp.

	Doesn't understand and can't give an answer.	Understands, but doesn't give a correct response.	Understands and gives a correct response.
"How are you?"			
"Are you hungry?"			
"What are you going to do			
"What are you eating?"			
"Where is the fish?"			
"Can you bring me the wood?"			

 Before the camp, have participants check off the words and phrases they know.  
Then, after the camp have them check off the words and phrases they know.

BEFORE THE CAMP	WORDS AND PHRASES	AFTER THE CAMP
	CARIBOU WEEDS	
	BALSAM	
	WILD BLUEBERRY	
	SOAPBERRY	
	DEVILS CLUB	
	STRAWBERRY	
	LOOK UNDER THE LEAVES	
	WALK STRAIGHT AHEAD	



# FLUENCY ASSESSMENT

## LANGUAGE LEARNING MOVES ALONG A CONTINUUM



**A learner's language ability is like water, it moves and changes all the time.**

- Language fluency cannot always be measured in levels. Instead, fluency ability is different all the time. For example, in some situations a learner may feel more comfortable and relaxed and he/she may seem very fluent, while in other situations that same learner may feel shy, nervous or tired and not able to speak as fluently. A learner's language ability rarely stays at one specific level.



**Learners' abilities change depending on the situation.**

- A learner may be able to understand and speak many words and phrases in some situations, but in other situations that same learner may not be able to speak much at all. For example, one day a learner may be able to have a simple conversation about the weather, but he/she may not be able to recognize names for different berries.

**Language learners will gradually progress along a continuum like the one below.**

Can't speak or understand the language.	Can imitate words & phrases, but can't come up with them on their own.	Can name objects and say simple words and some phrases.	Can respond to questions or directions.	Can interact in different situations.	Can have extensive conversations about many different topics.
Learner →	Can recognize a few words and phrases.	Recognizes many words and some phrases.	Can respond to oral directions.	Can come up with questions and conversations on their own.	Can ask questions and demonstrate activities in the language.

**\*Note:** Each individual's learning path may vary in length and level of language development. Some learners may take longer than others to progress along the continuum due to differences in language ability, interest in certain topics/situations, and level of comfort and motivation.

# CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

Every camp has challenges, but for every challenge there are many solutions!

★ **Keep A Positive Attitude** ★ **Be Prepared** ★ **Be Flexible** ★

COMMON CHALLENGES	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS
 <b>MAINTAINING TOTAL IMMERSION</b> Participants' couldn't understand the language Staff were not all fluent The group was too large	Keep it simple and fun. Try to use basic language and use pictures, gestures, & facial expressions to show meaning. Don't abandon immersion when participants don't understand. Instead, use simple language and REPEAT. A small group of learners makes it easier to maintain total immersion.
 <b>THERE'S NOT ENOUGH TIME!</b> Elders would have preferred a longer timeline to "lengthen the journey". Students needed more time to thoroughly practice their new skills. Focus shifted from language learning to just getting the job done in time.	Keep activities simple; don't try to do too much. Do a few good quality projects, instead of many projects that may not be completed. If time is running out, focus on language learning and completing the projects that are already started.
 <b>SCHEDULING</b> Scheduling around certain times of year/seasons (i.e. oolichan and salmon harvest) was challenging. Logistics such as publicizing and transportation required a lot of time and pre-planning.	Decide what kind of camp you will carry out depending on when funding will be received, and when participants are available (i.e. school holidays) Allot extra time for promotion and organizing logistics such as transportation.
 <b>LACK OF FLUENT SPEAKERS &amp; STAFF</b> Some Elders were suddenly unable to attend and replacement speakers were difficult to find. It was a challenge to recruit enough instructors/Elders for the camp.	First find out how many fluent speakers and Elders will participate, and then plan the number of learners. Aim for a 1:3 ratio of speakers to learners for optimal immersion and reduced stress on speakers and Elders. Have volunteers who are semi-fluent work alongside fluent speakers to learn more and to help new learners at the same time.
 <b>ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES</b> Elders didn't expect that they would be responsible for dealing with learners' behavioral issues. Staff was unclear about their roles and responsibilities at times.	Provide thorough orientation before the camp. Make sure that all staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities.






# CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

COMMON CHALLENGES	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS
 <b>THE GROUP WAS TOO LARGE</b> When learners greatly outnumbered fluent speakers, everyone would slip back into English. When children and youth of all ages were included with adults the group was more difficult to manage.	Organize a small key team of committed community members to work together. Learners should not outnumber fluent speakers and Elders by too many. Overwhelming speakers will cause them to slip back into English. Consider carrying out separate camps or separate activities for different age groups or fluency levels.
 <b>DISAGREEMENT ABOUT METHODS</b> Elders were not always aware of what teachers planned to teach. Disagreement arose between Elders, instructors and participants about which teaching methods were most effective.	Plan and consult with Elders regularly about what will happen during the camp. Before, during or after the camp, decide together what the best immersion methods are.
 <b>FLUENCY ASSESSMENTS</b> Collecting assessments after the camp was difficult. They were lost or incomplete. Assessments did not fit into the cultural atmosphere. Young participants could not complete the evaluations on their own.	Have participants complete evaluations at the start of the camp and again before the camp is over. Assessments do not have to be in the form of written exams. <b>See assessment section for ideas.</b> Staff can help young participants with assessments.
 <b>RELUCTANCE TO SHARE</b> Some families were reluctant to share knowledge because of traditional ownership issues. Elders were reluctant at first to participate and required coaching and encouragement.	Pre-planning and consultations with families and Elders help avoid disagreements and conflicts. Make a comfortable environment for Elders so that they are open to sharing their wisdom and knowledge.
 <b>RELUCTANCE TO PARTICIPATE</b> Learners were embarrassed to make mistakes in front of their peers. Participants were hesitant to participate at first.	Create a comfortable atmosphere through fun and humor. Treat mistakes as a natural and useful part of learning. Give extra attention to learners who need it.
 <b>WEATHER</b> Bad weather made some activities impossible.	Have a firm back-up plan for times when weather interferes with the original plan

# LIFE AFTER CAMP

Just one camp can create a "RIPPLE EFFECT" where participants continue to speak the language with other community members and spread pride for their language and culture.





## CONTINUE USING THE LANGUAGE AFTER THE CAMP

-  Encourage the language to be used in homes and communities as much as possible for it to thrive.
-  Encourage the spread of the language after the camp. Participants should feel proud that they have gained special knowledge that they can share with others who did not attend the camp.
-  Encourage participants to continue using the language and skills with other family members and friends.
-  Remind participants that they can use the language at school, in the community and at home.
-  Encourage participants to participate in follow-up immersion camps or projects.

*"The best part was when I got home and said something to my granny, even though my parents didn't know what I said, they were still proud of me. I can't speak all the time or understand all my granny says but it is still fun and I feel like I know a lot."*








-Glaglxisistala: Heiltsuk  
Language and Cultural  
Immersion Camp

## FUTURE IDEAS




-  Camp participants can become informal teachers. They can involve friends and family by teaching them what they have learned.
-  Camp participants can gather with other speakers to continue using the language.
-  Camp participants can make an agreement to speak only the language when they see each other on a daily basis after the camp.
-  Parents can speak in the language with their children on a daily basis.

Life must be given to the language by bringing it into the homes and communities of the people.

## LONG-TERM PLANNING

-  Plan to carry out language and culture immersion camps on a regular basis.
-  Have a cultural place to go where the language can be spoken and learned.
-  Encourage the spread of the language outside of specific revitalization projects.
-  Continue to promote a positive and proud attitude about the language and culture.
-  Create a need to use the language. For example, if the language is used on signs, at community gatherings etc, then people will have a stronger desire to learn and use it.
-  Work to secure an ongoing budget for more camps and other projects
-  Celebrate the language!

## RE-ASSESS AND PLAN TO PLAN AGAIN

-  Start the cycle again by reflecting on your project. Ask yourself:
  - What worked?
  - What didn't work?
  - What immersion methods were most useful?
  - What did participants enjoy and find useful?
  - What changes did participants recommend?
  - How could the project be improved for next time?
  - What kinds of activities supported the most language learning?
-  Measure your success.
-  Gather more support and commitment for a long-term camp planning team.



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