# Indigenous Languages and Research Universities: Reconciling World Views and Ideologies

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*Over the past 20 years, Indigenous languages have become important components of First Nation/Native American studies programs in large research universities. This inclusion, however, has not been easy because of varying educational philosophies between Indigenous and Western world views. Further, how knowledge is encoded in language provides significant challenges to new language-learners whose only language is English. This article looks at how epistemological cleavages have been dealt with in the Ojibwe language program at Michigan State University. It argues that although differences do exist, these can be overcome with creative and skillful approaches to classroom learning that not only address epistemological issues, but also the particular histories of schooling in Indigenous communities.*

A story is told about a grandfather and his grandson. The grandson attended university and every summer would live with his grandfather whose formal education went only as far as grade 5. This means, however, that the grandpa still maintained a vast amount of knowledge that he had acquired from life experience (in other words, his thinking had not slowed through Western forms of schooling). They were walking one day, and the grandfather said to his grandson, "It looks like it's going to be a hard, long winter." The grandson asked his grandfather, "How do you know that?" Grandpa turned around and looked at his grandson and said, "What are they teaching you at that school that you wouldn't know this?" Then Grandpa continued by saying that the grandson had to merely look at the world around him and observe all these things. Grandpa had looked at a beehive, and by the its shape he knew that the bees had been hard at work because the beehive was long. This meant that the winter would be long and harsh. Everyday life experiences teach us far more than we can learn from books, or so the Elders tell us.

What is knowledge? What is education? What is the relationship between the two? On the surface the definitions and relationships seem obvious: knowledge is the accumulated wisdom of a community about the social, cultural, and natural world that surrounds them, and education is how this knowledge is transferred. However, these definitions fail to encompass the varieties of ways that knowledge is constructed in communities, how certain types of knowledge are privileged, or about the

larger operations of power that underlie how people are disciplined into certain ways of knowing and behaving by social institutions (Bourdieu, 1991; Foucault, 1972; Smith, 1999). The introductory story demonstrates varying epistemologies, with the grandfather espousing a holistic and experiential view of learning that can be contrasted with the institutionalized model of Western schooling that the grandson represents. The story is also about how these epistemologies collide and the uneasy fissures that result from this clash. The grandfather struggles to reconcile the two systems and questions how certain forms of knowledge that he privileges do not translate into the academic world. He is undoubtedly proud of his grandson's accomplishments, but is perplexed by the form in which his education takes place. We use this story to think about how Indigenous knowledge, particularly Indigenous language, is incorporated into Western institutional structures.

Over the course of the last 20 years, many universities in the United States and Canada have added Indigenous languages to their curriculum. This has been a critical inclusion, and these languages—once maligned and stigmatized—have become central components of First Nation/Native American studies programs where they are ascribed the status that they so richly deserve (Benham & Mann, 2003, McCarty, Watahomigie, Yamamoto, & Zepeda, 2001; Johns & Mazurkewich, 2001). New scholarly forums have also opened up for communities to share their experiences with developing language programs, classes, and materials (Burnaby & Reyhner, 2002; Reyhner, 1997, 1999; Reyhner, Trujillo, Carrasco, & Lockard, 2003). Despite these opportunities for collaboration, this movement into schools has not been easy. Many language programs have struggled with issues such as teacher accreditation and training, materials development, and bureaucratic hurdles (Hébert, 2000). In addition to these struggles are epistemological issues that result from the inclusion of Indigenous languages in the academy including how to translate world views and ideologies about language and language use (Kepa & Manu'Atu, 2006). Although many structural obstacles can be overcome, the issues of varying language epistemologies are much more difficult to reconcile.

In general, universities have welcomed Indigenous language programs, but these invitations carry with them certain unstated conditions. Classroom organization and curricula for Indigenous language courses are expected to conform to pedagogical practices established for other languages. This expectation, however, does not address the specific needs of Indigenous languages. First, speakers of Indigenous languages often discuss the radical disjuncture between world views when speaking Indigenous languages versus dominant languages such as English (Clarke, 1996). Standardized curriculum materials that are based on English or other dominant languages fail to account for these divergences. Second, learning Indigenous languages means attending to the historical condi-

tions that surround language use and the policies that interrupted inter-generational language-learning throughout the 20th century (Fettes & Norton, 2000; Hinton, 2001). Past policies that forbade the use, let alone the teaching, of Indigenous languages are ever-present in the language class-room and influence how students learn (Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer, 1998; McCarty & Watahomigie, 1999). This is not to say that incorporating Indigenous language courses in the university setting is impossible; in fact we argue that it is precisely in recognizing and articulating these differen-ces that Indigenous languages have the greatest potential to change estab-lished practices and to transform language-learning on a more global scale. To argue this, we focus on our experiences with the Ojibwe language program at Michigan State University (MSU) and the knowledge gained through the course over the last six years.

Both of us have worked collaboratively to build the Ojibwe language program at MSU. Helen Roy has been at the university since 2000 and currently teaches all levels of Ojibwe. She is also responsible for coordinat-ing all the co-curricular and extracurricular events regarding Ojibwe. She is a member of Wikwemikong First Nations Band (Manitoulin Island, ON) and grew up speaking Anishnaabemowin exclusively, the language of the First Nation people. Roy first learned English when she began school at age 5. From the ages of 10 to 12, she attended St. Joseph's residential school in Spanish, Ontario. In 1968 she moved to Lansing, Michigan. Her first experiences teaching Anishnaabemowin were at Lansing Indian Center in the early 1980s, and she has continued to teach in various capacities for the last two decades. She worked for a number of years designing K-12 cur-riculum as the language specialist for the Lansing public schools. After this she enrolled in Lakehead University's Native Language Instructors Program, earning her teaching certification in 1990. She has taught Ojibwe at all levels—from young children at the Saginaw/Chippewa Academy Montessori School to adult learners at places such as Bay Mills College and Saginaw/Chippewa Tribal College, both located in Mt. Pleasant, MI. She has also taught at Central Michigan University, Western Michigan Univer-sity, and conducted a distance learning course at Northern Michigan Uni-versity. In addition to her teaching responsibilities at MSU, Roy serves as a consultant for language programs throughout the region, facilitates lan-guage immersion camps in northern Michigan, and is part of Diiva miin-waa Davis, a duo that performs and records contemporary songs in Anishnaabemowin.

Mindy Morgan is an anthropologist who works in areas of Indigenous language revitalization. In particular, her work centers on how Indigenous communities both view and use Indigenous languages as symbols of cultural persistence and tribal identity in the US. This research is con-cerned not only with the connections between language use and identity formation, but also the effect of federal policy on Indigenous language

maintenance and transmission. From 1996 to 2000 she served as the curriculum coordinator for a collaborative Nakoda language project between Fort Belknap College and Indiana University. This project was her introduction to the political and cultural negotiations that come with the integration of Indigenous languages into Western-style classrooms. Since coming to MSU, she has worked with Roy in developing events and programming to support the Ojibwe language classes.

This article is the result of conversations that we have had over the past six years about Ojibwe and the efforts to teach it. It includes Roy's observations of her classes and her own reflexive thoughts on the process of teaching to a wide array of students in the university. Portions of the article are from talks that Roy has given in a number of language workshops and seminars. The article also gives Morgan's views of how the Ojibwe classes at MSU fit into larger discussions of Indigenous schooling, language pedagogy, and revitalization programs. The resulting article is a collaborative interweaving of thoughts, ideas, hopes, and frustrations that we have shared with each other and now share with a larger audience.

Ojibwe has been offered periodically at MSU throughout the years; however, regular language courses were officially established during the 2000-2001 academic year as a part of the newly formed American Indian Studies Program (AISP). The Ojibwe program is officially housed in the Department of Languages and Linguistics. This not only ensures that the Ojibwe courses fulfill the university's language requirements, but also recognizes the equal status of Ojibwe with other languages taught at the university. At present students may enroll in a three-year sequence of language instruction. The class enrolls both Native and non-Native students who bring a variety of backgrounds, experiences, and goals to the language classroom. In addition to the regular sequence, an intensive day-long Ojibwe class is also offered at Mt. Pleasant on Saturdays throughout the semester, which allows community members who work full time to have the opportunity to learn the language. Although there are substantial challenges in creating a viable language program in the structures of the large research university, we have learned practical ways to improve language instruction. Ultimately, the inclusion of Ojibwe in the curriculum has opened new realms of knowing that extend far beyond the language classroom.

### Seeing the World Through Anishnaabemowin

Learning Ojibwe poses significant challenges to students who are learning it as a second language. Indigenous language classrooms are subject to the same problem facing Indigenous education as a whole, namely, reconciling established Western educational practices with the more experiential and holistic approach of many Indigenous communities (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005; Hodgson-Smith, 2000; LaFrance, 2000; Watt-Cloutier, 2000). By the time students are exposed to Indigenous languages in the

university setting, they have come through at least 12 years of Western-style education. This means that they have been subjected to "disciplined" thinking; the world has been divided into various subjects in order to be made understandable. Science stands apart from history and math as ways of knowing the world. Language, especially second-language learning, is similarly treated: it is segmented from other subjects and treated independently. But we argue that learning Ojibwe is different—a course in Ojibwe necessarily includes discussions of history, science, and math.

Because the Anishnaabeg have been subjected to the "disciplined" thinking through Western-style educational systems, these relationships have been lost, and many students resort to learning the language by memorizing equivalents in English. Learning an Indigenous language requires a separate disposition entirely. For example, the language student today needs to be taught at the onset what sounds in a word truly mean and how fluent speakers visualize them. Through this method learners are introduced to a whole new way of seeing things when they begin to learn their Indigenous language. Ojibwe can be described as a language of verbs, a see-and-say language in other words. In Anishnaabemowin, for example, words are highly descriptive as to shape and form; they also speak directly about what things do and what they are used for. For example, the word for rabbit is waaboozoonh. Waaboozo means an animate thing that turns or becomes white. If it were a person it could be translated as "he or she lightens." The ending *zo* speaks to the outer state of being and can be contrasted with the ending *zi*, which speaks to inner conditions. The final ending *oonh* speaks to *the being that*. Therefore, the word can be translated as "the animate thing that turns white on the outside." The term for shirt is bibagweyaan, which comes from the two words, *bibagaa* meaning "it is thin" and *weyaan* or animal hide. Therefore, a shirt is a thin hide, which is in contrast to what the Anishnaabeg have always worn, a thicker animal hide. The translation continually evokes historical meanings as well as contemporary definitions. The term speaks the essential nature of the object as well as describing it.

Actions are embedded in nouns as well: a bed is nbaagan, coming from the verb *nbaa* "to sleep" and *gan*, which is one of the two suffixes that turns a verb into a noun. Rather than the passive object *bed* in English, the Ojibwe term has the more active definition of "the thing one sleeps on." This means that a speaker who hears a word sees the action unfolding immediately and directly. Each part says so much that it makes translation into English difficult. For example, two Indian women were taking a walk during a break at a conference. They noticed someone walking ahead of them about a quarter of a mile away. One woman said, "Joe na wa e-animsed oodi (Is that Joe ahead of us)?" The other woman replied, "Kaa, Tom'ing ni-ninise wa (No, that one up ahead is walking like Tom)." To be more specific, Tom was walking like a man, and not just as in a male, but

as a man who walks two-legged. The action of walking is heard in the part of the word in *se* and *man* is spoken about in *nini*. Further, *ni* indicates that the person is doing something in the opposite direction of the speaker. In simple English, the above dialogue would be something like this: "Is that Joe?" "No, it's Tom." Although the essential meaning of the exchange can be communicated in English, the detailed description of movements that gives a fuller picture of the action cannot. Examples like these where subtle and nuanced meanings are lost in translation make correspondence between languages difficult.

As mentioned above, many fluent speakers say that when they are using an Indigenous language they think differently. Rather than breaking up systems into constituent parts, many speakers talk about how Indigenous languages emphasize integrative views or how things work together. A recent student extended this analogy to thinking in general. He said that according to Western thought, the natural world is divided up, and that nature serves as a backdrop to human society. Alternatively, an Ojibwe world view perceives the natural world as one large system that is inseparable from human experience. In addition to these diverse world views, speakers of Anishnaabemowin cite the lack of cognates with other languages as a way of talking about the lack of correspondence between this language and others such as English. There are few loan words with a preference for new words to be built up out of already existing units of meanings. This means that an Elder of hundreds of years ago would be able to have an exact sense of what words meant, even if the object did not exist then. In fact many speakers talk about how the language has a great sense of internal coherence and regularity because of its resistance to outside influences. This coherence is attributed also to the idea that in Anishnaabemowin, every sound has its meaning and the words themselves are like hearing a short story. Each individual part of speech creates an image and action in the mind of the hearer, and this both creates specificity and resists easy translation. For example, when something is miskwaa, or red, it does not merely indicate color, but the essence of being red and being permeated by red. It also references blood and how it moves through the body.

This way of understanding often frustrates students who are new to Ojibwe. If their first exposure to the language comes in the university classroom, this means that they often have more difficulty understanding concepts because their experience has been sitting in a classroom and not necessarily seeing and observing the world around them. The implication of this for teaching is that more of a focus on individual sounds is needed: how they are thought of in a variety of settings and contexts and then how they are employed. For example, many Anishnaabe words have the *aa* sound because it states being, which is what everything is in life—to exist, to have being in space and time. Anishinaabe words that have this sound

are understood in this way (Roy, n.d.). Children make these connections easily as this is how they acquire language. They are open to the connections between concepts and categories. Adult learners have more difficulty because they already have established connections based on their knowledge of English. However, these learners still need to learn as children do, with many visual examples and oral repetition. A sound and its attendant meaning need to be taught one at a time. Vocabulary as we know it is deemphasized as words grow organically from the constituent sounds. Simple translations of words into English need to be avoided because they fail to capture the connectedness of sounds. Students who need clarification or additional help need to hear more examples in the language rather than English glosses.

### Schooling in Diverse World Views

These differences in perspective that are embedded in the language bring additional challenges when fitting Indigenous languages into the established structure of a research university. This has to do with varying ideas about what constitutes education as well as the historical legacy that attends First Nation/Native American communities (Battiste, 2002; Castellano, Davis, & Lahache, 2000; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006). Both issues contribute to the alienation of students from the classroom environment in general and need to be taken into consideration, especially when dealing with Indigenous language courses. Although many postsecondary institutions have been able to overcome these obstacles by working with Elders and speakers to design community-centered curricula, these are often tribal colleges or First Nation universities where tribal members are able to shape courses around the needs of the language (Dementi-Leonard & Gilmore, 1999; McCarty, 2003; Hampton, 2000; Sims, 1998). This is different in the environment of a large public university where the needs of the individual languages are subjugated to larger institutional structures. Other strategies, therefore, need to be used in these environments that specifically address epistemological difference and the histories of schooling.

As the opening story illustrates, there are clear differences between Anishnaabeg ideas of education and the Western forms of education that dominate US and Canadian higher education institutions. This is further evidenced by the fact that in the Anishnaabe language there is no word for school. The Anishnaabe child did not need to sit down in a room and be taught as all children are taught today. The Anishnaabe child learned from observing everything around him or her. The Anishnaabe child was never told, "Now listen to this, I am going to teach you something." A physical structure for a school was something that was new for the Anishnaabe people. Anishnaabe people moved their homes when the time came to go elsewhere when the food of the hunt became scarce. In accepting change and the things around us, the Anishnaabe people now call this permanent

structure akinoomaagegamig. *Aki* relates to the earth, whereas *iz-hinoomaage* is a verb that means "to show." By adding the suffix *gamig*, this means that it relates to a place or a building. In all, the term can be translated as a "building/place where the things of the earth are shown." Importantly, the word for school does not divorce learning from the natural environment. The surrounding, "real" world is seen as both a part of and purpose for education.

This word for school indicates Anishnaabeg views toward education as a whole and reflects ways of learning that differ from Western approaches. An Elder once was asked in English, "How do you say 'learn'?" With the vast wisdom she had acquired through those life experiences, including learning how to speak English, she answered, "There is no word for that." She went on to explain that only in English do we say the word. Instead she said that she would use the following terms, gegoo gda-zhinoomaagoo (first you are shown something), e-aawang gda kid (you say what it is), gda-nsostaan zaam gda-waabandaan (you understand because you see it), miinwaa, gda-kikendaan (you know it). These four words speak to a process by which a person (teacher) demonstrates something to another person (a student); the learner repeats it until it is understood. As with the word for school, the emphasis is on showing and observing, both active verbs. Nowhere in what was said was *learn* uttered. This focus on process rather than a singular event replicates the scientific process where knowledge is gained through trial, error, and repetition. Often beginning language classes emphasize memorizing words, breaking grammatical concepts apart, or translating from one language to another. These practices mean that there is disconnection between the classroom setting and the conceptual focus of Ojibwe.

This detachment is further exacerbated by the deplorable and often violent history of schooling for Indigenous peoples in the US and Canada (Adams, 1995; Fear-Segal, 2007; Miller, 1996; Milloy, 1999; Reyhner & Eder, 2004). During the late 19th century, politicians, missionaries, and reformers who were convinced that Indigenous languages were useless at best and barbaric at worst developed policies that strictly forbade their use in schools (Crawford, 1992; Reyhner & Eder). Ultimately, this ideology resulted in educators physically punishing students for lapsing into Indigenous languages. Countless stories emerge from children about how they suffered abuse for speaking in their first language (Child, 1998; Coleman, 1993; Grant, 2004; Jaine, 1993; Johnston, 1995). This abuse was the culmination of the prevailing assimilationist ideas that integration into dominant Canadian or US society could only occur through the forced abandonment of Native cultures of which Indigenous languages remained the strongest symbol (Spack, 2002).

Although the oppressive policies were lifted in the mid-20th century, the stigma associated with speaking an Indigenous language persisted

and in some ways is ongoing. Current students and language-learners are aware of these past abuses, and the legacy accompanies them into the contemporary classroom (Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer, 1998). Some students worry that the current efforts at language-learning are not fully supported and that shifting political winds will again stigmatize the use of Indigenous languages. Many students, especially Native students, feel alienated from the classroom and the history that it represents. These feelings must be taken into account when teaching any subject; however, it is especially true when teaching Indigenous languages.

### New Strategies for Old Ways of Knowing

The above discussion outlines the issues and concerns that affect teaching Indigenous languages in the university setting. Teaching techniques must take into account diverse ways of knowing as well as memories of exclusion and alienation. This means that rather than fitting Indigenous languages into existing molds of second-language learning, new techniques must be used. First, students need to appreciate that learning Ojibwe is not about translation and/or memorization, but rather about hearing, feeling, and thinking in Ojibwe without recourse to English. Second, students need to interact in an environment that allows them to make mistakes and to feel part of the larger language community. This also means incorporating more cultural and historical information into the language class to deepen students' understandings of the complexities of the language. Finally, the Indigenous language classroom needs to be inclusive in regard to learning styles and flexible in terms of evaluation and assessment to mirror the holistic manner in which the language is taught.

Language courses in a university environment present a number of challenges to the holistic approach to education that is more in accordance with Indigenous epistemologies. First, the classes neither have nor encourage intergenerational learning. Although there are exceptions, the students are generally all of the same age group. This is a somewhat unnatural environment for language-learning where various life experiences allow for more opportunities to learn diverse words and phrases. Also, despite the similarities in age, there is wide diversity in learning styles and linguistic background among the students who enroll in the language classes. Students ranging from incoming freshmen to advanced doctoral students who have varied reasons for language study enroll in the Ojibwe class. Some Native/First Nation students come to the class to explore and reconnect with their heritage whereas others come with the intention of becoming a "language activist," and are already fully engaged with learning the language. Some students, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, approach the subject as they do any other class at the university and so distance themselves personally from the subject matter. Many students express the desire to become fluent speakers, whereas others only

want to learn about the language and how it may or may not differ from other languages they have studied. So the challenge of the classroom is to meet these needs while remaining consistent with Indigenous views about language use.

These obstacles are not insurmountable, and the language courses at MSU are designed to offer students a comprehensive approach to language-learning that models Indigenous-perspectives education. First, recognizing the epistemological differences between speaking Ojibwe and English, the classes at MSU focus on understanding how Ojibwe is formed and built up through its various components. Rather than relying on grammar and vocabulary drills, much of language-learning focuses on probing words for their greater meaning. Often one phrase becomes the focus of an entire class period. On the surface it might appear as if not much learning is going on; however, through exegesis, multiple concepts can be illustrated. This process helps learners understand language and not just memorize it. It also helps students to understand how to build concepts and language and not parrot phrases that they have already learned. This requires both time and dedication on the part of the instructor and students, and so brings up a critical paradox in teaching Indigenous languages in the university framework: the language classroom can provide as much information as can be contained in a standard 15-week semester; but language-learning is an ongoing process. By focusing on how Ojibwe is built and formed, once the students leave the classroom they can continue their language learning, adding words and phrases to the framework that they have already established.

Similarly, when they are taught the meanings of the sounds in the words, learners can more fully understand the target language. They are not learning individual words, but are able to understand them in full. By learning sounds, when a student hears a more complex form of a word five or 10 years later, he or she will understand it. The teacher should not have to teach every word because a teacher cannot possibly teach everything. Instead, the teacher needs to provide the building blocks. As Roy always reminds her students,

I am an Elder who has spoken her native language since birth and I still haven't learned all the English there is to know. I still have to refer to the dictionary when I can't understand English words. Had I learned English—really learned it—I might not have this problem.

As with anything that we learn, it is a lifelong commitment. We learn things that will enable us to continue to learn, especially as circumstances change.

Second, the language classroom must be active and multisensory. Much of the recent scholarly literature discusses the importance of creating immersive environments for Indigenous language classes (Henze & Davis, 1999; Hinton & Hale, 2001; McCarty, 2003; Harrison & Papa, 2005). This literature argues not only that most of class time should be spent in

the target language, but also that there be more active, creative learning in the language (Cantoni, 1999; Driskill, 2003). Language not only needs to be spoken, but performed for and by the students. Teachers cannot be afraid to act crazy in their classrooms, adopting characters, silly voices, and even songs to reinforce language-learning. Similarly, students need to participate in activities where they are asked to be inventive in Ojibwe. At MSU students have participated in skits, quiz shows, and other creative events. These types of experiences not only extend students' language knowledge, but also create memories that reinforce language-learning. This models the larger approach to teaching in Ojibwe in that students are not asked to receive information passively in the form of lecture or reading, but actively engage in activities that force them to move beyond repetition and to *own* their language knowledge.

In a similar vein, a great deal of emphasis is placed on humor in the Ojibwe classes. This accomplishes a number of things. First, it recognizes what many speakers already know: that the language is full of humor and that joking itself is a fundamental part of relating in Ojibwe communities (Spielmann, 1998). Second, it helps to reduce feelings of alienation in the classroom environment as students become complicit in all types of linguistic inside jokes. Finally, the use of humor allows students to admit to and own their own mistakes. Although all language teachers know that all students will make mistakes and that they are necessary in many ways to language learning, many students feel that they must be perfect when attempting to speak. This is sometimes reinforced through experiences in local communities where new language-learners are teased or scolded for incorrect usage. These episodes are forgotten or diffused in the language classroom through the use of humor. Humor is effective not only in making language-learning memorable, but also for creating a more inclusive environment in the somewhat alienating structure of the university classroom.

Another strategy aimed at making the classroom more inclusive is the use of nicknames. The names can be either silly or serious, but it is an important way of making a personal connection to students. Although the process of naming might seem trivial, it is anything but trivial for the students. First, through the process of naming, students are given both purpose and identity in the class environment. They are given ways of relating to one another that are not only reflective of Ojibwe ideas of relatedness, but that also allow them to escape other labels or categories in which they find themselves in their daily lives. Students take care to learn their name and its various components. They are able to internalize and keep the name as part of them even when they leave the class.

Requirements of the university classroom must be respected such as evaluation and assessment of students, but even these requirements can be used to support the more holistic view of language-teaching employed in

the above examples. Students do take quizzes and tests, and they do have homework; however, there are no wrong answers in the classroom, only those that are more correct. This is not to say that ungrammatical work is acceptable, but rather that mistakes and misuses of language are seen as teaching opportunities. Further, students are encouraged to work together collaboratively to help each other understand. Competition is used in the classroom to encourage learning, but it is never used as a way of formally evaluating students. These techniques combine to create an environment where students are able not only to learn language, but to acquire the necessary skills to continue learning when the class is over. According to this view, student learners are much like children. They are given the rudimentary elements that they need to create language just as young children are fed food that is appropriate for them. The teacher is responsible for giving them only what they are prepared to receive. But these fundamentals will enable the student to grow and to continue to learn once they leave the class.

Finally, a central component of the Ojibwe classes has been the extracurricular and co-curricular events, which are designed not only to extend opportunities for students to hear and use the language, but also as a way of involving local Ojibwe communities directly in the language program at MSU. These events, which include the Dance Showcase and the Quiz Bowl, recognize that the only way for the language program to grow is with the participation and encouragement of surrounding communities (Morgan, 2005). The Dance Showcase, which is essentially a one-session powwow conducted exclusively in Anishnaabemowin, invites dancers from throughout the region as well as university students to participate. In past years, groups from various language programs throughout the state have participated in the Quiz Bowl, a spirited competition modeled after high school quiz shows that has language-learners working in teams to demonstrate their linguistic knowledge. Fundamentally, these events serve to educate others about what is happening at MSU while bringing the local students into larger networks of language-learners and supporters. Ultimately, the experience over the course of the last seven years has taught us that to have a successful language program the instructor needs to employ various teaching techniques. A person cannot come at it from one perspective and needs to use a number of approaches to meet the diverse levels and backgrounds of students (Hébert, 2000).

The techniques discussed above are not only appropriate for Indigenous language classes and in fact are similar to strategies used in other language classes, specifically other less commonly taught languages (LCTL). MSU supports a number of LCTLs as well as an established language tutorial system for 28 African languages. Although there are significant differences among them such as the amount of reference and

language-learning materials, they are similar in that they focus on conversation and small-group interactions. Because of its experience in LCTLs, MSU was well poised to develop and sustain the Ojibwe courses. Furthermore, the Department of Linguistics and Languages has been fully supportive of creative pedagogy in their language classes and has always supported the Ojibwe program and pushed for its expansion. The Ojibwe program has benefited from its placement in such a welcoming environment; however, the Ojibwe classes have also become exemplary in how they have reached out to local communities and created events to link the university classes with larger groups of language-speakers.

## Some Conclusions and Cautionary Notes

To return to our opening scene, is there a way of reconciling Indigenous and Western approaches to language education? Our experience of the last seven years indicates that the answer is a tentative Yes. However, as with all things, certain caveats are necessary. First, the incorporation works only with the support of the larger institution. Although there have been some hurdles to overcome, administrators have been willing to work with us to create programs that respect the needs of the university without compromising the needs of the Indigenous language community. Sometimes conflicts are inevitable, but by and large we feel that we are supported by the university. Second, places need to be developed outside the university that can extend opportunities for students to continue their language-learning. Students need to feel as if their efforts will lead them to participate with larger communities of speakers. Because there is no immediate or logical extension to language-learning beyond the classroom at MSU, students need to begin to create their own opportunities. This can only be done once a critical mass of students have graduated from the courses and can begin to rely on each other for language reinforcement and further learning. The program at MSU is now at the stage where this group can emerge.

Finally, the entire program relies on a fluent and experienced teacher. Language instructors need to be prepared to offer extemporaneous analysis of specific words based on students' questions. A person cannot prepare in advance for these types of classroom sessions, but needs to have a large store of language knowledge from which he or she can draw. Fluent speakers have the linguistic knowledge, but this alone is not sufficient. This knowledge needs to be accompanied by the ability to be reflexive about language practice and to communicate it effectively to new language-learners. Despite Roy's fluency in Ojibwe, it took years of study and reflection on her own teaching practices for her to be able to go beyond teaching word lists and stock phrases to the deep type of linguistic analysis she now adopts in the language classroom.

As a cautionary note in our discussion, instructors to whom Ojibwe is a second language can provide this style of education only if they are

assisted by fluent Elders in the classroom or at least consult with them in preparing their courses. These instructors often have a good grasp of how the language is used today, but without full fluency they miss how the words work. First, they do not have access to the language of the past. This means that they are unable to talk at length about how language is formed or about the historical and cultural knowledge encoded in the language. As discussed above, Anishnaabemowin is also a conservative language, preferring to build new forms out of old ones rather than adopting loan words from other languages. A non-fluent instructor whose linguistic knowledge is limited will not be able to use the language to describe new things.

Finally, the creation of language programs in universities must be sensitive to the particular roles that Indigenous languages play in the community. Languages are used for specific purposes, and so the cultural lessons that surround language use must also be addressed in the Indigenous language classroom. This is tricky terrain because some of the arenas where Indigenous languages are used in community life are considered sacred or esoteric, and therefore not intended for wide knowledge or distribution. Language lessons, therefore, must attend to the performative aspects of language to ensure that they align with the cultural expectations (Whitely, 2003). This includes acknowledging what can, and more important what cannot, be taught. This reinforces the need for any university language program to work closely with the particular speech communities to develop programming that is both responsive to community language goals and respectful of cultural limits.

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