

Putting Knowledge Into Practice: Creating Spaces for Cree Immersion

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For Indigenous people in Canada, language loss has been great over the last century; of some 50 languages, about half are either endangered or close to extinction (Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 2002). With the rapid and radical loss of Indigenous languages worldwide, Indigenous people have been searching for effective ways to reverse this trend and revitalize obsolescing languages through school and community programs. Many have argued (Hinton & Hale, 2001) that it is only through intensive enrichment education such as immersion programs that children will gain sufficient language proficiency to reclaim their Indigenous language. In this article, we describe the Cree Immersion Day Camp at the Canadian Indigenous Languages and Literacy Institute and demonstrate how this immersion day camp exemplifies Fishman's (1990, 1991) key aspects of successful language revitalization efforts: intergenerational links, ideological clarification, and the participation of maximally dedicated and ideologically oriented individuals. Efforts to embed Cree culture and pedagogy in the day camp (Ermine, 1995) are also discussed.

Introduction

The drastic and radical nature of language loss worldwide has been well documented (Crawford, 1998; Dorian, 1989; Fettes, 1998; Hinton, 1994; Hinton & Hale, 2001; Pennycook, 1994, 1998; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000; Wurm, 1991). This situation has evolved in a sociopolitical context in which the existence of thousands of languages worldwide is under threat. Although it is natural for languages to change and even to die over time, the pace of this recent loss is not natural. In addition, it is the languages of the most marginalized people in the world that are at greatest risk. A combination of factors has brought the world to this point, but three in particular stand out: colonialism, the hegemony of English as a global language, and the rise of public education systems that promote selected national or official languages (Pennycook, 1998). According to Krauss (1992, 1996), 90% of the languages in the world are expected to disappear within the next 100 years, which will have huge ramifications for human civilization, and particularly for Indigenous peoples. The late Hale (1998), a long-time advocate for Indigenous languages, argued that languages embody the intellectual wealth of the people who speak them and that losing any one of them is like dropping a bomb on the Louvre (Hale, 2001). For Indigenous people in Canada, the language loss has been great over the last century; of some 50 languages, about half are either endangered or close to extinction (Department of Indian and Northern Affairs [DINA]

Canada, 2002). Of the languages still spoken, few are spoken by children at home. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that these languages could be close to extinction within a generation. Given this reality, Canada's Indigenous languages are among the most endangered in the world.

The Canadian Indigenous scholar Brant Castellano (2000) has made a convincing argument that all Canadians need to understand the sociocultural, historical, economic, and linguistic basis of the "the troubled relationships between Indigenous peoples, the Canadian government, and Canadian society as a whole" (p. 22). She articulates a clear understanding of Indigenous knowledge systems and the importance of all Canadians valuing them so that "indigenous ways of knowing can flourish and intercultural sharing can be practiced in a spirit of co-existence and mutual respect" (p. 223).

Willett (2001, as cited in Battiste, 2002) describes the interwoven connections between Indigenous languages and knowledges that make it imperative that these languages be retained and revitalized.

Language is by far the most significant factor in the survival of Indigenous knowledge. Indigenous languages and their symbolic, verbal, and unconscious orders structure Indigenous knowledge; therefore, educators cannot stand outside of Indigenous languages to understand Indigenous knowledge. Where Aboriginal languages, heritages, and communities are respected, supported, and connected to elders and education, educational successes among Aboriginal students can be found. (p. 17)

Working to Stem the Tide of Loss

If these languages and ways of knowing are to be part of the fabric of Canada, language maintenance and revitalization work is essential. A significant factor that hinders efforts to revitalize languages is the critical shortage of experts in this field who are prepared to do the work. The Canadian Indigenous Languages and Literacy Development Institute (CILLDI) at the University of Alberta is an intensive summer school with the goal of preparing Indigenous language-speakers and educators in Indigenous languages, linguistics, curriculum development, immersion, and second-language teaching methodologies, language assessment, policy and planning, program development, and research for the purpose of preserving these endangered languages. At CILLDI we facilitate the incorporation of current knowledge about language revitalization into practice by embodying holistic teaching and language-planning processes and building expertise to affect language revitalization. CILLDI began in 2000 when a group of Indigenous language educators and language advocates in Western Canada came together to stage the first summer institute, which consisted of one class. Since that time, CILLDI has held annual summer institutes that have involved over 600 students, representing at least 20 Indigenous languages across Canada. Inspired by Canadian Indigenous language leaders such as Freda Ahenakew and Verna Kirkness, as well as ongoing community and national planning activism such as

Maori language revitalization efforts in New Zealand (May, 1999) and the American Indian Languages Development Institute (AILDI, Blair, Pas-kemin, & Laderoute, 2003), CILLDI has become a unique community of like-minded individuals who gather annually to work together toward Indigenous language revitalization.

Fishman (1990, 1991) has outlined several key aspects of successful language revitalization efforts: intergenerational links, ideological clarification, and the participation of maximally dedicated and ideologically oriented individuals. Fishman argues that although numerous efforts have been made with obsolescing languages worldwide to reverse language shift, the only successful ones are those that have addressed all three of these aspects. With respect to intergenerational links, authentic communication among parents and grandparents and children is a crucial element in the retention and reintroduction of these languages, an idea supported by the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996). Fishman also argues that the more successful efforts are those in which the participants come to a common understanding of the ideology that underlies their efforts and that these kinds of endeavors take particularly committed people.

In this article, we demonstrate how Fishman's (1990, 1991) framework has guided CILLDI and how we have used it to create spaces for the emergence of new possibilities. We explain how we believe that CILLDI is contributing to the development of a theoretical framework for language revitalization efforts in the Canadian Indigenous context. To do this, we focus on one particular context at CILLDI that exemplifies these strengths: our Cree immersion day camp.

Immersion as a Pathway to Language Revitalization

With the rapid and radical loss of their languages worldwide, Indigenous people have been searching for effective ways to reverse language loss and revitalize obsolescing languages through school and community programs. Canadian Indigenous language teachers are looking for program models and teaching methodologies that will be effective for second-language acquisition and that are congruent with Indigenous cultures. Several programs both in and outside our country have influenced current thinking. French immersion programs, which began in the mid-1960s in Canada, have been a great success; the experience and research accompanying these programs have made significant contributions to language teaching and bilingual and biliteracy development worldwide (Genesee, 1987). These programs have been models for minority-language groups, and in the major cities in Canada, we find immersion programs such as Chinese, Ukrainian, and German (Wu & Bilash, 2000). Many have argued (Hinton & Hale, 2001) that is only through intensive enrichment education such as immersion programs that children from homes in which non-In-

Indigenous languages are spoken will gain sufficient language proficiency to reclaim their Indigenous mother tongue.

In an immersion setting, second-language development can be similar to first-language acquisition, particularly when it is supported by a culturally rich second-language (L2) community. First-language acquisition is informal, holistic, and developmental; and the focus is on meaning and function rather than form (i.e., correctness). Younger learners tend to have a lower affective barrier (Krashen, 1985), which makes them less fearful about making mistakes as they try to use the target language and consequently fosters the development of successive approximations—of interlanguage—as they move toward proficiency in the L2. These similarities between first-language acquisition and the language development in immersion underlie the success of well-run immersion programs. Immersion programs use concepts such as comprehensible input (Krashen) and the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1962) to facilitate language acquisition as learners learn content through the second language.

The process of learning a second or additional language may resemble first-language acquisition, depending on many factors related to both learner characteristics (e.g., how comfortable the learner is with taking risks) and learning conditions (e.g., the amount of time, Lightbown & Spada, 2006). With the development of cognitive maturity, people can increasingly learn not only by picking up language, but also through formal learning such as grammar rules. In addition, along with literacy development comes the ability to learn through the modes of reading and writing. Thus it is common to make the distinction between language acquisition (informal) and language-learning (formal). Studies have shown that when the informal acquisition that occurs in immersion programs, with its focus on meaning, is enriched by some focused attention on *form* (i.e., contextualized pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary practice), higher levels of second-language proficiency may result (Swain, 1996). As a result, successful immersion programs attempt to strike a balance between a focus on meaning and a focus on form and between language acquisition and language-learning. Researchers have also generally agreed that certain teaching practices and learning conditions facilitate language learning, including such principles as meaningful and communicative interaction (not just imitation; Richards & Rodgers, 1986); provision for a large amount of rich language input; repetitive practice (but not to the point of boredom); paired actions and language (Asher, 1977); and the learning of oral language before written. We have also learned to attend to the sociopolitical context of language learning (Cummins, 2000); the use of a particular language in a specified social context always has social and political meanings and implications. In our case, we are conscious of working toward elevating the status of Indigenous languages in this current Canadian social and political context.

In Canada, the Mohawk at Kahnawake, Quebec, and the Six Nations reserves in Ontario were among the first to undertake Indigenous language immersion programming based on the successful experiences of English-speaking children in French immersion programs. The current Kaien'keha program in Kahnawake began in 1979 (Jacobs, 1998) and has demonstrated that such program development is difficult to mount and maintain. This Mohawk immersion program remains one of the few long-term successes in Indigenous language immersion. The forward thinking and leadership of Kariwenhawe Dorothy Lazore and the preparation of teachers and curriculum, combined with the expertise of Mohawk trained teachers, have been central to this success (Richards & Burnaby, 2008).

The language initiatives of the Maori people of New Zealand and native Hawaiians have also resulted in powerful models and created considerable hope for Indigenous Canadians who work with language revitalization. The visits back and forth between Indigenous scholars and community members in Canada and these programs throughout the 1980s and 1990s (Kirkness, 1998) have had a significant effect on Canadian Indigenous language programs. In New Zealand, the Te Kohanga Reo (preschool language nests) launched in 1982 evolved to include the Kura Kaupapa Maori (Maori medium education in schools; May, 1999, 2004). These examples as well as others such as the Hawaiian Punana Leo programs (McCarty, Romero, & Zepeda, 2006) are powerful examples of the potential for Indigenous children in today's world to be learning their own languages by learning academic content through the languages.

These ideas have motivated Canadian Indigenous people to think about language loss and revitalization, and over the past few years several Indigenous communities in western and northern Canada have taken up ideas from these initiatives and have begun immersion programs with little advance teacher preparation, few resources, and little consideration for overall language planning for these languages at risk. These fledgling programs, some of which are having difficulties, demonstrate the need for further exploration, continued dialogue among parents and professionals, and more in-depth inquiry.

Research Methodology

This article is part of a larger ethnographic study at CILLDI. As teachers, researchers, and Indigenous language advocates, we use ethnographic research tools to help uncover the relations between the experiences of the CILLDI day camp participants and the language and culture in which they are immersed. First, we acknowledge the traditional Papaschase Cree people and their territory where our Institute is located, on land that houses the University of Alberta. We thank and recognize the Elders who support us, come to CILLDI each summer, and share their knowledges. They cross many boundaries to come to this postsecondary institution in the summertime in order to contribute to this language work. At CILLDI,

we work at creating a small, comfortable community in this huge university institution where all are welcomed, and being Indigenous is celebrated and validated. We try to work in ways that honor those who have gone before us and build relationships among ourselves daily. CILLDI organizers and teachers are both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal (we, the authors, are non-Aboriginal). We respect multiple perspectives, include the voices of the participants, and continue to explore Indigenous processes and research methods in this work (Smith, 1999).

Following ethnographic traditions, the researchers and graduate research assistants took part in day camp activities and recorded observations in the form of field notes, photographs, and video-recordings. They talked informally with day camp participants and parents, and the day camp teachers were interviewed and these interviews transcribed for analysis. The observations took place on a regular unscheduled basis at various times of the day over each year. All the children's more formal presentations and displays of accomplishments were photographed or videotaped. From this rich base of data, we have attended to those that we feel best inform the focus for this article.

CILLDI Cree Immersion Day Camp

In 2003, CILLDI incorporated a Cree language immersion day camp for children into its annual three-week summer institute. This five-year initiative has in part been a response to students' questions about how immersion programs actually work. Over the first few years of CILLDI, many of our CILLDI students asked questions and shared their concerns about immersion methods, curriculum, assessment, program successes, and the indigenization of their teaching. They were curious about how appropriately to involve Elders, how to get parents involved, and how to advocate for policy development. Over these five years, the day camp has become a place where our students have a chance to observe, work on planning for immersion teaching, do some practice teaching in an immersion context, and undertake research inquiries as part of their undergraduate or graduate coursework. Yearly the students taking a course called Second Language Acquisition: Teaching Indigenous Languages in an immersion context are given priority access to the camp, teach mini lessons, and receive feedback from their instructor as to effective immersion planning and strategies. This experience also provides a rich background for many fruitful discussions in their subsequent classes. Since the inception of the immersion day camp, several of these university students have become involved in immersion programs in their home communities, and one graduate student (Burnouf, 2005) completed her master's research here.

The Cree immersion day camp is also intended as a way to explore some of the possibilities for Indigenous language immersion and create a space for teachers in training and University and College faculty to work together with experienced Cree immersion teachers to find out how to

turn what is known about such endeavors into a reality in this particular place, time, and context. The youth in the camp are the children and grandchildren of our adult summer students who come from communities and homes where they hear both English and one or more Indigenous languages (not necessarily Cree). They are for the most part English-language-dominant children between the ages of 5 and 12. A maximum of 15 children are accepted each year. Two Cree immersion teachers work with the children along with at least one Elder. We have had to recruit widely for these teachers as there are so few locally. The teachers and Elders are paid for full-time work, their accommodation is arranged in a nearby campus residence, and all their expenses are paid. Funds raised from university and corporate sources have allowed us to operate the day camp without charging fees.

The day camp uses a dedicated space in the same building that the CILLDI summer institute uses. It serves as a Child Study Centre during the school year and is therefore well equipped and laid out for our purposes. The day camp is open from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. from Monday to Friday, with a one-hour lunch break.

Making CILLDI and this day camp a reality has taken a great deal of vision and the motivation of a range of university and grassroots community members. Slaughter (1997) emphasizes the importance of these for successful Indigenous-language programs. The planning begins months ahead for facilities, staffing, and funding; even when the funding proposals are turned down, the CILLDI committee members stick to their vision and find ways to make it happen.

From the outset we have believed strongly that the children benefit daily from the presence of Elders, their teachings, and their ways of knowing. We want the children to have frequent opportunities to interact with them, hear the complexity of the language as the Elders speak it, and have access to the traditional practices and processes these Elders share. For example, we ask our Elders for leadership in ceremonial observances at the CILLDI day camp. Ermine (1995), a Cree scholar who has written about Indigenous epistemology, explains,

The rituals and ceremonial observances still practiced by our Old Ones in our tribal communities compel us to make more inward journeys.... [and] enable the children of those early spiritual explorers to advance the synthesized understanding of inner space. (pp. 105-106)

Prayer is an integral component not only of ceremonies, but also of traditional daily Cree life, and we have relied on our Elders for direction on how to ensure this at the day camp. Ermine (1995) eloquently articulates the relationship when he says,

In Aboriginal epistemology, prayer extracts relevant guidance and knowledge from the inner-space consciousness. It is the optimal metaphysical idiom that is recognized in corporeal form as chants, dances, language, and meditation. The Old Ones know the

intricate and tedious task of fusing the energy that emits from the place of prayer within. Prayer becomes power and by its nature becomes another instrument in Aboriginal ways of knowing. (p. 109)

Each year in advance of the camp, we follow the traditional Plains Cree protocol of asking an Elder for his or her blessing. Elders have visited the camp in pairs, a man and a woman, to give the youths an opportunity to interact with both Elder men and women and come to understand their roles. The Elders take part in many of the daily activities. At snack time, the children host them; they learn the protocols for how to treat an Elder and use their newly acquired greetings and phrases in their interactions. Routines are established, and the teachers model the language used to establish family, kinship, and community affiliation as appropriate. We offer traditional teachings; one year we were fortunate to have an Elder bring a fresh deer hide to the camp and work daily through the steps in the process of scraping, preparing, smoking, and tanning the hide. The students observed and assisted whenever possible. It was a learn-through-observation process for the children and served as a powerful example of how traditional pedagogies of Indigenous people can be actualized in a contemporary urban university setting. According to Battiste (2002),

Indigenous pedagogy values a person's ability to learn independently by observing, listening, and participating with a minimum of intervention or instruction. This pattern of direct learning by seeing and doing, without asking questions, makes Aboriginal children diverse learners. They do not have a single homogenous learning style as generalized in some teaching literature from the 1970's and 1980's.... teachers need to experiment with teaching opportunities to connect with the multiple ways of knowing these students have and multiple intelligences. (p. 15)

Over these five years, we have continued to develop our own pedagogy and epistemological teachings based on the suggestions of our Elders. We believe that we need to continue to "turn inward" (Ermine, 1995, p. 103) and ask the Elders for guidance. Ermine contends that "aboriginal people have the responsibility and the birthright to take and develop an epistemology congruent with Holism and the beneficial transformation of total human knowledge" (p. 103). We see this as an ongoing process at CILLDI, and we continue to think about how to involve our Elders in the planning process to ensure this development. We have greatly benefited from the Elders, who lead our ongoing thinking about how to ensure that Indigenous knowledge systems and teaching methodologies are at the core of our immersion camp. Elders are the knowledge-keepers, the language specialists, and the inspiration for what needs to be done.

The day camp teachers and Elders work toward making the camp as culturally authentic and rich as possible by using the principle that language and culture are integrally connected. For example, one of the teachers sings, plays a hand drum, and leads the students every day in singing Cree songs. He teaches them traditional and contemporary songs and at other times just sings for them to listen and enjoy. He does not make every

song into a lesson, and he values a more natural learning environment: a kind of informal learning in a more Indigenous way. In an interview, he commented that singing the younger children to sleep at nap time was something that he remembered his mother doing:

So I've used that concept now, and we found that after a while these kids were falling asleep in five, 10 minutes. I'd just sing whatever came to mind.... So I sing just songs that come from the heart, something that I feel that's soothing to them. I don't sing loud; I don't use a drum; I use a rattle. It comes from within, and it seems to work. They like it, they enjoy it, they look forward to their naps sometimes: "When's naptime? When's naptime?" And then there's a song that I sing to them as they wake up as well.

These are some instances of the incorporation of Cree traditional ways into the daily practices of the day camp. The same teacher talked about using the drum.

I've introduced a drum several times to them, and it's not so much I want them to know each particular song that I teach them or each particular song that I sing, mainly to familiarize them with the different sorts of [unintelligible] that I heard, and if I start beating the drum and I start singing with the round dance, they recognize it. They join hands, and they start dancing. If I start singing the Chicken Dance Song, they'll stand there, they'll stand there, facing in front of me, and they'll have their hands on their hips, and they're just dancing to it. And there's others, like the powwow. The powwow starts, and they'll start dancing. That's what it's all about.

Through his use of songs and drumming, this teacher initiates the children into the world of Cree language, literacy, music, and dance; he believes that the next time they go to a round dance or a powwow, they will have a new level of understanding and be more literate in this aspect of the Cree world. One 5-year-old said to her mother several months after the day camp when she saw powwow dancers on the Aboriginal People's Television Network, "I know that; we did that at camp." These children learn about the Cree world and its dance traditions through observing and participating in the protocols of a dance event.

The same teacher concluded that traditional music is a key element of the program, because "song and dance is a very, very vital, essential component of our culture. We've overlooked that badly for just too long." The music, songs, and traditional dances are an integral part of culture that these children learn daily through the Cree language.

The day camp teachers talked about learning through language in other ways: "I believe that there's a *lot* of things in our culture that are incorporated in our language; for example, respect, discipline, relationships, [unintelligible], relations, kinship." Stories can be a good way to show these values (Ahenakew & Wolfart, 1998). One year, as a way to validate Indigenous history, the children were told a pre-contact story (Paskemin & Paskemin, 2002), and with the assistance of the immersion teachers and an actor they staged this story for the adult students and Elders. Weber-Pillwax (2001) explicates the role of stories in cultural transmission.

Stories may be for and about teaching, entertainment, praying, personal expression, history and power. They are to be listened to, remembered, thought about, mediated on. Stories are not frivolous or meaningless; no one tells a story without intent or purpose. A person's word is closely bound up with the story that she or he tells. A person's word belongs to that person and in some instances can be viewed as being that person ... These are the old ways, and they are still practiced and observed today by many people in many places. (p. 64)

All these events demonstrate how during the three-week day camp, the children are immersed in the Cree language. They take part in games, stories, storytelling, music, singing, dancing, drama, art projects, outdoor activities, and field trips. The teachers use gestures, acting, and repetition to get meaning across. The camp is a comfortable, welcoming, and engaging place where the children are encouraged to speak Cree but allowed to respond in English if they need to do so. The strategies of learning through observation and actions, and allowing for a silent period in language-learning are congruent with some of the second-language-learning literature (Asher, 1977; Gattegno, 1972) as well as with Indigenous pedagogy.

The distinctive features of Indigenous knowledge and pedagogy are learning by observation and doing, learning through authentic experiences and individualized instruction, and learning through enjoyment. Indigenous pedagogy accepts students' cognitive search for learning processes they can internalize, and Aboriginal teachers allow for a lag period of watching before doing. Indigenous knowledge is both empirical (that is, based on experience) and normative (that is, based on social values). It embraces both the circumstances people find themselves in and their beliefs about those circumstances in a way that is unfamiliar to Eurocentric knowledge systems, which distinguish clearly between the two. (Battiste, 2002, pp. 18-19)

Learning a language is a time-consuming process. Hinton (1994) has suggested that a learner needs at least 500 contact hours in language immersion to achieve a basic conversational proficiency. The children in our day camp engage in acquiring and learning language over three weeks and realistically, are immersed in the language for about 100 hours. This is a short time in relation to the time that is required for language acquisition, but we believe it is a good starting point, and we have tried to keep our expectations realistic. One instructor said,

We expect children to be conversing with adults, and that's not going to happen in the real world, in reality. But in terms of literacy, they do pick up a lot in terms of directives and instruction, instructions, discipline, behavior. There's many things that they pick up on there that we actually take for granted, but it's just that they're at a stage where they're not really comfortable pronouncing words. But in due time I do believe that they'll just come on; they'll start speaking, conversing with older people.

At the day camp, the children absorb oral language as comprehensible input in meaningful, communicative contexts. This is all part of the natural process of language acquisition, albeit time-consuming.

Following Fishman

Fishman's (1990, 1991) intergenerational language transmission has been a lived reality at our day camp and in the larger CILLDI community as

several of our Elders are the grandparents of some of the children in camp. Several of our teachers and student teachers have also had children in the day camp, and we have had parent volunteers. We believe that by working across the generations, we are working toward ensuring the intergenerational language transmission that Fishman identified as essential to the revitalization of languages.

Fishman's (1996) question "What do you lose when you lose your language?" has helped us think about how to address the importance of doing this work. His articulation of what he saw as the significance, complexities, and magnitude of losses individually, collectively, nationally, and globally when an Indigenous language is lost has been helpful. In endangered-languages work, this notion of ideological clarification is important, but not always tangible or easy to document. For a collective of language advocates to articulate their own beliefs and understand each other about the importance of language requires time, reflection, and discussion. We believe that through the Cree immersion day camp, we continually sow the seeds for this reflection and discussion among all CILLDI participants. They are all becoming specialists in endangered-languages work as teachers, community linguists, or graduate researchers; they read literature in the field and engage in these discussions regularly in their courses. One teacher talked about how we view language and the importance of language.

If you think about it, our language is actually our life—*pimatisiwin*, and everything kind of falls into place.... There's many things in our language that we don't take the time to see. We're too caught up in that personal, I was; I was too caught up in that me mentality, what we're taught in our Canadian society, that you have to take care of yourself, you have to become independent, take care of your own family, your nuclear family system. But in our language it's almost in contrast to that where there's a sharing of knowledge, that community you live in, people helping one another—*nitoh̄t̄en̄ihtowin*. Love, respect, sharing.

According to Fishman (1996), if you take language away from a culture, "you take away its greetings, its curses, its praises, its laws, its literature, its songs, its riddles, its proverbs, its cures, its wisdom, its prayers" (p. 81). Moreover, "you are losing all those things that essentially are the way of life. The way of thought, the way of valuing, and the human reality that you are talking about" (p. 81).

At CILLDI, we are cognizant of parental involvement as an important intergenerational factor and an essential step in ideological clarification as we work toward common understandings of why Indigenous languages matter. We have observed the support of parents and grandparents and their pride in their children's efforts at our annual CILLDI Indigenous languages festival when the children perform in short Cree plays and songs. In turn, the children enjoy the poems, songs, stories, vignettes, and plays that their parents and teachers have composed and then perform at the language festival. The alignment of cultural identities is powerful and

reminds us of the importance of clearly articulating why these languages matter. One teacher commented:

Some of the parents spend time there as well because they see the outcome; they like the outcome. They're really proud of their son or daughter who is picking up on Cree, and they want to be a part of that.... We're doing all that we can to maintain that parental involvement, because you don't want to lose that. Once you lose that, you pretty well lose the interest of the child as well.

Ideological clarification is a dynamic, evolving process. As we develop the program, discussions about our beliefs emerge as we work, try out new ideas, and evolve. One of the key working principles of the day camp is that it is a Cree place, where Cree is the privileged language. We consider Cree important enough that adults are not allowed to speak English. We ask any non-Cree speakers and visitors to refrain from speaking English during the camp except in a small staff workroom off the main day camp space where we allow the use of English for organizational and administrative purposes when necessary. Similar to the Te Kohanga Reo in the Maori context (May, 1999), the day camp is an Indigenous-language immersion space, and we have made every effort to keep it so. This is problematic at times because it is difficult for the teachers to attempt to make themselves understood all day long with these beginning language-learners. "Staying in the language" can be a challenge for novice immersion teachers.

The day camp staff take advantage of the summer days to take the children outdoors and into the community. These trips give the children opportunities to hear Cree in the community and experience new language and new learnings in new places. They take part in many CILLDI community events, from meals to ceremonies, and during these events they hear numerous Indigenous languages spoken in addition to Cree. We believe that this exposure to a range of Indigenous languages contributes to the children's growing understanding of the value of Indigenous languages and the potential for multilingualism. They demonstrate pride in their learning of one of these valued languages. Like their parents, they too are taking on the important task of learning their language, and we think this will help them to understand the value of learning the language and being a part of this linguistic community. It connects them to their teachers, their parents, the Elders, the rest of the CILLDI participants, a Cree way of life, and the larger Indigenous world.

Fishman's (1996) third key aspect of successful language revitalization efforts, the participation of maximally dedicated and ideologically oriented individuals, addresses the importance of vision and the motivation of community members in language revitalization efforts. These are clearly evident in the CILLDI day camp staff members' commitment each summer. They are all highly involved in Indigenous language revitalization and work in a range of capacities in their respective communities and

institutions. The day camp staff are all employed during the school year and come to work with CILLDI during what would normally be their summer holiday, which in itself shows the level of their commitment. One of the graduate students who visited the day camp regularly commented on the importance of this.

I think one thing that I would tell immersion teachers or whoever wants to teach immersion, or even help develop an immersion program, is to have that dedication there and to make a commitment to continue working on developing a really good, solid program and have a strong support system, create a strong support system, like a committee, like what we have back home. The Northern Cree Language Retention Committee is a real good support committee for language teachers. And something similar to that too for immersion teachers; that's really important. And to have community members also—parents—be in that committee so they know the development and they're part of that development.

This graduate student suggested that it is not enough for people to say that they think their Indigenous language is important and that they want to keep it; she believes that it is important that they become involved in the process as well. Involving parents in as many ways as possible is key. At CILLDI, parents are encouraged to continue their commitment to speak their Indigenous language to their children outside and after the day camp.

Issues and Possibilities

Numerous challenges have arisen that we will continue to address as we progress. We recognize the value of careful planning for the next year, drawing from our reflections on previous experiences. One strategy is to use a retreat for the day camp staff as a time to reflect, talk, and plan, keeping in mind the key principles of language acquisition that educators have learned from immersion programs elsewhere. We need to continue to refine ways to embed Cree culture and pedagogy in the day camp (Ermine, 1995) and determine how they reflect the local Cree communities. We must understand that pedagogy needs to come from within (Stiles, 1997) and identify mechanisms to recognize and track this emergence, while also being open to learning from others' experiences with immersion education. We are working on ongoing planning and establishing a clear vision for ourselves (Stiles). We need to continue to build an environment that is literacy-rich, increase our Cree children's book collection, add more events around oral storytelling, and develop our experience with immersion teaching methods and materials. We are working as well toward developing the drama component of our day camp. Drama can be an effective tool for building traditions; "trying out" new language, roles, and behaviors; and building community. Drama is an important component of the larger CILLDI community, as we believe it is of the day camp as well.

Conclusions

As we discuss throughout the article, Fishman's (1990, 1991) three requisites for the reversal of language shift guide our work at the Cree immersion day camp. We continue to try to create spaces and opportunities for intergenerational language transmission, to pursue ideological clarification, and to recruit and support those from the field who are most dedicated to this work. These goals are not always easy to achieve, and challenges arise.

Through this initiative, a collective of Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars at the university are attempting to do what Brant Castellano (2000) suggests: "to open up space for aboriginal initiative in schools and colleges, work sites, and organizations so that indigenous ways of knowing can flourish and intercultural sharing can be practiced in a spirit of coexistence and mutual respect" (p. 23).

We have drawn on Indigenous knowledge, and current research in the field of second-language acquisition and immersion programming in our efforts to build an indigenized program. We continue to address the issues and challenges that have arisen. In doing so, we will continue our efforts to make spaces for the CILLDI day camp participants to draw on what Ermine (1995) terms *mamatowisowin*: "a capacity to tap the creative force of the inner space by the use of all the faculties that constitute our being—it is to exercise inwardness" (p. 104).

Our aim has not been to create a one-size-fits-all model for an Indigenous language immersion day camp. Rather, we are attempting to interrogate the assumptions about possibilities and impossibilities and to create supportive spaces for the participants as they use their critical imaginations to envision and enact new ways of living in and through Indigenous languages in the 21st century. We recognize that no single model will work in every context; on the contrary, it is our hope that we will enable each individual CILLDI participant, acting within the unique context of his or her own community and working with scarce resources and competing demands, to create spaces for Indigenous language revitalization, advocacy, and immersion where they live.

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