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I came into these workshops with hopes of understanding how an immersion program works within the school systems pertaining to native languages. I'm developing a Head Start program in my hometown of Fort St. John, BC. This conference helped put into perspective how much work I will be having to do with developing a team with the same goals and ideals of teaching our native tongue. It will be a full immersion Head Start school. Dane-Zaa Zaage the main language in my region. The support and knowledge I gained here is what I'm bringing home to further my drive for learning and teaching my language Dane-Zaa Zaage.

Indigenous Approach to Cross cultural Communication

Week one

I honestly had no idea what to expect in this course. Once Jaskwan and Tommy started telling us about their past experiences and how connected they are with their past and the ways of teaching, I didn't feel alone on this journey. I loved this, because Indigenous communities are so connected to mother earth while harvesting food and plants and how singing/drumming brings pride, love and joy to people. Also singing songs helps heal wounds that you cannot talk about out loud, for example past traumas.

They made me feel at home while letting other people see and know my language and having pride in that. The first exercise was putting our favorite words on big post-its and display it for all of us to see. Mine was *Naschę* which translates to "I love you" in Dane-zaa zaage. Seeing all the different languages amazed me.

In our last class we made hand braided bracelets from cedar bark. I made one for each of my kids I help look after at home and they were so happy to see an object made from another culture and I got to explain the importance of this gift I was given. The power to teach and educate kids is what drives me to want to be a certified Dane-zaa zaage teacher.

Curriculum Design And Assessment For The L2 Classroom

Week two

I came into this class with hopes of seeing how the Indigenous groups down south have their assessments for school, and what their curriculum layout was as well as what tools they use to keep the kids engaged and what their standards were for leaning it. I was also interested in learning about how they measured the proficiency in speaking their language. The instructor, Kathryn Bryner, showed us so many tools we could use for this and how to get the language changed in the website apps for example 7000languages.com, to our own language and different apps to use with the children to keep them engaged. It was an eye opener. She is my new hero.

The best advice I got there was “don’t reinvent the wheel, just change the tire”. This refers to the language being taught. The school system is something I would like to change for my region like how the kids can learn a new language, even if it’s not their first language. Showing them the pride in our culture is what I want the kids to go home with since it was almost taken away by the system.

The learning of objective goals is another aspect of the curriculum which Kathryn laid out very clear for me. The idea is not expect too much, perfection, of myself or students learning. This reason is that if I apply for funding, the goals can be met in a timely manner and also, I need not to stress about what they can and can not say, because everyone learns differently. I now have the tools to start putting together my dream of having as Dane-Zaa Zaage classroom for little ones and adults who want to learn the language. I’d like to thank Kathryn for all she has shown me.

Teaching Indigenous Languages (Pronunciation)

Week two

This course was about showing the different ways of teaching pronunciation in your language, whatever that may be - kind of like the linguistic approach but not as formal. This makes it an easy class to understand. I really enjoyed the ultrasound approach of showing how your tongue has so much to do with how we speak our languages. And I think the students either young or older ones would love to see this.

With these tools I think it would totally get the student engaged in wanting to learn and make sure they pronounce words correctly. The elders in my region really emphasize pronouncing the words in my language correctly, very much, because it’s our way of speaking to one another and if it’s not said correctly, it could mean something totally different than what you meant to say.

This class tied into the curriculum development I will be using to start a full immersion program of Dane-Zaa Zaage in Fort St. John. I can’t wait to continue with my mentor apprenticeship training with my aunty Bernice Attachie, whom is a language expert on our reservation (along with other ladies who are on the same trail as me to become a teacher of the language to the young children). It has helped me appreciate the work these women are doing to preserve the integrity of our language and values that we are growing up with. I love my reserve and the work that has been happening within it, as a nation of the Beaver people.