

Syilx Language House: How and Why We Are Delivering 2,000 Decolonizing Hours in Nsyilxcn

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Abstract: The Syilx Language House has completed two years of a four-year, 2,000-hour program to create new adult Nsyilxcn speakers, based on Syilx communities' specific priorities. Our critically endangered status requires radically decolonizing teaching techniques. Nsyilxcn (Okanagan) teachers are learners, trained to deliver sequenced curriculum in full immersion using cutting-edge teaching techniques. Teachers employ strategies that prioritize effective immersion, frequent assessment, and a high level of classroom safety. This article shares our story, applied teaching methods, student testimonials, community feedback, and our 2020 Plan. After completing our second year, students have completed 900 hours of intensive immersion. Students state that our teaching methods are the fastest, most effective language learning they have ever experienced. After four years, students will emerge as mid- to high-intermediate speakers, capable of bringing language into homes, teaching new cohorts of adults, and creating immersion workplaces.

Keywords: applied teaching methods, direct acquisition, Indigenous language, Nsyilxcn, Okanagan, Salish

Résumé : L'association Syilx Language House est maintenant à mi-parcours dans son programme de 2 000 heures, échelonnées sur quatre ans, visant à constituer un nouveau groupe de locuteurs adultes du nsyilxcn (colville-okanagan), programme fondé sur les priorités particulières des communautés syilx. Le statut de cette langue gravement menacée exige l'application de techniques d'enseignement radicalement décolonisatrices. Les enseignants du nsyilxcn sont des apprenants formés pour offrir un enseignement progressif en contexte d'immersion totale, au moyen de techniques pédagogiques de pointe. Les enseignants emploient des stratégies qui privilégient des procédés efficaces d'immersion, des évaluations fréquentes et un niveau élevé de sécurité en classe. L'auteure relate l'historique du projet et décrit les méthodes de pédagogie appliquée utilisées, les témoignages des étudiants, les réactions de la communauté et les objectifs visés pour 2020. Après deux ans de participation au programme, les étudiants comptent maintenant 900 heures d'immersion intensive. Les méthodes d'enseignement utilisées dans le cadre du programme sont, affirment-ils, les plus rapides et les plus efficaces qu'il leur ait été donné d'expérimenter dans l'apprentissage d'une langue. Après quatre ans, les étudiants seront devenus des locuteurs de compétence moyenne à

intermédiaire supérieure, capables d'introduire cette langue dans les foyers, d'enseigner à de nouvelles cohortes d'adultes et de créer des milieux de travail immersifs.

Mots clés : acquisition directe, langue autochtone, nsyilxcn, okanagan, pédagogie appliquée, salish

Background: Why this program was chosen by community

On June 23, 2017, the Syilx Language House celebrated two years of language renewal and is halfway to its four-year goal of creating 10 new Nsyilxcn speakers. Learning an Indigenous language is a personal and community act of resistance, and putting this cohort together required vast amounts of preparation, activism, advocating, and lobbying as well as support from Elders and community (Kelowna Capital News, 2017). Nsyilxcn, also known as Okanagan, N'səlxcin, nqilx^wcn, Colville-Okanagan, Sinixt, and Salish, is an Interior Salish language located in Syilx territory, southern British Columbia (BC) and northern Washington. It is critically endangered, with fewer than 50 fluent Elders remaining. Nsyilxcn activists recognized a desperate need to create fluent parent-aged speakers and have become groundbreakers in language revitalization. Nsyilxcn is lucky in that we have a proven curriculum and teaching methods to follow, created by the Salish School of Spokane in Washington (Peterson, Wiley, & Parkin, 2015).¹ Like all Salish languages, Nsyilxcn has an extremely complex phonology and grammar. It is unique in that we have a full curriculum; most languages in BC do not, though many have a textbook or two. In our critically endangered state, some teaching techniques work better than others. The ongoing pressures of colonization require techniques streamlined to our specific community contexts, including a high priority on classroom safety and learning while teaching (Johnson, 2014; McIvor, 2015). The Salish School of Spokane has developed successful teaching strategies and a curriculum that prioritizes classroom safety, frequent assessments, and learning while teaching.

As an Indigenous person I first introduce myself. isk^wíst Sʔímlaʔx^w. Í snpintktn kiʔ kn mut. Simla naʔ Richter naʔ suyápix isʔax^wíps. incapsíw's Prasát, Cərtups, X^wənámx^wnam, naʔ Staʔq^wálqs iʔ sk^wsk^wistsəlx. iʔ səx^wmámáyáʔmtət Sʔamtícaʔ naʔ ʔAñn iʔ sk^wsk^wistsəlx. caʔk^w wikntp iʔ snýáʔáxaʔtntət Í málxáʔs ʔasyáʔqnm̐p. I am Syilx Okanagan and suyápix (British descent), and a member of the Okanagan Indian Band. I live in Penticton BC. My ancestors are from the Simla, Richter, and Euro-Canadian family lineages. My language sisters are

Prasát, Cərtups, X̣wə́náṃx̣ẉnam, and Ṣtaʔq̣ẉálqs. Our teachers are Ṣfam-tícaʔ Sarah Peterson and Chris Parkin. You may view our background films on Youtube.²

The goal of any revitalization program should be to create new speakers (McIvor, 2015). However, no BC programs have reported the creation of fluent speakers in 25 years (FPCC, 2014, 2016). Indigenous languages have few successful models to follow, and there is “no secure standardized education plan in BC to ensure the creation of fluent speakers” (FPCC, 2010, p. 4). Challenges appear to outweigh successes, and language planners in BC continue to place the burden of teaching on the Elders. In BC there is a predisposition to fund programs taught by Elders (FPCC, 2010, 2014, 2016) regardless of the lack of evidence that such programs create new speakers. Community protocols value the knowledge of Elders, but younger learners have a right to learn our Indigenous languages.

I find inspiration in the stories of language activists who embrace cutting-edge language acquisition methods and choose to *speak* language rather than *talk about* language (Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer, 1998; McCue, 2016; Parkin, 2012; Twitchell, 2012) and model programs after successes (Fishman, 1991, 1993). Like Sylx activist Bill Cohen (2010, p. 86), I ask myself on behalf of future speakers, “What can you do for the people to be?”

Sylx communities and leadership identified language and culture as critical priorities in the Sylx Nation through community engagement and visioning (PIB, 2013; WFN, 2015). While there have been community language classes for 30 years, not one fluent Nsyilxcn speaker has been created in Canada (Cohen, 2010, p. 194). A successful model has emerged on the US side of our territory. The Salish School of Spokane created the Nsyilxcn Curriculum, has trained a dozen new adult speakers, and currently 75 children are receiving instruction in Nsyilxcn all day in all subjects. The Chopaka Language House was formed in 2011–12 (Johnson, 2014) as a pilot project in Chopaka, BC, to test the Nsyilxcn Curriculum with a group of self-motivated adults. After that, the Inchelium Language and Culture Association was founded to teach the Nsyilxcn Curriculum to adults in Inchelium, Washington.

The Sylx Language House Association was formed in 2015 to address two language priorities: to create new speakers, and to document Elders.³ We are a grassroots activist organization and operate outside of institutional structures to focus entirely on language delivery, acquisition, and Elder documentation. We are a unique collaboration in the Sylx Nation. We are supported by core funding and in-kind contributions from three Sylx bands and by in-kind contributions

from a fourth Syilx band. We also receive funding from Simon Fraser University, Mitacs, the First Peoples' Culture Council, the Aboriginal Languages Initiative, and BC Hydro. Penticton Indian Band leadership was the first to support the vision by offering core funding and a beautiful building to house the program in a centralized location in our territory. Our students are members of five of the seven Syilx bands in Canada; most are supported by their workplaces in Westbank First Nation (WFN), Osoyoos Indian Band (OIB), Okanagan Indian Band (OKIB), Penticton Indian Band (PIB), and School District 23 to attend two full days a week for four years.

The Nsyilxcn Curriculum and its teaching methods were chosen based on their success in creating speakers. They are used successfully by four different Interior Salish languages in Washington, and new proficient speakers and teachers are being created. Some of the Nsyilxcn Curriculum, teaching materials, and methods are described in this article, and most are described in previous publications (Johnson, 2014, 2016, 2017).

The six textbooks of the Nsyilxcn Curriculum are summarized in Table 1. In summary, the six textbooks comprise over 1,300 hours of lessons, over 2,000 pages of textbooks, thousands of images, thousands of audio tracks on CDs, detailed lesson plans, partner exercises, computer programs for each textbook, daily quizzes, regular oral and written exams, and daily homework, following a sequenced, laddered curriculum that teaches language through a base of traditional stories and cultural knowledge. We developed an intensive four-year plan to deliver 2,000 hours as our best chance of success in creating speakers. Teachers are learners, delivering sequenced curriculum with cutting-edge teaching methods, regular assessments, and full immersion. The Syilx Language House delivers the Nsyilxcn Curriculum and receives regular visits from fluent Elders who provide discussion on cultural topics to complement the curriculum.

Applied teaching methods

While there are numerous second language teaching methods, there is agreement that both first language and second language acquisition rely on an abundance of high-quality language input. There is little published about best practices in First Nations language-teaching methods; in fact, little is published about First Nations language-teaching methods at all. Our situation is quite different from non-Indigenous second language teaching contexts in that our teachers are not fluent and are faced with the urgency to create curriculum, fundraise, and staff our own programs. Teachers must also contend with

Table 1: The Nsyilxcn Curriculum textbooks

Text	Title	Structure of lessons	Pgs.	Hrs*	Proficiency of text**	Proficiency estimate***
1	<i>N'səlxcin 1: A beginning course in Okanagan Salish</i>	45 lessons, each with 10 vocabulary words and 4–6 sentences, taught with graphic images and games, no books open during class	141	90	Beginner	Low-beginner
2	<i>Captik'wł 1: Okanagan stories for beginners</i>	16 stories, each with 10–15 new vocabulary words, and 25–35 sentences, taught with graphic images and games, no books open during class	212	100	Beginner	Mid-beginner
3	<i>N'səlxcin 2: An intermediate course in Okanagan Salish</i>	40 lessons, each with 20 vocabulary words, grammar boxes, 10–30 sentences, and partner exercises, taught with books open	423	200	Intermediate	High-beginner
4	<i>Captik'wł 2: Okanagan stories for intermediate students</i>	15 traditional stories, each with 30 new vocabulary words, with grammatical breakdowns, point of view exercises. Each story is narrated mainly in past tense (he/she form) and has approximately 15 paragraphs, each with an illustrated image.	406	200	Intermediate	Low-intermediate
5	<i>N'səlxcin 3: An advanced course in Okanagan Salish (4 volumes, 4 seasons, 90 hours each)</i>	Taught in 4 units of 18 lessons each: Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter, based on traditional knowledge of plants, animals, traditional practices, and cultural topics. Each lesson has 20–30 new vocabulary words as well as grammatical breakdowns. Subject/object conjugation boxes of 36 and multiple verb paradigms are introduced, various tenses of the four types of transitivizers	186 + 149 + 139 + 110	400	Advanced	Low to mid-intermediate (note – low-intermediate is an extensive phase covering a large range of learning)

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Table 1: (Continued)

Text	Title	Structure of lessons	Pgs.	Hrs*	Proficiency of text**	Proficiency estimate***
6	<i>Captikwú7 Okanagan stories for advanced students</i>	(nt, st, xt, and lt). While N3 is taught, N2, C1, and C2 are reviewed. 15 traditional stories, taught with full levels of grammatical complexity. N2, C2, and N3 are reviewed.	212	200	Advanced	Mid-intermediate

* The number of hours required to teach the text including review of previous lessons. Books 1–5 are based on my own teaching experience.

** Proficiency as indicated in the title of the textbooks themselves.

*** Author estimates of speaking proficiency after completing texts, following CLB (2012) benchmarks. For explanation of CLB benchmarks see below. Note that if students are taught the curriculum *and* are provided with an immersion workplace and exposure to more advanced speakers or Elders, they will move upwards in the benchmarks more quickly.

higher levels of learner anxiety due to various factors resulting from colonization, including language decline, older teaching techniques, “politics of distraction,” and tensions and oppositions in community (Cohen, 2010, p. 288). Techniques must be chosen and curriculum developed to support teachers to maintain immersion in a positive environment and to learn while teaching. A teaching success story I have been following is that of Khelsilem, a young Skw̓xwú7mesh (Squamish, Coast Salish) language activist in Vancouver. He started learning his language with the “Where Are Your Keys?” method and has added other methods and created lesson plans to deliver 900 hours, accredited by Simon Fraser University (Arcand, 2011; McCue, 2016). Syilx Language House students also received Simon Fraser University’s 900-hour Fluency Certificate on June 23, 2017.

I use several language acquisition terms in this paper, further described in Johnson (2017), Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011), and others. My intention in this paper is only to touch on applied acquisition terms as they can be used to support the activism required to successfully bring adults to advanced proficiency. There are two aspects to proficiency: grammatical accuracy (focus on form) and fluency, or the ability to speak quickly and fluidly (Archibald, 2016). A well-designed curriculum will develop both aspects.

Much has been written about language acquisition techniques and teaching methods, including the “direct method,” the “audio-lingual method,” “community language learning,” “total physical response,”

and “communicative language teaching” (see, e.g., Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011; Lightbown & Spada, 2006). However, as far as I can tell, other than in my work, nothing has been written about language-teaching techniques that are most effective for non-fluent (often beginner) Indigenous language teachers to teach with in their classrooms. Classrooms often rely on input from fluent Elders partnered with a beginner teacher. This situation is problematic because it is difficult, if not impossible, to have a fluent Elder follow a sequenced curriculum, to deliver full days of immersion, or for the teacher to maintain immersion or classroom safety. Remember that immersion means that the activities, as well as the instructions and classroom management, are in the target language, which means that the teacher must be able to deliver these and not rely on the Elder. A well-designed curriculum will support the teacher to succeed in maintaining immersion, transmitting language, maintaining classroom safety, and assessing language, all within the teacher’s level of language competence. Several techniques lend themselves to this context better than others. Suffice it to say, from an experienced perspective, that the techniques I outline here and in Johnson (2016, 2017) have proven excellent to teach as a learner. Using the sequenced curriculum and teaching methods, I and my co-teachers are able to maintain immersion and lead the exercises. In the following subsections I outline applied teaching methods and personal observations about their real-world application in the Syilx Language House.

Sequenced curriculum and lesson plans

In the Syilx Language House we follow a sequenced curriculum with detailed lesson plans. Co-teachers and students meet for two full days a week from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., with a lunch hour and two breaks; there are 11 hours of instruction per week. Two teachers deliver the material, taking turns in half-hour blocks.

I cannot overstate the importance of sequenced curriculum as a support to both learners and teachers. Without curriculum, the teacher has no support or structure, and lessons can devolve into speaking English or talking “about” language rather than doing language (Maracle & Richards, 2000; Nicholson, 1990; Richards & Maracle, 2002). In critically endangered languages, learners must become teachers (Hinton, 2003). This is an undisputed reality as our precious Elder speakers disappear. The role of a language teacher is to provide plentiful language input that is meaningful, comprehensible, and grammatically accurate. It is nearly impossible for beginner-speaking teachers to provide grammatically correct input to students unless

they are following a sequenced curriculum designed for learners to teach.

I know of two examples of a curriculum designed for beginner teachers: the Nsyilxcn Curriculum and the Chief Atahm school curriculum, discussed below. The Nsyilxcn Curriculum has six textbooks, audio, teaching materials, teaching methods, and teacher training, following what is known by its teachers and developers as the Direct Acquisition method, described below. The six textbooks are outlined in Table 1. Grammar is introduced sequentially in the six textbooks. The choice and ordering of the grammatical concepts, vocabulary, and example sentences was made by Christopher Parkin and S̓am̓tíca? Sarah Peterson. Chris was a Spanish teacher for 20 years before becoming an Nsyilxcn learner and curriculum developer; S̓am̓tíca? is a fluent Elder and speaker of two Interior Salish languages as well as English.

Something to keep in mind when deciding which order to introduce the grammatical structures in one's own language is that the needs of learners and teachers are quite different from the descriptive systems of linguists. For teachers it is important to teach one thing at a time. As teachers who are beginners ourselves, we are tasked with understanding a new grammatical structure enough to deliver it to the students. When I asked Chris Parkin how he chose the order of the grammatical structures, he told me that he himself was a beginner when he started writing the textbooks and was delivering the grammatical structures in the order that he himself was able to understand them.

Vocabulary items for Book 1 were chosen for the 45 lessons based on common objects and activities from daily life. Vocabulary items for Book 2 are from sentences from 16 traditional stories told as simply as possible by a fluent Elder speaker. Grammatical constructions introduced in the first two books include intransitive verbs and nt transitive verbs in simple past and future. Nsyilxcn has a highly complex system of transitivization. Later books include more tenses, paradigms, objects, the *st*, *xt*, and *lt* transitivizers and their future forms. I have found in practice that introducing more than one tense at a time frustrates learners.

Following a sequenced curriculum is a relatively radical technique. We know that the very best method of transmitting language is in the home to young children. Once the children are older, the best follow-up is having them attend schools where teachers teach in the language to children who are already fluent from their home exposure to language, similar to the francophone-school experience in Canada and the newly emerged Hawaiian schools in Hawai'i. We do not currently

have this luxury, so our efforts are directed at creating the first cohort of adults who will have the capacity to bring the language home. We have therefore turned to second language acquisition techniques, including following a sequenced curriculum, and this is working.

Direct Acquisition – beginner methods

The Direct Acquisition method was developed by Christopher Parkin (Peterson & Parkin, 2007; Peterson et al., 2015) and, like the curriculum, is a gift to learners. It is a collection of numerous techniques, all based on full immersion. Each lesson is provided with audio, a lesson plan, teaching materials, activities, a quiz, and homework sheets. Model sentences are provided. A teacher can practise the forms ahead of time, keep the lesson on topic, and provide perfectly modelled sentence forms.

This section describes the activities used to teach vocabulary and sentences in the first textbook (also described in Johnson, 2016). The first two textbooks are taught using what Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011, p. 25) would describe as the “direct method” and the “total physical response” method. The Direct Method has “one very basic rule: no translation allowed” (p. 25). Chris Parkin, during teacher training, adds two rules for teaching beginners which stress the importance of classroom safety: *never test*, and *never correct*. Never put a learner on the spot in front of other learners, for example by pointing at an object and saying “what is this?” Rather, vocabulary words are reviewed by giving a choice of two words. Never overtly correct students’ grammar or pronunciation, as this can raise anxiety levels. Rather, repeat the utterance with correct modelling. After 1,000 hours of instruction the lessons become more complex and different rules apply, but for the first 1,000 hours these simple rules serve our teachers well.

Beginner lessons are taught with no explicit grammatical explanation and follow several phases of learning: pre-production (the comprehension or silent phase), early production, speech emergence, intermediate fluency, and advanced fluency (Krashen & Terrell, 1988). In the *Teacher’s Manual: Direct Acquisition Lesson Activities* (Peterson & Parkin, 2007), the teaching activities are grouped into three phases: comprehension, limited production, and full production. Vocabulary words are taught with three to five comprehension activities first, where the students hear several iterations of the sentences and words before they are asked to speak them. The teacher may have the students silently point at pictures of the words, illuminate them with a laser pointer, or hit them with a fly swatter. In limited production activities, students repeat the words and play games where they say a

few words; for example, the teacher may point at a picture and give students a choice of two words – “is it salmon or bread?” – and students answer with one word. In full production exercises the students are guided to simple activities using full sentences.

The first book of the Nsyilxcn Curriculum, *Nsyilxcn 1*, has 45 beginner lessons. Each lesson follows a detailed lesson plan found in the teacher’s manual. Following a well-practised familiar method provides a sense of safety for both learners and teachers. After first learning the material, beginner teachers can be trained in the teaching method in two days. They are then able to provide 90 hours of immersion instruction from the first book. There is very little focus on form for the students in the first two books. The teacher, on the other hand, focuses on form as she is required to produce the grammatically correct sentences in each lesson.

The second book of the Nsyilxcn Curriculum, *Captikʷl 1*, is based on 16 traditional stories, taught using Direct Acquisition. Each story has a list of vocabulary. Teaching images are provided for each new vocabulary word and for each new sentence. New vocabulary words are taught as in the first book, following comprehension, limited production, and full production exercises. The story sentences are taught, five at a time, following the same sequence. The benefit of this teaching method is that students are able to acquire more complex forms but are still using a familiar format. The teacher is the most active learner and is required to produce increasingly complex sentences, but she has the familiarity of her well-practised teaching method.

Total Physical Response (TPR)

Total Physical Response (TPR) is a popular term in BC language revitalization. It was popularized by the Chief Atahm immersion school in Chase, mentioned above, which has become known for developing the TPR method (Dick-Billy, 2003) and for being the longest-running immersion school, one of only four immersion schools in BC (Ignace, 2016, p. 33). TPR is based on comprehensible, low-anxiety immersion input based on actions and with very little to no focus on form (Asher & Adamski, 1986; Krashen & Terrell, 1988). The Chief Atahm School developed two textbooks to be used with the TPR method, *TPR I* and *TPR II* (Dick-Billy, Michel, Michel, LeBourdais, & Michel, 2004, 2007), and offers annual workshops in the TPR method, well attended by First Nations language teachers, mostly beginners themselves. The TPR technique forms the basis of a text developed for BC kindergarten teachers by Kathryn Michel (2013), a founder of the Chief Atahm School. *TPR I* has been translated into Nsyilxcn (Peterson, Elkink, & Parkin, 2008). The TPR technique is the backbone technique of four of

the 45 lessons in the first book of the Nsyilxcn Curriculum. I find it an excellent way to teach action-based vocabulary (verbs) at the beginner level, and I utilize it as much as I can, even at intermediate levels. For example, when teaching songs, I have the students gesture with their bodies. I use TPR gestures to indicate the first person, second person, and third person singular and plural as a way for the class to demonstrate the grammar without using English.

Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling (TPRS)

At levels higher than beginner, more teaching techniques are introduced. Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling (TPRS) has become popular in teaching Indigenous languages (Cantoni, 1999, p. 5; Johnson, 2014). I have heard TPRS introduced at Indigenous language teaching conferences. Blaine Ray originated the technique in the 1990s, based on TPR, as a low-anxiety way to teach stories, with very little focus on form. (See Ray and Seely [2004] for a full description of TPRS and its application in the second-language classroom.) TPRS is based on comprehensible input; from the first day, the student understands (almost) everything she hears. It involves a series of questions and answers about a story, after the story has been learned through other methods (the sequence is detailed in Johnson, 2014, pp. 190–193).

The TPRS method is one of my favourites at a high-beginner level when students are ready for the challenge. Once students are at the level where they can ask and answer simple TPRS questions about a story, we can really begin to play with language.

Direct Acquisition – intermediate and advanced methods

After the first and second books, at the intermediate and advanced levels an array of techniques are outlined in the lesson plans. We continue to use hand gestures while speaking to demonstrate first person, second person, and third person singular and plural, alone and in sentences. Some techniques focus on form (grammar drills, partner exercises, and sentence production) and some on fluency (“word description” activities, described below; “what did you do last weekend?” conversations, and playing the card game UNO). A combination of communicative strategies and focus on form produces more accurate students (Archibald, 2016). Activities and partner exercises are learned and enacted in immersion, but in the third to fifth books, grammatical concepts are introduced in English for about 20 minutes per day.

Constant review and peer-learning

Constant review is a cornerstone of the Nsyilxcn Curriculum. Of the total teaching time 75% is spent on new lessons and 25% on review. Constant review can introduce the principles of interleaving, effortful recall, variation, spaced retrieval, and peer learning (Brown, Roediger, and McDaniel, 2014). Review can become an opportunity for peer learning when students lead the review sessions for lessons they have already learned and gain leadership experience speaking confidently and leading a group in a safe environment.

Word description activity

The word description activity is a low-intermediate activity or game for learning vocabulary in the third to fifth books. Each lesson in the third to fifth books introduces 20 to 40 new vocabulary words. In the activity, a student randomly chooses a word from the list. Without using any gestures, the student describes the word (storytells) using as many other words as possible, until another student correctly guesses the word from the list. The first student repeats the correct answer three times. The next student goes, until all words are described or 20 minutes have elapsed. The first few times the descriptions are short, but after a few times the students gain confidence and fluency. The descriptions then become detailed and hilarious. This exercise focuses on fluency rather than form. My students and I enjoy this activity since it gives us an opportunity to play with language. By the fifth book, we introduce the word description race. The list of vocabulary words is cut into strips and shuffled. Students are given one minute to describe as many words as possible and have other students correctly shout out their guesses. The next student tries to beat their total.

Flashcards

Flashcards are a well-known language acquisition tool. The Nsyilxcn Curriculum uses flashcards starting with the third book, when the vocabulary is too plentiful to be taught in the classroom and the onus is placed on the student. Students create flashcards of new vocabulary words and grammatical concepts. Once a word is known, it is placed in a separate pile. Remaining cards are shuffled and reviewed until all words are known. I had a love-hate relationship with flashcards until I read about the scientific basis for this low-tech learning tool. Flashcards are known to be more effective when reviewed regularly. The cards must be shuffled, which provides the principles of spaced retrieval, interleaving, and effortful recall, which are effective forms of self-testing (Brown et al., 2014).

Walking and storytelling review method

I developed the walking and storytelling method for intermediate students after reading about the value of effortful recall (Brown et al., 2014): the higher the effort, the greater the learning value. It is of great value in reviewing stories. Remember that constant review is a cornerstone of the Nsyilxcn Curriculum. After a *Captik*^{wł} 1 story is reviewed in class using audio and images, the students stand up in pairs, walk outside, and walk around the park for 10 minutes telling each other the story from memory. They are not to help each other so as not to interfere with the effortful recall. Because they are at the same level, they find this exercise safe and fun. It is a joy to walk around the park hearing pairs of students speaking, laughing, struggling to remember, and supporting each other. *Captik*^{wł} 2 stories and *Nsyilxcn* 3 lessons are reviewed similarly, but students are allowed to assist each other.

Learning by teaching

Little has been written about learning by teaching. I wrote about it in my thesis (Johnson, 2014) and found only one other published mention (Grzega, 2005). Brown et al. (2014) refer to it as peer learning, although without going into detail about what it involves. Nevertheless, it is known that Indigenous language learners must stand up and become teachers. The difficulty and tension in teaching as a learner are so great that Hinton (2003) refers to us as “heroes.” The Nsyilxcn Curriculum is generally taught by a pair of co-teachers, ideally with one of them more experienced and mentoring the other. As described above, it is absolutely necessary to be armed with well-designed teaching materials and methods in order to be successful. When I hear learners teaching, my heart sings (Johnson, 2016). I can personally attest that learning by teaching the Nsyilxcn Curriculum has created fluent speakers at the Salish School of Spokane.

Addressing language tension for teachers and learners

Something needs to be said about the mental effort required to teach a second language as a non-fluent teacher. I wish something was documented about this phenomenon, and I have asked French as a second language teachers if there is anything written to encourage teachers in this situation. While apparently it is uncommon for French teachers not to be fluent, in our critically endangered languages contexts it is common for teachers to be beginners, especially in the first stages of revitalization.

When my assistant teachers begin teaching as beginners, they say the room becomes hotter as they step up to the challenge of producing rapid-fire, correctly modelled sentences. The support of the sequenced

curriculum is the only thing that stands between them and losing immersion. I watch as they gain confidence in the repetitive patterns in the teaching method. In our first year, I started each day with words of encouragement (in English) to mindfully address the language tension. Addressing the tension helps to reduce it. I remind students and teachers that immersion will naturally induce tension. This tension can show up in various ways: an urge to speak English, crack jokes in English, arrive late, criticize the teacher, skip classes. I remind students to support each other and say that speaking and joking in English distracts other students and adds to the teacher's mental strain due to code switching.

From my own observations and conversations with French teachers, teaching language as a second language is far more taxing than teaching content-based language in immersion. By the same token, teaching in a French immersion school would be more taxing and less effective (for both teacher and students) than teaching in a franco-phone school, something that bears thinking about as we plan our schools and move toward an Indigenous language legislation in Canada. Once we bring groups of adults to fluency, they can form immersion schools and move from second language instruction to content-based instruction, as in the examples of immersion schools formed in Hawai'i by advanced second language learners (Kamana & Wilson, 1996).

Positive psychology in the classroom

Learner anxiety is a known factor in second language acquisition and teaching (Dewaele, 2002; Ignace, 2016; Johnson, 2014; MacIntyre, Gregersen, & Mercer, 2016). Direct Acquisition methods are designed to reduce learner anxiety and produce a safe classroom space. Positive emotion in the classroom increases learner motivation and enhances learning (MacIntyre et al., 2016). As teachers we can incorporate positive exercises. When we review songs I review the happy ones more often. At the intermediate level I introduce positivity-based discussion topics such as "Describe your favourite day in the past ten years; your favourite vacation; your best birthday" as substitutes for "What did you do last weekend?" During the exercise, students are paired up, walk around the park, and storytell to each other for four minutes each. Then they switch partners and tell the same story to a different partner for two minutes each. Then we return inside and each student retells their story to everybody for one minute. This exercise, designed to increase fluidity, helps us get to know each other and makes us cheerful and happy.

Learning by recording and transcribing Elders

If little has been written about learning by teaching, nothing has been written about the learning potential from recording and transcribing fluent Elders (though this technique, partnered with elicitation, works well for linguists who sometimes become speakers of Indigenous languages). Nsyilxcn's situation as a critically endangered language is dire, and as a teacher I feel multiple responsibilities. As a learner I must teach, fundraise, budget, train teachers, and run a program, all of which are challenging enough, but I also need to record our remaining Elders. Two years ago we chose a recording and archiving strategy and got started. I trained myself and then Śtaʔqʷálqs, Səxʷtums, Ǿas-títkʷ, Xáʔtma Sqilxʷ, and Qʷyqʷʕayáǵn to record, archive, and transcribe. Since 2015, the Syilx Language House has produced one publication per year of transcribed recordings with seven fluent Elders. Ten hours of recorded narrative and transcriptions were shared freely with community in a publication (Johnson, Gregoire, McGinnis, Barnes, Terbasket, & Edwards, 2015) and on our website.⁴

As any language learner knows, reading and writing are separate skills from listening and speaking (CLB, 2012). Recording and transcribing have noticeably improved our listening and writing skills. I can't assess exactly, but I can say that four years ago one minute of spoken Nsyilxcn took me an hour to transcribe, and now a first draft takes about 10 seconds. Śtaʔqʷálqs said that recording fluent Elders gave her confidence to approach and speak with new Elders. Recording strengthens relationships between learners and Elders, creates a valuable repository of wisdom, and builds a shared sense of history. I can attest that a lot of learning occurs through recording and transcribing and that these recordings are a valuable tool for future learners.

Assessment as a learning tool

Regular quizzing is an asset in the classroom, both as a learning tool and for program evaluation (Carless, 2007). Regular quizzing produces language gains that persist over time (Brown et al., 2014). Our daily written quiz at 9:00 a.m. serves the dual benefit of review and ensuring students arrive on time. Our mid-term and final exams have a written and oral component. Regular testing provides key benefits to learning: effortful recall, interleaving, and spaced recall (Brown et al., 2014), and the assessments provide objective information to teachers, students, and students' sponsors. In the first and second years of the Syilx Language House, of the 16 students, five received marks in the 90s and five in the 80s. Marks were based on daily quizzes, homework, attendance, journals, flashcards, a mid-term, and a filmed

final oral exam. For the first-year final oral exam, students were able to describe themselves, their families, and the life cycle of an animal, bird, and insect in Nsyilxcn. At the end of the second year, students were able to describe the cultural significance and traditional use of a plant or animal for their final presentation.

Assessment as benchmarking and evaluation tools

The other face of language assessment is relating students' proficiency to recognized benchmarks such as the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB), Maori benchmarks (Edmonds, Roberts, Keegan, Houia, & Dale, 2013), Hawaiian benchmarks (Housman, Dameg, & Kobashigawa, 2011), or the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). Assessment is often poorly developed in Indigenous language programs. There is a lack of published material on applied Indigenous language assessments, and existing Indigenous assessments underdescribe the vast range between beginner and advanced. There is little documented evidence of learners gaining enough proficiency to raise their children in the language. A beautifully written exception is a book with first-person accounts of individual learners who are raising their children in the language (Hinton, 2013). Many Indigenous languages face similar challenges such as language complexity, limited personnel, lack of resources, and political reasons for avoiding assessments (Mellow & Begg, 2014; Miller, 2004; Wigglesworth & Keegan, 2014). Assessment is well developed although not yet standardized in New Zealand (Edmonds et al., 2013; Wigglesworth & Keegan, 2014). First Nations languages in Canada have not adopted standard benchmarks, although recent research in BC has proposed task-based benchmarks based on work in Secwepmctsin and Sm'algyax (Ignace, 2016). My favourite benchmark system is the CLB because of its concrete, task-based descriptions. I applied CLB benchmarks to Nsyilxcn and Tlingit learners and collected four Nsyilxcn terms for Nsyilxcn benchmarks (Johnson, 2014, 2017).

Research shows that 2,000 hours are required to become highly proficient in complex First Nations languages such as Nsyilxcn (Ignace, 2016; Jackson & Kaplan, 1999; Johnson, 2014; Rifkin, 2003). Most Indigenous language programs in Canada fall far short of this and are not producing advanced speakers. In fact, there are "few highly competent second-language speakers of First Nations languages" (Ignace, 2016, p. 15). In the first year we delivered nearly 400 hours of lessons; by our second year we had delivered 900. Our four-year goal is 1,800 intensive hours.

Assessments are ongoing in the Syilx Language House. We performed a filmed storytelling assessment in June 2016 and again in

June 2017. We will compare students' speaking proficiency to CLB and Nsyilxcn benchmarks as ongoing research. Spoiler alert: as a teacher I can already tell that the students were speaking at a high-beginner level after 400 hours and are low-intermediate after 900 hours. Our delivery is on track in terms of both hours and proficiency. The intermediate phase is a lengthy phase, and students will spend the next 900 hours progressing from low- to mid-intermediate. At mid-intermediate, students can participate in full-immersion workplaces and continue to study and progress to the advanced level. The secret to achieving advanced-level proficiency will be in creating full-immersion workplaces, continued study, and exposure to more advanced or fluent speakers.

The definition of successful Indigenous language revitalization needs to expand to include these key assessment parameters: (a) How many advanced speakers have been created? (b) How many are raising their children in the language? (c) What percentage of learners' daily lives are conducted in the language? In the Syilx Language House, our answers to these questions would be (a) zero (we have not yet created an advanced speaker); (b) zero in Canada and a handful in the United States; and (c) just under 10 percent (11 hours per week divided by 112 waking hours per week). After the fourth year of delivery, some students will begin to form full-immersion workplaces and raise that percentage. This final step will support students to grow from intermediate to advanced.

Participants – who we are

This issue of *The Canadian Modern Language Review* calls for a focus on learner identities. This section describes who we are, how we found our way to language, and feedback from community. My students, co-teachers, and I are Syilx people who want to put in the commitment to become speakers. All are very hard workers. Most have families. Our language is of sacred importance to us. For most of us that is enough reason to be here and no other explanations are necessary. We are members of five of the seven Syilx communities in Canada, and live in Penticton, Westbank, Osoyoos, Keremeos, and Vernon. Most students commute an hour each way to attend. Two students commute two hours each way from Vernon. I, as well as two students, live in Penticton. In 2015, I asked Chiefs and Councils from Penticton Indian Band, Osoyoos Indian Band, and Westbank First Nation to support "ten of your best people" to attend the Language House two days a week for four years. They agreed to support employees to leave work two days a week for four years. I hoped for parent-aged adults between the

ages of 18 and 30. My students are between 24 and 60 years of age; most are around 30. I am nearing 50.

The Chiefs and Councils of PIB, OIB, and WFN provided eight students; the rest were recruited by word of mouth and e-mail. Ten students are supported by their employers to attend: Penticton Indian Band, Osoyoos Indian Band, Westbank First Nation, School District 23, and Sensisysten Band School. Four students are volunteers. Goya da Yeñsdih and Q^wyq^wƷayáǎn were co-teachers as well as students in Year 2. Q^wyq^wƷayáǎn is a gifted learner who, like me, got his start 10 years ago from community language programs including the Enowkin Centre in Penticton. Unlike me, he is a hilarious and gifted comedian and storyteller, a pow-wow dancer, artist, and father. We are lucky to have him and we make a great teaching team. He came to work full time at the Language House in 2017 and is now teaching and recording and transcribing Elders. The Syilx Language House started in September 2015 with 19 participants, including myself. As of July 2017 we had 16 participants. In the first year two students dropped out because of work pressures (lesson learned: they did not receive adequate support from their workplaces) and one to care for her baby. Three intermediate learners joined us in Year 1; one dropped a year later to care for his baby. A student withdrew in September 2017 to have a baby, delivered in October 2017. Another lesson learned: We need a language nest as soon as possible to support students to continue to attend. We applied for and received funding for a mini language nest at Westbank to provide support to two students and their babies.

Community feedback

Twice a year we invite family, friends, and funders to an event where students give an oral presentation and we share food and collect feedback from community. We did this on February 10, 2016, after 200 hours, on June 23, 2016, after nearly 400 hours, on December 15, 2016, after 550 hours, and on June 23, 2017, after 900 hours. During feedback sessions, Elders were amazed at the learning that has been accomplished in a short time, and students stated that our methods are the fastest, most effective language learning they have experienced. They are passionate about the speed of learning, the curriculum, the supportive environment, the positivity and sense of purpose, and the opportunities for creating connections and finding themselves. This paper shares feedback from the February 10 and June 23 session in 2016. June 23 was a proud day in both 2016 and 2017; 16 students celebrated completion of their first and second years. Students received

the SFU First Nations Proficiency Certificate on June 23, 2017, and celebrated with Nsyilxcn Karaoke (Kelowna Capital News, 2017).

**Community observations midway through year 1:
February 10, 2016**

ᑕᑎᑎᑎᑎ ᑖᑎ ᑎᑭᑦᑖᑕᑎ Grouse Barnes (WFN fluent Elder): When I first heard you guys, you were struggling. When I hear you now you are coming from being a baby into a teenager. I can feel the strength in your words and your heart. When your heart and mind come together you are strong.

Fluent Elder: Seeing the Captík^{wł} acted out. It's different when we grew up. You're doing really great the way it is. It is really good that the young people are getting up there and Captík^{wł}. It is part of who we are as people. The Captík^{wł} teaches us. It is a tool and it's history. Holy smokes! You are doing wonderful. You have learned a lot. I hope I'm still here when you can come to talk with me!

Parent: What I heard with the Captík^{wł} was beyond what I expected. I like what Grouse said about getting my spirit back I think maybe in my case that's what's been missing for me. To come back after years of being away (residential school and life), I decided to come back to where I was born. I feel so proud of what you do here. I hope to come back again and watch the progress, to see what's happening next.

ᑕᑎᑎᑎᑎ ᑖᑎ ᑎᑭᑦᑖᑕᑎ Pamela Barnes (WFN Elder): I think the program speaks for itself. The progress that's been made in such a short time. We've worked with language in our communities for many many years. This is working. Thank you to Michele and your stubbornness and hard work - that's exactly what is needed to make these things happen. I really appreciate that you have a vision and make it happen.

Osoyoos Indian Band Councillor: You've come a really long way since the first presentation. It isn't easy standing in front of each other. I was very proud and honoured to be here and hear those presentations. I hope you guys use each other and stay connected that way and build each other up, so you can teach us back at home.

ᑕᑎᑎᑎᑎ ᑖᑎ ᑎᑭᑦᑖᑕᑎ Levi Bent (PIB student, LSIB member): I'm very appreciative of this process. We need words to develop pronunciation. This process is giving us gobs of words. Let's look beyond the books and the stories to find the words and find it in our hearts. I'm looking forward to my brain hurting again! We got something really good going on here!

Community observations at end of year 1: June 23, 2016

Ki?láwna Andrew McGinnis (PIB fluent Elder): kn limt nixəlmn. ǰast i? sqʷa?qʷǰálp. I am happy to hear you, your speech is good.

Chief Nqʷa?smúlmn Jonathan Kruger (Chief of PIB 2008–16): Collaborate with all speakers, Elders, language authorities so there is a strong support. Continue to build new curriculum with Elders like Ki?láwna. I will speak with Council about supporting the 2020 vision. I am proposing a centre of excellence with a wing for language. Would like to see apps for increasing community engagement; not everyone will become fluent, we need to support all the other learners as well. All 18 students “keep going!” Millions have been spent on French (approximately 300 million compared to 5 million for FN languages). MP Richard Cannings will take our message to Ottawa.

ǰninmtm ǰa nqʷi?ctn Grouse Barnes (WFN fluent Elder): ǰast nixəlmn. lut ǰa c?ax ǰapná?. ta?li ǰǰal. nǰǰscin. mi kʷckʷǰctwix i? snǰqsilxʷs, i? sqilxʷcawtǰt. It is good to hear you. You are not shy anymore and are very clear. Keep going and it will strengthen your families and our sqilxʷ ways. We all have a job to do and we must continue to look seven generations ahead.

ǰucu?ásǰt Pamela Barnes (WFN Elder): Thanks S?ǰmla?xʷ for leadership. An especial limlǰmt to unsupported (volunteer) students. Take the message to Ottawa, full unquestioned support is needed.

Dawn Machin (student, OKIB member): We made it! Thank you to the teachers and students. Move forward, look forward, no politics, avoid critical people. We need to connect with band schools, school districts. Language programs for youth, children and families. We need to work on having support for all students.

Richard Cannings, MP, Okanagan Boundary: Congratulations to everyone. You are setting a good example for the rest of the country.

Xa?tma Sqilxʷ Flynn Wetton (student, WFN member): We all are awakening, reconnecting. We are sitting in this living dream. This doesn't happen overnight, carry the dream forward.

ǰastitkʷ Jolene Michel (student, PIB member and Language House assistant): Learning takes time & commitment. We are learning from books and memorizing curriculum but it's working, I am able to understand Elders. Challenge ourselves to speak in community.

Qʷayqʷǰayaǰn Levi Bent (student, PIB resident, LSIB member): nqilxʷcnm – ixí? mrimstn, niǰí?p c?ullús. Challenge ourselves to always speak nqilxʷcn whenever we meet up. This is our medicine.

S̱aʔqʷáɫqs Hailey Causton (student, WFN member and Language House assistant): I want to acknowledge the hard work of Sʔímlaʔxʷ. There is so much work done behind the scenes when you plan something big like this. She started the first language house in Chopaka and we never knew we would be doing this.

Language diary – observations on teaching methods and evaluations from year 1

The following comments are reflections from my language diary and blog on applied teaching techniques or evaluations, mostly from the first year, and I share them for interested teachers:

June 23, 2016 – Celebrating Year 1

Congratulations to sixteen students and teachers for achievement of the FIRST YEAR. It has been a phenomenal year, the first of four. 400 hours down, 1,600 to go! Thank you to Elders, community, and leadership for supporting our journey. The Elders who heard the students are proud, and we know the ancestors would be too. Students gave presentations on the life cycles of tmixʷ, animals, birds and insects. We can't thank enough the supporters and families Thank you MP Richard Cannings for representing the Federal Government. It has been a week with losses and deep sadness in Sylx community and our graduation day this week was a glimmer of happiness reflected by the lived experience of decolonizing healing through language. Watch out for the class of 2020 . . . The 2020 plan and 2030 plan are underway . . . limlám̄t p̄ isnəqsíxʷ. iʔ nqílʷcntət̄ iʔ mrimstntət̄.

April 14, 2016 – Language teaching technique – effortful recall

Today I am recalling the many successful techniques we are using, direct acquisition, TPR, TPR-S, flashcards, word description games, games with images, grammar exercises, partner exercises, learning by teaching, full immersion, learning by recording, and learning by transcription. I wish there was a way we could share our lesson plans with everybody who is trying to succeed in creating adult speakers.

There is something very gratifying about being able to implement a new technique right away. I realize we are very lucky in the Language House to have such highly motivated students who are willing to try anything and give it their best effort. I read a book called “make it stick” over the weekend, with suggestions such as interleaving, interspersing, mixing it up, pre-testing, self-testing, “effortful recall,” and shuffling flashcards. In fact, it got me interested in more effective flashcard use. It also motivated

me to intersperse more frequent moments of “effortful recall” into our lessons. Apparently the real learning occurs when the mind is activated to recall a word or phrase. I shared some of these concepts with my students this week. I counselled them to wait before “helping” each other with answers; to give each other the gift of struggling. This week I added several self-testing moments during lessons. The most exciting one was changing up our Captík^{wł} review. We usually do Captík^{wł} review by repeating the vocabulary words with the images, listening to the story and then doing TPR-S with the pictures in groups of four students. First, a student reads the vocabulary and the story to the whole group, then the story a second time with all students choral repeating. Then we break into groups and practice TPR-S for 20-30 minutes.

This week, after the choral repeat, I asked the students to stand up in pairs, walk out the door and walk around the ball park, about a city block. One student would tell the story completely from memory, adding or embellishing in their own words, or simply struggling to say as much as they could. Their partner’s role was to listen and not help. The only response allowed was nodding. Then they would switch roles. If they finished before the walk was over, they would run through the story together, asking TPR-S questions. They stood up and walked out the door into the bright sunlight of a spring afternoon. There was an uneven number, so I was paired with a student. He courageously started first, and told the story, struggling with numerous words. I could see the effort he was making, the smoke almost rising from his head. I have to say, to a fluent speaker, the story would have been only partially intelligible. Nevertheless, it was heartwarming to see a dozen sqilx^w adults walking on the land, speaking nqilx^{wcn} in full sentences, earnest concentration on their faces. When we came back inside I asked how it went, and they said it was exciting, they could feel the effort, and they loved it. We had the first student read the story aloud again, while holding up the pictures, and I saw several aha moments cross the faces of the students as they heard vocabulary words that they had almost recalled during their storytelling. These were golden learning moments.

February 20, 2016 – Penticton media coverage on Book 2 completion

Penticton newspaper picked up our story⁵ . . . Syilx Language House celebrates milestone . . . Captík^{wł} 1 completed.

February 24, 2016 – First Peoples’ Culture Council pays a visit

Aliana Parker from First People’s Culture Council visited the Language House today and stayed for the afternoon to observe. We were in full swing, learning Nsyilxcn 2, reviewing Captík^{wł} 1 and Nsyilxcn 1, and playing UNO. She said, “I’m really impressed . . . It’s so much more impressive in person than on paper,” and, “It’s four in the afternoon and

nobody's falling asleep!" She couldn't believe how many words the students were using while playing UNO. She asked for a copy of our UNO cheat-sheet. She said FPCC used UNO as an immersion game but the students weren't asked to raise the bar as high as we do. Our students have to say, "I pick one up," "I place down a red card," and "it's your turn" every time they play a card or they lose their next turn.

March 10, 2016 – praise from Sḡamtíca? and Chris Parkin

Chris Parkin said in an email: ḡapná? t sǰíxǰalt Sḡamtíca? k^wu cus, "ǰast i? sc^kwuls S?ímila?x^w. . . čxíl t mnimłttət, k^wulm ul qłnus." (today Sḡamtíca? told him, "S?ímila?x^w is doing good work . . . just like us, she works hard and is getting there.")

Feedback from fluent Elders after year 2

June 12, 2017 – fluent speaker Grouse Barnes

When I first started working with them they were babies in the language and now I can have a conversation with quite a few of them. They are more confident, more outgoing, and they've come a long ways. One student [in particular] has kind of blossomed. Even in their personal growth they've grown, they're more assertive, they're more independent, nix^w stłtałt, more true. They are not intimidated by an Elder speaker whereas before they were shy, x^wum ti ?arsik^w, like a turtle.

June 19, 2017 – Sḡamtíca? Sarah Peterson

Sḡamtíca? told me, "wisí?stmn," I hold you up, and, "k^w lklakt," you are persistent.

June 23, 2017 – media coverage on year 2 celebration

Local media reported on our second year celebration and graduation ceremony. Sixteen participants celebrated the completion of Year 2, 900 hours, and were awarded Simon Fraser University First Nations Languages Proficiency Certificates. The evening was celebrated with speeches, language presentations from Nsyilxcn 3, and Nsyilxcn Karaoke by students and teachers (see Kelowna Capital News, 2017).

The 2020 Vision

In 2019 the first cohort will have completed four years and 1,800 hours in the Language House and will, with prayers, emerge as mid-intermediate speakers. Syilx leadership is beginning to envision a world with fluent speakers and there are discussions to create language houses in Penticton, Westbank, and Osoyoos by 2020. These language houses will employ our graduates as teachers and bring a larger cohort through four years of intensive programming. Leadership and department heads will choose which departments will be Nsyilxcn-only by 2030. If we are successful in fundraising for this ambitious plan, the 2020 Plan will replicate the Syilx Language House experience for *one hundred* community members and then *turn off English* in several departments. We know that each learner needs to work in a full-time Nsyilxcn-only workplace, or language domain, as a final step to achieve advanced proficiency. After four years we will have enough critical mass to turn off English in several departments, workplaces, language nests, schools, and government offices, and learners will have the skills to bring their language into their homes. Our language dreams include full-immersion workplaces for a portion of band employees and immersion schools in each community, modelled after the Salish School of Spokane. axá? i? sqi?stət. *This is our dream.*

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Acknowledgements

I hold my hands up in the air to Sʂamtícaʔ Sarah Peterson, Christopher Parkin, LaRae Wiley, and the Salish School of Spokane for trailblazing leadership, mentorship, and for freely sharing the *N'səl'xcin Curriculum Project* teaching methods and curricular design (Peterson et al., 2015). For the people-to-be and for the language, *kn kʂam mi ətx^wlal iʔ nq^wlq^wiltntət*. High-five to my co-teachers Goya da Yeñsdih Tiana Louis and Q^wyq^wʂayáǰn Levi Bent and students for their passion and hard work. *Limləmt* to Dr. Marianne Ignace, Simon Fraser University, for a post-doctorate through the SSHRC Partnership grant, and Mitacs, First Peoples' Culture Council, the Aboriginal Languages Initiative, and BC Hydro. *Limləmt* to Penticton Indian Band, Osoyoos Indian Band, Westbank First Nation, Okanagan Indian Band, Okanagan Nation Alliance, and leadership for stepping up and supporting the Syilx Language House to create new speakers. Gratitude to Nq^waʔsmúlmn Jonathan Kruger (Chief of PIB 2008–16) and Chief Kiʔláwna Clarence Louie (OIB) for holding up the language and getting the ball rolling. Gratitude to the En'owkin Centre, Richard

and Jeannette Armstrong, Andrew McGinnis, and other fluent Elders for my first lessons in our language and creating a space for language. Gratitude to my capsíw's sisters from the Chopaka Language House. *p inǰmínk.*

Notes

- 1 All six textbooks may be downloaded from <http://www.interiorsalish.com>.
- 2 Our background is shared in Johnson (2014) and at <http://youtu.be/O7fFMN-KSa4>.
- 3 See <http://thelanguagehouse.ca>.
- 4 See <http://thelanguagehouse.ca>.
- 5 See <http://infotel.ca/newsitem/okanagan-first-nations-celebrate-language-milestone/it27856>.

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