B.C.’s Language Authority & Language Plan Development

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First Peoples’ Heritage, Language and Culture Council

First Peoples’ Organization
• Crown Agency
• Established 1990
• Legislation - First Peoples’ Heritage, Language and Culture Act
• Funding - Arts, Language
• Resource development

• Funding and support for the revitalization and maintenance of BC Indigenous arts, culture and language.
• Provide support and advice to leadership on initiatives, programs and services related to Aboriginal heritage

Who We Serve

204 First Nations communities
24 Tribal Councils
Urban Aboriginal groups
34 languages and 60+ dialects
Aboriginal artists
Arts organizations

B.C.’s Language Situation

language diversity
geographic diversity
insufficient funding
many communities
many language champions

Workshop Overview

PART 1: Language Authority
What is a language authority?
(FPCC language authority)

FPCC language authority
(Model and 3-phase plan)

Best practices

PART 2: Making a Language Plan
8 steps to community language revitalization
Planning - key points

Part 1: Language Authority
BC’s (FP) Language Authorities

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<th>Name</th>
<th>Language</th>
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<tr>
<td>Secwepemc Cultural Education Society</td>
<td>Eastern, Western &amp; Northern Secwepemc</td>
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<td>Coqualeetsa Cultural Education Centre</td>
<td>Upper Stó:lō-Halq'eméylem</td>
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<td>Upper S'tát'imc Language, Culture and Education Society</td>
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<td>Nuu-chah-nulth Language Authority</td>
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<td>Treaty 8 Dene-zaa Language Authority</td>
<td>Dene-zaa</td>
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<td>Okanagan Nation Language Authority</td>
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<td>Xaad Kihlgaa Hl Si'l Society</td>
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<td>Nicola Tribal Association</td>
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<td>WSANEC School Board</td>
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Definition

- A language community dedicated to the revitalization of the language through strategic planning in all areas of language including:
  - creating new speakers
  - increasing the domains of language use
  - documentation
  - authorizing vocabulary, orthographies etc.
  - setting standards and criteria for proficiency
  - teacher training
  - securing ongoing language funding
  - advocating for the language

- Language authorities should include all communities that share a common language.

Objective

- To strengthen and support B.C. First Nations to move towards more strategic, long-term and coordinated approaches to language and cultural revitalization.

Outcomes

- Create a plan for revitalizing the language
- All First Nations communities sharing a language collaborate under one language authority
- Share information and resources among stakeholders within the language group
- Address language needs through projects
- Create a sustainable language entity

FPCC Language Authority Model

- adapted from Language Authorities around the world: New Zealand-Maori, Ontario, Hawaii and BC
- based on work done in BC
- a model, not a rule

Language Authority Model
Important Model Elements

1. Language is owned by the people - Speakers & community members are in control and responsible for what happens with the language.

2. Collaboration, inclusion (dialects) & consultation are necessary - By working together, progress will happen. Save money, resources & TIME!

3. Language is a part of all areas of daily life - Family, education, health, community etc.

4. Language revitalization requires work on many different types of projects and prioritizing

Language Authority – 3 Phases

*Each language community is different - this is a general plan *

- **Phase 1 (Year 1): Get Ready**
  Identify needs and direction, consult

- **Phase 2 (Year 2): Get Set, Go**
  Language Authority and Plan: build, plan, consult, meet, implement the plan, start projects

- **Phase 3 (Year 3): Going!**
  Implement projects, re-assess needs, plan more projects

“Best Practices” from B.C.

- Community Inclusion
- Representation
- Roles & Responsibilities
- Communication
- Teachers/Training

Overcoming Community Challenges

- Identify challenges.
- Discuss.
- Build awareness.
- Create a plan and strategies.
- Encourage positive attitudes towards all language revitalization work.
- Include everyone, even those who were not supportive at first.
- Respect all opinions.
- Continue your work with a positive attitude.
- Invite more community members to participate.
- Promote inclusion & positive thinking towards language revitalization work.
- Keep going!

Part 2: Making a Language Plan
Purpose of a Language Plan

- Leverage financial resources
- Gather support for your work
- Long term success
- Language revitalization

1- Language Status

Knowing the status of your language will help you identify your community’s language needs.

- How many people speak/use your language? Include ALL dialects.
  - fluent • semi-fluent • latent learning • non speakers
- What attitudes do people have about the language?
- How often/where is the language used?
- What resources are there in your community?
  • people • materials • resources

2- Community/Leadership Support

- Is there community support?
  leadership support & community interest, support
- How to mobilize the community?
  inclusion, promotion, education & celebration of the language

Leadership Support (Language Policy)

- Mission statement about the language.
- Statement about the philosophy and value of the language.
- Statement declaring the official language(s) of the nation.
- List of the prioritized language planning goals.

- Policies could include:
  - Statement on policies about orthography and literacy, such as agreeing upon an official writing system.
  - Statement about intellectual property rights, copyright, archival rights, etc.
  - Statement about social, cultural, religious, situational and political constraints that may affect language programs.
  - Statement about the importance of all dialect groups working together while still respecting dialect differences.

3- Research

- What work has already been done on the language? Create a library or archive space where copies of previous work (stories, curriculum, recordings) can be kept to be accessed by all.
- What have communities in other parts of B.C./the world done to revitalize their languages?
- What methods work well for language revitalization?
- Look to other communities as models.
4- Language Goals
- Identify the language status, community needs & priorities.
- Set goals according to needs & priorities.
- What are your language community’s priorities?
- What are some reachable goals for your community?
- Identify both short-term and long-term goals.
- What kind of projects will best help achieve your goals or priorities?

5- Project Planning- Taking Action
- Decide on projects that address your goals & priorities
- Plan the nuts and bolts of your projects
- Key team of committed community members
- Get input from community (including Elders)
- Project participants, staff, resources
- Positive language environment
- Logistics

6- Implement Projects, Project Ideas:
- Language Immersion Activities (all ages), e.g. language nest, master-apprentice language learning, after-school immersion programs
- Teacher Certification and Training
- Material and Curriculum Development
- Adult Language Classes
- Employee Language Programs
- Computer Language Translation Program
- Language and Culture Camps
- Community Signage
- Media
- Policy making
- Documentation

7- Use the Language More
- Encourage community members to use the language in all areas of daily life.
  - in homes, parents/children, families
  - at social gatherings
  - in the schools, daycares
  - leadership & communication
- Involve the whole community
  - schools, government, social events, business

8- Keeping the Language Alive
- Long-term planning
- Policy, declaration, philosophy
- Create a need to use the language
- Make the language visible and ubiquitous
- Commitment and involvement of all generations
- Official recognition of language

Step 1: Language Status
- Return to Step 1 regularly.
- Find out:
  - How has the language status improved?
  - Have the projects been successful?
  - Are there more speakers? Younger speakers?
  - Is the language used more often?
Reassessing and Planning

- Assess the status of the language regularly
- Measure your success
- What worked & what didn’t?
- Celebrate the life of your language
- Speak your language!

Language Authority & Planning Sample

St’at’imc Culture and Language Council
11 communities, 3 dialects

Purpose:
- To form a single language authority
- Acknowledge dialect differences and form 3 regional language branches that operate under the same goals and principals
- Develop and formalize language revitalization plan and TOR
- Address issues of orthography, new vocabulary, materials development, documentation, teaching/training
- Develop a process to accredit language teachers
- Develop process and tools for assessing language fluency
- Ensure the integrity of language education programs and projects

Language Authority & Planning Sample

20 year language plan

Goals:
- Renew fluency
- Promote community awareness and usage
- Develop language resources
- Immersion programs
- Traditional teaching
- Leadership support and language use
- Leverage funding

- Teaching strategies, community strategies, nation strategies, additional actions, responsibilities

Recommendations:
- Dialects be acknowledged but not become a road block
- Chiefs and council accept, support and implement the language revitalization plan in their respective communities
- Chiefs and council include financing for the plan
- Chiefs and council develop and implement language and culture policies
- Designate a language and culture portfolio - create a position
- Ensure quality teacher certification and training
- Acknowledge that holistic approaches are necessary, including healing programs

Q & A