Acknowledgements

This handbook was created by the First Peoples’ Heritage, Language and Culture Council Language Program.

First Peoples’ Heritage, Language and Culture Council (FPHLCC) has strongly supported First Nations language and culture revitalization and maintenance projects in British Columbia (B.C.) since 1990.

Language and cultural immersion has proven to be the most successful method for the transmission of language and culture from generation to generation. For this reason, language and culture immersion camps, where participants are surrounded by their traditional culture and language, are highly valued in B.C. First Nations communities.

The Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation (MARR) and New Relationship Trust (NRT) provide support and funding, allowing FPHLCC to distribute language and culture immersion camp grants to many B.C. First Nations communities. In addition, FPHLCC provides ongoing support to communities with program planning, development and reporting.

FPHLCC is working towards improving and making the language and culture immersion camp grant program more accessible for B.C. First Nations communities. This handbook is intended to be a practical tool for elders, community members, teachers and anyone else involved in language and culture immersion camps. It includes tips for language teaching and learning, ideas for language immersion games and activities, as well as suggested language teaching methods.

FPHLCC Language Program Handbook Development Team
Xway’Waat (Deanna Daniels), Language Program Coordinator
Hannah Amrhein, M.A. Applied Linguistics

We respectfully acknowledge support and funding for this project from
Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation

[Logo]

New Relationship Trust
[Logo]
Contents

Five Language Learning Principles
Five Tips for Language Immersion Activities
Simple Language for Beginners
Daily Conversation Repetition
Daily Activities
Outdoor Activities
Oral Language Games
Cultural Knowledge Activities
Arts and Crafts
Nine Tips for Successful Language Teaching/Learning
Five Methods and Approaches
References
Five Language Learning Principles

- Learning a language requires patience from teachers and from learners.
- Language is learned by speaking it; give learners lots of chances to speak.
- Repetition is crucial; the more language a person hears, the more they learn.
- People learn in many different ways at different rates.
- Language is essentially used for communication, and the goals of language teaching should be to allow learners to communicate in the language.

Five Tips for Language Immersion Activities

- Any activity can be turned into a language learning opportunity.
- A good way to help learners pick up words and phrases is to have learners repeat actions, words and phrases.
- Language immersion does not include English.
- Learning is always more successful when it is fun and enjoyable.
- Feel free to create your own games and activities based on your own program!
Simple Language for Beginners

In the beginning, it is important for learners to be able to follow simple instructions and understand basic phrases. If learners can understand a few of the basics, they will feel more comfortable and learning will come easier.

**Basic language for instructions** – Learners can always participate by following instructions.

**examples:**

- stand up
- sit down
- come here
- go back
- be quiet
- give me the _________
- turn right
- turn left
- where is the ________?  
- jump
- put your hands up
- fold your arms
- cross your legs
- turn around
- lie down
- put ______ back
- leave ________ alone
- clap

**Saying ‘Hello’** – Learners need to be able to use simple questions and greetings.

**examples:**

- hello
- goodbye
- how are you?
- I am fine
- we are fine
- yes
- no
- maybe
- thank you
- have a good day
- look
- listen
- speak
- smell
- one
- two
- three
- four...
- ten ...
Daily Conversation Repetition

When the same simple conversations are repeated each day several times, they will become ingrained in learners’ minds and they will never forget them.

**Introductions** – Learners can introduce themselves to the group by using set phrases.

**examples:**

- my name is ________.  
- I am from ________.  
- my father’s name is ________.  
- I am ________ years old.  
- I love my family.

**Questions and answers** – Fluent speakers can ask and repeat questions that follow a set pattern.

**examples:**

- what is this?  
  this is a ________.  
- what colour is this?  
  it is ________.  
- how old are you?  
  I am ________.  
- what is this for?  
  it is for ________.  
- what colour is this?  
  it is ________.  
- where is the ________?  
  it is there.  
- where are you from?  
  I am from ________.  

- how do you say ________?  
- what am I doing?
Daily Activities

Language is naturally learned through daily activities. All daily activities can be carried out in your First Nations language. In a language immersion camp, phrases and words can be easily learned through daily routines with fluent speakers.

Meals – Learners can pick up words and phrases related to eating, food items, meal preparation, cleaning up and mealtime conversations.

examples:

- are you hungry?
- yes, I’m very hungry
- no, I’m not hungry
- do you like _____?
- this is delicious
- can I have some

more?
how was your meal?
come and eat
I’m full
serve the food
eat all your food

- the food tastes good
- would you like more?
- no thank you
- yes please
- pass the salt

wash the dishes
clear the table
dry the dishes
wipe the table
put the dishes away

examples:

- breakfast
- lunch
- dinner
- feast
- eat
- kitchen

- helping
- hungry
- thirsty
- full
- oven

- guest
- thank you
- washing
- cook
- drink

- knife
- fork
- baking
- cook
- pot

- spoon
- plate
- bowl
- table
- chair
- dishes
Daily Activities

Routines - Learners can pick up words and phrases related to getting up in the morning, getting dressed, going to bed, personal hygiene and the body.

examples:

- are you tired?
- brush your teeth
- get dressed
- I’m tired
- make your bed
- it’s time to wake up
- it’s time to go to bed
- good morning! / good night!
- did you have a good sleep?
- wash your hands and face
- what’s the weather like today?
- the weather is good today
- it’s cold/hot/sunny/rainy/snowy/windy today
- how do you feel today?
- I feel good today

examples:

- early
- late
- awake
- asleep
- tired
- weather
- sun
- cloud
- rain
- sky
- pants
- shirt
- dress
- skirt
- shoes
- socks
- underwear
- hat
- jacket
- vest
- body
- head
- eye
- nose
- mouth
- ear
- hair
- stomach
- arm
- hand
- finger
- leg
- foot
- knee
- teeth
- soap
- wash
- faucet
- toilet
- today
- tomorrow
- shower
- towel
- wet/dry
- bed
- blanket
- pillow
- comb
- toothbrush
- bathroom
Daily Activities

Chores – Learners can participate in daily chores such as chopping firewood, cleaning and gardening. From these chores learners can learn many new words and phrases.

examples:
chop the wood  today we need to _________
pull the weeds  can you help me?
water the plants  is it too heavy?
wash the dishes  carry the wood
clean the house  stack the wood

examples:
firewood   heavy   tree   floor
plants (different names) help   flower   dishes
carry   carry   room
stack   scrub   window
lift   brush   sweep
wash   collect   come/go

clean/dirty

Plans for Activities – Learners and fluent speakers can have simple discussions about plans for the day involving family, friends and community.

examples:
what are we going to do today?  is it a good idea?  where are we going?
let’s go for a walk.  do you want to go ______?  we are going _______
let’s go visit Grandma.  let’s go together  let’s visit _______
what do you want to do?  let’s play a game  let’s go fishing
Outdoor Activities

All outdoor activities can be carried out in your First Nations language. When learners are interested and can see places, things and actions in real life, they tend to remember the vocabulary and phrases better.

**Nature Walks**
- Fluent speakers can explain to learners about preservation, birds-plants-animals interaction, biodiversity and outdoor survival.
- Fluent speakers can point out names of plants (edible plants and berries), animals, geographic features and place names.
- Learners and fluent speakers can visit historical sites and sacred places to learn about traditions and history.

**Outdoor Activities**
- Learners and fluent speakers can participate in cultural outdoor activities.

*example outdoor activities:*

- learning to build fires
- canoeing lessons
- fishing
- gathering food
- tanning hides
- swimming
- food processing
- picnics
- collecting (roots, berries, tree bark)
- building rafts
Oral Language Games

Simple games that learners already know how to play in English work well for learning a language. A tiny bit of competition always adds to the fun of learning. Simple games also help learners feel at ease and comfortable to learn and make mistakes.

**Pictionary** – A learner is secretly given a word or phrase and has to draw it out for his/her teammates to guess.

**Charades** – A learner is secretly given a word or phrase and has to act it out for his/her teammates to guess.

**Card Games** – Cards with pictures or numbers on them can be used for many different games. For example: If two learners have the same card, the first one to say what is on the card gets to keep all the cards.

**Story-making** – Learners are given a few words and have to create an oral story using those words. The stories are usually very funny!

**Drawing** – Learners can practice drawing representations of words and phrases.

**Cut and Paste** – Learners can create personal posters or collages using pictures from magazines, then present their creation to the group.

**Simon Says** – Learners follow as the leader calls out actions. If a learner does the wrong action, he/she can sit down until the next round.

**Learners Teach** – Learners are divided into groups and taught the names of different objects, then each learner is responsible for teaching their words to the other groups.

**Eye-Spy** – Vocabulary items are said aloud and learners must point to the correct object.

**Ball of Yarn Toss** – A learner with a ball of yarn asks a question eg. “who’s your father?” then tosses the ball of yarn to someone else in the circle. Whoever catches the ball of yarn has to answer the question and ask another question, then toss the yarn to someone else.

**Bingo** – A bingo card can be filled with pictures and numbers. When a learner hears something on their card called out, he/she can mark it off.
Cultural Knowledge Activities

All cultural activities can be carried out in your First Nations language. Learners will benefit from observing and participating in activities that allow them to gain cultural knowledge in their First Nations language.

Prayers, Ceremonies and Smudges – can be carried out daily

Lahal - Learn to play lahal, create lahal sticks and play lahal.

Family Trees - Learners can draw family trees and learn family vocabulary and history.

examples:

mother  grandmother/grandfather  sister
father   cousin               grandfather
child   aunt                  grandchild
son     uncle                man
daughter brother  woman

Songs, dancing and drumming - Teach songs by demonstrating one part of the song at a time and having learners repeat.

Place names - Create a map using traditional place names.

Storytelling - Teach phrases and words using pictures, and then tell a story. Have learners re-tell the story.

Visiting - Participants can visit and meet community members with knowledge and wisdom.

Create your own cultural knowledge activities based on your community!
Arts and Crafts

Learners can express themselves by creating crafts and works of art in their First Nations language. Not only the product is important, but also the step-by-step process of learning skills and actions in the First Nations language is extremely valuable.

Art Projects – Learners and fluent speakers can create projects together.

**example projects:**
- dream catchers
- mandelas
- medicine bags
- button blankets
- sewing
- moccasins
- drums
- paintings
- knitting
- weaving

**example words:**
- cut
- sew
- hold
- colours (different colours)
- leather/hide
- button
- cloth
- thread
- yarn
- wool
- needle
- scissors
- tie
- knot
- even
- open
- close
- beads
- loop
- through
- pull
- push
- tight
- loose

Photo: Judy Chartrand
Nine Tips for Successful Language Teaching/Learning

Based on Leanne Hinton (2002)

1) Leave English Behind
   Resist speaking English even though it would be much easier in many situations.
   Avoid creating a pidgin mix of the First Nations language and English.
   Think of English as a habit you are trying to break.

2) Use Nonverbal Communication
   Actions – Act out what you are trying to say.
   Gestures and Facial Expressions – Point to things you are talking about and use facial expressions that show what you are thinking.
   Pictures and Objects – Use things and pictures to help communicate your meaning.

3) Teach in Full Sentences
   At first, learners will be focusing mostly on new words, but hearing the words in the context of full sentences will help the learner remember and understand the real meanings.

4) Aim for Real Communication in your First Nations Language
   Use the language for EVERYTHING.
   Put learners in a situation where they have to use the language to do or get something.
   Set up situations that require communication; rather than study a list of words about the weather, have a conversation about the weather.

5) Language is Also Culture
   Your First Nations Language is not just a translation of English.
   Learning a language includes learning customs, values and traditional activities.
6) **Focus on Listening and Speaking**
You don’t need to use writing and reading to learn to speak a language.
Learners can learn a language unconsciously, simply by hearing it and using it.

7) **Learn and Teach the Language through Activities**
Fluent speakers and language learners should live daily life together. Rather than separating language learning from daily life, use daily activities as language teaching/learning opportunities.

8) **Be an Active Learner**
Language learning requires students to actively participate, rather than passively observe.

9) **Be Patient and Proud of Each Other and Yourselves**
If you get discouraged, remember that you are doing the best you can. Each small step towards revitalizing a First Nations language is extremely valuable.
Five Methods and Approaches

The following are common methods and approaches in language teaching. It is not necessary to choose one approach, but it is useful to keep them in mind while carrying out your language program.

1) Immersion
This method of language teaching surrounds (immerses) learners in the language they are trying to learn. The language is used to communicate and to teach about other subjects. All activities, including meals, stories, daily routines and group activities are done in the language. Rather than teach the language alone, knowledge, skills and activities are taught by using the language. This method is more of a way of living (completely surrounded by the language) than a way to teach.

2) Natural Approach
This approach is based on the idea that a second language is learned in a similar way to a first language. When babies first learn language, they are never taught about grammar or language structures; they naturally learn without any instruction. Therefore, second language learners should also naturally learn language with little or no formal language instruction. Natural approach activities include reading, conversation, language games, and regular daily activities in the language.

3) Communicative/Task-based Approach
This approach is based on the idea that the main purpose of language is to communicate. Therefore, language learning should be focused on communicating and completing tasks in the language. With this approach, learners are not taught about the language, but instead are taught to do things in the language. For example, instead of learning weather vocabulary, a learner learns how to have a conversation about the weather.

4) Total Physical Response
This method of language teaching is based on body movement and speech together. Body movement is related to the mind, and if body movement occurs at the same time as speech, a learner will remember the speech more easily. It can be used to teach almost anything, including actions, object names, and storytelling. For example, while the language teacher calls out actions, learners perform those actions, and will remember the actions and words together.

5) The Silent Way
The basic idea of this approach is to allow the learner to discover, to experience and to have as many opportunities to use the language as possible. Instead of teaching, the teacher sets up opportunities for learners to learn independently. For example, a teacher could tell a story and have learners look at pictures related to the story. By doing this, learners are responsible for figuring out which words in the story go with each object in the pictures. In this approach, it is also important for the learner to make mistakes in order to learn. For example, a learner could guess the wrong name for an object several times before learning the correct name. In the end, the learner will remember the name for the object better than if the teacher had given the correct name right away.
References


TE Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (Māori Language Commission) Resource package for Māori Language Week. www.tetaurawhiri.govt.nz/
For more information please contact:
First Peoples’ Heritage, Language & Culture Council
1A Boat Ramp Road
Brentwood Bay, BC, V8M 1N9
Tel: 250-652-5952 or toll-free through Enquiry BC at 1-800-663-7867
info@fphlcc.ca     www.fphlcc.ca     www.fphlcc.ca/tk__forms.aspx