



Aboriginal Language Newsletter

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Proposed Aboriginal Technology Resource

In response to community requests to provide technical advice and to describe some of the potential that technology can provide to support instruction in Aboriginal languages, the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) is pleased to announce that such a document is being developed.

In partnership with the School Net Technology Committee, the Aboriginal Languages Subcommittee will be putting together a document that will provide “how to” advice as well as listing numerous other sources to assist teachers and curriculum designers in maximizing the benefits of technology without having to pay exorbitant amounts of money on contractors or persons who are not familiar with the language directly.

The Aboriginal Technology Resource should be available in the Fall of 2003.

Update from FPCF, including what is going on with First Voices (Deanna Daniels)

Developed by First Peoples' Cultural Foundation, FirstVoices provides BC First Nations communities with the means to archive language collections, including text, sound, pictures and video, to a Web-based server where they are safely stored. The FirstVoices database is backed up daily to ensure the safety of language collections. Once stored in the FirstVoices database, language resources can be repurposed as printed dictionaries, children's books, online language teaching resources, CDs and more. Training will be offered in the use of the FirstVoices application. FirstVoices is available free to BC First Nations. Aboriginal communities in other jurisdictions will pay license fees designed for long-term sustainability of the project.

Between July and October 2002, First Peoples' Cultural Foundation co-hosted FirstVoices workshops and demonstrations in North America and Australia. The sessions ranged from three days to three weeks in duration and were attended by over 150 Aboriginal people. Participants were invited to make recommendations for improvements to the FirstVoices application and these recommendations have now been incorporated into a unique, very robust, state-of-the-art language archiving tool. FirstVoices Version 1.0 will be launched this spring, (2003).

An ever-expanding group of private, corporate, government and NGO supporters is ensuring the growth and long-term sustainability of the FirstVoices project. Seventeen communities encompassing six languages engaged in the Tribal Digital Village project in Southern California have donated the powerful FirstVoices servers to the project in exchange for full access to the service. Interest in using FirstVoices for language archiving is also high in Australia.

Check the FirstVoices Website for breaking news at www.FirstVoices.com.

Language Curriculum Development workshops

For the past three years FNEC has sponsored, through the Speaker's Series, two levels of Language Curriculum Development workshops. Last year the Aboriginal Languages Subcommittee asked the presenters to explore the possibility of having these workshops accredited through a college or university. Dr. Ethel Gardner at Simon Fraser University (SFU) has been working with the presenters and is very close to finalizing a means to provide credit.

What is being considered is that participants would take the two in person workshops and then work with a SFU faculty member to develop a practical experience where they implement some aspect of what they have learned in the classroom. At the end of the course work and practical experience the participant would receive the appropriate university credit.

Once this has been finalized information will be distributed to all former workshop participants, First Nations, and First Nations schools. Former participants may be eligible to complete the required practical experience and then could receive the credit.

Proposed Graduate Diploma in Aboriginal Languages

Through the experience of the Sto:lo people as they implement their Developmental Standard Term Certificate program it has become evident that there are a number of people who have degrees in education, Arts, etc., who would like to learn their language to teach but do not want to do the DSTC as it includes courses they may have already covered through their degree.

At present SFU field programs is looking to create a Graduate Diploma that would build on the existing DSTC language courses. A prototype is being developed with respect to the Sto:lo Nation courses but other languages would be able to adopt a similar model once their language courses have been approved for university credit. The proposed Diploma would be an ambitious undertaking as it would be two years long of taking courses while you work but may provide incentive for existing teachers to take this training as they will receive additional credentials.

Calendar of Events

Haida Gwaii August 5-11, 2003 there will be an international meeting regarding languages. For more information contact Diane Brown at the Skidegate Band Council (250)559-7861.

Proposed Summer Aboriginal Languages Conference

Following the success of the February 2002 Aboriginal Languages Conference, the Aboriginal Language Subcommittee, in partnership with the FPCF and the Confederacy of Friendship Centres-BC Caucus, have decided to host a second conference in the summer of 2003.

At present a location is being sought with a view to holding the event in Prince George or Kelowna/Merritt. The conference would be funded on a cost recovery basis through registration fees which will be approximately \$300 per person with a group rate available.

The theme for the conference would be First Nations Language and Technology, Where Tradition and Technology meet. The conference will focus on very practical ways to support language preservation and transmission. We are going to explore the possibility of holding the conference at a high school so we can access a computer lab.

A call for presenters will be sent out in May 2003, with the conference program distributed at the end of May along with the registration form.

Clao7alcw Immersion Nest

Clao7alcw is an Indian Language Immersion School with 12 children from 3 - 6 years old.

The Lil'wat language immersion nest is dedicated to empower our people with Language fluency by nurturing them in the Lil'wat way.

Clao7alcw is open from Monday to Thursday with regular school hours. Stella Jim is the main teacher involved, together with the help of three fluent speakers and the parents.

Either of the speakers is there during the day, together with one parent to assist and help the teacher. Due to financial problems, we had to cut the time with the elders.

The stages of immersion are:

1. Comprehension - active listening 2-3 years
2. Speech 2-5 years
3. Reading 5-7 years
4. Writing 7 years

Aboriginal Languages Resource Inventory

Over the fiscal years 2001-2003, FNEESC tried to solicit information from First Nations communities regarding the resources they have created to support the teaching of their languages in their communities/schools. Unfortunately, many have subsequently indicated that they found the survey instrument too cumbersome and were unclear as to the purpose of collecting the information.

The Aboriginal Languages Subcommittee, at the February 10, 2003 meeting, agreed to investigate alternate mechanisms for encouraging people to share their information. It was recommended that we focus on a Best Practices book instead of an inventory and that along with the request for information there should be a better explanation about why we are doing this and what it could do for communities.

The purpose of sharing the information is to assist each other by sharing successes and letting others build on them. It is hoped that we can also learn from each other as to best teaching practices. Information that would be most welcome would include descriptions of some of the resources, curriculum strategies such as scope and sequence, or actual samples. No idea is too small or too simple. In fact, the simpler the better.

Further information regarding this project will be made available shortly. We encourage everyone to take advantage of this opportunity to share your successes.

Aboriginal Languages Sub-Committee

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Saanich Indian School Board
 Kitamaat Village Council
 Sto:lo Nation
 SCES - Secwepemc Cultural Education Society
 Upper St'at'imc Language Authority
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 School District #27 - Cariboo Tribal Council
 Coqualeetza Cultural Centre
 Kwakiutl District Council Sub-Office
 Yinke Dene Language Institute
 Coast Mountain School District #82
 Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a
 Tsimshian Tribal Council
 Nanoose First Nation
 Lower Similkameen
 Skidegate Band Council
 Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council
 Squamish Nation
 First Peoples Cultural Foundation
 BC Ministry of Education
 Musqueam First Nation

If you require further information regarding the FNEESC Aboriginal Language Newsletter, you may call FNEESC at (604) 925-6087 or write us at 113 - 100 Park Royal South, West Vancouver, BC V7T 1A2. Our website address is www.fnesc.bc.ca



Maori Language Tour - New Zealand, April 2003