



Volume One, Number One - November 1985

NATIVE LANGUAGE EDUCATION in ONTARIO

October 28, 1985

Dear Friends,

Greetings from Lakehead, and I hope you are having a creative and busy Fall.

Mary has told you that I am working with her to put out this Newsletter and from time to time, I will write you or put in something of interest for you the Native Language Teachers!

I came across this description in one of my varied readings for courses this year ".!.. a man digging knee-deep, in a muddy ditch, with banks so high as to shut out the landscape, in a hot sun and a swarm of blackflies around his head is a good description of the life of many a deserving teacher." The man who wrote that was Edward Thring about a hundred years ago, and we certainly hope that you aren't in Mr. Thring's rubber boots! I chuckled when I read it because I remember certain times when in the classroom, I felt as though I might have a swarm of blackflies around me!

However, besides entertaining you, I really do have a purpose for this letter. I was fortunate enough to catch Bill McCallum for a few minutes in his busy day. We were discussing the idea that he and some of you had this summer, of organizing a group for the Native Language Instructors out of Lakehead University. Let me refresh your memories and introduce you to the idea if you have not yet heard of it.

You as a group found that a Native Language Instructors' Organization needed to be organized and a name chosen for purposes of group identity. All Native Language Instructors would be able to talk about a common area, and standardize expectations they have.

Discussion did take place with Bill this past July and some elements of a proposal were discussed.

1. Who would be eligible?

- Requirements - Native Language Instructor
- Native ancestry
- fluency in at least one Native language
- qualified instructor or student in NLIP and could be extended to NLTC

2. This organization must have some purpose in meeting.

3. Objectives - To find out what we stand for.

Now the question is "Are you excited about this?". Would you join and support this new born idea? If you do, it could mean a strong organization of Native Language Teachers who have an identity and speak with one voice. The first organizational meeting will take place when NLIP summer session begins. In the meantime if you would like to start a core group in your area and get some suggestions together, please do and let me hear about it.

Hope to hear from you,

Bette Ross

PS You will find a form to fill out and return to me regarding your thoughts about this idea on page 3.

Profile on Genevieve McGinnis



(better known as Genny)

Genevieve is an Ojibway from the Treaty Three area. Married for 36 years, her and husband Harold have 5 children and 13 grandchildren. Genny has resided on the Manitou Rapids reserve near Emo, Ontario all her life.

Her education comprises residential school days, up-grading at Confederation College and her recent (1985) achievement as a graduand of the Native Language Instructors' Program at Lakehead University.

Prior to 1970, Genny was a contented housewife raising her family. She then ventured out into the world, first as a sawmill labourer, then as a store clerk, a Native teacher's aide for 7 years, then advancing to her present career as Ojibway language teacher for the Fort Frances-Rainy River Board of Education. She started teaching with no curriculum or materials. Today, after 5 years of hard work Genny and her daughter Bev who is also an Ojibway language teacher have worked to build up curriculum for K-4. She also works once a month with other teachers, developing Native curriculum on different subjects, (like wild rice, birch bark, pottery, etc.) so teachers can use materials in their classrooms.

Genny likes square dancing, pizza, rabbit and strawberry shortcake. For relaxation she recommends BINGO; she says it stimulates her mind.

Her goals: To wear that black cap and gown from Lakehead University. To hold a great grandchild.

Her advice to young native people is to learn your language and complete your education, "Go for it."

Update on Ministry Courses

On Tuesday, October 22, 1985, a meeting was held at Lakehead University to review last summer's Ministry "certification" programs in Native Language. Present were: Robert Sheridan (Teacher Certification Branch, M.C.U.) Keith Lickers and Mac Hall (Ministry of Education), Del Wolsey (Iroquoian NLTC, University of Western Ontario), Dean McLeod and Mary Mitchell (Lakehead University).

A full day of discussion covered many issues relating to the Iroquoian programs. Among the items were: (1) Admissibility to the program of Delaware and Onondaga teachers (hopeful of a positive decision), (2) Procedures for fluency testing of applicants to the programs (3) Possibility of offering year 3 of the program next summer as well as "validation" year for grads of NLTT/NLIP (seems to be a good possibility), and (4) Specification of the winter experience requirement for admission to the next part of the program. On this last issue, work still needs to be done, and a follow-up meeting is planned for November 18 in Toronto.

Teaching or Turmoil?

Organization

Preparation - knowing what to do, when to do it and having supplies on hand

Plan Book - have it done

- proper supplies
- seating charts - keep them up-to-date
- emergency lesson plans
- keep a resource box
 - dittoed quizzes
 - puzzles
 - extra ideas
 - magazine pictures
 - your own neat ideas

Routine - not time wasting

- keep grading lists up-to-date - it will help when report card time rolls around
- keep extra copies of handouts - if you already have 3 holes punched - kids can put them in notebook
- bulletin board - keep it contemporary
 - new
 - let students help
- class folders are good - keep in same place so students can locate them - one can pass them out

Lesson Plans

Variety - have other activities

- 20 questions
- Trivia game based on your subject
- audio-visual
- creative designing
- student teaching
- drama, simulations
- controlled movement (making circles) moving to game formation

Relationship

- Teachers have a unique relationship with students - not a buddy or a pal
- Respect - indispensable
- Effect rapport - be sensitive to feelings
- Attitudes - you enjoy teaching them and expect the best
 - you think they are capable of doing the work
 - you like and respect each one as an individual

- Be sincere

- Firmness

- Understanding - courtesy to students

- helpful

- flexible

- good humored

- Recognition to appreciate students' efforts

Discipline - order - students like order

- sense of security - can see clearly the rules

- learning and sense of accomplishment is a joy

- begin strictly

- enforce consistently

- punishment - immediate

- impartial

- suitable

- impersonal

Don't - make extravagant threats

- give ultimatums you can't back up

- humiliate a student in front of others

- indulge in mass punishment

Brierley, Ruth D., Teaching or Turmoil, A Practical Handbook on Classroom Control, Silver Burdett Co., Morristown, N.J. 1982.



How Can I Evaluate * Results?

Remember your goals as you evaluate your pupils, or your program, or your teaching.

The number of native words a pupil can say doesn't really show how well he is learning the language. Consider these points:

1. **Attitude:** Does he enjoy the native language and is he proud to speak it?
2. **Use:** Does he use the native language whenever he can (schoolyard, home, etc.) and not just in class when he has to?
3. **Comprehension:** Does he understand the native language when spoken to, not just by his teacher, but by other speakers (e.g. tapes, films, etc.) as well?
4. **Expression:** Can he express himself correctly in complete thoughts? Can he make up his own expressions correctly when he needs to? Are his accent and intonation good?

From time to time, we may wish to find out how well the students have learned. Better yet, we may wish to find out how well we have taught. In what ways can we make these assessments?

1. Questions on Language Master cards. Pupils must record their answers.
2. Distribute sheets of pictures illustrating full phrases (for example, the cat is drinking, three red flowers, etc.). The teacher says the phrases by number - the pupils must write the correct number on each picture.
3. Keep a class list in front of you while you are teaching. For each good answer, put a checkmark beside the pupil's name. Total these checkpoints once a week.
4. Give an oral test, privately, one pupil at a time.
5. Have the children listen to a story recorded on tape, and then paint a picture illustrating the story. They may explain their painting to you in the native language (advanced) or in English (beginners).

* Native Language Teacher's Handbook

How Can I Give Homework?

If you wish to give homework, while avoiding written work and/or translation work, try some of the following.

1. Assign a telephone call. Each student must phone a friend and speak only in the native language while on the phone.*
2. Ask the class to go through one entire meal, using only the native language to ask for food.*
3. Send a language game home to be played. The game should be returned the next day. Games are explained in section C of this Notebook, and include battloship, dominoes, etc.
4. Send home cassette language learning tapes for at-home practice. This may interest and instruct the family as well (for intermediates).
5. Ask the children to collect and bring to class certain articles with their native names. They may have to research this with the older members of the community. For example, five types of weeds or three types of shells, or four types of insects, etc.
6. Assign three- or four-line "plays" for the children to prepare at home for presentation to the class.
7. Send home tiny pictures of household vocabulary already learned. Ask the children to put these in the appropriate places around their houses (e.g. a mirror in the mirror frame). These will serve as reminders to use the language wherever possible.

This type of homework can be fun and should help children to practice and remember what they are learning in school. It will likely have the added advantage of getting their families to be more interested in using the language also.



LETTER FROM AN EXCITED NATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHER!

Verna Shawkanee of Kettle Point Reserve sent along a letter to Mary telling of her creative year that she's been having. Verna graduated in 1981 from the NLIP program. She had an exciting year last year when she conceived the idea of forming an Ojibwe choir.

She got permission from the Native Advisory Committee and her principal and she formed a choir made up of 18 Grade 3 & 4 girls. Verna did this during noon hours 12:30 to 1:00 p.m. when she wasn't on lunch duty. They learned six songs and gave performances in Kettle Point, Sarnia Reserve and at a Lambton County Board of Ed. meeting in Sarnia. They were received with standing ovations and great enthusiasm.

As well, the choir has been singing in non-native schools in the area and they do this to create an awareness of Native Culture through Language.

To date, the choir and Verna are looking forward to going into other schools and the choir itself has expanded to 25 girls. They have native dresses that they sing in and Verna also wears native dress. Verna sent a picture of the group and they are just beautiful.

Verna also teaches Native Culture as well as Native Language in her school....she is using crafts, legends, language, Native art, Native dancing and writing and possibly cooking as part of her program.

Verna says that she feels her teaching has been good and she wants to share her ideas with other teachers.

It is great to hear about teachers that are using the Language and their ideas to excite the students and parents by using Native Culture and Language in the schools. Megwech Verna for sharing this with us and we hope to hear from you again.

Bette Ross

*Thanks to Rebecca White, St. Regis Reserve.

detach here and send to

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☐

Yes, I really think we need to organize as Native Language Teachers. I would like to be an Active Member.

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Yes, it's a great idea and I would like to be a part of core group and help organize next July.

Name _____

Address _____

Thanks for your support.

How Can I Get the Community Involved? *

It is *very* important to the NASL program that the whole community be interested and involved in the native language. Children cannot learn *all* their language in school; the more they use it *outside* of school, the better they will learn and remember it.

Some Ideas for Getting the Community Involved

1. Plays in the native language, to which the whole community is invited.
2. Community production of tapes or video tapes for educational use in the school.
3. Collection and community use of bilingual jokes (this often catches on quickly and becomes a fad).
4. Open house days, when people may visit the native language classrooms as observers.
5. Adult education classes for adults who wish to learn the native language.
6. Home and school meetings where NASL is the topic. If you need teaching materials for your class, you might have a meeting where everybody makes something for the program. This will be fun, and will get folks involved and interested.
7. School yells (for inter-school games, etc.) in the native language.
8. Community sing-songs in the native language.
9. Some kind of honour roll or reward system, planned and administered by the elders of the community, to recognize levels of competence in each child's use of the language.
10. Continued investigation of ways to recognize the native language as a high school credit.
11. Visits to the school by the elders of the community as native language resource people.
12. An educational goal: to teach honour and respect for the community elders and the native language by precept and example. This involves the entire school staff.
13. "Password" admission requirements at community activities. A new word or sentence to be mastered each time.
14. Tapes made by students and mailed to a neighbouring reserve, as newsletters.
15. Native language picnics, camps, summer schools, recreation programs.
16. Material sent home with children after it has been mastered at school (e.g. picture books, game cards, etc.). Some of the more elaborate material might be given as Christmas presents.
17. A talented teenager commissioned to write a folksong (with your help, if necessary) in the native language, with a singalong chorus.
18. Dub films on tape in the native language and show the films with soundtrack turned off, and tape turned on, at community shows.
19. Pictures of "our honour speakers of the month" posted on bulletin board.
20. Continued investigation of the mass media for inclusion of material in the native language (e.g. local TV or radio station).

* Native Language Teacher's Handbook

