THE POLITICS OF LANGUAGE
CULTURAL IMPACTS OF LANGUAGE LOSS AND REVITALIZATION AMONG
THE NEZ PERCE OF IDAHO: A CASE STUDY

A Thesis

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Stefanie Lisa Adams

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Department of Anthropology
Abstract

of

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Statement of Problem

While several Native American languages have been the subject of previous studies, our understanding of the revitalization and preservation efforts concerning the Nez Perce language, Nimipuutímt, remains limited. Nimipuutímt is a member of the Sahaptian subfamily of the Plateau Penutian family of the Penutian language group. This thesis examines the cultural and political impacts of language loss and revitalization for Native American languages, focusing on the efforts of one specific tribe, the Nez Perce of Idaho, to revitalize their heritage language, Nimipuutímt. The research looks at the challenges affecting local language revitalization programs on the Nez Perce Reservation in Lapwai, Idaho, and offers some possible solutions to those challenges. It explores the relative effectiveness of various strategies in language revitalization and preservation and looks at several models of successful language revitalization.
Sources of Data

This study was conducted in north central Idaho in the towns of Lapwai and Lewiston in March of 2017. Interviews with a variety of individuals and observations of several Nez Perce language classes were conducted at the Lapwai combined Middle/High School, the Lapwai Elementary School, the Tribal Community Center in Lewiston, Lewis-Clark State College, and the Nez Perce National Historic Park Visitor Center. Individuals observed or interviewed ranged in age from preschool children to tribal elders.

Conclusions Reached

In comparing the Nez Perce language revitalization program to other more well-established programs, it seems that the program, although in its early stages, is thriving and its future looks hopeful. Many of the teaching tools used by other similar programs are also being employed here. The language program is well received and supported by the entire community and although there is still much work yet to be done, the tireless efforts of the language coordinators and the elders, along with the support of the Lapwai Public School System and the enthusiasm of the students, indicate that the Nez Perce language revitalization program is on track for success.

_______________________, Committee Chair
Joyce M. Bishop, Ph.D.

_______________________
Date
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I offer my heartfelt gratitude to the people of the Nez Perce Tribe for welcoming me onto the Nez Perce Reservation and into the classroom. Special thanks to Josiah Pinkham for helping me coordinate my entire trip and introducing me to key language educators for the Tribe, for speaking with me about his experiences with the language as well as important cultural aspects of the Tribe, and for giving me a tour of the culturally significant places on tribal land.

Thank you to Thomas “Tatlo” Gregory for helping me through the research permit application process which allowed me to work with the Tribe, for welcoming me into his Nez Perce language classes at the combined Middle/High School in Lapwai, and for taking the time to sit and talk with me about his language experiences growing up and his experiences as one of the Nez Perce language coordinators for the Tribe.

Thanks also to Angel Sobotta for allowing me to shadow her in her many Nez Perce language classes at the Preschool, the Elementary School, the combined Middle/High School, and at Lewis-Clark State College, and for being so open with me during our interview regarding her experiences with the language and her position as one of the Nez Perce language coordinators for the Tribe.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

While several Native American languages have been the subject of previous studies, our understanding of the revitalization and preservation efforts concerning the Nez Perce language, Nimipuutímt, remains limited. Nimipuutímt is a member of the Sahaptian subfamily of the Plateau Penutian family of the Penutian language group. The goal of my research is to examine the cultural and political impacts of language loss and revitalization for Native American languages, focusing on the efforts of one specific tribe, the Nez Perce of Idaho, and their attempts to revitalize their heritage language, Nimipuutímt. This thesis looks at the challenges affecting local language revitalization programs on the Nez Perce Reservation in Lapwai, Idaho, and offers some possible solutions to those challenges. It explores the relative effectiveness of various strategies in language revitalization and preservation in order to suggest a model that speakers of other languages may potentially use in the future. I am interested in four main questions: (1) what types of Native language instruction are available on the Nez Perce Reservation in Lapwai, Idaho; (2) what is the makeup of the student population; (3) how the student population responds to the language instruction available to them as well as how community members in general view language preservation and revitalization; and (4) what are the historical and political contexts of the current state of the language, as well as how the language education program is related to tribal sovereignty.
The fieldwork for this thesis was conducted over a two week period in March of 2017. Because the Nez Perce convey their history through stories and because they use storytelling as a primary teaching method, I found myself adopting this same approach in conveying my research.

**Background**

Language loss is a worldwide problem and an issue of major importance to Native American populations. According to linguist Michael Krauss, “as many as half of the estimated 6,000 languages spoken on earth are ‘moribund’; that is, they are spoken only by adults who no longer pass them on to the next generation” (Krauss 1992:5). Numerous Native languages are threatened because the number of children learning them is declining measurably and they are currently spoken only by elders. Scholars agree that linguistic diversity is a necessity for species survival.

If diversity is a prerequisite for successful humanity, then the preservation of linguistic diversity is essential, for language lies at the heart of what it means to be human. If the development of multiple cultures is so important, then the role of languages becomes critical, as cultures are chiefly transmitted through spoken and written languages. Accordingly, when language transmission breaks down, through language death, there is a serious loss of inherited knowledge: Any reduction of language diversity diminishes the adaptational strength of our species because it lowers the pool of knowledge from which we can draw (Crystal 2000:33-34).

For example, among the 16 indigenous languages still spoken in Washington State, few if any, have fluent speakers under the age of 60. All of California’s 31 existing Native American languages are moribund; of these, 22 are spoken only by small groups of elders. At today’s rates of language loss, it is estimated that by the year 2050, 135 of the American
Indian and Alaska Native languages spoken today are likely to disappear (Crawford 1995:18).

Assimilation policies of the late 19th and early 20th centuries in the United States centered around education. The goal of the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) was to assimilate Native Americans, especially children, into the dominant American society (Cordasco 1978:1-6). Beginning in 1879, Native American children were removed from their families and enrolled in government run boarding schools which were often located a great distance from their tribal homelands and their families. The idea was to prevent the Native children from attempting to run away and also to keep them from any influences pertaining to their traditional ways of life. While at the boarding schools, Native children were completely immersed in the values of dominant American society; the most important aspect of assimilation into that society was thought to be proficiency in the English language (Reyhner 2006:1-8). Students at the boarding schools were prohibited from speaking their Native languages and were forced to learn English. The BIA saw this as a way to help Native Americans become more “civilized.” In the words of Lieutenant Richard Henry Pratt, architect of the BIA boarding school system, the educational strategy was “kill the Indian…and save the man” (Crawford 1995:48). The idea was for the children to return to the reservations after graduating from the boarding schools and convert the rest of the tribe to more “civilized” ways; however, this is rarely what happened. Most often, the children reverted to their traditional ways upon returning home.

It was not until the 1930s when an anthropologist by the name of John Collier became Commissioner of Indian Affairs that the situation for Native children at the
boarding schools began to improve. Collier was much more respectful of Native American cultures than his predecessors and in 1934 he ordered the BIA to stop interfering with them. He supported bilingual education and promoted adult literacy among the Navajo. However, despite his best efforts, many BIA schools maintained their English-only policies well into the 1950’s (Crawford 1995:49). Many people cite BIA boarding schools as the main contributing factor in Native American language loss.

The overall effect of the boarding schools on Native languages was detrimental and long-lasting. Those effects can still be felt today. Being punished for speaking their ancestral languages often devalued the language in the mind of the Native child and many accepted the dominant society’s judgments when it came to the use of the language (Crawford 1995: 27). As a result, there formed a legacy of opposition to bilingual education among Natives who vividly remembered the pain that they suffered in school and who hoped to protect their own children and grandchildren from the same experience (Crawford 1995:27-28). Furthermore, even when a family continues to use a threatened language in the home, the outside environment may have such a strong effect that once a child reaches school age, he or she may unconsciously shift to speaking English predominantly and may no longer use his or her heritage language even at home (Kouritzin 1999:14-18). All of these factors combine to make the prospect of language revitalization and renewal rather bleak.

Today, the situation for many native languages in the United States is dire. At one time, as many as 90 languages were spoken in what is now California. As of 2003, according to Andrew Dalby, of those 90 languages, 45 or more have no fluent speakers left
at all, 17 have only one to five speakers left, and remaining languages are only spoken by elders. Not a single California Native language is currently being used as the language of daily communication (Dalby 2003:239-240). According to Leanne Hinton, “when an indigenous group is a minority in a country governed by speakers of a different language, the language of the indigenous group is potentially in danger of diminishing in use and perhaps eventually becoming extinct” (Hinton 2001a:3).

Hinton describes several levels of severity with regard to language endangerment. The first level is when a language is still spoken by all age groups, but with a visible decline in the proportion of children learning it at home as well as a decline in the various domains in which the language is used for communication. The second level is reached when a language is no longer being learned by children at home. This might mean that the parents know the language but have stopped using it or the grandparents are the last generation that knows the language. Third is a level where no one except for a few elders speaks the language, followed by a level where a language has lost all of its speakers and only exists in a written record of a linguist. This is the level at which a language is no longer considered endangered but is now regarded as a “dead language” (Hinton 2001a:4). Nimipuutímt is on the third level of this schema. Technically moribund, today it is only spoken fluently by a handful of elders.

**Definition of Terms**

In her book, *Face[t]s of First Language Loss*, Sandra G. Kouritzin offers definitions for six terms that are of value in the consideration of language revitalization:
(1) *Language loss* occurs “when [a] minority group member cannot do the things with the minority language that he used to be able to do…some of the proficiency he used to have is no longer accessible.” It may also refer to incomplete or imperfect learning of a language spoken in childhood (Kouritzin 1999:12). (2) *Language shift* usually refers to “the change from the habitual use of one language to that of another” either by a language community or an individual (Kouritzin 1999:12-13). (3) *Language attrition* (also known as language regression or language erosion) “may refer to the loss of any language or any portion of a language by an individual or a speech community” whether because of aphasia, aging, or for any social, catastrophic, or political reason (Kouritzin 1999:13). (4) *Subtractive bilingualism* usually refers to the loss of the minority language during the acquisition of a second language. In some instances, it may at times also refer in a general sense to semilingualism, the experience of language loss in minority language children who are schooled in a majority language “which results in reduced language mastery of both languages” (Kouritzin 1999:13). (5) *Language death* refers almost exclusively to those languages spoken by indigenous communities that, when they are no longer used as the languages of schooling, bureaucracy, or government, lose their “primary language” function (language obsolescence) and thus lose their viability. A language dies when nobody speaks it anymore (Kouritzin 1999:13). (6) *Language change* refers to all of the above, but also includes language acquisition, language learning, and historical linguistic development. (Kouritzin 1999:13).

One term that is absent from Kouritzin’s schema is *language revitalization*, a fact which seems strange to me given her expertise in language dynamics. On the other hand,
Hinton (2001a:5) defines *language revitalization* as “the development of programs that result in re-establishing a language which has ceased being the language of communication in the speech community and bringing it back into full use in all walks of life.” In addition, Hinton states that revitalization can begin with a less extreme state of loss, such as the situation with Irish or Navajo. Each of these languages are the first language of many children and both are used in many homes as the language of communication, though both languages are still slowly declining. For the communities who speak these languages, revitalization would mean a reversal of that slow decline.

**Need for the Study**

Linguistic diversity is an issue of growing social importance because the continued existence of the majority of living languages is currently threatened. The fact that there is such complex diversity among the world’s languages reflects the underlying complexity of humankind. Changes in the vitality of a language have important implications for individuals and societies. Individual languages reflect cultural patterns and categories and provide a mechanism for transmitting culture. This is why when an individual learns a “foreign” language, the customs and culture of the speakers of that language are often learned as well. Languages are distinctive features of communities as well as markers of the complex diversity of humankind. When a language dies, a whole system of beliefs and customs dies with it.

In Chapter 6, I examine specific examples of language revitalization including Hebrew, Native Hawaiian, and the Maori Kohanga Reo program in New Zealand, as well
as Arapaho and Keres in Wyoming and New Mexico respectively. It is important to understand, however, that ethnic minorities all over the world are currently fighting for their political and civil rights. The preservation of culture, along with language maintenance and revitalization, are integral parts of that fight. In the United States, the support of Spanish through public school programs that are designed to foster true bilingualism rather than a transition to monolingual English for immigrant students are a case in point. Extraordinary efforts are being made to save and preserve numerous languages here and in many countries. It is my belief that as citizens of the world, it is our duty and obligation to promote tolerance of one another and to strive to discover commonality among our differences. The present ethnographic study is one such attempt.

Limitations of the Study

According to nezperce.org, the Nez Perce Reservation currently spans about 770,000 acres with approximately 3,500 enrolled citizens. This includes communities of Nez Perce located in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho, though most individuals live in Idaho in the towns of Lapwai, Orofino, and Kamiah, with Lapwai being the seat of the tribal government. This study is limited primarily to the student populations in the communities of Lapwai and Lewiston (home of Lewis-Clark State College) and the resources and language programs available in these two locations.

Organization of Thesis

In Chapter 2, I present the background for my study. I review the literature pertaining to the social, cultural, and political history of the Nez Perce, and look at the
various laws and policies that have been enacted by the Federal Government, as well as the impact those laws and policies have had on the tribal way of life. I also look at some U.S. language policies and their impact on language maintenance and I examine the important role that storytelling plays in Nez Perce culture and in language revitalization.

Chapter 3 describes the methodology of my study, including instrumentation, setting, demographics, and design. Chapter 4 introduces the key collaborators in my study and describes their personal histories and motivations for doing the work that they do. Chapter 5 describes my classroom observations and interactions with tribal elders that took place during the fieldwork, providing several examples of teaching techniques and resources employed in classroom activities. Chapter 6 presents an analysis and interpretation of my data in comparison to other language programs. In Chapter 7, I provide a summary and concluding discussion of the implications arising from this research.

**Conclusion**

Language revitalization and preservation occur when a given community recognizes the value of saving their native language. It is easy for a heritage language to disappear as a result of various outside pressures such as the need for individuals to succeed in the dominant society and the perceived value of the heritage language to the Native group, including its role in family life and individual lives. I hope that my examination of the Nimipuutimt Language Revitalization Program will encourage other Native American groups to follow course.
Chapter 2

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The Social, Cultural, and Political History of the Nez Perce

“We fish the same rivers our grandfathers fished long before the arrival of Columbus. We dig roots in meadows our grandmothers harvested before the rise of the Roman Empire. We live in the places our ancestors called home before the great pyramids of Egypt were built. Our land defines the Nez Perce Way.” These are the opening words of a book written by the Nez Perce Tribe titled *Treaties: Nez Perce Perspectives* (Nez Perce Tribe 2003). These words describe a rich history and a way of life that has existed among the Nez Perce for many years and is still present in their society today. In one of the first books written from the Nez Perce perspective, *Hear Me My Chiefs*, L.V. McWhorter (1952) records an oral interview with Howlis Wonpoon (or War Singer, also known as Camille Williams), a native linguist and interpreter who provided the following account about the antiquity of the Tribe:

On the North Fork of the Clearwater River a few miles below Bungalow Ranger Station, the footprints of a human are plainly seen, sunken into the basaltic rock formation. The tracks are those of a man running upstream. These footprints were made in a soft surface. How long since the change into hard basalt took place nobody knows. The man was older than the stone itself. On the Snake River there are stony tracks of a woman and a child. Also tracks at a bathing place near Fir Bluff, today a solid rock formation. All these we regard as of Nez Perce origin.

McWhorter also records some of the earliest stories of the Nez Perce. “One of the Nez Perce creation stories tells us that our ancestors lived near the Salmon River, and as we grew more numerous we began to travel farther and farther—and to settle along other
rivers. These stories serve as our aboriginal Bible. They explain our beginnings” (Nez Perce 2003:2). The figure of Coyote, ever present in Nez Perce culture, represents various aspects of humanity and is thought of as a teacher figure. As such, he plays a significant role in Nez Perce creation stories. These stories have been passed down from generation to generation through oral tradition and serve to teach vital lessons with regard to the land, cultural values, and the history of the Nez Perce as a people.

Storytelling plays a significant role in Nez Perce culture. One of the more well known Nez Perce stories explains how Coyote created human beings. Not only was this story told to me several times during my fieldwork, but various versions of the story appear repeatedly in print. One version, told by Allen Pinkham, is presented in *Salmon and His People: Fish and Fishing in Nez Perce Culture* by Dan Landeen and Allen Pinkham. The story is presented as follows:

**Coyote Creates the Human Beings**

*Some time after the animals had been created, along came Coyote. Coyote had all the emotions and problems that humans have today. Everything that the human being was, this is what Coyote was. He was traveling one day when his brother, Fox, stopped him and told Coyote that a great monster was devouring all the animal people. Fox told Coyote that he had to save the animal people. Coyote gave it some thought and decided that maybe he would have to kill this monster. He got five flint knives all sharpened and shaped and put them in his belt. He had a little pouch and he put soot and pitch and rope in it. Then Coyote went to look for the monster.*

*He came across the prairie where Grangeville is now, and he hollered over toward the Clearwater Valley. The monster at that time was laying in the valley devouring all the animal people. Coyote hollered, “Monster, here I am! I am right here! Come and get me! You can’t eat me like you do those other people. Come and get me!”*  

*So the monster raised his head over the edge of the canyon and looked out across the prairie towards the place where Coyote was hollering at him.*  

*Coyote said, “Oh, there you are monster. I’ve come here to see what you are doing to the animal people.*

*The monster looked over and said, “I am going to eat you, too.”*
The monster devoured the animal people by sucking them into his stomach with his breath. Coyote knew this so he tied himself to the mountain on the other side. So when the monster would suck in his breath, Coyote would come to the end of his rope and stop. He teased the monster saying, “You can’t get me.” And then the monster would try again, but Coyote would stop at the end of the rope. The monster did this three times.

Coyote finally decided to go inside the monster so he could rescue the animal people. He reached around him and cut the rope and went in the monster’s mouth. When he was inside Coyote looked around until he could see the animal people. Some were already devoured, some were half dead, and some were still alive. As Coyote was walking among them, Rattlesnake shook his rattle and struck out at him and Coyote said, “What are you getting mad at me for? I came here to save you, and here you are striking out at me.” So Coyote stepped on Rattlesnake’s head, and that’s why today Rattlesnake has a flat head. Coyote went a little further and Grizzly Bear roared and growled at Coyote. Coyote said, “What are you getting mad at me for? I came here to rescue you.” Grizzly Bear growled at him again, so Coyote pushed his nose, and that’s why Grizzly Bear has a flat nose. Coyote then told all the animal people that he was going to rescue them and that he was going to kill the monster.

Coyote built a fire from the pitch in his pouch, and he used the fat from the monster to keep the fire going. Then Coyote told the people, “When the monster takes its last breath, you all escape by running out of the holes of the monster. Wait by the holes and when the monster takes its last breath, run out. That will be your last chance to escape.” Then Coyote started working. He started to cut the heart away. While he was doing this, sometimes his knife would break, and he would get another knife and keep going. In time he was down to his last knife and the last piece of flesh that was holding the heart. Coyote then told the animals to get ready because the monster was going to die. The animals were waiting by the holes in the monster: by the nose, by the ears, by the mouth, and by the hole underneath the tail. When Coyote made the last cut, the heart came loose. When the monster took his last great breath, all the animals ran out. The last one out was Muskrat. He ran out the hole where the tail was and the hole closed on his own tail while he was getting out. That’s why Muskrat’s tail doesn’t have any hair.

When the monster was dead, Coyote came out and said, “This place should have some human beings in it. It is such a beautiful place to be. I am also going to create other people, too.” Coyote started cutting the monster up, and as he did this he would throw pieces of the monster in all directions, and he would create tribes out on the Plains and to the south and east and north and west. So Coyote did all that. He scattered the body parts to the four winds, and that’s where the different tribes came from.

Then his brother Fox said to Coyote, “You forgot to put human beings here. You have to create people here, too.” Coyote replied, “What I will do is create people this way.” Coyote washed his hands in water to get the blood off and scattered the blood droplets on the ground. When those drops of blood hit the earth, human beings sprang up as Nee-mee-poo, the Nez Perce people. That’s how we were created: from the blood that hit the earth. Coyote said, “These will be a special kind of people in this valley. They will have strong hearts and strong minds and they will live well here in this valley. That’s how
the Nez Perce people came to be. To this day you can still see the heart of the monster where Coyote cut it out at Kamiah, Idaho (Landeen and Pinkham 1999:51-52).

The Nez Perce traditionally lived in villages. Tribal life evolved around small, semi-permanent villages scattered along major rivers and streams. Historically, the Nez Perce occupied a territory that encompassed virtually all of what is now north Central Idaho, northeastern Oregon, and southeastern Washington State. Evidence of human occupation in those lands traditionally occupied by the Nez Perce dates back as far as 11,000 years and possibly beyond. “In the adjudication of Nez Perce claims for the taking of property without just compensation, the Indian Claims Commission determined that the Nez Perce Tribe once had exclusive use and occupancy of 13,204,000 acres of land” (Nez Perce 2003:4). A map of the historic Nez Perce territory versus the current Nez Perce territory is shown in Figure 2-1.

![Figure 2-1. Historic Nez Perce Territory vs. Current Nez Perce Territory](image-url)
Different bands of Nez Perce were known to each other by the river drainage in which they resided and the Nez Perce name for the area in which they lived. In addition to the geographical name of the place, these areas were also named for the leaders or headmen of that place. Today, bands are remembered by the oldest known leader of their given area or their last occupation prior to displacement. Most of the Nez Perce on the reservation today are either Upriver (Kamiah and above), Downriver (Lapwai area), and Aspacha (Orofino area). Outside the reservation, many Nez Perce live on the Palouse (Nez Perce 2003:5).

Social interchange and trade were historically and prehistorically conducted between and among the bands throughout the Columbia River Basin. Today, many of the people divided into tribes still have blood ties to members of other tribes as a result of ancestral intermarriage between bands across ethnic boundaries. Because intermarriage on the Plateau continues, many of the groups in the area remain related.

Survival dictated that individual Nez Perce bands move in an annual gathering cycle in order to maintain the delicate balance between the people and the resources that the land had to offer. They depended on nature to survive, from the salmon runs during the spring and fall that coursed through the region’s rivers to the deer, elk, and other game animals that were utilized for their meat, fur, and skin, as well as the berries, roots, and mosses that were also staples of the diet (Hines 1984:17). This meant that they traditionally lived in small, semi-permanent villages scattered along major rivers and streams. (Landeen and Pinkham 1999:54). There are more than 300 known Nez Perce village sites in the aboriginal areas of Oregon, Idaho, and Washington that encompass over 13.5 million acres.
(Nez Perce 2003:5). The earliest inhabitants probably relied on foraging for plants and on hunting large mammals. Gradually, as resources were used on a more seasonal basis, people began living in rock shelters, storing food, and eating more fish and shellfish. As people increased their dependence on rivers and river resources, they also increased the number of base camps and settlements along major rivers, such as the Columbia, Snake, and Clearwater (Landeen and Pinkham 1999:53). As a means of shelter during the cold winter months, Nez Perce bands would set up camp at lower elevations with proximity to water, fuel for cooking fires, and game to hunt. Communal longhouses were dug several feet into the ground, approximately 15-20 feet wide and 50-70 feet or more in length. Life within the longhouse centered around the fires which were placed in a row down the middle of the structure’s floor. Each fire was shared by at least two families. During the warmer spring and summer months, the longhouse was dismantled and individual families put up tipis in its place (Hines 1984:18).

The acquisition of the horse in the 1730s drastically changed the Nez Perce lifestyle. Horses had been brought to what is now the U.S. southwest by Spanish conquistadors and settlers in the 1600s. The Nez Perce subsequently acquired horses through conflict with the nearby Shoshone. With increased mobility, people of the plateau could travel more frequently, both east to buffalo country in Montana and north to the Columbia Basin region to trade, hunt, and fish. The Nez Perce and the Cayuse were the only groups known to selectively breed horses to improve their stock. This practice added to the wealth and reputation of the Nez Perce in terms of trade goods and territory (Landeen and Pinkham 1999:57).
Traditional Nez Perce social structure consisted of villages, bands, composite bands, and the entire ethnic group itself. Villages were often comprised of family and extended family groupings. There was little need for extended political organization beyond the band headman and peace leaders who insured the safety and provisioning of the women, elderly, and children (Nez Perce 2003:5). Individuals derived their identity from the commonality of language, land, family, and religion. Territorial rights were honored and special permission had to be obtained to hunt, fish, or gather in another’s territory (Landeen and Pinkham 1999:57). Leadership was specialized with regard to function, such as warfare, hunting, fishing, religion, conflict resolution, and healing, as is common among foraging societies.

The arbitrary classification of peoples into the specific local “tribes” that we know today occurred only after the arrival of Europeans. In fact, at first contact, the Nez Perce, Cayuse, and Palouse were so intermarried at the time that it was difficult to distinguish between them. The Nez Perce regularly visited their relatives when travelling throughout the region. Relatives were the primary links with other areas for purposes of resource utilization (Landeen and Pinkham 1999:53). The classification of native peoples of the Americas into “tribes” was primarily an ethnocentric European convention that ultimately proved politically advantageous to the United States government. By labeling individual groups of people who inhabited different geographical areas as separate “tribes,” the United States government could justify dealing with each group separately, a policy which served to scatter and divide people. This led to the eventual degradation of a very strong indigenous Nez Perce culture (Nez Perce 2003:6). However, contemporary Nez Perce
people are fighting back by maintaining their own identity through oral histories, songs, legends, dances, and religious and other cultural ceremonies.

Our identity and our story are written within our hearts and minds. It is the strength of our elders who carry our oral traditions and the spirit of our children that continue to bring life to us in full circles, circles that transcend the adversity and challenges of our changing society (Nez Perce 2003:6).

In *Treaties: Nez Perce Perspectives*, it is stated that, “To some extent, the lives of our ancestors are recorded in the treaties. Our spiritual values related to hunting, fishing, and gathering are even reflected in the treaty language. The very purpose of protecting these rights was to safeguard our strong spiritual beliefs” (Nez Perce 2003:7). Many of the values that sustain and drive Nez Perce culture today are fundamentally the values that were important when the treaties were being negotiated. That said, contact with European settlers ultimately changed the Nez Perce way of life forever.

The Nez Perce, who call themselves Nimi’puu “Nee-Mee-Poo” (“The Real People”), first came into contact with Euro-Americans in the early 1800s. The name Nez Perce is French for “pierced nose” and was applied to the Tribe by early French Canadian fur traders, who apparently observed a few individuals in the region with pendants in their noses. Nose piercing, however, is not a common Nez Perce custom. In 1805, the Nez Perce came into contact with members of the Lewis and Clark expedition, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark who falsely referred to the Tribe by the name given to them by the early French Canadian fur traders. By 1836, the Nez Perce had entered into a new relationship with the Euro-Americans which created a permanent change that still affects the Tribe today. A group of Presbyterian ministers led by Henry Spalding arrived in Lapwai, Idaho, and settled in the area in an effort to introduce Christianity to the Nez Perce. In many ways,
the United States government used religion to divide and conquer the Nez Perce people by funding missionaries and their missions (Nez Perce 2003:10). Those Nez Perce people who adopted the Christian religion discovered that advances could be made in terms of material wealth and by doing so, land acquisition. Those Nez Perce who clung to their traditional Walasat faith soon realized that this division would tear the Tribe apart for many generations. Today, the Nez Perce people practice a variety of religions. Many belong to one or another of the various Christian denominations while others choose to celebrate their faith through traditional Nez Perce ceremonies in the long house (Landeen and Pinkham 1999:58-59).

**History of United States Laws and Policies**

Generally, the Indian policy of the United States can be divided into six eras: (1) The Colonization Era (1492-1776), (2) The Relocation Era (1776-1880s), (3) The Allotment Era (1887-1930s), (4) the Indian Reorganization Era (1934-1960s), (5) the Termination Era (1960-1970s), and (6) the Self-Determination Era (1975-present) (Nez Perce 2003:18). Prior to European contact, North America was inhabited by thousands of native people with organized social, economic, and governmental structures by which they protected their homes and resources. Each group (or nation) controlled its own territory, exhibited its own cultural and social patterns, spoke one of some 250 languages, practiced its own religion, and developed medicines to heal its sick. Alliances were made between native groups with regard to trade, commerce, and territorial boundaries. In essence, these alliances can be thought of as the first early form of treaties (Nez Perce 2003:18).
From the beginning of European contact, treaties and agreements were made between European immigrants and indigenous groups in which European goods were exchanged for land and friendship. Few European immigrants would have survived without the aid and support of these native peoples. As with other indigenous groups in the west, the Colonization Era for the Nez Perce occurred later than it did for eastern and mid-western tribes. For all intents and purposes the first official agreement between the Nez Perce and the United States Government occurred in 1805 with the Lewis and Clark expedition. However, prior to their treaties with the U.S. government, the Nez Perce already had extensive experience dealing with fur trappers, trading companies, missionaries, and immigrants.

European contact brought with it the introduction and spread of European diseases, which had a dramatic and detrimental effect on tribal populations in general and the Nez Perce in particular. Early settlers brought diseases such as smallpox and cholera that quickly spread up the Columbia River and into Nez Perce country. “By the year 1810, an epidemic had nearly wiped out the lower Columbia River bands and the news of this catastrophe soon reached the upriver tribes” (Nez Perce 2003:21).

In spite of these depredations, by the 1830s and 1840s, the Nez Perce, Cayuse, and Umatilla tribes, as well as others, had acquired great herds of horses and Spanish cattle and were considered among the wealthiest tribes in the Northwest. Those tribal members who resided near the missions also produced agricultural crops that they traded to the incoming colonists who were arriving in the territory. However, by 1843, “what had begun as twenty
to thirty new settlers a year had soon increased to 800, then to 1,000” resulting in growing
friction between white settlers and Native American groups.

Most of the principles that exist in federal Indian law today are a result of early
European contact with Native Americans. Initially, during the formative years of the
United States, individual tribes had enough power and political authority so that by
comparison, the U.S. government was limited in their control. It was not until after the War
of 1812 that the relationship between the U.S. government and Native American tribes
began to deteriorate. In 1823, John Marshall, Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court,
determined in Johnson v. McIntosh that “although tribes retained occupancy and use rights
to their aboriginal lands, they were precluded from selling or ceding their lands to anyone
other than the country that ‘discovered’ them. Thus began the decline of true sovereignty
for the Indian nations of North America” (Nez Perce 2003:26).

The Indian Removal Act of 1830 marked a time period when Native people of the
southeastern United States were being forced off of their lands and crowded into a small
area west of the Mississippi so that Euro-American settlers could have access to the
valuable resources on the lands in the South. The removal policy “brought tremendous
suffering to the uprooted people and disrupted the lives of the people already inhabiting
the region to which they moved. As many as a quarter of the Cherokees died on their Trail
of Tears in 1838” (Calloway 2012:292). The relocation that took place had tremendous
consequences for all involved. Tribes such as the Choctaw, Cherokee, and Creeks, were
removed from their lands in Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, North Carolina, and Florida
and relocated to the Oklahoma area. They were placed in an environment that was
physically and ecologically different from what they were accustomed to. The land was unfamiliar to them and they were forced to live with other ethnic groups who spoke different languages and had different customs and traditions, a situation which sometimes led to conflict (Calloway 2012:290-292).

In response to their desire to expand westward into territories occupied by Native American peoples, the Federal Government developed policies for dealing with them. By 1871, the U.S. stopped making treaties and instead attempted to assimilate the Native Americans into “white” society (Calloway 2012:346). The ultimate result of the relocation era for the Nez Perce was the Nez Perce War of 1877. Though the Nez Perce did not start this war, it was the ultimate response to years of mistrust and broken promises with the U.S. Federal government. The Federal government had reduced the boundaries of the reservation to one tenth of its original size and demanded that all bands of Nez Perce located outside the new boundary lines relocate onto the reservation. Chief Joseph, a leader of the Wallowa band of the Nez Perce Tribe, became famous in 1877 for leading his people across the Bitterroot Mountains and into Montana with federal troops in pursuit. He eventually surrendered the decimated band to federal troops near the Canadian border in Montana. Chief Joseph and his followers were taken to a reservation in Indian Territory in present day Oklahoma, where they remained until 1885 when they were sent to the Colville Reservation in North Central Washington (historylink.org).

To ensure assimilation, Congress passed the General Allotment Act of 1887, also known as the Dawes Act (Canby 2004:20-23). A key tenant of this act was that communal ownership of tribal lands be changed to individual ownership. Each Native American male
over the age of 18 was given an allotment of acres and the rest of the tribal lands, considered to be “excess,” were sold to non-natives. The Indian Citizenship Act, passed in 1924, granted Indians United States citizenship but this required them to pay taxes on their piece of land (Calloway 2012:446-447). Further ensuring assimilation, “the Allotment Era also marked the establishment of boarding schools both on and off the reservations. Indian children as young as five years old were shipped away to schools far from their homes where they were required to speak English” (Nez Perce 2003:57). Students at the boarding schools were punished for speaking their native language or practicing aspects of their native culture or religion.

After some three decades, the Merriam Report of 1928 declared allotment to be a complete disaster. “The allotment system arguably produced even greater poverty on the reservation that the relocation era” (Nez Perce 2003:54). The Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) of 1934 set up Reservation Business Councils to govern tribes and provided for the adoption of tribal constitutions and the granting of federal charters, thus reversing the policy of allotment and encouraging tribal organization. Native Nations were given the opportunity to salvage their political structures and regain some of their traditions. Many, but not all, tribes adopted the IRA structure (Calloway 2012:488-489).

However, by 1953, new legislation was passed that mandated a reversal of the tribal self-government movement previously endorsed and ended the trust relationship between Federal and certain Tribal Governments. More than 50 Tribal Governments were terminated. The Federal Government simply no longer recognized them as Indian Nations. Public law 280, passed in 1953, gave six states, including Alaska, California, Minnesota,
Nebraska, Wisconsin, and Oregon, mandatory and substantial criminal and civil jurisdiction over Indian country. Ten other states also opted to accept some degree of P.L. 280 jurisdiction. Those states included Arizona, Florida, Idaho, Iowa, Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Washington. The Federal Government stopped providing subsistence to the tribes, thereby breaking the federal trust responsibility that had been defined by the Marshall Trilogy more than a century before (Canby 2004:232-234).

By 1961, the abuses of the termination era again led to reforms. The period between 1961 and the present-day has been one of self-determination and self-governance. Characterized by the expanded recognition of the powers of tribal self-government, important legislation during this time period included the Indian Civil Rights Act of 1968, the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975, the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, the American Indian Religious Freedoms Act of 1978 and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (Calloway 2012:546-576). Sadly, changing policies of the current administration are once again calling these advancements into question.

Interestingly, the Nez Perce notion of self-determination was somewhat different from that of other groups. Wanting to maintain the trust responsibility held by the U.S. government, the Nez Perce Tribe repeatedly voted against self-determination. As a result, Nez Perce programs and departments such as health, forestry, fisheries, education, and land operations no longer filtered through federal departments such as the Bureau of Indian Affairs or Indian Health Service. Today, the Tribe is free to implement its own social programs and policies.
Language Policies in the United States

Language policies in any country, whether written or unwritten, have an impact on the languages that people choose to use on a daily basis. The predominance of English in day-to-day life in the United States has had a profound effect on the maintenance or loss of heritage languages. A fear of linguistic diversity has been present in American society since the arrival of the first colonizers to the country. The lack of official language policies on the part of the United States government has long made the oppression of heritage language speakers possible. Research by Macedo et al. (2003) indicates that,

...as the mainstream culture felt threatened by the presence of multiple languages, which were perceived as competing with English, the reaction by the media, educational institutions, and government agencies was to launch periodic assaults on languages other than English. This was the case with American Indian languages during the colonial period and German during the first and second world war (2003:23).

In his examination of the reasons why language loss occurs in Native American communities, James Crawford (1996) presents three key hypotheses. His first hypothesis is that language loss can be due to the “assimilation of speakers into other cultures” (Crawford 1996:3). For example, when speakers move between two groups (such as a Native American community on a reservation and an English speaking community of a nearby town), a shift in language may be necessary in order to be understood at work or school or in order to have their basic needs met. In addition to such potential cultural genocide as well as the advent of English language media, Crawford cites the repressive language practices of the Bureau of Indian Affairs among the complex reasons for language loss (Crawford 1996:47). However, he indicates that the external forces that are often
blamed for the suppression of a given language cannot be held solely responsible as there is almost inevitably an element of resistance on the part of the Native people. Language is so closely tied to an individual’s sense of identity, community, and ideology that it is extremely hard to change language practices without a certain degree of resistance.

Crawford’s second hypothesis for language loss is that it may be due to internal changes within the community itself. This occurs when individual families choose to use the heritage language only in certain contexts (or not at all). Additionally, some families may choose to teach the heritage language to their children while others see more value in only teaching their children the dominant language to the extent necessary for survival. Economic factors and mass media also play a role in language choice. Our society has made it essential to have a working knowledge of English in order for an individual to succeed in almost any career path, to stay abreast of current events, or to navigate one’s surroundings because most signage throughout the United States is written only in English.

Crawford’s final hypothesis is that language loss occurs because of a change in values on the part of the speakers of the heritage language. He states that, “if language choices reflect social and cultural values, language shift reflects a change in these values” (Crawford 1996:8). Language loss is due in large part to the degree of communication in the heritage language and to the relative value that a given community places on that language. Assimilation into mainstream culture and resulting changes in community values both have an effect on the languages that are used by a community. As the majority of a community shifts to the language of dominance (typically Standard English in the United States), the heritage language is used less and less. The result of this is a lessening need for
the heritage language. Mainstream culture in the United States dictates the necessity of leaving one language behind in favor of a more “important” language. This has a profound effect on the language maintenance activities practiced by parents and grandparents, thus damaging linguistic and other ties across generations. In the past, some parents have been convinced that learning their heritage language could serve as a distraction for learning English and other school subjects. Nevertheless, this sentiment seems to be falling out of favor in many Native communities as a growing number of Native Americans favor efforts to keep their heritage languages alive.
Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I describe the instrumentation employed in my study, the setting where my research took place, the demographics of the study population, and the design of the study. The methodology for the data collection was different from what I had initially planned and what I thought it would be. I had developed a list of interview questions and had an idea of the different populations I would interview. However, my entire plan changed the instant I arrived in Idaho. It was a bit disorienting at first as I arrived in my hotel room and had some initial trouble reaching any of my contacts. But after two days of making phone calls, exploring the landscape, and familiarizing myself with the layout of the towns of Lapwai and Lewiston, I found myself with almost too much to fit into the time allotted. Although I unfortunately did not have the opportunity to live with a family in the area while I was in Idaho, the majority of my days were spent with tribal members either in Lapwai at the combined Middle/High School, the Elementary School, the tribal community center, the Nez Perce National Historic Park Visitor Center, and at Lewis-Clark State College (LCSC) in Lewiston.

Nimipuutimt is a language that is heavily based on mechanisms that convey movement and interaction in the present moment. This is very evident in the way that the language is being taught to youth today and it was also largely how the tribe’s language revitalization efforts were presented to me. My conversations and interviews were predominately story based. In like fashion, the teaching methods and tools that are used in
language classes from the preschool level through to college employed the use of many traditional narratives with pictures and much repetition on the part of the students. The Nez Perce are a people who take great pride in their culture and their connection to the land. It is a connection that is of the utmost importance and it permeates every aspect of the language.

**Instrumentation**

There were four target groups for my data collection: elders, teachers, children, parents, and community members and adult learners as well. Data were collected either through observation or through interviews with groups or individuals. Questions for elders focused on early childhood memories of hearing the language, changes to the language over time, community attitudes towards the language, and the perceived importance as to the current state as well as the future of the language. Questions for teachers centered around learning objectives; available language resources, activities and programs; and perceived community responses to language education and revitalization. Questions for children focused on their experiences with the language both in school and at home, their attitudes regarding learning the language, and their feelings about the language in general. Questions for parents, community members, and adult learners focused on community experiences with the language as well as general feelings regarding the language. A list of all questions that were asked is provided in Appendix A.
The Nimipuutímt language is a member of the Sahaptian subfamily of the Plateau Penutian family of the Penutian language group. The Nimipuutímt spelling system, which is significantly different from that of English, is given below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>á</th>
<th>é</th>
<th>í</th>
<th>m</th>
<th>q</th>
<th>w</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>áa</td>
<td>éé</td>
<td>íí</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aw</td>
<td>éey</td>
<td>k</td>
<td>ó</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>γ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ay</td>
<td>ew</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>óo</td>
<td>ú</td>
<td>y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>úu</td>
<td>‘ or ?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3-1. Nimipuutímt Orthography (Spelling System)**

This is the Tribe’s own spelling system and as the reader will see, it is the system that is used in all of the teaching materials. The orthography presented in Figure 3-1 can be broken down as follows:

á = Short a sounds like the a in Dakota. Ex: háham – men.

áa = Long a sounds like the a in hall or paw. Ex: táamsas – wild rose.

aw = Sounds close but not exactly the same as the ow in towel. Ex: lawaytiwa – friend.

ay = Sounds like the i in mine or pie. Ex: tatáayvn – news or laymiwt – youngest one.

c = Sounds like the ts in hits. Ex: cíicyele - purple

é = Short e sounds like the e in echo. Ex: siwe – forehead.

ée = Long e sounds like the a in wack. Ex: wéeptes – golden eagle.
éey = Sounds like the a in the word mare. Ex: méeywi – morning.

ew = Sounds close but not exactly the same as the ow in towel. Ex: tewlikt – tree.
h = Same sound as English h.
í = Short i sounds like the i in it. Ex: tit – tooth.
ii = Long i sounds like the e in bee. Ex: pííps – bones.
k = Same sound as English k.
l = Same sound as English l.
ɫ = Put the tip of the tongue on the roof of the mouth and when trying to say the “l” sound, air comes out of the sides of the mouth. Ex: léeplep – butterfly.
m = Same sound as English m.
n = Same sound as English n.
ó = Short o sounds like the o in potato or Arapaho. Ex: tóhon – pants.
óo = Long o sounds like the o in oh or tone. Long o does not glide into a w. Ex: sooýáapoó – EuroAmerican.
p = Same sound as English p.
q = The “back k” sounds close but not exactly the same as the k in ketchup. Ex: qéhep – bobcat. (There is no equivalent sound in English)
s = Same sound as English s.
t = Same sound as English t.
ú = Short u sounds like the u in put and look. Ex: sílu – eye.
úu = Long u sounds like the oo in pooh or through. Ex: hííusus – head.
w = Same sound as English w.
x = Soft x, to make the sound hunch up your tongue close to the top of your mouth. Start to say the k sound and then move your tongue down just a little. Ex: tátx – fawn.

χ = Hard x. The uvular or “back” x. It is formed much like the soft x but farther back in the mouth. Ex: túux – tobacco.

y = Same sound as English y.

‘ or ? = The glottal stop, for popping and stopping sounds. It is a half consonant

Letters not included in the Nimipuutímt spelling system include: B, D, F, G, J, R, V, and Z.

Setting of the Study

This study was conducted in north central Idaho in the towns of Lapwai and Lewiston (Figure 3-2). Nestled in a valley between rolling hills, Lapwai is within the boundaries of both Nez Perce County and the Nez Perce Indian Reservation and is home to the Lapwai combined Middle/High School (the Middle School and the High School are housed on opposite ends of the same building) and the Lapwai Elementary School where much of my research was conducted. While both the combined Middle/High School and the Elementary School are on reservation land, they are nevertheless considered public schools and their funding comes from the state of Idaho. As such, there is no obligation to teach Nez Perce language as part of the curriculum, but because of the primary demographic that they serve (students of Nez Perce descent), the school district sees value in and therefore supports Nez Perce language as part of the curriculum.
According to public-schools.startclass.com, a typical school in Lapwai is made up of 80.6% American-Indian students, so both Lapwai combined Middle/High School and Lapwai Elementary School have a demographic distribution similar to that of other schools in the city. The combined Middle/High School is a small school of around 200 total students (grades 6-12) which serves a very economically disadvantaged area. Ninety-nine percent of the student population is classified as economically disadvantaged, with 96% qualifying for a reduced lunch program and 3% qualifying for a free lunch program. The school has 15 fulltime teachers; the student to teacher ratio is 15/1. Demographically, the school has a 92% minority enrollment with the following breakdown (Table 3-1).
Table 3-1. Demographic Breakdown of Lapwai Combined Middle/High School
(from public-schools.startclass.com)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaskan Native</td>
<td>80.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaiian Native/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Races</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nez Perce culture and heritage is reaffirmed throughout the school. The Nimipuutímt language is widely utilized in the school. Upon entering the building, students, teachers, and visitors are greeted by a banner with the school’s mission statement written in Nimipuutímt. It reads: “kíye pecepelíhniku' wapáyat'as mamáy'asna hipewc'éeyu' cúukwenin’.” Underneath, is the English translation, “Together, we ensure all students will reach their full potential.” Teaching styles employ a supportive and safe learning environment in which students are encouraged to explore the culture and the language.

I also observed several classes at the Lapwai Elementary School which has a demographic breakdown similar to that of the combined Middle/High School (Table 3-2).

Table 3-2. Demographic Breakdown of Lapwai Elementary School (from public-schools.startclass.com)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaiian Native/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Races</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As with the combined Middle/High School, Lapwai Elementary School also utilizes Nez Perce language and culture throughout the school. The Nimipuutímt alphabet is printed on a banner which lines many of the classrooms as well as the school cafeteria. All of the signage in the school is written in both Nimipuutímt and English, usually with Nimipuutímt being the primary language followed by the English translation.

The demographics of both Lapwai combined Middle/High School and Lapwai Elementary School are indicative of the demographics of the City of Lapwai itself. They are presented in Table 3-3.

Table 3-3. Demographic Breakdown of the City of Lapwai (from public-schools.startclass.com)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaskan Native</td>
<td>80.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaiian Native/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Races</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The portion of my research that took place outside of Lapwai occurred for the most part at Lewis-Clark State College (LCSC) in the city of Lewiston. Away from the Nez Perce Indian Reservation, there is a stark contrast in demographics, both within the school system and in Idaho in general. This contrast is evidenced by the demographic breakdown of LCSC (presented in Table 3-4), which is similar to the demographic breakdown of the City of Lewiston (presented in Table 3-5).
Table 3-4. Demographic Breakdown of Lewis-Clark State College (from lcsc.edu)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaskan Native</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaiian Native/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>82.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Races</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity Unknown</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3-5. Demographic Breakdown of the City of Lewiston (from city-data.com)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaskan Native</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaiian Native/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>91.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Races</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to give an idea of the greater context within which the cities of Lapwai and Lewiston are situated, demographic information for the state of Idaho in general is also presented in Table 3-6.

Table 3-6. Demographic Breakdown of Idaho (from public-schools.startclass.com)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaskan Native</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaiian Native/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>76.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Races</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Design of the Study

Data for the study were collected through a series of interviews and conversations with cultural specialists, language coordinators, tribal elders, the tribal linguist, the cultural anthropologist for the Tribe, school administrators, teachers, and students as well as
through multiple classroom observations. I also attended several sessions of the ongoing language study group conducted by Harold Crook, Ph.D., with a group of Nez Perce elders. Dr. Crook is a trained linguist and a language professor at LCSC. His contributions are described in Chapter 4.
Chapter 4
PERSONAL HISTORIES OF LOSS AND GAIN

The three primary collaborators in my study were Josiah Blackeagle Pinkham, Thomas “Tatlo” Gregory, and Angel Sobotta. I also interviewed and spoke with several tribal elders and I will describe their input and contributions to my research as well. It is important to note, however, that the majority of the cultural background information pertaining to the Tribe was conveyed to me by Josiah, while the majority of the linguistic and language revitalization information was conveyed to me through interviews with Tatlo and Angel along with observations of the multitude of classes taught by both individuals. Storytelling is a huge part of Nez Perce culture and language and is a teaching tool utilized throughout the language program. The power of the way the Tribe shares information through stories has led me to adopt their storytelling approach with regard to my own research as evidenced by the introduction of my main informants below. I begin with two powerful life histories, those of Josiah Blackeagle Pinkham, a tribal ethnographer and cultural specialist, and Thomas (Tatlo) Gregory, a language coordinator with the Nez Perce Language Program. I then go on to introduce Angel Sobotta and several of the tribal elders.

Josiah Blackeagle Pinkham: Tribal Ethnographer and Cultural Specialist

Josiah, tribal ethnographer and cultural specialist with the Tribe, was the first individual whom I met from the Nez Perce Tribe. He helped me with the logistics necessary to make my project a success, introducing me to key people within the Nez Perce language
and education communities. Among his many responsibilities as an ethnographer for the Tribe is the role he plays in breathing life back into the old stories that have been dormant for two or three generations because they have either been archived or not written down. He says that what enriches him is that he is doing something to contribute and give back to the grand scheme of things that made his life possible. Without hesitation, he shared with me numerous stories about the history and traditions of his people as well as his experiences with the Nez Perce language.

Born in 1971, Josiah grew up in Lenore, Idaho, and attended Lapwai schools. On his father’s side, Josiah is descended from a long line of prominent Nez Perce leaders including Red Grizzly Bear, John Pinkham, and Old Chief Joseph (father of Young Chief Joseph who led the 1877 War). His mother is Shirley Mosqueda Pinkham and his father is Allen Pinkham Sr. Josiah received his Nez Perce name of Blackeagle from his grandmother, Annette Blackeagle Pinkham Burke, at age eight. During the same ceremony he received a century-old outfit that had belonged to his namesake. In discussing how Josiah got the middle name Blackeagle, he told me the following story:

The name Blackeagle comes from my paternal grandmother. Her maiden name is Blackeagle. I have one older sister, four older brothers, and one younger sister. By the time I came along, my mom and dad did not know what to name me so they told my grandmother that she was responsible for the middle name and they told my grandfather that he was responsible for the first name. My grandfather said that since they were related to Josiah Blackeagle, the last living survivor of the Nez Perce war, I should be named Josiah as my first name and Blackeagle as my middle name both to carry on my grandmother’s middle name but also to serve as my Nez Perce name.

Josiah and his wife, D’Lisa, have two sons, Tamáhsat and Sapáatma. Josiah confided in me that it was important to him that his children have traditional Nez Perce names.
Growing up on the Nez Perce reservation, surrounded by family, Josiah travelled with them to cultural events and danced traditionally until he began college, wearing outfits created by his mother, Shirley, and sister, Lynne. His education was local; he did a semester at University of Idaho but ultimately decided it was much more important to him to be closer to his family and ended up going to Lewis and Clark State College for most of his education, saying, “My strength is my family.”

While attending the University of Idaho and then LCSC, Josiah maintained a strong connection with his Nez Perce culture, holding internships and working in various positions with the National Park Service and the National Museum for the American Indian. Those experiences were instrumental in his development as a cultural resources professional. Josiah earned an interdisciplinary degree with honors in Native American Studies and Psychology in 1998. That same year, he became the ethnographer for the Nez Perce Tribe’s Cultural Resource Program, where he now works as a cultural specialist. He says, “The strength that I have through the attachment with my community is stronger in what I do…It’s on the forefront of the expression of my life.” Josiah expresses gratitude for his academic and professional development, about which he says:

It’s something I use to honor my commitment to perpetuating the greater heartbeat of Nez Perce life and culture. I try to do for my future generations as my elder kinfolk did. I have received – and will continue to receive – a lot of help and guidance. I am thankful to have been raised with a wealth of teachings and values about many things: homeland, family, animal people, stories, life-ways, and language.

I interviewed Josiah at the Nez Perce National Historic Park Visitor Center located in Spalding, Idaho, approximately ten miles east of Lewiston and three miles north of Lapwai on U.S. Highway 95. As we sat next to each other in the theater and watched the
video that plays to greet visitors, Josiah provided me with commentary surrounding the video’s creation. The video is titled *Ná Qc Timine Wisíx*, which translates to “Of One Heart” (Banyad & Johnson n.d.). Josiah indicated that the video had recently been redone with the goal of giving it a more hopeful, progressive feeling. After watching the video myself, I came away with the hopeful feeling that they were trying to convey. Both Josiah and his cousin Angel, who I introduce next, played an integral role in the creation of the video. Angel can be heard on the video saying that, “the language, Nimipuutímt, is the center of our culture…it’s our heartbeat. If we didn’t have our language, that heartbeat would be gone.” She also says that “when you’re speaking the language, you have that direct connection to the spirit of your ancestors because they spoke that same language.” Throughout the video there is an undertone of language as the foundation of Nez Perce culture, that if one learns the language, the culture will follow. You also get a sense of the Nez Perce connection to the land throughout the video as the narrator states that “our land gave rise to every aspect of our culture.” Josiah can be heard in the video saying, “In essence, that’s who we are as Nez Perce people, we ARE our landscape; our landscape sustains us.”

During my interview with Josiah, I chose several open-ended questions to ask him about his experiences with the language. Our conversation flowed freely and topics ranged from the taboos that surround the recording of a traditionally oral language and the effect that boarding schools had on his family to the current political climate and his hopes for the future. As I hesitantly set my tape recorder down on the table and politely asked if it was okay for me to record our conversation, Josiah quickly put me at ease by
acknowledging that even though there is a bit of a taboo that exists with regard to recording a traditionally oral language, he sees the value in it...in adapting and using modern technology in an advantageous way for a culture that is fighting hard to continue. He says, “if we want this culture to survive, it’s got to be resilient enough to take advantage of modern technology.” He says that not a lot of people understand the value of what people are trying to perpetuate and this likely stems from the taboo on recording spiritual songs and other things along that line. He brings up a valid point, though, when he says that many people have the feeling that when you see words on paper, you see only the corpse of what was.

I agree with Josiah that there is nothing like being with another person, just talking and visiting. As a student of anthropology, I would suggest that this is part of the reason for such a taboo, not only within Nez Perce culture but in many cultures around the world. People want to preserve the social aspect of language and that cannot be done by writing it down. There is a certain spirit of the moment that exists when people are just connecting without worrying about writing things down, when they are only worried about being present in that moment and just being with another person and conversing with them. Language is an important part of this because it is the tool that one uses to relate to other human beings. The specific language one uses to communicate is an expression of that relationship and how it takes place. Josiah mentioned to me that he believes that it is “really important for relationships like this to manifest, that’s why [he] is so appreciative of people who not only take an interest in working with the Tribe but actually come to Lapwai and work directly with the Tribe”. He says,
It means a lot to have that extension of sympathy and empathy for what the Tribe is going through here and to have that as a part of your formal research helps us. We rely upon people like you heavily because you ultimately end up in positions where you’re working with us or for us and in the long term, that helps us.

Josiah indicated that he personally tries to work with anybody he can who is interested in Nez Perce, but in particular with scholars because it means a lot.

Throughout time, spoken language has been the ideal for the transfer of knowledge. Unique perceptions and values are embedded in spoken language. Josiah has recordings and writings from his grandfather that his grandfather made because he knew that was the only way he was going to reach his grandchildren. Josiah recognizes that he himself is not going to live long enough to speak with all of his grandchildren or great grandchildren, so he is faced with a dilemma: Does he sacrifice and give them his culture and knowledge in a written and recorded form so that they can come along and one day breathe the life back into it? He says there is a certain necessity that exists to adapt to modernization in order to perpetuate a culture. However, “the important thing is to maintain the value base that is inherent in that expression of relationship that is created by language. This will dictate the way in which we are doctors, engineers, biologists and any other profession that native youth are choosing to go into today.” His hope for the future is to influence his grandchildren so that they will share the language one-on-one in the same way that he does with his sons (as opposed to his grandchildren trying to learn the language through a document/a piece of paper or a recording).

Josiah told me that,

One of the shocking transitions that has taken place is that now, I speak English. That’s the first language that I really mastered by the time I was three or four years old and although I had a lot of Nez Perce language influence (my grandmother
spoke fluently, I’ve got elder kinfolk that I was around that spoke it fluently), I was fluent in English. I’m only a passably fluent individual in Nez Perce, I know enough to get by essentially but I’m not adept at crafting words in the way that my elder kinfolk were.

He attributes part of the difficulty with learning Nez Perce language as a second language to the fact that English is a nominally-based (noun-based) language much like its Romance language counterparts, Spanish and French. They are nominally based languages also. What that means is that the way in which speakers of those languages relate to their environment is that they pull things out of the void, they label those things, and then they categorize them into different components from which they manipulate information for further expression. Conversely, a Nez Perce speaker observes movement because Nez Perce is a verb-based language. You can not become fluent in Nez Perce until you master verbs and the five different tenses that they possess (past, present, future, distant past, distant future). A Nez Perce speaker is basically observing movement between different phenomena and labeling that movement. Movement is often times something that exists between the nouns and so a Nez Perce speaker is watching the movement as opposed to pulling something out of the void, labeling it, and categorizing it for further manipulation. A Nez Perce speaker is instead observing relationships. He says that Nez Perce uses a different form of expression. “One of the challenges is that, in English, it takes a little bit more work to express those relationships, whereas in Nez Perce, it’s kind of already wired in.”

In discussing the history of the Nez Perce language, Josiah stated in our interview that “to witness Nez Perce language being taught in a public school is incredible.” He then proceeded to tell me the story of his paternal grandfather. His name was Alex Pinkham. He
was born in 1896 and right around the time that he was four or five years old, they spoke about the woman that would come with two men (almost in the same sense that children today talk about the boogy-man) because those three individuals were coming to take you away from your family and take you to a boarding school. So Alex was playing out in front of his house one day and he noticed that there was a carriage approaching. When he saw that there were three people in the carriage, and that one of them was wearing a bonnet, he immediately ran and hid. But to no avail, as the woman went to the house, the two grown men who were with her apprehended Alex and dragged him out to the carriage. Alex said that,

One of the worst things I’ve ever seen is the flash of sun off of steel, referring to being held down while they clipped off each of his braids. He watched each of his braids fall to the dirt as he struggled against two fully grown men and was taken and put into the carriage with other Nez Perce boys. As he was being taken away, he saw his mother emerge from the house. She walked over and picked up his braids and she just held them to her chest. That was the last that he saw of his mom for some time because he was immediately taken off to the boarding school. There, he was met by an older Nez Perce boy who told him, in Nez Perce, “our language that we speak at home, we can never speak it here or we will be severely punished.

The boarding schools were intent on destroying the children’s relationship with their language, but Josiah’s grandfather took the traumatic experience of the boarding schools and told his children “Look at me…I’ve got an eighth grade education and look at what I’ve done, look at what I’ve accomplished, you kids are going to go even farther.” When speaking of his grandfather and telling me of this experience, Josiah stated that his grandfather “took a very traumatic experience with no bitterness towards the system or towards white people and he rolled it into something inspirational…that’s resilience!” This sense of resiliency is still present in the Tribe today and I experienced it first hand in how
welcomed I was (being a white, female outsider) and how included I felt in all of the activities throughout the duration of my time there.

To take his grandfather’s experience and compare it to what Nez Perce children experience now is amazing and incredibly moving, because today on the reservation there are non-Indian teachers, educators, and administrators who are greeting Nez Perce children in the Nez Perce language. Nimipuutímt is present throughout the public schools in Lapwai. It is on all the banners and the signage, but it is not just on the banners and signage, it is the language that is listed first on all of the signage. Josiah says that what he wants today’s Nez Perce youth to understand is that,

Maybe you aren’t very good at Nez Perce language, maybe you’re not the top student but just the fact that you’re in that classroom and you’re surrounded by the language, even if it’s just for five minutes a day…we fought really hard for that. A lot of people survived some pretty awful situations in order for that language to still be here.

Josiah really wants the younger generation to have a genuine interest in their language, their culture, their rituals, and their relationship with the land, because these are irreplaceable. The intrinsic value that they are trying to express to everyone is that, as Nez Perce people, they have a sensitive relationship with the land that needs to continue, not only for the Nez Perce but for the sake of all people.

Something particularly impactful that Josiah said to me during our interview was:

Our sensitive relationship with the land is expressed through our language. It’s honored through our ceremony and ritual, and as an outsider, you depend upon a sensitive relationship with the land…humanity depends upon it, because none of us are going to survive unless we have that in place. Our economic system depends upon it. This is why language is so important.
Later in our interview, Josiah also expressed his concern over natural resource management and the environment saying,

    English is the perfect language for colonialism but for management of natural resources, it possesses some inherent shortcomings that we as Americans (or speakers of English) have to deal with somehow. Language is an expression of how you relate to your environment...English speakers aren’t wired for natural resource management here (in Nez Perce country) and that’s a big challenge that we face so what can we do about it? We work harder to impress upon ourselves and other English speakers that these relationships are more complex than you can understand and it takes a little bit more work.

    Language is inherently political and while we didn’t go into an in-depth discussion on politics, our conversation did touch upon the current political climate in the U.S. and how the Tribe as a sovereign government is affected by it. U.S. politics and governmental decisions and elections are a genuine concern of the tribes and the current political administration has shown through its recent actions that it is not very sensitive to the needs and wants of Native Americans. Josiah says that he “would rather have it another way, in the long term, we’re not going anywhere...we’ve already got a pretty good, well-established track record of policy and executive memoranda and laws that provide protection so we’ll get through it.” His hope in working with outsiders is to impress upon them an understanding of the Nez Perce place in this world and how it relates to outsiders and how we all need to work together for the sake of the environment and our children’s future.

    Much of the work that Josiah does is centered around his dedication to future generations. He made the point that in order to increase academic performance, you have to cater to the self-esteem of the child. You need to find unique ways to foster the self-esteem of any given population of children in ways that reassure those children that they
can take on and conquer the challenges put in front of them. Culture and language are two of the tools that can be used to do this and Josiah says that he tries to infuse a lot of culture into language perpetuation efforts. While they try to infuse language and culture into the classroom, there is also a push to get the children out to where the culture is supposed to take place, what is often called experiential learning. Josiah says, “We’re trying to get language and culture into the place where it’s supposed to be.” He repeatedly emphasizes the sentiment that “our language comes from our landscape; we as Nez Perce people name ourselves after animals…we’re focused on expressing in our language what’s really important…the things that have provided for us to be here.” Josiah says his main responsibility in the language revitalization effort as a tribal ethnographer is “to ensure that in the perpetuation of our language that the values the language is trying to express are well known and regarded.”

Thomas “Tatlo” Gregory: Nez Perce Language Coordinator

Tatlo grew up around the Lapwai area for the majority of his life. The Nez Perce language was heavily emphasized in his family because of his great grandmother, Catherine Dixon Cloud and her sister, Annie Dixon (Tatlo’s great aunt). Neither Catherine nor Annie spoke any English. Around the time Christianity really took hold on the reservation, people were either choosing to go toward Christianity or to maintain the traditional ways. Tatlo’s great aunt Annie leaned more toward the traditional way, called the Wallasut faith, while his great grandmother Catherine leaned more toward the Christian way. As a result, a lot of Tatlo’s family is now Presbyterian and has lost touch with the
Nez Perce traditions. However, over the past couple generations, his family seems to be leaning more toward the traditional ways again. In fact, within his family, there has been a resurgence of the language to the point where Tatlo’s preschool-aged daughter is learning and using it on a daily basis. Many members of Tatlo’s family grew up hearing and understanding Nimipuutímt though they were never really taught the language. Tatlo’s maternal grandmother passed away when her daughter (Tatlo’s mother) was eight years old. Because of this, Tatlo’s mother was raised by her grandmother (Tatlo’s great grandmother, Catherine Dixon Cloud) who did not speak any English. Because she attended public school, which emphasized English, but spoke exclusively Nimipuutímt at home, Tatlo’s mother grew up completely bilingual.

Nimipuutímt was not given any recognition or importance in the schools at that time. Tatlo says that,

At that time I don’t think that people could really foresee the damage that taking the language for granted for one generation would do. The people who did not pass on the language to their children because they were trying to protect them did not realize how ultimately detrimental that decision would be.

This was the boarding school generation and religion played a big part during this time with regard to language as well. A lot of people from Tatlo’s grandmother’s generation refused to speak the language after the boarding school experience and, in fact, completely turned their backs on the whole “Indian way of life” because they were taught that it was “wrong.” As a result of all of this, a lot of people from Tatlo’s generation who wanted to learn more about their culture or their language had to seek it out as this type of information was not readily available and the older generation was often hesitant to discuss such subjects with the younger generation. Tatlo’s interest in the language did not really start to
peak until he was in college. He grew up in the typical way of most of the youth in the area with regard to the language. That is to say, he understood several Nez Perce words but he could only speak a few words here and there. He refers to this as “broken Nez Perce.”

When he began college, Tatlo went through the language program at LCSC. He recalls several experiences that influenced his desire to learn more about his language and the culture. He mentions interactions with Steve Evans (Nez Perce Native History teacher at LCSC for many years) and Alan Marshall (cultural anthropologist and professor at LCSC). He says that Evans and Marshall were probably the two individuals who spearheaded getting Nez Perce language established at LCSC. It was an encounter with Evans in which Evans said to Tatlo, “Manáa weés?” Tatlo says that he just kind of looked at Evans blankly not knowing what he had just been asked and Evans said “How are you?” The fact that Tatlo did not understand such a simple phrase stuck with him and he did not like that feeling and knew that he wanted to learn more. So by the time he got to college, in 1998-99, he signed up for an introductory Nez Perce language class taught by Harold Crook and Vera Sonneck. He recalls that his mother would tell him stories about when she took language classes at LCSC. Learning the language was something that came easily to Tatlo and he enjoyed it and looked forward to doing it. Semester after semester, even though he had not yet chosen a major, he kept taking Nez Perce language classes. Tatlo says that he

Remember[s] starting in the first Nez Perce language class with about forty students. The following semester there were half as many students. The semester after that, there were only six people in the class. The harder it got, the more people would drop out of the language classes and I thought that I had better stick with it since there was just a handful of students left in the program wanting to continue studying the language.
Tatlo says that unfortunately this is still happening today. As the program progresses, it gets harder and harder and fewer people continue on each semester. Most of the students who do stick with it and continue on in the program are Nez Perce people.

That second semester when they had six people in the class, Tatlo did really well and received a letter from Dr. Haruo Aoki acknowledging his performance and interest in the language along with a copy of the Nez Perce dictionary that Dr. Aoki himself had written. (This is the only Nez Perce dictionary as far as I know). When Tatlo had completed the first two years of Nimipuutímt and it was time for him to choose a major, he says that he would have like to have majored in Nimipuutímt but it was (and still is) only offered as a minor at LCSC so Tatlo majored in management but his interest in the Nez Perce language and the letter he received from Aoki encouraged him to pursue the minor.

Partway through his college education, Tatlo took a break from school and got a job painting houses but his interest in Nimipuutímt and his passion for the language remained. One day, he saw a Nez Perce language coordinator position being advertised and he applied for it. However, he received a phone call indicating that it was not really a position but that the school system had received an ANA (Administration for Native Americans) Grant and had written in the coordinator position in accordance with the grant requirements. So Tatlo went back to painting houses until one day in 2008 when he received a phone call from Vera Sonneck asking him to come to work the next day. He accepted the position and started off working as a language aid making flashcards and other learning materials, and eventually moved on to teaching in the afterschool program. After taking about a five year break from his college studies, he returned and not only completed
the language program but also earned a Bachelor’s degree in education, thus following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather before him, both of whom were teachers. During that five-year hiatus however, Tatlo had continued to use the dictionary that Dr. Aoki had sent him and constantly looked things up and learned how to use it. His friends and family knew that he had an interest in the language so they started asking him questions about it. Even though he did not always know the answer he found he had a desire to search out the answers in order to help them.

His business management background came in handy when it came time to apply for grants for the language program. The language staff won one of the most competitive grants in the country. Tatlo says,

It gave us focus…all of our successes and failures over the years have focused us and given our Native Language Program direction. With Native languages, there are not very many resources to fall back on like there are with Spanish, French, Italian, or English. Nez Perce does not have as many grammars, dictionaries, and fluency systems (structured formats) that other languages have.

The “new generation” of language educators decided that they wanted to embrace technology but the elders were on the fence about it at the time (around 2008-2009). They did not want recordings or anything on the internet. However, Tatlo and Harold had different ideas. They wanted to record the elders speaking the language because they knew how valuable and helpful those recordings would be in preserving the language and teaching it to future generations. Tatlo continued to work with elders Bessie Scott, Cecil Carter, Florene Davis, and Vera Sonneck to put together a curriculum for the language grant they had received. The other part of the grant consisted of taking the curriculum they had developed and putting it into a software format.
Tatlo recognizes that one of the most important things is being aware of how a person learns language and knowing where they are at in each stage of language learning. This can be seen in the techniques that are employed in the Nez Perce language program, which involve learning through repetition of sounds, words, pictures, phrases, and stories. The progression of these techniques became clear to me after I had attended several classes at various levels in the program. The pictures progressed into words, and words progressed into sentences. The sentences progressed into phrases and the phrases into stories, all the while relating the language to the surrounding environment. The language staff have built a program that attempts to mimic the way in which babies learn a language and as I observed the different levels of the classes from preschool through to college, the effectiveness of the immersive nature of the program became clear. Tatlo tries to make learning fun; there is no testing in his classes, just assessments. He does his best to make learning the language a positive experience; there is no scolding for getting something wrong, instead, he will just keep repeating the word or phrase correctly until the child eventually understands.

When he started working with the language program in 2008, it was just an afterschool program. It has since expanded to what it is today, language as part of the elective curriculum that students can choose to take each year. Tatlo says “you’ve got speakers and you’ve got teachers. A fluent speaker isn’t necessarily going to know how to teach and that’s where the language program comes in. Teaching the language is a matter of wanting to do it and figuring it out.” Tatlo has learned a lot of the language himself
simply by teaching the language to others. It has helped him to figure out numerous aspects of the language.

The emphasis on learning the language using a natural progression can be seen in the workbooks and other learning materials as well. They are all structured in a manner that encourages this natural progression. Teaching methods are interactional. One of the challenges that Tatlo faces is trying to figure out how to present the language in a meaningful way and in a way that the children will retain the knowledge. With this in mind, he plays a lot of interactional games in the classroom and as a result there is usually little to no homework in his classes.

When I asked him what his favorite grade to teach was and why, Tatlo paused to think about his answer and then said,

That’s a tough question for me because they all have their pros and cons. I really love the younger children because they’re like sponges, but I don’t like the fact that I only get about fifteen minutes with them before their attention span is gone. It would be more beneficial for younger children if they were getting more language exposure at home.

However, he recognizes how tough this is and says that with his own daughter, who is three and a half years old, even he finds it challenging to try to speak exclusively in Nimipuutímt with her all the time and he has to consciously work at it. But he makes a concerted effort to speak the language as much as possible with her because he is the only one in his immediate family who can really speak Nimipuutímt with any degree of fluency. It is less of a challenge when he goes to his mother’s house because his mother is a fluent speaker and he is able to speak the language with her in the presence of his daughter. He says, “After all, if you really want the children to learn, the best way is to put grandma in a corner
and put the children around her.” As a result of his efforts, his daughter does know a lot of Nimipuutímt words purely based on interactions in the home. When she does start going to school, she will have a head start when it comes to Nez Perce language classes.

Tatlo expresses a hope for the future that the language program will continue to grow and reach more people. He is encouraged that more and more individuals are expressing a desire to learn the language. Even so, Tatlo recognizes the fact that it ultimately comes down to how much people are able to preserve and pass on. The language program coordinators have done nothing but improve and expand the language program with respect to how the language is taught, what they as educators of the language are learning, and what they are able to help people with. The partnership between the language program and the school districts continues to grow and improve with regard to the amount of classroom instruction time allowed and the amount of funding that is put towards the program to provide language resources. There has been talk that the school district wants a permanent language teacher in the schools but there is a question of how they will be able to accommodate this with the limited number of fluent speakers they have who are able to effectively teach the language.

When I asked Tatlo where he sees the language program going, he responded that he would like to see more funding for the program so that there would be enough teachers to have somebody teaching in each of the Nez Perce communities. He says that, “each community should have a language program office staffed with teachers like the one in Lapwai.” While the main community of Nez Perce and Nimipuutímt speakers is in Lapwai, there are also communities in Kamei and Orofino that deserve the same types of programs
and resources. In five years, Tatlo would really like to see three strong language programs, one in each community. Nevertheless, even if they are able to secure the funding needed to continue to expand the language program, it really comes down to a yearning to want to learn and keep learning and instilling that yearning in the children.

One issue that Tatlo brings up that he says really bothers him is that “the Tribe considers the language and the culture to be of paramount importance, but they don’t put their money where their mouth is. The language is the thing that is most in danger of disappearing but the resources are not being put into it to keep it afloat.” He says that he recognizes that “funding needs to be allocated first to survival resources, such as health and food, but language is important too.” That is not to say that people do not need their language in order to survive and thrive but “the language program seems to be one of the first to suffer when funding and resources are limited.”

Another challenge in teaching the language, according to Tatlo, is that the language is never going to be the same as it was. “The world is constantly changing and so language has to change in response to that. We are not the same type of human beings that lived two hundred years ago; the food we eat is not the same; the environment is not the same and so the language is not going to look the same.” He says that children will often ask about words for things that there are no words for in Nimipuutímt, such as “car,” “computer,” or “cell phone.” Some of the elders are against making up new words to accommodate new technologies and modern concepts but Tatlo’s generation realizes that there is a legitimate need for this.
There is a lot of pressure that comes with his position as a language teacher. People now are taking more responsibility and ownership of the language, wanting to be more involved in the language program. Tatlo says that as language educators, they need to keep encouraging people to do so because a language program can not save a language by itself. Rather, there has to be an interest and people need to take an initiative. Language teachers can only facilitate learning, they cannot give people the desire to learn. Language needs to be perpetuated in the family. The children are the ones who are initiating this a lot of the time because they bring home what they learned in school and initiate the conversation with their families. He says that community support is crucial to the perpetuation of the language. He gives a lot of credit to the elders of the Tribe, recognizing that it takes a lot of dedication for the elders to work so closely and intensely with Dr. Crook to really learn the morphology of the language. “It is a daunting task to take on but they are really dedicated to working through it.” Most of the parents are ecstatic that their children are bringing the language home, but Tatlo says that he would like to see even more parental involvement. He wants the parents to learn what their children are learning and use it to speak with their children regularly. His hope for the future is that one day what the children are learning in the classroom will be supplemental to what they are learning at home as opposed to the primary way that they are learning the language. He likes to see his students engaging with each other in the language. He says the best days are the days when he looks back and realizes that they hardly spoke any English in the classroom that day.

Tatlo’s classes are composed of a mix of grade levels from seventh to twelfth grade and they also exhibit different levels of language comprehension. This poses a special type
of challenge because a seventh grader is going to learn differently from a high school senior. This diversity of the student population in the classroom requires Tatlo to teach to different levels of fluency and comprehension in the same class. However, he says that, “a positive side effect to having a mixture of beginner and advanced students in the same classroom is that they are actually helping each other learn the language by speaking to each other and correcting each other in the language.”

Tatlo recognizes the importance of making the language meaningful. He says that, “having some kids able to tell a condensed version of our creation story in the language within one semester is pretty incredible after not having anybody able to tell the story in the language for decades prior.” The teachers in the language program see the need to make the language meaningful to the students so they make sure to set aside money for fieldtrips to take their students to meaningful places in the landscape so that they can see and experience the locales that the myths and stories are attached to. They run into obstacles with the schools when it comes to policies and funding, so a lot of these fieldtrips end up being extracurricular. Tatlo says that a huge victory for the language program would be to be given the same amount of time as other subjects, such as math, science, and English. This is something he really hopes to see in his lifetime.

As far as learning materials go, the classrooms have picture books, puppets and stuffed animals, conversational videos, and AcORNS software (Acquisition Of Restored Native Speech) which is a software that allows the teacher to build lessons and record audio to use with those lessons. Tatlo would like to see this expanded so that children are able to access the language with modern technologies, such as cell phone apps, but he says that it
really comes down to the children’s desire to learn both in and outside of the school setting and how interested they are in seeing the language program expand and grow. He spoke about how some of the children will take the lessons home and actually teach the stories they learn in class to their parents. He looks forward to the day when the children of his students today will be bilingual from birth. He says that the ultimate dream is a total immersion school where they are able to teach all subjects in the language.

**Angel Sobotta: Nez Perce Language Coordinator**

Angel was born and raised on the Nez Perce reservation near Lapwai. She is a direct descendant of Chief Red Grizzly Bear and Old Chief Joseph. Her mother is Rosa (Spencer) Yearout and her father was Larry McFarland Sr. From an early age, Angel was a theatrical storyteller who loved to make up stories of her own. As a child, like many Nez Perce children, she especially enjoyed hearing stories that told her of the origins and customs of her people. Today, Angel is one of the Nez Perce language coordinators, the chairperson of the Nez Perce Arts Council, and a seasoned actor, scriptwriter, and producer. She and her husband, Robert Sobotta, have four children: Payton, Glory, Grace, and Faith.

After graduating from Lapwai High School in 1983, Angel attended Washington State University and then the University of Washington where she completed her Bachelor’s degree in General Studies with a focus on Public Relations and Indian Studies. For the next few years Angel performed with a professional theater touring company. In 1997 she came home to Lapwai and studied the Nez Perce language at LCSC with Harold Crook and Cecil Carter. In 2007, Angel became the first person officially certified by the
Nez Perce Tribe and the State of Idaho to teach the language. In 2013 she received a Master’s degree in Interdisciplinary Studies with an emphasis in Nez Perce Language from the University of Idaho, where she is currently pursuing her doctorate in Nez Perce language with an emphasis on storytelling.

When I asked her what her earliest memories were of the language when she was growing up and if she could remember her parents or her grandparents speaking it when she was a child, she told me that just today she was out all day root digging, and she was reflecting on how she was not really brought up in that way. Her paternal grandmother was a fluent speaker but was raised in an orphanage at a Catholic mission during much of her childhood. Her maternal grandmother dug roots and she was a fluent speaker. However, Angel’s mother was raised by her grandmother and great grandmother, not her own mother, for much of her childhood. Whenever they would have family gatherings, both of her grandmothers would get together and speak the language but because they knew the children did not understand, they did not speak it to them. They would switch back to English to talk to the children. Angel and her siblings’ only exposure to the language was with little phrases here and there, phrases that all Nimi’puu children would use. It was when Angel was in the third grade and Chloe Halfmoon came to her class and introduced her to the CNA’s (Colors, Numbers, Animals) that the seed of interest in her heritage language was planted. She says that is why she is where she is today. Angel has been working with the Nez Perce Language Program for over nineteen years, the longest of anyone. She also teaches at LCSC and University of Idaho. She says that when she thinks
about what their children are learning today compared to the few words she learned as a child, it gives her a great sense of hope for the future of the language.

Angel came back to this sense of hope repeatedly during our time together. She spoke about how she moved away from home for a period of time but came back because she wanted to spend time with both her maternal and paternal grandmothers who were both fluent speakers. She started taking language classes at LCSC. At that time, Harold Crook was working with the Tribe but not yet teaching at the college and he asked Angel if she wanted to work with him as a temporary part-time language teacher at the college. The position turned into a permanent part-time teaching position and she has been working at LCSC for the last nineteen years but she always wondered why she was not fluent. As a way of hoping to achieve fluency, Angel went on to get her Masters degree in the language and is now studying for her Ph.D. with a focus on teaching the Nez Perce language though the stories.

Angel says that she has the goal of becoming a fluent speaker, that even though she has been working in the language all these years, she is not fluent. She says that she is not even close to being a fluent speaker but that even though it is hard to gauge, she as well as the other members of the language staff have reached a level of proficiency that is higher than most. People who hear them speak think that they are fluent speakers. She hopes that even if she is not able to ultimately achieve fluency, maybe the children who they are working with now will be the ones who do.

Both of Angel’s grandfathers knew Nimipuutímt but they would only speak it with each other and not with the children. The first time Angel ever heard her grandmother speak
extensively in the language was in 1998 when she told Angel her life story, which Angel recorded. Angel remembers being able to follow along here and there. She recognizes that, growing up as children, they did not realize how valuable it was to be exposed to the language by speaking with the fluent elders, but now that the elders are no longer here, that opportunity is gone.

Angel’s mother married young, at fifteen, and quickly became busy with raising her own family. During this period, her grandmother and great-grandmother passed away and her mother did not have a lot of time to spend with her own mother. She ultimately became a Catholic. Angel knows that her father knew the language because she remembers hearing him speak it with people but he used it the most when he was out hunting and fishing. So while Angel did not grow up with the language, she does recall hearing individual phrases somewhat frequently. She was not exposed to any of the language in school because the language was not taught in the schools at that time.

Her maternal grandmother had been a storyteller who told Coyote stories as well as stories about the history of her family. Her great grandfather was a Nez Perce historian and often spoke about the War of 1877. However, she says that the stories she was told as a child did not become really meaningful until later on in her life. She says that “all of the language staff has been drifting towards this way of learning…through our stories…they started to develop their stories into curriculum and that’s the path that they are on now.”

When asked if she currently teaches any of her children the language, she says that she teaches them as much as she can but, unfortunately, it seems that it is better when other people teach your children because they seem to listen and mind better. Two of her
daughters, now in seventh and eighth grade, do participate in Angel’s Nez Perce language classes twice a week. At the beginning of the year she tried to create a formal type of class with her children at their home but it was difficult to find the time to dedicate to it and she would sometimes get frustrated. She says it is harder to make your own children pay attention to language lessons outside of the school setting. Nevertheless, she does try to teach her children as much as she can. She uses phrases with them and she is trying to figure out the best way to teach her children the language. She says that it is hard, as a parent, to force them to learn so she always has to figure out more natural ways of communicating with them in the language. She says that her children are learning but not at the rate that she thinks they should be learning. When I asked what attitudes exist toward the language in the community as a whole, Angel said that it varies. The language teachers are trying to instill in the community a sense that “language is cool.”

When asked what motivated her to study and teach the language, Angel said that she just always had this desire to know more. She told me the story of how in 1986 she moved to Seattle, where she lived for ten years. There were a number of other Nimi’puu people from Lapwai who also lived there and Angel organized a monthly gathering where they would speak about home and they started talking about the language. That is where Angel got the desire to come home to Lapwai to learn the language. So she moved back to Lapwai and started taking Nez Perce language classes at LCSC with Harold Crook. Harold eventually hired her on as a temporary part-time language teacher. That is where her desire to teach the language to her people grew and she eventually joined the permanent teaching staff.
As can be expected, teaching the language is not without its challenges. Angel says the main challenge is that people do not have enough time to devote to learning the language and she is not given enough time to really teach it. The children are generally exposed to the language for no more than a couple of hours a week and that simply is not enough time to effectively learn a language. Another challenge that Angel mentioned is that there is still this sense of shame and embarrassment that is attached to saying things wrong or making mistakes when attempting to speak. As a result, their way of “coping” with this is to avoid speaking the language in the first place. Another challenge is the lack of the proper amount of funding needed to develop the language program further. Angel recognizes that time, shame, and funding are common challenges with essentially every language program.

When asked what she sees for the future of Nimipuutímt, Angel says that being here for nineteen years, she feels that she should be further along in the language herself than she currently is. She recognizes the “power of the indigenous knowledge within the stories.” She believes this is where the hope lies…within the stories. The stories have the power to change the worldview of the people who hear them and know them as they are passed down from generation to generation. The stories possess so much valuable knowledge to teach as more and more elders are lost. These stories are the voices of past generations and, as such, they are of the utmost importance. When the elders are gone, the stories will remain and those stories, including more than 300 Coyote stories, are documented and recorded. Angel says that they need to study those stories with the elders who are still here and can explain different aspects of the stories that people reading them
today might not fully understand. Angel herself has misinterpreted stories because she did not know the deep cultural meaning behind them.

Angel recently gave a presentation at the American Anthropology Association annual meeting on a paper titled “Teaching from a Place of Hope.” In this paper, she emphasized a valuable “indigenous knowledge emphasis world view.” This world view is what Angel hopes to convey through her style of “teaching from a place of hope through the stories.” She believes, and after spending two weeks with her I agree, that the future of the language is hopeful and bright.

Angel addressed my question about how the Tribe feels about anthropologists coming in to work with the language and the stories. She responded that the Tribe already has many audio recordings of elders reciting traditional narratives that anthropologists have helped to record. The language coordinators are actively working with anthropologists to integrate these recordings into lesson plans and PowerPoint presentations. Angel recognizes that all of the work that was done to record the stories has really been an invaluable gift for the Tribe.

Tribal Elders: Bessie Scott, Florene Davis, and Gary Greene

The elders of the Tribe play a valuable role in the language revitalization process. I observed that role on several occasions throughout my visit. Not only was there an elder present in each one of the language classes that I attended but the elders also spent a lot of their own time working with Harold Crook, the tribal linguist. I had the opportunity to speak with several elders and also observe several language study group sessions with
Harold and two of the tribal elders, Bessie Scott and Florene Davis. One such session involved a lesson titled “Whale,” which can be found in Appendix C.

When I spoke with Bessie and Florene outside of the classroom setting and explained to them the premise of my project and why I was there, they were able to give me a much greater sense of the history of the Tribe and the Nez Perce struggle. Bessie mentioned that they have no more truly fluent speakers; they are all gone. She says that Florene and herself are the last ones but mentioned that they are not “really fluent” and they have to “struggle to try and converse with each other in the language.” She mentioned that the other elders (the ones who have died) did not have to stop and think about how to say certain words. They could just talk with each other. They both mentioned that their grandmothers could not even speak English. They said that the last truly fluent speaker, Horace Axtell, has been gone for a couple of years. Bessie mentioned that they are very lucky that they have a group of young people, such as Angel and Tatlo, who have an interest in working with the language. Bessie also mentioned that she has encouraged the Tribe to create jobs for the language that encourage the young people to learn and work with the language so that they can make a living from it. She said that they need to be able to afford to learn the language and bring it back while still being able to support their families.

When I inquired as to whether the language was used in school at all when they were growing up, Bessie told me that it was not. She explained to me that children in her parents’ and grandparents’ generation (the “boarding school generations”) would actually be reprimanded if they spoke Nimiputímt at school. This is why it is so important to understand the historical trauma that many Native groups have undergone. The attitude
towards language and cultural pride among today’s youth is a direct result of the colonization era and the historical trauma that resulted from it. Bessie grew up hearing the language everyday but never learned to speak it. She remembers that her grandparents would tell her stories in the language but she no longer remembers any of those stories. It was not until after her husband retired from the military and they moved back to Lapwai in 1972 that she developed an interest in learning the language, an interest that stemmed from a desire to be able to communicate with her elders. She began taking Nez Perce language classes because she wanted to be able to hold a conversation with her elders.

Both Bessie and Florene’s parents were fluent speakers and Bessie mentioned that although she could understand most of what they were saying, she could not hold a conversation because she could not really speak the language. Both of their parents only completed school through the eighth grade. When Bessie and Florene were children, they were busy trying to keep up with their schoolwork and all of their schoolwork was in English. Their parents also understood the value of knowing English and would “practice” speaking it with their children; therefore, Nimipuutímt was not given a lot of attention in the home. Bessie says that she did not teach Nimipuutímt to her children either because they were always busy trying to keep up with their schoolwork and extracurricular activities.

While we were talking, it started to snow very hard. Through the window, we could see sideways snow coming down outside and Bessie commented that one of the tribal beliefs is that when there is a death in the Tribe and something like a snowstorm happens, that signifies that person leaving and saying goodbye. The Tribe had just had a funeral
service the night before for one of their elders and Bessie said that the snow was her way of “cleaning up the area and leaving us.” Bessie commented that the deceased elder was “having a hard time cleaning up the area and that she needed to go to Washington D.C. and clean that area up.” Her statement speaks to the fact that the Tribe is indeed a very contemporary society, concerned with politics and current events as decisions made in Washington often directly affect them.

Another elder who I had the opportunity to speak with was a man by the name of Gary Greene. I met him on one of my many trips to the Nez Perce National Historic Park, where he volunteers his time. Gary told me that he grew up hearing the language and that both of his parents were fluent in Nimipuutímt. He would hear his mother speaking the language with her brothers and sisters but later in life when he asked his mother why she did not teach him and his siblings the language, she said it was only for the adults and his parents generation thought that their children would be better off learning English. His parents generation thought they were helping their children to assimilate into “mainstream” culture by not teaching them the language.

Gary ultimately developed an interest in the language through dance. Dancers were expected to be able to say prayers and give background information on specific dances. He has personally been asked a few times to say a prayer and he was not as proficient as he would have liked to be so he began studying the language and now he is much more comfortable saying prayers. He has been working with the language program for over three years. He mentioned that people from his grandmother’s generation did not speak English (Bessie is his aunt and her mom did not speak English). He also mentioned that one of the
main challenges with the language is that the more proficient speakers do not really have a lot of ways to utilize the language on a daily basis.

**Harold Crook, Ph.D.: Nez Perce Language Professor at Lewis-Clark State College**

I first met Dr. Harold Crook through my observation of one of the advanced language classes with the elders at LCSC. Harold shared with me how he came to work with the Tribe helping to revitalize the language. He told me that he wrote his PhD dissertation at UCLA on Nez Perce morphology and phonology. He subsequently received an Administration for Native Americans (ANA) grant in 1996 to help start a language program and then came to Lapwai about twenty years ago to start working on the project. He hired Angel and they got the language program going. Harold worked exclusively for the Tribe for a couple of years and then began teaching Nez Perce language classes at LCSC. Prior to Harold’s arrival at LCSC, Horace Axtell, and before him, a man named David Miles Sr., had also taught language classes at the college.

Over time, Harold developed a standardized Nez Perce language program at the college and made it possible for students to use Nez Perce language classes to satisfy their foreign language requirements. The college now offers first, second and third year language classes in the Nez Perce language. Tatlo actually took all of Harold’s language classes at LCSC and that is how Tatlo first came to be involved in the Tribe’s language revitalization program.

Harold mentioned that he did not know how to speak the Nez Perce language prior to coming to work with the Tribe in 1996, so all of the progress that he has made in his
study of the language has happened within the last 20 or so years. He had completed his Bachelor’s degree in Linguistics at Washington State University where he first developed an interest in the Nez Perce language. He went on to complete both his Master’s and Ph.D. in Linguistics at University of California, Los Angeles. His dissertation is titled “The Phonology and Morphology of Nez Perce Stress” and his current research with the Tribe pertains to the revitalization of Nez Perce, including the impact of moribundity and language disuse upon the grammars of individual speakers. Even though it seems to me that he possesses quite a high level of proficiency in the language, Harold was the first to say that he is indeed not “fluent” and is still learning new things in the language everyday through his ongoing work with the elders. Knowing that there exists a Nez Perce dictionary, I asked Harold how long it took to develop. Harold replied that the author, Haruo Aoki, had worked on it for many years after completing his Ph.D. at U.C., Berkeley. The Tribe considers the dictionary to be an invaluable resource.

Harold has an extensive history of service to the Nez Perce Tribe which includes the production of a new curriculum for the Tribe and the College (LCSC), serving as a liaison between the Tribe and institution of higher education, serving as a liaison with the Tribe’s Circle of Elders, and writing grant proposals for the Tribe. He supervises several language coordinators and elder-teachers, evaluates language program progress and helps with the planning of future goals. He teaches beginning Nez Perce at the Northwest Indian College in Lapwai, researches the Nez Perce language with the elders, and mentors students in the advanced language classes. He has developed the certification policies for the Tribe and the State of Idaho in Nez Perce Language Teaching K-12 and prepares proposals for
allocation grant funding for the Nez Perce language program, as well as teaches in after-
school programs for elementary school students in Lapwai and Kamiah.

Harold stated that he and the language program coordinators need to make a greater
effort to speak the language with the elders on a daily basis because they will only have
the elders around for about ten more years at most. Once the elders are gone, Harold says,
it will be up to people like Tatlo and Angel to take their place as far as language
revitalization efforts go.

**Conclusion**

When a community losses its language, the people risk losing their history and their
connection to the past. They risk losing all of the wisdom and knowledge that has been
accumulated through centuries pertaining to how to live on this planet in a sustainable
manner. This is the dilemma that the Nez Perce people are facing. However, every person
I spoke with, whether they were a tribal member, a linguist, or an anthropologist conveyed
to me a sense of hope for the future. They are very much aware of the struggles that the
Tribe has been through historically and are actively working to instill a sense of importance
and connection to the land, culture, and language among Tribal youth. They are battling
overwhelming historical losses. At the same time, they are working together to overcome
those losses as evidenced by their growing and evolving language revitalization program.
The efforts I observed instilled in me a sense of hope. As the reader can see from the
foregoing commentaries, Nimipuutímt is of paramount importance to the Tribe and
remains the very foundation of Nez Perce culture.
Chapter 5
THE NEZ PERCE CLASSROOM

Introduction

The Nez Perce Language Program is structured in such a way that the Nez Perce Language Coordinators, Angel and Tatlo, go into a mainstream public school classroom, typically an English or a social studies class, twice a week for approximately an hour each time and teach a Nimipuutímt language lesson to the class. The language coordinators bring with them multiple teaching tools that they use to teach the language. These teaching tools generally consist of flashcards and worksheets for the higher grade levels and puppets, stuffed animals, and picture books for the lower grades. The techniques that the language coordinators use are consistent regardless of grade level. It is the content of the material that changes depending on the comprehension level of each specific group or grade level. Regardless of the level of the program, the content of each lesson always builds on previous lessons. Angel typically teaches preschool and elementary school level classes at several schools within the Lapwai public school system. She also teaches college level classes at LCSC in Lewiston. She teaches the lower level introductory Nez Perce Language classes while Harold Crook teaches the advanced conversational seminar classes at the college. Tatlo, on the other hand, focuses mainly on the middle and high school level classes.

Many of my observations were conducted in Angel’s various language classes. The first class that I observed was her Nez Perce Language 102 class at LCSC. Before class began, she informed me that the monthly Circle of Elders meeting scheduled for March 1st
that I had hoped to attend would likely be cancelled due to the fact that both the Lapwai High School boys and girls basketball teams made it to the state tournament so most of the town (including the elders) would be heading to Boise to show their support. This is a testament to how close-knit and supportive this community is of each other and how connected the elders are with the youth. The elders play a significant role in the classroom setting. Usually, there is at least one elder present in the classroom during every language class taught within the schools. This is indicative of the generational depth that exists within Nez Perce society and the sense of connectedness that exists across generations, young and old, within the Tribe.

Classroom Practices

All of Angel’s language classes typically follow the same format, regardless of level or age, with each class consisting of several different segments. As an example, I give an overview below of a lesson from her college level Nez Perce 102 class. The reader should understand that the structure of this lesson is the same regardless of the level in the program. Content presented is made appropriate to the specific age group.

A. Sample Class: Angel Sobotta’s College Level Nez Perce 102 Class

1. Nez Perce Language Pledge: Angel begins all of her language classes (regardless of level or age) with the Nez Perce Language Pledge. It is a call and response pledge led by Angel and it goes as follows:

Nimipuutímt – The People’s Language (Nez Perce)
(In parenthesis below is the sign language that goes with the pledge.)


cukwenéewit (know it)
(With your right index finger, point to the side of your head, by your right temple.)

hitéemeneewit (learn it)
(With both hands, reach out with palms facing up and pull in towards the body, closing palms.)

téecukwe (teach it)
(With both hands, throw palms out in front of you like you are giving something away.)

c’ixnéewit (speak it)
(With right hand, up to the mouth – hand rounded – throw hand out, palm open.)

titooganáawit (live it)
(With right hand, tap heart twice.)

wiyéeleeheyn (Everyday!)
(With both arms and hands, extend them out to each side, palms up, so that you bring them out for sunrise and in for sunset.)

2. Quiz on previously covered material: Class then proceeded with a quiz on the materials covered in the previous class. The quiz consisted of twelve simple phrases that the class had to translate from English into Nez Perce.

Quiz materials included the following:

1. Monday – halxpáawin’aqit
2. Tuesday – lepitkaa ’awn
3. Wednesday – mitáatkaa ’awn
4. Thursday – piileptkaa ’awn
5. Friday – paxatkaa ’awn
6. Saturday – halxpawit ’á
7. Sunday – halxpáawit
8. January – Wiliuupup
9. February – ’alatam’áal
10. March – Latiiit’aal
11. April – Qeqiit’áal
12. May – ‘apa’áal
13. June – Tustimasáat’al
14. July – Q’oyxc’áal
15. August – Waw’amaayq’áal
16. September – Pik’unmaayq’áal
17. October – Hóopl’al
18. November – Sexliw’áal
19. December – Ha’óqoy
20. What is your birthday month? Tustimasáat’al (June)

Quizzes on Nez Perce vocabulary are given weekly and while the class was busy taking the quiz, Angel spoke with me about her language studies with Harold Crook, confiding that he would always end every lesson with a story. This became the focus of her own Ph.D. research, language learning through storytelling. This approach is apparent in her teaching style. The language teachers put together stories with pictures to go with each lesson plan. Classes often consist of translating picture books into the language. Angel emphasizes the importance of experiential learning through her teaching; for example, the previous week’s lesson had consisted of making frybread in the language.

3. New Lesson: This week’s lesson pertained to putting up a teepee. On this particular day, the class went over vocabulary words. An example of the type of teaching materials that are utilized (particularly the ones pertaining to the construction of the teepee) can be found in Appendix B2.

3a. Vocabulary: The vocabulary for this lesson consisted of words for the materials necessary to construct a teepee and cause it to stand as well as ordinal numbers:

1. coqoycóqoy (teepee)
2. tíwe (poles)
3. hiikte’ke’ś (canvas)
4. *wec ’é ’ke’s* (hammer/nails)
5. *cuuyek’ipske’s* (poles)
6. *hi’niksíix* (they are placing/putting)
7. *’üuyit* (first)
8. *lepítipx* (second)
9. *mitáatipx* (third)
10. *píiletipx* (fourth)
11. *páaqatípx* (fifth)
12. *’oyláaqcîpx* (sixth)
13. *’uynéepípx* (seventh)
14. *’oymáatatípx* (eighth)
15. *k’u’ícîpx* (ninth)
16. *piútímpx* (tenth)
17. *piútímp wax náaqçîpx* (eleventh)
18. *lamt’áy* (finally)
19. *lamt’ay’níx* (the very end)

3b. **Story Utilizing New Vocabulary**: The lesson proceeded with a story of the significance of the Nez Perce teepee. The Nez Perce teepee is shaped like the buffalo (not conical shaped, but slanted) and the teepee is talked about like a buffalo. The canvas is the buffalo hide, and the sticks that poke out of the top of the teepee are referred to as the buffalo’s ears. The story (as told to Angel by her cousin Josiah) goes as follows:

There was a young boy who was with his family. It was winter time and there was a storm coming and he got separated from his family. He was wandering around and there was a blizzard out. Then he ran into this Buffalo Bull and the Buffalo Bull told the boy that he would protect him but the boy needed to close his eyes and could not open them for any reason. It was storming all around the boy and there were all these different things that would happen that would make him want to open his eyes...he could hear the wind blow and feel the snow. Then it became dawn and he could see the light through his eyelids but he remembered that Buffalo Bull told him that under no circumstance could he open his eyes so he kept them closed. He heard his family saying “Oh, there you are! Come with us! But he remembered that Buffalo Bull had told him that under no circumstance could he open his eyes. So the next morning came and the storm went away and when he opened his eyes, he was surrounded by buffalo and the buffalo took care of him. Buffalo Bull was there and he told the boy that he would be there for protection of him and he gave him the instructions of how to build a teepee. This is why the first teepees were made out of buffalo hide. It is also why the front legs are slanted and the back legs are a little bit smaller (like a buffalo) and the horns are the ears of the teepee and the ribs are the poles. This is the reason that Nimi’puu teepees are constructed the way they are today...because of how the
Buffalo Bull instructed the boy and gave him the gift of the knowledge of how to build the teepee so that he would be protected.

3c. Sentences and Sentence Structure: The lesson then progressed into sentences. A quote from the lesson book (with translation) is as follows:

*Elmer Paul hihine:* “Niimiipuwn coqoycóqoy ’uus ku’ús cúulim qoq’áalx hiwxsu’úce. ‘ipnim

Elmer Paul he said: “The Peoples’ teepee it stands like a buffalo bull. It has ‘uus ‘anóoaqt wéeyux, héelex wéeyux, tupé’c, k’úpk’up, kaa mac’áyo. Pískis hiwes the front legs, the back legs, the ribs, the back, the ears. And the door tin’éhtitkin’ikeey.”

is to the east.

Many of the lesson plans consist of stories where the language staff serve as the main characters doing everyday activities. For example, this particular lesson proceeded to translate a story in which Angel and Tatlo are setting up a teepee. That story and its translation is as follows:

*Angel kaa Tatlo hiséewseke’yksix. ’ewsíix tíwe, hiikte’ke’s

Angel and Tatlo they caused the teepee to stand. It has the poles, the covering, wec’é’ke’s, kaa cúuyek’ipske’s the hammer and nails, and the pins (or buttons).

’úuyit, hi’niksiix hiikte’ke’s wéetespe.

First, put the covering on the ground.

*Lepítipx, hiséewseke’yksix wéeyux. ’éyncelnim ’uus ‘anóoaqt wéeyux.

Second, they cause the poles/legs to stand up. Angel has the front legs Tátlonm ’uus héelex wéeyux. Tatlo has the back legs. Hi’niksiix wéeyux ku’ús.

They are putting/placing the legs as such.

*Kawá hiséewseke’yksix tupé’c, lu’q’iiickin’ikeey kaa yaw’iiickin’ikaay.*
Then they caused the ribs to stand up to the south and to the north.

*Kawá hiséewseke'ysik piskísnim tiwe 'anóoqtipx.*
Then they caused to stand the door poles to the front.

*Kii hiíwes kúp'up.*
This is the back.

*Tátlo hinkáastiksa hiíkte'ke's kúp'úppe.*
Tátlo he is tying the cover on the back.
*Ku'ús hiíwes.*
Like this.

*Tátlo kaa 'éyncel hiséewseke'ysik kúp'up kaa hiíkte'ke's.*
Tátlo and Angel they are causing the back to stand and the covering.

*Hiíkte'ksik coqoycóqoy.*
They are covering the teepee.

*Ku'ús hikusiix.*
They are doing it.

*'éyncel hinkáastiksa hiíkte'ke's piskísnim tiwéepe.*
Angel she is tying the cover to the door poles.

*Hiíkte'ke's hiíwes nikáastikin' tiwéepe.*
The covering is tied on the poles.

*Kii hiíwes cúuyek'ipske's, Soyapootímtki “buttons.”* 
This is buttons in English

*Kawó' hicúuyek'ipskse coqoycóqoy.*
Then button the teepee

*Naaqc...lepít...*
One...two...

*Mac cúuyek'ipske's hiíwes?*
How many buttons are there?

*Hiwec'è'kse wec'è'ke's.*
She is hammering in the nails.

*Lamt'ay' hiséewseke'ysik mac' áyo.*
Finally they caused the ears to stand up.

*Kii hiwes mac’áyo.*
This is the ear.

*Tátlo kaa ‘éyncel hipéséewseke ‘yks coqoycóqoy c’a’á’.*
Tatlo and Angel they caused the teepee to stand correctly.

3d. *Questions about the Story:* After translating the story, the class reviewed the vocabulary from the story and went over several questions about the story. Examples of those questions/vocabulary can be found below:

*Weet hiwes kúckuc ‘itq’o himéeq’is?*
Is it small or big? Kúckuc (Small)

*Weet ‘íimk’e ku’ús séewseke ‘yko’qa?*
Can you two make it stand up like this?

*‘itúuki hanyíin coqoycóqoy?*
What is the teepee made with?

*Kii coqoycóqoy hiwes hanyíin canvas-ki.ó*
This teepee is made up of canvas.

*Waqíipa hiwéeke hanyíin qoq’áalxnim wispóolki.*
A long time ago we had made teepee with the hides.

*Kii hiwes wiispol.*
This is the hide.

*Waqipaníx hiwéeke hanyíin tok’óoki.*
A long time ago they had made tule mats

*Kii hiwes tók’o.*
This is tule.

*Tok’óo’niit*  
Tule mat lodge  
*‘inittáalam*  
top of the teepee

*cóqoy*
body of the teepee

*piskis*
door

*teqéex*
room
*coqoycóqoy, walíim ’niit*
teepee, the whole thing

*cóqoy*
refers to the top part of teepee

3e. Directionals: The lesson then progressed to a discussion of directionals as they relate to the structure and use of the teepee. The lesson utilized pictures of individuals inside and outside of the teepee and questions about each specific picture. For example:

‘áala hiwes héepey coqoycóqoya.
The fireplace is in the center of the teepee.

*Naqsníix ‘áayat hiwes ‘imiit coqoycóqoya.*
One lady inside the teepee.

*Mácwa titóogan hiysiix ‘éemti?*
How many people are outside of the teepee?

*Mácwa ha’áyat hiysiix ‘imiit coqoycóqoya?*
How many ladies are inside the teepee?

*Mácwa titóogan hiwes ‘imiit?*
How many people are inside?

*Mácwa hiwes ‘éemti?*
How many people are outside of the teepee?

*Téeet’ukt* (Directionals)
‘imiit (inside)
‘imiitkex (towards inside)
‘éemti (outside)
‘éemtkex (to the outside)
héepey (middle)
héepeype (in the middle)
3f. Weather: The next part of the lesson introduced new vocabulary pertaining to descriptions of the weather. A picture depicting a certain kind of weather was presented to the class with the question “Manáa hiwes ‘éemti?” which translates into English as “How was it doing?” (How was the weather doing?). Some examples from this vocabulary lesson include:

*Manáa hiwes ‘éemti?*
How was it doing?

*Hiwéeqise.*
It is raining.

*Hiwéeqise! Ku’skí wic’éese ‘imíit ‘iniitpe.*
It is raining! For this reason I am staying in the house.

*Manáa hiwes ‘éemti?*
How was it doing?

*Ta’c hiyk’iwce.*
It is nice and sunny.

*Hiyk’íwce! Ku’ski kúuse ‘éemtkex.*
It is nice and sunny! For this reason I am going outside.

The students proceeded to work through several writing exercises on their own pertaining to the new vocabulary. Once they completed their writing exercises, the class came back together to cover a new set of material pertaining to commands and another activity in which I got to participate.

**3g. Commands:** This was an activity in which one person would say commands to another in Nez Perce and the other person had to follow the command. Commands were based on the current lesson plan. For example, one person would say “*Kuy piskísx!*” (Go to the door) and the other person would have to follow the command and get up and go to the door. The students learned that the “x” on the end of the word is the locative indicative of the command “to.”

Later in the week, I attended the next session of the same class. During this session, the class went over a worksheet that they had done for homework – it was a lesson from the same workbook as the class that I had previously attended two days prior. This lesson reviewed directionals learned in the previous class session. I participated in an exercise where the class got into groups of two and each partner would give the other commands that they would have to follow. Commands included things like “Walk backwards to the door.” Examples of the worksheets that we went over are included in Appendix B3 and Appendix B5. One of the elders, Bessie Scott, attended this class and helped with pronunciation. There were several call and response exercises that the class did where
Bessie would read a Nez Perce phrase from the worksheets and the class would repeat after her.

**B. Instructors’ Analysis of the Nimipuutímt Language Program**

After class, Angel discussed some of her teaching styles and methods with me, mentioning that when creating the teaching materials, the language coordinators try to use no English with their worksheets and examples. They try to teach with total immersion. She told me about the experiences of one of the professors on her doctoral committee, an ethnographer by the name of Rodney Frey. When he first started working with the Nez Perce, the elders had told him that if he really wanted to know the culture and experience it, he would have to immerse himself in it. This was something that he took very seriously and he came to realize that the traditional stories are the heart of Nez Perce culture. He would later go on to say in his writing that if all the stories are told, then good things will come. This same emphasis on stories and storytelling would ultimately become the focus of Angel’s work. She says that there are over 300 documented stories in the language and not one family knows them all. So many stories have been lost and the stories have so much rich culture and indigenous knowledge within them and that is why it is important to try and work to bring them back.

Because the stories are learned primarily through oral tradition, I asked Angel how the Tribe feels about writing them down. She told me about anthropologist Deward Walker who spent 20 years with the Nez Perce people and Haruo Aoki who spent 30 years with the Nez Perce people and also wrote the Nez Perce dictionary. Both men personally spent
time with Angel’s grandparents. Angel says that even though some people might not like it, it is because Aoki and Walker spent so much time with the elders in the 1960’s writing down the stories that they now have written documents in the Nez Perce language (with translations and recordings). These documents and recordings have become an invaluable resource to current language revitalization efforts. Angel also noted what an incredible experience it is to get to listen to these elders (some of whom are relatives of hers who are no longer alive) tell these stories in the language. One reason Angel started her doctoral program focusing on the stories is because of the limited number of speakers there are. She says they are down to about 20 elders who speak the language and she was concerned about what they were going to do when there are no more elders. She says that, “the stories have so much rich language within them. The stories are going to be a way to connect with the elders when they are no longer physically here.”

Early the next morning, I met with Angel again to go over some of her lesson plans. She told me how she and the other language coordinators would divide up different stories and create lesson plans using those stories. She explained that there are two separate workbooks, a student workbook and a teacher’s workbook with the correct answers and translations. She explained how their teaching methodology includes giving the student a set of words and a corresponding set of pictures to match with the words. Worksheets given to the students reinforce the connection of specific vocabulary with specific pictures and often pose simple questions in the language about the story that is told through the pictures. Stories usually consist of one picture per sentence. Angel will also utilize flashcards with a picture on the front and a word or phrase that the student has to figure out on the back.
Additionally, Angel develops games to play with the students utilizing the stories. Some games involve asking the students different questions about the stories which they have to answer in teams. Other activities involve acting out the stories.

One such story involves the *sápl’is* (whirlwind). It is a symbol that is used a lot in Nimi’puu storytelling because it is seen as a roadmap to life that tells you the different seasons and where to hunt and fish according to those seasons. The *sápl’is* rotates around *luk’upsíimey* (the North Star). The Nimi’puu use *luk’upsíimey* to center themselves (and to guide them home). The symbol of the *sápl’is* is an ancient symbol to the Nimi’puu people. The Nimi’puu believe that it was stolen by Hitler and turned into a symbol of hate (a swastika) but Angel makes it clear that was never the original intention for that symbol. This is problematic because it is a symbol that is integrated into much of the artwork and ceremonial items of the Nimi’puu people and outsiders might not understand that. Angel told me a story about her young nephew wearing a shirt with a *sápl’is* and a man (an outsider) got mad and started yelling at him and her nephew did not know how to respond. As a result, Angel tries to give assignments to her students that encourage a positive connection with the symbol of the *sápl’is*. For example, she will have her students go out during the different seasons and draw where the *sápl’is* is at in the sky. Another activity involves making masks for the different characters and acting out the story of *luk’upsíimey kaa sápl’is* (the North Star and the Whirlwind). An example of this story (with translation) can be found in Appendix B1.

As the week progressed and I attended more classes covering a wide variety of ages and abilities, it became clear to me that the format of the curriculum is generally the same
for all levels; it is just the content that changes. For example, Tatlo’s Nez Perce Language I Class at the Middle/High School followed the same general format as Angel’s Nez Perce Language 102 class at LCSC. The Middle/High School class is a total immersion setting. This is an elective course and the students range in age from 6th grade to high school seniors. Tatlo uses pictures to ask questions in Nimíipútímt and the students have to answer back in Nimíipútímt. The language program is through the Lapwai Public School system and this particular school is on reservation land. As a result, the majority of the children that go to the school are Nez Perce. There are a few children who are not Nez Perce, but they are definitely the minority. It is very obvious that Tatlo tries to make learning the language fun and applicable to the everyday lives of his students. The class is very conversational and the pictures in the workbooks are of real people and places on the reservation (places and people that the children know and are familiar with in their day-to-day life). As already seen in Angel’s classes, in Tatlo’s classes, there is a lot of repetition. For example, he will go through the same pile of pictures multiple times and each time, a different student is asked a different question about the picture. The lesson I observed went over names for animals using pictures. Tatlo would show a picture and the students would have to answer simple questions about the picture (what kind of animal it was, what color it was, etc.). He might also hold up two pictures and ask a question and the students have to pick the correct one. The class then went over number flash cards and did simple addition and subtraction problems in Nimíipútímt. Tatlo would say a sentence and the students would have put the sentence together by putting the pictures in the correct order. He might
also put the pictures in a certain order and the students would have to construct the sentence that he created with the pictures.

The predominant method of teaching the language consists of an hour long language session twice a week in which Angel or Tatlo go into a “mainstream class” (usually English classes) to teach Nimipuutímt. Angel says that one of the challenges that she faces is that sometimes when she goes into these classes it seems as if some of the teachers view it as an opportunity to take a break from teaching. They use the time to surf the internet, grade papers, or do other things instead of taking the opportunity to learn the language with the class. She is concerned that if the teachers do not take the language seriously, the students can hardly be expected to take it seriously. There is also an attitude among some, though not all, of the parents that it is good that their children are learning the language in school but they do not have the time to look at the materials that are sent home with their children nor do they have time to reinforce at home what their children are learning in school. As a result, the language teachers really have no way of knowing how many of the children are actually utilizing the language technologies that are available to them, such as CD’s, websites, apps, etc. Then there is the additional factor of some students knowing a lot more than the teachers realize but maybe being embarrassed or ashamed to even try to say something in the language for fear of getting it “wrong.” She indicated that these feelings tend to be present in Native language programs throughout the country as indicated through comments she has heard from other language educators at Native language conferences that she has attended. Numerous teachers in various programs have
indicated there are challenges in getting students engaged and getting them to commit to learning the language.

Another obstacle in attracting children to the study of Native languages is that Native language programs often have to compete for children’s attention with other extracurricular activities and opportunities. The language teachers have come up with creative ways to counterbalance this. They relate the language to what the children are interested in, whether that be root digging or basketball. The objective is to get the children to connect to the language in their own way with their own interests so that it is more meaningful to them and they will want to use it. In this way, they will retain the language better and have a more positive experience. She says it is disheartening when she goes into a classroom and finds that her desire for teaching the language is not matched by the students desire to learn the language.

Angel teaches all levels of the language: preschool (4-5 year olds), as well as second grade, fifth grade, and sixth grade classes. She also teaches as a substitute in the after school program and she teaches Nez Perce language classes at LCSC. She used to go into the combined Middle/High School classes with Tatlo. Of all the levels she has taught, she says that the Middle/High School combined classes are probably the most receptive to language learning because they take it as an elective so they are taking it because they want to be there as opposed to it being mandated curriculum, as it is for grades pre-K thru sixth. She says it is a matter of finding the right thing with which to catch their attention, such as when she has them act out the stories in the language. Angel would like to integrate more fieldtrips into the curriculum. She believes that if she can take her classes to the actual
places in the landscape on which the stories are based, it could make them more meaningful for her students and give them a stronger connection to the land, the story, and the language.

In a similar vein, Josiah actually took me to many of these places on the landscape and told me the stories associated with them. Each time he would stop the car and turn off the engine, he would tell me a story. When he finished, he would point to a particular spot on the landscape and the rock formations would come alive in my imagination with the story he had just told me. I can only imagine how impactful this would be to a child who has grown up hearing these stories and for whom these stories are an integral part of his or her culture and history.

When asked what learning objectives students should aim for when they take her classes and how she gauges her students’ progress, Angel spoke about a new curriculum that she is developing that is focused more towards interactive practice of words and phrases rather than just simply going over lists of vocabulary words. The new curriculum also covers the lists of vocabulary words but in a more useful, interactive, and memorable way. She says that the ultimate learning goal for older children is to be able to master the lists of nouns and verbs and combine them into meaningful phrases. Another goal for older language learners is to be able to have small conversations in the language by the time they graduate from high school. The ultimate goal for younger children is that they master the sound system and the alphabet. The teachers do not try to expose the younger children to the writing system; they try to keep the emphasis on the fact that it is overall an oral language so there is more of a focus on sounds than there is on writing. The younger
children do learn some writing conventions because they need to be able to read in the language but their exposure to the writing system is limited.

Learning materials for the younger children include puppets, pictures, and masks. Learning materials for the older children include flashcards, pictures, websites and workbooks. For both older and younger language learners, Angel introduces stories about the surroundings and the environment. One example of this is a story about the constellations and the whirlwind symbol called the “sápl'is,” a sacred symbol that symbolizes the life cycle. This story can be found in Appendix B1. In addition to acting out the stories, she also plays games with her students that encourage more repetition of the language. There is often a lot of sign language that goes along with the stories and Angel teaches this to her students as well and encourages them to use it.

C. Advanced Language Classes

It is very apparent that the language program that has been instituted on the Nez Perce Reservation is working. Nowhere was this more observable than in Nez Perce Language 202, the most advanced of the classes offered at LCSC. This is a small, total immersion class taught by Harold and held at the Pi’amkinwaas on the LCSC campus. Pi’amkinwaas literally means “The Gathering Place.” It is the American Indian Center for Educational Excellence. The Center promotes a positive learning environment by providing student support services and an introduction to the unique cultural and community values of American Indian people. The center is respectful and inclusive of student representatives from all ethnic groups. Because the Pi’amkinwaas is more of a
community center than a classroom, it provides an environment that is much more relaxed than any of the other classes that I visited. The sense of community and the overall importance of Nez Perce culture on the LCSC Campus was exemplified by a little girl, about five years old, who kept coming into the room during the class to talk to Harold. She was the child of one of Harold’s students. It became very evident that family is of central importance to the Tribe and Harold almost seemed to have a grandparent-type relationship with the little girl.

This particular class was conducted exclusively in Nimipuutímt. Occasionally a student would ask for clarification in English but Harold would always answer back in Nimipuutímt and most of the time the student could comprehend the message that Harold was trying to convey. In addition to this advanced Nez Perce language class at LCSC, the college also offers two conversational classes. It was evident in my observation of the class described above that the students at this level possessed a good grasp of the language. They were able to communicate with relative ease and only broke from the language when they did not know a specific word. The student population in the more advanced language classes consists almost exclusively of individuals of Nez Perce descent, whereas in the lower level classes, there is more of a mix of Native and non-Native students. It seems that most students who choose to continue on in the language program are of Nez Perce heritage.

Several portions of the seminar class I observed consisted of Bessie saying a phrase or reading a story in Nimipuutímt and the class repeating the phrases after her. One or more of the elders as always present in the seminar-type classes and they interject regularly to
provide clarification on pronunciation, word meaning, or sentence structure. I did my best
to participate in this particular exercise and quickly learned that Nimipuutimt has a lot of
phonemes that I am not familiar with, so I struggled to pronounce some of them but
managed to keep up for the most part. This class used the same teaching style and types of
teaching materials as the classes that I observed previously; however, the content was at a
more advanced level. Several students in this class were very enthusiastic about learning
the language.

Following the class, one of the students stayed behind to work with Harold and to
interview Bessie and Florene for his senior project. The student was researching the
language through storytelling and was interested in how the stories are traditionally told in
terms of rhythm, phrasing, tempo, intonation, and dynamics, etc. He inquired as to what
kind of stories the ladies had heard when they were little girls growing up, to which both
Bessie and Florene answered “Coyote Stories.” Bessie said that when her grandmother
would tell her the Coyote stories, she would mimic the sounds of the animals and sing parts
of the stories. Bessie mentioned two well-known Nez Perce storytellers, Sam Waters and
Elizabeth Penney Wilson, who used to perform the stories and would use sounds and songs
in their storytelling. We then listened to a recording of one of the Coyote Stories and we
could hear how the storyteller would use these various tools of intonation, tempo,
dynamics, etc. to differentiate between the various characters in the story. Even though I
do not speak the language and did not know what the storyteller was saying, I could still
pick up on these subtle changes and recognized each time the character in the story
changed. The Tribe has a lot of quality recordings of elders telling traditional stories. With
the interest of some of the students who are currently in the Nez Perce language program at LCSC and the guidance of individuals like Harold, Tatlo, and Angel, these recordings may be key to this language’s ability to continue to survive and thrive.

As with learning any language, consistency is key and it seems that the language staff of the Nez Perce language program have found an effective way of teaching that works across multiple generations and learning levels. Despite the challenges that the language staff face everyday, the story-based curriculum that they have developed and the repetitious teaching methodologies that they employ seem to be highly effective in teaching the language.
Looking at language revitalization programs around the world, we find a variety of approaches. According to Hinton (2001a:7), most programs fall into one of five categories: (1) school-based programs which include teaching an endangered language as a subject, bilingual education, and full-scale immersion programs; (2) children’s programs outside of school, including after-school programs and summer programs; (3) adult language programs; (4) documentation and materials development; and (5) home-based programs (Hinton 2001a:7). To succeed, language renewal projects require not only good intentions but also enormous practical efforts. In the U.S., some tribes still need expert help to complete orthographies, grammar books, and dictionaries. Virtually all creators of language programs need assistance in developing and publishing curriculum materials.

The question of whether or not anything can be done to cope with the crisis of language loss and slow or even stop the incredible rate at which loss is occurring is answered by several examples of successful language revitalization. One such example is the Hebrew language. Hebrew was a “dead” language for nearly 2,000 years when it was brought back to life in Israel in the 1920s. It is now the language of schools and daily life. In Israel, it is recognized as the national language and now has several million speakers according to Ethnologue (http://www.ethnologue.com). However, as David Crystal points out, Hebrew is quite a contentious example of successful language revitalization due to the
“powerful combination of political and religious factors [that] explain the rebirth and ongoing maintenance of Hebrew in modern Israel” (Crystal 2000:127). Hebrew revival relied on state policies and social norms that heavily stigmatized the use of any Jewish language that was not Hebrew; these are the same methods that are often used by governments to suppress indigenous or minority languages. Thus, the strategies of reversing language shift that caused Hebrew’s miraculous resurgence were also responsible for the loss of dozens of immigrant speaker communities, whose status dropped as Hebrew’s rose (Fishman 2000:216-19).

Examples that more closely parallel the case of Nimipuutímt are two Polynesian languages, Native Hawaiian and Maori. The resurgence of Native Hawaiian is an example of successful language revitalization. Following European settlement in Hawaii by Captain James Cook in 1778, English quickly “became the preferred language of commerce, government, and education as society made the transition from communal to British-style monarchy to annexed territory to U.S. State” (Nettle & Romaine 2000:96). Historical and political factors such as population loss, loss of political autonomy, and cultural and physical dislocation all contributed to a decline in the use of the Hawaiian language. As a result, Native Hawaiian became a severely endangered language. However, in the 1970s a cultural and political renaissance took hold in Hawaii, and by 1984 a program of Hawaiian immersion preschools called Punana Leo was established. By 1987, the first elementary immersion programs had begun. Parental support and involvement in the program was exceptionally high because parents saw the importance in maintaining Hawaiian language and culture (Nettle & Romaine 2000:180-182). “In 1999, around 1,600 students
participated in public school immersion programs and eleven students graduated from the state’s two immersion high schools, the first to have been educated entirely in Hawaiian in over a century” (Nettle & Romaine 2000:183). Hawaiian language programs have steadily increased and in 1997 the state legislature approved the establishment of a Hawaiian Language College at the University of Hawai’i, a move intended to strengthen and expand the Hawaiian Studies Department, making it the most highly developed program in an indigenous language in the U.S. (Nettle & Romaine 2000:183)

The Native Hawaiian language revitalization program was modeled on another successful language revitalization program, the Kohanga Reo language immersion program in New Zealand. The Kohanga Reo is “an early childhood language immersion program that was developed by the Maori community in response to the realization that few children were being raised as speakers of the language” (King 2001:119). Since its beginnings in the early 1980s, the Kohanga Reo has grown to include over 600 individual schools throughout New Zealand.

Similarly to the Native Hawaiians, the Native population of New Zealand was devastated by the arrival of English settlers in 1840. English ultimately became the language of communication between the English and the Maori and in 1867, the Native Schools Act formalized English as the language of literacy in schools (King 2001:120). Many parents began to believe that “a good knowledge of English was essential to their children’s ability to obtain work and status within the dominant community” (King 2001:120). As a result, many Maori parents consciously chose not to speak Maori to their children at home and Maori became a language that was only used in places of tribal
business or in church (King 2001:121). It was not until 1977 that Maori would become a language of literacy within schools again. In 1987, the Maori Language Act made Maori an official language of New Zealand (King 2001:121).

Each Kohanga Reo school is run by a collective of teachers, local elders and members of the Maori community who work closely with Maori parents to ensure that they are providing a Maori-speaking environment at home. The Kohanga Reo schools have proven to be successful in producing a large number of bilingual children who can speak Maori with a reasonable degree of proficiency. The program has been an inspiration to language revitalization efforts both within New Zealand and around the world (King 2001:126-127).

Another language revitalization program with perhaps the greatest amount of similarity to Nimipuutimt is that of Arapaho, an Algonquian language spoken by the Arapaho Tribe of Colorado and Wyoming. According to an article published in the Denver Post on April 23, 2017 and accessed via denverpost.com, titled, To save their dying language, the Arapaho turn to high-tech apps, old-school flash cards and a new generation, the Arapaho language had “dwindled to just a few dozen speakers – most of them in their 70s – among the slightly more than 10,000 registered tribal members in Wyoming” (Simpson 2017). The article goes on to discuss the massive effort to save the language. The Arapaho turned to University of Colorado Boulder linguistics professor Andrew Cowell for help and they have “embraced websites, phone apps and video tutorials along with classroom immersion and personal mentoring” to renew a native language that they embrace as an essential part of their culture, religion, and worldview (Simpson 2017).
Together with doctoral student Irina Wagner, Cowell created a website in conjunction with the Arapaho Language Project as a resource for individuals who wish to learn more about Arapaho culture and how to speak the language. The website offers language lessons, a pronunciation guide, bilingual curriculum materials, stories, audio files, and many other resources. There are many parallels between the Arapaho language program and what the Nez Perce Tribe is attempting to do with Nimipuutimt. Both use similar types of teaching materials and both are attempting to make use of modern technologies (such as Facebook and Twitter) in addition to smartphone apps, in order to make the language interesting and relevant to the younger generation. Both also have a website that serves as a resource for language learning. Current estimates now put the number of active Arapaho speakers between 250 and 1000 (Simpson 2017). Hopefully, with the strides that the Nez Perce Tribe is making with their own language program, the number of active Nimipuutimt speakers will soon increase as well.

Yet another model for indigenous language revitalization is Keres, a dialect of Rio Grande Keresan, spoken in the pueblo of Cochiti in New Mexico. Cochiti Pueblo has instituted an all-Keres room where Head Start and preschool children can spend half an hour to two hours daily, depending on parental preferences. They also offer Keres language classes for tribal employees as well as arts and crafts classes in the language for both children and adults. In addition, they offer community mentoring projects where fluent adults are matched with learning adolescents and there are plans for a language nest where young babies and very young children can be cared for by fluent Keres-speaking elders (Salzmann et al., 2015: 178). I witnessed a lot of these same practices during my time with
the Nez Perce and even though some are being newly instituted, their success among the Cochiti offers a great amount of hope for the future of the Nez Perce project.

Languages do not exist without people and culture. Any given language at any time is a product of cultural and historical processes and, as a result, its use can be deliberately political. Language functions not only as a device for reporting experiences but also as a way of defining experience for its speakers. People assert their identity and subjectivity through language and, as such, language creates and perpetuates culture and culture influences language. As Daniel Everett asserts, language is essentially a tool used to create different ways of being in the world; it represents a social reality and no two languages represent the same social reality (Everett 2012).

In order to save a language, we must then view it as a part of culture. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the six factors for successful language revitalization programs presented by Crystal. He first suggests that an endangered language will progress if its speakers increase their prestige within the dominant community. Second, an endangered language will progress if its speakers increase their wealth relative to the dominant community. Third, an endangered language will progress if its speakers increase their legitimate power in the eyes of the dominant community. Fourth, an endangered language will progress if its speakers have a strong presence in the educational system. Fifth, an endangered language will progress if its speakers can write their language. And finally, in today’s world, an endangered language will progress if its speakers can make use of electronic technology (Crystal 2000:131-144). All of these factors for language
revitalization and survival are intricately intertwined with aspects of culture and cultural survival.

Another key factor is teacher-training, which is complicated by the fact that Native American language speakers often lack academic credentials, while outsiders lack essential cultural and linguistic knowledge. As a result, language renewal projects must often draw on cultural resources available on reservations and, especially, on elders, the true experts in these languages. As James Crawford states in his article on Native American languages, “Tribal initiative and control are essential to the success of renewal efforts because language choices are a matter of consensus among speakers. They are very difficult to impose from outside” (Crawford 1995:30). A tribe must WANT to restore their native language. If endangered languages are to be saved, it is crucial for native speakers to see the value of doing so and become actively involved in the process. However, Crawford makes it clear that at the same time, language renewal programs often face a major barrier to social progress on Indian reservations, the problem of scarce resources. Language projects must often compete with other, usually more pressing priorities like health care, housing, schooling, and economic development. Most tribes, lacking a local tax base, have historically relied on federal funding for these needs. But since 1930 the federal government has cut back substantially on its support of Native American programs in general (Crawford 1995:30).

In order for heritage language revitalization programs to succeed, they must not only have governmental support but also the support of the people, both within the public community and at home. Greatly aided by the efforts of the American Indian Language
Development Institute and Native American Language Issues Institute, Congress passed the Native American Languages Acts of 1990 and 1992. These laws articulate a government policy of protecting indigenous languages and authorize a grant program for that purpose (Crawford 1995:30-31), yet Congress has been slow to appropriate any resources to carry out the new laws. However, for languages that are still being learned by children, taught in bilingual education programs, and receiving tribal support, there is considerable hope. Heritage-language immersion programs have been employed as a primary strategy to cultivate heritage-language proficiency among native youth. The Pueblos of the Southwest and the Blackfoot of Montana illustrate community-based approaches to language revitalization. Data from school-based heritage-language immersion indicates that children can acquire the heritage language as a second language without “cost” to their English language development or academic achievement. Studies have shown that heritage-language immersion is a viable alternative to English-only instruction for Native students who are English-dominant but identified as limited English proficient. Studies have also shown that time spent learning a heritage language is not time lost in developing English, while the absence of sustained heritage-language instruction contributes significantly to heritage-language loss (Reyhner 2006:83-97).

According to, Mary Eunice Romero Little and Teresa L. McCarty, it takes approximately five to seven years to acquire age-appropriate proficiency in a heritage language when consistent and comprehensive opportunities in the heritage language are provided. It has been shown that heritage-language immersion contributes to positive child-adult interaction and helps restore and strengthen Native languages, familial relationships,
and cultural traditions within the community. Literacy skills first developed in a heritage language can be effectively transferred to English, even for students with limited proficiency in the heritage language upon entering school. Additive or enrichment language education programs represent the most promising approach to heritage- and second-language instruction and contribute to overall tribal sovereignty (Little & McCarty 2006:25-26). The home plays a fundamental role in revitalizing a language and keeping it alive. School programs alone cannot accomplish intergenerational transmission unless the task is supported and continued in the home. Early childhood education is key. However, beginning the use an endangered language as the first language at home is a big commitment and the perception of the endangered language within the dominant society may weigh heavily on the decision to speak the minority language predominantly in the home.

There are many challenges to revitalizing endangered Indigenous languages. The most critical of those seem to be access to fluent, competent teachers, quality teaching materials and adequate funding. But it is important to keep several things in mind when it comes to the overall importance and validity of Native American Language Immersion Programs. Language is directly tied to cultural heritage and a sense of identity (Grenoble 2011:36). One important reason many people want to learn their ancestral language is that they want to regain access to their traditional cultural practices and traditional values. Successful Native American language immersion programs are characterized by Native ways of knowing, learning and indigenous knowledge. For this reason, many immersion programs put a lot of faith in the traditional role of grandparents whose involvement in
teaching and learning language is directly tied to cultural heritage and a sense of identity.

Language is an important contributing factor to a culture’s “worldview” and to lose a language is to lose diversity and another way of seeing the world (Nettle & Romaine 2000:69-70). Native American language immersion programs serve to counter the devastating effects of American colonization on Native people. Learning the tribal language is one way in which cultures maintain the integrity of their way of life.

Heritage language loss affects languages throughout the country and the world. An example of this can be seen in California, which was once home to over 300 Native American dialects and as many as 90 languages, historically making it the most linguistically diverse state in the United States. According to the Advocates for Indigenous California Language Survival (AICLS), about half of those languages disappeared as the Gold Rush of the nineteenth century had a devastating impact on Native Americans and their culture and language (Shipley 1978:80-90). An important figure in this movement is L. Frank Manriquez who has played a huge role in the California language revitalization movement which began about twenty years ago after many people noticed that languages were disappearing with the death of the oldest generation of fluent speakers. Manriquez is one of the founding board members for the AICLS and is committed to the preservation and revival of Native Californian Languages through the practice of traditional arts, language immersion, conferences and workshops (Capachi 2012).

One program in California that has had good results is the California Master-Apprentice Language Learning Program, run by an intertribal organization, the Advocates for Indigenous California Language Survival. It is a program in which the last elderly
speakers of various California Native languages are paired with young relatives who want to learn the language. They are taught immersion-style techniques of language teaching and learn to speak their language together one-on-one. Interactive activities such as cooking, gathering, housework, or taking a walk are the encouraged teaching style so that the language is learned in the context of real communication (Hinton 2001b:217-226).

Experiential learning and connecting the language with practical aspects of daily life seem to be very important aspects of the Nez Perce language program. The workbooks use actual members of the Tribe in the examples and pictures. Hands-on lessons involve relevant cultural activities such as making traditional foods in the language or putting up a teepee in the language. The teachers of the language program strive to make the language as relevant as possible to the interest and everyday life of the students.
Chapter 7

AN APPRECIATION

The language program on the Nez Perce Reservation is integrative, complex, and multi-faceted. It takes significant coordination between the language coordinators, school administration, teaching staff, the tribal linguist, the tribal anthropologist, the students, the parents, and the community in order to make it successful. That coordination was very apparent to me throughout my time with the Tribe.

Going into this research project, I had apprehensions about being a white, female cultural anthropologist coming in to study a language and a culture that I essentially knew nothing about. Josiah, however, put my apprehensions to rest when he said that he was reassured in working with me, that the experience and the knowledge that I was gaining was going to be taken to a better place because of my personality and what I feel is important.

Both Josiah and Angel addressed my question about how the Tribe feels about anthropologists coming in to work with the language and the stories. Angel brought up the fact that a lot of the stories that anthropologists have helped to record actually have audio recordings of elders reciting the stories. This has allowed the Tribe to be able to take the recordings and integrate them into lesson plans and PowerPoint presentations. Angel recognizes that all of the work that has been done to record the stories has really been an invaluable gift for the Tribe. Josiah addressed the belief that all anthropologists want is to come and take the Tribe’s knowledge and leave. However, he indicated that with me, it
was different. He told me that not all outside researchers are accommodated and welcomed into the classroom to the extent that I was. It is the choice of the tribal members whether or not to accommodate outsiders. Angel and Tatlo did not have to welcome me to the extent that they did but they both sensed a sincerity in me that made them more accommodating and more willing to share and open up to me. Josiah told me that he could see during our initial contact through email that I had done a lot of background research and it helped him to see how serious I was as a researcher. It helped him to see how interested I was which in turn allowed him to see how genuine I was. I, in turn, was amazed by how open and receptive everybody was towards me.

My research, however, was not without its obstacles. One such obstacle had to do with forms of address and some of the challenges that I had with the way that I addressed certain individuals. This actually turned into a lengthy conversation with Josiah. We spoke about Tatlo, whose legal name is Thomas Gregory, but who is called Tatlo by everyone. In our initial communications, I thought of it as a sign of respect to address him as Mr. Gregory. After several meetings with him, however, I realized that this was an ethnocentric approach and I ultimately changed the way that I addressed and referred to him to more reflect Nez Perce cultural values. Josiah says this exemplifies exactly what the Tribe are struggling for, this idea that outsiders are coming in not knowing how to behave in the Nez Perce community but thinking that they do. I learned that, as an outsider who had been invited in, I needed to respect the culture on its own terms instead of my opinion of how I thought respect be shown. The conversation regarding markers of respect led us to a discussion of naming and the crucial role it plays in one’s identity. Josiah says that both of
his sons have Nez Perce names because to him, giving them English names had not been an option. He knew at the time that they were born how important Nez Perce language was to him and how important it was to him to assert his family’s Nez Perce identity. His wife was supportive of that. He recognizes that his boys’ names are an assertion of his own identity and not necessarily the identity of his sons but he wants them to have that sense of pride and identity in their names eventually and that is what he hopes for. When he was growing up, people would call him J.J. even though his middle initial is B. At that time, he did not know the importance of the name Josiah. For a very long time when he was a child until he got into grade school, he thought that his name was actually J.J. He did not know the back story of the name Josiah, so he just let people call him J.J. until he realized that the name J.J. did not mean anything to him. He realized that he needed to start using the name Josiah because that was the name that his grandfather had given him. It had relevance and importance.

Another challenge that arose while I was conducting my research, had to do with the fact that day-to-day life carried on for the Tribe as usual while I was there. Granted, a lot of the Tribe knew of my visit and they were aware that I was in town, and while I am sure that accommodations were likely made so that I felt a certain level of comfort and inclusion in the day-to-day activities, I had to adapt to various situations that did not quite go the way that I had planned. I would have liked to have met more of the elders and maybe sit in on a Circle of Elders Meeting but I really had no way of knowing that both the boys and girls basketball teams would make it to the State Basketball Championships and that many of the elders would be heading down to Boise to show their support so the monthly
Circle of Elders Meeting for March would be cancelled. There was no way to know that Tatlo would have a family emergency while I was in town and would have to cancel several of his Nez Perce language classes that I had planned to observe. There was no way for me to know that Josiah would have to be out of town unexpectedly for work for the entire first week of my trip. When Josiah and I finally did get the chance to connect, he paid me one of the nicest compliments I have ever received. He told me that he had a great appreciation for the fact that I allowed my research and interviews to happen so naturally, meaning that my interviews were not so structured and forced. He said that this put him at ease and made him much more willing to open up to me. He said that “unless you are willing (as a researcher) to release your attachment to those types of controls – meaning the rules and regulations and the interview scripts and trip plans – I’m not going to trust you.” He told me that because he sensed my openness to learn over my attachment to my agenda, he trusted me so he opened up more. He says he has had experiences in the past with other researchers who were more attached to their agenda and he has given them less because he just did not trust them as what that shows is an attachment to control over their environment and it is immediately offputting. And even though Tatlo had a family emergency that took him away from his classes for several days, he still made time to sit and talk with me for almost two hours on the last day of my trip because he saw the value in what I was doing and appreciated the passion that I had to really learn about and understand the Tribe’s language revitalization efforts.

As an outside researcher, I had understandable apprehensions about living among a group of strangers for two weeks but never have I felt so warmly received as I did with
the people of the Nez Perce Tribe. Tribal members had a genuine interest in what I was doing and why I was there and everyone I encountered offered a story or some kind words. Perhaps one of the moments that stands out the most for me was when, upon my third meeting with one of the medicine men for the Tribe, he presented me with a hand-sewn necklace made from buffalo hide and stuffed with traditional herbs which he blessed as he put around my neck and told me that it would keep me safe on my journey. I believe that Nimipuutimt will survive based on the connection that the Tribe is fostering between the language and the traditional ways of the past. The process may be slow but it is very apparent that the language is becoming a tightly interwoven part of the culture again.
Appendix A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview questions were developed with four target groups in mind. The first target group was elders; the second target group was teachers; the third target group was children; and the fourth target group was parents, community members, and adult learners. Questions for elders centered around personal history with the language, changes in the language, attitudes towards the language and the various revitalization efforts, the connection between language and culture, and the future of the language. Questions for teachers centered around reason for choosing language education as a profession, learning objectives, types of resources and programs available, and attitudes towards the language and language revitalization efforts. Questions for children centered around various types of exposure to the language, family history with the language, and feelings towards learning the language. Questions for parents, community members, and adult learners centered around family history with the language, community experiences with the language, experiences with the language in school, and feelings towards learning the language.

Questions asked in any given interview took into account the age range of the interviewee(s). Not all questions were asked in every interview as answers to initial questions sometimes negated potential follow-up questions. All questions were developed to serve as open-ended conversation starters.
Interview Questions for Elders

1. Describe your earliest memories of hearing and speaking the Nimipuutimt language. Who did you first hear the language from, who spoke it to you? How did that person influence you throughout your life?

2. How do you think your childhood was different being raised speaking Nimipuutimt rather than being raised speaking English? Did you speak the language with your childhood friends? Was there ever a period of time that you did not speak the language? If so, why?

3. What changes in the Nimipuutimt language have you observed throughout your lifetime? How has the community's attitude toward the language changed in your lifetime?

4. What does speaking the language mean to you? Why is speaking the language important?

5. Have you taught the language to anybody? When did you first begin teaching the language to others? What motivated you to do this? What were some of the challenges you faced in teaching the language to others? What were the rewards?

6. How did your elders feel about the language? Have you learned anything about the land through the language? Do you ever dream in Nimipuutimt?

7. Do you believe that speaking the language necessary for keeping the culture alive?

8. Nimipuutimt is listed as one of the world’s most endangered languages. Do you believe the Nimipuutimt language can be revitalized to the point that it can become a thriving language again, used as much as English in everyday life? If so, what will it take? What do you think the priorities should be in revitalizing the language? What needs to be done in order to save it?

9. Why is it important to have the people keep speaking the Nimipuutimt language in future generations to come?

10. Is there anything else that you would like to add that I have not already asked you?
Interview Questions for Teachers

1. How did you come to choose the work you are doing? Why do you study/teach Native languages?

2. What learning objectives do you think students should accomplish in a Native language course? In other words, what do you think students ought to know at the end of one month? One year? Three years? How do you measure their progress?

3. What kinds of activities do you have where children can demonstrate their understanding of Nimipuutimt to the community?

4. What types of resources are available to facilitate language learning among both children and adults (i.e., flashcards, board games, videos, computer programs, etc.)? Are there any materials or readings you would say are crucial to coursework in the Nimipuutimt language?

5. How does the community value or devalue Nimipuutimt? Which part(s) of the community is/are working on language revitalization?

6. What problems have you encountered in working to promote awareness of Nimipuutimt culture and language?

7. Why do you think there are differences in whether people choose to speak the language or not speak it?

8. What types of programs does the Cultural Resources Department/Education Department offer? What types of programs have been offered in the past? (refers to all programs, not just language programs).

9. Where else in the community (outside of the classroom) can you hear the language spoken? By whom?

10. What do you think has been gained or will be gained by revitalizing/maintaining Nimipuutimt?
Interview Questions for Children

1. Do your grandparents speak something other than English? What do they call it?

2. Do your parents speak something other than English? What do they call it?

3. Do you use the language at home? Do you use the language anywhere else?

4. Do you know any songs, poems, or stories in Nimipuutimt?

5. Did you learn any of it in school?

6. Do you take part in any activities that involve Nimipuutimt in school? How about in other environments like church or boy scouts/girl scouts? What have those been like for you?

7. How does speaking or learning the language make you feel? When does speaking English feel better and when does speaking Nimipuutimt feel better?

8. Do you like learning Nimipuutimt? Why is it important or not important to you to learn it?
Interview Questions for Parents, Community Members and Adult Learners

1. Do any of your family members speak the language? Who in your grandparents’ generation can speak it? In your parents generation? In your family’s youngest generation? If not, when was the last time it was spoken?

2. Describe your experiences growing up in the community. When you were growing up, was Nimipuutimt used in your home?

3. Did you learn as a child any songs, poems or lullabies in the Nimipuutimt language?

4. What attitudes toward Nimipuutimt exist in your family?

5. Do you currently use the language in everyday conversation? If so, how? If not, why not?

6. How did schools treat your language learning and use growing up? Did you or family members learn any of the language in school? Describe your experiences in school.

7. Were you ever punished for speaking Nimipuutimt in school?

8. Do you currently take part in any activities related to Nimipuutimt? What kinds of activities? Describe your experiences.

9. Has your experience learning Nimipuutimt made a difference in your life? If so, how?

10. How does speaking or learning the language make you feel? Why is it important or not important to you?
Appendix B

NIMIPUUTÍMT TEACHING MATERIALS

The following are samples of the types of teaching materials used in the language program. These samples provide an overview of the materials utilized at several different levels of the program. The materials that I have chosen to include here are the same materials whose use I observed during my fieldwork. I have added handwritten English translations of several Nimipuutímt words and phrases that were offered at several points during my observations.

The teaching materials included here come from two separate sources. The materials in Appendix B1 come from a picture book for young children that tells the story of the Bigger Dipper, the North Star, and the Whirlwind. The materials in Appendices B2 through B7 come from lessons in the college level workbook for Nimipuutímt 101-102 at Lewis-Clark State College.

Materials provided in Appendix B are as follows:

B1 – Picture Book of the Big Dipper Myth

B2 – Workbook for older students re: building a teepee followed by questions re: teepee lesson

B3 – Directionals

B4 – Weather

B5 – Commands

B6 – Ordinal Numbers
B7 – Body Parts
Appendix B1

PICTURE BOOK OF THE BIG DIPPER MYTH

The following is an example of a picture book for young children that tells the story of the Big Dipper, the North Star and the Whirlwind.
The Big Dipper

hiyúumtaxto

luk'upsíimey kaa sápl'is

THE NORTH STAR AND THE WHIRLWIND
Five Wolf Brothers

páaxat

hímiin piyéeme

WDUCZT.
Civilti
Pawi
xáxaac

yáaka’
Pawi
Pawi

'iceyéeeye hitoláyca
Coyote is gray-up stream.
céep (arrow)
waliim tim'úuni

xíc'iyu
luk'upsíimey
THE NORTH STAR
xáxaac hipastaláhsaya

A brown bear is looking up

hímiin hipastaláhsaya

The wolves are looking up
The wolves watch the cubs as they look up.
I wonder what the wolves are looking up at?

The wolves they want to go up in the sky.
Cyote he makes an arrow trail for the wolves.

And there is no way for them to return. That’s all.
Grizzly Bow, grizzly Bow, what do you see?

χάχαχαχ, χάχαχαχ 'tıúne 'éeksiix?

We see the North Star

núun 'éeksiix luk'upsiimeyne

Wolves, wolves, what do you see?

hımihı́n, hımihı́n 'tıúne 'éeksiix?

We see the grizzly bears looking up at the North Star

núun 'éeksiix riça Estáłhalaasíx luk'upsiimeyne

16

17
In each season 'enim', 'elweht, tayam, sexim' go outside on a clear night & draw the location of where hiyúqtxasto appears in the sky. Also, can you see where xat'sat'l'ac – Grizzly Bear's pet dog is?

Write a note on what is happening with nature: plants, fish, weather etc., & draw where the hiyúqtxasto is in the sky according to what took place on that day. Ex: “On August 7, 2016, I went to Fog Mountain up above Selway & picked 'cemits—huckleberries'. This is how the hínimt piyédxen káxem t'axwq appeared in the sky then.”
Nimipuutimt
"Heartbeat of our culture"

Nez Perce Language Program
P.O. Box 365
311 Parade Avenue
Lapwai, ID 83540
(208) 843-2253
http://www.nimipuutimt.org

Qo’lleyew’w’ to Josiah Pinkham Titwaxiyew’lat for the nimipau story, sepehitemenew’ yet

... hyúumíaxko – grizzly bear sneaking up.
lu’k’usíme yísa sápi’is – north star & whirlwind
píaxap limin piyéem – 5 wolf brothers
wk’waac – grizzly bear
yákka’ – brown/black bear
‘icyéelye hitólayca – Coyote is going upstream.
céep – arrow/bullet
wállim tim’uuni – old bow, xíc’yu’ – star
lu’k’usíme yísa – north star, without pulsating.
hu’xáapac hipastahásya – Grizzly bears looked up.
limin hipastahásya – Wolves looked up.
hu’limin hinéshxene’ xišxasna hístahásasix
Wolves saw the grizzly bears looking up.
’icyéelyenem hinéshxene hínimíshístahásasix
Coyote saw the wolves looking up.
“túwaxap ‘túuwecet kínnem hínimíshí
pastahásasix’?”
I wonder what these wolves are looking up at?
“hi’limin hiwáshx’i’pácwísita ’lísxúlapa’
Wolves want to go up in the sky.
’icyéelyenem pástahásasix céeppne
Coyote shot the arrows up.
'iceyéeeyem hinaashanyán‘ya céep 'iskit hímísne
*Coyote made for them an arrow trail the wolves.
'iceyéeeyem hineesepetagel’wetiyékéy’ke
hímísne – *Coyote abandoned the wolves.
kaa wéet’u minmai hipawiipáytoqa.
*And in no manner they can return.
yox kaló’ – *That is all.
 Kháaac, Kháaac 'Itúune 'éekisiix?
*Grizzly bear, grizzly bear what do you see?
núun 'éekisiix luk’upsíimeyne
*We see the north star.
hímilin, hímilin 'Itúune 'éekisiix?
*Wolves, wolves what do you see?
núun 'éekisiix Kháaasnim histaláhsasix luł’upsíimeyne. We see the grizzly bears looking up at the
north star.
'iceyée, 'iceyéeeye 'Itúune 'éekice?
*Coyote, coyote what do you see?
‘iín ‘éekice hihímísnim péékcix Kháaasna.
*I see the wolves looking at the grizzly bears.
táyam – *summer
sexnim’ – *fall
‘ením’ – *winter
‘elwéht – *spring (coming out of winter).
Appendix B2

TEEPEE LESSON FROM COLLEGE LEVEL WORKBOOK

The following is an example of the teaching materials contained in the workbook that is used for the Nimipuutímt 101-102 classes at Lewis-Clark State College. It is a workbook/picture book that is designed for older students. The lesson is immediately followed by questions for the students pertaining to the teepee lesson.
Téecukwe 'uynéept (7)
Coqoycóqoy Séewseke'ysix
Elmer Paul hihúne: "Niimíipu'm coqoyécóqoy 'uus ku'ús ciútím qoq'áalx ke yoq hiw'hsu'úce. 'ipnim 'uus'anóoqt wéeyux, héelex wéeyux, tupé'c, k'úpk'up kaa mac'áyo. Pi'skis hiwes tin'èhtikin'ikeey."
Angel kaa Tatlo hiséewseke'yksix coqoqcóqoy. 'ewsíix tíwe, hiikte'ke's, wec'ë'ke's, kaa cúuyek'ipske's

'túuyít, hi'niksíix hiikte'ke's wëetespe.

Lépitpx, hiséewseke'yksix wéeyux. 'éyncelnim 'uus 'ánóqot wéeyux. Tátlo'm 'uus héelex wéeyux.

Hi'niksíix wéeyux kuuús.

Kawá hiséewseke'yksix tupé'e, lu'q'íickin'íkeey kaa yaw'íickin'íkaay.
Kawá hiseeewseke'lyksix piskísnim tíwe 'anóoqtipx.

Kii híiwes k'úpk'up.

Tátlo hinkáastiksa hííkte'ke's k'úpk'úppe.

ku'ús híiwes.

Tátlo kaa 'éyncele hiseeewseke'lyksix k'úpk'up kaa híikte'ke's

Hííekte'lyksix coqooycóqoy.

Ku'ús híikusíix.

'Éyncele hinkáastiksa hííkte'ke's piskísnim tiwéepe.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hiikte'ke's hiiwes nikáastikin' tiwéepe.</th>
<th>Kii hiwes cúuyek'ipske's, Soyapootimtki &quot;buttons.&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kawó' hicúuyek'ipskse coqoycóqoqoy.</td>
<td>Naaqc...lepít...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mac cúuyek'ipske's hiwes?</td>
<td>Hiwec'Č'kse wec'Č'ke's.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lam'tay' hiséewseke'yksix mac'áyo.</td>
<td>Kii hiwes mac'áyo.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tátlo kaa 'éyncel hipeséewseke'yks coqoycóqoy c’a’á'.

Weet hiwes kúckuc 'itq'óo himéeq'ís?
Weet 'limk'c ku'ús séewseke'yko'qa?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>'itúuki hanyín coqoycóqoy?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kii coqoycóqoy hiwes hanyín <em>canvas-kl.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Waqlípa hiwéeke hanyín qoq'áalxnim wispóolkl.

Kii hiwes wíspol.

Waqipánfx hiwéeke hanyín tok'óoki.

Kii hiwes tók'o.
'iniitáalam → coqoy → pískis →

coqoycoqoy, walím'niit

coqoy

wec'ėke's

'áala híiwes héepey coqoycoypa. →
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Naqsniix 'áayat híwes 'ímít coqoycóqoypa.</th>
<th>Mácwa ha'áyat hiwsíx 'ímít coqoycóqoypa?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mácwa titóqan hiwsíx 'éemti?</td>
<td>Mácwa titóqan hiwsíx 'ímit?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mácwa híwes 'éemti?</td>
<td>Mácwa híwes 'éemti?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hitéemetoqt: *(to go back)*

Mine híwes téeq's Besi?

*Mine híwes Besi?*  
*Where is the woman?*

'ítuú híwes yox?

*'ítuú híwes yox?'  
*What is she pointing at?*

'ítuú híwes kii?

*'ítuú híwes kii?'  
*What is she holding?*

Mipx hitkúupke'ykse?

*Mipox hitkúupke'ykse?*  
*What is she pointing at? To where is she pointing?*
Appendix B3

LESSON ON DIRECTIONALS FROM COLLEGE LEVEL WORKBOOK

The following is an example of the teaching materials contained in the workbook that is used for the Nimipuutímt 101-102 classes at Lewis-Clark State College. It is a workbook/picture book that is designed for older students.
Kuy ʼéemtkex!

**Téetk'ukt:**
Directionals

**Teméeckiliikix →**
tūm'es 152

C'iqiqin
- ʼímít, ʼímítkex
- ʼéemti, ʼéemtkex
- héepey/héepeype
- ʼánóoqt, ʼánóoqtipx
- héelex, héelekipx
- cáky'ax, cáky'axpx
- wepsúux, wepsúuxpx

**Kíye**
xeeléewisix!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weec'éy ʼánóoqtipx!</th>
<th>Weec'éy ʼímítkex cílpćiľpx!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'ipsqike'yx héelekipx</td>
<td>wiséeke'yx héepeype cílpćiľpe.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Teams:** Each different verb you use with a unique direction = 1 point!
Téetk’ukt: Directionals

Nez Perce has many verbs that indicate movement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>kúuse</th>
<th>kuy!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'I am going'</td>
<td>'go!'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>weec'éye</th>
<th>weec'éy!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'I am jumping.'</td>
<td>'Jump!'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Séewleke'ykse</th>
<th>Séewleke'yx!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'I am driving.'</td>
<td>'Drive!'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>'ipsqíke'ykse</th>
<th>'ipsqíke'yx!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'I am walking'</td>
<td>'Walk!'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>hiwúuleke'ykse</th>
<th>'It is ambling' (4-legged)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>tukéepke'ykse</th>
<th>tukéepke'yx</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'I am pointing.'</td>
<td>'point!'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Direction of movement in Nez Perce is typically indicated by placing the suffix –px/–x on the thing movement is to/towards. The form of the directional case suffix is determined by the noun to which it is affixed. The most common form is simply –x:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>'in kúuse t'éepwey.</th>
<th>&lt; t'éepwey –x</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'I am going to Lapwai.'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caan hiséewleke'ykse Simínénekem.</th>
<th>&lt; Simínénekem –x</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'John is driving towards Lewiston.'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Besi hitkúupke'ykse pískíx.</th>
<th>&lt; pískí –x</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'Bessie is pointing towards the door.'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When a noun ends in x, ɣ, or a stressed vowel, then the directional suffix is –px. There are some other common directionals that also take this form, including the question word:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mípx kúuse?</th>
<th>&lt; mi –px</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'To where are you going?'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sík'ém hiwúuleke'ykse c'íxč'ilxpx</th>
<th>&lt; c'íxč'ilx –px</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'The horse is walking towards the grass.'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nimipwauyuq 103–102 (2015–16), Lewis–Clark State College – HD Cusick
‘ıpín kúuse Qémwepx.
‘ıpín kúuse Tewéepx?
Séewleke’yx cáky’axpx!
‘Drive to the left!’
Séewleke’yx wępsúuxpx
‘Drive to the right!’
Cáan ƙʼpsqike’yke héelekipx.
‘John is walking backwards.’
Piskísnim tíwe híwes ’anóoqtípx
‘The door poles are to the front.’

In addition, there are some special forms that must be memorized:

Kuy ‘eemtkex!
Kuy ’infitkex!
Weec’ey ’infitkex cilcifílp!
Háham hikuśífix mækséemkex.

The cardinal directions suffix –y to indicate direction:

yaw’lickin’ikaay
‘to the north’
lu’q’lickin’ikeey
‘to the south’
tin’eŋq’lickin’ikeey
‘to the east’
tin’eŋq’lickin’ikeey
‘to the west’

< Qémweç –px
< Téewé –px
< cáky’ax –px
< wępsúux –px
< héele –ípx
< ’anóoqt –ípx
< ‘eemti –kex
‘outside’
< ’infit –kex
‘house’
< ’infit – kex cilcif –x
< mækséem –kex
‘mountain(s)’
< yaw’lickin’ika –y
< lu’q’lickin’ike –y
< tin’eŋq’lickin’ike –y
< tin’eŋq’lickin’ike –y
‘east’
‘west’
Appendix B4

LESSON ON WEATHER TERMS FROM COLLEGE LEVEL WORKBOOK

The following is an example of the teaching materials contained in the workbook that is used for the Nimipuutímt 101-102 classes at Lewis-Clark State College. It is a workbook/picture book that is designed for older students.
Manáa híiwes 'éemti?

Manáa híiwes 'éemti?
How was it doing?
Híwéeqise.
It's raining.
Híwéeqise! Ku'skí wíe'èese 'ímisit 'ínísitpe.
It's raining! For the ñu'mân, I am going outside.

Manáa híiwes 'éemti?
How was it doing?
Ta'c hiyk'iwece.
It's sunny.
Híyk'iwece! Ku'skí kúuse 'éemtkex.
It's sunny! For the ñu'mân, I am going outside.

Manáa híiwes 'éemti?

Manáa híiwes 'éemti?

Manáa híiwes 'éemti?
Haykaat híiwes
Clear it is

Manáa híiwes 'éemti?
Appendix B5

LESSON ON COMMANDS FROM COLLEGE LEVEL WORKBOOK

The following is an example of the teaching materials contained in the workbook that is used for the Nimipuutímt 101-102 classes at Lewis-Clark State College. It is a workbook/picture book that is designed for older students.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kiye</th>
<th>xeleewisix!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Hitëemenwëespe**

**At School**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caan:</th>
<th>Mëcli, wišëeke'yx! Kuy piskix!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mëwë miłte. Go to the door.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'eëchë, ciłëitox. Kuy wixsiłikëeetex.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yës të'isëpte'k to sit down.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'eëchë, wixsiłifix!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kuy piskix!</th>
<th>Go to the door.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kuy tak'áayn'asx!</td>
<td>Go to the writing place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuy ipëënx'esx!</td>
<td>Go to the mirror/mirror.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wilëeke'yx tiim'enwëesx!</th>
<th>Run to the door.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>áxci hwiëëke'yxes.</td>
<td>The woman is running.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>'ipšqke'yx hëëlekiyx!</th>
<th>Walk forwards.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weeke'eyx 'ipnëexn'esx!</th>
<th>Fly to the window/mirror.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Payóopayoo hwiëëeke'yxix.</td>
<td>The birds are flying.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Siwëke'yx piskix!</th>
<th>Running to the door.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tiłóóqan niswike'yxse.</td>
<td>The person is swimming.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oqëqke'yx a'móöqtipx!</th>
<th>Stump to the that.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sëk'èm hiqëqke'yxse.</td>
<td>The horse is galloping.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wiyûuyeece'yx! hëëlekiyse.</th>
<th>The rabbit is hopping.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hëëuyxci hiwëyyùuyee'ceyxe.</td>
<td>The rabbit is jumping.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Tukëepke'yx tak'áayn'asx! | Point to the T.V. |

*150*
Appendix B6

LESSON ON ORDINAL NUMBERS FROM COLLEGE LEVEL WORKBOOK

The following is an example of the teaching materials contained in the workbook that is used for the Nimipuutímt 101-102 classes at Lewis-Clark State College. It is a workbook/picture book that is designed for older students.
Téetk'ukt: Ordinal Numbers

Nez Perce has several ways of deriving numbers:

Regular (non-human)
naaqc, lepít, mitáat, pílept, páxat...
   one two three four five

Human
naaqc, lepú', mitáaw', pílepu', páaxlooo...
   one two three four five

Days of the week:
lepít káa'awn, mitáat káa'awn, pílept káa'awn, páxat káa'awn
   2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, etc.

Ordinal numbers indicate the 'order' of the designee – first, second, third, fourth, fifth...last. In Nez Perce, most of these numbers end with the directional suffix -px, so the meaning is roughly 'to the two' (= 'second') 'to the three' (= 'third'), etc.

Ordinals
'úuyit, lepítipx, mitáatipx, píleptipx, páxatipx... lam't'áy'
'first' 'second' 'third' 'fourth' 'fifth' 'last'

The exceptions are 'first' and 'last.' 'úuyit literally means 'beginning.' It comes from the verb 'úuyise I am beginning.' lam't'áy' means 'last,' and lam't'ay'nix 'very last.'

Lamt'áy' hiwc'eyu' úuyit kaa' úuyit hiwc'eyu' lam't'ay'nix. -Meet. 20.6

Last will be first and first will be the very last
'éeni hiwes Séelinpm píke.
'ipí hiwes mamáy'acpíim qáaca'.
She is the children's grandmother.
'áatway hiwes. Ha'atway ta'c hiúukwecix minma'í
hipeséewseke yyóq'qa coqyoqóyóq.
now to put up a teepee.

Hinéeshime'te'kse mamáy'asna, 'Ku'ús 'eext
They snow the children. "This is the way
peséewseke yyóq'qa coqyoqóyóq.

you should set up your teepee.

'éeni: Ta'c méeywi. Manáa 'eext wisíx? Good morning how are you all?
Mamáy'ac: 'eehé, ta'c méeywi Qáaca'. Ta'ač wiisíx.

'éeni: Kíye séewseke'yyóxix coqyoqóyóq. Kiye wiisíx tíwe, hiíkte'ke's, we'éc'ke's, kaa cúuyek'ipske's. 'úuyít, séewseke'yyóxix tíwe. The teepee

Méelí: Mníkkoon tíwe séewseke'yyóxix 'úuyít?

'éeni: 'úuyít, séewseke'yyóxix wéeuyux tíwe. 'ánóot wéeuyux hiwísíx

Méelí: Mníkkoon tíwe séewseke'yyóxix 'úuyít?

'éeni: 'úuyít, séewseke'yyóxix wéeuyux tíwe. 'ánóot wéeuyux hiwísíx

Meet: 'eehé, wáaq' 'êkusíx.

'éeni: Leptíx, 'ew'nikktix įxípérc tíwe lu'q'íkkín'kkeey kaa yaw'qíkkín'kkáy.
Meet: 'eehé.

'éeni: Míóóxíp, 'ew'nikktix pískís tíwe tìn'hlítkín'kkeey.
Mamáy'ac: 'eehé.

'éeni: Píileptíx, nikáastiksa hiíkte'ke's k'up'k'úppé kawá séewseke'yyóxix k'úpk'up. Foram, te kawá séewseke'yyóxix kawá séewseke'yyóxix

Mamáy'ac: Wáaq' 'êkusíx.

'éeni: Paqatíp, 'ehtí'k'síx kawá anchástíksíx písikis tíwóope.

Mamáy'ac: Wáaq' pahínaq'ís.

'éeni: 'oynaq'ípx, hiíkte'ke's cuyuyik'ilk'síx cuyuyik'ipske'sí.

Mamáy'ac: 'eehé.

'éeni: 'uyúñeepípx, we'éc'ke's wec'éc'síx weéetespe.

Mamáy'ac: 'eehé, wáaq' pahínaq'ís.

yes, now we are finished.
'éni: Lam't'áy, sëwseke'ysisí mac'yónm tîwe.
'eehé, yox t'a'c! Qe'ciyéw'yew.
Yes that's good, thank you.

'éni: 'ítúu hîwes hêepeype coqoycôqoypa?
Mamá'y'a: 'áala hîwes hêepeype.
'éni: Yox ca'a'. 'ítúu hîwes hêelekipx coqoycôqoypa?
Séemi: Teqée'x hîwes!
'éni: Yox ca'a'. Wepcûux 'ee wees Séemi.
That's correct, you are smart! Right Séemi.
Appendix B7

LESSON ON BODY PARTS FROM COLLEGE LEVEL WORKBOOK

The following is an example of the teaching materials contained in the workbook that is used for the Nimipuutímt 101-102 classes at Lewis-Clark State College. It is a workbook/picture book that is designed for older students.
Hand and arm

'iÁpsus kaa 'áatim

'iÁpsus ('iÁpsÁuspe)

hÁepeyme
mÁullÁicÁ fÁinÁgor
ÁukÁepeÁeÁyÁkeÁ's
ÁointÁer fÁinÁgor

'iÁpsÁstÁÁeÁqÁ'is
ÁhÁmb

tÁukÁepeÁeÁyÁkeÁ's
ÁÁoÁoint.

'áatim ('atÁÁimpÁa)
Arm

ÁhÁhÁuy
ÁshÁoudÁer

kÁÁapÁ'ap
ÁwrÁist

kÁÁhÁhen
ÁÁicÁrp

kÁÁssÁÁynÁo
ÁÁmÁow

kÁÁÁatÁÁeÁxÁ 'iÁpsÁus
ÁÁntÁÁam

kÁÁÁatÁÁeÁxÁ 'áatÁÁim
ÁÁntÁÁam

wÁÁpsÁÁuxÁ 'iÁpsÁus
ÁÁngÁurtÁÁam

wÁÁpsÁÁuxÁ 'áatÁÁim
ÁÁngÁurtÁÁam
Appendix B8

C’iqin - REVIEW

The following is a review of the vocabulary from the preceding lessons contained in the workbook that is used for the Nimipuutímt 101-102 classes at Lewis-Clark State College.
C’iiqin

Directions

cáky’ax, cáky’axpx  
'left, leftwards'

héépey/h’éépeype  
'middle, in the middle'

héelex, héelekipx  
'back, backwards'

wepʃúux, wepʃúuxpx  
'right, rightwards'

’anóoqt,’anóoqtípx  
'front, forwards'

'imíkit, 'imíkitkex  
'inside, to the inside'

'éemtì, éemtìkex  
'outside, to the outside'

Cardinal directions

yaw’íickin’íkaay  
'to the north'

< yaw’íickin’íka -y  
'north, cold country'

lu’q’íickin’íkeey  
'to the south'

< lu’q’íickin’íke -y  
'south, warm country'

tin’éehtítkin’íkeey  
'to the east'

< tin’éehtítkin’íke -y  
'east, sunrise direction'

tin’eenéeékitkin’íkeey  
'to the west'

< tin’eenéeékitkin’íke -y  
'west, sunset direction'

Verbs

kuu- VS  
'go, do'  
Manáa kúuse?  
'What are you doing?'
Míp’ kúuse?  
'To where are you going?'
kuy!  
'go!'
kuum!  
'come!'

ke’éyk- /ke’yk- VC  
'move' [NPD 208-217]
This verb root is only used with adverbial prefixes. These prefixes define the kind or manner of movement.

séawaseke’ykse  
'I cause to stand up'

< séep- 'cause' wisée- 'stand' ke’yk-

hípeséewaseke’yks  
'they have stood (it) up' (perfect)
híséewaseke’ykoqa  
'she may stand it up' (conditional)
lípeséewscle’ko’q’a  
'they may stand it up. (plural conditional)
sécwleke'ykse  'I cause to run, I drive' (of a car)
< séeep- 'cause' wilée- 'run' ke'yk-

siwīke'ykse  'I am swimming'
< siwī- 'swim' ke'yk-

wiléeke'ykse  'I run' (of humans and 4-legged beings)
< wilée- 'run' ke'yk-

weeke'éykse  'I fly'
< wee- 'wing' ke'éyk-
weeke'yke'í  'airplane'

quūkőke'ykse  'I am galloping'
< quū- 'gallop' ke'yk-

tukéepke'ykse  'I am pointing'
< tukéep- 'with hand' ke'yk-
htúitupke'ykse  'she is pointing'
tukéepke'yke's  'pointer finger'

wúuleke'ykse  'I am ambling' (esp. of 4-legged beings)
< wúule- 'amble' ke'yk-

'ipṣqőke'ykse  'I am walking' (a human)
< 'ipṣqi- 'bipedal' ke'yk-

híikte'kse  VS  'I am covering' (from the elements)
< híi- transitivizer kíte'k-
híikte'ke's  'cover'
< híikte'k -e's 'thing'

nikāistiksa  VS  'I tie'
< nikée- 'pull' stík- 'tie'
nikāistiksa's 'lacings, ties, shoe laces'  < nikāistik -e's 'thing'
nikāistikin' 'tied on'

híinaq'isa  VS  'I finish'
pahíinaq'is  'we finished'

c'ey-
weec'éycz  'jump, hop'

wiyúuyee'ykse  'I am jumping'
wixsuúce  'I am seated'
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>VC (or VS)</th>
<th>English Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wixsi’lícke</td>
<td>VC</td>
<td>'I am sitting down'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wéwc’e’kse</td>
<td>VS</td>
<td>'I nail down, I stake down'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wéwc’e’ke’s</td>
<td></td>
<td>'hammer, nails, stakes'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cúuyek’ipske</td>
<td>VC</td>
<td>'I button'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cúuyek’ipske’s</td>
<td></td>
<td>'buttons'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'inikíse</td>
<td>VS</td>
<td>'I put, I place'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wic’éé-</td>
<td>VS</td>
<td>'stay, become'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wic’éese</td>
<td></td>
<td>'I am staying'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wic’éeye</td>
<td></td>
<td>'I became, I was born' (indefinite past tense)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Nouns**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cúútím</td>
<td>'bull, buffalo bull'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qog’áálx</td>
<td>'buffalo, bison'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coqoycóqoy</td>
<td>'tipi'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cóqoy</td>
<td>'smoke hole'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tiwe</td>
<td>'tipi pole' tiwéepe 'on the tipi pole'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(if you say this word like the next word, people will laugh at you.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tfiwe</td>
<td>'bad smell' tfiwe 'skunk stink,' tít tfiwe 'fart stink'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wéewyx</td>
<td>'leg' weyúuxpe 'on the leg'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tutéc</td>
<td>'rib'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mac’áyo</td>
<td>'ear'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k’úpk’up</td>
<td>'backbone'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>híík-te’ke’s</td>
<td>'covering'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nikáastika’s</td>
<td>'laces, ties'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cúuyk’ipske’s</td>
<td>'buttons'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wee’ke’s</td>
<td>'hammer, 'nails, stakes'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teqéex</td>
<td>'the rear of the inside of the tipi' archaic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'innitáalam</td>
<td>'tipi top'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wilspol</td>
<td>'cured hide'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tók’o</td>
<td>'tules, tule mat'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tok’óo’niit</td>
<td>'tule tipi'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wálímp’niit</td>
<td>'old style house, tipi'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pískis</td>
<td>'door' pískíspe 'at the door' pískísx 'to the door'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘áala</td>
<td>'fire'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cilpcifilp</td>
<td>'circle, round' cilcífilp 'in the circle'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>méexsem</td>
<td>'mountain(s)' mexséemkex 'to the mountain(s)'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'ipsus</td>
<td>'hand, finger' 'ipsúspe 'in the hand'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'ipsustáalam</td>
<td>'finger tip(s)'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'ipsustéeq’ís</td>
<td>'thumb'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
'ipsuslaymíwt 'baby finger'
tučéek'yke's 'pointer finger' Note: in Plateau culture we do not use the pointer finger to indicate a person. We indicate with our mouth and chin.
temélúkt 'ring finger'
'ipsusteekey 'palm, handcovering'
'áatim 'arm'
atímpa 'shoulder'
húhuy 'a muscle, esp. the biceps'
k'assáyno 'elbow'
k'áp'ap 'wrist'
Nimipútímt 'Nez Perce Language'
Nimipútímtki 'in Nez Perce'
Soyapootímt 'English'
Soyapootímtki 'in English'

Adjectives
ku'ús 'thus, in this manner'
ku'ski 'thrusly, for this reason'
kúckuc 'small, little'
himéeqís 'big'
wepcúux 'smart'
hanyíin 'made' <hanli- 'to make'
nikáastikin' 'tied on'

Adverbs
waqípa 'long ago'
waqípanix 'very long ago'
kú'ús 'thus, in this manner, like this'
c'a'a 'correct, right'

Question words
Mínikuuu 'Which one?'
Míne 'Where?'
Máwa 'When'
Mípx 'To where?'
Mac 'How many?' (non-human)
Máxwa 'How many?' (humans)
'itúu 'What?'
'istí 'Who?'

Ordinal numbers
'uyit, lepitpx, mitåtátpx, pílëpitpx, páxåøatpx ... lamt'áy', lamt'ay'níx
'first' 'second' 'third' 'fourth' 'fifth' 'last' 'very last'
Appendix C

STUDY GROUP MATERIALS

The following is an example of the materials that the tribal elders go over with Harold Crook during their weekly language study group sessions. The elders meet with Harold Crook in a seminar format to work on vocabulary and building a lexicon of the language. I sat in on two of these sessions during my time there. During one of those sessions, we went over the following lesson, titled *The Whale.*
HIMTAKASH XXVIII
Hfimte'ke's XXVIII
Lesson XXVIII

Hiwel'135
Weyl
Whale

Naks hiutsah siuam
Naaq hiwc'ax crruy'em
one it-can-be fish

himaqshpa kushpa himakesh
himeq'fispe kruuspe himeeq'is
big-in water-in big

tamaunin. Suipum punikanih
tamawatin. Soodisasoom puyu'nikan'ix136
exceedingly Americans name-it

hiwel. Tosh pakusha uiikalana
weyl. T0oxs pealkuse 'yikalana
whale exceeds it-does all

imashna kakala hiwash kushpa
'tmesne137 kakala hiwes kruuspe
animal as-many-as it-is water-in

wah watashpa.
way. weetespe.
and land-in

Hitanih tirokan, kikohet
Hitanih'iix tidogue, kikithet
they-say-typ people long-ones

Hiutsakana wakepa; metu
hiwc'axaqna wago'pa; metu' there-were long-ago but

135 No NP word may begin with more than one consonant, thus we transcribe the introduced word hiwel as weyl, as we expect the NP would have actually pronounced it at that time.
136 PDNP puyu'nikan'ix.
137 NP lacks a general word for 'animal', so the general word for 'deer' 'imes is used here, apparently following earlier use of deer in English when it designated any animal.
titokanmpuiopsiunakana⁴⁸
titóqanp náawyoopciy'awanqana,
person he-it-used-to-kill

kunki kikahtu hiutsah kikaua.
konkí kikaht'о hiwč'áax kíí kawá.
that-by short-ones it-can-be this time

Panaks mitaptit watikt kuip
Panáaqc mita'ápitit wetfikt kú'tip³⁹
each-one thirty steps approximately

hiutsah: metu pawilakaptit
hiwč'áax: mét'u pa'oylaqca'ápitit
it-can-be but each-sixty

hiutsakana.
hiwč'áaqana.
it-used-to-be

Himakash tamaunin autsah hushus:
Hímeeq'ís tamáwnín' 'awwc'áax húusus:
large exceedingly its-can-be head

metu kikuskus silu. Watu tukuh
mer'u kikúkuç silu. Weert'u tuk'úx
but small-ones eyes not straight

anokt hisaiohoh. Kala katu aktahp
'andoqt hisay'óoxo'ax. Kál'a qétu 'eqtéxp
in-front it-may-look just more sideways-to

hisaiohotatu.
hisay'óoxo'tato.
it-looks-typ

³⁸ These two words are clearly separate, having been merged by a typographical error.
³⁹ This word is unknown in PDNP, although it appears to begin with the indefinite particle ku'.
Tuinuki pawawiatatutu kushna, Tu'ynuuki pàwawiyatato kuusne, with-tail it-strikes-type water

Liashna patamakopatutu wah liy'snees peetemel'uptetu wax boat it-breaks-type and

titokana posiautatu.
titòqana pàsasy'awtato. people it-frightens-type

Tsalamìi witu ishinm mish pamih,\textsuperscript{140}
Caalamì' weet'u' 'isinm mi's ... if not someone at-all ?
kawu witu mish ipnimka pamih.
kawá weet'u' mi's 'ipnimk'e ... then not at-all it-too ?

Metu kakaa popiautenuh, Mé't'u' ka kawá pòpciy'awtan'ix, but when they-kill-it

Kauana sikauish hiutsatatu. kawáanaì cikàawis hiw'c'etetu. then fierce it-becomes-type

It strikes the water with its tail, breaks up boats, and frightens people. It is afraid of the

If no one disturbs it then it won't disturb you. But when the whale is attracted, it will fight back.

Many people search for the whale in the great water in boats.

\textsuperscript{140} We do not know what this word is, here and in the following line. This word must be a verb that begins with the prefix pée, indicating a third person acting on another third person. However, the identity of the root is unknown. We suggest perhaps pa'amx 'it-gathers-it', based upon the root 'amq-', but that does not seem truly correct.

\textsuperscript{141} PDNP tìxìnì́nì́m
liashki. Kakakua masina paktatu,
liy’éeski. Ka kawá macfinna péektetu,
boat-by when some he-it-sees-typ
himakeshp kinih liasph kinish
himeq’ifispkin’ix liy’eesplkin’ix
big-from boat-from
hahám hiwasatanih kuskusaph,
háham hiwéeetatenix kuckucéspx,
men they-mount-typ small-one-to
kaua paushaklitutanih. Kísuinim
kawá pewsekiyütten’ix. Kícynim
then they-go-after-it-typ metal
shishtoshki himakeshki padtatanih,142
sísto’ósaki himeq’ifískí pépréten’ix,
harpoon-by large-by they-stab-it-typ
kaua hiwalatinuktatu.
kawá hiwéeetin’uktetu,143
then it-bleeds-to-death-typ

Panaks kunálnih kitkaukaitatu144
Pannáaq konaynxí hitgwóqfitetu
each-one right-there it-dies-typ
kakaua paptatanih; kaua panaksim
kawá pépréten’ix; kawá pannáaqsim
when they-stab-it-typ then each-one(-of-boats)
panahatukalakaiktatu. Shishtoshpa
pé’nehtukeleke’ytktetu. Sísto’óspa
they-it-tow-away-typ harpoon-on

tatash autsatanih; tsalawí híauki
téeawtes ‘ewc’éetaten’ix; c’alawí Tyéewki
rope theirs—is if slowly

When someone exes it from a big boat then the men get into small boats and go after it.

They stab it with a large metal harpoon and then it breaks to death.

It dies right there when they stab it then each boat tows it away.

Their rope is on the harpoon.

---

142 The letter d is in the original. We believe it represents a typographical error since it is the only time d is found in the ms.
143 PDNP hiwéeetin’uktetu.
144 Typographical error in the ms., where it should be hitkaukaitatu with an initial h not k.
hinásntükálakáiktatu, 
hinééc’nhútukékelekeyktetu  
it-tows-them-typ
kála kaua kunmainih
kál’a kawá konmayníx
just then from-over-there

ipnánkatahtuiktatu liashki. Tsalawi
‘ipnéenketetwíiktetu liyééski. C’alawi
it-gets-itself-loose-typ boat-by if

hamtis hinásntükálakáiktatu
háamtílc hinééc’nhútukékelekeyktetu  
fast it-tows-them-typ
kála pilífil panahnatatu
kawá pilífil pé’nehmetetu.
then unraveling it-takes-it-typ
tautéshna; kalauniká
tewtéesne; kál’awník’ay’
rope eventually

hilatwitatu. Panaksnim
hi’lásatwitato. Pannaqáqnim
it-tires-typ each-one

kunku panahnatatu.
kán’ku pé’nehmetetu.
always he-it-bring-typ

Síkauish hilotkóllníih takaukainash.
Cíkáaw’ís hi’lóotkóllíxmíix téqewqíín’ésíx.
fierce it-struggles dying-to

Wiatka kaua
Way’áartkax166 kawá
far-to then

---

166 We believe that this is a typographical error. In PDPN the word ends in the velar fricative x, and thus the ms. should be Wiatka.
The proper watch it from afar.

When they kill it then they bring it to the big boat.
Then they cut it up then they drag it onto the boat.
Then they boil it and they take the oil.
Then they pour it into wooden containers to bring back.

Its oil is good for things.

---

147 This is the NP word for ‘fish grease.'
sapatakaitash, patuain shiutash.  
capałakáa’wit’as, pa’to’e’yn sfit’as.  
lighting things-for spreading

Panaksnim hwelnim  
Panàaqcnílm wéylnim  
each whale

autsah putaptit wah  
’awc’áax púnte’ptit wax  
its-may-be one hundred and

pakaktitipa titlupa hikaipa, shíhu.  
páqa’ptitipa titlúpe hik’áaypa, shifw.  
fifty-in large-in container-in oil

Hatau autsatatu mamaias.  
Heté’ew ‘awc’ásetetu mamáy’ac.  
precious its-is-typ young

Watu hiulalihnapiktah.  
Weet’u’ hiwilaixínapíkt’ax.  
not it-may-flee-away-from

Free Translation
There is an extremely big fish in the great water. White people name it whale. It is greater than all animals that are in the water and on land.

People say there used to be long ones in the old days; but the people killed them; consequently there are only short ones. Each one is thirty feet; but they used to be sixty feet.

It has a very big head; but small eyes. It does not see from the front. It just sees from the side.

He strikes the water with his tail, he breaks boats, and it frightens people.

If no one ----- it, then it too will not ----
But when they [try to?] kill it, then it becomes fierce.
Many people whale in the great water. And then when they see some from a large boat, they go toward a small one. They hit it with a large metal harpoon and then it bleeds to death.

Each dies? when they spear it and then they tow it away. They have a rope on the harpoon; if they slowly tow it then he can pull the boat. If it goes fast, then the rope can loosen; eventually it becomes tired. Each one always pulls.

It struggles fiercely as it dies. The people watch it from afar.

And when they kill it, they take it to the large boat; there they cut him up and drag it on to the boat. Then they boil it and take the oil. They pour it into wooden barrels to take it home.

It is good to have the oil for things, for light, to grease things. Each whale usually produces one hundred and fifty large barrels of oil.

The young are precious. It will not desert them.
Appendix D

INFORMED CONSENT FORMS

The following are the informed consent forms for all of the informants involved in my study. Consent forms are included for the following individuals:

Josiah Blackeagle Pinkham – Tribal Ethnographer and Cultural Specialist
Angel Sobotta – Nez Perce Language Coordinator
Thomas “Tatlo” Gregory – Nez Perce Language Coordinator
Mary Lynn Walker – English Teacher at the Lapwai Combined Middle/High School
Dr. Alan Marshall – Cultural Anthropologist for the Tribe
Dr. Harold Crook – Tribal Linguist
Bessie Scott – Tribal Elder
Florene Davis – Tribal Elder
Gary Greene – Tribal Elder
INFORMED CONSENT
The Cultural Impacts of Language Loss and Revitalization Among Native American Populations

You are invited to participate in a research study which will involve interview questions pertaining to your experiences surrounding the learning and teaching of the Niimi’ipuutimt language. My name is Stefanie Adams, and I am a graduate student in the Anthropology Department at California State University, Sacramento.

Your participation in this project is voluntary. Even after you agree to participate, you may decide to leave the study at any time. You may also request to skip any question(s) that you feel uncomfortable answering.

The purpose of this research is to examine the challenges affecting the preservation and revitilization of the Niimi’ipuutimt language. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to answer a series of questions describing your personal experiences with the Niimi’ipuutimt language. Your participation will take approximately 30 minutes. Risks associated with the study are not anticipated to be greater than those risks encountered in daily life. If you have any questions about the research at any time, please contact me at (916) 335-5333 or by email at stefanieadams@csus.edu. You may also contact my graduate advisor, Dr. Joyce Bishop at (916) 278-5627 or by email at jbishop@csus.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in a research project please call the Office of Research Affairs, California State University, Sacramento, (916) 278-5674, or email irb@csus.edu.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. Measures to insure your confidentiality include the removal of any identifiable information upon completion of this study. The data obtained will be maintained in a safe, locked location and will be destroyed after a period of three years after the study is completed.

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the information provided above.

[Signature]

[Date]
INFORMED CONSENT
The Cultural Impacts of Language Loss and Revitalization Among Native American Populations

You are invited to participate in a research study which will involve interview questions pertaining to your experiences surrounding the learning and teaching of the Niimi’ipuutímt language. My name is Stefanie Adams, and I am a graduate student in the Anthropology Department at California State University, Sacramento.

Your participation in this project is voluntary. Even after you agree to participate, you may decide to leave the study at any time. You may also request to skip any question(s) that you feel uncomfortable answering.

The purpose of this research is to examine the challenges affecting the preservation and revitalization of the Niimi’ipuutímt language. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to answer a series of questions describing your personal experiences with the Niimi’ipuutímt language. You may have been participating in a 30-minute interview. Risks associated with this study may be the personal risks to be greater than those risks encountered in daily life. If you have any questions about the research at any time, please contact me at (916) 335-5333 or by email at stefanieadams@csus.edu. You may also contact my graduate advisor, Dr. Joyce Bishop at (916) 278-5627 or by email at jbishop@csus.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in a research project please call the Office of Research Affairs, California State University, Sacramento, (916) 278-5674, or email irb@csus.edu.

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Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the information provided above.

[Signature]

Date: 3-9-17
INFORMED CONSENT
The Cultural Impacts of Language Loss and Revitalization Among Native American Populations

You are invited to participate in a research study which will involve interview questions pertaining to your experiences surrounding the learning and teaching of the Niimi’ipuutimt language. My name is Stefanie Adams, and I am a graduate student in the Anthropology Department at California State University, Sacramento.

Your participation in this project is voluntary. Even after you agree to participate, you may decide to leave the study at any time. You may also request to skip any question(s) that you feel uncomfortable answering.

The purpose of this research is to examine the challenges affecting the preservation and revitilization of the Niimi’ipuutimt language. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to answer a series of questions describing your personal experiences with the Niimi’ipuutimt. Your participation in this study may include a 30-minute interview. Risks associated with this study are not anticipated to be greater than those risks encountered in daily life. If you have any questions about the research at any time, please contact me at (916) 335-5333 or by email at stefanieadams@csus.edu. You may also contact my graduate advisor, Dr. Joyce Bishop at (916) 278-5627 or by email at jbishop@csus.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in a research project please call the Office of Research Affairs, California State University, Sacramento, (916) 278-5674, or email irb@csus.edu.

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Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the information provided above.

[Signature]
3-9-17
INFORMED CONSENT

The Cultural Impacts of Language Loss and Revitalization Among Native American Populations

You are invited to participate in an research study which will involve interview questions pertaining to your experiences surrounding the learning and teaching of the Niimi’ipuutit language. My name is Stefanie Adams, and I am a graduate student in the Anthropology Department at California State University, Sacramento.

Your participation in this project is voluntary. Even after you agree to participate, you may decide to leave the study at any time. You may also request to skip any question(s) that you feel uncomfortable answering.

The purpose of this research is to examine the challenges affecting the preservation and revitalization of the Niimi’ipuutit language. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to answer a series of questions describing your personal experiences with the Niimi’ipuutit language and any language revitalization or preservation efforts you may have been involved in. The interview will last approximately 30 minutes. Risks associated with the study include those risks encountered in daily life. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in a research project please call the Office of Research Affairs, California State University, Sacramento, (916) 278-5674, or email irb@csus.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in a research project please call the Office of Research Affairs, California State University, Sacramento, (916) 278-5674, or email irb@csus.edu.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. Measures to insure your confidentiality include the removal of any identifiable information upon completion of this study. The data obtained will be maintained in a safe, locked location and will be destroyed after a period of three years after the study is completed.

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the information provided above.

[Signature]

[Date]

3-9-17
INFORMED CONSENT
Parent/Legal Guardian

The Cultural Impacts of Language Loss and Revitalization Among Native American Populations

Your child is invited to participate in a research study which will involve interview questions pertaining to their experiences surrounding the learning and teaching of the Niimi'ipuutlmt language. My name is Stefanie Adams, and I am a graduate student in the Anthropology Department at California State University, Sacramento.

Your child’s participation in this project is entirely voluntary. Even after you agree to allow your child to participate, you may decide to stop their participation in the study at any time. If you or your child feels uncomfortable with any of the question(s), you or your child may request to skip those question(s).

Your child was selected as a possible participant in this study because of their participation in Niimi’ipuutlmt language classes. The purpose of this research is to gain an understanding of the types of Native language instruction available on the Nez Perce Reservation in Lapwai, Idaho; the make-up of the student population; and how that student population responds to the language instruction available to them. If you decide to allow your child to participate, he or she will be asked to answer several questions pertaining to their experiences with regard to learning the Niimi’ipuutlmt language. His or her participation in this study will last for the duration of a short interview (approximately 20 – 30 minutes).

There are some possible risks involved for your child. These risks pertain to feelings of anger or sadness towards the Niimi’ipuutlmt language depending on the personal experiences they have had while learning the language. There are some benefits to this research, particularly that your child may recognize the importance of learning their heritage language and feel empowered.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with your child will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. Measures to insure your child’s confidentiality include the removal of any identifiable information from all data obtained from this study. The data obtained will be maintained in a safe, locked location and will be destroyed in three years after the study is completed.

If you have any questions about the research, please call (916) 278-5333 or by email at stefanieadams@csus.edu. You may also contact my graduate advisor, Dr. Joyce Bishop at (916) 278-5627 or by email at j bishop@csus.edu. If you have any questions about your child’s rights as a participant in a research project please call the Office of Research Affairs, California State University, Sacramento, (916) 278-5674, or email irb@csus.edu.

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the information provided above, that you willingly agree to your child’s participation, that you may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue your child’s participation at any time, and that you are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies.

[Signature]
Date: 3/9/17
INFORMED CONSENT

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The purpose of this research is to examine the challenges affecting the preservation and revitalization of the Niimi'ipuutitmt language. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to answer a series of questions describing your personal experiences with the Niimi'ipuutitmt and any participation that may have been associated with the 25-30 minute interview. Risks encountered in daily life. If you have any questions about the research at any time, please contact me at (916) 335-5333 or by email at stefanieadams@csus.edu. You may also contact my graduate advisor, Dr. Joyce Bishop at (916) 278-5627 or by email at j bishop@csus.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in a research project please call the Office of Research Affairs, California State University, Sacramento, (916) 278-5674, or email irb@csus.edu.

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[Signature]

[Date: 3/8/17]
INFORMED CONSENT

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The purpose of this research is to examine the challenges affecting the preservation and revitilization of the Niimi’ipuutimt language. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to answer a series of questions describing your personal experiences with the Niimi’ipuutimt language. You may have been associated with these risks encountered in daily life. If you have any questions about the research at any time, please contact me at (916) 335-5333 or by email at stefanieadams@csus.edu. You may also contact my graduate advisor, Dr. Joyce Bishop at (916) 278-5627 or by email at jabishop@csus.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in a research project please call the Office of Research Affairs, California State University, Sacramento, (916) 278-5674, or email irb@csus.edu.

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[Signature]

Date: [Signature]
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The purpose of this research is to examine the challenges affecting the preservation and revitalization of the Niimi'iipuutimt language. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to answer a series of questions describing your personal experiences with the Niimi'iipuutimt language. During the interview, you may have been exposed to graphic or disturbing material. If you have any questions about the research at any time, please contact me at (916) 335-5333 or by email at stefanieadams@csus.edu. You may also contact my graduate advisor, Dr. Joyce Bishop at (916) 278-5627 or by email at j bishop@csus.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in a research project please call the Office of Research Affairs, California State University, Sacramento, (916) 278-5674, or email irb@csus.edu.

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[Signature]

Date: 3/1/17
INFORMED CONSENT
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You are invited to participate in an research study which will involve interview questions pertaining to your experiences surrounding the learning and teaching of the Niimi’ipuutitmk language. My name is Stefanie Adams, and I am a graduate student in the Anthropology Department at California State University, Sacramento.

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The purpose of this research is to examine the challenges affecting the preservation and revitalization of the Niimi’ipuutitmk language. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to answer a series of questions describing your personal experiences with the Niimi’ipuutitmk language and your experiences with those risks encountered in daily life. If you have any questions about the research at any time, please contact me at (916) 335-5333 or by email at stefanieadams@csus.edu. You may also contact my graduate advisor, Dr. Joyce Bishop at (916) 278-5627 or by email at jbishop@csus.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in a research project please call the Office of Research Affairs, California State University, Sacramento, (916) 278-5674, or email irb@csus.edu.

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[Signature]

March 1, 2017
INFORMED CONSENT

The Cultural Impacts of Language Loss and Revitalization Among Native American Populations

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The purpose of this research is to examine the challenges affecting the preservation and revitalization of the Niimi'ipuutimt language. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to answer a series of questions describing your personal experiences with the Niimi'ipuutimt language and any language revitalization or preservation efforts you may have been a part of.

Your participation in this study will last for the duration of a 20-30 minute interview and associated materials are not anticipated to be greater than those risks encountered by you everyday. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at (916) 335-5333 or by email at gabe.adams@csus.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in a research project please call the Office of Research Affairs, California State University, Sacramento, (916) 278-5674, or email irb@csus.edu.

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