

Modifying Assessment Tools for Ganöhsesge:kha: Hë:nödeyë:stha

A Seneca Culture-Language School

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This paper presents background information on Ganöhsesge:kha: Hë:nödeyë:stha, or the Faithkeeper's School, a small Onön:dowaga: (Seneca) language and cultural school in New York State, and analyzes its type of curriculum and teaching methodologies. It reviews the importance of data collection and student/teacher assessments and the particular implications of assessments for a specific type of school such as the Faithkeepers. After describing the commonly-used FLOSEM and New York State assessment tools, this paper explains the need for adapting and modifying such tools for the unique needs of the Faithkeepers School. At the end of the paper, the process taken to develop the new rubrics for this school is explained, and the new tools are displayed in the appendices.

Ganöhsesge:kha: Hë:nödeyë:stha, or the Faithkeeper's School, is a small, multi-age school founded by Dar and Sandy Dowdy. The school follows the language, customs and ceremonies of the Iroquoian Longhouse and the Allegany Seneca. Located near Salamanca, New York, its mission:

is to preserve and maintain the traditional Seneca language, culture and customs. Our Seneca language gives meaning to our ancient Seneca customs, ceremonies, history and laws. It is the elders who possess the knowledge and wisdom of our Seneca heritage. It has always been that way. Those who can think and speak in Seneca number fewer than 5% of the Seneca population and now there is an increasing sense of urgency whenever a fluent Seneca speaking elder passes on. Our identity depends on how we fulfill our responsibilities to our children. The knowledgeable ones teaching young minds is the key that ensures our Seneca language, customs and traditions will remain alive and constant. (Faithkeeper's School, 2007)

The school offers a variety of education programs for both adults and youth who are L1 English speakers learning Seneca as an L2. These programs vary throughout the year, and for school year 2007-2008, they included a summer institute for elementary-aged children and school-year instruction for about ten elementary and middle school-aged students. For these students, interdisciplinary lessons center around the ceremonial cycle; these lessons, which may integrate math, science, home economics, and history, are focused on culturally-relevant activities taught in the Seneca language as much as is feasible, resulting in a sheltered-style of planning. In addition, approximately ten adults are learning conversational and ceremonial language practices. At the present time, immersion teaching accounts for about ten percent of the school's curricula. Staff at

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the school is trying every possible means to get learners to utilize the language and strengthen the community as a result.

This sense of urgency for preserving the language and customs is echoed in a multitude of government protection measures such as the various Native American Languages acts in the U.S. and Canada, and also the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. It is obvious in the estimates of remaining Seneca speakers; Ethnologue's figure, which quotes Wallace Chafe (Seneca, 2007), states that there are 150 speakers in the U.S. But even since that information was published, the numbers have dwindled. In an electronic message, Chafe stated that he "would definitely put it at Stage 7. My guess is that there are less than 50 speakers altogether" (W. Chafe, personal communication, 10 November, 2007). Stage 7 represents one of the eight stages of language endangerment in a scale developed by Joshua Fishman (1991), with stage 1 as the least endangered and 8 as the most. These statistics are what drives the school and its community to seek the most effective and innovative ways to strengthen the language and culture before they disappear. Yet researchers and educators have advocated a multitude of recommendations, some contrary to others. Native language schools like Ganöhsesge:kha: Hë:nödeyë:stha are searching for the most appropriate and effective ways to gauge the merits of their teaching programs.

Neither subtractive nor submersion

Many linguists and educators are researching effective ways to save or revive endangered languages such as Seneca. An example is the work of Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson, who spoke on this issue at a 2005 First Nations education symposium in New Brunswick. One of the key factors in their presentation is that reversing language shift requires people to avoid familiar assumptions about Indigenous education:

Any education which imposes a dominant language by ignoring, stigmatizing, and replacing or displacing the mother tongue of minority and Indigenous children is subtractive language education. It subtracts from the children's linguistic repertoire, instead of adding to it. This form of education is also called submersion education because it is accomplished by submersing the children of Indigenous and minority peoples in the culture and (official) language of the dominant society using a whole array of strategies, both subtle (carrots) and blatant (sticks), and expecting the children to sink-or-swim. It teaches the children (some of) the dominant language at the cost of their mother tongues. It neither respects the mother tongue, nor promotes fluency in the dominant language. When any language is imposed by a powerful state onto dominated Indigenous or minority linguistic group with the purpose of destroying minority languages and reducing the number of languages in the world, it constitutes linguistic imperialism. (Education Through the Medium, 2005)

Ganöhsesge:kha: Hë:nödeyë:stha is working toward reversing such language imperialism, and its founders advocate putting status back into their mother tongue through a unique curriculum and innovative teaching strategies. The effectiveness of these strategies can be ascertained with the aid of specific, culturally relevant assessment tools that are carefully designed and implemented by stakeholders. Such tools are scarce, which gives rise to the need for creation, use, and proliferation of rubrics as one thread in a fabric of tools necessary to stave off language extinction. These measures can be adapted for local needs for other Native language programs. These programs should consider the using the local culture and ceremonies for curricular decisions, including adults in an intergenerational student body, emphasizing speaking and oral skills through use of a cyclical teaching pattern, determining the stages and levels of student Native language proficiency, and constructing special assessment tools specific for these local needs.

Curricula

The curricula at a school which is fighting for language revival must meet unique needs in order to be effective. Fostering the language must include teaching some form of specific local customs. It is the language which transmits these traditions. Special topics of instruction are advocated by Indian educators, as well as the age of students learning the language.

Cultural: The importance of a culturally-focused education at Indigenous language revival schools cannot be overestimated. “Since culture is inseparable from the language itself, culture is incorporated in the instruction at all levels” (Ögwehöwe:ka:, 1988, p. 12). These cultures often include ceremonies in which particular language is used. Darrell Kipp of the Piegan Institute of the Blackfeet Nation, a successful language school, explains that “many things transferred in our religion and our tribal ways come to us because of our knowledge of the language” (2000, p. 14). Also, the settings of these religious teachings have been explicated. “‘Critical’ languages should restore use of language in specific settings like ceremonies and plan to expand” (Kavanaugh, 1991, p. 28). Ganöhsesge:kha: Hë:nödeyë:stha is teaching the language through the year-long cycle of ceremonies. At this time, the curriculum centers on one of the ceremonies, but others will be added once students are ready. These ceremonies are part of the religious beliefs.

Since many of the students and even some teachers at the school are English-speakers learning Seneca as a second language, they must follow certain prescriptions pertaining to the delicate balance and treatment of the two languages. “While we still have speakers fluent in our languages we have the opportunity to teach in our languages through additive language education, which promotes and respects the right of children to become high level bilinguals” (Education Through the Medium, 2005). But some things are difficult to interpret between two languages. Kipp (2000) describes the difficulty of making a one-to-one translation between Indigenous and English languages: “Be sure not to change

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the structure of your language. There are words, phrases, and idioms that don't convert to English grammar" (p. 26).

But this does not mean that grammar is to be avoided. Researchers advocate using rich and varied curriculum materials. Elders and fluent speakers should present phonology, vocabulary, expressions, grammar, songs, life histories, and stories and legends in audio, video and written form (Kavanaugh, 1991). Reyhner and Tennant (1995) advise using real-life contexts for language teaching. Suggested situations for listening and speaking include listening to "providers of common public services" (*Ögwehöwe:ka:*, 1988, p. 7). Topics also include "the Ögwe'ö:we: world view, nature's and seasonal cycles, and traditions and customs" (*Ögwehöwe:ka:*, 1988, p. 12).

Local: As schools everywhere are beginning to embrace particularly local curricula, Indigenous schools have been doing so for centuries. Educators should "make every effort to utilize locally-relevant curriculum materials with which students can readily identify, including materials prepared by Native authors" ("Guidelines," 2001). Kipp (2000) simply explains to Indigenous educators, "Your language is your curriculum" (p. 26). The unique characteristics of the Longhouse religion and Allegany Seneca traditions are daily topics of instruction. The focus changes with the seasons; such a focus would not be appropriate for a school in northern Canada or southern Arizona. Ganöhsesge:kha: Hë:nödeyë:stha teaches about corn ceremonies in late summer, house cleaning in winter, and maple and strawberry ceremonies in spring, for example, echoing the recommendation that "Goals for language revival will be specific for your community" (Kavanaugh, 1991, p. 27).

Including Adult Students: Ganöhsesge:kha: Hë:nödeyë:stha is a multi-age school. Classes include young children, older children, and adult community members. Some research indicates that the inclusion of adults is key to language survival. "Aboriginal language programs for adults can have many benefits. One of the most important of these is that they will help parents to speak the language with their children and in community settings" (Kavanaugh, 1991, p. 65).

Ganöhsesge:kha: Hë:nödeyë:stha uses New York State Learning Standards for Languages Other Than English, first published as *Ögwehöwe:ka: Native Languages for Communication: New York State Syllabus*. Teachers also use the Gano:nyök, also known as the thanksgiving address, which is recited daily to thank the creator for all of the splendors of the earth; it is also used to open and close ceremonies. The Gano:nyök is used as a spiritual lesson, but it also provides a real context in which to deliver language instruction. Appropriate assessment tools must reflect the special curricular focus used at the school.

Teaching methods

Most of the teaching methods at Ganöhsesge:kha: Hë:nödeyë:stha are not the product of following a guide or manual, yet they reflect those advocated by linguists and educators, and even those of the New York State Learning Standards for Languages Other Than English (LOTE), first presented in the *Ögwehöwe:ka:* guide. The Dowdys and a handful of other teachers and teacher-apprentices

employ a wide range of instructional methods including TPR, direct instruction, inquiry and field-based lessons, audiolingual, Natural Approach, and hands-on games. The school's founders emphasize speaking and listening over reading and writing, but individual student preferences are always honored. Also, certain ways of incorporating process teaching and gauging speaking levels of proficiency for students at the school reflect the unique Indigenous worldview and educational philosophy.

Speaking/Oral: "Instruction should emphasize oral language skills" (Kavanaugh, 1991, p. 50), then reading and writing, and the emphasis should be placed on "communication, not grammar" and emphasize "speaking over speaking correctly" (Reyhner & Tennant, 1995, p. 294). "Emphasis should be on the negotiation of meaning rather than the structure of the language" (*Ögwehöwe:ka:*, 1988, p. 5). Sandy Dowdy, one of the founders and the lead language teacher, often incorporates these ideals, and does so through the teaching of certain ceremonial language she presents to the students.

Processes: The *Ögwehöwe:ka:* guide (1988) advises educators to use the function and purpose of communication, situation and context in which it can occur, topics on which it can occur, and the proficiency level of the communication expected. The guide proposes using cyclical patterns in language teaching, in accordance with other recurring and spiraling patterns they observe in nature, ceremonies, and generations. Three of the cycles in language teaching are: observe, participate, and do; respect, put knowledge together, and use courage and wisdom; and listen, respond, repeat (some regression), and remember. Since it is a "wholistic way of life," the instruction and assessment should operate wholistically as well, for maximum learner benefit (p. 1).

Stages/Levels: Richard Littlebear recommends that "Teachers of American Indian languages must remember that everybody has to go through some definite stages of acquiring a language" (Littlebear, 1999, p. 5). The students at Ganöhsesge:kha: Hë:nödeyë:stha, whether younger or older, represent various stages in their Seneca language learning processes. Dowdy's teaching reflects the sensibility that at all stages, teachers should put "comprehension before completion" (Reyhner & Tennant, 2000, p. 295). Now that it is time to develop tools for formal measurement of each student's level, the levels must be defined. Proficiency level is defined specifically in the *Ögwehöwe:ka:* guide. It "relates to the linguistic accuracy, originality, scope, and cultural authenticity with which the communicative task is carried out" (*Ögwehöwe:ka:*, 1988, p. 5). These speaking and listening processes and levels should be in mind when selecting and designing assessment rubrics.

Importance of data collection and assessments

In order to determine student proficiency levels, assessments must be sensitive and accurate. "Evaluation is essential because it aids the teacher in determining whether and to what extent the learning outcomes have been attained or the desired proficiency levels achieved" (*Ögwehöwe:ka:*, 1988, p. 30). There is no single assessment tool or rubric that is useful for all teaching and learning

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purposes. The New York guide offers the suggestion that teachers “use informal and or formal testing to assure achievement of the objectives” (p. 27).

Assessing Indigenous learners requires knowledge of certain conditions unique to their mission to revive the language. “The effort to improve cultural relevance of curriculum and assessment must be guided by all stakeholders” (Bordeaux, 1995). This demands cooperation of the members of the community, something which Ganõhsesge:kha: Hë:nödeyë:stha is striving for. “You have to put status back into the language, so you have to do status checks” (Kipp, 2000, p. 13). Assessments are one way to achieve this goal.

Many Indigenous peoples have preferred teaching children by observation and performance since time immemorial. “Before the European conquest of the Americas, nearly all native peoples used performance-based assessment.” These assessments, when used in a culturally congruent context, “can help schools see language and culture as integral parts of the total curriculum” (Bordeaux, 1995). Developing appropriate assessment tools must include performance-based measures. Not many available tools include all these factors.

Existing assessment tools

There are a multitude of assessment tools and rubrics available to the educator. But when selecting or designing tools for a unique school that has a special purpose, the appropriateness of the typical rubrics comes into question. After reviewing several rubrics, two emerged as the most suitable, the Foreign Language Oral Skills Evaluation Matrix (FLOSEM) and the *Ögwehōwe:ka: Native Languages for Communication: New York State Syllabus* (see Appendix A).

The FLOSEM is a standard assessment tool used by World Languages teachers nation-wide. It measures pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary and grammar. Its designers explain that it is “not designed for gauging specific information, but for a general assessment of communicative ability” (Padilla & Sung, 1995, p. 5). Additionally, it is a tool most often employed by foreign/world language teachers. It is “a valid, reliable, and convenient measure of communicative proficiency available for use by foreign language teachers ... Findings reveal that the FLOSEM can be used for indexing growth in foreign language proficiency within and across instructional levels” (p. 2).

The attribute that makes the FLOSEM stand out from other assessment tools is that it gives more “detailed descriptions of each of the different categories in the various levels of oral proficiency” than other tools do (p. 5). But these factors aren’t particular to the World Languages community; they may be used in the teachings of various languages. The descriptors are not based on a specific language; they are “intended to capture general behavior of language learning in a new language” (p. 7).

Another plus for the FLOSEM is that it can be used as a formative or summative instrument. It is designed for the classroom teacher to use and to compare to a native speaker. Teachers can use the rubric in reflection after the teaching/learning event (p. 8).

The Ögwehöwe:ka:’ Native Languages for Communication: New York State Syllabus Checkpoint System uses three “checkpoints” to delineate speaking and listening proficiency levels (see Appendix B). These checkpoints are labeled A, B, and C, and roughly correspond to Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced levels of proficiency used in mainstream assessment tools. At each checkpoint, four components are analyzed for learning outcomes: functions situations, topics and proficiencies. These four components and three proficiencies may overlap and are viewed in a spiraling continuum of language learning.

Adapting the assessment tools for local use

Model tools for assessment are good practice for any education program, but for Ganöhsesge:kha: Hë:nödeyë:stha, the standard tools and the pedagogical philosophies contained within must be adapted for the unique and essential goals specific to the Seneca community at Allegany. The process of adapting these tools for Ganöhsesge:kha: Hë:nödeyë:stha entailed a close reading of the FLOSEM and *Ögwehöwe:ka:’* guides, a description of the proficiency levels typical of students at the school, a discussion of the teaching methods and goals that Dowdy and other teachers have for the language learning of their students, and types of skills that should be measured through assessments and rubrics. After initial development, the rubrics were presented, and after discussion they were revised.

The FLOSEM measures comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar and includes six proficiency levels. The *Ögwehöwe:ka:’* guide analyzes listening, speaking, reading and writing at three proficiency levels. The FLOSEM included too many proficiency levels for teacher use at Ganöhsesge:kha: Hë:nödeyë:stha, and the *Ögwehöwe:ka:’* guide used too few. For the school’s needs, four levels were chosen (see Appendices C & D). Both models included various skills that Ganöhsesge:kha: Hë:nödeyë:stha adopted: pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, grammar and listening, but reading and writing were discarded. Dowdy wanted to add rubrics for several skills. She wanted to include a task completion rubric, since attendance at the school is sometimes interrupted, and motivating students to commit to certain language learning tasks is important to the teachers at the school. Dowdy also desired a retention rubric, as she is assisting the students in retaining ceremonial language rituals. A third essential ability of the Seneca students not included in the models yet critical to the ceremonial language is sequencing. It is crucial to the transmission of ceremonial and other Seneca language tasks, so a sequencing rubric was added to the school’s array of assessments. Next, a holistic assessment that includes all eight rubrics was developed for use at year’s end or other times when teachers want to evaluate overall student learning outcomes. Finally, a student self-assessment was included so that teachers could understand their students’ metacognitive and psycho-social progress, and also so that teachers could compare their measurement to the students’.

Teachers who are native speakers of Seneca or are learning the language as well as teaching skills gathered together for a brief explanation and training of

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these rubrics. Directions for using the rubrics, which were developed as a result of these trainings, are included in the Appendix. A head teacher and three interns exchanged insights and questions about the tools. The language teachers opted to begin with the Pronunciation/Fluency rubric as a starting point, since this skill is one they are most interested in developing for their students. Initially, they asked several questions regarding assessment of students' overall language proficiency levels versus proficiency levels on individual tasks. The teachers stated a preference for using the Pronunciation/Fluency rubric for discrete speaking skills on specific tasks such as narration of the Gano:nyök. They wanted to build their assessment skills with each of the different rubrics before assessing overall skills of learners. Inter-rater agreement was achieved among these four teachers after watching a videotape of a student recitation.

These rubrics are broad-based in scope. Each level on these rubrics may take a year or years to master before moving on to the next level. The teachers at Ganöhsesge:kha' Hë:nödeyë:stha plan to use all the rubrics at different points throughout the school year, closing the spring term with the Combined Rubric to arrive at an overall proficiency level for each of the students at the school. At present, most adult students are proficient at Level 1 for most tasks; some are at Level 2, while a majority of the youth is proficient at Level 2. To date, the student self-assessments have not been used since the staff wishes to accumulate more data from these broad-based proficiency rubrics as well as more specific evaluative tools that are currently in the planning stages. The results of these assessments will be re-evaluated at the end of the next school year and will be used in several ways: to drive instruction and curricular decisions, to train new language teachers, to measure student growth at regular intervals, to track particularly effective teaching strategies, to assist students and parents in greater understanding of teaching and learning at the school, to provide data to the partnering Seneca Nation of Indians as well as potential funding institutions and other interested parties, and to share with other Native language teaching institutions in finding appropriate and specific instruments.

Conclusion

Native language educators and those interested in reversing linguistic imperialism and its resultant language "genocide" (Education Through the Medium, 2005) realize the hazards of this phenomenon. Most agree that there is real need for revitalizing these endangered languages before they reach extinction. Ameliorating linguistic side effects is also recognized as tantamount; these effects "are known to produce adverse material, social, economic, psychological, and political consequences" (Education Through the Medium, 2005). Native schools have taken many different directions in accomplishing the goal of reversing these effects through language and cultural education.

But many current models do not work, owing to a multitude of causes. As Joshua Fishman notes, "even appropriately focused RLS-efforts on behalf of seriously threatened languages are becoming increasingly difficult to institute and will doubtlessly become even more so...RLS-efforts will require increasingly

more integrative focus and sophistication” (1991, p. 380). This sophistication necessitates, in many cases, a rejection of standard instruments and philosophies used by mainstream, English-language instruction in favor of culturally relevant tools for Native language learners.

One such customary concept is standardization. Bordeaux cites a host of researchers who disparage the use of standardized tests for Indigenous as well as non-Indigenous learners. “The problem with using such testing are compounded for AI/AN [American Indian/Alaska Native] learners by the common disregard for the diversity of languages and cultures among Native learners” (1995). In place of these instruments, researchers like Bordeaux recommend performance-based assessments, which are gaining favor even in the mainstream, yet have been common practice for Native peoples since time immemorial. Using performance-based evaluations leads to an “understanding of value systems specifically related to their culture, and mastery of traditional ceremonies” (1995).

In light of these recommendations and from following traditional wisdom, Ganöhsesge:kha: Hë:nödeyë:stha is adopting the testing methods described and displayed in this paper. They are specific for their local needs, such as measuring students’ knowledge of sequencing during recitation of the Gano:nyök. They are simplified enough for new teachers, to use, since other speaking rubrics commonly in use require extensive training and practice. They are performance-based, accentuating task completion and pronunciation, for example. Yet they are malleable enough to include grammar and comprehension, for example, when teachers want to assess these skills in conjunction with locally-specific initiatives. Future plans include development of more specific, narrow-based tools that evaluate student learning during particular lessons, such as the language of announcements of social dance songs.

Overall, the teachers at Ganöhsesge:kha: Hë:nödeyë:stha intend these tools and the rationale behind their creation to help the move toward immersion education at the local level, as well as to strengthen the status and prognosis for the survival of Seneca in general, and ideally the proliferation of other Native languages at the widespread level.

Annotated References

- Bordeaux, R. (1995). Assessment for American Indian and Alaska Native learners. *ERIC Digest*. ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools. ED385424. Retrieved Oct. 27, 2008 at <http://www.ericdigests.org/1996-1/indian.htm>. Bordeaux offers explanations for shortcomings in use of standardized tests with American Indian/Alaska Native students as well as reasons for poor performance by these students on such tests. It recommends performance-based assessments for AI/AN learners.
- Education through the medium of the mother-tongue: The single most important means for saving Indigenous languages In *A symposium on immersion education for First Nations* (Oct. 3-6, 2005). Fredericton, NB, Canada: St. Thomas University and The Assembly of First Nations. These symposium proceedings provide effective ways to save Indigenous languages through

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immersion education. Keynote speakers debunk common assumptions about these languages posit compelling information on “linguistic genocide,” and present benefits of immersion teaching along with guidelines for educators.

Faithkeepers School. (2007). *Faithkeepersschool.com*. Retrieved Nov. 15, 2008 at <http://www.faithkeepersschool.com>. This is the website of Ganöhsesge:kha: Hë:nödeyë:stha. It explains its mission, longhouse cycle of teachings, and gives a sample program of study.

Fishman, J. (1991). *Reversing language shift: Theoretical and empirical foundations of assistance to threatened languages*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters. This classic piece for Native language revitalization defines language endangerment and its eight stages, explores reasons for language shift and its reversal, offers case studies, and offers effective language planning recommendations.

Guidelines for strengthening Indigenous languages. (2001) Anchorage: Assembly of Alaska Native Educators. These guidelines propose suggestions for parents, children, teachers/administrators and Elders for enhancing language efforts, and they advise communities, institutions, local education agencies and linguists.

Kavanaugh, B. (1991). *The Aboriginal Language Program Planning Workbook*. Vancouver: First Nations Education Steering Committee. This is Kavanaugh's workbook for the First Nations Education Steering Sub-Committee. It includes Indigenous language information and education theories and provides activities for language teachers to apply the theory into practice. It offers program planning and curriculum recommendations.

Kipp, D.R. (2000). *Encouragement, guidance, insights, and lessons learned for Native language activists developing their own tribal language programs*. Browning, MT: Piegan Institute's Cut-Bank Language Immersion School. Retrieved Nov. 24, 2008 at <http://www.grottofoundation.org/upload/store/peigan.pdf>. Kipp's “conversation with twelve visiting Native American Language Activists” proposes a rationale for immersion rather than bilingual education. He iterates rules for developing revitalization programs, elements of immersion programs, and methods for teaching immersion curricula.

Littlebear, R. (1999). Some rare and radical ideas for keeping Indigenous languages alive. In J. Reyhner, G. Cantoni, R.N. St. Clair & E.P. Yazzie (eds.), *Revitalizing Indigenous Languages*. Flagstaff, AZ: Northern Arizona University. Retrieved Nov. 14, 2008 at http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/RIL_1.html. Littlebear examines the impact of US government efforts to disenfranchise Indigenous languages, the importance of elders and ceremonies in Native language communities, language and sovereignty, and other insights gained through his teaching experiences.

Ögwehöwe:ka: *Native languages for communication: New York State syllabus*. (1988). Albany: The University of the State of New York. This is the original curriculum guide for New York State's Learning Standards for Languages Other Than English (LOTE). It contains a philosophy and goals, factors of

- communication, learning outcomes, a planning outline, role of assessment, and interdisciplinary applications.
- Padilla, A., & H. Sung. (1999). *The Stanford foreign language oral skills evaluation matrix (FLOSEM): A rating scale for assessing communicative proficiency*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press. Eric Document Reproduction Service No. ED445538. Padilla and Sung developed the FLOSEM for foreign language teachers interested in assessment of communicative proficiency of their students. The major asset of this tool, authors assert, is its simplicity and utility.
- Reyhner, J., & E. Tennant. (1995). Maintaining and renewing Native languages. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 19(2), 279-304. Retrieved Nov. 14, 2008 at <http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/Main.html>. Reyhner and Tennant review the research on maintaining tribal languages, including language policy as well as suggestions for second language teaching. They explore programs ranging from early childhood through post-secondary levels.
- Seneca: A language of USA. (2007). *Ethnologue.com*. Retrieved Nov. 15, 2008 at http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=see. The *Ethnologue* provides information and statistics for many of the languages of the world; this page gives the latest numbers for Seneca.

Appendix A

Stanford FLOSEM (Foreign Language Oral Skills Evaluation Matrix) (Padilla & Sung, 1999)

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
Comprehension	Learner can understand a limited number of high frequency words in isolation and short, common conversational formulaic expressions (e.g., "How are you?", "My name is ...").	Learner can understand short questions and simple non-formulate statements when they are embedded in a short dialogue or passage. However, the entire dialogue or passage must be repeated at less-than-normal speed for learner to understand.	Learner can comprehend the main point(s) of a short dialogue or passage which contains some statements with embedded structures heard at less-than-normal speed, though it is likely that details will be lost. Even at this speed, some repetition may be necessary.	Learner understands most of what is said (all main points and most details) in both short and longer dialogues and passages, which contain abstract information heard at almost-normal speed. Some repetition may be necessary, usually of abstract information.	Learner understands nearly everything at normal speed, although occasional repetition may be necessary.	Learner understands everything at normal speed like a native speaker.
Fluency	Learner can participate only in interactions, which involve producing formulaic question-answer patterns and/or offering very short responses to simple questions.	When participating in a simple conversation on familiar, everyday topics, the learner frequently must pause to formulate short, simple non-formulate statements and questions.	While participating in a conversation or discussion, learner can express herself using simple language, but consistently falters and hesitates as she tries to express more complex ideas and/or searches for less-common words and expressions. Although these efforts noticeably impede flow of communication.	Learner can effortlessly express herself, but may occasionally falter and hesitate as she tries to express more complex ideas and/or searches for less-common words and expressions. Although distracting, these speech rhythms don't noticeably impede the flow of communication.	Learner is generally fluent, with occasional minor lapses while she searches "or" the correct manner of expression.	Learner's fluency is native-like.
Vocabulary	Learner's vocabulary is limited to high frequency words for common everyday items and actions, & same conversational formulaic or idiomatic expressions.	Learner has enough vocabulary (including high frequency idiomatic expressions) to make simple statements and ask questions about concrete things in a simplified conversation.	Learner has an adequate working vocabulary. Further, learner is at a beginning stage of showing knowledge of synonyms and a limited number of alternative ways of expressing simple ideas.	Learner clearly demonstrates knowledge of synonyms and alternative ways of expressing simple ideas. Learner also has enough vocabulary to understand and participate in conversations, which include abstract ideas.	Learner possesses a broad enough vocabulary to participate in more extended discussions on a large number of concrete and abstract topics. Learner is aware of some (but not all) word connotations and nuances in meanings.	Learner possesses an extensive native-like vocabulary.
Pronunciation	Even at the level of isolated words & formulaic expressions, learner exhibits difficulty in accurately reproducing the target language sounds and sound patterns.	Although learner is beginning to master some sounds and sound patterns, she still has difficulty with many other sounds, making meaning unclear.	Learner is beginning to demonstrate control over a larger number of sounds and sound patterns. Some repetition may be necessary, to make meaning clear.	Learner's speech is always intelligible, though a definite inappropriate intonation pattern is apparent.	Pronunciation and intonation approaches a near-native-like ability.	Learner's pronunciation and intonation is clearly native-like.
Grammar	Since learner's productive skills are limited to high frequency words and short formulaic conversational expressions, it is difficult or impossible to assess her knowledge of grammar.	Learner can produce utterances, which show an understanding of basic sentence and question patterns, but other grammatical errors are present which obscure meaning.	Learner is beginning to show a limited ability to utilize a few complex constructions, though not always successfully. Other noticeable grammatical errors persist which may make meaning ambiguous.	Learner shows an almost consistent command over a limited range of more complex patterns and occasional errors are still present, they are few in number and do not obscure meaning.	Learner's speech exhibits a good command over a large (but not complete) range of more complex patterns and grammar rules. Errors are infrequent.	Learner's speech shows a native-like command of complex patterns and grammatical rules.

Appendix B

Ögwehöwe:ka: Native Languages for Communication (New York State Syllabus, 1988, p. 13)

LISTENING:

Checkpoint A: Student can comprehend simple statements and questions. Usually comprehends the main idea of extended but simple messages and conversations. Often requires repetition for comprehension.

Checkpoint B: Student can comprehend short conversations on simple topics in everyday situations. Limited vocabulary range necessitates repetitions for understanding. Student can understand simple sentences and Ögwehöwe:ka: word-order patterns. Has both general and detailed understanding of short expressions but has only general understanding of longer conversations and messages within familiar communicative situations. (Can sustain comprehension within context or short communications on familiar topics with Ögwehöwe:ka: speakers who are aware of the nonfluent status of the listener.)

Checkpoint C: Student can understand standard speech delivered with some repetition and rewording by an Ögwehöwe:ka: speaker not used to dealing with nonfluent speakers. Can understand the essential points of discussions or presentations on familiar topics. Comprehending complex utterances may be affected by tension, pressure, emotional stress, and unfavorable listening conditions.

SPEAKING:

Checkpoint A: Student can initiate and respond to simple statements and engage in simple face-to-face conversation within the vocabulary, structure, and sound patterns appropriate to the communicative situations and functions of this level. Can be understood, with some repetitions, by Ögwehöwe:ka: speakers working with students attempting to speak their language.

Checkpoint B: Student can initiate and sustain a conversation, but limited vocabulary range necessitates hesitation and need to gain confidence in speaking. Can use the more common verbal structures but still makes many errors in formation and selection. Can use word-order sentences accurately but still makes errors in more complex patterns. Can sustain coherent structures in short and familiar communicative situations. Can correctly employ basic cohesive word incorporations. Extended communication is largely a series of short connected utterances. Can articulate comprehensibly but has difficulty in producing certain sounds in certain positions or combinations. Speech is usually labored. Has to repeat to be understood by the general public.

Checkpoint C: Student can handle most communicative situations with confidence but may need help with any complication or difficulty. Vocabulary is sufficient to communicate. Can handle elementary constructions accurately. Limited control of more complex structures may interfere with communication.

Appendix C

Directions for Using Rubrics

- Rubrics are often used as a way to “test” or assess what students are able to do, but they also show how effectively teachers are presenting material to students.
- Rubrics are just one way to gauge learning in the classroom; teachers may also use other methods.
- Rubrics can be used informally while observing students in everyday situations; they also may be used more formally for “report card” purposes or assessment of the effectiveness of an entire curriculum or program.
- Teachers should understand the rubrics before using them. They should agree on what the categories mean. They may also choose to show and explain the rubrics to the students.

For these rubrics, start with speaking and listening. There are four levels, with one being a new or beginning learner, and four being a “veteran” learner. How long it takes for students to move from one level to the next varies greatly, and it may take one or more school years for some students to move up through a level. Generally, students will be able to do these things at the corresponding levels:

Speaking:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Single words, set phrases or chunks of memorized oral language	Phrases, short oral sentences	Simple and expanded oral sentences; speaker uses more detail	Speaker uses a variety of oral sentence lengths of more complexity; also shows more detail and clarity

Listening:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Point to stated pictures, words, phrases; Follow one-step oral directions	Sort pictures, objects according to oral instructions; follow two-step oral directions	Locate, select, order information from oral descriptions; follow multi-step oral directions	Compare and contrast relationships; identify cause and effect; draw conclusions from oral information

Once a teacher or teachers decide which rubric to use and for what purpose it will be used, they should circle the appropriate level number.

When to Use:

- Teachers should use a rubric for the first time as a kind of “pre-test” to see where the students are before the teaching begins. This is called a baseline.
- Teachers should also use the same rubric at the end of a lesson, unit or school year as a kind of “post-test” to see where the students are after teaching has taken place. At the end of a school year or term, the rubric results can be used to plan the teaching for the beginning of the next year or term.
- The same rubric should be used regularly throughout the school year. Mark the date on each rubric. A class or group of students who started together, called a cohort, may be measured for a specific period of time to see how the learning within the group changes from year to year or term to term.
- One teacher may choose to assess a whole class of students, or only a few students for each grading period. Two or more teachers may assess the same student to determine whether they agree on the categories and student’s level.

Setting:

Rubrics can be used in the classroom, but they also may be completed while younger students play sports or games, or when people attend ceremonies or other community events.

Context/Topic:

Include the context or topic of the lesson or ceremony on the rubric so that many learners who are learning the same material may be compared to each other, or compared to themselves from year to year. Also, teachers may want to include comments (such as student attendance or illness issues) in the space below the rubric.

Internal and External School Use:

- Internal: Use these rubrics to know where the students are in terms of level; use them to decide what and how to teach to them; use them for progress reports and/or curriculum evaluation.
- External: Share the results of the rubrics with the Nation so they can see where the community’s speakers are in terms of language learning.

Appendix D

Assessment Tools For Ganöhsesge:kha: Hë:nödeyë:stha

LISTENING/COMPREHENSION RUBRIC: Student Name: _____
Teacher: _____
Date: _____

- 1. Pre-Production
 - cannot yet understand simple expressions, statements, or conversations
 - can recognize a few high-frequency words in isolation
 - may remember formulaic expressions

- 2. Beginning Production
 - Understands previously learned expressions and/or vocabulary in context
 - Can remember short passages, questions and some non-formulaic expressions
 - May need repetition/reminders
 - Understands when spoken to slowly
 - Can remember the main point of a dialogue

- 3. Intermediate Production
 - Understands sentence-length speech, simple messages or basic instructions
 - Can remember longer dialogues/passages
 - Remembers most of what is said/read
 - Some repetition may be necessary

- 4. Advanced Production
 - Understands more complex directions or main ideas
 - Participates in discussion with occasional repetition
 - Understands speech at a normal rate
 - Remembers nearly everything at normal speed

VOCABULARY RUBRIC:

Student Name: _____

Teacher: _____

Date: _____

1. Pre-Production
 - Limitations so extreme as to inhibit conversation
 - Misuse of words
 - May be limited to high-frequency words
 - Some formulaic/idiomatic expressions

2. Beginning Production
 - More formulaic/idiomatic expressions yet comprehension difficult
 - Uses wrong words but has adequate working vocabulary
 - Some knowledge of alternative ways of expressing simple ideas

3. Intermediate Production
 - Occasionally uses inappropriate words; rephrases owing to limited vocabulary
 - Conversation may be limited
 - Knowledge of alternative ways of expressing ideas
 - May be able to participate in extended discussions
 - May be aware of nuances in meaning

4. Advanced Production
 - Uses vocabulary and idioms approaching that of a native speaker
 - Learner has an extensive vocabulary

Indigenous Language Revitalization

PRONUNCIATION/FLUENCY RUBRIC: Student Name: _____
Teacher: _____
Date: _____

- 1. Pre-Production
 - Speech halting and fragmentary
 - Communication is difficult
 - May produce short responses to simple questions
- 2. Beginning Production
 - Hesitant speech
 - Language limitations cause some silence
 - Pauses to make non-formulaic statements and questions
- 3. Intermediate Production
 - Speech may be halting to search for correct expression
 - May be mostly fluent with some lapses
 - May falter with more complex ideas
 - Rhythms do not impede flow of message
- 4. Advanced Production
 - Generally fluent or with occasional minor lapses
 - Approximates that of a native speaker

TASK COMPLETION RUBRIC: Student Name: _____
Teacher: _____
Date: _____

- 1. Pre-Production
 - Minimal attempt to complete task
 - Responses frequently inappropriate or off-task
- 2. Beginning Production
 - Partial completion of task
 - Responses may be undeveloped
- 3. Intermediate Production
 - Completion of task
 - Adequate elaboration
- 4. Advanced Production
 - Completion of task above and beyond average and with elaboration

GRAMMAR RUBRIC:

Student Name: _____
Teacher: _____
Date: _____

1. Pre-Production
 - Emerging use of basic structures. May be difficult to assess grammatical knowledge due to limitations. Errors so severe as to be unintelligible
2. Beginning Production
 - Emerging control of basic structures
 - Grammar/word order errors may make comprehension difficult
 - Produces basic patterns
3. Intermediate Production
 - Control of basic structures
4. Advanced Production
 - Emerging use of advanced grammatical structures

SEQUENCING RUBRIC:

Student Name: _____
Teacher: _____
Date: _____

1. Pre-Production:
 - conveys little or no information about the order of steps/events
 - may be out of sequence
 - includes inaccurate or off-topic information
2. Beginning Production
 - minimally conveys information about the order of steps/events
 - gives some details but may include inaccurate or off-topic information
3. Intermediate Production
 - adequately conveys information about the order of steps/events
 - gives the key details
 - may include some inaccurate or off-topic information
4. Advanced Production
 - accurately conveys information about the order of all steps/events
 - elaborates on key details
 - includes consequences of not following the order of steps/events

