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Collaborative Language Planning Project

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Collaborative Language Planning Project: Report 07: Summer 2022

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CLPP Report 07

Success! CoLang 2022!

Members of the Collaborating Language Planning Project (CLPP) had been talking about the Institute on Collaborative Language Research (CoLang) 2022 from the inception of the project team. It was co-hosted by the University of Montana (UM) and Chief Dull Knife College (CDKC), and held on the UM campus. The work of CLPP has created opportunities for increased communication and networking among language workers in Montana. CoLang has been one of the central discussion topics at CLPP meetings. After CoLang 2020 was canceled due to the pandemic, UM and CDKC were offered a second chance to host, and CoLang 2022 finally happened this summer. Over 200 individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds gathered in Missoula to participate. The UM campus was enlivened as the venue for a great many inspirational people to connect and exchange knowledge and ideas, and to learn and gain skills in many topics including cutting-edge language documentation methods, language teaching techniques, and so much more. Despite the challenges brought by the ongoing pandemic, overall, the Institute convened with success. Many CLPP members participated in the event in various roles. Kudos and thanks to everyone who was involved in CoLang 2022, as well as those who provided support despite not being able to physically attend. (See more in page 3)

Collaborative Language Planning Project (CLPP)

PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS

Aaniiih Nakoda College (ANC)
Blackfeet Comm. College (BCC)
Chief Dull Knife College (CDKC)
Fort Peck Comm. College (FPCC)
Salish Kootenai College (SKC)
Stone Child College (SCC)
University of Montana (UM)



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Class 7 Meeting in Missoula

The Class 7 Alliance organizers hosted the 2nd Class 7 Conference on March 8 & 9, 2022. The event consisted of talks presented by Indigenous language educators, including UM alum Jesse DesRosier. The second day consisted of talks and breakout sessions. CLPP lead members, Richard Littlebear, Mizuki Miyashita, and Susan Penfield, conducted a breakout session on CoLang 2022.

The Convening

Scholarship Recipients' Testimony

"Talking in small groups fostered connections that I took into CoLang. The interactive and varied activities made the convening engaging. These group discussions and activities successfully brought about a number important conversation topics, allowing the Indigenous people there to share their perspectives. Overall, the convening succeeded in bringing out Native American perspectives on a variety of language issues and I highly valued my time there." — Jack Ryan

"My experience at the convening really resonated with the approach to language work I have been working on within my community and I was inspired to come together with so many others working in language work; not only that, in the short time at the convening, I made a handful of personal connections that continued to develop and enrich my first CoLang experience!" — Rae Anne Claxton



Image: Convening on June 12, 2022, at UM (left); Rae Anne Claxton at Convening (right)

The Convening was held on the University of Montana campus on June 12, 2022, immediately before CoLang, with support from the NSF's Build and Broaden grant (BCS-2037470). The event was named for the distinctness of a 'convening' from a conference or presentation, in that it generally refers to an opportunity for a broad discussion that involves stakeholders from all levels of a project. It focuses on creating an environment where an open discussion can take place between those who might not otherwise have a chance to meet for discussion. In the CLPP Convening for 2022, the invited participants were CLPP members including researchers, teachers, scholars, and consultants from Tribal Colleges in Montana, the University of Montana, the American Indian Language Development Institute (AILDI) which is one of CLPP's consultant organizations. Five CoLang 2022 participants who were awarded CoLang internal scholarships also joined the event. The Convening addressed the ongoing issue of bridging language research (linguistics) and community concerns (language revitalization). In current discourse on these topics, the typical direction is to first talk about language documentation, then its application for language revitalization; the Convening instead emphasized a community-based approach: to forefront and begin with a discussion about community concerns. Participants were given a number of tasks aimed at building grassroots curricula and language lessons. These tasks initiated great discussions among each group, which all included stakeholders from different backgrounds.

Hard work paid off! CoLang 2022

CLPP members' contributions at CoLang 2022 were phenomenal! From Day 1, CLPP members and collaborating Montana Indigenous language activists took inspirational roles at CoLang 2022. Melanie Sandoval gave a prayer in Salish before the UM President's opening remarks. Susan Penfield and Mizuki Miyashita presented the opening ceremony in collaboration with Richard Littlebear, Leora Bar-el, and Irene Appelbaum. Wesley Leonard, who presented on language reclamation at CLPP's all-liaison meeting in 2019, gave the opening keynote speech. It was great to have him here again! Public talk series "Language Reclamation and Beyond," co-sponsored by Humanities Montana, included presentations by Montana tribal language scholars Chaney Bell, Melanie Sandoval, Jesse DesRosier, and Sean Chandler, as well as Tim McCleary, an anthropologist at Little Big Horn College. Aspen Decker and Naatosi Fish, former student members of CLPP, participated in many ways at CoLang, including as workshop co-facilitators. Iva Croff and Naatosi Fish gave introductions for public talk speakers. Aaniiih Nakoda College (ANC), Blackfeet Community College (BCC), and CDKC brought interns to attend CoLang workshops. OPI Renewal Units as well as academic credits were made available for those who wished to earn them. AILDI sponsored two workshops. CLPP was a very important part of CoLang, and will hopefully participate in future CoLang Institutes. The next Institute, CoLang 2024, will be held in Arizona, co-hosted by the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community and Arizona State University. We look forward to expanding our language work activities through future projects and collaborations.



Image: CoLang 2022 attendees on Oval, the University of Montana. June 24, 2022.



Next Onsite Workshop

While people are starting to travel more and more, we still wish to be very careful with regards to health and safety. CLPP moves forward with in-person meetings beginning this fall. The next CLPP onsite workshop will be held on October 8th on the BCC campus, co-hosted by Iva Croff, BCC liaison. Please mark your calendar !

New SCC liaison

Welcome Alicia Tyner to CLPP starting this fall! Tyner is the new Administration for Native Americans (ANA) coordinator, who will also serve as a CLPP liaison for Stone Child College (SCC). Her joining CLPP will allow for continued collaboration with SCC.

Editors of this issue

Richard Littlebear
Mizuki Miyashita
Susan Penfield
Madeleine Shek

The Cheyenne Language Practicum at CoLang 2022 Focused on Application for the Community's Language Work

The award-winning Cheyenne Language Texts Project Team, led by Richard Littlebear, Wayne Leman, and Sarah Murray, offered the Cheyenne Practicum at CoLang 2022. The facilitation team included CLPP member Burt Se'tovaotse Medicine Bull, a speaker and teacher of the Cheyenne language at CDKC. Every past CoLang institute included practica, and the forms of the practica varied from institute to institute. CoLang 2022 offered two: one, on South Bolivian Quechua, focused on documentation, and the other, on Cheyenne, focused on applications for revitalization. There were challenges that the Cheyenne practicum team faced: part of the course overlapped with the Northern Cheyenne Culture week; an elder who was also a speaker passed away. The CoLang organizers were grateful for the Cheyenne team's dedication and hard work despite these challenges. The UM CLPP members kindly assisted the practicum team during the final week, and the participants successfully completed their projects. See images below of the example projects.



Bingo cards in Cheyenne (left); Go Fish Set in Cheyenne (right) created

Many practica participants were linguistics students, accustomed to structured academic courses. Through the Cheyenne practicum, these participants were given an opportunity to consider what it means to participate in a community-based project, and to evaluate what language documentation research offers, as well as its relevance within the needs of the language community. Online news magazine Buffalo's Fire published an article about CoLang focusing on the Cheyenne practicum, titled "Montana, scene of global gathering to save Native languages." Richard Littlebear is quoted: "It was amazing and gratifying to see so many young people so dedicated to saving languages [...]" In the practicum portion of the symposium, these young people devised language acquisition activities that were designed to facilitate teaching and learning a language." Organizing such a large institute is once in a lifetime opportunity. CLPP is fortunate to have had a chance to participate in CoLang 2022.

CoLang 2022: A good time was had by all

By Iva Croff
Blackfeet Community College



And a good time was had by all! I don't know what else to say other than it was truly fun. CoLang 2022 was my first ever CoLang event, and the energy was amazing. It was such a treat to actually be among people face-to-face and network with such a variety of scholars in several disciplines.

Whether you are a linguist, researcher, language preservationist, instructor, or student, CoLang 2022 had something for everyone. I discovered that I selected a class by mistake due to its description, but I found a fantastic alternative that had seating available. I learned so much from that particular class, it broke my heart a little that it had come to an end so quickly.

The networking was astounding. I am not a linguist, but I made many connections with individuals who are students or faculty in that area. In fact, I dropped information that I teach Plains Indian Sign Language, and I was immediately sought out to host a quick demonstration class one evening near the end of my stay. We had planned to be there for an hour, but it turned into a two-hour teaching session with some sensational plans for future collaborations.

What made CoLang even more special was that I was there with my youngest daughter,

a Piikani Studies Major at Blackfeet Community College.

She was there with her 6-month old baby boy, as was one other family with a slightly older baby. Every class that Whitney was at, baby DJ was used as an example of teaching babies language immediately after they're born.

I really wanted to be part of the Animating Traditional Stories as Pedagogical Tools for Language Reclamation, but I'm not an artist by any means. Once I saw those drawing pads, I knew that I was completely out of my element. It is hard to list my favorite classes, but I absolutely can pinpoint one; the Master Apprentice Program with Stan Rodriguez. I believe that I can also speak for my daughter that this was her favorite as well. Mr. Rodriguez brought so much humor to the classroom, and his games and other exercises can easily be incorporated into any age group of teaching.

On the surface CoLang looks like a tremendous amount of work, and I cannot fathom what it's like behind the scenes. Despite some attendees and one organizer getting COVID, I believe that a good time was had by all, and the knowledge gained from this experience was incredibly beneficial.

Ending Note

So far, much of CLPP's focus has been devoted to organizing and planning CoLang 2022. Now that CoLang 2022 has ended, it is time to shift gears. CoLang 2022 was a fantastic event, and we hope the experience will help CLPP in the future through continued networking and collaboration. The next stage is to move forward with in-person meetings, with a newly added focus on "Build and Broaden" and to host a conference on a collaborative language science within language reclamation in May 2023. -- The editors

Linguistics Program
University of Montana

Collaborative Language Planning Project (CLPP) is a series of activities conducted by a group of like-minded people who work toward the recognition, maintenance, and promotion of the Indigenous languages of Montana and beyond.

Collaborative Language Planning Project (CLPP)



CLPP aims to enhance communication among language activists, language teachers, students, and researchers from Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities in the state of Montana. The participants consist of representatives from tribal colleges in Montana as well as language activists, teachers and researchers from independent community language programs. Its goals include enriching language revitalization efforts among Indigenous communities, enhancing teachers and activists' training experiences, and encouraging collaboration.

CLPP - Montana

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