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An Emerging Native Language Education Framework for Reservation Public Schools With Mixed Populations

Phyllis Bo-yuen Ngai

Currently, we lack a viable indigenous language education framework for reservation public schools with mixed Native and non-Native student populations. Can stakeholders holding different and often conflicting points of view agree to accept and nurture Native language education programs in the public school arena? In search of a workable framework that will guide language education efforts acceptable to most (if not all) stakeholders in mixed districts, the author gathered grassroots input across communities with mixed populations on the Flathead Indian Reservation in Montana. Study participants suggested approaches for dealing with existing obstacles and ways to include diverse local perspectives. The emerging framework presented here consists of prerequisite conditions, action steps, and program elements that are abstracted from their district-based recommendations and reservation-wide considerations. Based on participants' suggestions, this initial blueprint includes guidelines for improving and increasing Native language learning on, and possibly beyond, the research sites. Finally, the author presents implementation questions that highlight areas requiring adaptation in specific contexts and suggestions for further research.

Introduction

Currently, we lack a viable indigenous language education framework for reservation public schools with mixed Native and non-Native student populations. In places where the mainstream culture overwhelmed the local heritage and few grandparents and parents know the indigenous language, collaboration between local public schools and the Native community is vital for facilitating indigenous language learning among the young (Silverthorne, 1997). Although responsibility for the survival of American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) languages cannot be shouldered by public schools alone (Fishman, 1991; Krauss, 1998), schools play an important role in Native language revitalization

(McCarty, 1998; Watahomigie, 1998). The presence of Native language programs in the public school system serves to validate the heritage of the indigenous students. Carefully designed and effectively implemented education programs can promote interest and facilitate development of language and cultural competence among local youths (Ngai, 2002).

Language revitalization is particularly challenging in school districts with a mix of AI/AN and non-Native populations because of the co-existence of diverse and often conflicting perspectives. In the mixed districts¹ that constitute the headwaters of many dying tongues, can educators, American Indians, and their non-Indian neighbors living on Indian reservations agree to accept and nurture Native language education in the public school arena? In searching for a workable language education framework that is likely to be accepted by most (if not all) in mixed districts, the researcher gathered grassroots input in communities with mixed populations on the Flathead Indian Reservation in Montana. Three interrelated questions guided the inquiry:

- What are the interacting facilitating factors and obstacles that affect the design and implementation of Native language education in public school districts with a mix of American Indian and non-Indian student populations?
- How can the social, economic, political, historical, cultural, linguistic, and educational conditions that prevail among mixed communities in rural America be accommodated fruitfully with regard to the design and implementation of a framework for Native language education in public schools?
- What are the key components of an effective public school Native language education program that would be acceptable to local Indians and non-Indians, educators and parents, policymakers and stakeholders, supporters and non-supporters in mixed public school districts?

These research questions point to potential sources of obstacles and solutions beyond the indigenous community. They call for considerations of the wider social, economic, political, historical, and educational contexts. Linda Tuhiwai Smith maintains that many researchers “frame their research in ways that assume the locus of a particular research problem lies with the indigenous individual or community rather than with other social or structural issues...and fail to analyze or make sense of the wider social, economic and policy contexts in which communities exist” (1999, p. 92). In communities of mixed populations, Native language education is not just an “Indian issue.” It requires acceptance and support from non-Natives as well.

In the search for a framework acceptable to all in mixed communities, one is bound to encounter the challenge of reconciling different opinions. As Paulo Freire suggests, diverse perspectives “struggle to prevail as a legitimate object of learning” (Freire & Macedo, 1987, p. 20). A “multicentric” point of view that includes different voices allows the researcher and research participants to recognize interrelated and contradictory ideologies and to analyze how differences

within and between diverse groups can expand human potential to solve problems and improve life for all (Giroux, 1992). This study aims to capture and integrate diverse local voices who address ways to help strengthen the impact of public school indigenous language education.

Fishman (1997, p. 121) points out that “the unique assets of the view from within have long been overlooked.” Views from the inside are valuable because only such views can be accepted as authoritative interpretations of local conditions. With regard to indigenous language education, Radford Quamahongnewa, a Hopi elder insists that “local people should set their goals; they need to become owners of their goals and finance the achievement of those goals themselves” (Reyhner, 1996, p. 28). Thus, this study set out to find out what local people on the Flathead Indian Reservation desire, what steps they believe should be taken, and how they propose their suggestions be implemented. As Crawford (1996) points out, a comprehensive strategy for revitalizing Native languages means “centralizing available information about what is already being done, organizing discussion about strategies and directions, and, most importantly, fostering leadership from endangered language communities themselves” (p. 66). Outsiders cannot lead this movement, although they can serve as “helpful allies” (Crawford, 1996, p. 67; see also Lomawaima & McCarty, 2002; Smith, 1999). As an outsider, I relied on local input in preparing action frameworks that can serve to guide local collaborations. The research process operated like “a central forum for discussion” about approaches for moving things forward (Crawford, 1996, p. 66). The study responded to Crawford’s (1996) call for action and sustained “momentum” (pp. 66-67) by initiating local discussions in the hope of stimulating grassroots initiatives from within.

Inside perspectives can be enriched by outside insights. As Fishman (1997, p. 121) points out, “Every perspective brings with it certain debits and certain assets....” This study explicitly incorporates the diverse perspectives of research participants and the researcher (also see Dorian, 1999), practitioners and academics, educators and parents, politicians and community leaders, administrators and stakeholders, American Indians and non-Indians.

Perspectives on Indigenous Language Maintenance

While some educators and policymakers oppose efforts to promote AI/AN languages, others urge contributions from multiple sectors to revitalize them. Developing a framework for guiding language education that can be supported by people from a diverse audience is a challenging task. In-depth understanding of different perspectives allows for determining common ground on which language programs will be acceptable to most (if not all) stakeholders.

Nonsupportive Perspectives

Non-Indian Point of View: Some politicians view maintaining languages other than English as a threat to the dominant group in society (Romaine, 1995). In the 1980s, for instance, President Ronald Reagan condemned the idea of maintaining

Native languages as “un-American” (cited in Romaine, 1995, p. 251). Reagan argued that preserving the Native language of a minority group would not help its members acquire sufficient English to contribute in the job market (Romaine, 1995). Some educators and writers have expressed similar views. They believe that the spread of more than one language in the country would diminish a sense of “Americanism,” or unity (Butler, 1985; Chavez, 1996; Hirsch, 1999; Roth, 1996; and Vazsonyi, 1997), foster intergroup conflict (Butler, 1985; Ruiz, 1984), produce a divisive society (Butler, 1985; Chavez, 1992; Roth, 1996), and weaken national defense (Vazsonyi, 1997). Mainstream teachers often attribute the difficulties they believe that AI/AN students experience in school to their language and culture (Deyhle, 1995). Some teachers even conclude that the ability of AI/AN and immigrant students to speak a language other than English is a cause of learning and reading disabilities (Deyhle, 1995).

Native Point of View: Some American Indians/Alaska Natives, especially among the younger generation, have developed feelings of discomfort, insecurity, and/or dislike toward their traditional languages (see also Linn, et al., 1998; Romaine, 1995). This outcome has been influenced, in part, by negative mainstream attitudes toward languages other than English. For instance, a Yowlumne tribal member confessed that, at one point in time, “I wanted to forget the language...I was ashamed of my language” (Vera, 1998, p. 79).

Watahomigie (1998) contends that language loss begins with parents not teaching their children the heritage language at home. When considering the reasons why some AI/AN parents have not wanted to pass on their native tongue, one Loyal Shawnee teacher explains that “if my children are to succeed in school and have a chance at a good job, they need to learn English” (Linn, et al, 1998, p. 64). Fillmore (1994, cited in Linn et al., 1998) suggests the following additional reasons that parents fail to teach the heritage language to their children:

- (a) the desire for children to perform well in school and the concomitant fear that using the family language will prevent children from learning English well;
- (b) the belief (or despair) that the family language has no use outside the home;
- (c) the belief that the family language is symbolic of low social status; and
- (d) the belief that English is the key to acceptance by peers and teachers (p. 63).

Supportive Perspectives

Native Point of View: Ambler (2000), the former editor of the *Tribal College Journal*, maintains that “by recognizing Native languages, they [educators] recognize Native people, leading to self-esteem and academic success” (p. 9). This insight is supported by Deyhle’s (1995) decade-long ethnographic study of the lives of Navajo youth. Deyhle found that “students who embrace their traditional culture ... both gain a solid place in their society and are more successful in the Anglo world of the school” (p. 430). Along the same lines, a

Yupiaq indigenous educator advises that “Yupiaq people do not have to become someone else to become members of the global society; they can continue to be their own people” (Kawagley, 1999, p. 45).

Tribal languages are more than just a communication tool among AI/AN people. Duane Mistaken Chief, a member of the Blackfeet tribe, explains that American Indians use words and phrases to reconstruct their cultures and to heal themselves. By studying the Indian words, they learn to respect themselves. From the Indian point of view, the traditional language is a sacred gift, the symbol of one’s identity, the embodiment of one’s culture and traditions, a means for expressing inner thoughts and feelings, and the source of ancestral wisdom. This perspective is mostly shared by the older generation, the elders (Linn, et al., 1998).

Although the groups of AI/AN people who are actively involved in traditional language maintenance often are small (see Linn et al., 1998; Lopez, 1998), the number of individuals striving to achieve language revitalization is growing rapidly in some places (Hinton, 1998). Given the limited resources available for language maintenance in AI/AN communities, non-Indian support plays a vital role in the process of reversing the trend of language shift and death.

Non-Indian Point of View: Scholars and linguists point out that indigenous language shift and death “threatens to eliminate, within a generation or two, the extraordinary linguistic and cultural diversity that characterizes the planet” (McCarty & Zepeda, 1998, p. 1; see also Yamamoto, 1995; and Zepeda & Hill, 1992). The threat to linguistic diversity is similar to the threat to biodiversity. Bjelijac-Babic (2000) explains that “there is an intrinsic and causal link between biological diversity and linguistic diversity” (p. 3) in the sense that a local language embodies a special stock of local knowledge about the natural environment. As indigenous languages die, traditional knowledge about the environment disappears as well (Bjelijac-Babic, 2000).

Although one cannot be certain that indigenous languages will be useful a hundred or a thousand years from now, they remain meaningful to the linguistic groups themselves. The right to maintain one’s heritage language is an important human right (Fishman, 1991). Socio-linguist Skutnabb-Kangas (1999, p. 48) contends that “if the minority language is not used as the main medium of education and child care, the use of the minority language is indirectly prohibited in daily intercourse or in schools” and “that is an issue of linguistic genocide.” In the International Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide prepared by the United Nations, linguistic and cultural genocide along with physical genocide are considered serious crimes against humanity (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1999). Preserving and restoring indigenous languages should be part of societal reform (Fishman, 1991) because “linguistic human rights in education are a prerequisite for the maintenance of the diversity in the world that we are all responsible for” (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1999, p. 58).

If indigenous languages are valuable creations of humankind and meaningful possessions of people, what specific actions should and can we take to help save disappearing languages? Given the opposing perspectives, what

might a Native language program that is acceptable by both supporters and non-supporters look like? What are the required conditions for such a program to survive? What actions steps are needed to implement such programs? This article incorporates the suggestions of study participants holding diverse perspectives into an emerging Native language education framework. The last part of the article will explore remaining implementation questions and suggest areas for further research.

Research Method

The Flathead Indian Reservation is the current home of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai tribes. According to census of 2000, about 17% of the reservation's population consists of American Indians. The low percentage of Native population on this reservation can be attributed to the Hellgate Treaty of 1855 and General Allotment Act of 1887. These policies allowed for the opening up of the Flathead Indian Reservation to non-Indian homesteaders and the forced sale of tribal lands to non-Indians at clearly below-market prices (Bigart & Woodcock, 1996; Smith, 1995). In 1910, "a Presidential Proclamation opened 'surplus' reservation lands to non-Indian settlement. Since then, non-Indians settled much of the land in the valleys" (Camel, et. al., 1996, pp. 3-13). The continuous influx of non-Indians to the reservation forced the Salish and Kootenai to learn English in order to function in an economy dominated by non-Indians. Today, roughly 70 people on the reservation speak Salish and perhaps 40 people speak Kootenai (the two local indigenous languages) and the majority of these speakers are elders (Silverthorne, personal communication, 2001 August). The Salish people consider the Bitterroot Valley their homeland, whereas the aboriginal territory of the Kootenai people includes the Columbia River Basin, the Rocky Mountain Region, and the Northern Plains (Montana OPI, 2004). The Salish culture and the Kootenai culture are based on two different belief systems and their languages are unrelated (Camel, et al., 1996; OPI, 2004). This study focuses on interviewee suggestions regarding Salish language education because there is no Kootenai program in the selected districts that are located in the southern part of the reservation.

"Authentic" or "decolonizing" research emphasizes the Native perspective in setting research goals as well as in the outcomes of research undertakings (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2002; Smith, 1999). In this study, the Native perspective, along with constructive suggestions by non-Natives, shaped the data collection process and the framework that emerged. In school districts with mixed populations, the sustainability of indigenous language education programs rests upon collaboration, coordination, and contributions by multiple entities.

As one tribal education leader reported, "We can't have language revitalization if schools don't help us. But we can't revitalize a language in the school only." Salish cultural and education leaders, both young and old, refuse to "put the language on the shelf," or "preserve it like a jar of pickles" in the words of the tribal education leader. They want to revive the language. The

leaders' initiatives have provided the impetus for continuous improvement and expansion of Salish language education programs on the Reservation. Planting the seeds of Salish language instruction in the public schools, the tribal college, and other educational settings constitutes a significant accomplishment of the Salish Cultural Committee. Today, adult Salish classes and workshops are offered by the Salish Cultural Committee and the People's Center (a tribal community cultural center).

Native language programs also are in place in most of the public schools on the Flathead Indian Reservation. A Salish language teacher and respected Salish elder affirmed that "It's a dream to have the language in the public school" where Native languages used to be prohibited. In public schools, the continuation of Salish language instruction since the 1970s can be attributed to the efforts of Salish-language teachers who are willing to step into a traditionally hostile setting in order to pass the language on to the young. Over the last two decades, individual Salish teachers had been devoted to developing curricula and materials. For many years, Salish teachers delivered their lessons without a classroom designated for Salish instruction and received only the salary of a teaching aide or a home-school coordinator because they were not certified teachers. Since 1995, the establishment of Class 7 state certification for Native language teachers, a non-traditional certification process, has improved the status of Salish teachers. Following approval by the cultural leaders, such teachers are full-school employees within the union contract. They enjoy the same rights as certified teachers in public schools. According to a tribal educator, "this is the biggest open door for Native language teaching/learning in public schools."

On the other hand, from the perspective of a school administrator, "I haven't seen public school Indian language programs make much of an impact on kids." This disturbing statement provided one impetus for the researcher's search for answers to the question—why not? Public school Salish language programs reach more children than any other Salish program on the reservation. What are the reasons that they have not been effective in passing on the heritage language to the young?

Through this study, I encountered diverse voices regarding ways to help strengthen indigenous language education in public schools on the reservation. I conducted a total of 101 individual interviews with 89 research participants holding diverse perspectives (including cultural and community leaders, educators and parents, historians and politicians, Indians and non-Indians, advocates and skeptics of indigenous education). Only one parent and one former tribal education leader refused to participate in the study. Clearly, indigenous language education constitutes an issue of concern in the local community. The challenge is to integrate varied perspectives into a Native language education framework that incorporates suggestions acceptable to both supporters and non-supporters of Indian language school programs, American Indians and non-Indians, stakeholders and policymakers, community leaders and administrators, and parents and educators.

The three districts included in this study differ in terms of the proportion of Indian/non-Indian students and their experience with Native language education. The first selected school district has close to a balanced population ratio among American Indians and non-Indians. The political atmosphere in this district reflects this even split. A portion of the community supports Salish learning in public schools and a portion objects to it. The situation faced by Native language education supporters in this school district requires careful balancing. A school administrator explained that “it’s a matter of moving carefully and slowly through the political mine-field of this community.... [This is] a situation where school administrators have to walk on the middle line” between the Native and the non-Native communities.

The second selected district has more American Indian than non-Indian students. It offers a K through 12 Salish language program along with a K through 12 Native American Studies program. The district first offered Salish language instruction in 1972. An American Indian teacher describes this district as “the forerunner in providing K-12 Salish language instruction and Native American Studies on the reservation.” This is the only district in Montana that has been awarded a grant under the Native American and Alaskan Children in Schools Program.

The third selected district has more non-Indian than American Indian students. All research participants agreed that this district has been perceived as a “White” district on the Flathead Indian Reservation with enrollment of youth of primarily Euro-American ancestry. A non-Indian participant described it as “the oasis” in the middle of the reservation. An Indian participant described it as “the irony” in the center of the reservation. This district historically has been perceived as a strong anti-Indian, racist population. Currently, no Salish language education program or Native American Studies program is in place in this district.

Data collection occurred from April 2002 to October 2003. Forty-one of the participants identified themselves as American Indians; forty-eight are non-Indians. In building the sample, I selected twenty-five participants who were not professionally associated with these districts, because of their experiences with and/or influence on reservation-wide Native language education. Sixty-four interviewees either worked for or were involved in the three selected public schools districts. Out of these 64, 19 were associated with the district with a balanced Indian/non-Indian student ratio, 28 with the district with predominantly Indian students, and 17 with the district with predominantly non-Indian students. I interviewed the non-district-based participants first to obtain an understanding of reservation-wide challenges and of inclinations at the tribal level. Then, I conducted interviews in one district at a time. The sampling procedure determined the number of district-based and non-district-based participants.

The study used theoretical sampling. Participants selected for initial interviews included elected officials and appointed public education officers, superintendents and school principals, supportive and non-supportive mainstream teachers, supportive and non-supportive parent leaders, school board members,

the head of tribal education, and the cultural leaders of the selected American Indian community. These groups represented the diverse voices of Indians and non-Indians, community leaders and educators, stakeholders and administrators, and supporters and non-supporters.

However, the sampling list served only as a starting point. Sampling, in fact, continued throughout the research process. The initial group of participants recommended individuals, who, from their perspectives, had been influential in supporting or obstructing the development of Indian education (including Native language education) in the selected districts and/or on the reservation as a whole. This subsequent group of participants included tribal education leaders, respected tribal elders, former and current Native language teachers, Indian and non-Indian community activists, Indian and non-Indian language education advocates, vocal anti-Indian community members, a historian in residence, and a linguist specialized in American Indian languages. Sampling lasted until participants' recommendations were exhausted.

In-person interviewing provided opportunities for brainstorming approaches to problems and alternatives that would accommodate a variety of local conditions and diverse perspectives. I formulated the interview questions based on insights gained from literature review on indigenous language education and from a pilot study conducted with experienced Montana educators. The following interview protocol, which addresses essential dimensions of program design and implementation as exemplified in relevant bilingual education models and well-known indigenous language programs (see for example, Amrein & Pena, 2000, Batchelder & Markel, 1997; Krashen and Biber, 1988; Ngai, 2002; Reyhner, 1992; Sims, 1998; Valdes, 1997), provided the guidelines for the unstructured interviews:

1. What efforts have been successful in helping to increase the learning of the Salish language in your school district?
2. Why do you think current efforts have not succeeded in reversing the trend of diminishing use of the Salish language?
3. What do you think public schools should do to help increase the learning of the Salish language among young people in your school district?
4. What are the possible ways to integrate Salish language learning into the public school curriculum?
5. What would be the design of an ideal Salish language program in terms of the following areas?
 - *objectives*
 - *grade levels*
 - *subjects taught in Salish*
 - *required teacher qualifications and teacher training*
 - *the place of the program in the current school organization*
 - *length and frequency of the Salish class(es), etc.?*
6. Do you think such program would work in your school district? What are the obstacles and what are the facilitating factors?
7. How do you think the obstacles can be minimized or even removed? e.g.,
 - *What kind of professional development can be provided?*
 - *What qualifications are acceptable?*

- *What are the possible sources of funding?*
 - *What should be the minimal level of external (or central) funding?*
 - *How can collaboration between the tribe(s) and public educators be facilitated?*
 - *What can the tribal council and the cultural committee do to help?*
 - *What can school administrators and teachers do to help?*
 - *What can student leaders and parents do to help?*
 - *What can you do to help?*
8. What are the innovative ways to gain support from policy makers and stakeholders?
 9. What compromises/accommodations must advocates make in order to gain support from policy makers and stakeholders? e.g.,
 - *If some people oppose... how much would you compromise?*
 10. What compromises/accommodations must policy makers and stakeholders make in order for such a Salish language program to become feasible? e.g.,
 - *If an advocate proposes..., would you find it acceptable? How much would you compromise?*
 11. What are the key components of a public school Salish language program that are acceptable to both Indians and non-Indians?
 12. What are your suggestions regarding possible ways to establish these components?

The study applied the constant-comparison method and three stages of coding that are similar to open, axial, and selective coding procedures (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) in the identification, analysis, and integration of grassroots suggestions for increasing and improving indigenous language learning in the mixed communities. This article synthesizes the ideas encountered around the Flathead Reservation and incorporates them into a Native language program framework. The term *framework* refers to a description of important dimensions that need to be considered in program design and implementation. It consists of descriptions of conditions, actions, and program elements that can be adopted or adapted for Indian language education in mixed districts on and beyond the research sites.

An Emerging Native Language Education Framework for Mixed Public School Districts

Research participants identified ways to include the perspectives of both local American Indians and non-Indians and of both supporters and non-supporters of Native language education in public schools. They also proposed key program elements that accommodate the socio-economic, political, cultural, linguistic, and educational conditions faced by mixed districts on the reservation.

Some of the study participants' suggestions apply to Native language education programs in public schools on the reservation in general, whereas others are specific to districts with a student body that is half Indian and half non-Indian, districts with more Indian than non-Indian students, or districts with more non-Indian than Indian students. Based on the four sets of ideas, the researcher constructed a framework for public school districts with mixed Indian and non-

Indian student populations. Under this framework, components extracted and abstracted from participant input constitute prerequisites, action steps, and program elements proposed for districts with characteristics similar to the research sites. Prerequisites are local conditions that participants identified as necessary for advancing Native language education in mixed school districts. Following the discussion of prerequisites, we will consider action steps. The emergent action steps, based in part on the main concerns expressed in the selected districts, aim at facilitating Native language education by addressing existing difficulties or preventing future problems in mixed school districts. The next section presents Native language program elements (e.g., objectives, target students, curriculum, school and community atmosphere, and teaching approaches) that are widely accepted by study participants as essential for public schools with mixed populations.

Prerequisites

The prerequisites for advancing Native language education in mixed school districts are derived from the necessary conditions identified for public school Native language programs across the Flathead Indian Reservation along with the specific factors identified in the selected districts (see Table 1). First and foremost, according to the participants, a desire to revitalize the indigenous language at all levels needs to exist. Both top-down initiatives and bottom-up support are essential. At the reservation level, tribal leaders need to initiate language revitalization through the establishment of a cultural committee, by granting official status to the language, and by financially supporting language education efforts. Most study participants agreed that these conditions helped lay the foundation for language revitalization on the reservation. At the grassroots level, there must be a desire to learn, to use, and to teach the language. As participants from the district with about half Indians and half non-Indians and the district with predominantly Native students pointed out, Indian parents' demands and expectations for effective Native language education and support from school administrators and teachers are crucial for planting a language program in the school system.

Participants also believed that a coherent K-16 formal language instruction plan that includes language teacher training is needed to help students progress from beginner to proficiency levels. Such a language education plan calls for the involvement of committed local educators and external experts in the areas of language revitalization and bilingual education. It requires support not only within local districts, but at state and national levels. Study findings indicated that, without federal funds, bilingual education would not grow in rural schools. Limited budgets typically force poor districts to prioritize mainstream education over Indian education. State mandates (such as Indian Education for All in Montana²) and local American Indian parents' demands and political influence helped move Indian education up on the priority list of local school districts. State support, such as approval of Class 7 teacher certification and the development

Table 1
An Emerging Framework³ for Native Language Education in Reservation Public School Districts with Mixed Populations: Prerequisites

- Desire to revitalize the Native language:
 - top-down initiative
 - grassroots support and interest
- Written records and materials.
- A coherent K-16 formal language education plan.
- American Indians and non-Indians, insiders and outside experts, committed to help revitalize the language:
 - Native language teachers in public schools
 - young learners and new teachers
 - linguists who help document the language
 - school administrators and teachers supportive of language education
 - grant administrators willing to link Native language education with English literacy development
 - proactive American Indian-parent leaders and American Indian education advocates
 - widely respected, popular American Indian Club supervisor
- Constructive engagement between American Indian and non-Indian supporters:
 - State office of public instruction (OPI) as the state liaison through the services of a bilingual-ed specialist and an Indian-education specialist
 - tribal education department as the reservation liaison
 - Indian-education committee as the district liaison
 - agreements on Class 7 certification for Native language teachers and World-Language standards (including American Indian/Alaska Native languages)
 - collaboration among teachers
- Federal funds:
 - for the survival of a Native language program
 - for professional development of Native language teachers
 - for helping children to develop English literacy plus Native language awareness
- Amiable political atmosphere:
 - American Indians are becoming politically powerful
 - American Indians are accepted as state legislators and local school-board members
 - American Indian Education for All as a state law
- Supportive school environment.
- Open-minded community.
- Successful American Indian club.
- Proactive district-based Indian-education committee.
- Change agents in addition to committed American Indian people:
 - people moving from out of state who are free from the historical baggage and are interested in learning about local American Indians
 - influential non-Indians who are supportive of Indian education
 - mass media that reaches beyond the local area

Special Considerations

Districts with about half American Indians:

- Native language education needs to be accepted as part of the school rather than as an "Indian thing."
- Involvement of both Native and non-Native teachers and students is needed to end isolation of the program.

Districts with more American Indians:

- Native people's demand for more and better Native language education is needed to upgrade the current program.
- Passion and vision guides future language education efforts.
- Willingness to try new language-teaching approaches on the part of language teachers is a prerequisite for improvement.

Districts with fewer American Indians:

- The advocacy of influential non-Indians who are respected by both non-Indians and Indians is crucial.
- A needed partnership between non-Indians and Indians is one of local actors and external support.

of world-language state standards relevant to American Indian language education, provided the impetus for school districts to include Native language programs as part of basic education.

According to study participants, a conducive political atmosphere at the state and reservation level, a supportive school environment, and an open-minded community (as in the district with predominantly American Indian students) are vital conditions for effective Native language education. Moreover, the experience of the district with predominantly non-Indian students teaches us that grassroots efforts, such as the successful Indian club and proactive Indian Education Committee (IEC),⁴ can bring about fundamental change from the bottom up. AI/AN people need not feel alone in pushing for change. Participants pointed out that in some cases effective change agents were non-Indians and non-locals, such as open-minded community members, teachers moving in from outside of the state, non-Indians who were well-liked by both American Indians and non-Indian community members, and mass media that reaches beyond the local area.

Action Steps

Based on study participants' suggestions for removing reservation-wide obstacles and for addressing the main concerns identified in selected districts (Ngai, 2004), the researcher identified action steps for facilitating Native language education in mixed school districts (see Table 2). A vital first step involves increasing the perceived value of the language. Study participants pointed out that promoting the language and mobilizing grassroots support for language education is essential locally and beyond. In terms of initiating change from inside out, participants from districts with at least 50% American Indian students emphasized marketing the benefits of language education to all parents, mobilizing American Indian parents to demand improved language education program, persuading teachers, counselors, and administrators of the value of fitting indigenous language learning into mainstream programs, and motivating students to learn the language. The experience of the district with predominantly non-Indian students demonstrated how reaching out to the young and the wider community would help increase the perceived value of Indian education.

Once a Native language education program is in place, effective learning and teaching of the language requires support from all directions. In terms of

Table 2
**An Emerging Framework for Native language Education in Reservation
Public-school Districts with Mixed Populations: Action Steps**

- Increase perceived value of the Native language locally and reservation-wide:
 - market the benefits to all parents
 - mobilize American Indian parents to demand for improved service
 - convince teachers, counselors, and administrators of the value
 - motivate students to learn
 - reach out to community members
 - inform and include the quiet majority
 - educate the young to change the mentality of the old
 - publicize successful efforts and efforts that improve a district's image
- Support learning:
 - use active and interactive teaching strategies
 - set standards and expectations
 - reinforce learning in mainstream classrooms, around the school, at home, and in the community
 - recruit student leaders who are likely to attract other students to learning the Native language
 - provide incentives and awards to encourage learning, use, and practice of the Native language
 - hire supportive teachers
 - provide extra support for interested and talented learners
- Support teaching:
 - provide incentives and support to motivate speakers to teach
 - recruit and train young Native language teachers
 - provide teacher training to proficient Native speakers
 - convince speakers of the benefits of adopting active and interactive teaching methods
 - centralize Native language instruction
 - facilitate collaboration among Native language teachers
 - facilitate coordination between Native language teachers and mainstream teachers by providing administrative assistance and released time
 - provide mainstream teachers with training and materials for language reinforcement in mainstream classrooms
 - involve mainstream teachers in IEC, which serves as a liaison and a support system
- Create additional domains for Native language exposure, practice, and use:
 - types of domains determined by types of desired language functions
 - mainstream classrooms (academic context)
 - after-school language programs (academic, cultural, and/or everyday contexts)
 - snack shop, lunch room, hallway in the school (everyday context)
 - community centers (intergenerational and intercultural context)
 - selected ceremonies (cultural context)
- Improve relationship between Natives and non-Natives:
 - build trust through open/honest communication
 - define partnership
 - use inclusive decision making
 - consult with each other
 - hire mediation consultant to help resolve conflicts
 - conduct diversity training and Prejudice Reduction Workshop
 - need a tribal liaison to build relationship between Tribe and school, between school and Native parents

- provide school staff and Native parents with collaborative communication training
- Collaborate with one another:
 - coordinate horizontally among teachers, among schools, among IECs, among tribal entities, among Native language advocates
 - coordinate vertically among immersion school, public school, tribal school, and tribal college; among politics of the state, the tribe, and the community; among national Indian education organizations and local advocates; among tribal leaders and young educators
 - share funding responsibilities among the schools and the tribe
- Expand involvement:
 - involve non-Indians related to Indians
 - involve outside experts in areas such as literacy development, bilingual education, marketing, etc.
 - involve non-fluent speakers and Salish learners in language-teaching capacities
- Establish a language commission:
 - to lead
 - to support
 - to coordinate

Special Considerations

Districts with half American Indians:

- Continuous open and honest communication is required to reduce fear and end suspicion.
- Inclusive decision making and consultation are especially important for balancing polarized needs and interests.

Districts with more American Indians:

- Strengthening the impact of local language education is required for overall language revitalization.
- American Indian people need to take the lead to use the language around the school.

Districts with fewer American Indians:

- Instilling in the community a positive attitude toward learning about local Indian heritage is a required action step.
- American Indians strategically stay low-key and support non-Indian advocates and educators who work in the forefront.
- Language learning needs to be promoted as a form of enrichment that taps into the interests of local students and parents.

support for learning, district- and non-district-based participants agreed that incentives and reinforcement must come from the home, classroom teachers, and respected adults within the school and in the community. Educators in the two districts with at least 50% non-Indian students maintained that recruiting student leaders to be involved in language learning and hiring teachers who are supportive of Native language education constitute necessary steps toward creating an atmosphere conducive to learning the local heritage language. Furthermore, participants across the reservation called for adopting active and interactive instructional strategies that will facilitate language learning. They believed that teacher training is important in this regard, but ultimately language teachers' willingness to replace traditional didactic teaching approaches with creative, active, and interactive methods determines the outcome of language education. Therefore, a needed action step is to convince and motivate speakers to try new ways of teaching.

In terms of supporting current and future language teachers, according to research participants, tribal leadership is crucial. Participants agreed that an important action step is for tribal leaders to determine the desired functions of the language as a complement to the mainstream English language. A community consensus concerning desired functions is necessary to determine the domains for use and practice of the language and, hence, the content and context of language education. Moreover, educators in individual districts tended to look to tribal departments for guidance and support in terms of curriculum and material development, setting standards and expectations, and coordination between tribal educators and classroom teachers. In the long run, as educators and administrators in the study recommended, a tribal authority would need to recruit and train young, certified language teachers.

In response to the question—Who in the tribes would be in a position to lead, to support, and to coordinate district-based as well as reservation-wide language education efforts?—a participant proposed establishing a language commission, a language committee, or the like and others in subsequent interviews supported the idea.

At the reservation level, according to study participants, actions need to be taken by a leadership group to improve relationships between American Indians and non-Indians through creating and defining partnerships that facilitate and expand horizontal and vertical collaboration between tribal and non-tribal entities, fluent speakers and non-fluent advocates, Indian leaders and non-Indian educators, and insiders and outside experts. At the district level, as the participants from the district with about half Indian students pointed out, it is the shared responsibility of Indian parents, school administrators, and teachers to establish constructive and trusting partnerships through open, honest communication and to act proactively in terms of contributing to language education efforts.

Suggested Program Elements

Based on a fusion of elements suggested for Native language programs on the reservation in general along with common elements identified for the selected districts, the researcher identified program elements that would be important for mixed districts (see Table 3 for details). The widely accepted perspective on the reservation is that language programs in mixed school districts should play a supportive role in language revitalization efforts. Although expecting public school programs to help all children develop proficiency in the Native language would not be realistic in every district, participants agreed that a language program in mixed districts should aim to benefit both non-Indians and Indians. Indian participants maintained that a program should aim to help students, especially Indian children, become communicatively competent in the heritage language and develop a solid sense of Indianness. On the other hand, non-Indian participants believed that a program should aim to enhance students' cultural experiences and multicultural competence.

Table 3
**An Emerging Framework for Native Language Education in Reservation
 Public-school Districts with Mixed Populations: Suggested Program Elements**

- Supportive role of public school:
 - promote interest
 - validate the Native language
 - supplement other programs
- Shared vision and mission:
 - commitment to revitalize the Native language
 - tribal leadership in teacher training, materials and curriculum development, and using and promoting the language around schools and in the Indian community
 - community consciousness
 - hope
 - individuals' willingness to take on responsibilities
- Program objectives beneficial to both American Indians and non-Indians:
 - enhance cross-cultural understanding for all
 - enhance multicultural competence for all
 - enhance second-language awareness for all
 - enhance proficiency in the Native language for American Indians
 - enhance self-esteem for American Indians
 - enhance cultural experience for non-Indians
- Target population:
 - targeted at young children
 - available to all at elementary, but allows parents to pull out their children
 - optional in high school
 - honors classes for interested, talented students
 - extra-curricular activities for interested students
- Frequency:
 - a minimum 60 minutes per week
 - preferably daily exposure
 - increasing exposure by grade levels
- Common progressive curriculum:
 - benchmarks and standards
 - common lexicons for everyday, cultural, & academic context
 - multicultural perspectives
 - comparative approach
 - aligned with content standards
- Effective instructional approaches:
 - immerse learners in the language
 - design hands-on learning activities
 - make learning experiential
 - allow for learning through all senses
 - adapt ESL and foreign language-teaching strategies
- Integration:
 - integrate some Native language use and language learning into mainstream classes
 - separate from NAS for education and political reasons
- Affirmative school atmosphere:
 - responsive to all students' needs
 - value all students' heritages
 - words and expressions in the Native language used by educators around the school
 - reward students for using the Native language around the school
 - integrate words, expressions, songs into everyday routines, school events, and ceremonies

- A permanent room for Native language classes:
- Careful presentations about the language programs:
 - softer approach
 - consultative approach
 - assuring approach
 - appeals
- Complementary learning opportunities:
 - home
 - after-school programs
 - joint-school programs
 - mentor-apprenticeship programs
 - community center where the Native language is used
- Support external to the district:
 - inter-school collaboration
 - tribal investment
 - objectives and standards set by the tribe
 - training provided by the tribe

Special Considerations

Districts with about half American Indians:

- A school atmosphere in which both American Indian and mainstream cultures are acknowledged explicitly is important.
- Program design and implementation ought to be inclusive and optional.

Districts with more American Indians:

- Effective instructional approaches are required to produce language proficiency among learners.
- Tribal leadership in teacher training and supervision is required for change to occur.
- The Native language needs to be integrated throughout the school in order to help learners develop proficiency.

Districts with fewer American Indians:

- A realistic goal is to raise awareness of and stimulate interest in the local Native language rather than to develop language proficiency.
- To appeal to non-Indian parents, language learning needs to aim at reinforcing academic skills and preparing students for effective participation in the diverse U.S. society and beyond.
- Native language learning needs to be combined with desired, but unavailable, activity classes and learning opportunities.
- External support is essential because of limited federal funds for and expertise in Indian education.

In spite of the differences in focal objectives, a shared consensus emerges that Native language education in public schools should be inclusive and optional. It should be designed for all, available to all, but not mandatory. In order to meet diverse needs and interests within mixed districts, participants proposed a common progressive curriculum that covers contexts ranging from everyday communication and cultural studies to academic learning. Integrating language education into mainstream classrooms, according to study participants, is a first step in districts where Native language education does not exist (such as the district with predominantly non-Indian students). It is a next step in districts (such as the two districts with at least 50% American Indian students) where a language program independent from the mainstream classroom has been in place.

To facilitate integration and reinforcement by mainstream teachers, some participants suggested, the standards and benchmarks required for a needed progressive preK-16 Indian-language curriculum could be aligned with state-and/or national-content standards. Such alignment, along with the adoption of a comparative approach in designing and implementing language education, could help win support in mixed districts where resistance to Indian education remains. As evident in the experience of the district with about half Indians and half non-Indians, without an affirming school atmosphere, careful presentations of program benefits to all stakeholders, and a grassroots movement targeted at mobilizing support from the quiet majority, a Native language program would not flourish. Additionally, without effective teaching approaches and complementary language learning opportunities, progress would be limited (as demonstrated in the case of the district with predominantly American Indian students). External support, including tribal support and inter-school collaboration, would be helpful in schools on the reservation in general and would be essential in districts with little federal funding (such as the district with predominantly non-Indian students).

Considerations Specific to Districts with Different American Indian/non-Indian Ratios

Among the conditions, actions, and elements suggested for mixed districts, some demand more urgent attention than others in individual districts. Each district is likely to have its own set of primary concerns. A comparison of the three selected districts indicates that the Indian/non-Indian student ratio is a key factor determining the priorities of a district. Thus, in addition to presenting common requirements, the language program framework highlights considerations specific to districts with a balanced Indian/non-Indian student ratio, districts with more American Indian than non-Indian students, and districts with predominantly non-Indian student populations.

Districts with an Indian/non-Indian Balanced Ratio

In mixed school districts with about half American Indians and half non-Indians, Native language education is likely to be tolerated. Thus, the primary challenge is not so much maintaining a program in the school as it is improving the image of the program and attitudes toward the program. According to study participants, educators should ensure that the language program would not be perceived as “the Indian thing” relevant to only half of the student population. Study participants emphasized that a language program must be developed as a part of the school’s mission that involves both non-Indian and American Indian educators and students. Otherwise, as shown in the case of the selected district with about half non-Indian students, the language program would be isolated, language learning would receive little support in the school, and many students would hold negative associations with Native language learning. Study participants believed that a required action step would be for educators to create

an affirming school atmosphere in which all heritages (both Indian and non-Indian) were valued and acknowledged explicitly. Local community members and education leaders suggested that marketing the language program as an enriching learning opportunity designed to complement mainstream classes would help reduce suspicion and fear that Indian education is taking over mainstream education. Moreover, Native language education ought to be optional in a district where half of the parents might perceive no obligation to learn someone else's heritage language. In order for an optional language program to be popular, according to local education administrators, language programs should appeal to both the American Indian half and the non-Indian half of the stakeholders in the district.

To balance the seemingly polarized interests and needs of the two halves, inclusion is a key factor. Non-Indian participants in the district with a balanced Indian/non-Indian student ratio expressed the need to be included by American Indians who in turn repeatedly conveyed the hope to be accepted by non-Indians. An acceptable language program must be built on inclusive decision making and consultation. For instance, local school administrators learned that inviting non-supporters to informative, consultative meetings concerning Indian education helped reduce suspicion, misunderstanding, and antagonism. At the same time, consultation is a step toward a constructive partnership that is instrumental for meeting all needs.

Predominantly American Indian Districts

In mixed districts with more Indian than non-Indian students, Native language education is likely to be accepted as legitimate. Resources for Indian education are available and few object to integrating the local Indian language into mainstream classrooms and throughout the school environment. The key question is how to carry it out effectively. Study participants portrayed the school community as open to using the language in the hallway, the lunchroom, the playgrounds, and at school events, but no one was taking the lead. At the grassroots level, a required action step is mobilizing Indian parents to clarify their shared expectations. In addition, parent leaders and language teachers need to take the lead to use the language frequently with students, staff members, and other teachers and to integrate the language in the school environment by such means as posting signs in school buildings and placing books in the library.

In districts with mostly American Indian students, non-Indian educators, parents, and community members are in a position to accept and support Native language education, but it is not their place to determine how to carry it out. In order to improve and/or expand language education, Indian people have to decide how much more they want to achieve. Study participants also pointed out that tribal support would be essential in the areas of training mainstream teachers to reinforce language learning, training language teachers to assist learners in second language acquisition, setting standards and benchmarks for language programs, and promoting the language locally and beyond. Tribal leaders also need to

convince language teachers of the need to use instructional strategies that are effective for achieving this goal.

Predominantly Non-Indian Districts

In mixed districts with few American Indian students, an Indian language program that requires funding from the district's central budget is likely to meet with resistance. Thus, the immediate challenge is to gain acceptance for integrating some language education within the school. Realistic goals are not so much about achieving language proficiency as about raising awareness of and stimulating interest in the local Native language.

In such districts, advocacy by influential non-Indians who are respected by both non-Indians and American Indians is crucial. As in the case of the selected predominantly non-Indian district in this research project, the needed partnership between non-Indians and Indians is one that joins local actors and external support. Based on participant experiences, the researcher concluded that it would be more strategic for Indians to remain low-key and to support non-Indian advocates and educators who worked in the forefront than to be aggressive grassroots activists demanding change.

Furthermore, the local parents indicated that they would be willing to support Native language education if it was combined with desired learning opportunities that were not easily affordable with the tight local school budget. For instance, study participants indicated that parents and students would appreciate Indian education if it is combined with arts and crafts and field trips. Beyond-school support is essential because federal funding for Indian education is limited and expertise in teaching about local tribes is minimal. The local appetite for learning opportunities, unsatisfied by limited resources for activity classes, potentially cracks open the door to tribal investment, which could make a difference.

While each district is faced with unique difficulties, there are concerns shared by all. The distinct needs uncovered in this study within districts with varying Indian/non-Indian student demographics, along with the conditions, actions, and program elements suggested for mixed districts in general, provide the basis for an emerging Native language education program framework. In addition to serving as action guidelines locally, this inclusive framework is likely to be applicable in mixed districts with characteristics similar to the selected study sites in terms of approaches required for tackling existing difficulties and for preventing future problems. This initial blueprint also can be adapted when exploring and developing various dimensions of a feasible program in a specific public school context.

Implementation Questions

Most of the research participants in this study agreed that language revitalization in U.S. society will not be complete without the help of public schools. They specified important reasons for providing Native language learning opportunities in the midst of the cultural confluence occurring in today's public schools. Study

participants also typically held that public school Native language programs should aim to supplement the language revitalization efforts of the home, the immersion school, the tribal school, the tribal college, and other learning opportunities in the community.

As indicated in the emerging language program framework, a number of concrete steps can be taken to break the logjam and energize district-based and reservation-wide language revitalization efforts. However, the list of required actions is long and many of them require giant steps. In order to carry out the proposed steps successfully, a series of implementation questions arising from the study need to be answered. Based on participants' suggestions and comments, the author identified the most pressing implementation questions and grouped them by reservation-wide and specific district-type contexts (see Table 4).

For instance, who should lead? Who should coordinate? At the reservation-wide level, there needs to be a group of stakeholders who concentrate on overseeing all dimensions of language revitalization. If the financial resources (e.g., grants from private foundations or tribal government funding) needed to support such a group exist, nearly all of the remaining implementation questions can be addressed. In the case of Salish language education, for instance, if there are five to ten committed people who work full time on leading and coordinating language education efforts, most of the research participants' suggestions can be carried out. For example, the language commission can be the entity that anchors the following tasks suggested by participants:

- Set annual reachable goals;
- Map out a reservation-wide program and a common curriculum;
- Establish standards and benchmarks for language programs;
- Come up with a plan for K-12 public-school programs;
- Develop curriculum and materials for public-school programs;
- Support Salish language teachers in various public-school districts;
- Find ways to make sure the language is integrated in all tribal offices;
- Reach out to and recruit potential learners;
- Facilitate collaboration among language teachers in developing curriculum and materials;
- Facilitate coordination among the immersion school, the public school system, the tribal school, and the tribal college;
- Support remaining speakers in teaching the language;
- Provide training to potential teachers, including semi-fluent speakers;
- Support mainstream teachers in developing materials for reinforcement in regular classrooms;
- Coordinate intra- and inter-school extra-curricula activities;
- Market the language throughout the reservation and beyond;
- Promote use of the language at sports events, community powwows, community dances, community dinners, and community gatherings, etc.
- Create and maintain domains for language use;
- Hold the Tribal Council accountable for carrying out the language policy; and
- Secure funding from the Tribal Council and other sources to expand language education.

Table 4
Implementation Questions

Reservation-wide Considerations

- What kind of training and planning would it take for reinforcement to occur in the mainstream classroom?
- Who should be responsible for setting up Native language radio station, producing Native language TV programs, putting up Native language signs in the community, etc.?
- Who should be responsible for recruiting? What support system is needed for the recruited learners?
- How to convince the Tribal Government to invest more in language revitalization efforts? Who should take on the responsibility of presenting needs?
- Who should be responsible for outlining the shared responsibilities and gain commitment from individual entities for each task?
- Who should define the role of each entity? How? What kind of coordination system will allow for fair contribution from all and for tapping into existing expertise?
- Who should take the initiative to reach out and coordinate with others?
- How to coordinate existing Native language programs so that they build upon each other?
- How to strengthen the partnership between public schools and tribal entities? What are the steps for clarifying responsibilities?
- How to bring about coordination among committed individuals so that they can build upon one another's efforts?

Districts with about half American Indians

- How will grassroots local efforts fit in with reservation-wide language revitalization efforts?
- Who should initiate open, honest communication between the schools and the Native community?
- How to facilitate coordination between Native language teachers and mainstream teachers and between Native language teachers and Native American Studies teachers?
- Who in the Tribes or the local Indian community should set standards for Native language learning?
- Who should set the goals? How to hold teachers accountable in terms of reaching standards?
- Where should promotion of the language begin?
- What are American Indian parents expected to do in the process? How can American Indian parents make a difference in terms of policy making?
- How will the suggested integration and coordination work? What is the role of a language commission in facilitating such efforts?
- Who should set the benchmarks and standards for Native language language education? What would be appropriate expectations for a public-school language program?
- What persons are in a position to initiate activities that will bring about an affirmative atmosphere?
- Who should take on the task of promoting the language in the school? How should local efforts be tied to reservation efforts in affirming the values of the language and language learning?
- Who should be responsible for initiating and coordinating activities and programs offered by different entities? What is the role of a language commission in this regard?
- Who should be responsible for marketing and recruiting?
- How would marketing at the local level fit in with reservation-wide efforts?
- Who is in a position to organize grassroots movements? Who should take on the responsibility?

Districts with more American Indians

- Who should have authority over the speakers? How to convince the speakers to modify instructional strategies?
- Who should be responsible for recruiting and training?
- Who in the Tribes should train teachers? Who in the Tribes should be responsible for preparing materials for mainstream teachers?
- How to secure agreement from the American Indian community and the tribal government to focus their investment in early-childhood Native language-language education? Who should shoulder the responsibilities of initiating and implementing the plan?
- What are the sources of support for designing and implementing the suggested entertaining, engaging, communicative Native language-language activities?
- What kinds of support do Native language teachers need to meet the demand of coordinating with mainstream teachers? Who can be the coordinator?
- What can be done to ensure that mainstream teachers, Native language teachers, administrators, staff, school members are all on the same page in promoting Native language education? What is the role of IEC in this regard? How can a language commission on the reservation collaborate with a local IEC to accomplish the suggested tasks?
- Whose responsibility is it to create and maintain each of the suggested learning and use domains? How to ensure each of the suggested domains complement and build on one another?
- Who in the Tribes should take the next step of actually reaching out to teachers systematically?

Districts with fewer American Indians

- How to tap into the change and speed up change? How to bring about change positively?
 - What do community members look for in terms of educational benefits? Who can play the role of an effective communicator in this regard? Who would the community trust?
 - What kind of Native language training is needed for teachers who are working in reservation schools? Who should be responsible for training teachers and producing materials for training teachers? Who should be responsible for producing Native language materials for teachers to use in the classroom?
 - What kind of multicultural education is needed at the teacher-education level?
 - Who in the Tribes should be responsible for writing grant proposals and organizing training to help teachers integrate Native language(s) in selected subject areas? Is there someone who is committed to the task on a long-term basis?
 - Who is in a position to facilitate grassroots efforts?
 - If the community honestly welcomes tribal financial support, will the Tribes (i.e., the Tribal Council or the Tribal College) be willing to invest in barrier-breaking in a non-Indian district that does not receive enough Title VII, Impact Aid, and JOM funds to afford a Native studies teacher?
 - Who in the Tribes should be responsible for providing external support for the local district?
 - Who should take on the responsibility of reaching out to the non-Indian community? Who would be an appropriate liaison between non-Indians and Indian-education advocates?
-

The list presented in Table 4 is by no means exhaustive. As captured in the program framework emerging from this study, language education does not succeed in isolated classrooms, but needs to be infused throughout the school, the community, and the reservation. The life of individual language programs depends upon the bonding of multiple entities and the strength of support—both reservation-wide and beyond. The expertise required for attending to all dimensions of language education encompasses administration, marketing, networking, human-resource development, management, instruction, curriculum and materials development, program design, organizational change, and research (see Silverthorne, 1997). As the leadership group, the language commission must possess the required expertise and/or the abilities to harness the needed expertise locally as well as externally if necessary.

In the case of Salish language revitalization, a major stumbling block involved forming the leadership group. Participants explained that finding the right people to lead has been difficult throughout recent history. A tribal education leader called for an agreement among Salish speakers and cultural leaders that a language commission or the like would be valuable and should be established.

While speakers are expected to be responsible for language education, they do not necessarily possess the required expertise or the energy to attend to all dimensions of language revitalization. The strength of the remaining elderly speakers needs to be preserved and carefully cultivated for supporting advanced learners in acquiring fluency. The other issues can be dealt with by non-speakers, non-Indians, and perhaps non-locals. Entrusting language revitalization efforts to a language commission calls for a re-definition of “outsiders.” Instead of relying solely on the few speakers to save the language, the burden needs to be shared by devoted individuals with a wide range of expertise—even though some of them culturally might be considered outsiders. What would help this group enhance language education? What elements do they need to consider? What steps should they take? What questions do they need to ask? What are the possibilities? What should they avoid? What should be their priorities? This study recorded a multitude of suggestions to consider when addressing these questions.

Further Research

The Native language public school program framework for rural districts on Indian reservations with a mix of American Indian and non-Indian student populations presented here emerged from input shared by Natives and non-Natives, educators and parents, policymakers and stakeholders, and supporters and non-supporters. One limitation of such a framework is that it is not likely to present an ideal picture from any one perspective. For instance, some supporters wish for total language immersion in public school classrooms and some non-supporters would rather keep Indian education outside of the public school system. In this study, the researcher searched for objectives, approaches, arrangements, and action steps that are acceptable to most (if not all) when the ideal is not feasible given prevailing financial, social, cultural, historical, and

educational conditions. Creating common ground requires creativity and collaboration and, sometimes, compromise and willingness to accommodate others' needs. The implication is that one does not always win everything hoped for. A framework of agreements can lead to positive steps even though the targeted change may not meet the ideal for some. Some progress is better than no progress. Actions leading to improvement are better than inaction because of disagreements. As Fishman (1991) points out, "smaller victories earlier on will do much more for the eventual larger scale and longer-term success of pro-RLS (reversing language shift) efforts than will lack of success vis-à-vis more grandiose but impossible goals" (p. 13).

The suggested action steps included in the resulting framework do not necessarily remove, but only minimize, the impact of existing obstacles. Indeed, not all obstacles have been addressed fully. Some questions remain unanswered. Further questions spring from every suggestion. Thus, the emerging framework is not a complete blueprint that includes a solution for every existing problem. The suggested action plans require refinement based on insights gained from testing the framework at the selected sites and beyond. Issues (e.g., ways to link English literacy development with Native language instruction, types of language materials needed for teaching and reinforcement, and teacher training approaches for effective language teaching and place-based multicultural education) that have not been fully addressed require further attention by stakeholders. Unanswered implementation questions (e.g., What is an appropriate procedure for forming a language commission? What are acceptable ways to distribute funding within a district and the tribal government? What are effective grassroots mobilization tactics?) need to be answered by committed actors in specific districts. Replicating this study with other tribes would be important next step in order to provide consistent findings.

American Indian/Alaska Native language education in public schools offers one key piece in a promising overall language revitalization effort. Even if progress occurs in the public school setting, revitalization still might not happen. Participants in this study agree that public school programs play a supplementary role. While the impact of public school programs depends on the vigor of efforts outside the public school system, the success of other language education efforts (e.g., those of private immersion schools, tribal-school language programs, tribal-college language courses, and cultural committees) depends on the assistance of public school programs. Therefore, in order to be complete, the action framework derived from this study needs to be linked to parallel frameworks directing non-public school programs.

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Endnotes

¹A *mixed community* is defined as a town or city where American Indians live side by side with non-Indians. A *mixed school district* is one that consists of at least 15 % and at most 85 % Native students. A *small town* is defined as a geographical area with a population size that ranges from less than 1,000 to 50,000 people. A rural area has a population size below 1000.

²*Indian Education For All, MCA 20-10-501*, is Article X of the Montana State Constitution. It stipulates that all public-school students in Montana should be educated about Montana tribes and be instructed in American Indian Studies. In 2005 the Montana Legislature approved funding to be allocated to each school district for implementing Indian Education. See November 2006 issue of *Phi Delta Kappa*. See also "A Process Guide for Realizing Indian Education For All" by Ngai & Allen, 2007.

³Tables 1-3 summarize study participants' suggestions. The content of the tables are extracted and abstracted from participants' input. Although the phrases included are not direct quotes, the author endeavored to retain key words used by the interviewees.

⁴IEC refers to Indian Education Committee on the Flathead Indian Reservation. Districts that receive federal funds (i.e., Impact Aid and Johnson O'Malley Funds) for Indian education are required by law to establish a committee composed of American Indian parents (when available). The function of the committee is consultation.

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