

Best Practices in Language Revitalization

The Lakota Language Consortium are Talking the Talk.

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Full integration of language.

THE LAKOTA COMMUNITY has a relatively large population of approximately 130,000 people located primarily in the Northern Plains. This represents a relatively large pool of potential speakers. Currently, the speaking population numbers under 10,000 and the average age of speakers is above 65 years old. However, the Lakota community is also very young, with the majority of people under the age of 18 and a population growing at about three times the rate of non-Natives. In addition, Lakotas have a very cohesive tribally-centered education system with over 40 schools and over 20,000 students enrolled in schools controlled by tribal members. The problem has been that 0% of children entering school are proficient and until recently, no schools had success in teaching the language.

In 2004, tribal community leaders and linguists partnered to form the Lakota Language Consortium (LLC) to develop a strategy to achieve large-scale and broad-based language proficiency to save the language. The result is a comprehensive system for language revitalization that has five major parts that are clearly defined, measurable, and interdependent.

Linguistics: develop pedagogically correct curriculum and literature for the language at all its levels and across a range of uses; our primary focus is on K-16 schools.

Instruction: retrain existing Lakota language teachers and develop a new language teacher corps utilizing proven teaching methodologies.

Education: start with a standard, sequenced second language curriculum to lay the ground work for a population of second-language speakers and eventual Lakota-medium instruction.

Oversight: provide accountability by conducting pre-and post-testing of language proficiency in schools at sequenced intervals of instruction

Social: promote and support language use beyond the schools – homes and communities.

Through a persistent and concerted effort, language proficiency and use is significantly increasing in the Lakota language community. However, there is still a long way to go. Success will only come by continuously improving our practices and by listening to and collaborating with others.

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Leháŋl Lakhóta oyáte kiŋ hená 130,000 wahénačekapi nahán hená iyótanš waziyatakiya makhóblaye ektá thipi. Ho čha hená iyúha phiyá Lakhól'iyapi kte kiŋ hé okíhiphiča. Waŋná tóna Lakhól'iyapi kiŋ hená opáwiŋge wikčémna aókpanipi nahán nakúŋ iyúha kinil lila kánpi. Ho éyaš Lakhóta éгна théčake čin hená óta, na tóna waniyetu akéšagloŋaŋ aókpanipi kiŋ hená óta hča. Ho na nakúŋ Lakhóta oyáte kiŋ wašiču kiŋ yámmi akhígile isaŋm oh'ánkhoya óta áyapi. Ho nakúŋ Lakhóta kiŋ lila wakhánheža hóčhokathunthunyan waunspewičakhkiyapi, owáyawa wikčémna tópa saŋm iyáya yukhín nahán 20,000 saŋm iyáya wayáwapi. K'éyaš Lakhóta wakhánheža eyá thókéya wayáwapi kiŋ hená Lakhól'iyapi šni na nakúŋ owáyawa ektá tanyán Lakhól'iyá unspewičakhkiyapi, tkháš lečhála héčhetu.

2004 él Lakhóta thánkaka eyá na iyápi wapásike eyá Lakhól'iyapi kiŋ glukiniŋi kta čha Lakhól'iyapi Okhólakičhiye kágapi. Tókhel kágapi kte kiŋ hená záptanŋiya yaŋké, ho na iyóhila ablésya oyágphiča, iyúthe-phiča na kakhinunŋkhaŋ yaŋké.

Iyápi wóunšpe: wóunšpe očhánku na wówapi aiyopteya unkáŋapi kte, iyótanš K-16 kiŋ óphapi hená iyúha wičhúkičičaŋapi.

Waunspewičakhkiyapi: Lehánhunŋiyaŋ waunspewičakhkiyapi kiŋ hená héčhenaškánpi kte, nahán nakúŋ thelyákel waunspewičakhkiyapi ošpáye unkáŋapi kte.

Wóunšpe: ošibčib wóunšpe očhánku waŋ muŋkáŋapi kte na uŋ tóna Lakhól'iyá ičháŋapi šni kiŋ hená unspépi kte na thókátakiya Lakhól'iyá ečéla waunspewičakhkiyapi.

Wóawanyanŋe: wóunšpe ithókab na ihákab wóiyuthe inyanŋ'unŋkiyapi na uŋ tanyán ečhúnŋi héči iwánunyanŋapi kte.

Oyáte: owáyawa ithánkal, thiyáŋtikiya na tuktétu ke éyaš Lakhól'iyapi kiŋ lé uŋpi kte kiŋ hé unpátitanŋi.

Ókunwanžila na ptáyela škinunŋkič'iyapi na uŋ Lakhóta makhóče ektá Lakhól'iyapi kiŋ lé unspewičakhkiyapi kiŋ lila wašté áye. Ho éyaš nahánhčičin théhanl maunŋipi kte héčha. Oyáte thókeča anáwičhunŋoptanŋi na ób óunŋkičhiyapi hántanš nahán wóunšpe unglúwaštépi hántanš ečéla ohíunyanŋi kte. 📍