

Xqéntwecw – Learning a Language Together:  
Secwepemctsín Mentor Apprenticeship Immersion

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### Abstract

Indigenous language revitalization is a growing movement in Canada, specifically in British Columbia which has 34 distinct Indigenous languages (FPCC, 2018). Secwepemetsín, the language of the Secwépemc peoples in the Interior of British Columbia, is one such language that is considered critically endangered (April 18, 2021, retrieved from <http://endangeredlanguages.com/lang/1472>). Current established methods of language revitalization within Secwepemcúlecw, the land of the Secwépemc, focus on community language programming, K-12 public and Band school language classes, and the Chief Atahm immersion school. Other than the immersion school, new language speakers are not emerging from these language programs. To enhance the growth of new speakers, and support Secwepemetsín revitalization efforts, new methods of language revitalization, including the Mentor Apprentice Program and the piloting of the Direct Acquisition Model developed by the Salish School of Spokane, are being implemented to augment the dearth of adult speakers. This study aims to explore the effects of the Mentor Apprentice Program model on the development of language and cultural fluency, the methods of language instruction within that model, and a brief exploration of how morphological analysis fits into this picture. Relationality and cultural immersive environments were found to be the most effective means of enhancing language development. As this research examined only successful participants within the Mentor Apprentice Program, further exploration into those dyads that did not continue within the language program would be beneficial, as well as further examining the nature of morphological analysis in the training of future mentors and how traditional storytelling (legends and relayed experiences) complements this research area.

*Keywords:* language revitalization, mentor apprentice program, immersion, Indigenous, Secwépemc, Secwepemctsín

### **Dedication**

*This thesis is dedicated to my family and my community, both of whom provided all of the support I needed to pursue a graduate degree.*

*To my partner, Lex Edwards, and our incoming skúye. You both have provided all the incentive I need to make it through this graduate research.*

*My mother, Helen Sandy, and my father, Mike Grimsrud, were instrumental in their belief that I could, and have, accomplished my higher education.*

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## **Xqéntwecw – Learning a Language Together: Secwepemctsín Mentor Apprenticeship Immersion**

Secwepemctsín language revitalization has been active since at least the late 1960s and early 1970s when several Secwépemc first language speakers worked with Aert Kuipers on developing word lists and dictionaries, and other Secwépemc language resources (Sandy, 2005). Today, Secwepemctsín is being taught to youth in four B.C. Interior School Districts, in several Band Schools, and in one immersion school setting. It has been acknowledged that there had been a lack of language programming for teaching new adult speakers of Secwepemctsín (Billy, 2003, 2009; Sandy, A., 2005).

### **Study Context**

This qualitative study will consider one such program, the Mentor Apprentice Program (MAP), within the Northern Secwépemc communities of British Columbia. This research was conducted between July and October 2020, at the height of COVID-19 pandemic (following all institutional and provincial health orders), and will benefit those seeking to learn more about the helping and hindering aspects of the MAP on the development of Secwepemctsín and cultural fluency. As well, this study looks closer at the teaching methods within the program that enhanced the language educational experiences of both the mentors and apprentices, and how morphological analysis assists these dyads.

### **Geographic Context**

Secwepemcúlecw [the land of the *Secwépemc*] (Michel, 2012) is a geographical area of British Columbia, Canada encompassing a traditional territory of “approximately 180,000 square km” (Billy, 2003, p.2). The land borders the area just north of Soda Creek, west to Jasper along the Rocky Mountain range, down towards the south to just before Invermere; head back a bit

northwest to Lillooet, then follow the Fraser River up north again to Soda Creek. Since time immemorial, our vast territory allowed nomadic travel between communities and through use of traditional language, culture, and ceremonies, sustained and guaranteed that our language evolved through all of that space. “There are two major Secwepemc dialects [Western and Eastern] with minor dialectical differences between each band” (Michel, 2005, p. 16). As shown in Figure 1, this land is the basis of our Secwépemc identity. Secwepemctsín\* is the language of the Secwépemc people who reside within the interior of British Columbia.

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\* Within this paper I have tried to keep the proper Secwépemc spelling, with inflections, within my own writing. The instances where I have not included them, they are direct quotations from the authors.



The Secwépemc language, as a first and primary language, has been in sharp decline since the mandatory attendance within Residential Schools disrupted the transmission of the language (Billy, 2009; Ignace & Ignace, 2017; Michel, K., 2005; Sandy, A., 2005). There are a few children who are being raised with Secwepemctsin as their first language (Ignace, M.B., 1998; Ignace & Ignace, 2017). The only fluent pair in the last thirty years found that the English language held a stronger influence on their child (Lai & Ignace, 1998). These findings support the need for aggressive Secwepemc language revitalization to disrupt the strong dominance of English and to bring back Secwepemctsin to be the first language of communication at home, in communities, and in cultural gatherings.

Current Secwépemc language revitalization efforts, led by fluent Secwepemctsin speakers and learners throughout Secwepemcúlecw, include: two active Secwepemctsin language societies (Spi7uy Squqluts Language and Culture Society and the Wúmec r Cqweqwelúten-kt Community Society); K-12 public school programs; Band school language programs; an independent immersion school (Chief Atahm), community language programs; and the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC); as well as, the First Peoples Cultural Council (FPCC) Mentorship Apprentice Program (MAP). Another organization, the Secwepemc Cultural Education Society, was formerly quite active, providing plenty of Secwepemctsin resources, but has reduced its training to trades programming. In terms of producing fluent speakers, "[p]resently there are few effective programs for students to acquire Secwepemctsin quickly and efficiently, with the exception of the Chief Atahm Immersion School" (Billy, 2003, p. 8). Given a lack of family members speaking the language, maintaining the language after leaving the immersion school is a challenge. Complementary programs for youth and adults are required to build a fluent community. The MAP is one of them, and as such, it merits

examination to identify its effectiveness in developing language proficiency and strengthening cultural identity.

There are few methods of language transfer (Billy, 2003), hence Secwepemctsín is one of the 32 Indigenous languages within British Columbia, and one of 61 within Canada, that is endangered if strict measures are not taken (Dunlop et al, 2018). Dunlop et. al. further asserts that Secwepemctsín has 2.1% fluent speakers of a reported population of 8,968 nation members (2008, p. 46).

### **The Critical State of Secwepemctsín**

Overall, Secwepemctsín is in a critical state, it is labelled as “extinct” on the Fisherman’s Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS) (Billy, J., 2003, 2009; Sandy, A., 2005). Secwepemctsín is an endangered language and, as determined by Billy (2003) most of the current methods are proving unsuccessful in reviving the language; therefore, it is reasonable to assume that new teaching methods are needed. While Billy (2003) suggested school-and home-based language learning occurring together would produce further Secwepemctsín acquisition; currently the MAP has provided a complimentary, community-based program option (McIvor et al., 2018).

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this research is to use the traditional Secwépemc research methodology of “visiting” to examine the MAP through the immersive experiences of their participants, focusing on its contribution to Secwepemctsín fluency and cultural development.

### **MAP: An Overview**

The MAP was originally developed in California for its endangered Indigenous languages (Hinton, & Steele, 2002). Originally the program was meant for teams, fluent speaker

and learner, whose dedication to their endangered language provided them with the motivation for revitalization. “The Master-Apprentice Language Learning Method is a mentored learning approach, created for people who may not have access to language classes but, instead, have access to a speaker” (Hinton et al., 2002, p. xiii). The Mentor-Apprentice Program (the name was changed “in 2014 in order to better represent the mentorship role of the language speakers” within British Columbia (FPCC, 2016, p.i)), began in 2007 with 12 teams, all from differing Indigenous languages.

### **Research Questions**

In the wishes of my language mentor, my Túme, I will examine the types of teaching methods used in immersive one-on-one Secwepemctsin teaching/learning that effectively builds language proficiency and cultural knowledge. First, within the fluency component, I will observe participants assumed progression towards Secwepemctsin fluency within the MAP, determining which methods of teaching helped or hindered fluency progression. Second, within the cultural component, I will examine how learning within the MAP reflects and builds Secwépemc ways of being and knowing (culture).

The following questions will be addressed within this research study:

1. What helped or hindered Secwepemctsin fluency within the MAP program?
2. What helped or hindered cultural fluency/development within the MAP program?
3. What methods of language teaching are used in a Mentor-Apprentice session?
4. Do MAP teams honoured the morphologically rich structure of Secwepemctsin? If so, how?

Using qualitative research design, this research will help determine how the interactions and dynamics in MAP influence developing fluent Secwepemctsin speakers. Moreover, this

research should provide insights into effective teaching practices for other Secwépemc language programs throughout Secwepemcúlecw (land of the Secwépemc).

### **Indigenous Research Metaphor: The Pine Needle Basket**

*Examining a pine needle basket, you see the combination of materials that evoke more than just the usefulness of the item. The pine needles, while fragile on their own, come together to form a strong structure. The sinew pulls the pine needles together into a cohesive whole. The needle used to thread the sinew around the pine needles and through the whole basket must provide that pointed delving into the material to help bring it all together. The pine needle basket is a receptacle for knowledge, but, as has already been stated, its aesthetic appeal is more than just visual. The tactile feeling of the pine needles, their root tips, and the sinew that combine them together provide evidence of the hard work that has gone into the basket. The basket itself evokes comfort in its scent of fresh pine, no matter how long it rests in storage. And the numerous items that it can hold must also not be ignored. That pine needle basket is the receptacle of generations of knowledge, and when empty can represent the knowledge to come.*

I use this metaphor to illustrate that Indigenous research has always been present within Secwepemcúlecw. Our technical knowledge gathered from the resources present on our land, in our area, by our ancestors was evidence of careful thought and planning. Their innate understanding of the usefulness of the pine needle basket materials evidenced their “research” into the items needed for such a receptacle. *The pine needles, their scent, and their abundance in the area, provided a material that, when put together, warded off unwanted insects, and was great for the items resting within the basket.* This metaphor will be woven throughout this thesis to illustrate and enhance Secwépemc research. The metaphor will provide a method of “seeing” how the study came together to form this thesis.

## Positionality

*Within Secwépemc culture, ponderosa pine needle basketry was essential for our storage needs. These baskets provide a Secwépemc ontological basis for my research. Each basket begins with a knot; thus, the beginning knot of this study begins with my place, my positionality: W7ec re ckúk1tenwen.*

*“Marie Sandy ren skwekwst. Secwécwpmc-ken ell seqwtéws te séme7. W7ec re é7lkstwen re lleqémélten.”*

My name is Marie Sandy. I am of both Secwepemc and Settler descent. I currently work as a teacher. My identity has always been entwined with education. Influenced by the five women in my life, ren Tétum ell Kí7ce, Aunts and Mother, have provided a strong foundation within education. Each of them hold/held postsecondary degrees, and two of them completed postgraduate education. I note this, as it is highly unusual for any Indigenous young lady growing up in the 1980s to make such a claim. As such, I never questioned if I would pursue higher education; it was always assumed. In a way, education has always been of interest to me, even with learning my own language.

As an Indigenous woman within academia, my interest in language started with the curiosity of a young child who did not understand the (secret) language spoken within the community. Having heard it, though, I was gifted with the ability to “hear” the appropriate sounds of my Indigenous language. Determination to learn my own language came in my adolescent years and continued to present. Through this time, I experienced many different methods of teaching language: classroom based, community based, basic family interaction, and finally, one-on-one mentoring.

## **Overview of the Chapters**

Chapter Two will review the literature that provides the background that supports this research study. It will look at the current success in language revitalization at a global, then national, then regional level. The Mentor (or Master) Apprentice Program model will be reviewed, as well as the currently situation of Secwépemc language, and cultural, revitalization efforts. To gain an appreciation for the researcher's perspective, Secwépemc ontology and epistemology will be presented. Concluding with a look at the current Secwépemc language programming.

Chapter Three will engage with a review of the Indigenous research methodology that influenced and provided the structure for this study. It will also address the method in which the researcher conducted this study using a qualitative method influenced by the Critical Incident Technique as originally outlined by Flanagan (1954) to determine the helping and hindering aspects of the proposed research questions. Ethics application, data collection, recruitment, and interview process as well as the data analysis and reliability checks are presented. The implications of this research and the plans for dissemination will also be addressed.

Chapter Four provides the analysis, and the findings, as distilled from the interviews with the participants of this research study. Specifically, the Mentor Apprentice Program (FPCC, 2016; Hinton & Steele, 2002) influences on language and cultural fluency; the importance of relationality and cultural immersion within MAP; the teaching and learning experiences of both the mentors and mentees, and how morphological analysis influenced these experiences; and, finally, the hindering aspects of MAP.

Chapter Five considers the original research study questions and discusses the implications behind the importance of relationality and the authentic immersive experiences of

MAP dyads, as well as considers the potential influence that morphological analysis could have within future MAP pairings.

Chapter Six reviews the challenges encountered during this research study. Including the onset of a world-wide pandemic, the use of a research method that was not well known by most committee members, and the limitations of the research and researcher herself. Further implications of this research, including delving deeper into how morphological analysis could assist MAP, and Secwepemctsín revitalization as a whole; examining the other MAP teams who did not succeed in completing the program, and their implications towards enhancing the MAP; and, most intriguing, the role of traditional storytelling (stseptékwll) and recounted “lived experiences” (slexéyem) (Ignace & Ignace, 2017, p. 12) within Secwepemctsín immersion revitalization.

## **Literature Review**

In reviewing the literature, I provide an exploration of Indigenous language revitalization strategies, both internationally and locally; the close relationship between language, culture, and identity will be established; Secwépemc ontology and epistemology will be outlined; definition of Secwépemc pedagogy will be presented; and an overview of the current Secwepemctsín teaching methods. I follow with a brief review of research into capitalizing on morphological analyses to learn a language and conclude with a need for more research into the MAP.

### **Strategies to Revitalize Indigenous Languages**

Fishman created a language classification scale to identify a languages' current situational level from healthy language use at all levels of society, families to government and university communications - to lack of use of language, even within a family (Fishman, 1991; Lewis & Simons, 2010). The need for a classification scale depicting the state of an Indigenous language demonstrates the dire situation of the diversity of languages. However, there is evidence of Indigenous language revitalization success, which curbs the dismal state of Indigenous languages around the world.

### ***International Language Revitalization Success Stories***

Internationally, global efforts towards Indigenous language revitalization (e.g., UN 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages) have prompted many programs, institutes, policies, and governmental legislations and ultimately the support of over 7000 Indigenous languages spoken in the world today (Eberhard et al, 2019; UNESCO, 2019). Using the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS) Eberhard et al. (2019) noted that, “roughly 40%...or 2,895...of [these] languages are endangered, often with less than 1,000 speakers” (SIL

International, 2019). There are a few language revitalization success stories which provides evidence that Indigenous language revitalization is feasible. Israelis, Māori, Hawaiian, Inuit and the Mohawk provides a broad overview of the best-case scenarios of language revitalization efforts within the world to date (Dorais, 2010; FPCC, 2021; Gomashie, 2019; Green & Maracle, 2018; Hinton & Hale, 2001; Hinton, Huss & Roche, 2018; Hinton & Meek, 2016; Iokepa-Guerrero, 2016; King, 2001; May & Hill, 2018; McCarty et al., 2019; Montgomery-Anderson, 2013; Ó Laoire, 2018; Rawlins, Wilson, & Kawai‘ae‘a, 2011).

### ***Hebrew Revitalization***

One of the most successful language revitalization endeavours came with Israel reinvigorating Hebrew as their national language. This brought a language that was on the brink of extinction, having only been used as their language of religion, into everyday usage. According to Hinton & Hale, Hebrew had “ceased being a language of the home for two millennia” (2001, p. 415-416). Ó Laoire (2018) confirms that the language revitalization began as “an ambitious political goal in Palestine that began roughly at the end of the nineteenth century” (p. 180). Of note, Hinton, Huss & Roche (2018) pointed out that through the overall success of reinstating Hebrew, the other Jewish minority language, Yiddish, has since declined due to the extreme focus on Hebrew revitalization. This instance of a language, while not quite “dead,” still moribund in its existence within the home, brings hope that a threatened language can become the living language of a community, then so too can indigenous languages. This point provides a sense of reflection, given the diverse linguistic area of British Columbia, and the multiple dialects of Secwepemetsín, that must be culturally honoured and sustained.

Language revitalization supporters need to be aware that one language does not subsume another through their overall language revitalization strategies. The First Peoples’ Cultural

Council (FPCC) Mission Statement, “is committed to establishing itself as the key source of current and accurate information on the state of First Nations languages in British Columbia and to continuing (*sic*) to provide program coordination and funding for First Nations language and cultural preservation and enhancement” (retrieved from <https://fpcc.ca/about-us/overview/> on April 14, 2021). Their overall mandate is to ensure that BC First Nations languages are all given equal opportunities to revitalize their languages through funding and program supports that flow through the FPCC.

### ***Te Reo Māori Revitalization***

In Aotearoa, New Zealand, their language revitalization has been extended within their government structure, educational institutes, various forms of media, and even in the non-Indigenous Pākehā population; however, the use of the Māori language within the home had not been as proficient (King, 2001). May & Hill (2018) also paints a rather dire picture of Māori fluent speakers declining due to the higher enrolment of succeeding generations within English-medium educational settings (which do not provide a higher percentage of Māori language); however, they also point out that, through their “principle of *tinorangatiratanga* (self-determination)”, the new language revitalization strategy of the Māori are to develop a “wider Māori regeneration effort...[within the] iwi/tribe and whānau/family” (p. 313). Māori successful language revitalization efforts, although requiring continual work, has enabled other Indigenous peoples to follow suit.

### ***'Ōlelo Hawai'i***

In North America language revitalization has proven highly successful in Hawaii. Their initial language revitalization model was based upon the Māori early childhood education language nests and has since flourished. Their programming now extends from preschool, right

into post-secondary education taught within their Indigenous language (Hinton & Meek, 2016; Iokepa-Guerrero, 2016; McCarty et al., 2019; Rawlins, Wilson, & Kawai‘ae‘a, 2011).

Montgomery-Anderson (2013) emphasizes the domains of Hawaiian language revitalization within institution-based, rather than home-based, realms of learning and maintaining the language. He emphasizes the Hawaiian point of view that relying solely upon home-based domains leads to the loss of mother tongue language once students leave home-based domains of language acquisition, and the lack of support once their children enter into dominant language educational institutes. Montgomery-Anderson further argued, with an example of the Cochiti Pueblo, who demonstrated his assertion against home-based domains of language transfer as they placed too much emphasis on language use only within the community, and specifically within ceremonial speech which limited their language revitalization success. With the success of the Hawaiian model of pre-school to post-graduate education entirely in their language, this argument seems sound (Iokepa-Guerrero, 2016; Montgomery-Anderson, 2013). Another contrasting argument within this article noted that although the emphasis of Hawaiian language revitalization is focused within the larger school-based domain, their goal remains that once the learners emerge from their complete education within the language that they will, hopefully, bring that language back into the homes and communities. This would culminate in actualization of their language revitalization efforts. However, Montgomery-Anderson points out that more than just “teaching and learning” a language is needed within language revitalization. Rather encouraging an emphasis on cultivating youth cultural identity alongside language acquisition is needed to support home and community language use (2013). Iokepa-Guerrero (2016) agrees with this assertion indicating that the Hawaiian language revitalization movement has positively impacted the overall social and emotional development of Hawaiian youth since

the beginning of the Pūnana Leo Hawaiian Medium Preschools in the early 1980s.

Demonstratively, the Hawaiian language revitalization movement has had an immense influence on overall indigenous language revitalization across the globe, and especially in North American Indigenous communities.

### ***Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun***

Within Canada, Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun dialects of the Inuit languages; and Mohawk, are the two nations that report if not success, maintenance, in revitalizing their Indigenous languages. The Canadian political influence of the “law on multiculturalism”, the creation of the “Interpreters’ Corps” in the Northwest Territories, “the Northwest Territories Official Language Act”, the Inuit Language Protection Act of 2008, and finally the Official Language Act of 2008 (Dorais, 2010, pp. 246-7) enhanced, not only the sovereignty, but the linguistic authority of the Inuit; and, with the Mohawk revitalization efforts, through a combination of various immersion-based programming and bilingual education (Dorais, 2010; Gomashie, 2019; Green & Maracle, 2018). These language revitalization movements assist Indigenous revitalization movements across the globe.

According to Dorais (2010), the multiple dialects of the broader Inuit languages (which vary from country to country, and territory to territory and province) can be seen, overall, as maintained. However, in certain regions the Inuit language dialect may not be passed on to the younger generations due to the greater influence and dominance of the English (and, in some instances, French or Danish). Dorais (2010) alludes, even with the Language Protection Act, English has crept into government and business dealings in Canada’s North (Dorais, 2010; Iokepa-Guerrero, 2016). It did not help that initial formal education within Canada had teachers instructing in English. Now, to ease youth into their education, they are now taught in

their mother tongue in their primary grades. Bilingual education is the method used within Canada for the most part, in elementary; but it must be noted that in higher education institutes, Inuit languages are taught in “intensive sessions” (Dorais, 2010, p. 197).

### ***Kanien'kehá ka***

After identifying that Kanien'keha (Mohawk language) is indeed in a critical state, Gomashie (2019) proposed that efforts to revitalize Kanien'kehá ka have been successful since their assessment of their language beginning in the early 1990's. Their use of school-based and community immersion programming for intergenerational learners provided a wide array of language learning opportunities. Noted within one of their adult programming, the intentional teaching of Kanien'kehá ka as a polysynthetic language, provided adult students with the understanding of how to understand the overall structure of the language (Gomashie, 2019; Green & Maracle, 2018). Another successful model of adult immersion included communicative oral-based lessons in the home and the community, with less emphasis on reading and writing the language. The school-based immersion programming in the community of Kahnawà:ke is full immersion from pre-school to grade 4, then it turns to bilingual education for succeeding grades.

These language revitalization efforts by the Mohawk communities provide several models in which to draw best practices. The identification of morphological analysis of their polysynthetic language is an area that partially aligns with some Secwepemctsin programming and was identified by both Gomashie (2019) and Green & Maracle (2018).

However, other Indigenous-led immersion-based programming, such as the Mentor-Apprentice Program (FPCC, 2016; Hinton & Steele, 2002) the Direct Acquisition Model as developed by the Salish School of Spokane (Peterson & Parkin, 2005), and the Where Are Your

Keys system developed by Evan Gardener (Where Are Your Keys, 2021), are conspicuous in their absence within Mohawk language revitalization efforts to date.

Although these are just a few models of language revitalization, they provide successful scenarios for Secwepemctsin revitalization efforts. In particular, the Māori language nest model (Michel, 2005) for preschool aged children provided the impetus not only for the Hawaiian model, but also for Tselcēwtqen Clleq̓mełten/Chief Atahm Secwépemc Immersion School (Hinton & Meek, 2016; Michel, 2005). And, as with Hebrew revitalization, Ron Ignace asserted that our language was kept within religion as well:

During this time, as the missionaries learned our language from our people, core religious concepts were translated into our language.... After having learned Secwépemctsin with the help of local Secwépemc who knew Chinook Jargon, Le Jeune set out to translate prayers, hymns, parts of the catechism and liturgy, and portions of the bible into Secwépemctsin and neighboring languages. (2008, pp. 282-283)

Hinton, Huss & Roche (2018) cautions that although “success” is possible within language revitalization, this does not come without its fair share of negative perspectives. She notes that opposing advocates of the language revitalization efforts, outside opposition towards enforcing indigenous local language autonomy, and even the language revitalization movement curtailing, or even endangering, other potential endangered languages in the area. With these forewarnings in mind, successful language revitalization methods from the Israelis, Māori, Inuit, and Mohawk have helped inform the existing language revitalization movement within Secwepemcúłecw.

### ***The MAP Program Effectiveness and Challenges***

The Mentor-Apprentice Program (the name was changed “in 2014 in order to better represent the mentorship role of the language speakers” within British Columbia (FPCC, 2016, p.i)), began in 2007 with 12 teams, all from differing Indigenous languages.

These groups were successful in developing the fluency of each apprentice, due to the dedication of 3 years of 300 hours each year (a total of 900 hours, which also includes dyad training at the beginning of their MAP). Some limitations with the program include access to fluent speakers, both in terms of knowing fluent speakers and distance between MAP pairs; also, mentors are not always trained teachers and may struggle with structuring their MAP sessions. However, their success spurred successive new MAP teams during each intake through FPCC’s (2016) grant program. To date, there have been over 25 Secwepemetsín MAP teams (data retrieved from various First Peoples’ Cultural Council reports). In Canada, apart from McIvor et al. (2018), the available literature does not reveal in-depth information on the effectiveness of MAP. In fact, McIvor et al. (2018) reports on its effectiveness in relation to mental wellbeing and developing language fluency. As well, this same report provides supplementary evidence on how the MAP method contributes to cultural fluency (McIvor et al., 2018).

The report, *NeTolnew: One Mind, One People*, found that MAP overall was a great learning method for learners at various levels. A majority of their apprentices gained vocabulary and an overall improvement in their language comprehension, as well apprentices found that their speaking ability was sustained for longer durations. Overall, apprentices found that their language level did advance through the MAP method. Mentors found that MAP provided a great framework for their language teaching; helped many of them with their personal healing from the effects of colonization, and their status as language knowledge keepers was confirmed. As well,

“[a]pprentices reported their involvement in MAP has strengthened their identity, given them a sense of connection, and taught them how to conduct themselves better in life and in relation to others” (McIvor et al., 2018, p. 20). This shows that each MAP pair connected with their own culture through MAP. The challenges included: time commitment, goal setting, a sense of ennui for language revitalization from the community, a lack of support system, and, finally, some reported an ill-fitting MAP pairing.

Additionally, McIvor et al. (2018) found that apprentices found occupations within language after their MAP experience, sharing their language learning with their families, increasing their community involvement and leadership, and became mentors themselves. Further, their report details added cultural, health and wellbeing outcomes that were not expected. These include a strengthening of their identity through molding the program to fit their own culture, the impetus to choose sobriety, a sense of empowerment with a counter of overall learning fatigue, and a sense of grief for language situation countered by an overall hope for success in language revitalization. To date, there are not studies exclusively examining the experiences of Secwepemctsin learning through MAP. The study reported in this thesis aims at filling this gap.

### ***Secwépemc Revitalization Efforts***

Recognition that Secwepemctsin was in danger of being pushed into dormancy was realized in the 1970s. The Shuswap Language Committee, which was comprised of members from the Northern Secwépemc Bands, provided initial curriculum materials based upon Aert Kuipers, May Dixon and Mary Palmantier’s lexical and curricular work from 1974. Current revitalization efforts are underway through several methods of language transmission. Such as an immersion school for kindergarten to grade 10 (K-10), Secwepemctsin classes ranging within

grades K-10 within the public-school systems in the interior of British Columbia (specifically School Districts #27, #73, #74, and #83). Six of the 17 communities have adult language programs available as well (Dunlop et al, 2018). Finally, there are three language societies, Secwepemc Cultural Education Society (currently only provides language resources), Spi7uy Squqluts Language and Culture Society and Wúmec r Cqweqwelúten-kt Community Society which promote the revitalization of Secwepemctsín. These societies have a wealth of language resources, as well as a limited number of proposal-based projects that focus on developing language teachers and speakers (e.g., MAP through the First Peoples Cultural Council Language Grant Funding). These are the programs established from the language revitalization efforts of the Secwépemc. A new Secwepemctsín language proficiency program, in collaboration between Shuswap Nation Tribal Council, Tkemlúps te Secwépemc and Simon Fraser University (SFU) will begin this Spring 2021. The emergence of new initiatives for language revitalization is encouraging.

Chief Atahm, influenced by “the Maori’s *Te Kohanga Reo*” initially began as a language nest, then emerged as a preschool to grade three immersion school (Michel, 2012, p. 21). Today Chief Atahm, one of the first few indigenous immersion schools of BC, offers immersive and bilingual language programming from preschool to high school, an annual Indigenous Language Conference, Total Physical Response Institute for language teachers, as well as adult language programming through their summer institute, and partnership with Simon Fraser University (Michel, 2005; Chief Atahm School, April 14, 2021, retrieved from <http://www.chiefatahm.com/>). This road to success was not easy, according to Michel (2012). Challenges from community members, who were indoctrinated by the colonization and assimilative nature of the dominant Canadian society, erosion of Secwépemc spirituality, and

residual effects from residential schools. Chief Atahm's success can be measured by the, eventual, support and involvement of community, determination of its founders, and enforcing the school as a site of activism (Michel, 2012).

Of all the Secwepemctsín revitalization methods, only the Chief Atahm School has managed to produce fluent speakers (Billy, 2003; Ignace, 1995; Michel, 2005). Michel quoted a former Chief Atahm student, ““I wouldn't say I'm completely fluent, because there's a lot of words I don't know. But I can converse with elders with ease”” (2005, p. 79). The MAP (minimum 13 Secwepemc teams, data found within FPCC reports from 2007-2018) through the First Peoples' Cultural Council may also be another program that produces fluent speakers. We know little about MAP completed to date in Secwepemcúlecw, their nature and their effectiveness. Therefore, further investigation into Secwépemc language pedagogy within MAP is needed to fill this knowledge gap.

### ***Public School-based Secwepemctsín Programming***

The Secwépemc language curriculum was last updated at its inception into School District #73 in 1999. We have a language curriculum that is over 20 years old (Ministry of Education, 2018)! Currently, the British Columbia Ministry of Education has not yet updated their second language curriculum template package to align with the new curriculum. Until this is done, a new curriculum cannot be accepted, currently I know of only one project to update a school district's current Indigenous language curriculum (personal communication D. Sandy, January 18, 2020). As well, the current time provided within the public school system does not devote enough time during a scheduled week to language studies (Billy, 2003).

### ***Salish School of Spokane Curriculum/Kalispel Method/Language House Method***

Currently, several language revitalization groups in Secwepemcúlecw are piloting a 3-level, 6-step fluency system developed originally by the Syilx speakers of the Okanagan area of Washington State. Each level consists of two components: language structures and vocabulary, and traditional stories. The communicative language learning approach is used in levels one and two, and immersion in cultural camps is used in level three. The communicative approach involves the use of the targeted language constantly during instruction as the main vehicle for communication, using highly contextualized (through body language, images, objects, experiences, etc.) language structures. Vocabulary and language structures are introduced gradually within communicative situations (there is no explicit teaching of grammar), which increase in difficulty as the learner makes progress learning the language. The focus is on oral communication (listening and speaking) and on roleplaying with the language, imitating its use in natural contexts (e.g., to greet each other, to ask and answer questions in a variety of situations, to comment on the weather, etc.). Emulating natural language, initial learning stages involve extensive listening. Lessons involve five steps: introduction (statement of purpose and content), comprehensible input (vocabulary and language structures are introduced with context), guided practice (through engaging and fun ways), independent practice (students use what they have learned to recreate conversational situations with each other) and assessment. This curriculum can be found on the Salish School of Spokane resource website (2019). This system was originally developed for intergenerational, family learning, but it can also be used in adult learning programs in other settings. The curriculum is quickly being adapted for use within Secwepemcúlecw. Janice Billy, and the Wúmec r Cqweqwelúten-kt Community Society (2019), have committed to offering the adapted curriculum “Level 1 Secwepemctsin Stories course

beginning in January [but in reality did not begin until October], 2020” (June Kelly, personal communication, December 10, 2019). As well, Thompson Rivers University Secwepemc Language teacher, Cody William, has applied the same curriculum, with success, over the past year (Cody William, personal communication, December 16, 2019). Other methods of immersive language teaching (MAP, language nests, language and culture camps, and other alternative immersion programming) are also being explored within BC First Nations through the assistance (financial, advocacy and resource development) of the First Peoples’ Cultural Council (FPCC, 2019).

### **Language, Culture, and Identity**

Indigenous languages are a valuable resource, not only for their intrinsic value, but also because the knowledge contained within Indigenous languages often holds deeper cultural meaning. Knowledge that contains methods of land management; the laws and governing structures that were in place prior to contact; local animal migration and habits; seasonal and environmental indicators; and the medicinal properties of local plants (Billy, 2009; Ignace & Ignace, 2017; Gagnon-Creeley, 2019). Language, culture, traditions all weave together to create a strong web of identity.

Literature is replete with evidence that language and identity are intertwined. Ron Ignace sums up Secwépemc identity in one word: “*tslexemwilc*...encapsulates how we come to know as individuals, and how, individually but in the end collectively, we are shaped by the knowledge and deeds of those before us. *Tslexemwilc* describes the time when a young child gets to the age where he or she can remember” (2017, p. 3). Our language and our culture form the basis for our Secwépemc identity. Michel concluded, in her 2005 thesis, that there is a strong “connection between establishing a strong identity and knowing your heritage language” (p. 103). As Michel

stated within her 2012 dissertation, “Indigenous languages can be seen as the window through which we can communicate, interpret, and translate thousands of years of collective knowledge of living on this earth” (p. 37). An example can be given by Ignace & Ignace (2017),

...Tkemlúps, usually translated as ‘confluence’ or ‘meeting of the waters,’ has a visually vivid and interesting meaning that gives us clues about past Secwépemc ancestors’ perception of shape and space. The word Tkemlúps derives from the prefix *t* for ‘on top of,’ plus the root *kem* for ‘two things coming together at an angle,’ plus the lexical suffixes *-l/ll* for ‘perpetual’ and *-ups* for ‘pointed buttocks.’ The word invokes the kind of buttock shape that past Secwépemc people saw in the very shape of the confluence of the North and South Thompson Rivers, still visible from the bird’s-eye view of an airplane or from the lookout on what is now Columbia Street in Kamloops (p. 251).

Within Secwépemc ontology and epistemology culture is innately passed through the language. To define identity through culture, which upon asking a Secwépemc elder who pondered my question then said, “it is not our philosophy to separate things” (personal communication G, Gottfriedson, February 14, 2020) brought me to Shawn Wilson’s *Research is Ceremony* (2008). Specifically, Wilson asserted that, “The underlying meaning behind language uses many more verbs than nouns. Objects themselves are not named: rather what they might be used for is described” (p. 73). To define Secwépemc grammar reveals that every word has a relationship attached. For example, the “word” house does not just mean “house”, but it means either “my house; your house; his/her/their house; our, but not your, house; all of our house; all of your house.” Secwepemctsin is a polysynthetic language which means that it incorporates many morphemes (smaller structures of meaning) within a word. Therefore, Secwepemctsin is innately relational in nature, our words cannot be separated into smaller structures of meaning as

otherwise they do not make sense. This is a lengthy explanation of why identity and language are so entwined within Secwepemc ontology and epistemology. Without relationships, you cannot be Secwépemc. It is not a surprise that traditionally the greatest punishment within our Nation was banishment. It not only meant that this person was excluded from the collective food, shelter and supplies, but also was excluded from acknowledgement from every living thing within Secwepemcúlecw. Death would have been kinder because that would have allowed the punished to rejoin their ancestors.

Kipuri's contribution to the United Nations (UN) report on the State of the World's Indigenous Peoples focused on the importance of culture as an aspect of indigeneity. Kipuri acknowledged that Indigenous identity, language, culture and land are closely entwined. She further states, "Language is an important component of one's identity. It is fundamental to understanding values, beliefs, ideology and other intangible aspects of culture" (2009, p. 57). For example, one's xqelmucweske is the embodiment of language being a core part of your identity. Those who have been gifted with a xqelmucweske were lucky enough to have elderly family members "see" you in the traditional names that are passed down through the generations. In her overview of successful school-based language learning programs in the USA and Canada, Iokepa-Guerrero concluded that the social and emotional development of learners, teachers and families encourages "individuals [to] grow...while learning the language, the culture, and more about themselves and the place where they live" (2016, p. 241). In other words, understanding identity is a positive impact of language revitalization.

Rau et al. (2019) outlined how deliberate acculturation interpretation of the Te Marautanga o Aotearoa national curriculum document reinforced the success and identity of the students from the two Ngā Kura ā Iwi (NKAI) schools. Pem Bird was quoted as saying about his

identity, ““My wellbeing, my wellness, my health lives in my reo [language]!... If my reo dies, I die! I cease to have an identity!”” (p. 75). Ultimately, this “culturacy”, as Rau et al. (2019) puts it, and reinforced tribal identity, paved the way for higher levels of learning success for their students.

In her chapter on Hopi “cultural and linguistic identity,” Nicholas acknowledged that Hopi youth, while many may not be fluent within the language, are fully aware of their cultural traditions and fully assert that they identify as Hopi. As one participant encouraged her contemporaries to speak what they knew of the Hopi language, Nicholas summarized that the Hopi language will continue to encompass Hopi identity, spearheaded by the collective community ““Itamyani,’ ‘*We* will [carry the Hopi way of life forward]”” (Ruiz in Nicholas, 2019, p. 192).

### **Chunks of Meaning: The Morphological Structure of Secwepemctsin**

Secwepemctsin, morphologically speaking, is a rich language. Morphemes are small chunks within words that have their own meaning and provide extended meaning to a word stem; examples of English morphemes include re-, de-, -ing, -s, -ed, -tion, graph. Some of them provide grammatical meaning (e.g., -s indicates plural when attached to nouns and third person singular when attached to verbs; -ed indicates past tense), others provide syntactic information (e.g., -tion converts a verb into a noun, educate-education), and others provide semantic information (e.g., re- twice, repeat). Within Secwepemctsin, morphemes may indicate tense, nominalization, pronoun marking, evidential and lexical suffixes (Ignace & Ignace, 2017).

The ability to identify and manipulate morphemes is called morphological awareness (Carlisle, 2000) and has been found to be critical in vocabulary learning and the development of various language related skills in first and second language learning settings and Indigenous

language revitalization. For example, Ramirez, Walton, & Roberts (2014) found that morphological awareness was related to better vocabulary learning in a group of kindergarteners in BC, of whom 12% were Aboriginal. In a different study, Hirata-Edds (2011) examined second language immersion students' ability to recognize past-tense morphemes within regular and irregular words and sentence structures within their first language. Morphological awareness has indicated advanced "metalinguistic skill" of learners, whether their first or second language (McCutchen & Stull, 2014).

Recognition of teaching from a morphological perspective has gained support within British Columbia. Kell's (2014) report asserts that BC Indigenous languages are polysynthetic, meaning these languages have words that merge many morphemes together with a stem to create a "polysynthetic" word (pp.6-11). An example includes the Secwepemetsín word *Secwepemcúlecw* (s-nominalizer, cwep - stem word to be spread out, -emc people of, -ulecw land/territory) (Ignace & Ignace, 2017). Clearly, morphological awareness provides a useful method of teaching language, in particular with listening (Karimi, 2012), vocabulary development (Kell, 2014; Ramírez, Walton, & Roberts, 2014), writing (McCutchen & Stull, 2015), and general metalinguistic awareness (Hirata-Edds, 2011; Kell, 2014). The available literature does not discuss whether and how direct teaching of morphological awareness within the MAP learning sessions occurs.

## **Conclusion**

Current methods of Secwépemc language revitalization efforts are needed to reclaim what was taken away by past (and current) colonial assimilation practices. These methods must keep in mind Secwépemc ontology and epistemology as outlined by Billy (2009) and Ignace & Ignace (2017) and must capitalize on effective strategies that accelerate language learning such

as morphological analyses. Traditional Secwépemc pedagogy engaged the whole community, which is lacking in today's Secwepemctsín teaching and learning. Current Secwépemc language teaching methods focus on public school classes (K-10), community adult programming, an immersion school setting, and the Mentor-Apprentice Program model.

Current research has indicated of the Secwépemc language teaching/learning methods in existence, only the immersion school in Chase, BC has provided fluent speakers. Direct Acquisition methods, developed by the Salish School of Spokane, have provided another potential curriculum tool for developing fluency. To date, there is a lack of clear evidence of identified successful Secwepemctsín speakers emerging from the Mentor-Apprentice Program, and this provides evidence for further research. As well, attention on a morpheme-based teaching method of instruction could promote a deeper understanding of Secwepemc ontology.

## **Methodology and Methods**

### **Research Approach**

“I realize that I view the academic world through a weaving lens. We all connect, get tangled, break apart, come together, and are interwoven to create a greater range of knowledge” (Sandy, 2017, p. 106). We weave our research together to support our viewpoints. For me, I believe that all Secwépemc youth should be able to speak Secwepemctsín as their first language. Secwépemc pass their information down through oral histories and stories; this is not possible without a good relationship with our community Knowledge Holders, their stseptétkwll (traditional stories), and the language and cultural fluency of community members. In my previous written work, I have indicated that “connections interwoven” (Sandy, 2017, p. 106) is my epistemology, or my ways of knowing.

Choosing a qualitative method that was unfamiliar to the majority of the researcher’s thesis committee was another challenge. The committee had to rely upon the researcher’s basic knowledge of Flanagan’s (1954) Critical Incident Technique. Eventually, another researcher’s assistance, with prior knowledge of CIT, was acquired to hone the researcher’s CIT skills. As well, a more knowledgeable committee member was acquired to gain their expertise in the CIT method to round out the experience of the committee. Thus, this research, while based upon the CIT (Flanagan, 1954), relied much more upon basic qualitative techniques. Therefore, respectful research based on Indigenous methodologies will ensure quality outcomes.

### **Research Questions**

Four research questions guide this study:

- What helped, or hindered, Secwepemctsín fluency within the MAP program?
- What helped or hindered cultural fluency/development within the MAP program?

- What methods of language teaching are used in Mentor-Apprentice sessions?
- Do MAP teams honour the morphologically rich structure of Secwepemetsín? If so, how?

### **Ontology and Epistemology: An Indigenous Perspective**

Ontology, as explained by Wilson (2008), is defined as the reality of a researcher and their point of view, or more widely, it is their worldview. Wilson asserts epistemology is looking through your worldview (ontology) and how, as a researcher, you know your entire background of stored knowledge. Overall, Wilson concluded that both ontology and epistemology, from an Indigenous perspective, are centered around relationships and that, if you know your worldview, you know exactly who helped you learn that ontology and how they passed on that knowledge (your epistemology)(2008).

***Secwépemc Ontology.*** Secwépemc ontology places their priorities with the land and the people, recognizing these relationships which align with their responsibilities as Secwépemc. The stories, oral histories, songs and dances, rituals, and ceremonies all of these define the people in this territory as Secwépemc. As Billy states, “[t]he interconnection of land, culture, people, and spirituality embodies the Secwepemc way of life.... These values, beliefs, morals, and teachings were expressed through our language” (2009, p. 26).

The disruption of Secwépemc ontology was triggered by colonization. The Secwépemc are still reeling from the aftereffects of Residential School assimilation practices, as well as the overall effects of colonization. Traditional family structures were splintered, and the traditional ways of teaching were disrupted. As Secwépemc, the understanding that not only was there the loss of the language through colonial assimilation processes, but also, “[c]ritically important cultural, social, technical, and ecological knowledge that is intrinsically linked to language is

also at risk.” (Billy, 2003, p.6). Recognition of these damaging affects had provided the impetus of Secwepemctsin revitalization within the nation.

This study embodied Secwépemc worldview and values. These are: *K'wselktknéws* – the value of relationship (we are all family), *Knucwectsút.s* – the value of individual strength and responsibility (take care of yourself), *Étsxe* – the value of knowing your gifts, *Mellélc* – the value of renewal, and the added core principle of knucwetwecw – the value of cooperation (Chief Atahm School, retrieved from [http://www.chiefatahm.com/WebPages/vision\\_values.html](http://www.chiefatahm.com/WebPages/vision_values.html)).

### ***Secwépemc Pedagogy***

Secwépemc knowledge is held by the elders, family, and the community. Learning is a daily practice and a way of life. Billy outlines Secwépemc pedagogy as encompassed by “child-rearing practices” and interdependence with the land. She states, “the Elders provide the necessary philosophy, knowledge, and skills needed to restore Secwepemc language, culture, and all aspects of our traditional way of life” (2009, p. 35-38, 164). Further, knowledge was passed to the Secwépemc through the animals and our observation of their collective knowledge. Ceremonies and storytelling were also outlined as key aspects of Secwépemc pedagogy (Billy, 2009).

The Secwépemc use of oral stories to teach was a well-established practice. Stories, told by the elders, held as much practical knowledge within a particular “lesson.” For example, in the story “Xelxlíp, Xelxeléq,” or “Coyote Juggles his Eyes,” listeners learn how Coyote was tricked into getting his eyes stolen and having to find his way back home to restore his vision again. On the way, Coyote encounters many trees and plants that identify his path...clearly this teaches listeners the bio geoclimatic zones of a particular area identified by the storyteller (Ignace, 1998b; Ignace & Ignace, 2017). On a different note, the context of Michel’s (2005) early

acquaintance with traditional Secwépemc storytelling/pedagogy had her comparing her father's method of traditional storytelling to "instruments of torture." Considering his method was one of checking-in for active listening, then starting again if her full attention lagged provides an insight into the full effectiveness of traditional Secwépemc pedagogy for an adolescent young woman. Michel does go on to state that his Secwépemc pedagogy provided her with the necessary skills needed to acknowledge the messages he was imparting through storytelling.

Currently, non-Indigenous public-school educators have begun to accept these traditional pedagogies into practice which have allowed a wider array of ontological and epistemological interpretations within the new BC curriculum. However, this needs to be fully embraced with regards to teaching the Secwépemc language (which is currently reliant upon an outdated Provincial curriculum template). Recommendations for upgrading BC's Integrated Resource Packages have been posited by researchers such as Kell (2014).

## **Research Design**

Research was conducted in the community, and within participants' homes as much as possible as per Indigenous Ways of Knowing, and in a healthy safe method following COVID-19 mandated protocols. Research was conducted with the authorization, endorsement, and consultation of key stakeholders (e.g., fluent Elders, language coordinator(s), language society) within Northern Secwepemcúl'ecw. Interview questions, and potential questionnaire, all centered around the Mentor-Apprentice Program, as well as the use of various methods of teaching. Purposeful sampling was used given the research question targeted a specific population of individuals who participated in the MAP program. Data was recorded, transcribed, and a variety of levels of anonymization were utilized, as outlined within the consent section below.

## **The MAP Program Examined in this Study**

The Mentor-Apprentice Program (MAP) is a program that is delivered, within British Columbia, through the First Peoples' Cultural Council (FPCC). Each year the FPCC provides grant funds to BC Indigenous language organizations, and potential MAP pairs, for language programming. A northern Secwepemc community was approved for an advanced MAP cohort program in 2017. Study participants have largely participated in this MAP cohort; however, a few have also participated in the FPCC stand-alone MAP as well. The main difference between the two lies within the timing of their programs. FPCC delivers their MAP over a whole year, and teams must complete 300 hours within that year. The other provided their MAP cohort(s) with 150 hours over half a year of programming.

## ***University Research Ethics***

Ethics approval was granted by Thompson Rivers University, Research Ethics Board File Number 10230 on January 15, 2020 (see Appendix E).

## **Researcher Declaration**

The researcher, as a participant, as a Secwépemc, as a university graduate student, as a community member living outside of the community, as a woman, as a person of comfortable means or livelihood, as an educated person, as a cis-gendered and cis-relationship individual all of these, and more, shaped the research that has emerged from this study. Although these could be interpreted as biases brought into the research, thus seeing it as a limitation, it can also be interpreted as submersion (Merriam, 1995), an important aspect that increases the trustworthiness of qualitative research. These biases/subversive aspects influenced the interview processes, their analyses, the findings and their interpretations, and the final conclusions.

## **Ethical Considerations**

This research used a qualitative technique that was influenced by the Critical Incident (Flanagan, 1954) approach, where academic processes require ethics approval from the university. In addition, I review the importance of following community protocols and ethical processes to ground this study in Indigenous ways of knowing and being using the 4 R's Theoretical Framework (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991).

### ***4 R's Theoretical Framework***

I aligned this research study within ethical procedures for Indigenous education and research, the four “R’s” cultural safety framework known as respect, responsibility, relevance, and reciprocity (Archibald, Jovel, McCormick, Vedan & Thira, 2006; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991) was woven throughout this research. Kirkness & Barnhardt (1991) define these 4 “R’s” as, ...an emphasis on the need for higher educational system that *respects* them for who they are, that is *relevant* [emphasis added] to their view of the world, that offers *reciprocity* in their relationship with others, and that helps them exercise *responsibility* over their own lives (p. 1).

Using these culturally safe, ethical considerations, ensured respect and reciprocity were imbued throughout my research study as this is my responsibility to myself as an Indigenous researcher, and as a member of my Secwépemc community and Nation, that I made sure this research will be relevant to our collective Secwépemc language revitalization needs. For example, I honoured respect and responsibility by making sure that the knowledge shared by participants, was respected, ensuring their knowledge has been kept safe and secure. Further, I have honoured relevance and reciprocity by ensuring my research is useful for Secwépemc, and, in the end, I will hand over my research results and data for the forward progress of Secwépemc

language revitalization. As a Secwépemc woman performing this study in my community, I have a responsibility to give back. Therefore, upon research completion, research results will be shared with all Secwépemc language programs for their future analysis and use. Curriculum aimed at using the findings within this research needs to be developed to assist future Secwepemctsín programming. All research findings will be shared, and any future publications that arise from the research interviews will be shared, with the interview participants.

### ***Consent***

Participants were provided with a consent form (See Appendix A) and were fully informed of their participation risks and benefits throughout this research, through an introductory letter/email from the MAP Program Coordinator at Spi7uy Squqluts Language and Culture Society (attached separately within Appendix C). Potential risks may have involved potential revisitation of language use repression from past learning experiences (e.g., Elders in residential school) or intergenerational trauma issues tied to language loss. Potential benefits included identifying effective methods of language teaching and learning within the MAP. Also, participants had the chance to reflect deeply on their learning and teaching within the Mentor-Apprentice Program, and as a result will have intentionally taken steps to enhance their language learning experience.

Participation was completely voluntary, and participants will have up to research report finalization to withdraw their data. Each participant has been fully informed about the research, the questions provided, the way the data has been analyzed, how the data is being presented, and other future forms of dissemination of research data (i.e., academic research papers, conferences papers).

Participants were given a choice on their level of confidentiality within this research study. Their choices included named and acknowledged within research; anonymized within research data but acknowledged within research as contributing; anonymized and not acknowledged within research. They are fully able to change this level of confidentiality up to submission of research report to thesis research committee. Final data will be anonymized or linked to participants names, as per participant choice, and be fully accessible by the Secwépemc community.

With the multiple levels of confidentiality, participants each have had a fair and equal say about the information they provided within this research study. Participants had the ability to participant in part, or in full, or even to withdraw completely from the study. During the study, participants were given ample time if they changed their mind about the information they had provided.

## **Data Collection Tools**

### ***Interviews***

Interviews were conducted, whenever possible, in person by the researcher, ensuring that proper COVID-19 health protocols were followed. Only one participant conducted her interview over the telephone. All interviews were recorded for transcription. Additional questions were added, when needed, to the interview protocol as necessary as the research was conducted and new information was uncovered. Several follow-up queries via email were held, to ask for clarification of participants' statements, to request additional information, and to confirm accuracy of the findings. The research interview guide questionnaire is attached in Appendix D.

### ***The Language Learning Assessment Tool***

This form is a self-assessment language learning tool developed by the NETOLNEW: One Mind; One People research group for their research of MAP pairs across British Columbia. The tool assesses where a MAP language learner is currently at in their language speaking and understanding, whether at a beginner or an intermediate level. It is a tool meant to be used after each 50-hour MAP logged sessions has been completed to assess the learners' progress. The assessment begins with a section for learner's reflection of their language learning, then proceeds with 4-8 multiple choice questions, with the scale of "'Not yet', 'rarely', 'sometimes', 'mostly', and 'always'" (McIvor & Jacobs, 2016, p. 4). The self-assessment provides two levels of fluency for assessment: beginner and intermediate. With each level the fluency is assessed based upon speaking and comprehension of the assessed. I asked each Apprentice participant during each interview to populate this learning assessment tool. Mentor participants were not asked to complete the learning assessment tool, which is addressed in the limitations of this research section of this thesis.

### ***Language Learning Artifacts***

Participants were asked to share their language learning artifacts with the interviewer. Artifacts included Secwépemc language textbooks, audio recordings, realia, toys, or puppets. I took pictures of the learning artifacts shared by participants for careful examination.

### ***Community Engagement and Protocols***

Data collection relied upon the traditional Secwépemc research methodology of "visiting." A form of very loosely structured, lengthy, open-ended interview (Ignace, 2008). As with any Indigenous research, in these interviews, relationships are key for developing valid and reliable data needed for this research. At the same time, due to the COVID-19 declared pandemic, interviews took place with individual participants in a safe outdoor setting, ensuring

proper COVID-19 pandemic protocols were followed. At the time of interviews, COVID-19 protocols allowed for research interviews to take place in-person only if: participants were already inside your immediate bubble of family and friends (many of the participants were also my kin and, in my bubble), or if you met taking appropriate COVID-19 measures (i.e., sanitize area before and after meeting, staying 2 metres apart and wearing appropriate masks during the interview. I also ensured that there was hand sanitizer available for when participants signed the consent form and populated the language self-assessment tool). Often, these interviews took place at the participants' homes, or out on the land. This reflected well on the data as interviews were able to still be held in the specific "visiting" method indicated, which matched specific teaching methodologies of many of the MAP pairs.

The Northern Secwépemc communities were contacted in several instances via email to inform them of my research parameters. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, their priorities did not allow for their follow-up with this research. However, the Spi7uy Squqluts Language and Culture Society, the local organization that directly handles language matters for the Northern Secwépemc communities, was consulted and approved this research. Their Board of Directors, comprised of local elders from the surrounding Northern Secwépemc communities, and informed me that their approval was sufficient for this research project.

As per custom, a gift of sage or tobacco was provided per participant for their time and wisdom. As their time is also limited, an additional \$25 honorarium was provided to each participant. As the main researcher is a participant of the research, her remuneration was excluded due to scholarly benefit overall. Research data will be held by the Spi7uy Squqluts Language and Culture Society upon completion, and through perpetuity.

### ***Data Storage & Access***

As per established Indigenous research, relationality is the basis of this study's inquiry. Gathering data requires the establishment of relationships with your participants, and in qualitative research it is imperative that these relationships are well established before engaging in the interview process. In this instance, prior relationships, and with the majority of the participants, kinships, were fully part of this research. This is important to establish within the research up front as it affirms the trust, and thus the reliability, of the data provided by the participants. Data is stored on researcher's password protected laptop and backed up on Thompson Rivers University student H: drive. Portions of the interview data transcripts were shared with the Thesis Supervisor, Dr. Gloria Ramirez, to ensure transcription process was correct. As has already been stated above, the data will eventually be stored and held, through perpetuity, by Spi7uy Squqluts Language and Culture Society.

### **The Process and the Participants**

With relationality considerations at the forefront of my decisions, all participants are from northern Secwepemc communities, where I have kinships and other *k'wseltknéws* (community relations). At the time of the study there were 15 recognized MAP pairs, for a total of 30 potential participants. I spoke with several of them about my study during visits to my community, and they were all enthusiastic and supportive. I also consulted with one of the language societies and obtained their authorization to approach other MAP participants. Once the feasibility of this study and the support from the northern communities was established, I applied and obtained Ethics clearance from TRU. Following ethics approval, I started formally recruiting my participants through individual emails with the study's information letter and consent form attached. A total of ten MAP participants, seven mentees and three mentors were interviewed for

this study. One of them had experience as both mentor and mentee, so she provided perspectives from both experiences. Below is a brief description of each of the participants. In alignment with Indigenous research protocols, participants were given the choice to be identify with their name or to use a pseudonym. This choice of revealing their names “honours their roles as agents of change in their unique contexts” (Wemigwans, 2018, p.73) through their commitment to Secwepemetsín revitalization.

### ***Crazy Squirrel***

Beloved member of several northern Secwépemc communities, Crazy Squirrel was an active member in Secwepemetsín revitalization. She taught Secwepemetsín in two different public-school districts, and within her communities. Her interview was spent on a hot summer day in the Williams Lake area, where she insisted on showing the researcher several important Secwépemc cultural sites. This was just one of the many accounts of her generous nature. Crazy Squirrel was a wonderful storyteller and could recount much of the local history of northern Secwepemcúlecw.

### ***Estkwelálnik***

A respected member of the community, Estkwelálnik is a driving force within Northern Secwépemc language revitalization. She has been an active language learner since the early days of Secwepemetsín revitalization movement in northern Secwepemcúlecw when she would bring her mother to all the local language meetings. She grew up hearing and understanding the language, but not taught to speak the language. She has spent her whole adult life improving her Secwepemetsín fluency. She currently teaches the language at her local Band school, and up until recently was a teacher within the local public school district. After apprenticing under several mentors, herself, she now mentors two apprentices in Secwepemetsín.

### ***Dancing Water Sandy***

Dancing Water dedicates her life to assisting her community by promoting Indigenous and Secwépemc traditions. She is a traditional woman, and pipe carrier. Professionally, she is a cultural curriculum development teacher in her local public-school district and has earned the respect of colleagues who teach the three local Indigenous languages (Secwépemc, Chilcotin, and Carrier), as well as the whole district with her professional development cultural workshops. She also provides various other cultural workshops throughout the Williams Lake and Greater Vancouver areas. Her expertise in beading, ribbon skirt sewing, cultural food gathering and preserving are just some of the many talents she provides.

### ***A.J. William***

Well known fluent speaker within Secwepemcúlecw, A.J. William has assisted the Secwépemc language revitalization movement since her work (teaching and school counselling) within the local public-school district. She now tries to enjoy her retirement but finds herself busier than ever with language and cultural contracts within the northern Secwépemc communities. You can find her language revitalization projects through the resources provided by the local Language Society. She had taught within the public-school district, but now enjoys teaching at her local Band preschool, and mentoring several apprentices in the language.

### ***Cecilia***

An influential fluent speaker within Secwepemcúlecw, Cecilia dedicates her life towards Secwepemctsín language revitalization. She is a long-time teacher within School District #27 and has enjoyed teaching the language to many levels of learners. She has been an active mentor within the Mentor Apprentice Program since its inception within British Columbia through the

FPCC. She too is an avid language contractor to the local Language Society, providing numerous curricular materials and resources for future Secwepmetsín learners.

### ***Skémcis***

Her initial foray into Secwepemetsín was to learn her language. Imagine her surprise when she recalled much of what she was learning already and began remembering her early fluency. Skémcis was an early participant in the MAP, directly through FPCC, at its inception as well. However, her experience proved different as she participated as part of a group apprentices with two mentors. This seemed to be successful in their situation due to the isolated, but committed, nature of their community. She now works within northern Secwepemcúlecw on various language resources contracts and is a Board Member for the local Language Society.

### ***C. William***

A strong advocate for Secwepemetsín language revitalization, C. William embodies much of the programming that the northern Secwépemc communities have enjoyed. His dedication to Secwepemetsín has provided numerous language opportunities and resources for the Secwépemc nation. He works as the language administrator for the local Language Society, and this encourages him to work on his own language fluency development through various language programming (MAP, post-secondary language courses). He also teaches the beginners immersion courses at the regional post-secondary institute, and a community language pilot project using the Salish School of Spokane curriculum.

### ***Secwépemc Matriarch***

A strong presence in her community, Secwépemc Matriarch is a go-to community member for all cultural activities be they hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering or community events. She served on several Band Councils and has been active in ensuring following Councils

follow through on their political and community duties. She grew up in a fluent household, speaking, hearing, and understanding the language until she was about to enter public-school when her family decided to stop speaking Secwepemctsin to her to help ease her into and English-speaking school setting. Although she spoke fluently when she was a child, she still considers herself at an intermediate language learner level.

***Joseph A.***

A well-known supporter of Secwepemctsin, Joseph A. is often seen within his northern Secwepemc community assisting language activities. His work with the local Band school was much appreciated by the education staff and faculty. He is a tireless language learner, who enjoys immediately passing on what he has learned in the language.

***M. Sandy***

Wanting to contribute whatever she can to the Secwepemctsin language revitalization movement, M. Sandy helps by teaching the language at the regional post-secondary institute all the while upgrading her language fluency through multiple methods of language learning. She plans on passing on Secwepemctsin to her soon-to-be-born child in hopes that more children her age have begun to speak Secwepemctsin as their first language.

**Data Analysis**

Interview data was transcribed and analyzed for depth of language and culture from participants within the Mentor-Apprentice Program for critical incidents (i.e., what helped or hindered language/cultural fluency within the MAP). The researcher consulted various Secwepemctsin resources, and her own fluent speaking relatives, to assist with the few needed translates from the participant interviews. “Only after the accumulation of a considerable body of material...” (Chell, 2004, p. 51) could these critical incidents be analyzed to outline areas that

have been identified by participants as key examples/activities that have highlighted the aim of this study.

### **Data Triangulation: Trustworthiness**

Triangulation was sought by multiple interview opportunities, multiple data collection tools, and multiple iterations of data collection over a period of six months. Credibility and accuracy were sought through member checks, by giving the participants the chance to read chunks of the findings section to verify that their quotations were used and interpreted accurately. In addition, robust quotations from participants were used to accurately represent participant input. Results were confirmed through participant consultation prior to research publication/submission. In addition, my supervisor carefully examined my findings and the quotations for accuracy.

### **Dissemination**

Research findings will be shared with a copy of the thesis presented to each participant. The final study will be provided to the Northern Secwepemc te Qelmucw Board of Directors, the Shuswap Nation Tribal Council, as well as the Spi7uy Squqluts Language and Culture Society Language Coordinator. Research findings may also be used in further conference papers, and research articles. Finally, data from this research will be provided to Spi7uy Squqluts Language and Culture Society (and ultimately the Secwépemc Nation) for the purpose of contributing towards future language resources or programming.

### **Timeline** (see Appendix F)

- November 2019 - Consulted Spi7uy Squqluts Language Society Board for their input regarding ethics and procedures on this research study
- November 2019 - Submitted thesis proposal to TRU Research Ethics Board

- January 2020 – Research ethics approval received (see appendix E)
- March 2020 – COVID-19 asserted as a world-wide pandemic, and interview plans were halted until further notice
- July - October 2020 - Conducted interviews with MAP pairs
- July – December 2020 - transcribed and coded interview data
- January 28, 2021 – Follow-up interview questionnaire sent out via email
- January - February 2021 - Analysis of interview data
- February - March 2021 - Wrote report of research findings. Disseminate findings to participants.
- March – April 2021 – Wrote thesis draft
- April 2021 – Thesis revisions completed
- April 2021 – Thesis sent to external reviewer
- June 2021 – Will present research project to SILS 2020/2021 conference
- June 2021 – Will prepare to defend thesis, share findings with communities
- June 2021 – Will defend thesis

## Findings

*All the pieces for the pine needle basket have been gathered, the pine needles, the needle, and the sinew. I now must examine each pine needle carefully; I examine their shape, their strength, and their length. I sort them out, group them, regroup them, move pieces around, sort them out. When I see the pieces that would work well together to reveal a pretty pattern, I thread them together. Before each stitch, I test the fit. Sometimes a piece that at first seemed to work needs to be changed for one more suitable.*

This chapter expounds the findings from four main research questions:

- What helped, or hindered, Secwepemctsin fluency within the MAP program?
- What helped or hindered cultural fluency/development within the MAP program?
- What methods of language teaching are used in Mentor-Apprentice sessions?
- Do MAP teams honour the morphologically rich structure of Secwepemctsin? If so, how?

Woven through this chapter, Secwépemc participants will first relay their experiences of language, followed by their cultural fluency development. Finally, the language teaching methods found within the MAP program, as well as a more detailed look into the morphological explorations into Secwepemctsin during their MAP sessions will be outlined.

### MAP Influence on Secwepemctsin Fluency

*The overall design of a pine needle basket relies upon the length and strength of the needles used to form the basket. Within this study, the data focuses within the larger theme of how MAP influences Secwepemctsin fluency. You can see the strong and supple, or the older dried and cracked, needles within a basket. So too the concepts of relationality and resources, in*

terms of both helpful and hindering critical incidents, within the MAP on Secwepemetsín fluency will be revealed within this section.

Fluency is often discussed within Indigenous communities and its meaning is different for each person. Often speakers of a language may not think of themselves as fluent; however, a new language learner will see them as fluent speakers from their perspective.

And...and then realizing -- because I know that Túm'e [Estkwelálnik] doesn't, because she didn't grow up speaking the language which is something that she's really, you know, sad about; I mean we all are...but she...she doesn't feel like she is fluent. I feel like she's a fluent speaker, but she...she, herself, doesn't feel like she's completely fluent -- so, when I realized that I could understand what she's talking about when she's, you know, like, talking about the land. And, you know, like, 'oh,' you know, she'd be talking about 'oh, this is the best place for juniper,' or, 'oh, over there, the berries are really good,' you know. She talked, she'd be sitting talking about the land and...and even, you know, sometimes she'd be even talking about what she remembers about when she was younger, and stuff. And it was really, kind of, cool. (M. Sandy, 2020)

Mentors express great concern about the loss of fluent Elders, their responsibility to continue teaching the language, and some anxiety at not being sufficiently fluent.

And...and, what really frightens me is that I'm actually going to be one of the ones who...like when all our elders are gone, the fluent elders, it's gonna be up to myself, and a couple others.... And as an apprentice, I feel inadequate. Not as an apprentice, as a mentor. I feel inadequate because I still have to go back to my books, my recordings, for things. And...and then, as more people are getting interested, we have to find you know there's no....not enough mentors So, that's frightening. (Estkwelálnik, 2020)

Participants acknowledge that the MAP program has helped them progress towards achieving their Secwepemctsin fluency goals but recognize that the program itself is not a magic bullet. Making meaningful progress towards fluency requires great commitment. Also, having regular exposure to the language during their childhood helped them make quick progress during the MAP program. In a way, the language was dormant in them, and the MAP helped awaken it.

But...I think the biggest thing about doing the Master Apprentice Program, is you gotta have the commitment. So, if you don't have the commitment it's not gonna work. We did it, like I say, for three years, and four of us stuck it out. Then, at the end of that, according to my mentors, I was 90% fluent. And, same with my sister-in-law, she was 90% fluent. But the difference was, was I and her were reviving our language. Like I'd known it as a child, and then then lost it. Like after my grandmother passed away, we never heard it in the house anymore. My grandpa died at 100 years old, and was 100% fluent, but he hardly ever used the language. He only used it for storytelling. He was a great storyteller but, though, it was the only time he used it, after I thought about it a lot. So, when my grandmother died, we didn't have it anymore. And I just...I was losing it, I guess? So, that was why we picked it up so fast. And she was the same, raised a grandmother. So, we were just...had to re-learn it, I guess you'd say? Or revive it?

(Skémcis, 2020)

Skémcis continues by acknowledging the progress made by those MAP apprentices whose early exposure to Secwepemctsin was not as pronounced.

And the other two were beginners, total beginners. Well, I guess I shouldn't say total. The one had took...took it all through high school in Williams Lake. And she could read it and write it, but she couldn't speak it. That was one of the things she...she realized that.

They'd say it to her, and she'd write it down because she was so good at the reading and writing, but she couldn't talk. At the end they figured they were at least 50% of those, after those three years. So, they...they went along really well. (Skémcis, 2020)

Although the common goal of MAP and those who participate in is to achieve language fluency, there were differences in the dynamics and operationalization of MAP activities across the participants. For example, some dyads were strictly following MAP guidelines related to full immersion in the language:

And, like I say, it was the commitment to do it. We...we'd never miss in three years. I just made it clear to everybody, like job-wise, and everything, my Tuesdays were booked. We did it on a potluck basis. We all brought something. And we'd all just get together, just total language, for, like I say, from 5 till 8:30 - 9 o'clock at night. With just straight language. (Skémcis, 2020)

And I don't know that word. So, I was asking my mom, how the heck does...and you can't say anything in English when you're there. Like, with us we would, but...but when you're at that training, there is no English allowed. So, she gave me that word for falling into the water. (C. William, 2020)

By contrast several dyads were more relaxed with the immersion guidelines allow for interaction in English, such as when planning their language sessions.

So, we would do that. So, for my Tým'e and I, we would be at the restaurant and we would do all of those. And so, I would, you know, like, I'd point out: the saltshaker, the plate, the fork, the knife, the spoon, the pepper shaker, I would show...I would point to where the bathroom is, I would show where the kitchen is, I would show oh, this is the

chair, this is the table. If there was flowers on the table in a vase I'd say, 'oh,' you know, like, 'here's some flowers,' you know? I could...I could have even, like, pointed to our jackets, to our purses, you know? Things like that, you know? And just naming everything that I know, right? And then our actual meal would be our break. So, we'd stop, and we would talk in English. Umm, and talk about how we feel the session is going, right? So, it's always kind of keeping on topic, right? But that was what was neat, was we could talk about how we feel our language sessions are going. And then, afterwards, if we're still able to, we would go back into the language and talk about the meal, and...and maybe how it was prepared. Or...or, you know, talk about what we tasted. Or...or talk about, 'oh yours looked really good I wish I had gotten that.'

Depending on, you know, we...we'd just have a little bit more. And then we...we'd, and then we'd, you know, like, either go on our separate ways, or...or...or move on to something else. Those were our early sessions. (M. Sandy, 2020)

And then...and then, some parts I would say in English but she would still tell me, back in a language. And I would know what parts that I knew, or, with the ones that I didn't know, in English. (C. William, 2020)

Same thing, with the other elder that I would work with, a lot of the time. Same thing. I would try to keep her in the language, too, but it seemed like she would always go back. It was more easy to speak in English for her, and she, you know? (C. William, 2020)

Another obstacle to implementing full immersion in the language was that proficiency levels also varied across mentors as revealed by some mentors' frustrations with not knowing, or remembering, the language enough to answer their apprentices' queries.

With my sister, it was a little harder because she'd get frustrated with me. I remember one time she was just about crying, and she told me, 'I wish I could just give it to you. I wish I could just hand it over to you.' And that's when she started, she gave me permission to listen in on stories. And, she had a set pattern, as well. She'd come with an agenda in mind. (Estkwelálnik, 2020)

I'm...I'm honest with them, because I don't use the language all the time. I forget things and I'll tell them, 'oh I forget this, you research this with Cody, or somebody.' Or, we look it up in the dictionary, and stuff like that. Yeah. I'm straight forward with them. (Crazy Squirrel, 2020)

As a result, Secwepemctsín use within MAP varied across different dyads. This played a part in the development of the apprentices' assumed language fluency over the term of their program. After the interview, participants, specifically the apprentices, were asked to gauge their language fluency level in a self-assessment survey from the NETOLNEW Indigenous Language Revitalization Project (McIvor, O., & Jacobs, P., 2016). Of the ten participants interviewed, six completed the assessment. Of those, five indicated they were at an intermediate level of Secwepemctsín fluency, while one indicated they were at a beginner level. The four who did not complete the fluency self-assessment were mentors.

## **Relationality in MAP**

*The cyclical shape of a pine needle basket provides overall structural strength, much as the data that forms around the concept of relationality within this study.*

Within relationality, several dimensions were identified including, the relationship between the mentee and the mentor, relationships among mentorship dyads, and relationships beyond the mentorship program. Each of these aspects of relationality are found in the data presented below.

### ***The Relationship Between the Mentee and Mentor***

The mentorship program strengthened existing relationships between the mentor and mentee and provided a space for developing a sense of connection, in some instances, as expressed by Dancing Water Sandy, offsetting feelings of loneliness:

So...I live here and there's a lot of people who...have unhealthy lifestyle choices, and I'm not that person, right?... I do beadwork, I sew...I Sun Dance. So, I have pipe ceremony. I do all these things. I develop myself professionally. I do all these workshops, and stuff. And I find that I'm having a hard time connecting with people in my community. Because, they have different interests, and they are at a different place in their life. And so, I'm lonely all the time because there aren't people here who are...able to continually do stuff.... And so, Auntie [A.J. William] is actually my best friend...here. And then, we run amok. (2020)

For others, the MAP program created new relationships that extended beyond the program, which as illustrated by the following mentor's statement is greatly appreciated:

And I'm really happy with [my first apprentice] because she...was faithful, and right through. And she still comes and visits and still uses the language. You know...almost...she's almost getting, kind of...She understands mostly everything. And...she responds back. (Cecilia, 2020)

One participant outlined the delicate balance needed within the mentor-apprentice relationship, and the tensions between trying to honour Indigenous Elders' ways of being and the structures and accountability systems imposed by funding institutions:

And, yeah to find a really good mentor. Always have a good mentor. You just can't force them to do things if they don't have time. And you have to respect that. And, usually they're older so, just...you can't really pressure them. And then, with us, though, but we do have deadlines. So, it does, kind of, pressure them. And then it, kind of burns them [elders/mentors] out.... And it makes it more...too much like work, I guess. (C. William, 2020)

Shared, or inferred, the relationships between the mentor and their mentee reflected a certain amount of respect shown towards one another.

You have to be patient with it. That's the thing I notice. A lot of people don't have patience. Secwepemctsin, you have to be patient with yourself mostly, I think. And your mentor is always there, and they want you to learn. You'll get there, you'll get there. Just keep at it, you'll get there. (Joseph A., 2020)

Joseph A. elaborates on the respect shown to others as a strong Secwépemc trait, and essential when working with others and with the language.

...both my xpé7e and my kyé7e both showed me, kind of, told me a few scenarios, and stuff like that when I was younger. 'You can say this in front of somebody, but, like, this

person,' or, not even another person, it might be another family, or something, that's really sensitive. So, just recognizing that type of thing and a lot of people don't even take the time to think about other peoples' feelings. That's a pretty important thing when it comes to our people, Secwepemctsin people. But it...I learned...learning, if they haven't...if they don't know it already, they're at least slowly starting to recognize it within themselves. That's another thing that takes time, the same thing along with the language. (2020)

Strategies to pair a mentor with a mentee varied across participants. A mentor and mentee dyad more often choose each other prior to applying for a MAP slot. This establishes a prior relationship, however not all pairs chose this route. Some pairs were suggested by the Administrator of their Language and Culture Society; however, each of these suggested dyads checked in with each other prior to applying to the program. Work could not proceed if a certain sense of rapport were not established at the beginning of a meeting. Most of the partners held a significant generation gap between mentor and apprentice. However, this was not seen as a detraction within the MAP. In fact, several participants valued this intergenerational learning opportunity.

...when I moved here Auntie [A.J. William] was...very supportive about it. I asked her if she could be my elder, and she be my mentor. And she was really happy about it, because she knew that meant we were gonna do a whole pile of stuff. And we have done a whole pile of stuff. So, that was just the beginning. And then we bring William with me and he, periodically, we bring my son, and he gets to listen and participate. (Dancing Water Sandy, 2020)

Cecilia, a mentor within the program, confirms the importance of this cross-generational relationship when she highlights the joy at the presence of her mentee's baby during MAP sessions, "And...she's really interested, and then she brings her baby along. And she had a baby, so she brought the baby along for most of our sessions last winter. And he's picking up the language" (2020).

The benefits of learning the language through the MAP program, extended beyond the mentees, as they shared what they learned with their immediate families, other relatives, and friends. Participants' statements suggest that their involvement in the program was steeped in their sense of community responsibility to future generations.

In fact, one of the participants knew that since the interview would be recorded, she needed to formally introduce herself as I, as the researcher, may not be the only one to "hear" her interview in the future. "And...it's kind of like in our language we introduce ourselves..." (Dancing Water Sandy, 2020). She knew that the information gathered could, and may, be used for further Secwepemctsin revitalization efforts within Secwepemcúlecw (see Methodology/Methods section of this thesis for more details). So, acknowledging herself to those listening was an important part of the dialogue between the participant, and the future generations who may listen to her interview.

As Dancing Water Sandy identified in her interview, "Mentor Apprentice, really, has helped develop our relationship.... So, I don't know, I just think..., as an added benefit. The Mentor Apprentice has just really strengthened our relationship" (2020). This affirmation of the bond between the mentor and apprentice hints at more than just a program aimed towards developing language fluency, it reveals that the relationship is key to both the mentor and the apprentice.

It's...it's a different, it's... exciting and fun way to teach the language, for me. And the interaction that we have with one another. Yeah. And that we're out, and I think that's what keeps me...keeps me young. Keeps me moving. And I enjoy the outdoors, and I really enjoy the sewing. I really enjoyed the, you know, there's nothing that I don't like about the learning that they want. Like the singing, and the sewing, and food gathering, and the medicine gathering. Out, being out on the land. Taking a drive, you know? And just making everyday things. Normal things. And that's the way I learned the language growing up, and I'm proud of it. (A.J. William, 2020)

A healthy relationship is important between a mentor and their apprentice. Although the working relationships between mentors and apprentices can be characterized as positive, there were a few instances where some dyads identified challenges in the working team dynamic.

I really need to talk about, how, fatigue is real.... I remember towards the end it was hard, it was hard getting that enthusiasm, I suppose.... We were almost, we needed a break from each other is what I'm getting at. And, yeah, so, that was kind of interesting. (M. Sandy, 2020)

Yeah, making it...you wanna make it fun, really, like, 'Oh, there she comes again. Woo hoo,' kind of like. Not like, 'oh no here they come again.' Cause you did, I did hear that. Some of the elders were saying that, like, 'oh no, here's so-and-so again.' (C. William, 2020)

These apprentices showed the downsides of the lengthy language program and the strains placed upon the mentor-apprentice relationship. Their concerns about these strains on the relationship were voiced out of respect to their mentors. This points to an overall Indigenous

sense of relationality, friendship, and bonding. In Secwépemc ontology, respect for elders (and a rather inferred reciprocity of respect towards the younger generation) is inherent.

### ***Working with other MAP Teams***

There is a slight distinction between MAP teams and what I will refer to here as MAP group. Differences include number of hours completed and guidelines followed, which will be discussed further under the subheading “MAP Total Immersion”. Positive results came from the MAP dyads combining their language learning sessions with other MAP teams, or in the case of one participant, a MAP group.

That's part of what we found in our MAP program is...if we worked as a group, with another MAP group [team], then it was less tiresome, I guess. And the different vocabulary, or the different way of saying things, would pop out.... (Dancing Water Sandy, 2020)

There was a group of us from Canoe Creek. And they [First Peoples' Cultural Council] actually, I guess, stepped out of the box to test it out to see how it would work. We were the only ones approved as a group. There was...two Masters, as they called it back then, my two Aunts...were doing it. And there was eight of us that were participating...and at the end of three years, four of us completed. (Ském̓cis, 2020)

As outlined by Dancing Water Sandy and Ském̓cis, working with other MAP teams or within a group provided great learning opportunities for the mentees.

### ***Extending Learnings Beyond MAP Participants***

During the interview process participants indicated that their own Interest in learning Secwepemetsín was not limited to the MAP participants. The apprentices found that they in turn

started teaching others Secwepemctsin and that Secwepemctsin was, in little but valuable ways, making its way into spontaneous interactions.

Now that I'm at a...at a level that I can teach, I think that more and more people are wanting to learn the language, anyways. That's what I love about it. Like the real...realization of our Secwepemctsin, being where it is right now, and me helping out whoever wants to learn. And there's been...there's been seme7, too, that have been wanting to learn. At least a dozen that have asked me, but even my instructor that have, down at TRU. He's asked me, "how do you say snow? How do you say rain?" And stuff like that. "Cause he surprised me, and I said, "mé7e." I was like, we were doing something on the building, on the dream home we were working on. I asked him, "if this is right.... this is right the way. Can you come check on this?" "Mé7e." At first, I didn't notice, until we got to the work spot, I was working on. And he's coming to check on the door, I think. And I asked him again if it's alright. If it's good. If I can leave it if it's good to go. And he said, "mé7e," again. And it finally snapped my head back. "Mé7e, hey, he said mé7e!" "Mé7e." After that he's...I finally noticed. (Joseph A., 2020)

Joseph A. (2020) made the realization that his own participation, as an apprentice, within the Mentor Apprentice Program precipitated the desire to pass on the language, and to even become a mentor himself.

Yeah [I could become a mentor to a beginner]! I think so. I believe so! Yeah, mé7e. Because I think I have enough experience. Like even this...past...last Spring. I was doing a carpentry program down there [Kamloops]. My auntie was asking me if I could go...go spend time with her down Kamloops, at her place. And she...teach her some Secwepemctsin. So, I was like, 'yeah.' (Joseph A., 2020)

“So, like, yeah, learning it, and then trying to teach it almost right away is a good way to remember it. And it worked well for me so far.” (Joseph A., 2020)

Skémcis also indicated the need to pass on the language as a mentor. However, she notes that the dyad relationship relies upon commitment from any potential apprentice she would take on. “I’ve often thought...been thinking about it, to try and mentor somebody. And that would be the one thing I’d really make sure of is that they’re committed. They’re not gonna just wanna get together once in a while, and that” (2020).

As the key component of MAP, these relationships emphasized the importance that relationality has on language fluency development. Each dyad itself comprised significantly as language resources that flowed both ways within language learning and teaching.

### **Resources for developing fluency**

Unsurprising, resources for teaching and learning the language used within MAP sessions played a key role in apprentices’ development of Secwepemctsín fluency. Participants mentioned resource books, games, common household objects, and various mentor-created curricular material.

Each mentor and apprentice mentioned resources as an integral part of their MAP experience. Mentors created engaging methods of challenging their apprentice’s language development such as songs with lyrics in Secwepemctsín, using well known melodies, mini situational dialogues, and drawings, among others. Figure 2 was provided by Skémcis and used within her MAP group. Each card represents a topic for conversation that they would use to engage in discussions during their potluck dinners.



Figure 2 - Discussion Topics from MAP Group

But the same thing, we'd go along and try to...she would sing. I would put on there, Waylon Jennings.... She would make up lyrics for that. She could just go on-the-spot make it up. So, it was fun sitting with her. (C. William, 2020)

We included some modern questions like, 'what did you watch on TV last night?' And then you'd have to work hard to put it all into Secwepemctsin. Depending on what you watched, and that. Or just some of the...tell us something about culture from the...like, different questions about what we learned from our traditions and our culture, we'd have to talk about it. Yeah. But we had a lot of different topics on there. (Skémcis, 2020)

So, it was really interesting, I remember one of the activities that they gave us, at that training session, was they gave us blank paper. And, the mentor has to tell the apprentice, in the language, to draw...describing, you know, like, 'oh,' you have, you have a picture of maybe this sort of weird looking alien looking creature, just a simple drawing, of course. But you'd say, like for example maybe, you're...you're explaining how to draw Sully from Monsters, Inc, you know? You'd say, 'oh, draw a round body with two legs,

that immediately end in feet, short legs. That immediately end in feet, and one big eye, no eyelashes, no ears, maybe it has one hair, one really big mouth with lots of teeth, that aren't pointy,' or, 'they are round,' you know? Like, so you have to explain, the mentor explains, as much as they can to the apprentice. And, the apprentice has to try to draw this image that you're, that the mentors saying. And it's really kind of cool because you know afterwards you look to see how accurate you were. And, if...if the mentor was on point and able to explain properly, then that's pretty cool. So that was one of the activities. (M. Sandy, 2020)

In one instance, the mentor's lack of training on the recording resource hindered the apprentice's learning as he was not able to refer to the recordings of their conversations that were unrecorded when he forgot to, and his mentor was unable to, set up the recording device. "I think the recorders do really help. When I was traveling with my mom, I didn't put recorders on. Which I really wished I'd did...[because I would listen to] the recorders, and then to re-listen to everything again" (C. William, 2020).

The majority of these resources were made available to all the MAP teams, including Figure 2, and the provided training was also given to the one MAP group. So based on the above accounts, language learning was facilitated by the use of language teaching/learning materials.

Overall, MAP has shown to provide a great pine needle base for the eventual strong basket of Secwepemctsin revitalization. An increase of fluency, while not directly "tested" within this study, was gauged through self-assessment and reflection of both the mentors and apprentices. The strong relationships, mostly prevalent prior to the beginning of MAP, were a key element for this program's perceived success by participants. They have begun to weave the

words they learned into sentences and conversations, like stitching together pine needles to form a strong pine needle basket.

### **MAP Influence on Cultural Fluency/Development**

Tightly interwoven, cultural and language fluency are examined from the Secwépemc participants' perspectives. Overall, participants did not separate the concepts of language and culture, and when this was brought up during the interviews each seemed a bit surprised that there could be a distinction between language and culture. Hence, upon reflection of research itself, the devolution of information into separate spheres of data, this does not lend itself well to Indigenous, and specifically Secwépemc, epistemology. Piecing together each participants' knowledge forms a strong basket of information. Trying to separate the idea behind language and culture as separate entities seems out of touch with Secwépemc ontology. Seeing the parallels between what helps and hinders both language and cultural fluency within the participants only enhances Secwépemc ontology. Culture and language do not exist separately from each other, rather they form a whole strong basket. "So, language was just an added benefit, actually, to all the things that we were gonna do. And it worked out that way. Actually, it was pretty fantastic because...we canned, we picked berries" (Dancing Water Sandy, 2020).

Crazy Squirrel clearly presents *stseptékwll*, storytelling from the Secwépemc perspective, as evidence that language and culture are intertwined. She precedes even her interview with a story, then relates it to the researcher's query.

And there was this one story, I was telling them, these two old ladies from...they were out in a white out. And I know my...my Aunt..., she doesn't...doesn't tell us not a... she doesn't tell us lies or tell stories. And, she said they...they got in the white out, they were out trapping...trapping squirrels, and stuff like that. Rabbits, and whatever. And the

whiteout came. Just like from here to probably that mountain over there. Away from the Rez. In a white out, that's like a hundred miles travel. So, and she said...she said, 'they remember...I remember the old people telling me something about this,' she said. Dug and dug under the snow. Dug under about...but the snow was already really deep in just a little while. She said, 'me and this other lady, we dug, and dug, and dug under the snow. And we just had one blanket and we wrapped ourselves in the blanket. And, we covered ourselves up with a whole bunch of snow.' And she said, 'it was really warm under there.' Otherwise, they would have froze to death.... I tell them stories like that. They really listen. (Crazy Squirrel, 2020)

Each MAP language session example provided by participants was ripe with cultural enhancement. It was evidenced in the teachings on the land, talks about traditional knowledge, around seasonal activities, and domestic task, which involved cultural practices (e.g., cooking traditional food). The one-on-one method of MAP provides the perfect vessel for strengthening Secwépemc identity whilst building the language fluency (and teaching fluency) of the MAP dyads. The setting of language teaching/learning sessions provided the participants with a culturally rich environment in which to immerse (both in language and culture). As the setting provides a wonderful base for the fluency of the participants, these will be outlined within the next two subsections.

### **Being “On The Land”...**

Most participants indicated that they took the opportunity to do their MAP sessions “on the land.”

Yeah, we went out for drives and just talked about the weather, the scenery, the clouds, and the trees, different trees, and the land and...houses we went by some ranch houses

and...different things we saw. Types of cows you know the black, the red, and white.

And the dogs, and you know cow dogs. And, oh we went across the river, so we talked

about the rivers. At first, we went through...went on it, and then went around and

Meldrum Creek, and up and down, and then back through Riske Creek and down there....

Learning on the land provided more than a meaningful, realistic, and concrete context to learn the language. The experience of learning the language while walking or travelling on the land seems to have triggered deeper awareness of it, a stronger connection with it, and an opportunity to talk about traditional knowledge as illustrated with this statement by Cecilia.

...And it was really interesting. You know you don't really pay attention when you're driving you just drive through, you know. You go to Riske Creek, you go to...we don't notice anything. Well, you notice the weather, and things like it, but then when you're talking about it then it's...different. Then you talk about Blackdome Mountain over there, and the Blackdome medicine that you gather. Stuff like that. It, you know, it was quite interesting, you know. Like you, because when you, you know, when you drive you just look out the window. And then once in a while you have your own conversation. But then when you're talking about the land then it becomes more interesting. (2020)

These authentic opportunities allowed participants to access rooted language knowledge, as outlined by Estkwelálnik.

I...also going out on the land triggered memories. It triggered memories of, like say when we're doing the ethnobotany, it triggered memories of what my mom could do, you know? So many things that she would pick, and...you know? And the places, it just triggered memories. And I think when that happened it...the comprehension just started coming. (2020)

Overwhelmingly these instances were indicated as the most successful language and cultural fluency development opportunities by dyads. As emphasized by A.J. William, Estkwelálnik and Skémcis, being on the land provided increased, authentic, language learning opportunities. “But I think we just need to continue to teach this way, because it's getting you out on the land. Using the land, using the resources that are out there. There's so much to learn” (A.J. William, 2020). As also expressed by Estkwelálnik, “But I, what I really loved, was when we went out on the land. And, she started naming all the place names...” (2020). Even Skémcis emphasized the importance influence working on the land had on her language learning,

On our own, we decided to have a language immersion weekend up at Meadow Lake one time. And our evaluators agreed to come for the whole weekend. And we just did total immersion in the language all weekend. And our big project at that one was, we went out and we made some...we were gonna be doing baskets. So, we went and got stínesten [cedar roots], and we found somebody that knew how do...they get the roots with us. Taught us how to do that. Then we went and got our own bark with Cecilia. She spearheaded that, since she was the basket-maker. And then, on the weekend, that was our project. We had to make...all make baskets. And it was a fun weekend. Just living together, eating, and everything was just total Secwepemctsin. In the evening, if you wanted, you could reverse back to English. But, I think, by the second night there we were just into the language, and we never really went back to English. Well except for the beginners, if they weren't sure about a word but they'd ask, in Secwepemctsin, ‘stemi emétin yi7éne?’ Like, ‘what do you call this?’ If they couldn't get the Shuswap word for it. So, we really worked hard to find ways to stay in the language. Like we wouldn't

break out in English and say, ‘what do you call this?’ We’d say, ‘stemí emétentem re Secwepemctsín?’ It was challenging, but it was really lots of fun.” (2020)

This land-based learning provided a relaxed, non-institutional setting for the MAP team to feel comfortable with being immersed in the language. This setting also provided the environment needed for mentors to slip easily into the language.

Yeah, 'cause she says, like, when somebody asks a word it's hard to remember but when you're out there doing it...it just comes. Yeah, those words come.... So...so the best thing, what we find is when we're out in the bush and going around doing our thing. And everybody's happy, and those words are there, and they just come, and it's not like in school. (Secwépemc Matriarch, 2020)

Learning on the land, a valued aspect of MAP, contrasts with classroom-based teaching, in which the setting is often limited to one room, with the potential for items brought to the learners. Another setting that emphasizes the importance of MAP, is the learning that MAP dyads encounter within their own residences.

### **In the Home...**

Similar to learning on the land, learning the language at home facilitated the ease of speaking in Secwepemctsín. By learning in a home or community environment, MAP participants held the advantage of choice in their learning sessions, such as learning through traditional activities (e.g., sewing, beading, drying meat as in Figure 3), learners’ interest-based topics kept mentors and apprentices engaged and appreciative during their lessons. Participants indicated that they did various cultural activities such as: seasonal canning, sewing ribbon skirts, beading, field dressing game, and preparing foods and medicines.

A lot of it happened in the home, because I wanted...I remember being spoken to, like, and being told what to do, and comprehending it. But I couldn't say it back. And so, when my sister started working with me, that's what I told her I wanted. So, it made things easier for me. (Estkwelálnik, 2020)

And I remember in the beginning of our last program we did some cooking. In our first two sessions. Like learning all the foods. And we thought we were just going to do the same thing with pictures and stuff. But she, '...we're going into the kitchen.' 'What?!' 'Wash your hands'... We know how to cook in the language.... I like being hands on it...was a good surprise. It was fun, actually. Cooked some...salmon, rice. Fried some carrots. I think [her daughter] made some bannock, so we were there for a good 2 hours of our 1st session. (Joseph A., 2020)

With A.J. William we've done a lot at A.J. William's. Canned, like, this spring we just went through our freezers and took all the extra stuff out. And, yeah. So, I...did a bunch of salmon. We did salmon up there. Berries, whatever berries, we got. Or sxúsem. Yep. And then a couple months ago took out all the roasts, and stuff, and cut 'em up, and we did a bunch of the dry meat. Yep. So, I got lots of nice pictures. But, yeah. Yep. So, it's just awesome. (Secwépemc Matriarch, 2020)



*Figure 3 - Secwépemc Matriarch Drying Meat*

I stayed with...my aunt..., with my Túm'e, I would go stay at her house. And so, as soon as I'd wake up in the morning, she would be speaking to me in the language. She would be just...it's really funny, she would just be talking about what she's doing. And she's like, '...oh I had a good sleep,' or, 'I didn't have a good sleep.' If she didn't have a good sleep she talk about why she didn't have a good sleep, you know like, 'oh, the coyotes were out there howling around last night and I couldn't get to sleep because the dog was barking at them....' And all of that was just, she didn't require me to answer anything. Which I thought was really good, you know? So, it was listening to the language.... And then...we would, I would speak to her in the language, you know? Like, 'oh, tsucwínucw,' which means good morning. More, it's the traditional way to say good

morning; which actually, literally means, ‘oh I see you made it through the night.’ It was, yeah, these mentor apprentice sessions are really...they're really amazing because you do find yourself working. (M. Sandy, 2020)

Learning the language through traditional activities at home, is another example of how the MAP program facilitates learning the language through authentic and meaningful contexts. All the participants indicated a preference for their MAP language learning settings, and did not mourn the lack of, or other resources provided within, a classroom.

### **Language Teaching Methods Found within MAP**

*Finding the pine needles that merge well to create a beautiful and/or useful basket are necessary to the overall design. If the materials you need are mismatched, some pine needles are freshly gathered while others have been in storage too long, the basket will not come together cohesively. It will be fragile.* As too, is the relationship and dynamics of a MAP pair.

Although the MAP is an immersion-based language program, curiosity led to this study's third research question: what [other] methods of language teaching are used in a Mentor-Apprentice session? Other second language teaching methods thought to be found within the program were Total Physical Response (TPR), the Communicative Approach, and the Natural Approach. Also anticipated were Indigenous methods of teaching: Storytelling, as well as inferring meaning within specific MAP lessons. Finally, linguistic analyses, specifically morphology, has been a huge influence on Secwepemctsin, and will be explored further, and separately, within the final theme of this chapter.

### ***MAP Total Immersion***

The original Master-Apprentice Program, begun by Hinton, had their teams commit to 10-20 hours of immersive training per week for a year (approximately 300 hours) (Hinton,

2002). In this study the original MAP concept, as envisioned by Hinton, of teams prevailed. However, there was one instance of a MAP group consisting of 8 apprentices and two mentors. As well, dyad MAP teams would sometimes meet for their MAP language sessions. There is also a distinction in the timing between participants' MAP experiences (some were part of a MAP program that asked the dyad to complete 300 hours within a year, and the other teams were part of a cohort-based MAP program that asked them to complete a program of 150 hours over 6 months).

Total immersion, as encouraged by the MAP program, was sometimes found to be unrealistic. Participants indicated, and were also encouraged within their initial training sessions, to inject periods of English language breaks. This suggests a loosening of the original strict guidelines of total immersion.

Sorry I just...just to interject, I want to, I want to say, that the MAP program, and in our training, we're told, you know, like, remember that the mentors, many of them are elders. So, we need to make sure that they are comfortable and, so, which is all familiar to us, anyways, right? You know? Make sure everybody is comfortable, and able to continue, and don't tire them out too much, right? So, also planning in breaks, because it's hard. You don't realize how much work, like actual work, it is to learn a language until you start sitting down and trying to be in immersion. And it's hard having your brain, think, and think, and think, and trying to remember the words to what you're trying to say. It's...it's hard. And I know it's, I can't...I can't explain how hard it is, it...it's like you've been reading a really detailed...and...textbook on, maybe like physics, and you have, sort of, a pop quiz coming up. And you know it's coming up but, so you need to, sort of, remember what you were learning from that textbook. It's kind of like that. So, I...I really

appreciated that in that training, in our MAP training session. At the beginning we were told, 'don't be afraid to have breaks, but remember that,' you know, 'you...you have those breaks and then go back into immersion.' You need to, you need to plan those breaks, right? (M. Sandy, 2020)

I'm not supposed to teach reading and writing, but I truly believe that we are in the world of that. You have to keep the language alive, it's going to have to be, you know, like say the policies and that will have to be written down. And, the apprentices have to, if they want to teach, they have to be able to read and write. Because we're losing our elders. (Estkwelálnik, 2020)

Other dyads indicated that at times they felt the situation was not right for full immersion. An example as given by Cecilia was that there were other participants, who did not or were not planning on learning Secwepemetsín, present at their MAP sessions.

But I think traveling, like with...like with Secwépemc Matriarch, she, you know, she likes to travel. So, and that's more interesting. You know, like I mean when we're having lunch, we...her hubby was there so we don't want to speak Shuswap all the time. But just the...just the highlights we done on. (2020)

The FPCC, anticipating challenges with a full immersion approach for some participants, provides training to MAP teams prior to the beginning of their MAP learning sessions. The following quotes from M. Sandy and C. William's interviews reveal parallels in their MAP training.

Oh, they taught, how to stay in the language? Survival...survival words. So, 'how do you say...how do I say, can you say that, can you say that, again,' or, 'again. Say it slower.'

So, with them, you have to stay in the language, like, 100% of the time. And they...so they gave us those survival things. What is, like, if they didn't understand, 'what is this word?' And, you can say it. Gestures, using facial expressions, body language, actually doing it. 'What is this, what is that, this is, that is, over there?' And, that's where my mom was telling me all of those different ways to say, 'there.' Like, 'where over there, how far over there?' (C. William, 2020)

The goal of the program is to stay in immersion. So, our training all of our, all of the MAP teams, were trained at the beginning. And, that was exactly it, we were taught how to stay in the language. We were given questions on, or statements to, for either the mentor or the apprentice, to say, to stay in the language. My, the best one that I like is, 'how do you say that, how do you say whatever,' in the language. So, 'Stém'i ke7 tsut.s re pen?' and I would be holding up the pen and showing it to my mentor. And then she'd look at it and she'd go, 'oh,' she'd say, 'qímeke7 yí7ene.' So, that I'd know all that's what she said. So then, and then I would use that in well whatever I'm talking about, right? So, if I ever got tripped up, that was the plan in the training is if you ever get tripped up, you have you have these questions to follow-up back on. (M. Sandy, 2020)

Figure 4 offers an example of a valuable resource provided during MAP training sessions. It contains frequently used expressions and questions that dyads can use regularly to keep them interacting in the language during MAP sessions.

### 3. Ten Points for Successful Language Learning<sup>5</sup>

After you have figured out how to get started with your Master-Apprentice Program, it's important to be clear about how you will learn and teach the language. Here are some important points to remember when learning your language.

#### 1. LEAVE ENGLISH BEHIND—COMMUNICATE USING ONLY YOUR LANGUAGE.

- > **Resist** speaking English even though it would be much easier in many situations.
- > Think of English as a habit you are trying to break. If you catch yourself using English, switch right back into your own language. This may happen quite regularly at first, but keep reminding each other to use your language only.

In the beginning learn basic questions and phrases in the language so that you don't have to use English.

For example:

- How do you say \_\_\_\_\_?
- Could you repeat that please?
- Could you say it more slowly?
- I don't understand.
- What is this? What is that? What is this called? What are those?
- What am I doing? What are you doing? What should I do now?
- Am I correct? Am I right?

stemi ke7 tsat ne \_\_\_\_\_?

tsatce cutsem

(tsatce yuyunt) kenkintes ke7 sagwlate

ta7 ren gegn? mentsen?

stemi ye7ene? stemi yirey?

ec kenemwen? ec kenemwen?

ec kenemwen? ec kenemwen?

ec kenemwen? ec kenemwen?

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- > Learn some phrases in the language to help each other stay in the language. Some of these phrases may need to be reworded to fit with your language.

For example:

- Please speak to me in our language.
- Now say that in our language.
- Tell me a story, legend or traditional story. Tell me about an event.
- Tell me what's in this picture or photo (or some other visual object).
- What is happening here (pointing to the picture)? Tell me what is happening in this picture.

gugwlate ne xgweltent

gugwlate ne xgweltent

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<sup>5</sup> These 10 points are adapted from Chapter 2 of Leanne Hinton's book *How to Keep Your Language Alive* (Hinton 2002).

Figure 4 - Key Questions and Phrases to Stay in Immersion

Having been provided teaching and learning resources at their initial training prepared MAP dyads with the needed tools to situate themselves within an immersive environment for their MAP sessions. As indicated by participants, the safety net questions and sentences to assist

dyads with remaining in immersion, as well as the other games and suggested immersive activities were used by the dyads. Figure 5 provides an example of a community language immersion cultural activity organized by a MAP dyad. The mentee Dancing Water describes it.

And then...if we were doing something – like we made ribbon skirts, and we repaired regalia, and we did beadwork, and sewed different things together for whatever project she needed, or I needed -- we went over colours and supply names, and cutting things, or putting things together. Different materials, what they were called. And so, we did that, a lot of that, in the winter because you're not outside as much. So, in the winter we switched into...indoor activities. (Dancing Water Sandy, 2020)



WLFN Language Social Event  
**How to Make a Ribbon Skirt with Secwepemcstin**

Facilitated by Dancing Water Sandy  
Language Mentorship by A.J. William  
Funded by WLFN Language and Culture

Schedule: Friday February 12  
Saturday February 13  
Friday February 19  
Time: 6pm – 9pm

This course is for **WLFN community members (including off reserve members)** and will be presented entirely online via Zoom. Ribbon Skirt Kits will be mailed to participants. Please send the following: Mailing Address, Phone Number, Email, along with your waist and inseam measurements with your RSVP.

**\*IMPORTANT: Participants Will Need To Provide the Following Items\***

Sewing machine  
Iron  
Scissors  
Measuring Tape

Internet Connection & Computer or Device.  
Please Download Zoom App Prior to attending the session

\* Participants will need to have knowledge on how to operate their sewing machine, including loading the bobbin, changing the stitch pattern, and threading their machine.

*Figure 5 - Community Engagement Language and Culture Workshop*

Crazy Squirrel reports on another spontaneous language and culture immersion opportunity during a MAP session.

Yeah. Then...and then I go for a walk with them, and we...I showed them different plants, and what they are, in the language. Or, just in the spur of the moment, we'll get up and we'll go and pick some pitch and give it to Tony and Elsie. (2020)

Immersion, whether strictly following the MAP guidelines or not, highlighted the abilities of the fluent speaking mentors, while providing a much-needed opportunity to hear and use the language.

### ***Mentor's Teaching Style***

The goal of MAP is to pair professionally un-trained, but fluent, speakers and learners together (Hinton, 2002). As the following quotes illustrate, and as expected in any teaching environment, many different teaching styles within the "MAP immersion" technique emerged. For example, M. Sandy's mentor seems to be keen on implementing full immersion.

But Tým'e is also aware that we need to speak the language more. So, she realized that this MAP program focuses on immersion. And, so, she meant, 'we're doing immersion.' Which is wonderful, and I think that's what you have to have is both...both participants really have to be, I find, you have to both be committed to immersion and speaking the language in order to be successful in completing your MAP program. (M. Sandy, 2020)

Crazy Squirrel, one of the mentors, seems to favour teaching through stories. "And we go through that...where...maybe 20 minutes, or so, and then...and then, maybe, till I tell him a story, and the next time he tells me the story" (2020).

As suggested by Dancing Water's quote, her mentor capitalized on situational learning using TPR within traditional domestic, seasonal activities.

So, language was just an added benefit, actually, to all the things that we were gonna do. And it worked out that way. Actually, it was pretty fantastic because...we canned, we

picked berries.... [S]o we'd go for a drive, and we'd talk about land formations and weather, and territory, and names of places. We'd talk about...modern made-up words, like, for vehicle.... [W]hat you would call a truck. We talked about things inside the truck, right? Like all the different stuff inside the truck. We would talk about...giving directions..., 'oh, turn left here,' right? Like...a Siri, 'turn left now.' But...lucky for me she never tried to make me go...she was kind enough to not do that yet, but, yeah, I'm sure that's coming. (2020)

As seen here, in addition to the immersion style that is inherent within the MAP program, mentors approached their teaching style with the Communicative Approach teaching method, a few participants implied their use of Total Physical Response, and the Grammar-Translation Approach with their MAP sessions, and one mentor used storytelling.

Then there was...yeah, turning on the light. Open the window, and the curtain. Simple, yeah, simple commands. Putting on your shoes, putting on your hat. Like in the Wintertime, taking off your coat when you walk in the house. Yeah, there is always simple things she tells me when I'm walking in the house. 'You took off your shoes. You took off your qmut.' (Joseph A., 2020)

Yeah. I tell them stories like that. Or...or they tell me stories about their adventures, out in the bush. On the land.... It's all about learning. Gonna try and make it really interesting. Instead of all, just, bookwork. (Crazy Squirrel, 2020)

With the apprenticeship I had an elder come and stay, come into my home. And that was, wow! That really heightened, increased my learning because we'd get up in the morning

and you know she talk about everything about breakfast. She'd sit here and tell me what I'm doing. Or ask me what I'm doing, and I'd have to answer her. (Estkwelálnik, 2020)

We want to be able to expand the [words]...and show that the words have different grammatical features. Anyways, so we're...we're interested in the grammar, I guess, behind the language. And so that's sort of our, the angle we come at it from, from our MAP sessions. (M. Sandy, 2020)

Some mentors indicated that they knew their apprentices did not yet have enough Secwepemctsín vocabulary/language knowledge to fully understand advanced speech, so they adjusted their teaching accordingly. As with Crazy Squirrel, "Tell...them the story. I haven't gotten into the language, yet. It's pretty...it's pretty intense. The words are a bit too big. Too advanced for them..." (2020). She goes on to emphasize her conscientious teaching technique, with another mentor, Cecilia, providing additional examples of adjusting her language teaching to her apprentice,

I start primary and then...and then after bit I start throwing in a higher level in the language, like University level. I have one beginner, so I do all mostly primary with her. Once in a while, I might throw in a University level word, but I'll tell her about it. And I tell them not to teach primary level. I gotta watch that, I just teach primary level and not the throw the University level in there, because you get all mixed up. You have to really watch that. (Crazy Squirrel, 2020)

I am really relaxed...relaxed with Secwépemc Matriarch when she comes, because she understands most of what I say. So, you don't have to, like you...you tend to baby, not

baby talk, but you tend to...[repeat]...Yeah. Kind of, yeah. Yeah. Or make it easier somehow for...for the non-speaker when you're teaching then, when they don't know anything. But I'm...I'm getting over that with [my other apprentice] because I...I know she's determined to learn. So now I gotta try and be just normal and direct. (Cecilia, 2020)

### **Apprentice's Learning Experiences**

Apprentices also acknowledged the importance of patience and perseverance when learning Secwepemctsin, as noted by Joseph A.,

You have to be patient with it. That's the thing I notice. A lot of people don't have patience. Secwepemctsin, you have to be patient with yourself mostly, I think. And your mentor is always there, and they want you to learn. You'll get there, you'll get there. Just keep at it, you'll get there. (Joseph A., 2020)

He does go onto acknowledge his improvement in pronunciation and comprehension through the MAP.

'Cause [MAP gave] a boost of my confidence. Kinda, speaking it and my pronunciation. I know some words I wasn't pronouncing right 'cause the way I remembered it, and the way I was saying it, I know it wasn't right. So, I know there was some things I had to correct. I didn't...I didn't know the information and how to say certain things. So, it's definitely upped my fluency, and my confidence. (2020)

The need for commitment to the MAP process to ensure/facilitate successful development of language fluency was noted by Skémcis,

But...I think the biggest thing about doing the Master Apprentice Program, is you gotta have the commitment. So, if you don't have the commitment it's not gonna work. We did

it, like I say, for three years, and four of us stuck it out. Then, at the end of that, according to my mentors, I was 90% fluent.... And the other two were beginners, total beginners. Well, I guess I shouldn't say total. The one had took...took it all through high school in Williams Lake. And she could read and write it, but she couldn't speak it. That was one of the things she...she realized that. They'd say it to her, and she'd write it down because she was so good at the reading and writing, but she couldn't talk. At the end they figured they were at least 50% of those, after those three years. So, they...they went along really well. (Skémcis, 2020)

Sometimes, apprentices' curiosity would surpass their mentors' knowledge of certain topics. As with C. William,

She'd give a few, or I'd ask a few, questions, "how do you say this?" And some of the things I was asking, she didn't know. But it was just vocabulary things, like, "how do you say...?" that they would never hardly ever use anyways. Like, "what is...how do you say, 'Northstar?'" "How do you say, 'a falling star?'" "How do you say, 'the Milky Way?'" "How do you say, 'the Northern Lights?'" Those things, I...I didn't know. So, I was asking her, and she didn't know. She gave me a few of them. But the same thing I asked Bridget, another time, and the same thing, she...she didn't, she heard them, but she never could remember them either. (2020)

Or, sometimes I think, "Oh my God! I don't know anything!" It's just frustrating...if you [her apprentice] ask me something, and I don't know. You know? It bothers me. I think, "God I should know that!" (Estkwelálnik, 2020)

Apprentices also acknowledged the need to constantly try to use the language intentionally to make progress towards fluency.

But as you don't go out as often...in the winter when you start not doing those things.

Then you lose those vocabulary, unless you're continually using them. Which was, sort of, we did a lot of review, all the time. But it still isn't all in there, you know? (Dancing Water Sandy, 2020)

The findings in this section highlight the variety of experiences, complexities and challenges experienced by learners of Secwepemctsin. It highlights the tremendous time investment and commitment required to learn a language. It takes a long time and a herculean effort.

### **Morpheme Analysis and MAP**

*The details found within a pine needle basket are numerous, if examined closely. For instance, the root tips of the pine needle fascicles provide a myriad of possibilities in basket design.* So, too, you can see patterns within a language. Within Secwepemctsin, the prefixes, infixes and suffixes of the language provide a variety of learning opportunities for language learners once they have been exposed to the idea of these small pieces of meaning within a language. Learning artifacts, learning activities, and participants' interviews revealed that several mentors capitalized on morphological analyses when teaching new vocabulary.

I had learned how to identify Prefixes, Root Words and Suffixes in my Language

Proficiency Certificate Course. I had taken some more Advanced Courses and attended a Language Immersion Camp where we worked on Prefixes, Root Words and Suffixes....

Both of my Mentors were Language Teachers and were comfortable with teaching me some grammar and added to my knowledge in this area. (Estkwelálnik, 2021)

So, we're all, you know, for example, one of the projects that we have on our back burner is that we were wanting to take the word lists in the dictionaries and expand those into each form of how people would say it. So, that one word. So, for example, how I could use hello, 'hello - I say hello to you; I say hello to them; I say hello to them, but not you; or, I say hello to us, but not that person.' Things like that, you know? We want to be able to expand the...and show that the words have different grammatical features. Anyways, so we're...we're interested in the grammar, I guess, behind the language. And so that's sort of our, the angle we come at it from, from our MAP sessions. (M. Sandy, 2020)

So, there'd be some like that, and she would think of those words. And she would ask, tell, me, 'what does this mean?' And I would say...then I would try to break it up. And she'd just laugh and laugh. And she's, like, 'no, that's not...and then something.' Asking me how I'm trying to get it. And, but she found it interesting that's how I was learning it. (C. William, 2020)

Thus, as seen with a few of the participants, morpheme analysis within their MAP sessions was a valuable learning activity that, according to their perception, helped them make significant progress towards Secwepemetsín fluency.

And I really started looking at root words. That's when I decided I'm just going to concentrate...I was at a point where I concentrated a lot on the suffixes and prefixes. And...and then... 'cause a word can change, like "úllewe," and, "tsúllewe" into...into, into 'come in,' you know? A command to come in. (Estkwelálnik, 2020)

Long story, short. And then I felt...the more we harvested, and the more we were on the land, the more I was able to retain those vocabulary, or those ways of being. And...the endings for plants or the endings for, you know,... different forms of plants. And so, it was really good to be able to do that. (Dancing Water Sandy, 2020)

*It is interesting to note that morpheme analysis – just like the separation and examination of each pine needle strand, piece of sinew, or material needed to create a pine needle basket -- provided an insightful tool for these MAP teams, and potentially, for future Secwepemctsin learners.*

### **Hindering Aspects of MAP**

*With any important tool or resource, there are also limitations. For instance, a pine needle basket is a great receptacle for storing goods; however, you would not use a pine needle basket for carrying water as it is not waterproof; neither would you use it to cook on fire, because it would burn. To receive a full picture of the Mentor Apprentice Program within Secwepemctsin language learning, the limitations must also be examined.*

First, and as stated by the developer of MAPs, one of the intentions of the MAP program is to provide an environment to learn the language through immersion.

The master-apprentice program is designed so that a highly motivated team consisting of a speaker and a learner can go about language teaching/learning on their own, without outside help from experts. The teaching and learning is done through immersion: the team members commit themselves to spending ten to twenty hours per week together, speaking primarily in the language (Hinton & Steele, 2002, p. xiv).

However, this immersion environment does not seem to be the ideal learning environment for beginner learners with no, or very little, proficiency.

One, like I say, it's really difficult 'cause the dominant language is English and is really typical to...to just strictly conversing in the language. I feel like I'm just talking to myself, I don't know if anybody else is hearing me. Or understanding me. And, I feel, sometimes I feel uncomfortable. Like if I'm continuously talking.... It's really difficult sometimes. (A.J. William, 2020)

Another hindering aspect noted by two mentors is the perceived lack of commitment to dedicate the time and effort required to learn a language, which results in frustration and fatigue for the mentor.

Whereas, with the ones I'm apprenticing now, I find that I have to come up with the routine. And it's partly frustrating, but I like having a routine. Like, for example, I want you to review the story, so you can remember some of the words, and patterns.

And...and, I have one apprentice that the commitment is weak. And that's really frustrating. And it's hard to sit back and just say, 'well, if they really want to learn I will...they will have to make that effort.' And I find myself calling and establishing the routine, and all that stuff, and I find that frustrating. (Estkwelálnik, 2020)

I guess I'd just like to say that...that I think that it's a really good program. And...what I think, if they're gonna keep doing it, they should make sure the teams have the commitment to do it.... And I've often thought...been thinking about it, to try and mentor somebody. And that would be the one thing I'd really make sure of is that they're committed. They're not gonna just wanna get together once in a while, and that. Like, I see some now that instead of getting together regularly, they're trying to cram it at the

last part, just to get their 50 hours. We had to do so many hours, and we had to fill out paperwork and everything. (Skémcis, 2020)

The funding timeline established by MAP does not include the summer, which regrettably leads to missing seasonal language learning opportunities on the land.

There's gapping in seasons, and then there's also, 'cause there's nothing...we don't do nothing in the summer.... [S]ummer is always off for MAP. And that's...one of our busiest things. So, we always do...a Spring harvest and a Fall harvest. Because you get to pick...some Fall-time stuff at the beginning of your next MAP hours, right? But...your other MAP hours end in the Spring, right? So...you miss all of summer, right? So, there's that gap. (Dancing Water Sandy, 2020)

Seasonal gaps in the MAP program are like gaps within a basket. When there is a gap in the weaving of the basket, the overall design is affected. Perhaps the paring of misaligned pine needles shows the potential flaws within a basket design. So too can anyone teaching method fall short of providing all of the needed teaching tools for the development/revitalization of a language.

## **Discussion**

*The pine needles, now cleaned and sorted, can be assembled with thought and the strong support of the needle and sinew. Pine needles chosen for their root, length and colour that match the pattern of the basket. The needle, sharp or blunt when needed, to pass sinew through and around the pine needles. The sinew itself supports the basket, holding it together through careful placement of stitches.*

This section provides a discussion of the findings extracted from the participants voices. Participants highlighted their development of Secwépemc language and cultural fluency; the wide range of teaching methods utilized within their MAP sessions; the importance of learning on the land and through seasonal, traditional activities; and the value of morpheme analysis in learning new words. They also emphasized in, different ways, the importance of relationality; their authentic experiences; and, finally, they talked about some hindering incidents throughout their program.

This discussion is organized around the questions that guided this study, with the first part focusing on aspects that facilitated or hindered Secwepemctsín fluency. The second section will focus on aspects that facilitated or hindered Secwépemc cultural fluency. Then the focus will turn to discussing the teaching and learning methods that were employed during MAP sessions. Finally, it will discuss emerging evidence of the use of morphological analysis as a tool for teaching and learning Secwepemctsín.

### **Relationality**

Analyzing the initial research question “what helped or hindered Secwepemctsín fluency within the MAP program?”, what emerged was that various forms of relationality, as well as the accessible resources, which were integral to the success of apprentices’ language learning. This

resonates with Iokepa-Guerrero's (2016) assertion about the Hawaiian concept of "*ohana* setting of support and community," an integral component in Hawaiian language revitalization. Like in *ohana*, cultural activities, items, and resources are commonplace within their language teaching. This ensures the continuation of their language *within* their culture. Similar to Hawaiian *ohana*, in Secwépemc culture relationality transverses each aspect of Secwépemc life. Reliance upon one another, upon the family, the community and the nation as a whole was, and still is to a certain degree, the cornerstone of the Secwépemc way of life. You are taught at a young age to care for your elders, to make sure they have a place to sit that is comfortable, with their preferred sustenance, and within good distance of others to visit with. They in turn entertain the younger generations with stories and keep an eye on them while the adults are engaged in their work. Children and teenagers are tasked with various jobs that support the whole. It is cyclical. Within this study, Dancing Water Sandy (2020) made sure to engage in activities that were enjoyable to her mentor. Crazy Squirrel (2020) knew that she had to engage her audience, her apprentices, when their minds wandered too far. She regaled them with stories, *slexé'yem*, that piqued their interest. Finally, Cecilia (2020) mentions how her apprentice continues to visit her, even after the cessation of their MAP partnership.

The Secwépemc concept of respect, critical in relationality, emerged through the findings in this study. This was evidenced in the careful and thoughtful way mentees approached fluent speakers, most of them Elders, to ask them to be their mentors. This honours Secwépemc ways of being "All persons older than oneself are to be treated with respect. The word used in Secwepemetsín for this is *xyemstéc* (you honour someone)" (Ignace & Ignace, 2017, p. 326). Mutual respect was also revealed in the way mentors and mentees negotiated the best time and places to do activities. As C. William (2020) had stated, making sure to respect the time and

energy the mentor puts into their MAP lessons, without the added pressure of deadlines, made the sessions enjoyable.

In this study, prior relationships, and with the majority of the participants, kinships, were fully part of this research. This is important to establish within the research up front as it affirms the trust of the participants. Relationships are built day by day, little by little, and nurtured through mutual respect. Within this concept, the generation gap between the mentors and apprentices would be considered an important aspect of language learning. Indeed, as Kipuri points out,

Indigenous knowledge is embedded in community practices, institutions, relationships and rituals and is inextricably linked to indigenous peoples' identity, their experiences with the natural environment and hence their territorial and cultural rights. Indigenous peoples therefore place a great deal of importance on passing this knowledge on to future generations--not only for the sake of preserving the knowledge, but also for preserving their own cultures and identities. (2006, pp. 64-65)

Indeed, the participants themselves showed that the relationships were enhanced between elders and their younger apprentices through the MAP language program.

Along respect, relationships are also strengthened with reciprocity. In the MAP reciprocity was embodied in the major motivation by participants to pass along to their community and future generations the language they were learning and the goal of becoming mentors themselves upon achieving higher fluency levels. This reciprocity within the MAP program was also identified by McIvor et al. (2018), when reporting on a study examining MAP across BC, "Most of the interviewed apprentices became (more) deeply involved in their

community through or following their participation in MAP; they took on roles as teachers, speakers, leaders, and became role models for others.”

However, as previously recognized by McIvor et al (2018) and as evidenced in this study, relationship dynamics within MAP dyads also face challenges. In this study, some challenges emerged, and were mainly centered around commitment of either individual (mentor or mentee). It seems that a delicate balance, of topics of interest and level of work contributed, must be struck between the dyad to establish a successful partnership of language development. Unfortunately, there is not a magic solution to this hindering aspect. Learning a language requires overwhelming time investment. For example, the Kalispel model for language revitalization, which is currently one of the most successful models (e.g., they were able to go from a handful of speakers to creating a small core group of intermediate speakers, and growing, using their model) requires a minimum of 1000 hours to achieve beginner fluency, and an anticipated 2000 hours for full proficiency according to Johnson (2014, 2017).

Another point to consider is that it does not seem to be the ideal learning environment for beginner learners with no, or very little, proficiency – when paired with a mentor of first-language fluency. The extreme amount of pressure felt by both language learners, and fluent speakers, to produce more speakers is certainly felt, as with Estkwelálnik (2020) “I felt such pressure. To...have the knowledge, or know, what I'm talking about. There was so much pressure. And they weren't pressuring me, it was myself that was pressuring myself.” This addresses the tension in the language learning research literature in general and in Indigenous language revitalization about facilitating and hindering aspects of immersion. Wilson & Kamana (2001) point out several challenges faced within Indigenous revitalization and immersion. First, they explain that initial immersion programming was meant for already established dominant

languages (i.e., French Canadian), and that many Indigenous languages are at a disadvantage with few fluent speakers, program funding, training, and curriculum resource creation. Following this observation, Indigenous communities have high expectations for their immersion programs to produce fully fluent speakers that will flip the dominant language to that of the heritage language. This is a difficult goal, even for the Hawaiian and Maori language immersion movements both of which enjoys the benefit of being the only Indigenous language of their respective islands and have strong community support. Finally, they indicate that the majority of the “immersion” programs implemented by Indigenous communities are more “‘culture- and language- driven programs’ ...than subject-matter-driven programs,” with only a few (i.e., Mohawk, Secwépemc, Cree) providing true “immersion programming.” (Wilson & Kamana, 2001, p. 38).

One of this research study findings asserted that language and cultural fluency were strengthened through the MAP program, especially when allowing the dyad to engage in their language sessions on the land or participating in traditional activities around the home. The mentor and apprentice were able to allow their natural teaching and learning styles to enhance their Secwepemctsin educational activities. Through their slexéyem (in this case, interviews), participants asserted strong relationality is essential for successful learning within MAP. This study provided various findings on the importance of relationships within the MAP, and how it influences language and cultural fluency, as well as the trust needed between MAP dyads and the MAP organizers.

Establishing that the mentorship pair can successfully work with one another was an indicator of overall success. Trust is essential to language learning success, as quoted by Chris Parkin in Johnson (2017), “Chris Parkin, during teacher training, adds two rules for teaching

beginners which stress the importance of classroom safety: never test, and never correct. Never put a learner on the spot in front of other learners” (p. 517). Dyad success relied upon these rules as well. At most, mentors would use repetition of the correct forms or words in order for their apprentices to hear and comprehend the Secwepemctsin that they were learning as expressed by A.J. William,

And, but I've noticed that this term where my...my apprentices are coming up with their own sentences and saying words and...and the pronunciation has extremely improved to the point where I don't have to do any corrections. And, I don't like doing corrections, I just like to repeat things until they until they can get it. (2020)

Within Secwépemc ontology, as an example of respect for each other, our storytellers would often use the *stseptékwll* (stories), as alluded to by Ignace and Ignace (2017), to impart important teachings to their audience. The lessons were never stated outright, the learners must actively think about the story and derive the lesson on their own. Here this shows the respect that Secwépemc elders had for their youth, they did not announce their transgressions, instead allowing them to correct their own mistakes. As evidenced by Crazy Squirrel who allowed for her own apprentices to learn from her own storytelling during their MAP sessions.

### **Authentic Experiences**

*The interconnectedness of language and culture are as tightly woven as a pine needle basket. Qwlélwem-ken tek kéme, I gather some pine needles, ne s7etqwillp, on the Ponderosa pine tree, méte ren túme, with my aunt (mother's sister). These experiences with gathering resources are filled not only with language, but knowledge passed down through the generations...the knowledge of where to find the kéme, how to gather the needles, how to clean and care for them*

*once you have brought them home.* The highlights of this study, however, recognized that the locality of MAP sessions enhanced the Secwepemctsín educational experience for the dyads.

Originally when asserting the second research question of, “what helped or hindered cultural fluency within the MAP program?” the idea was to separate and distinguish Secwépemc “language” and “culture” to determine the apparent growth of each fluency type within participants. However, when prompted by the researcher, participants seemed at a loss on the distinction between language and culture. Secwépemc Matriarch (2020) asserted that the MAP program,

helps strengthen me in the language, but in the culture, as well.... I do a lot of stuff, but it just makes me stronger.” She goes on to say that, “...we are still practicing all that we can. With the language..., and with our culture.... [M]y daughter is going to have a baby this winter and she wants to start on the MAP project, as well.... [T]o know that our culture is going to still keep going and be strong. (2020)

Her comments on language and culture are woven together throughout her interview. As supported by Ignace & Ignace, they emphasize that Secwepemctsín influences and “embeds” Secwépemc ontology (2017, p.121).

Rather, participants focused on the cultural methods of learning the language that indicated authentic Secwépemc experiences that enhanced Secwepemctsín fluency. As indicated by Gessner et al. (2017), MAP and other immersion land-based programs are key to establishing new speakers as opposed to classroom-based models. As laid out in the findings, participants found that working on the land relaxed their inhibitions of “learning/teaching” and allowed the dyad to engage unencumbered with Secwepemctsín. “And I really love going out on the land. 'Cause when you're out there, everything else falls away. Time falls away. And, you're just doing

the activity. And she wasn't as, my sister, wasn't as stressed about teaching” (Estkwelálnik, 2020).

Their presence on the land prompted their early language exposure. Two instances where apprentices indicated their MAP work, as occurring on the land, stimulated those early memories of their Secwepemctsín comprehension. As Estkwelálnik recollects,

...also going out on the land triggered memories. It triggered memories of, like say when we're doing the ethnobotany, it triggered memories of what my mom could do, you know? So many things that she would pick, and...you know? And the places, it just triggered memories. And, I think when that happened...the comprehension just started coming. (2020)

Secwépemc Matriarch agrees,

When we're on the land, and the words just flow then. And...it's pretty awesome. And, yeah. So, when I try and...bring the ladies if I go hunting, or go fishing, or berry picking, or medicine picking, or...canning salmon, or...drying meat, or drying salmon, or whatever. That's...when the learning happens. (2020)

As with on the land, participants also indicated that learning within the home, or community, provided numerous authentic Secwépemc experiences that enhanced their language sessions. What distinguished their indoor MAP educational opportunities, lay in the topic choice of participants. By engaging in language sessions that were tailored to their interests, participants overwhelmingly found that their language fluency was heightened. As Hinton & Steele stated,

You will do many activities where the language can be used readily, and you will also be involved in activities where the language may not ever have been used before; thus, you will become linguistic innovators. Do any activity you want together, whether it is sitting

at a table together, going on a walk, cooking a meal, going shopping, doing laundry, fixing the car, going to a ceremony, collecting wild edible plants, or anything else. (2002, p. 10)

Thus, their MAP activities reflect their real-life language needs (and wants). Hinton asserted that through this method, MAP dyads innovate their curriculum, through interest-based teaching and learning of Secwepemctsin (2002).

### **MAP Methods and Experiences**

*Ponderosa pine needles come within fascicles of three within their set of needles ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pinus\\_ponderosa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pinus_ponderosa)). The fascicles can be separated to individual needles to make a delicate walled basket, the three fascicled needles can be used to make a thin-walled basket, or the needles can be all bunched together (in small parcels) to form a thick-walled basket. The mentors' knowledge provides that strong thick-walled basket with their ability to pass on Secwepemctsin, and their group of strands represent their different experiences and teaching methods. Each group of strands provides the strength needed to continue to revitalize Secwepemctsin.*

The third question in this study asked, "What methods of language teaching are used in the MAP sessions?" The data showed that mentors used a wide range of teaching methods, other than the obvious immersion of the MAP method, all with a focus on developing oral fluency (listening and speaking). This is in alignment with the communicative approach to language teaching. Within that approach, mentors would assume the use of total physical response, but only in certain instances to reinforce their particular MAP session topic. More surprising, was the low indication of traditional storytelling within the teaching methods of the MAP pairs. Only a few mentioned the use of traditional storytelling (*stspetékwl*) within their MAP language

sessions. Although, many of the MAP sessions relayed that *slexéyem* (stories/news), rather than the *stspetékwll* (stories/legends), were a main source of their language sessions.

### ***MAP Immersion***

In the findings, participants indicated that the immersive method of MAP was upheld within their sessions. However, they did indicate that full-intensive immersion was not the case. This “immersion” appears more language, or cultural, specific depending on the different MAP teams interviewed. As the majority of participants were in a program of shorter duration, MAP cohorts ran into a few more hindering incidents of the MAP experience. Some participants, both mentor and mentee alike, indicated that at times it was difficult to maintain immersion. Either due to mentors’ dormant language use which inhibited their ability to quickly communicate about any given topic, or due to their actual lack of language knowledge of a particular topic. For example, Crazy Squirrel (2020) states, “I’m honest with them, because I don’t use the language all the time. I forget things.”

### ***Mentors Experience***

Participants, or more specifically the mentors, indicated that maintaining an immersive environment could be more challenging depending on the language level of their apprentice. As A.J. William (2020) pointed out, “I feel like I’m just talking to myself, I don’t know if anybody else is hearing me. Or understanding me. And, I feel, sometimes I feel uncomfortable. Like if I’m continuously talking.” This aligns with David G. Underwood’s (2017) assertion that as a beginner speaker, comprehension of language, and language translation, is often taken very literally. The nuances of the Indigenous language may be lost on a beginner speaker as they do not recognize that direct translations may not always be possible. So, mentors’ discomfort at speaking immersively to their apprentices at times is a valid hinderance to MAP immersion.

Communicative, and the natural, approach to language teaching aligns well with the MAP method of teaching and learning a language. Participants in this study indicated that the communicative approach, whether it be through direct conversation or through actions, enhanced their MAP experiences. As both participants Estkwelálnik and M. Sandy (2020) attain, listening, or in some cases actively responding to TPR imperatives, to their mentor, and having to respond appropriately, heightened their language learning. As Hinton & Steele (2002) relates,

Our format also uses a modified form of the model of communicative competence,...where the master and apprentice focus on learning appropriate communication in different situations. The apprentice learns how to perform and respond appropriately to greetings, invitations, questions, apologies, and so on. She must learn storytelling, ceremonial behaviour, and other forms of communicative acts as appropriate to the culture. (p. xvi)

Hinton & Steele (2002) confirms the correlation, or interaction, of the communicative approach within the MAP method.

Another form of communicative teaching, but much more Indigenous in approach, is traditional storytelling. Within Secwépemc ontology *stspetékwl* formed a main teaching strategy within the community. As Ignace & Ignace (2017) affirm,

Secwépemc *stspetékwl* (*sic*)<sup>1</sup> – here alternatively termed ‘ancient stories’ or ‘oral traditions’ – have for countless generations given Secwépemc and other Interior peoples ‘equipment for living’; they show by example how to behave and how not to behave, as well as illustrating the social, moral, and natural consequences of past ancestors’ actions. (p. 57)

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<sup>1</sup> Ignace and Ignace (2017) are fluent speakers of Secwepemctsin, and their spelling is also definitely correct. However, in this thesis the use of Kuipers *Shuswap-English Dictionary* (1983, p. 70) will be used to keep consistent spelling.

Clearly this implies a certain reliance upon *stspetékwill* within Secwepemctsín teaching, especially, you would think, within the MAP method. However, many of the participants, whether by active exclusion or because the idea was not brought forth during their interview, did not emphasize traditional storytelling within their MAP experience. Instead, their focus implied much more *slexé'yem*, the concept of relayed personal history or experience (Ignace & Ignace, 2017). Other than the limitations of researchers' interview skills, this can also relate back to the mentors' use of the communicative approach within MAP sessions. Teachers, and elders' use sharing circles, often use this approach within a classroom to elicit learners' comprehension of topics. So too, it seems, did the mentors within this study.

### ***Apprentices' Experience***

The apprentices within this study indicated overall the need for perseverance and commitment to succeed within the MAP program. Their success with advancing within the program indicated their engagement within MAP could be reliant upon many factors, including Mentor training, allowing for authentic MAP experiences, timing and the time commitments of the pair, and a certain amount of bravery to “fail” during their MAP sessions on the side of the apprentice. Hinton & Steele (2002) alludes to this idea of commitment through the example of the learner who created an immersive experience for himself when there were no speakers of his language to engage with. He translated his language as he went throughout the day to become a fluent speaker.

This also refers to the general concern of all Indigenous language revitalizationists: the lack of fluent speakers, either now or in the near future, to pass on their language knowledge. Apprentices, and mentors, feel a certain pressure to continue their efforts to ensure the survival of their Indigenous language. As is show by Estkwelálnik (2020),

...and then I started doing, as a mentor...to me, as a mentor, it's easier because with the elders I felt such pressure. To...have the knowledge, or know, what I'm talking about. There was so much pressure. And they weren't pressuring me, it was myself that was pressuring myself. (2020)

Estkwelálnik also acknowledged that she felt her own apprentice was advancing sometimes too fast for her to keep ahead her language. As Hinton (2001) points out,

One of the major differences between the teaching of endangered languages and foreign-language teaching is that the students learning an endangered language are probably going to one day be the only speakers of that language. Thus any kind of error in grammar, pronunciation, communicative practices, and so on will actually become part of that language in the future. (p. 189)

This is also a concern acknowledged by participants within this study. The fact that someday, they will be the authority of Secwepemctsín.

This discussion shows the pine needle basket's weave, whether tight or gapping, the pine needles provide a unique pattern when woven together. As with the mentors and apprentices, the pine needles themselves, and how they are placed, provide a great metaphor for the MAP experience. The teaching and learning that emerge: the obvious immersive teaching method of MAP itself; mentors naturally using the Communicative Approach; the dichotomy of mentors' use of stspetékwl vs. slxéyem; apprentice's perseverance and commitment to learning Secwepemctsín; and the pressure that both the mentor and apprentice feel as the continuers of the emergent pine needle basket of Secwepemctsín. This leads us to the final study question, which connects to the concept of teaching methods within MAP, do participants honour the morphologically rich structure of Secwepemctsín?

## **Morphological Analysis...**

*As I examine the pine needles, I notice the root of the fascicle, I notice that each has three leaves. Some of the fascicles have leaves that are longer than others, some have leaves that are broken, or discoloured. In Secwepemctsín so too can you examine the language in such a fashion. You look at the root word, you examine the extending pre-, suf-, or even the in-fixes of the words. You begin to understand the meaning of each leaf.*

As mentioned above, linguistics has been influential in Secwepemctsín revitalization for the past 50 years. Morphology, or the breakdown of words into their smallest units of meaning, provides a great method of furthering beginning language learners into intermediate speakers.

During this study morphological analysis was queried, but not pushed as the main question during participant interviews. As such, a direct link to heightened language fluency due to the use of morphological analysis cannot be claimed. However, prior research does indicate advancement of language development within second language learners. Studies by Ramirez et al. (2014) and McCutcheon & Stull (2014) found that language development and vocabulary gains were found with increased morphological awareness. Thus, as seen with a few of the participants, morpheme analysis within their MAP sessions was a valuable learning activity that, according to their perception, helped them make significant progress in their Secwepemctsín progression toward fluency.

Because many of the remaining fluent speakers of Secwepemctsín were encouraged to teach the language within their respective School Districts, they were all required to provide evidence of their language teaching qualifications. This exposed all of these fluent Secwepemctsín speakers to linguistics in one way or another.

And...first time I did a mentorship was...I think it was in the 90's. Taking language classes with SFU, Simon Fraser University. And I was lucky enough to be taking it with all the language teachers. They were all the fluent language teachers because they were...they had to get their certificate, even though they were fluent. They had to get their certificate so they could teach. (Estkwelálnik, 2020)

As such, innate understanding of morpheme analysis was not found. This provides an avenue for further research within future Secwepemctsin MAP research.

## **Challenges of Research Process**

*As with any complex project, creating pine needle baskets has its limitations. Brittle needles, not enough sinew, needles that break mid-project. My research study pine needle basket encountered a few hindering setbacks. Unanticipated events and my novice research habits contribute to this first-time pine needle basket. Given away, so that it will keep record of the learning that had taken place when creating the final product.*

### **COVID-19 Pandemic**

Delays in the interview process, up to 5 months, were due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Alternative arrangements for interviews were made to be completed by telephone, or by video conference; however, most participants (9 out of the 10) preferred in-person interviews. This, along with the general disruption of life (which included travel, business, physical distancing measures, social media misinformation, general fear), proved too much for the initial research study timeline to complete the interviews (initially interviews were to be completed by the end of March 2020). Eventually, interviews were conducted with participants once the pandemic measures were lifted late in the summer 2020. Figure 6 shows the measures taken by the researcher to ensure COVID safety was adhered to. Swift measures to meet up with the majority of participants before the predicted second wave of the pandemic were made. The updated timeline of interviews stretched between July and October 2020. Follow-up questions were completed in January 2021 via email and responses trickled in over the first few weeks of February 2021.

Researcher's language teaching responsibilities, of having to adjust to teaching virtually due to the pandemic, at Thompson Rivers University for the Summer and Fall 2020 semesters also delayed the interview analysis timeline, which began in November 2020. However, teaching

responsibilities in the Fall 2020 semester, especially one new course, to be taught and delivered virtually, meant that the researcher continued to delay the thesis study.

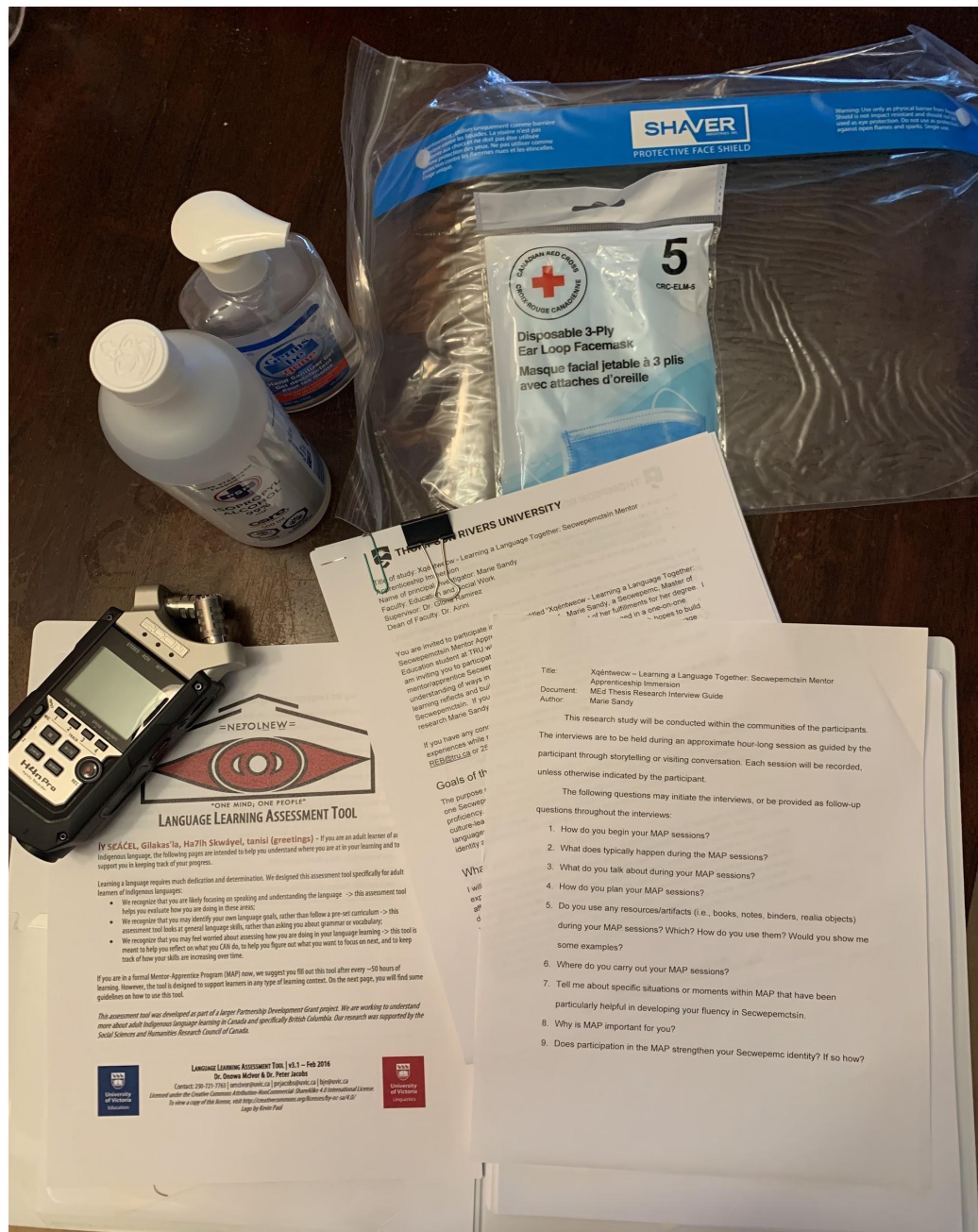


Figure 6 - Researcher's Toolkit, including COVID Safety Tools

## Critical Incident Technique

Relying upon examining helping and hindering incidents formed the basis of the data collection, the sorting and categorization remained in its original categories of the research

questions and did not strictly fall within CIT format. Instead, study analysis was triangulated through initial analysis and critical reflection by researcher, critical reflection by thesis supervisor, and confirmation of study findings by interview participants.

### ***Choice in Using Critical Incident Technique***

Through the interview analysis process, it was noticed that quite a bit of the details of the participants' interviews was cut out. This culling of the interviews data aligns too much with "western" research methods. For future research, other methods of research analysis, that allow the details of participants data to be provided and placed at the center of the research, instead of just as a "tool" for the end result of the study, will be sourced. Participant stories felt jilted and out of place in such an (Western) academic way. It was expected that their *slexéyem* (accounts/stories) would flow more naturally within this thesis study, however that was not the case.

### **Researcher Limitations, or Limitations of this Research**

In retrospect, asserting advanced research skills is difficult with only a handful of research assistant experiences. Certain limitations must be made, especially in the case of this study. As is set forth in the methodology section, participants were given a language self-assessment tool to complete during their interview. An assumption was made by the researcher that since the mentors themselves were already fluent speakers, that they would not have to complete the language assessment. Upon further reflection, it is an extreme shortcoming as the mentors could have taken the time to instead do a basic assessment, using the tool provided, of their apprentice(s). This would have provided so much more data on the fluency development of the apprentices of the MAP program.

Another blind spot of the research lay in the limitation of the interviewer's skills. Hindsight provides a clear picture to delve into the lack of traditional storytelling, *stseptékwll*, by the MAP dyads. It was interesting to note that only one of the mentors provided traditional storytelling, along with the current recollections (*slexé'yem*), during her MAP sessions. This could definitely be pursued as a great method of continuing traditional Secwépemc ontological methods of teaching within the Mentor Apprentice Program.

Finally, it was more of a regret of the researcher that the participants within this study were all successful past participants of the MAP program. This study would have had much more robust data to provide information on how to ensure future MAP participants within Secwepemctsín language programming can be successful. This is definitely an area for future research.

## **Future Research**

*Pine needles always remain after a project has completed. These core needles of knowledge have much to provide for other pine needle baskets. These baskets will have other usages, for collecting resources, holding knick-knacks, providing aesthetic appeal, for an offering or gift. These pine needles will once again be examined and separated for their new future. They will be soaked in the interest of those future weavers, to be created into something that will be useful to a new audience.*

This study provided a rich source for further research. The questions that arose from the shallow look into morpheme analysis within Secwepemctsin provided two points of interest: morpheme analysis as a training tool; and, examining morpheme analysis within Secwepemctsin learners (and teachers) for innate understanding, and the difference when specifically taught. This study only examined the successful MAP dyads within the pool of Secwepemctsin MAP dyads. Further research could review the data from those MAP teams who did not complete the program. The other mentor preparedness and apprentice experience also played an interesting role, that was not examined in depth. And finally, Secwépemc stspetékwl and slexéyem were brought up in this research study, but there was a dearth of evidence of the traditional storytelling, or stspetékwl, used within MAP, and more of an emphasis on the slexéyem, day-to-day news. These all provide valuable directions for future research baskets.

## **Morpheme Analysis**

Within the MAP, morpheme analysis could be used as an effective training tool towards an enhanced method for mentors to focus their initial teaching sessions for their apprentices. The FPCC training for MAP dyads should provide additional information on morpheme analysis within their initial training program to encourage mentors to assist their apprentices with seeing

how the language breaks down into smaller pieces of meaning. As C. William (2020) pointed out “...she would think of those words. And she would ask, tell, me, ‘what does this mean?’ And I would say...then I would try to break it up. And she’d just laugh and laugh. And she’s, like, ‘no, that’s not...and then something.’ Asking me how I’m trying to get it. And, but she found it interesting that’s how I was learning it.”

This also brings up another facet of morpheme analysis that can be studied within Secwepemctsín – innate understanding of morphemes, or does it need to be taught? This research study had found that most participants, if not all, had been informed about morphological analysis. As indicated by A.J. William, she minored in linguistics from SFU in a follow-up discussion. “I have a minor in linguistics from Simon Fraser University. Most of my courses were with Dr. Marianne Ignace linguist from SFU and Mona Jules” (2021). This training may well have provided Secwépemc fluent speakers with the background knowledge to teach their future learners about the basics of Secwepemctsín via morphological analysis. Only one initial recognition of, and then with the help of available resources created by linguistics who had studied Secwepemctsín in the 1970s and 1980s, morpheme analysis was identified within this research study.

I largely learned on my own as I had started translating stories from the ‘Western Shuswap Reader’ (Dixon & Kuipers) and as I translated the word lists before the story I identified Prefixes, Root Words and Suffixes on my own. One of my cousins gave me an extended Suffix list, and the book ‘A Classified English-Shuswap Word-list’ (A. H. Kuipers) was very helpful. (Estkwelálnik, 2021)

This is an area that can be pursued further, gathering specific data on innate and taught morphological awareness, and how this can assist with Secwepemctsín revitalization efforts.

## **The Data Behind MAP Dyads**

Due to time constraints, and the recognition that research, especially graduate research, needs to be focused, this study did not gather data on MAP dyads that did not succeed in the program. Further examination of what deterred these teams from completing the program and gaining Secwepemctśín fluency would benefit the entire MAP revitalization movement, not just within Secwepemcúlecw. As well, this could indicate the constraints that MAP provides from the individual/pair life experience.

## **Mentor Preparedness and Apprentice Experience within Secwepemctśín**

A more in-depth look at mentors within the MAP program and their ability to train their apprentice would provide much needed background information for further MAP programming. Mentors, depending on their level of fluency, and the fluency of their apprentices, may require access to additional training, whether it be in the language or in effective methods of relaying the language during MAP sessions. As Estkwelálnik reveals,

For the mentor [MAP], I was kind of scared to do it, at first. But I know that, from my teaching experience, I know that teaching really helps you in your fluency. So, like, for example, my work with you as a mentor, sometimes I have to really go back into my lessons. To try keep ahead, I guess. (2020)

Along with that, another aspect to consider would be the opposing end of a MAP dyad, the apprentice. Does the level of an apprentice matter when paired with a mentor? This question was pondered by the researcher throughout this research but was put aside due to time and main research restrictions. There were times that mentors alluded to the notion that being paired with apprentices that were at the beginner level should now be within the realm of the upcoming

intermediate speakers to mentor. Another further question could be, would those intermediate speakers be ready to mentor beginners?

### **Stspetékwll vs. Slexéyem within MAP**

A final question that could be pursued -- would the use of stspetékwll, rather than slexéyem, help the language fluency of apprentices within the MAP program, or would it have hindered the process? One can argue that Secwépemc ontology allows for the full use of both to suit the situation, or the particular MAP session. However, traditionally stspetékwll was a main source for education (Billy, J.D., 2009; Billy, J.E., 2015; Ignace, R., 2008; Ignace & Ignace, 2017; Michel, 2005, 2012; Sandy, A., 2005).

## Conclusion

*Yerí7 re stsukws ren mim̃c. Tqwet̃sts ren mim̃c re stselxmém. My basket is ready. My basket is filled with knowledge. The woven pine needles of participant knowledge, together with the strong supportive sinew of knowledge that threads through my pine needles, I, as the needle, pulled them together into the complete basket. This basket can provide for future generations, the knowledge gathered and imbued within the basket, can also handle being filled with the knowledge, the resources, of future generations. It can be passed on.*

The main design that threaded throughout this research basket revolved around the relationships within MAP. Relationality, as a core function of the program, provides the necessary framework for supporting the success (or failure) of a MAP dyad. This is not a unique concept within second language acquisition and language revitalization; however, this study examined the various facets surrounding the relationships that alluded the successful development of language and cultural fluency. Additionally, MAP participants overall indicated a distinct comfort level when engaged in authentic Secwépemc language experiences, whether it be on the land or in their homes and communities. These indicate more than just a language immersive, but a culturally immersive, experience is required for greater success in developing language fluency. The brief foray into analyzing morphological influences within the MAP experiences of participants provided intriguing future research opportunities regarding the further training of mentors within morphological analysis; and the dynamic between the innate understanding, or intentionally taught, influence of morphological analysis within Secwepemetsín learners. As well, the potential research opportunities into the traditional Secwépemc stspetékwll (traditional oral stories) and sleléyem (stories based upon recounted

experiences) in terms of which will enhance Secwepemctsín fluency development within language learners should be explored.

### **Final Summary**

This research provides great potential for Secwepemctsín revitalization, especially within the adult language learner population. Capitalizing on the notion of relationality inherent within Secwépemc ontology, as well as the authentic cultural experiences of the MAP sessions, will provide a firm foundation for future language programming. The slight tension among mentors noted during the interview process and analysis, regarding the amount of work placed upon them when working with beginning language learners is a caution for language revitalization participants to consider within that same future language programming.

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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix A – Consent form**

Title of study: Xqéntwecw - Learning a Language Together: Secwepemctsín Mentor Apprenticeship Immersion

Name of principal investigator: Marie Sandy

Faculty: Education and Social Work

Supervisor: Dr. Gloria Ramirez

Dean of Faculty: Dr. Airini

You are invited to participate in a study entitled “Xqéntwecw - Learning a Language Together: Secwepemctsín Mentor Apprenticeship Immersion”. Marie Sandy, a Secwepemc, Master of Education student at TRU will conduct this research as part of her fulfillments for her degree. I am inviting you to participate in this research because you are engaged in a one-on-one mentor/apprentice Secwepemctsín teaching/learning program. This research hopes to build understanding of ways in which the mentor Apprenticeship model of Indigenous language learning reflects and builds Indigenous ways of being and knowing and fluency in Secwepemctsín. If you have any questions arising from this research, you can contact the research Marie Sandy at [msandy@tru.ca](mailto:msandy@tru.ca) or via telephone on 250-574-5545.

If you have any concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the Thompson Rivers University on [REB@tru.ca](mailto:REB@tru.ca) or 250-828.5000.

#### **Goals of the Study**

The purpose of this research is to identify the types of teaching methods in immersive one-on-one Secwepemctsín teaching/learning that effectively build cultural knowledge and language proficiency. This research is important because it will help identify effective language and culture-learning strategies that would help revitalize Secwepemctsín and other Indigenous languages and cultures. The overarching goal of this research is to strengthen Secwépemc identity and develop more fluent speakers of Secwepemctsín.

#### **What you will be asked to do**

I will invite you to participate in two interviews of approximately one hour each to reflect on your experiences of language learning within the Mentor Apprentice Program (MAP) and how it has affected your cultural identity and fluency in Secwepemctsín. I will ask you to provide descriptive accounts of events that facilitated or hindered a particular learning aim; in this case, what teaching methods helped or hindered the aim of increased fluency and cultural identity. I will encourage you to include storytelling within the interviews, and I will ask you to share any learning notes or artifacts (e.g., learning log, binder, pictures). After I complete data analyses, and before I submit my final report, you will receive a report on the results containing your quotes, via phone or email, to confirm the accuracy of selected quotes from your interviews and my interpretations.

## Description of the benefits and risks

The benefits of your participation include the opportunity to share your strategies for teaching/learning the Secwépemc language within MAP, and to help identify effective language teaching methods that will help others become better learners and to inform new curriculum. The risks are no greater than those you encounter within a classroom, or within your daily life. Reflecting on your experiences, however, may trigger emotional reactions. In such case, you are encouraged to access professional counselling through First Nations Health Authority's toll free number 1-877-477-0775 to request a counselor. You may also call the 24 hour toll-free Residential School Crisis Line 1-866-925-4419.

## Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research must be voluntary, and if you decide to participate, you have the right to refuse to answer any questions you do not wish to answer. You may withdraw from the study by informing the researcher of your decision to withdraw before I submit the final written report to my supervisor (approximately 4 months after the final interview). In that case, I will exclude your interview data from the analyses and will discard all transcripts from interviews with you.

## Compensation

In keeping with Indigenous tradition, it is important that participants receive symbolic remuneration for giving up their time and wisdom in participating in this study. If you agree to participate, you will receive an honorarium of \$25 per interview.

## Sharing the Results

The results will be shared with Secwépemc and other Indigenous communities through written reports and community gatherings. I may also publish them in scholarly and professional journals, as well as at conference presentations.

## Data Storage

During the study, all documents, audio and/or video tapes will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at the researchers' office, and all computer files will be encrypted and password protected. Upon completion of the study, the data will be held by the Secwépemc researcher, with the permission of the Secwépemc community, for at least five years and destroyed when no longer needed. In compliance with the First Nations principles of ownership, control, access, and possession (OCAP), raw data in aggregate form, will be given to Spi7uy Squqluts Language & Culture Society.

## Anonymity

As this study involves co-creation of knowledge, you will be given the opportunity to have your name attached to relevant quotes or to remain anonymous.

Please indicate below which level of anonymity you prefer in the written research results:

- A. ☐ I agree to be identified by name and to be credited in the results of the study.

- B. \_\_\_\_ I prefer the use of a pseudonym in the written results but allow for my name to be credited in the study, so that data associated with me will not be directly linked to my name.
- C. \_\_\_\_ I prefer the use of a pseudonym and the removal of my name in the results.

For those who choose A or B, please answer the following:

I wish to be given the opportunity to provide feedback on any publications, which contain quotes attributed to me:     **Yes / No**

If any concerns arise about anonymity following the interview, or you wish to change the level of anonymity you chose, please contact Marie Sandy so that your data can be appropriately anonymized. Changes of this nature will only be possible before the completion of the research.

### Confidentiality

Regardless of the level of anonymity you choose above, the only people who will have access to the research files is the research team (including supervisor and interviewer). Communities will have access to the anonymized data.

I would like to audio record the interviews for later transcription and analyses. Please indicate whether or not you authorize being audiotaped:     **Yes / No**

I agree to participate in the interview:     **Yes / No**

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study, that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researcher and you received a copy of this consent form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Name of Participant*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

I wish to receive a summary of the final research via email:     **Yes / No**

Please contact me via my preferred method:

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

*A copy of this consent form will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.*

## **Appendix B – Research Interview Guide**

Title: Xqéntwecw – Learning a Language Together: Secwepemctsín Mentor Apprenticeship Immersion  
Document: MEd Thesis Research Interview Guide  
Author: Marie Sandy

This research study will be conducted within the communities of the participants. The interviews are to be held during an approximate hour-long session as guided by the participant through storytelling or visiting conversation. Each session will be recorded, unless otherwise indicated by the participant.

The following questions may initiate the interviews, or be provided as follow-up questions throughout the interviews:

1. How do you begin your MAP sessions?
2. What does typically happen during the MAP sessions?
3. What do you talk about during your MAP sessions?
4. How do you plan your MAP sessions?
5. Do you use any resources/artifacts (i.e., books, notes, binders, realia objects) during your MAP sessions? Which? How do you use them? Would you show me some examples?
6. Where do you carry out your MAP sessions?
7. Tell me about specific situations or moments within MAP that have been particularly helpful in developing your fluency in Secwepemctsín.
8. Why is MAP important for you?
9. Does participation in the MAP strengthen your Secwepemc identity? If so, how?

## Appendix C – Recruitment Letter

[insert date]

Re: Invitation to participate in my Master of Education thesis study

Weytkp,

Marie Sandy ren Skwekwst. Te T'élcelc ren St'7é7kwen, k'émell T'kemplúps re múmtwen. Ren Kí7ce, Helen Sandy re skwest.s, ell ren Qé7tse, Mike Grimsrud (aka Stretch) re skwest.s. Len Kyé7e ell len Xpé7e, Anastasia ell Frank Sandy re skweskwést.s. W7ec ren e7elkstwen ne Thompson Rivers University ell School District #73 (Thompson/Nicola District).

I am excited to bring my efforts in assisting Secwepemctsín revitalization, and my academic interests together for my Master of Education research project, titled Xqéntwecw - Learning a Language Together: Secwepemctsín Mentor Apprentice Immersion. This letter has been forwarded to you through Spi7uy Squqluts Language & Culture Society because of your involvement within the Mentor Apprentice Program (MAP).

I value your commitment to revitalizing the Secwepemc language within this mentor apprentice program. As such, this letter is an invitation to participate within my research study through two separate visit-type interviews. The interviews aim to be about an hour at your convenience, and I will be providing a \$25 honorarium as an acknowledgement of your time and knowledge sharing.

I have attached a copy of the consent form that has much more information about how and why the interviews will be conducted. If you have any questions about this study, please contact me directly via email or at the number below, or you may contact my Master of Education supervisor Gloria Ramirez at [gramirez@tru.ca](mailto:gramirez@tru.ca).

Kukwstsétsemc,

Marie Sandy

T'élcelcemc ell Thompson Rivers University student

[marie.a.sandy@gmail.com](mailto:marie.a.sandy@gmail.com)

250-574-5545

## Appendix D – Language Assessment Tool

For a print pdf, or online fillable pdf copy, see: <https://netolnew.ca/assessment/>



# LANGUAGE LEARNING ASSESSMENT TOOL

**ÍY SŁÁĆEL, Gilakas'la, Ha7lh Skwáyel, tanisi (greetings)** - If you are an adult learner of an Indigenous language, the following pages are intended to help you understand where you are at in your learning and to support you in keeping track of your progress.

Learning a language requires much dedication and determination. We designed this assessment tool specifically for adult learners of Indigenous languages:

- We recognize that you are likely focusing on speaking and understanding the language - > this assessment tool helps you evaluate how you are doing in these areas;
- We recognize that you may identify your own language goals, rather than follow a pre-set curriculum -> this assessment tool looks at general language skills, rather than asking you about grammar or vocabulary;
- We recognize that you may feel worried about assessing how you are doing in your language learning -> this tool is meant to help you reflect on what you CAN do, to help you figure out what you want to focus on next, and to keep track of how your skills are increasing over time.

If you are in a formal Mentor-Apprentice Program (MAP) now, we suggest you fill out this tool after every ~50 hours of learning. However, the tool is designed to support learners in any type of learning context. On the next page, you will find some guidelines on how to use this tool.

This assessment tool was developed as part of a larger Partnership Development Grant project. We are working to understand more about adult Indigenous language learning in Canada and specifically British Columbia. Our research was supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.



LANGUAGE LEARNING ASSESSMENT TOOL | v3.1 – Feb 2016

Dr. Onowa McIvor & Dr. Peter Jacobs

Contact: 250-721-7763 | [omcivor@uvic.ca](mailto:omcivor@uvic.ca) | [pejacobs@uvic.ca](mailto:pejacobs@uvic.ca) |

[bje@uvic.ca](mailto:bje@uvic.ca)



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Logo by Kevin Paul

### **Guidelines on using the Language Learning Assessment Tool**

1. Fill in the section “About the Language Learner” on the next page, including the date & your name;

2. You can fill out this assessment tool on your own or with someone who is supporting you in your learning, e.g. your mentor. If someone else is filling in the answers with or for you, please write down their name and role in your learning process as well;
3. Next, there is a place to write down the language you are learning and assessing today;
4. If you keep track of it, write down the number of hours of language learning you have completed;
5. There is a section for you to reflect on your language learning first, if you want;
6. Start the actual assessment with the first level ‘Beginner’, and complete both areas, ‘Speaking’ and ‘Understanding’;
7. Read each “I can...” statement and think about which answer BEST describes where you are at in your learning today;
8. Put a mark in the field of your answer, or colour in the field, or circle it – anything to take note of where you are at in your learning today. Please choose only one field;
9. You will see there are some blank “I can...” fields throughout. Here, you can add your own language learning goals and skills that you wish to track as you progress, specific to your context of learning;
10. When you are ready, you can move on to the ‘Intermediate’ pages.

### **About the Language Learner**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Language Learner: \_\_\_\_\_

If not the learner, who filled in form: \_\_\_\_\_

Language assessed today:

\_\_\_\_\_ Number of hours of  
language learning completed: \_\_\_\_\_

## **A Place to reflect on your Language Learning (optional)**

Below are three points you may wish to reflect on, as a “warm-up” or “wrap-up”, in addition to filling out this Language

Learning Assessment Tool. You can write down your answers here, so that you can come back to your thoughts at a later time:

For my language learning, I worked a lot on ...

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---

---

I’m really proud of ...

---

---

---

Something I’d like to get better at is...

---

---

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# Speaking – Beginner

## SCALE

(select one answer that best describes where you are at in your learning today):

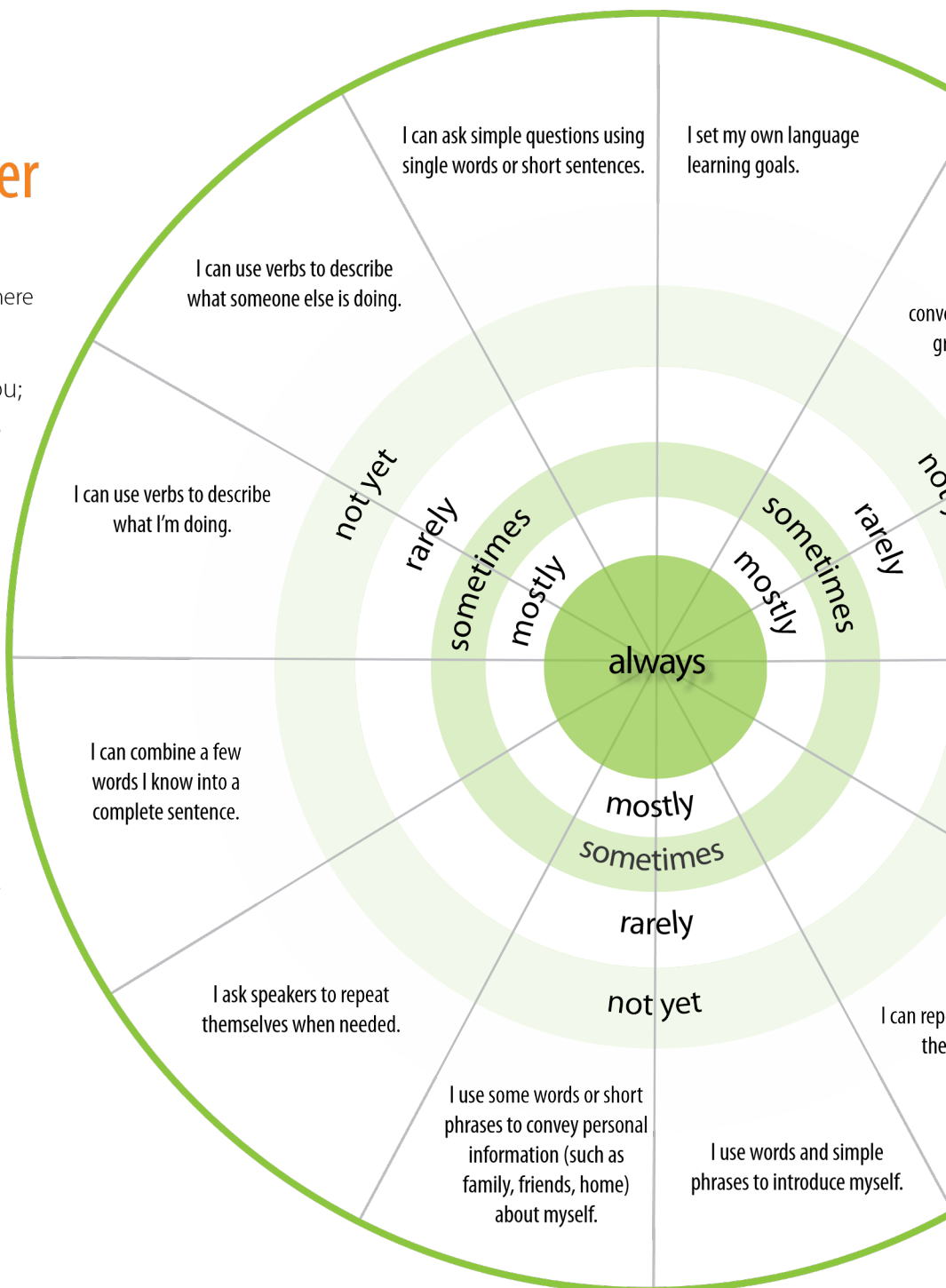
**'Not yet'**—this is something new to you;

**'Rarely'**—this is something that you've noticed, but you've only done it a few times or in a few contexts so far;

**'Sometimes'**—this is something that you are more familiar with and you notice you are doing in a number of different contexts;

**'Mostly'**—this is something that you are familiar with and that you've become good at doing in a wide variety of contexts;

**'Always'**—this is something that you know well and you are confident in doing it all the time and in all contexts.



# Speaking – Beginner

## SCALE

(select one answer that best describes where you are at in your learning today):

- 'Not yet'**—this is something new to you;
- 'Rarely'**—this is something that you've noticed, but you've only done it a few times or in a few contexts so far;
- 'Sometimes'**—this is something that you are more familiar with and you notice you are doing in a number of different contexts;
- 'Mostly'**—this is something that you are familiar with and that you've become good at doing in a wide variety of contexts;
- 'Always'**—this is something that you know well and you are confident in doing it all the time and in all contexts.



# Understanding – Beginner

## SCALE

(select one answer that best describes where you are at in your learning today):

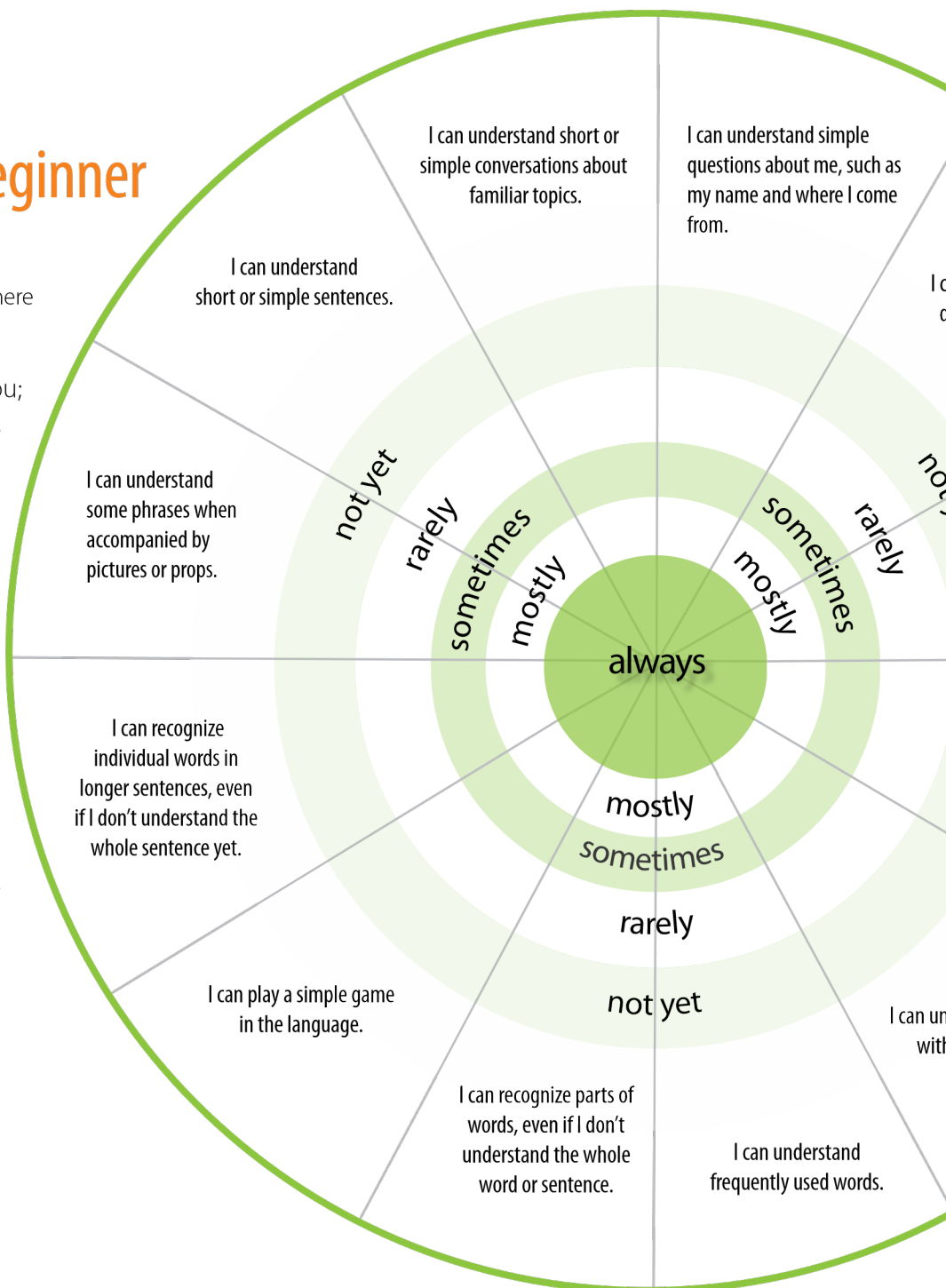
**'Not yet'**—this is something new to you;

**'Rarely'**—this is something that you've noticed, but you've only done it a few times or in a few contexts so far;

**'Sometimes'**—this is something that you are more familiar with and you notice you are doing in a number of different contexts;

**'Mostly'**—this is something that you are familiar with and that you've become good at doing in a wide variety of contexts;

**'Always'**—this is something that you know well and you are confident in doing it all the time and in all contexts.



# Understanding – Beginner

## SCALE

(select one answer that best describes where you are at in your learning today):

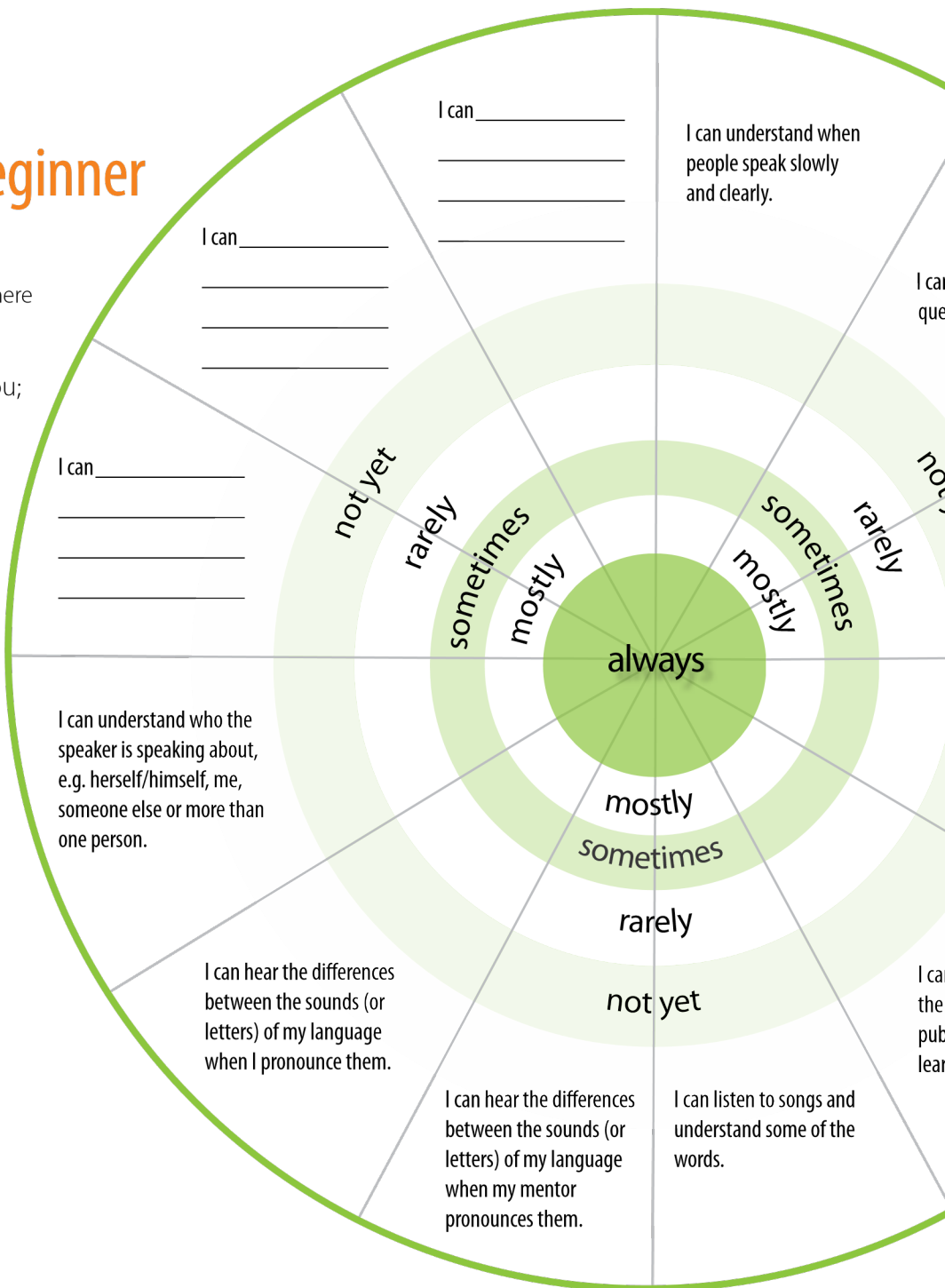
'Not yet'—this is something new to you;

**‘Rarely’**—this is something that you’ve noticed, but you’ve only done it a few times or in a few contexts so far;

**‘Sometimes’**—this is something that you are more familiar with and you notice you are doing in a number of different contexts;

**‘Mostly’**—this is something that you are familiar with and that you’ve become good at doing in a wide variety of contexts;

**‘Always’**—this is something that you know well and you are confident in doing it all the time and in all contexts.



# Speaking – Intermediate

## SCALE

(select one answer that best describes where you are at in your learning today):

**'Not yet'**—this is something new to you;

**'Rarely'**—this is something that you've noticed, but you've only done it a few times or in a few contexts so far;

**'Sometimes'**—this is something that you are more familiar with and you notice you are doing in a number of different contexts;

**'Mostly'**—this is something that you are familiar with and that you've become good at doing in a wide variety of contexts;

**'Always'**—this is something that you know well and you are confident in doing it all the time and in all contexts.



# Speaking – Intermediate

## SCALE

(select one answer that best describes where you are at in your learning today):

- 'Not yet'**—this is something new to you;
- 'Rarely'**—this is something that you've noticed, but you've only done it a few times or in a few contexts so far;
- 'Sometimes'**—this is something that you are more familiar with and you notice you are doing in a number of different contexts;
- 'Mostly'**—this is something that you are familiar with and that you've become good at doing in a wide variety of contexts;
- 'Always'**—this is something that you know well and you are confident in doing it all the time and in all contexts.



# Understanding – Intermediate

## SCALE

(select one answer that best describes where you are at in your learning today):

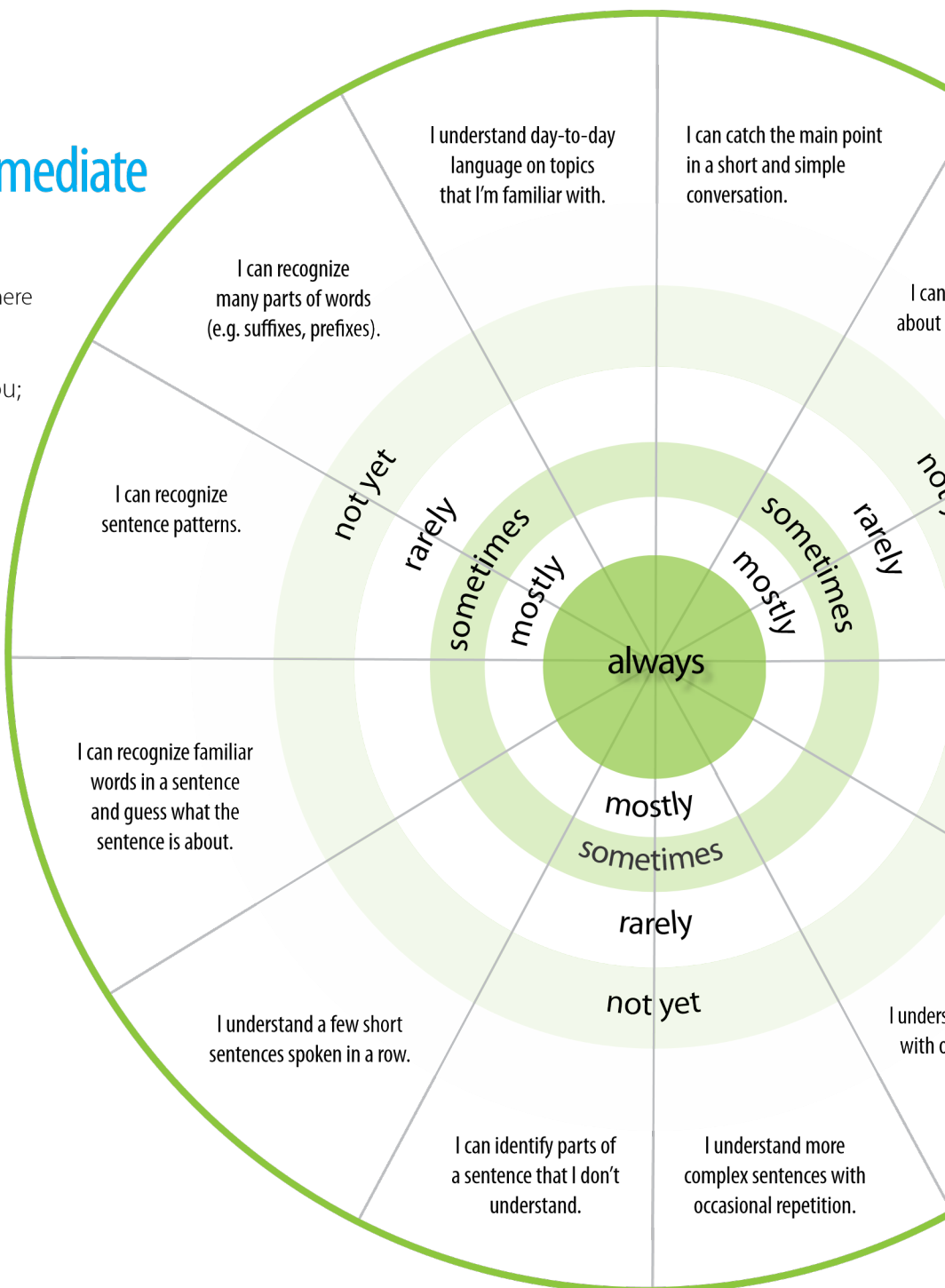
**'Not yet'**—this is something new to you;

**'Rarely'**—this is something that you've noticed, but you've only done it a few times or in a few contexts so far;

**'Sometimes'**—this is something that you are more familiar with and you notice you are doing in a number of different contexts;

**'Mostly'**—this is something that you are familiar with and that you've become good at doing in a wide variety of contexts;

**'Always'**—this is something that you know well and you are confident in doing it all the time and in all contexts.



# Understanding – Intermediate

## SCALE

(select one answer that best describes where you are at in your learning today):

- 'Not yet'**—this is something new to you;
- 'Rarely'**—this is something that you've noticed, but you've only done it a few times or in a few contexts so far;
- 'Sometimes'**—this is something that you are more familiar with and you notice you are doing in a number of different contexts;
- 'Mostly'**—this is something that you are familiar with and that you've become good at doing in a wide variety of contexts;
- 'Always'**—this is something that you know well and you are confident in doing it all the time and in all contexts.



## Appendix E – TRU Research Ethics Board Approval



The Research Ethics Board has reviewed your application titled 'Xqéntwecw - Learning a Language Together: Secwepemctsín Mentor Apprenticeship Immersion'. Your application has been approved. You may begin the proposed research. This REB approval, dated January 15, 2020, is valid for one year less a day: January 14, 2021.

Throughout the duration of this REB approval, all requests for modifications, renewals and serious adverse event reports are submitted via the Research Portal. To continue your proposed research beyond January 14, 2021, you must submit a Renewal Form before January 14, 2021. If your research ends before January 14, 2021, please submit a Final Report Form to close out REB approval monitoring efforts.

If you have any questions about the REB review & approval process, please contact the Research Ethics Office via 250.852.7122. If you encounter any issues when working in the Research Portal, please contact the Research Office at 250.371.5586.

Sincerely,  
Joyce O'Mahony  
Chair, Research Ethics Board

Appendix F – Timeline Flow Chart

