
ISSUE 27
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This newsletter is brought to you by
Maris Hawkins and Stacey
Margarita Johnson



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Preview of the Next Episode

EPISODE 72: A CONTENT-BASED, UPPER-LEVEL LANGUAGE
COURSE ON LATIN AMERICAN POLITICAL HISTORY

This Friday's episode embodies the ethos of this podcast
in a couple of important ways.

For one, this episode was conceived, recorded, edited, and submitted
by the teachers themselves. We Teach Languages is meant to be a
collective effort, and submitted episodes like this one help make that
dream a reality. I am incredibly grateful to Carolyn, Rachel, and Elena
for trusting me to share their ideas.

Two, the course described in this episode is a level 4 language course
that brings in experts and community partners, weaves in students'
identities and lived experiences - all while exploring the literature,
history, and language of Latin America and bringing in authentic
voices from the L2 community and in L2 literature. These teachers are
doing important, interdisciplinary work, and I am so excited to share
their episode with the WTL family.

I didn't anticipate the degree to which students
would quickly make these personal connections...
I felt like that was particularly powerful.

-Carolyn Siegel



RESPONSE TO EPISODE 71: INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE PRESERVATION AND REVITALIZATION WITH ALIANA PARKER

Today's response is written by Dr. Sabine Siekmann, Associate Professor of Linguistics at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, a department with extensive expertise in indigenous language education. Dr. Siekmann shares a U.S. perspective on indigenous language preservation.

Indigenous communities around the world are working towards maintaining and revitalizing their ancestral languages. As Aliana Parker explains, reclaiming one's language and culture is a complex endeavor that links learners to their ancestors and at the same time to future generations.

Because intergenerational transmission is disrupted by a history of oppression and punishment for using ancestral languages, many indigenous communities worldwide have turned to a variety of immersion programs to arrest and reverse language shift to English. For example, all of the 20 Indigenous languages of Alaska are at varying stages of language shift, ranging from Yup'ik with approximately 10,000 speakers to Eyak whose last Native speaker passed away in 2008. Yup'ik is used as the medium of instruction in a number of communities in Southwest Alaska, including a k-6 immersion school in Bethel.

While language nests and immersion programs hold many promises for developing bilingualism, biculturalism, and high levels of academic achievement, they also face many challenges, including a lack of a) teachers who are highly proficient in the language, b) institutional support, c) local leadership and d) materials (Siekmann et al, 2017). The types of programs funded by the First People's Culture Council are well positioned to contribute to the important work of supporting the right to speak one's own language:

- Language nests are the first step towards immersion schools
- Mentor-apprentice programs are highly effective in developing language proficiency necessary to immersion teachers
- Recordings of speakers and creation of linguistic resources can form the foundation for linguistically and culturally appropriate materials for language learners of all ages in schools and at home

In the context of supporting Yup'ik immersion education in Alaska, long-term partnerships between schools, communities and the university have been crucial (Marlow & Siekmann, 2013). These partnerships can provide meaningful and targeted teacher professional development, addressing the specific needs of Indigenous immersion programs. Teachers of Alaska Native languages completing master's and doctoral degrees are developing linguistically and culturally appropriate pedagogy and are conducting research in immersion classrooms. These highly qualified teachers are then positioned to move into leadership positions in their schools, districts, and at the university. It is this Indigenous leadership that has the potential to change the conversation (Marlow & Siekmann, 2012) around language revitalization and teaching.

For further reading, please reference the works cited in this response:

Marlow, P., & Siekmann, S. (2012). Changing the Conversation: Promise and vulnerability in

Alaska Native language revitalization. *Journal of American Indian Education*, 51 (3), 46-69.

Marlow, P., & Siekmann, S. (Eds.) (2013). *Communities of Practice: An Alaska Native Model for Language Teaching and Learning*. University of Arizona Press.

Siekmann, S., Parker Webster, J., Samson, S., & Moses, C. (2017). Teaching our way of life through our language: Materials development for Indigenous immersion education. *Cogent Education*, 4, 1362887.

As always, share your reactions to this episode with us on Facebook, Twitter, or in the comments section on our website weteachlang.com!

Resource Corner

- You can see many resources for indigenous languages on the First Voices website.
- This toolkit helps promote indigenous languages for language revitalization.
- In this video, there is an example of the Language Nest which is a program that teaches indigenous languages to children in the indigenous community.
- Episode 71 includes a free, printable Episode Guide you can use before, during, and after you listen as well as a full written transcript!
- Pūnana Leo - Hawaiian Language Pre-School Programs
- Te Kōhanga Reo – Maori Immersion Programs
- Piciryaramta Elicungcallra – Materials Development for Yup'ik Immersion Education
- Alaska Native Language Center



Reactions to past episodes:

 **Foreign Language Teachers of South East Texas**
August 28 at 6:19 PM · 🌐

Here are some great podcasts to listen to about teaching languages. Great free PD. <https://weteachlang.com>

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 **Carmen**
@profecarms Following

I only started listening to [@weteachlang](#) podcasts in May and have learned so much! Thanks, [@staceymargarita](#)!

 **We Teach Languages @weteachlang**
My Episode Recommendations: A Guest Blog Post from Carmen Granda weteachlang.com/2018/09/24/rec...

 **Darcy Rogers**
@RogersDarcy Following

Replying to [@weteachlang](#)

Love the implications of whole family & whole community involvement. What a beautiful segment.

 **Lead with Languages**
@LeadWLanguages Following

Is learning another language the key to unlocking your potential in an increasingly globalized world? [@ACTFL](#)'s 2018 Teacher of the Year, [@YingJin](#) would say so. Hear more from [@weteachlang](#). bit.ly/2QJLRq9

 **Corbette Doyle**
@corbette Doyle Follow

Small private colleges must be creative to remain relevant & sustainable. One success story: a virtual consortium that uses technology to create minors & majors they couldn't otherwise offer [@vandyctf](#) [@leadinglinespod](#) [@weteachlang](#)

Updates from Past Contributors



Leslie Grahm (episode 69) has written a new blog post on how to create performance assessments using an authentic text. She also includes how to prepare students prior to the assessment.



On Twitter this Thursday at 8 PM, #langbook is starting to discuss While We're on the Topic. Many of the moderators have been on the podcast including: Tim Eagan and Rebecca Blouwolff (episode 47) and Lisa Shepard (episode 14).