

Language Vitality Workshop
May 19 & 20, 2016
University of Arizona, Tucson

Summary

The primary participants in the workshop were from Arizona tribal language programs that participated in the initial meetings to discuss the idea of piloting a language assessment. Also instructors, administrators and students from four tribal colleges (Blackfeet Community College, Dull Knife Community College, Dine College and Tohono O’odham Community College), that have had previous experience with sending students to AILDI, were targeted to attend the workshop. The tribal college representation is critical to test the feasibility of using the tribal college network as partners for the dissemination and implementation of a national effort. Ultimately, only two tribal colleges participated, Tohono O’odham Community College and Chief Dull Knife College. Later, the San Carlos Apache Tribal College joined the project via the tribal language program.

The workshop included a review of current assessment tools, team building and examining community-based survey strategies. Participants developed initial questions for language surveys and were introduced to aspects of data gathering. Discussion and hands-on exercises stressed the importance of designing a tool that is realistic and practical.

Agenda

Meeting room: Education North

Directions - <http://uanow.org/RIcC>

Parking - <http://uanow.org/iVVc>

Hours – 8:30 am to 9:00 am Coffee

9:00 am to 12:00 noon – Discussion and breakouts

12:00 – 1:00 – Lunch delivered

1:00 – 4:00 – Discussion and breakouts

The American Indian Language Development Institute (AILDI) has received a grant from the National Science Foundation to create a new and innovative tool to assess the state of language vitality. This workshop is designed as an opportunity for collective brainstorming and roundtable discussions with tribal representatives engaged in language work rather than having formal presentations. The workshop is the first step in AILDI’s plan to create a model for grass

roots assessment that can be shared with tribal communities throughout the United States with the help of Native American community based researchers in Arizona and Montana.

We expect the two-day workshop to be flexible and we anticipate the following topics will be part of the discussion.

- Reviewing community experiences with language surveys
- Re-thinking community survey strategies
- Thinking outside the box: Innovations in language assessment
- Visioning and developing templates/models of what the possibilities are for trying to capture language vitality
- Defining language vitality
- Testing and critically evaluating innovative models/templates.
- Indigenous ways of data gathering
- Supplementing surveys
- Decolonizing assessment strategies
- What does it mean to be a “speaker”?

Please come prepared to share your experiences with language surveys. If it is appropriate, bring along your own community surveys. Examples of language assessments you wish to share will also be welcome.

We look forward to working with you!

Workshop Participants

Ak-Chin Indian Community

Lerline Peters
Julene Narcia
Velacita Lopez

Colorado River Indian Tribes

Amelia Flores

Gila River Indian Community

Anthony Gray
Luis Barragan

Hopi Tribe

Bernita Duwahoyeoma
Arvis Myron

Hualapai Tribe

Carrie Cannon

Sharon Wilder

Northern Cheyenne (Chief Dull Knife College)

Elrena Whiteshirt

Adeline Spotted Elk

San Carlos Apache Tribe

Beatrice Lee

Cordella Moses

Tohono O'odham Nation (Tohono O'odham Community College)

Francina Francisco

Elizabeth Ortega

Guest Presenters:

Mary Linn

Susan Penfield