

Master/Mentor-Apprentice Language Learning Model for Native Language Teacher Training

Presenters: Heather Sauyaq Jean Gordon, PhD and Brent Huggins

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About ANA

- The Administration for Native Americans (ANA) was established in 1974 through the Native American Programs Act (NAPA).
- ANA provides discretionary grant funding to American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) tribes both federally and state recognized. ANA also funds Native Hawaiians and non-profits in all 50 states and Native populations in the Pacific Basin (including American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands).
- The mission of ANA is to promote the goal of self-sufficiency and cultural preservation for Native Americans by providing social and economic development opportunities through financial assistance, training, and technical assistance to eligible tribes and Native American communities.
- ANA's Vision: Native communities are thriving!

About the Presenters

Heather Sauyaq Jean Gordon, PhD

- Iñupiaq, an enrolled member of the Nome Eskimo Community, and grew up in Homer, AK
- Program Analyst for the Administration for Native Americans' Division of Program Evaluation & Planning
- PhD in Indigenous Studies from the University of Alaska Fairbanks
- Experience working on Indigenous self-determination, sustainability, wellbeing, data analysis, qualitative interviewing, and research partnerships



About the Presenters Cont...

Brent Huggins

- Citizen of the Cherokee Nation and grew up in Wagoner, OK
- Program Analyst for the Administration for Native Americans' Division of Program Evaluation & Planning
- Graduated from Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, OK
- Experience working on data analysis, qualitative interviewing, Native language, and tribal healthcare.



Presentation Outline

- When Master-Apprentice learning is useful for language preservation
- The Master-Apprentice language learning model
- Experiences from past ANA grantees about Master-Apprentice
- Common challenges to the Master-Apprentice model
- Master-Apprentice language learning leads to wellbeing
- Past ACF grantees using Master-Apprentice
- Resources for Master-Apprentice
- ***If you have any questions throughout the webinar please type them in the questions box and we will get to them at the end

Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (adapted from Fishman 1991)			
Level	Label	Description	UNESCO
0	International	The language is widely used between nations in trade, knowledge exchange, and international policy.	Safe
1	National	The language is used in education, work, mass media, and government at the nationwide level.	Safe
2	Regional	The language is used in education, work, mass media, and government within officially recognized regions of a nation.	Safe
3	Trade	The language is used in work and mass media without official status to transcend language differences across a region.	Safe
4	Educational	The language is vigorous and literacy in the language is being transmitted sustainably through a system of public education.	Safe
5	Written	The language is vigorous and is effectively used in written form in parts of the community though literacy is not yet sustainable.	Safe
6a	Vigorous	The language is used orally by all generations and is normally learned by children as their first language.	Safe
6b	Threatened	The language is still used orally within all generations but there is a significant threat to sustainability, particularly a break in transmission to the next generation by a significant portion of the child-bearing generation.	Vulnerable
7	Shifting	The child-bearing generation can use the language among themselves but they do not normally transmit it to their children.	Definitely Endangered
8a	Moribund	The only remaining active speakers of the language are members of the grandparent generation.	Severely Endangered
8b	Nearly Extinct	The only remaining speakers of the language are elderly and have little opportunity to use the language.	Critically Endangered
9	Dormant	There are no proficient speakers, but some symbolic use remains as a remind of heritage identity for an ethnic community.	Extinct
10	Extinct	No one retains a sense of ethnic identity associated with the language, even for symbolic purposes.	Extinct

When a language is at a level 8 on the scale, with speakers being primarily Elders or grandparents, the language is severely/critically endangered.

Current Status of Language	Suggested Interventions to Strengthen Language (source: (Reyhner, Cantoni, and St. Clair))
Stage 8: Only a few elders speak the language.	Implement Hinton's (1994) "Language Apprentice" Model where fluent elders are teamed one-on-one with young adults who want to learn the language. Dispersed, isolated elders can be connected by phone to teach others the language (Taff, 1997).
Stage 7: Only adults beyond child bearing age speak the language.	Establish "Language Nests" after the Maori and Hawaiian, models where fluent older adults provide pre-school child-care where children are immersed in their indigenous language (Anonby, this volume ; Fishman, 1991).
Stage 6: Some inter-generational use of language.	Develop places in community where language is encouraged, protected, and used exclusively. Encourage more young parents to speak the indigenous language in home with and around their young children.
Stage 5: Language is still very much alive and used in community.	Offer literacy in minority language. Promote voluntary programs in the schools and other community institutions to improve the prestige and use of the language. Use language in local government functions, especially social services. Give recognition to special local efforts through awards, etc.
Stage 4: Language is required in elementary schools.	Improve instructional methods utilizing TPR (Asher, 1996), TPR-Storytelling (Cantoni, this volume) and other immersion teaching techniques. Teach reading and writing and higher level language skills (Heredia & Francis, 1997). Develop two-way bilingual programs where appropriate where non-speaking elementary students learn the indigenous language and speakers learn a national or inter-national language. Need to develop indigenous language text-books to teach literacy and academic subject matter content.
Stage 3: Language is used in places of business and by employees in less specialized work areas.	Promote language by making it the language of work used throughout the community (Palmer, 1997). Develop vocabulary so that workers in an office could do their day- to-day work using their indigenous language (Anonby, this volume)
Stage 2: Language is used by local government and in the mass media in the minority community.	Promote use of written form of language for government and business dealings/records. Promote indigenous language newsletters, newspapers, radio stations, and television stations.
Stage 1: Some language use by higher levels of government and in higher education.	Teach tribal college subject matter classes in the language. Develop an indigenous language oral and written literature through dramatic presentations and publications. Give tribal/national awards for indigenous language publications and other notable efforts to promote indigenous languages.

When the language is not yet extinct but only Elders and Grandparents are speaking it, Master-Apprentice is a way to revitalize the language.

Master-Apprentice for Teacher Training

- Elder/grandparents are *not* typically teachers of language classes for youth/children as this can be overwhelming
- When the language is endangered with just Elder/grandparent speakers left, these speakers pair with younger people (usually 20+ years old) to teach them the language
- The apprentice to the Elder speaker is then the classroom teacher for youth, and they can start teaching immediately as they are learning.
- Master-Apprentice training serves to teach the language to teachers who can then teach the Native language to youth in schools

Learning a Language

- All language is learned by exposure
- You were not taught whatever language you speak. You learned it because it was used with you and you used it with others
- You learn when you receive comprehensible input.
Comprehensible input is whenever you can know what is being communicated even if you do not yet know the words because everything else (the context, body language, objects, and indicators) gives you meaning
- The best way to learn a language is through action, activities, and situations, not just separate words

“People learn best when we are surrounded by the language, don’t hear any English, and don’t have the language translated to us.”

-Hinton, 2002, *How to Keep Your Language Alive: A Commonsense Approach to One-on-One Language Learning*

Advantages of the Master-Apprentice Model

- Master-Apprentice puts focus on oral fluency, comprehension, language production, and comprehensible input. You want to hear and speak the language. Focus first on speaking and reading and writing can come later.
- Translation keeps the mind in an English mode, and makes the language just a poor reflection of English, while Master-Apprentice focuses on immersion
- Never treat writing as a substitute for listening and speaking, you can learn writing over time but always hold the master-teacher above any book.
- Grammar needs to be automatic-the goal is to generate sentences at the speed of conversation. Too much focus on grammatical rules inhibits speaking. Accept that you will make mistakes.

ANA Grantee Experience in Choosing Masters and Apprentices

- “Selecting interns that have energy and picking youth with longevity, but old enough to be responsible. It is about recruiting the right teacher-student interns. By picking interns that can continue the language and teaching it to younger generations it gives potentially longer life to the language.” -Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon
- The Project Director at the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon recommends conducting team building activities to create respect and bonding between Masters/Elders and apprentices/interns.

ANA Grantee Experience in Weekly Meetings for all Masters-Apprentices

- The Yakutat Tlingit Tribe held meetings on Fridays that had all the master and apprentice teams come together. “This was a way to provide grounding, gather feedback, and build positivity. People discussed and talked about the emotional process, and it was important to explore reasons for people who were bored, under or overwhelmed.” The project “made sure that everyone on the team was getting to share and express opinions. The project thought it best to be open to modification, utilize a lot of communication, provide opportunities for continuous sharing, and not forcing people to stay on who were not motivated.”

Master-Apprentice Best Practices

- Master-apprentice is an immersive language environment between at least one speaker and at least one learner
- Spend 10 to 20 hours a week together, 2 to 4 hours a day 5 days a week
- Stay away from English and just speak in the immersion language: At first this will be difficult as the apprentice does not know any words so use mime, gestures, actions, facial expressions, objects, pictures, context, and rephrasing
- When the apprentice makes an error, the master responds with “Yes” and then the correct way to say it. There is no teasing or getting angry at an apprentice making mistakes.
- Make audio and video recordings of sessions so the apprentice can go back and listen to them
- The apprentice should be just as active if not more active than the Master in planning lessons and deciding what will be learned as well as keeping communication in the Native language

Master-Apprentice Best Practices Cont...

- Both the master and apprentice should decide what to do, what to teach, and what to learn
- A word must be said at least 20 times in at least 20 different contexts (that's 400 times) to be retained
- Especially early in the relationship, English can be used to plan the immersive time. You might start with 5 minutes immersive then move to 10 minutes, then longer. During immersive time use gestures and other tools to help communicate.
- Total physical response is a powerful method: where you say and do the same thing at the same time
- Learn through real life situations through doing activities together like cooking, setting the table, making the bed, shopping at the store

“The teacher’s impatience with the learner and the learner’s impatience with himself/herself are the greatest obstacles to adult language learning.”

-Hinton, 2002, *How to Keep Your Language Alive: A Commonsense Approach to One-on-One Language Learning*

10 points for Successful Language Learning

1. Leave English Behind: this will be difficult at first as the apprentice will not understand the language
 - Learn basic questions: What is this/that? How do you say ____?
 - Learn these basic questions in a culturally appropriate way as in some languages it may be rude to point at something and ask what it is
 - Remind each other to stay away from English
 - If you lapse into English just get right back into immersion language
2. Make Yourself Understood with Nonverbal Communication
 - Gestures and facial expressions
 - Pictures and objects

10 points Cont...

3. Teach in full sentences

- Don't just teach "sit." Teach, "sit on the chair, etc."
- Even though you are focusing on specific words, the real lesson comes by using full sentences and conversation in your language
- Comprehension precedes production-the apprentice should focus on recognizing and understanding and speaking will naturally follow

4. Aim for real communication in your language

- Do everything in your language

10 points Cont...

5. Language is also culture

- Learning your language means learning customs, values, and appropriate behavior
- There is a lot of vocabulary around traditional ways of life

6. Focus on listening and speaking

- You don't need to focus on writing to learn to speak a language
- The apprentice can learn the grammar unconsciously by hearing it and using it
- Writing makes pronunciation suffer and leads to writing English translations
- If you want to have a memory aid then record the session with audio or video and replay it later

10 points Cont...

7. Learn and teach the language through activities

- Live your daily life together, it is a learning opportunity
- Do traditional activities
- Come up with situations such as talking about the weather, doing the laundry to learn vocabulary
- Work with objects and pictures, think of situations instead of separate words
- Visit other speakers together to hear the language spoken fluently in larger groups
- Teach what you learn to someone else
- Have “immersion gatherings” like camps

10 points Cont...

8. Use audiotaping and videotaping
 - Create practice tapes from sessions, these also serve to preserve the language
9. Be an active learner
 - The master does not always have to take charge
 - The apprentice can guide their learning experience by asking questions
10. Be sensitive to each other's needs; be patient and proud of each other and yourselves!
 - Language learning is a slow process so be patient
 - Correct errors by simply repeating the sentence correctly to model

What you can learn in 3 years

Year 1

- Vocabulary
- Basic conversation
- Greetings
- Introduce self
- Respond to basic questions
- Describe pictures
- Prayers, songs, stories
- 1 minute speech

Year 2

- Understand most of what master says
- Talk briefly about most subjects
- Simple sentences without grammatical errors
- Short speeches 1 minute plus
- Engage in extended conversation

Year 3

- Understand what master and other language speakers say
- Be able to talk at length in your language and tell stories, give speeches, and speak correctly with long sentences
- Develop plan for teaching others the language

The Typical Master-Apprentice Session

- Practice a phone call to confirm the meeting time
- Conduct greetings in your language
- Planning for immersion can be done in English at the start but the immersive experience should be entirely in your language
- Conduct small rituals like making coffee and talking about the weather to learn vocabulary, using situations instead of learning separate words
- Understanding precedes speaking so ask the apprentice questions and give commands
- After the immersive set you may want to talk about it and how you could improve the immersion experience

The Typical Session Cont...

- It is important to do unstructured immersion as well and take time to talk in your language about anything just to practice and for the apprentice to hear the language
- Devote some time at the end of the session to record the new material learned to prepare the practice tapes for the apprentice
- Plan for the next sessions, choosing the date and time and activities
- Say farewells in language
- If you see each other between lessons try to keep your interactions in your language

“Language learning also takes place most effortlessly in the context of activities. If team members (master-apprentice) do things together and talk about what they are doing, then the learner automatically understands and, just as importantly, is absorbed in the activity rather than straining to consciously learn the language. That absorption in the activity is when true learning starts to happen.” -Hinton, 2002, *How to Keep Your Language Alive: A Commonsense Approach to One-on-One Language Learning*

Activities for Learning

- Greetings and Leave taking-how to greet and how to answer a greeting as well as how to take leave. After learning this always use language to greet and take leave of each other
- Learn questions-"What is this?" "How do you say _____?" Learn these with appropriate cultural customs for politeness.
- Apprentice learns to say: "Say it slowly." "Please speak to me in our language."
- Commands-Teach commands through gestures and language such as: come here, sit down, stand up, walk, touch your nose, etc.
- Play games-like dominoes or cards to learn numbers and more vocabulary

Activities for Learning Cont...

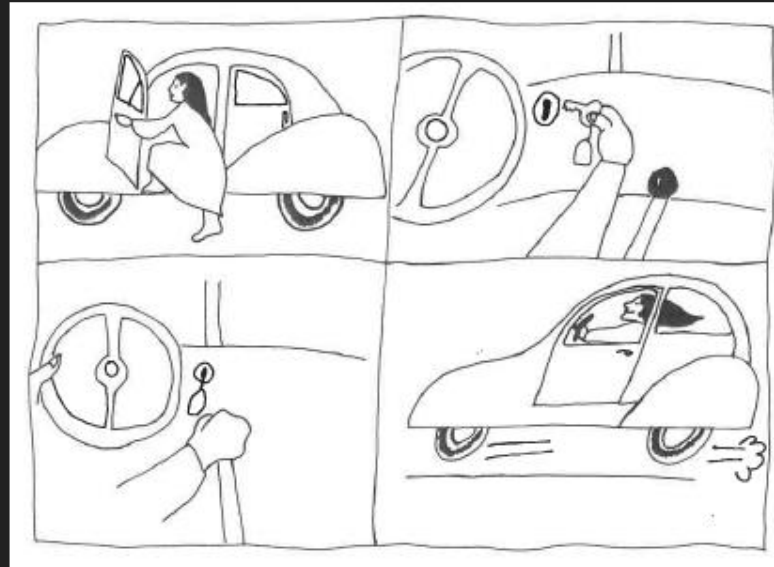
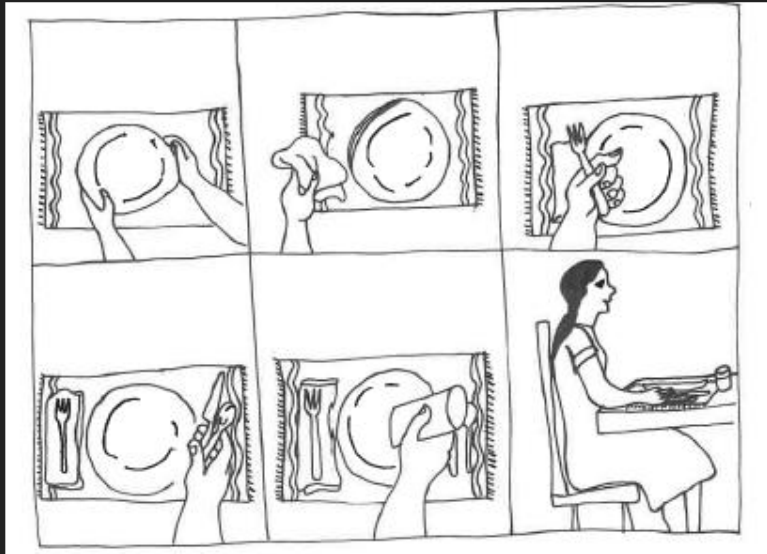
- Names for things-when the master teaches a word like “table” use it in a sentence such as “That’s a table” so the apprentice learns conversation. Say things like, “Is that a table?” so the apprentice can learn yes and no.
- Weather-talk about the weather. Bring in pictures of different weather so you can talk about them
- Snacks-Have snacks and beverages for more things to talk about. Learn the vocabulary for setting the table
- Take a walk-The master can talk in the language and the apprentice can listen to learn the rhythm, intonation, and pronunciation while being “bathed” in the language, not straining to understand but just listening

Activities for Learning Cont...

- Family Relationships-go through a photo album and learn family words
- Directional words-take a drive or a walk and learn: stop, go, right, left, etc.
- The Alien Game-have the master describe an alien to the learner and the learner draws it to learn body parts such as eyes, arms, legs, etc.
- Visit Another Speaker-the apprentice can listen to the language in its fluent form
- Make up a language lesson to teach children
- Watch TV with the sound off-describe what is happening
- Attend a traditional ceremony

Cartoons

- Use cartoons and pictures to have something to describe in your language



ANA Beneficiary Statements

- “The apprentices of this program have gained the most from this program. They have lifelong, documented memories with the Mentors. They have ingrained knowledge of their language, histories and cultural protocol. They received the gift of time and knowledge.” -Yakutat Tlingit Tribe
- “The knowledge that has been transferred from the Mentors in this project to the Apprentices is invaluable to the members of this community and the future generations. The Apprentices have so much to give to the language nest and in promoting culture in the home and public. While the Apprenticing was happening, the Mentors would often call onto the Apprentice to be recognized for the time and effort they are putting into understanding the true and correct ways to know what it means to be a Tlingit person, to know the language and carry out our protocols. This has opened a space where the community calls on the Apprentice for cultural knowledge and language.” -Yakutat Tlingit Tribe

ANA Beneficiary Statements Cont...

- “The interns are learning sentence structure, pronunciation, about the traditional ways, preservation of food, and the language that goes with these traditional practices. The interns are practicing the songs and learning prayers. She saw the interns go into the schools and the interns "came a long way, very proud of them" as "they taught me too." She believed the awareness of language was being lost, but these grants helped to keep the language going. To her everyone has a past, present, and future, no matter how old. She would like to see more parents getting involved and seeing more younger teachers interested in learning traditional ways. She believes they are still going to do this even after the grant ends.”
-Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon

Common Challenges

- If learners and teachers are paid (which is often a matter of practicality, due to the time commitment required), then a relatively large amount of resources appear to be devoted to just a few people, which can create distrust. To counter this, projects may plan for apprentices to begin teaching immediately—perhaps through local Head Start, public schools, or community education classes—to demonstrate the project's value.
- Another challenge is in recruiting and retaining apprentices. To overcome this, at least one ACF-funded program used an unpaid internship program from which to evaluate and select potential apprentices. You might also try selecting students from existing language programs who demonstrate commitment, or from existing teachers. It is also important to provide apprentices a clear pathway towards permanent employment, such as by partnering with academic institutions to certify graduates and schools to employ graduates of the program.

M-A language learning leads to wellbeing

- **Cultural and spiritual health and healing:** strengthened Indigenous identity, better connection to ancestors, cultural knowledge, and ways of life
- **Health outcomes:** participating in Mentor-Apprentice motivated participants to maintain their general wellbeing and health, connect with emotions, end drug and alcohol dependence
- **Negative impacts of language loss on the wellbeing of Indigenous people:** colonization and language loss, grief over language loss
- **Committing to Mentor-Apprentice and wellbeing:** feeling strengthened, increased confidence, and overall feeling of empowerment also feelings of exhaustion with all the hours devoted to language learning
- **Strengthening Mentor-Apprentice apprentices to become future community leaders:** becoming more involved in the community, getting job offers, asked to lead cultural activities
- **Elders healing through becoming language mentors:** getting to use the language and teach it after a history of language suppression in boarding schools

Some Examples of ACF Master-Apprentice Grantees

- Boys & Girls Club of the Three Affiliated Tribes (2010-2013, \$405,305)
- Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation (2008-2011, \$397,376)
- Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation (2009-2010, \$131,306)
- Cultural Survival, Inc., with Sauk Language Department (2009-2012, \$237,662)
- Dakota Wicohan (2011-2014, \$698,300)
- Euchee Tribe of Indians (2008-2010, \$380,902)
- Karuk Tribe of California (2008-2011, \$466,338)
- Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (2008-2011, \$594,095)
- Leech Lake Reservation Tribal Council (2008-2011, \$436,729)
- Owens Valley Career Development Center (2009-2011, \$179,982)
- Prairie Band of Potawatomi Nation (2011-2014, \$799,686)
- Sac & Fox Nation (2013-2016, \$695,335)
- Sealaska Heritage Institute (2013-2016, \$448,902.00)
- Wopanaak Language and Cultural Weetyoo, Inc. (2010-2012, \$541,607)

Helpful Resources

- “Cultural Survival and Sac & Fox Language Department Revitalize Sauk Language,” from the Administration for Native Americans. <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ana/success-story/cultural-survival-and-sac-and-fox-tribes-revitalize-sauk-language>
- [How to Keep Your Language Alive: A Commonsense Approach to One-on-One Language Learning](https://heydaybooks.com/book/how-to-keep-your-language-alive/) by Leanne Hinton with Matt Vera and Nancy Steele. <https://heydaybooks.com/book/how-to-keep-your-language-alive/>
- “Ten Points for Successful Language Learning,” First Peoples Cultural Council. Adapted from Leanne Hinton. 2002. *How to Keep Your Language Alive*. Berkeley: Heyday Books. Refer to Chapter 2, pages 7-19. http://www.fpcc.ca/files/PDF/MAP/FPCC_MAP_10PointsForLanguageLearning.pdf
- “Tlingit Language Mentor-Apprentice Handbook” by Sealaska Heritage Institute <https://www.sealaskaheritage.org/sites/default/files/tlingitmentorapprenticehandbook%20final.pdf>
- “Wampanoag Tribe Certifies 10 Wôpanâak Language Teachers,” from the Administration for Native Americans. <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ana/success-story/wampanoag-tribe-certifies-10-wpanak-language-teachers>

References Used

- The Administration for Children & Families: Native Languages Working Group. (2014). "Native Language Practice Brief: Master-Apprentice Methodology."
- Fishman, Joshua A. (1991). *Reversing Language Shift: Theoretical and Empirical Foundations of Assistance to Threatened Languages*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Hinton, Leanne. (2002). *How to Keep Your Language Alive: A Commonsense Approach to One-on-One Language Learning*. Berkeley: Heyday Books.
 - Notable book sections:
 - Pages 10-19, 10 points for successful learning
 - Pages 22-23, 3 year plan
 - Pages 25-28, Typical session
 - Pages 29-61, Lots of ideas on what to do (Pages 58-61, Vocabulary ideas)
 - Pages 63-67, How to learn the grammar without being taught the rules
 - Pages 114-119, Sample cartoons
- Jenni, Anisman, Mclvor, & Jacobs (2017). "An Exploration of the Effects of Mentor-Apprentice Programs on Mentors' and Apprentices' Wellbeing" "International Journal of Indigenous Health 12(2): http://www.fpcc.ca/files/PDF/Language/MAP/MAP-Wellbeing_Jenni-Annisman-Mclvor-Jacobs.pdf

ANA has Training and Technical Assistance that can help you apply to an ANA grant.

Alaska Region

www.anaalaska.org
(800) 948-3158

Eastern Region

www.anaeastern.org
(888) 221-9686

Pacific Basin Region

www.anapacificbasin.org
(844) 944-9544

Western Region

www.anawestern.org
(855) 890-5299



Any questions?

QUYANAQ!

WADO!

THANK YOU!

