

Langscape

Biocultural Diversity of Coastal BC, Canada

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Terralingua



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In our homes and in the privacy of our longhouses we continue to observe the wisdom of the past. The more we learn about the old ways the more we realize that science, mathematics and social studies did not begin with the schools. For some of us it ended.

Excerpt from *The Saanich Year*, by Earl Claxton, John Elliott, Saanich Indian School Board.

Langscape is a Terralingua publication

To enquire about submissions for future issues of Langscape contact
ortixia@terralingua.org

To learn more about Terralingua please visit our website at: www.terralingua.org

Edited by Ortixia Dilts, Creative Designer, Terralingua

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Cover reference: CÉNTOLÉN means Winter (cold earth) in SENĆOŦEN.

Editorial

I should have heeded the warning, a few weeks back, when the first flakes of snow were falling and my neighbours had parked down by the mailboxes. But I didn't. I have just moved my family to an old log house at the top of a remote, long and windy road, on Salt Spring Island, British Columbia (BC), and am still getting accustomed to the area. By that evening I was snowed in, and remained so for the entire week.

It certainly gave me a lot of time to think. I am a big believer in bringing biocultural diversity into the home, leading me to ask the question: how can I live my life, recognizing my intimate connection with nature, moving with the seasons? For example: taking the day to stock up the woodpile when the day is dry (missed that one!), or going out to fish for spring salmon when they hit the river (you got to play the salmon to wear it out, not yank it in and break your pole, hmm...). I don't know if my children agree with our lifestyle (I think they would rather live closer to town), but I do hope that somehow, inside, it will touch who they are and who they will be. But I still have much to learn and often, like that week, I am teaching them what 'not to do': in that case, not paying attention to the dictates of my locale.

It certainly has been a challenge, working in this field, to explain to my kids what biocultural diversity means and why it is so important. My eldest daughter, who thinks she knows everything, explains it: *I know, to save the environment, you need to talk to the indigenous people, and you need to talk to them in their own language.* She's got a point there.

So, in all this, it is really exciting to be compiling this issue of *Langscape*, because it celebrates Terralingua's home region, enriching our knowledge of this unique region and its peoples.

Our first author is BC's leading ethnobiologist Nancy Turner. I first met her last spring at a conference in Tofino. We bumped into each other picking plants on the side of the road. She was picking skunk cabbage leaves for a demonstration concerning using the plant's original name, timaat (Hesquiaht dialect). Nancy's humble and intimate relationships with nature and the First Nations of the area lend such depth and authenticity to her work. To have her write the introduction to this issue of *Langscape* is a true honour.

A few days ago I had the pleasure of meeting with Saanich (Coast Salish) Elder John Elliot to interview him for *Langscape*. We talked about his efforts as well as that of his father to transmit their language to the younger generations. And we had an in-depth discussion of the Saanich Lunar Year, which reflects the natural rhythms of nature, and our relationship to it throughout the year, in my home region. I am delighted that indigenous voices and stories are finding their way into *Langscape*.

We then explore three wonderful projects taking place in this region: First Voices Language Program, ÁLENENEŁ-Learning from Place, and Feasting for Change. Each of these projects serves as an excellent model for biocultural diversity revitalization projects, in language, education, and food sovereignty.

This being said, I called up an old friend of mine, who lives on a remote Nuu-chah-nulth reserve, far out on the west coast of Vancouver Island, to see how he was managing through the power outages in the winter storms. "That's okay, Ortixia," he said, "I've got a generator."

Hy'chka, Gilakas'la, Kleco-Kleco, ʔekoo ʔekoo! Thank You! Ortixia Dilts, Editor, *Langscape*.



River Tavis fishing on the Nitinaht River, BC.

Credit: David Gooding



Biocultural Diversity of Western Canada, Coastal BC

by Nancy J. Turner
Photographs by Jacqueline Dara

Coastal British Columbia, in Western Canada, is one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse regions of North America.

Altogether, some 20 distinct Indigenous languages from five major language families are represented in this region, and many of the languages include two or more dialects. Most of these peoples have resided along the coast for a considerable time. The region is also rich and diverse ecologically, with an immense variety of ecosystems, habitats and species represented, from the ocean floor to the peaks of the coastal and island mountain ranges.

Towering coastal temperate rainforests of Sitka spruce (*Picea sitchensis*), Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), western redcedar (*Thuja plicata*), grand fir (*Abies grandis*), amabilis fir (*Abies amabilis*) and western hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*) give way at upper elevations to forests of yellow cedar (*Chamaecyparis*

nootkatensis), mountain hemlock (*Tsuga mertensiana*) and subalpine fir (*Abies lasiocarpa*). Red alder (*Alnus rubra*), and cottonwood (*Populus balsamifera* ssp. *trichocarpa*), Pacific crabapple (*Malus fusca*), bigleaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*) and various other broad-leaved trees also occur in the coastal forests. At the forest edges, and in the understory, are thousands of species of flowering plants (shrubs and herbs), ferns, mosses and their relatives, many of which are culturally important to First Peoples as sources of food, materials and medicines. As well as the rainforest environments, on the southeastern part of Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands – in the rainshadow of the Olympic and Island mountain ranges – is a drier environment, featuring more open forests of Douglas-fir and grand fir along with woodlands of garry oak (*Quercus garryana*) and arbutus (*Arbutus menziesii*), interspersed with prairies where edible camas (*Camassia* spp.), chocolate lily (*Fritillaria affinis*) and other species requiring a more open habitat can flourish.



Seals watch cautiously on the rocky shoreline of Mitlenatch.

The forests and associated features, including wetlands, streams, rivers, lakes, and prairies, are teeming with animal life: thousands of different insects, spiders and mites, dozens of songbirds, as well as elk, deer, black bear, grizzlies, and other fauna are sheltered and live out their lives within these special places. Mushrooms, lichens and other fungi – species that are integral to the cycles of life of the forests and other terrestrial habitats – are also abundant, although sometimes invisible, elements of

the landscape. Joining the land and the sea are those special “edge” environments – tidal marshes, estuaries, lagoons, bays, rocky bluffs and sandy beaches and dunes – that host their own special array of life-forms. In the intertidal and subtidal zones, live myriad kelps and other marine algae that provide food and shelter for hosts of fish and shellfish, and in turn sustain immense populations of seals, sea lions, and other marine mammals as well as ducks and seabirds of many types. In the open ocean are schools of many types of fish, whales, dolphins and other species that comprise the rich web of life of the region. All these species and the places where they live have immeasurable importance in First Peoples’ lifeways, belief systems, languages and cultures.

Indigenous Peoples all along the coast have developed, and shared, sophisticated and distinctive knowledge systems, technologies and cultures that have enabled them to live sustainably and creatively from generation to generation, in some cases for thousands of years, within their home territories. Being totally reliant on the plants and animals and other organisms of their homelands, they have developed ecological worldviews in which these other lifeforms are regarded as generous and sometimes powerful relatives of human beings. These species are not only resources, to be accessed and used for food, materials and medicines in the circle of life; they are also sources of energy and power that can influence human lives in positive ways if they are approached with care and respect, or negatively if they are abused or treated carelessly or heedlessly. Thus, the knowledge systems that have allowed First Peoples to survive and thrive in this region embrace a philosophy of respect and responsibility towards the societies of plants and animals with whom they share their homelands, as well as to their human families and communities.

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The Indigenous Peoples of coastal British Columbia are part of a wider cultural area, the Northwest Coast Cultural Area, extending from southeastern Alaska to southern Oregon (Suttles 1990). Northwest Coast peoples are characterized by a strongly maritime-oriented economy, based on fishing, shellfish harvesting and marine mammal hunting – a lifestyle that has been in place in the region for at least the last seven thousand

years or so. Today, they are perhaps best known for their strong reliance on the five species of Pacific salmon (*Oncorhynchus spp.*) and on western red cedar, the tree from which their iconic ocean-going dugout canoes, their famous post and plank big-houses and their monumental totem poles are made, as well as bent-wood boxes and numerous smaller items. The inner bark of western red-cedar also has many cultural applications: as roofing and siding for shelters, for cordage, and

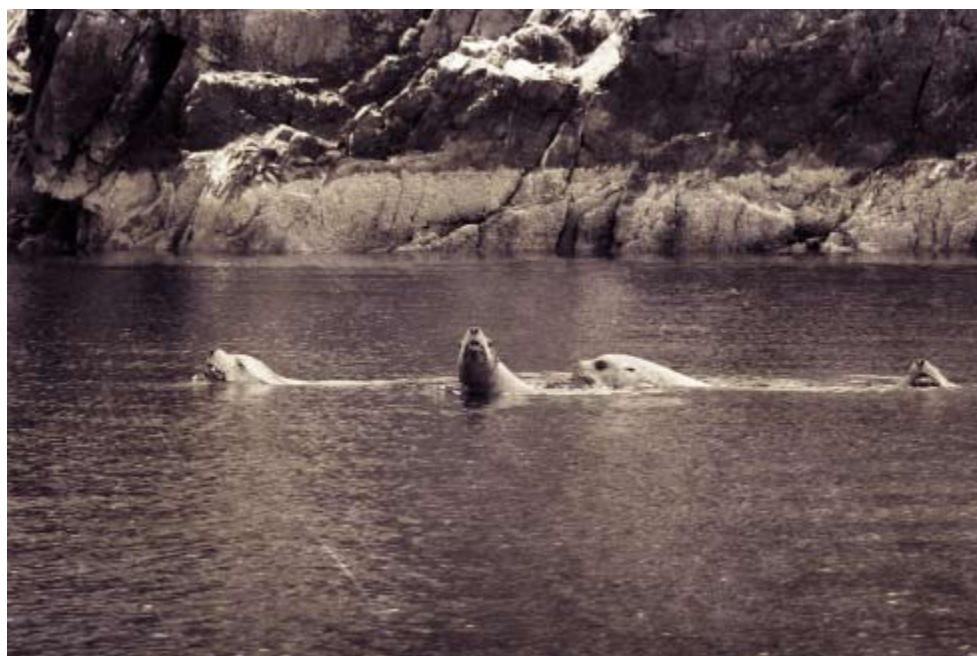
for weaving mats, baskets, hats and clothing. Flexible cedar branches, or withes, are twisted into strong rope and also used for basketry. Even the roots of cedar are used, for cordage and basketry. The green fronds of cedar are used in a variety of ways for ceremonial and medicinal purposes. This tree is only one of approximately 250 different plant species are known to have been named and utilized in one way or another for food, materials and medicines by Indigenous Peoples of coastal British Columbia.

Western red cedar links the Northwest Coast maritime economy to the terrestrial environment and the coastal temperate rainforests that cover much of the landscape. People simply would not be able to access the ocean's resources without the resources of the land. These two major ecosystems and all of the habitats within them are inextricably connected, and humans – along with the salmon, seabirds, bears and other animals – have played a major role in their interconnection. Together, the waters and lands of the Northwest Coast have provided First Peoples with everything they required to live healthy, fulfilling lives. Although only one species of tobacco (*Nicotiana sp.*) and a species of small woolly white dog could be said to have been truly domesticated on the Northwest Coast, the peoples of this region have developed a wide range of practices to intentionally manage and intensify production of many other culturally significant plant and animal species. These include controlled burning, clearing, pruning, coppicing, tilling, replanting and transplanting, application of ceremonial constraints, selective and seasonally limited harvesting, and resource proprietorship (Deur and Turner 2005).



A cormorant takes flight after drying its wings, Mitlenatch Island.

Unfortunately, the dramatic changes to both cultures and environments of this region since the colonial era have resulted in a serious decline in cultural knowledge about plants and environments, and of the Indigenous languages themselves, as well as a marked deterioration of the native species and habitats. Many of the vast temperate rainforests have been clear-cut and transformed into settlements, agricultural areas or tree plantations. Estuaries have been diked and filled, converted into log sorting areas or mill sites. Lakes and wetlands have been drained or filled for agricultural purposes or building. Some of the most productive camas prairies have been built over, and many of the creeks and rivers are far less productive than formerly. Environmental loss and cultural loss go hand in hand. If the cultures and languages of the Northwest Coast of British Columbia are to be revitalized and restored, so must the habitats and species around which they were created, and upon which they depend.



A small group of California Sea Lions tour along the shores of Mitlenatch Island

Nancy Turner, CM, OBC, PhD, FRSC, FLS is a distinguished professor in the School of Environmental Studies at the University of Victoria, and has worked with many knowledgeable Indigenous plant specialists in British Columbia and has written many books and articles on ethnobotany and related topics. She can be found wandering in the bush picking berries and admiring cedar trees...

About the photographer: Jacqueline Dara is a professional freelance photographer from Vancouver Island. With a strong love for traditional film methods, she often brings an old aesthetic to the digital realm. Although she is a portrait photographer, nature and landscape serve to be a constant source of inspiration - she is proud to call the coast her home and plans to share her love through her works.

About the photos: Mitlenatch Island is a beautiful national park in the Strait of Georgia. Meaning 'calm waters all around' in the Coast Salish language, it is a small rocky island that has desert-like features caused by the island's location in the 'rain shadow' of Vancouver Island. Accessible only by boat, it's home to the largest seabird colony, and even has its own species of cacti!

First Nations and Language Groups of Coastal British Columbia*

Cultural group	Language (major dialects)	Language Family	Location
Tlingit	Tlingit (Lingít)	Na-Dene (Athapaskan-Eyak-Tlingit)	southeast Alaska, bordering coastal BC
Haida	Xaaydaa Kil (Masset, Skidegate, Alaska)	Xaaydaa Kil (isolate)	Haida Gwaii (formerly Queen Charlotte Islands) & Prince of Wales I, Alaska
Nisga'a	Nisga'a	Tsimshian	Nass Valley, northern BC
Coast Tsimshian	Smalgyax	Tsimshian	Skeena River area, south to Douglas Channel
Southern Tsimshian/ Kitasoo/ Klemtu	Ski:xs	Tsimshian	Klemtu and vicinity, northern Coast
Haisla	Xa'isla'ala	Wakashan	Kitamaat and vicinity, northern Coast
Hanaksiala	Xenaksialak'ala	Wakashan	Kitlope valley and vicinity, central Coast
Nuxalk/Nuxalkmc	Nuxalk	Salishan	Bella Coola Valley and westward, central Coast
Heiltsuk (Bella Bella, Haihai, Oweekeno/ Wuikinuxv)	Hailhzaqvla/Bella Bella, Oowekyala/ lhuwk'ala, xíxís	Wakashan	channels and islands of the central Coast, west of Nuxalk territory; Oweekeno are in Rivers Inlet vicinity
Kwakwaka'wakw (many different subgroups, speaking a range of dialects)	Kwak'wala	Wakashan	northeastern Vancouver Island, adjacent mainland and islands between; central and southern Coast
Nuu-chah-nulth	Nuuchaan'ulh (many different tribes, speaking a range of dialects)	Wakashan	west coast of Vancouver Island
Ditidaht (Nitinaht)	Diitiid7aatx	Wakashan	southwest coast of Vancouver Island
Comox/ Sliamon	Ey7á7juuthem/Sliamon; Sál-hulhtxw/Comox	Salishan	Powell River area, central eastern Vancouver Island and adjacent islands
Pentlatch	Pəntl'ách	Salishan	Qualicum area, central eastern Vancouver Island
Sechelt	Sheshashishalhem/ Shashishalhem	Salishan	Sechelt Peninsula, Sechelt Inlet and vicinity
Squamish	Skwxwú7mesh sníchim	Salishan	Squamish Inlet to n Vancouver and vicinity
Halkomelem/ Halq'eméylem	Halkomelem (Halq'eméylem/ Upriver; Hənqəminəm/Downriver; Hul'qumi'num/Vancouver Island)	Salishan	se coast of Vancouver Island, Gulf Islands, and lower Mainland and Fraser Valley region
Northern Straits Salish	Lhéchelesem (Semiahmoo, Malchosen, SENCŌFEN/ Saanich, Lekwungen, T'Sou-ke)	Salishan	southern Vancouver Island, Gulf Islands

* Provided by Nancy Turner. Many of these groups have been represented with multiple spellings over the years; we have done our best to present the most recent; language names are from First Peoples' Language Map of British Columbia (2007) [<http://maps.fphlcc.ca>]; further explanations, accurate linguistic spellings of the language names and dialects, and many relevant references to B.C. First Nations' languages, are provided in William J. Poser's The Names of the First Nations Languages of British Columbia, (n.d.) pp. 1-22 [<http://www.billposer.org/Papers/bclgnames.pdf>]



FirstVoices: Bringing Indigenous Language Legacies into the Future

Introduction by Luisa Maffi

As Nancy Turner explains in her article, Coastal British Columbia is a hotbed of biocultural diversity—and so is British Columbia (BC) as a whole. The westernmost province of Canada, BC is geographically and biologically very diverse. It features a variety of ecozones, spanning from the deep, mountainous fjords and thousands of islands of the wet Pacific coastal regions to the high peaks of the Canadian Rockies, going through successive mountain ranges and a semi-arid interior zone, and including areas of boreal forest and taiga to the north. This great natural diversity has helped spawn an exceptional diversity of indigenous cultures and languages as well. Taking just the linguistic diversity aspect, there are officially 34 distinct languages (or 59 languages and/or dialects, according to other definitions) in British Columbia – which accounts for over 60% of all the indigenous languages of Canada!

But this extraordinary language legacy, along with the wealth of knowledge and wisdom carried by the languages, is at serious risk. Through historic processes of government-directed assimilation, which included centrally the system of residential school, children from BC First Nations were taken from their families and communities, kept essentially captive in schools often far away, and prohibited from speaking their own languages and practicing their customs. Thus another, in this case tragic, legacy was left behind. The intergenerational transmission of languages and cultures was in a large number of cases severely hampered if not totally interrupted, with a majority of the children who passed through the residential school system being induced or forced to switch to English and give up their ways of life. The social, psychological, health, and economic costs of this wholesale linguistic and cultural assimilation are incalculable, and we are barely beginning to come to terms with them. Again confining ourselves to languages, most of BC's indigenous languages are now endangered. The majority of remaining fluent speakers of these languages is made up of Elders aged 65 years or older, and in most cases the younger generations have grown up without speaking their ancestral mother tongue. The Elders fluent in their mother tongue are the last of the Knowledge Keepers, the last few who hold the remnants of their languages and traditional ecological knowledge.

Enter FirstVoices, the brainchild of two teachers at the ŁÁU,WELNEW Tribal School on southern Vancouver Island, BC: Peter Brand and John Elliott. John Elliott is a member of the Saanich Nation and a language and culture teacher at the Tribal School. In 1999, John began to experiment with digital video and computers as teaching tools for Aboriginal language education. John's collaboration with teaching colleague Peter Brand (who hails from Tasmania, Australia, and had taught Aboriginal students in the Northern Territory of Australia before coming to the ŁÁU,WELNEW Tribal School) resulted in the development of multimedia tools specifically designed for Indigenous language instruction.

First Voices Information

www.firstvoices.ca

FirstVoices is a suite of web-based tools and services designed to support Aboriginal people engaged in language archiving, language teaching & culture revitalization.

The FirstVoices Language Archive contains thousands of text entries in many diverse Aboriginal writing systems, enhanced with sounds, pictures and videos.

A companion set of interactive online games is designed to present the archived FirstVoices language data in creative learning activities.

Some language archives at FirstVoices are publicly accessible, while others are password protected at the request of the language community.

Contact

Aboriginal communities interested in archiving and teaching their languages using the FirstVoices multimedia language tools are invited to contact the FirstVoices team:

Telephone: (250) 652-5952

Email: Peter Brand (peter@fpcf.ca)

Media Contact:

Megan Lappi, Communications Manager

Telephone: (250) 652-5952 ext. 214

Email: megan@fphlcc.castuff



This experience ultimately led in 2003 to the creation of the FirstVoices Web-based Aboriginal Language resource (www.firstvoices.com). For their contribution to Indigenous language revitalization, in 2002 Peter and John were honored by the University of Victoria with the Community Leadership Award.

In Peter Brand's words, the philosophy of FirstVoices is that of the old Chinese proverb: "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." When conceiving the project, he and John Elliott wanted to create a set of tools, training and support services that would enable grassroots community-based language activists to document their own languages from within their communities via the Web. In 1999, that was a fairly radical concept for the Internet. Today, as the project's literature explains, "FirstVoices [is] an accessible tool for Aboriginal communities to document their language and rejuvenate traditional learning through the spoken word." In response to the need to make the most of limited financial resources, FirstVoices provides innovative technical solutions for First Nations language documentation and revitalization. The project, which was launched by the First Peoples' Cultural Foundation and is now administered by the First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Council, "allows Aboriginal communities to use the latest technology to accurately document their language data and manage their own language resources to keep their languages and cultures vibrant and accessible for future generations."

At its root, FirstVoices is an online language archiving tool through which First Nations can document their own alphabets, vocabulary, phrases, songs, and stories. FirstVoices is currently working with 31 First Nations communities in BC, plus several others in the rest of Canada as well as in California.

This is a lot of progress, yet Peter Brand predicts that we have perhaps five years left to rescue the precious indigenous language legacy of BC and breathe new life into it. The work is absolutely urgent, and it needs more support than it does have.

Recently, Langscape editor Ortixia Dilts had an opportunity to interview Peter Brand and John Elliot and ask them a few burning questions. The text of the interviews follow.



Interview with Peter Brand, FirstVoices

Ortixia Dilts: Peter, who is your target audience?

Peter Brand: The focus for the FirstVoices language documentation tools is the dwindling population of community-based language champions intent on capturing and safely archiving the linguistic treasures of the few remaining speakers before it is too late.

The target audience for those resources, delivered via the FirstVoices language tutor, FirstVoices Kids, and the FirstVoices Mobile applications, is the younger generations of First Nations People. There is a growing population of young First Nations People who recognize that their identity is closely tied to their language, and who want to grasp and absorb that knowledge. The residential school system, supported by government assimilation policies, literally beat Canada's rich linguistic diversity out of several generations of First Nations People. The rekindling of those languages will not happen overnight.



Or: How do you collect data for the FirstVoices website?

PB: The whole idea is that the community language champions collect the data – ALL of it. Every word, phrase, song and story on FirstVoices was put there by First Nations technicians young and old, trained by our small team. We still travel for a week or two at a time into small remote communities for training purposes, but we're making increasing use of Skype audio and video conferencing for training and technical support.

Or: For the linguists out there, could you please talk about the orthography and the differences between the alphabets used within Coastal BC, versus the standard IPA (international phonetic alphabet)?

PB: Fascinating stuff! A subject we literally stumbled into rather blindly at first. We now find ourselves part of a small international group of 'experts' constantly working to ensure that literacy and publishing tools are as accessible to Indigenous languages as they are to mainstream languages.

In BC, the amazing linguistic diversity was a direct result of our equally amazing geographical diversity. The magnificent mountains and fjords that dissect our province were the very features that isolated small linguistic groups over time. Today there are 34 distinct languages plus 2 'sleeping' languages – over 60% of all the languages of Canada.

None of the Indigenous languages of BC had a writing system pre-contact. The reason that every one of the 34 BC First Nations languages has a different orthography stems from the fact that, with a few exceptions, a series of priests, teachers and linguists arrived in First Nations communities, their motivation ranging from religious proselytizing to linguistic research. Each brought their own recommendations of adaptations of the Roman alphabet, usually with characters borrowed from the IPA. The result is a very diverse range of orthographies, which today are held on to quite strenuously by each community. Each unique orthography is seen to define the unique language that adopted it.

Some of the orthographies, especially in the Yukon, are so complex that I'm sure they actually scare a lot of would-be learners off their language. The beauty of the late Dave Elliott's orthography (John Elliott's dad [see next article—ed.]) here in Saanich is that it uses one character per phoneme. Linguists consider it to be a brilliant solution. You need to see the kids at the school using the language, orthography and keyboard!

Or: Most important question: Anything that I have missed that you are really passionate about?

PB: Well – I am absolutely passionate about advocating on behalf of Indigenous people to ensure a full documentation of their languages while they still have access to fluent speakers with the knowledge to lead the work. The situation is now desperate.

I just learned that the New Zealand government devotes a budget of \$240M annually to the Maori language, the ONLY Indigenous language in the country. In this country the federal government currently devotes \$2.08M per year to the Aboriginal language Initiative – divided equally between 10 provinces. BC, with 34 languages, gets \$208,000 per year. New Brunswick, with 2 languages, also gets \$208,000. The population of New Zealand (\$240M) and British Columbia (\$208,000) are almost identical. Do the math!

Or: Can you tell me about your name Puu?ic?uktk*kwak?iš?

PB: Puu?ic?uktk*kwak?iš (Poo-its-ooktwh-kwook-ish) "Dreamer of good dreams" (my Nuchatlaht name – West Coast) I was visiting Zeballos to train the community FirstVoices team there. When they learned that FirstVoices was my 'brainchild', a committee of elders was convened to come up with a name that reflected the FirstVoices story.



Interview with John Elliot, First Voices

“It is time to put away the paddle”, he says. ^[1] “This month, SJELÁSEN, is the time when the rains return, and the waters are too restless to travel, we put away the paddle, and gather around the fire to tell stories.” Thus begins my interview with Saanich Elder and high school teacher, STOLÇEŁ, John Elliott.

Many years ago, the Saanich people took over School Board 63, in the Saanich Peninsula of southern Vancouver Island, north of the provincial capital of British Columbia, Victoria, and began the indigenization of education for their children. I am meeting John at the high school. The kids are finished for the day and converging in the halls that are donned with posters such as: Sacred Medicine: Tobacco. Don’t abuse it. He has just finished teaching his carving class. The kids are practicing traditional designs. He says they need to master them on paper before they bring them to the wood.

“In the beginning there was Rain, SŁEMEW, he recounts. Rain was a human being and taught people things. Each living thing once was a human being and shared special knowledge on how to live: the killer whale, the eagle, the salmon. These teachings, sacred words, were given to specific families to carry and protect on through the generations. For John’s family, it was the cedar tree.

Much of our culture, he continues, has been lost throughout a short period of time, through boarding schools, rules and regulations. There is a farm around here that used to be an ancient grove of cedar trees. In the old days, we had all the wood we needed from the deadfalls. We rarely cut a living tree—and then only with great ritual and prayer, and we honoured those trees. We used them to build our great cedar canoes, in which we used for food gathering and to visit our families across the way. This farmer came along, and he did not want us to have these trees, so he cut them all down and burned them. And the elders cried...”

John Elliot has dedicated his life to bringing back the culture to his people through the Saanich School and his father, Dave Elliott, did so before him. As we walk around the classroom, he shows me the SENĆOŦEN alphabet that his father devised to make the language more accessible to his own people. Here’s a bit of history:

“In the early 1960s, Dave Elliott became a custodian at the Tsartlip Indian Day School, attended by most of the Saanich children. Dave recognized the rapid decline in the use of SENĆOŦEN and the knowledge of the language and culture. The late Phillip Paul led an initiative to establish the Saanich Indian School Board. The SENĆOŦEN language was immediately offered as part of the curriculum of the band-operated school. Realizing that without a method of recording the language it would eventually be lost, Dave began to write down SENĆOŦEN words phonetically. He soon discovered that upon returning to read previously recorded words, he could not understand what he had written. Dave studied with a Victoria linguist, learning the International alphabet and other orthographies. The main difficulty with these systems was that some of the complex sounds of the SENĆOŦEN language required numerous symbols to be represented, resulting in long and complicated words. Dave decided to devise his own alphabet, using only one letter to denote each sound.



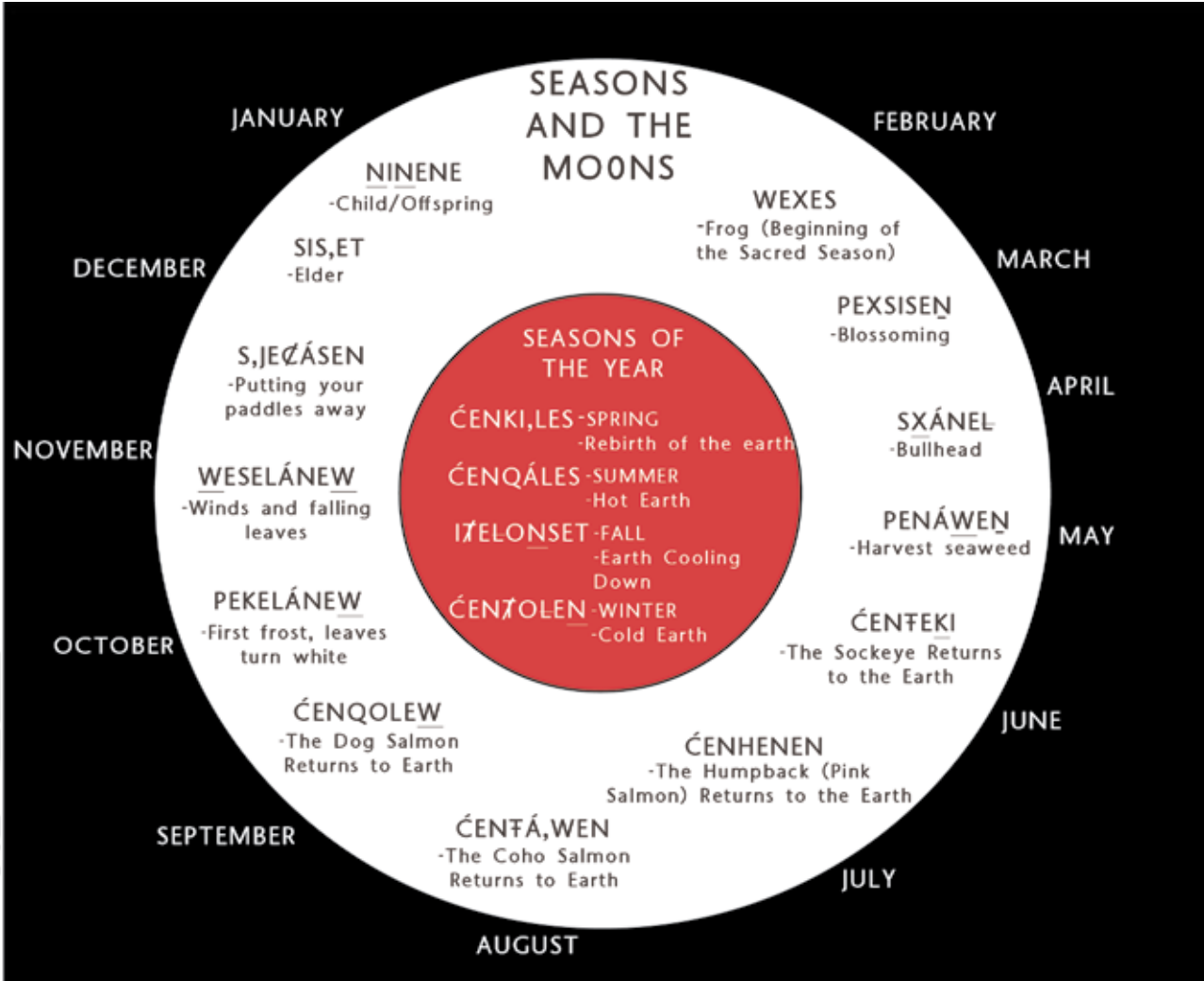
He purchased a used typewriter for \$30 and set out to make the SENĆOTEN writing system accessible to his people. During the winter of 1978 the Dave Elliott SENĆOTEN Alphabet was created.”^[2]

In the classroom, John patiently walked me through the alphabet letter by letter, practicing the soft and subtle sounds of each letter, including precious time spent on the four different Ks. Ƙ ǵ Ƙ Ƙ ^[3]. He told me that, to create the letters, his dad would backspace on the typewriter to put one character on top of the other. Today, John can be found texting his colleagues on his iPhone in SENĆOTEN!

In the short period of time we talked, John told me many stories, about reef net fishing and the salmon spirit, how to build cedar planks, tidal routes, and how they used the old technology to transport large boulders long distances. Even today, we are still learning from these ancestors, he said mysteriously, when I noticed the hoop drum on his desk. So much has been lost he muses—losing a language is losing ancient knowledge. Bit by bit, we are regaining this, but still, there is so much more work to do, and not a lot of time.

Editor’s notes:
 [1] approximate words from an unrecorded discussion
 [2] www.sisb.bc.ca/index3.html
 [3] <http://www.languagegeek.com/salishan/sencoten.html>

THE 13 MOONS
 of the WSÁNEĆ
 (Saanich people)
 adapted from the
 Saanich Year by
 Earl Claxon and
 John Elliott ©1993
 Saanich Indian
 School Board.





“Long ago, there was a time when the creator actively taught the people how to live. This was the time when all things were human and could communicate with each other. The creator took some people and threw them out across the water. These people became these islands [the Gulf Islands and San Juan Islands off the Pacific Northwest Coast of Canada and the USA]. The creator told the island people and the Saanich [WSÁNEĆ] people to take care of each other. This is why the roots of our word for island, TETÁĆES, mean relatives of the deep. For a very long time we took good care of these islands. These waters were teeming with fish because we were taught to respect them. This is what we have the responsibility to teach. The islands and the fish are our relatives.”

ÁLENENEÇ:

Learning from Place, Spirit, and Traditional Language

by Saanich Indian School Board (SISB) and

Joshua Guilar (Royal Roads University) and Tye Swallow (Saanich Adult Education Centre)


[excerpted from an article originally published in 2008 in the Canadian Journal of Native Studies; reproduced with permission]

This essay describes the nature and outcomes of an Aboriginal education program. This program has an Aboriginal name, ÁLENENEÇ, which means homeland. Very little has been done to assess the effectiveness of learning from place in any culture.

A fundamental question considering the Indigenizing of education is about what knowledge a community considers most important. The regeneration of ÁLENENEÇ emerged from the question: what is knowledge of most worth to WSÁNEĆ people? Earlier research found that knowledge of most worth was associated with land and territory, and significant essentials of this knowledge: Elders as carriers, SENĆOŦEN language and place names, WSÁNEĆ history, teachings, stories and ceremony, sense of belonging and identity. The ÁLENENEÇ program was offered by the Saanich Adult Education Centre (SAEC). Ten students age 19 to 43 participated and assisted in our program’s development.

Keith Basso wrote *Wisdom Sits in Places* because place names reach deeply into other cultural spheres. Earl Claxton Jr., an advisor and student, said to us, “a place name is more than just a name of a place. A place name is very important in identifying with our homeland as each of those place names contains a history, an important meaning or a teaching. John Elliott Sr., our SENĆOŦEN teacher, said that teachings about place “provide a sense of identity as WSÁNEĆ people. They provide a connection to place. Our people learn something from these places. They learn an important value, respect. This is WSÁNEĆ thinking”.

Daily experiences in our program took place mostly at WSÁNEĆ places. Elders and participants shared their knowledge of a place’s history, teachings and stories. As a group we also discussed SENĆOŦEN words that relate to a place’s current and traditional value.



Eco-cultural restoration projects, outdoor recreation and participant journaling infused practical meaning into our curricular experiences. The bringing together of people, particularly the Elders and our participants, breathed life into our collective experiences. The energy of the people and their stories guided us in our journey toward understanding a wisdom still held in WSÁNEĆ places.

Six Program Outcomes

Employing grounded theory together revealed six outcomes. Each segment begins with a summary and then quotes the voices of Aboriginal learners to express some of the differences and richness. The outcomes were determined by the researchers from interview notes.

Altered Relationship to Place: The first outcome concerned the basic purpose of the program—the goal of understanding better how we can learn from our homeland. Our relationship with place was altered. Relationship with place became much more meaningful, connected and intimate. Learning in place taught us our stories, teachings, culture and the way of life of our ancestors. We are beginning to be able to culturally interpret temporal and physical expressions of our land. With the depth we now have, we can return to those places and learn more. We feel a responsibility to take care of our land.

“I think the way I look at my territory has changed dramatically--the way I look at plants, their SENĆOŦEN names, the environment, and the meanings of these places. I look where I step now. I have a much greater appreciation of where I am. Before, I took these things for granted. Now, I feel pretty lucky to live here. I know this place as CIETNEWALE. Before, it was just somewhere to go. I now have a different attitude about the place. I take pride in what is there. Now I take my garbage away. People need to be aware of taking their garbage away and not just leave it” (Paul Sam Jr., 2007).

“This course has reawakened something that has been dead for a long time. [...] I probably wouldn't have got as much if it wasn't for being in the longhouse. Because of the longhouse work I was allowed to grieve for these places. To go out there was an amazing experience” (Rhonda Underwood, 2007).

“I use our SENĆOŦEN names when I talk about these places. There is a place near PKOLS (Mt Doug), SIKANEN, means becoming Saanich. This course has been like becoming Saanich” (David Underwood, 2007).

“I definitely know my territory differently and have more respect for the responsibility of taking care of our land. We have a starting place for our families out there. My

great grandfather had a home out there. We have history out there” (Branden Wilson, 2007).

“I take the time and pay attention to my environment in new ways, and I ask my kids to do the same. We were picking KEXMIN the other day. The kids catch on so quick to what we are doing. I teach them to not pick all from the same plant so that it remains here always. It is amazing how quickly they learn” (Samantha Etzel, 2007).

Enhanced Relationship with Elders: The second outcome was enhanced relationships with Elders. We appreciated deepening relationships with Elders during the course. We need to visit, talk and learn from Elders, before these Elders are gone. Elders know so much of the traditional knowledge and our own family history. We need to deepen and share the knowledge of Elders' stories before it is too late.

“I look to the Elders and make sure I talk with them now. I appreciate the opportunity to see them, to visit with them, and to show my appreciation for them” (Paul Sam Jr, 2007).

“I feel sad that I don't see the Elders. We have an urgent responsibility, because our Elders are not well. We need to learn from them before they are gone. All of our community's knowledge, history, teachings, language is housed in our Elders” (Rhonda Underwood, 2007).

“I feel a need to go see the Elders now, and learn the knowledge that they have. Elder Ray Sam told us so much it was hard to keep up. He was telling us about the different tides and their names. Tides were like a transit system that could take you where you wanted to go” (David Underwood, 2007).

“The stories our Elders shared with us come from our families' histories. These stories are not fictional but have a deep history. We need to know our stories and to carry them with us” (Toby Joseph, 2007).

Changed Relationship with Community: The third outcome was a changed relationship with the community. We need to bring out what we learned in this course with our community. We learned to respect all our relatives. Our culture teaches us that everything, even plants, were once people. Restoring our plant communities is good. The first thing is to learn our culture. Then, we need development in our communities but with respect. We need to protect our land as well as protect and support our culture. This class was a good model for respect and energy for ideas. We need to be culturally sensitive as we serve our communities.



“The native plants are like our relatives. In our view everything around you is your relative. Everything before was a person, like the trees were once people, there is a story about that. It doesn’t matter that restoration worked its way into our program, that it might not be ‘traditional.’ We are giving back and fixing something. We are creating a relationship with place. You recognize your friends” (Ian Sam, 2007).

“I think we need to be more open in our community and find positive ways to approach issues like development. I am not against development. But many of the ways we do things now are not WSÁNEĆ. We need to use our land but in respectful and healthy ways” (Branden Wilson, 2007).

“There needs to be a push from the political side for people to see the importance of our ÁLENENEŁ program. This experience has allowed me to stand up and to show my community who I am, the commitment I have for my people” (Toby Joseph, 2007).

“I am aware of more people within our community. I am worried about how will we protect our heritage in this place rather than just making money? I have been questioning what is really important in our community. The residential school has left a huge hole in our culture. Our people have become so modern, and what have we lost? How do we get our kids to think about what is a good life, a life that was once ours, our traditions” (Samantha Etzel, 2007).

Transformed Relationship with Self: The fourth outcome was knowledge that our true identity or self is in our land. Knowing our places means knowing our selves. We need to reconcile with our lands. We belong here, and knowing that and our other teachings is our way to grow as WSÁNEĆ people. The program made us want to take action—to protect the environment and our culture and (often) to be teachers. Learning our history in place taught us about who we are as descendants of our ancestors. We have a unique and important way of knowing our land. We want to be and to share who we really are. Believing and living our ideas and feelings is crucial.

“I think I am not as selfish as I used to be. I was used to doing things for me when I should have been doing things for other people. My outlook has changed. My educational goals have changed. My identity has changed. I am more proud to be WSÁNEĆ. Now I know there is so much to learn about myself, my people and our language. We are not some stereotypical Indians. I want to share what we really are” (Paul Sam Jr., 2007).

“Returning to place will help people heal. We are told by

our Elders that grief is a part of daily life. Our traditional places give respite for grieving. We’ve stayed lost in addiction and in pain because we are so lost in our grief. Grief is not a weakness but is essential in building strength. Being in this course has helped me return to my whole self” (Rhonda Underwood, 2007).

“I found I have been very emotional during the program. I think I have learned more about compassion, understanding where some of our youth are coming from, why they sometimes seem so lost, that our young people are hurting themselves” (MENETIA, Elisha Elliott, 2007).

“Our trip to our TETÁĆES formed much of how I think about myself. The stories Ray told me that my grandfather planted those trees out at TIXEN. My history is here. There was a change in the way I feel about myself. I belong to this land and our people. Nothing can take that away” (Toby Joseph, 2007).

Relationship with Language: The next outcome was increased commitment to learning our language. Our language, SENĆOŦEN, has become real and is a reflection of our identity as WSÁNEĆ people, but how do we continue to learn it? We enjoyed seeing the humour when our Elders talked with each other. Learning our language is learning the roots of words, our culture, our family histories, and our relation to place and, of course, our stories. Our language is open to interpretation and always growing inside us.

“My understanding of my language has increased. So much of our language connects to our way of living and being. Our place names have impacted how I think. The root words and what they mean provide an understanding of how we organized things, how we named them. Our Elders tell us ‘you are thinking in English, you need to think in SENĆOŦEN.’ I realize there is a transformation in thinking in SENĆOŦEN. When addressing people in a group I speak from the heart. I feel more comfortable in using my language. I’m becoming me” (Ian Sam, 2007).

“Learning our language will always be a growing process. Our Elders say SENĆOŦEN is a patient language. Anything I learn I take to heart. My perspective has changed. Our language is open to interpretation. We are taught an inherent meaning and then we can take it on and comprehend that meaning ourselves. To me it is always about perspective. Interpretation is part of our belief. In sacred belief there are 3 variations. HELI means lively, SHELI means life, SOX HELI one’s life belief or life’s teaching. Some words are very personal, our sacred belief. I have heard that you cannot tell a lie in our language” (David Underwood, 2007).

“Around my family we can understand and converse, not fluent, but there has always been a strong message that there is not much time left. It is scary that many of our older people do not even know any greetings in SENĆOŦEN” (MENETIA, Elisha Elliott, 2007).

“This experience has given me names and a history I was not aware of. I use the place names we learned. ȪIXEN, TILEQEN. When I see things like Camas [a native lily whose bulbs were a key part of native diet], I think about our words KŁO,EL. Learning our language was a profound experience for me. Using our language is about connecting with our identity. The fact that I can now introduce myself in my language is huge. My pride and self-respect are higher than they have been in a long time” (Toby Joseph, 2007).

“I have been dreaming in our language. I know I have so much more to learn. I have spent my whole life here and am just beginning to learn our language. I learned a lot from our classes” (Samantha Etzel, 2007).

Barriers: The sixth outcome was knowledge about barriers to learning program content. Barriers include time, money, accreditation and the availability of SENĆOŦEN classes. Many people are unaware of what goes on at the SISB. Fear of failure with learning the language is common. We need the emotional space to share what is really going on inside. A lack of Elders is and will be a barrier. One barrier is the Western paradigm and its assimilative powers. There is a lack of support and understanding by our own communities, employers and leaders who do not see how the program might relate to our jobs within our community.

“Money was a barrier for me because I have a family to care for. My attention span, sometimes I find it hard to sit and pay attention” (Branden Wilson, 2007).

“Lack of support from leadership in the community. I wasn’t aware of the potential for the fact that these things can be within a curriculum. If people cannot experience this, how can they possibly understand?” (Toby Joseph, 2007).

“There is a lack of understanding by leadership. They have the opportunity to support us but don’t. It has been such a challenge to justify this course to them. I can’t understand why there has been such resistance. The questions they ask, “what will you bring back to your community, and how do we measure that?” They live in a world that needs papers and figures to demonstrate something. How do you measure something as important as culture, traditions and identity? Our strength is within our traditions and culture” (Samantha Etzel, 2007).



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Discussion

The outcomes section featured the voices of WSÁNEȪ learners as they completed the learning from place program in their territories. Their voices are remarkable because they are tentative yet powerful, and speak as both learners and teachers. Many times they declare their perspective as being their own, but as we discussed the creation of this article with our advisory, we agreed their voices represent a synthesis of the collectivistic and the personal. We feel that the voices of the learners best describe the outcomes of the program. Their voices are filled with insight, relevance and richness. Analysis could add little by breaking what they said down into parts. Instead, in our coding we synthesized what the learners said about relationship as we formulated emerging ideas together.

With an agreement in place that enables First Nations in British Columbia to assume meaningful control of education on reserve at the K-12 level, the Indigenizing of education has finally become a reality. Learning from place is a content area with promise as a foundation for Aboriginal education programs such as language acquisition, cultural knowledge, Western traditional subject areas and social and economic development. The work of the SISB with ÁLENENEȪ demonstrates the power of learning from place programs. The learners in this cohort attest to the power of the program to change perception and relationship. The six outcomes of this project have to do with an altering of relationship. Relationships were enhanced between Aboriginal learners, their traditional

places, their Elders, their communities, themselves and their language. Indigenous worldviews such as WSÁNEĆ are in flux and have been for over 200 years of colonialism. So much has changed for an Indigenous reality, including the life-ways and the landscape itself that the Indigenizing of education must be interpreted anew. 'Education' has played a large role in the elimination of Aboriginal knowledge. Yet, a new education needs to play a significant role in revitalization.

Aboriginal people today must create education that will: 1) maintain and enhance their traditional culture including their languages, and 2) work effectively in mainstream society.

Learning from place is a fundamental context for exploring and implementing the process of Indigenizing education.

Bringing together people in traditionally meaningful places allows stories to be told, questions to be asked and perspectives on what learning from place can mean. Being Aboriginal involves a deep relationship with Elders, family, community and place. Learning from place is a context for engaging in meaningful experiences and encouraging a common dialogue to explore how we can learn from our homeland. Learning from place provides a foundational process for Indigenizing education through which many Aboriginal life-ways can be learned.

The community must drive the program to effectively address local cultural needs.

Indigenizing education means local Aboriginal community determining, controlling and implementing education for members. Determining community needs requires community input at all levels of program conception, development and implementation. Establishing an advisory committee is essential because the community must oversee the whole program. The committee represents the knowledge of Elders, other knowledge holders and potential participants. Having gatherings, meetings and discussions with all people involved further reinforces that community has ownership and is explicitly driving the program.

The community must teach the program in Indigenous ways involving Elders and knowledge holders.

The community must also be intimately involved in teaching the program. According to cultural protocol, Elders and cultural knowledge holders are the most important teachers. During our program, Elders most often taught in a traditional place and were often fluent SENĆOŦEN speakers. They were not handed a script. We only said where we were going and we asked if they could tell stories that were connected to place. Each Elder spoke from the heart and each participant listened with the heart.



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Involving Elders in program development, supervision and teaching is necessary for success. Elders receive the acknowledgment of their communities because of their authenticity. Their authenticity often involves their ability to speak the traditional language, to be knowledge holders of traditional ways and to live the traditional culture. Participants, Elders, knowledge holders and other guest speakers are all learners and teachers at the same time. This ensures what one of our advisory members called a collective, communal place of learning.

Learning from place must be real, e.g., it must happen in context both socially and environmentally.

For experiences to be most meaningful and for lasting relationships to become established, they must be situated in meaningful places. Although some time in class can be scheduled for discussions, presentations and language lessons, participants confirm that the most memorable experiences are situated in place. Visits to place foster perceptions that are connected to place. In groups, these experiences foster ties to land socially, furthering a common and current notion of relationship with territory. How did our ancestors know their territory, how did they learn from it and, what can this mean now?

The foregoing addresses an essential element in program success – the program must be real. At the core for



many participants is grieving and a sense of loss. Time for reflection must be made for grieving. An example comes from the sacred places themselves.

All places to various extents have been disturbed by development and by environmental degradation. As well, participants often become overwhelmed when speaking about the loss of their lands, their language, their culture, and the shame they feel in not knowing. Participants need the time to think, to feel their loss and to come out stronger.

Language learning in place fosters meaningful relationships with territorial places and the culturally significant entities that live there. In our research, knowing a place as WSÁNEĆ is meaningfully different than knowing it as Saanich, as is viewing an arbutus tree as KÓKO, IŁĆ, or knowing yourself in your traditional name. The landscape that we see around us, the mountains, valleys, coastlines and islands, known in their traditional names encourage an understanding as ancestors might have had. The learning of skills, such as cedar stripping, clam gathering, or praying, provide appropriate context for the development of culturally relevant language learning. WSÁNEĆ identity lies in the SENĆOŦEN language just as it lies in homeland. Revitalizing language learning in traditional places is a promising place for language curriculum development.

The program, similar to culture and language, must be open to interpretation and adaptation as time passes. Culture must be reinterpreted anew for each person and each time. Interpretation of the Indigenizing of education is ongoing. Further understanding evolves as time passes. And although there will be commonalities among different Aboriginal groups, one thing is certain, the program needs to adapt to local circumstance. A culture that is alive innovates. For example, we used kayaks on our trip to traditional islands. Kayaks are not traditional to Coast Salish people. Rather, cedar canoes were used in traditional travel. However, kayaks and guides are insurable, they were available and they worked great. We hope to use cedar canoes in the future, but until they are available, kayaks are fine.

The same innovative thinking can be seen in the integration of eco-cultural restoration work. Before contact with settlers, it was meaningless to study removal of invasive plant species because obviously such species were not here. However, restoring native ecosystems such as the Garry Oak that were once essential for traditional life-ways enriches the learning experience. Another example is using scientific measures of pollution for stream and food gathering sites.

The outcomes of the program are significant and positive, particularly for program effects on identity, community involvement and career/educational development. 'How can you know who you are without knowing where you come from' is a common saying in WSÁNEĆ culture. This relationship is essential to Aboriginal culture. The finding of improved relationship with self means a positive cultural identity as a WSÁNEĆ person. The strength of this identity integrates with the development of a career. This career could be very traditional such as carving or it could be less traditional as in finishing post-secondary education or learning to lead an organization or community.

The community, particularly leaders (chief and council), must embrace and support the program. The program needs to be integrated with other elements of community life, i.e., employers, economic development, social development, other educational programs in the community and post-secondary education. The program's evolving success depends on its integration with the community and with leaders. Chiefs and councils often lead social and economic development in their communities. The social and economic development of the community needs to be integrated with culture also. It is important to integrate traditional culture with economic and social development to ensure that chiefs and council members are steeped in traditional knowledge learned from place.

Aboriginal employers need to be supportive. Some of the main barriers identified by participants were financial and job commitments. Participants are often community people employed by bands. We overcame this barrier by asking band councils to release employees with pay, on a half-time basis, for professional development. These experiences foster cultural learning that is relevant to jobs and make people better workers. Learning from place provides a foundation for other elements of life-ways. We encourage land and housing managers, school board reps, teachers, administrators, social and community support workers to also participate. These are the people who know the realities of the communities where they live and work.

The curriculum of the ÁLENENEŦ: Learning from Homeland program can be emulated by other First Nations communities. Inherent in this discussion is the idea that other Aboriginal Communities can develop their learning from place programs using the one described herein as a model. Learning from place as we have described it in this article is about the development of meaningful and relevant learning context through a process of bringing people and place together. Outcomes emerge from participants and the relationships they deepen with their homeland, language, community, Elders and themselves.

It is about facilitation. We believe that however similar the processes may be in facilitating a program of this type, all programs remain local. Each community is as unique as the ecologies they call home.

Conclusion

As we continue to develop the **ÁLENENEÇ**: Learning from Homeland curriculum, we need to work with strengthening the program in many ways. First, we need to integrate the program with other programs and age groups at the SISB.

One example is already underway with integrating work with place such as propagating and planting native plants with K-12 programs at the Tribal School and in the local public schools as part of cultural programming.



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Another need is to integrate the program with higher education institutions so that the **ÁLENENEÇ** program counts toward studies in other programs in the arts, social sciences, sciences, tourism, and commerce. We have begun discussions with post-secondary institutions as part of Aboriginal Service Plans to incorporate elements of the program. The University of Victoria is in the process of beginning a multi-disciplined degree for Aboriginal students. We are working with some of the barriers identified by the course members. An example of overcoming job and financial barriers is offering a program of this type as professional development to band employees.

Finally, Indigenizing the K-12 curriculum is and will continue to be a monumental task. This curriculum development research has hopefully demonstrated that Indigenizing the context will be key to making this transformation a reality. We believe that all Western traditional subject areas can be engaged in learning from place experiences. Contextualizing the learning environment in place, rather than the classroom, is an educational and structural challenge that needs to be overcome.

Ultimately, we can all learn from the places we call our homeland. The quality of listening to the land and stories from the land can lead toward listening to each other. Respect for land and for each other is a lesson for any society and nation.

*We are grateful to the authors for arranging permission to reproduce here a condensed version of the published article. Special thanks to Tye Swallow for telling us about the wonderful work of the Saanich Adult Education Centre (www.sisb.bc.ca/saec/index.htm), of which **ÁLENENEÇ** and the Language Apprenticeship Program are key components.*

Editor's Note: The **ÁLENENEÇ program has continued on over the past four years, and evolved into a 'language apprenticeship program', which is as an intensive training program for the next generation of Saanich Teachers. Much of their work revolves around on one-on-one training with six Elders, the last of the Saanich Knowledge Keepers. Many of the voices whose voices are heard in this article have continued on as Language Apprentices, and much hope and responsibility is placed on them to continue and pass on Saanich culture and language to future generations.*

Ancestral Teachings through Feasting for Change

The project “Feasting for Change—Reconnecting to Food, Land and Culture” was initiated by Aboriginal Community Nutritionist, Fiona Devereaux of the Vancouver Island Health Authority, in British Columbia. The project has reached over 32 communities across Vancouver Island, with more than 4000 participants. Initially, the project brought youth together to prepare a traditional feast, gathering food from the wild, setting up a steam pit to cook vegetables and salmon. These feasts have then inspired the Elders, the last of the Knowledge Keepers, to start speaking, sharing knowledge, stories and traditional ways. The feasts have opened new doorways for cultural and spiritual resilience, food sovereignty, and a revival of traditional ecological knowledge. What really illuminates the project is the stories of the people, the light and the joy in their eyes as they talk about tasting a traditional food for the first time, or for the first time in many years.

Excerpt from the Feasting for Change Event Snitcel March 13, 2009:

It was a wonderful day, as we came together to celebrate the beauty and sacredness of Snitcel. The sun was shining and people were getting busy digging the pit and building a fire. We were split up into four smaller groups. The first one went to a nearby stream to collect more rocks; the second harvested salal branches; the third picked sword ferns; and then the fourth collected oceanspray. The rocks, salal branches and sword ferns were for the pit while the oceanspray was used for a clam bake and make baked bread too.

When the rocks were hot enough to cook with it was time to put the materials in the pit; every one of the volunteers worked amazingly fast. There were seven pairs that were lined up in the order that layers in the pit. The layers were salal, sword fern, then the root vegetables, and apples with clams; then the order was reversed: sword fern and salal on the top. While all of that was going on, the clam bake was taking place down on the beach.

After the pit was closed, I (Lewis) told a legend story about how some of the birds got their songs, while we all sat to enjoy some medicine tea that was collected by some of the students. We then got back to work and split into 2 groups – one group was to learn about the plants in Snitcel and the other was to help remove invasive species in the park. It was amazing to see how much work the groups got done. They were powerful and passionate in removing the invasive species while learning about all the medicines and indigenous plants in the territory.



Preparing the steampit. Photo credit: Feasting for Change

Our Vision for Feasting for Change

A vision rooted in prayer, song, gratitude, spirit and the life energy that we hold high to ensure that we will have a healthy home to live on. This guides us in the dreams we have for this project and shapes its potential.

Promotion of culture and preservation of Mother Earth in giving thanks to the land, the animals, the sea and allowing all people to reconnect to their cultural heritage by exercising their inherent right to hunt, fish, grow and harvest as our ancestors taught us.

Modeling First Nations Stewardship, as our ancestors did, to ensure an abundance of sustainable resources and healthy traditional foods which will continue to nourish our bodies and revitalize the spirits of ourselves and our families.

To learn more or get involved with Feasting for Change please contact:

Fiona Devereaux,
Fiona.Devereaux@viha.ca

As the groups came back together they could go down to the water and spend time watching Earl Claxton Jr prepare this Iron wood sticks to bake the clams and bake the oysters by the fire. Earl is such a wealth of knowledge and stories.

It was now time to enjoy the bounty of the pit. As the group got together they opened the pit and we feasted on the root veggies, clams, apples, and it was delicious!

To really get a glimpse of vitality of this project view the digital story at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KF7PNeSoGV0> and continue to read the stories on the Feasting for Change website: <http://feastingforchangevi.blogspot.com/>



First Nations Youth Photography Club

Sacred Spaces & Environmental Conservation Exhibition, May 2010, Tofino, BC



The First Nations Youth Photography Club brings together youth aged 13 - 24 in a fun, healthy and creative activity that offers new experiences, develops skills and encourages them to be independent thinkers and doers. The Club aims to support members in developing their photographic skills, through participation in workshops, exhibitions, competitions, day trips and longer outings. Wherever possible, members get together and review each other's work, choose photographs for use in future projects and exhibitions and to assemble and autograph photo cards. The photo cards are sold at craft fairs and in local stores to raise money for purchase of cameras for the photography club and to support club activities throughout the year.

For this assignment, photographers were asked to submit a photo of something that inspired them to consider the less material and more spiritual side of life. The exhibition showed images of awe-inspiring landscapes, of things seen but seldom noticed in our daily lives, and places that have special meaning. The pairing of photography with the written word further illus-

trated the reverence with which these places are held and experienced - sometimes, if we are lucky, what is observed around us becomes what is sacred within us.

Terralingua will make an online presentation of this exhibition available soon. It will be announced in our next e-news. Our members will be invited to make comments on the photographs for the youth to receive the feedback directly and, hopefully, be inspired to continue taking photographs. It would be very inspirational for the kids.

We hope that those who view these photographs will accept the responsibility to behave with sensitivity to the many and varied sacred spaces around us; to care for them and to protect them. In the words of one of the participants, a sometimes reluctant but promising young photographer, "You've got to look around you; pay attention to what you see or it's gone!"

For more information contact Celina Tuttle: celina@telus.net (or ortixia@terralingua.org concerning the online version).

Photo Credits.

Above: detail from My Grandfather's Boat, by Mitch Touchie, Itattsoo

Left: Morning After Dark. By Tamara Jackson, Esowista.

"Sometimes I wake up at 5am just to see the sun come up, and then I take pictures of the beautiful day. I wish the view would just freeze so I can sit there and look at it. I love this beach and I love the water and the mountains."

Community Pages

“Endangered but Creative”: A call for materials for a brochure on creative efforts to foster revitalization of endangered languages

Terralingua’s Advisory Panel member, the eminent sociolinguist Prof. Joshua Fishman, is seeking information about creative efforts to foster revitalization of endangered languages. We are delighted to help disseminate his request, and hope that many Terralingua members and supporters will respond to his call! Here’s Joshua’s message:

Dear friend:

I am seeking your help and suggestions re preparing a brochure with the above name to underscore the fact that many of the small languages whose imminent deaths we decry are still very much alive and used in innovative and creative ways. Can you write (or suggest someone who could write) an account of the creation and use of a song, story, poem, film, videotape, dramatic presentation, puppet-show, class-lesson, study-group, school, journal, newsletter or any other effort for the purposes of fostering a small and weak language? I would like to put together a small collection of these for the edification of the general public who is of the opinion that “there is no use crying over spilled milk” and to indicate that there is still much that can be done by anyone who cares. Your assistance and cooperation would be very much appreciated!

Joshua

Prof. Joshua A. Fishman
3616 Henry Hudson Parkway #7B N
Bronx, NY 10463
email: JoshuaAFishman@aol.com
tel: 718-796-8484; fax: 718-796-8155
www.joshuaafishman.com



24 ways to say exactly what you mean

A present with a meaning is the perfect gift that you can give someone for the holidays, while at the same time helping an organization like Terralingua! By creating the “In a Word” greeting card line, Terralingua Board member Susan Fassberg, owner of Connecting Dotz, initiated a “save the words” campaign. By sending these cards, you not only keep these words in circulation - you also support organizations that work to preserve linguistic and cultural diversity, like Terralingua. Visit Connecting Dotz to learn more about this wonderful card line.

www.connectingdotz.com



Why words? It's a poignant fact that half the languages spoken on our planet could be extinct by the year 2100. When we lose a language, we lose traditions that connect people to place – and to each other. And the regions where languages are dying are often the same as those where plants and animals are threatened with extinction. Our climate crisis isn't just an issue of resource and species protection. It's also about culture, because indigenous traditions and languages carry so much knowledge about how to live lightly on this earth. (excerpt from connecting dotz website.)

Philippines hit by Super Typhoon Juan

Isabela Province needs your help!

We are publishing this appeal because the Crocodile Rehabilitation Project is one of our Sourcebook projects. <http://www.terralingua.org/bcdconservation/?p=138>. We are glad to help disseminate this request, and hope that many Terralingua members and supporters will respond to this call!

Hello everybody:

Last October 19, the Philippines was hit by Super Typhoon Juan. The damage in the coastal areas of Isabela is catastrophic, and very high in the western foothills of the Sierra Madre. Over the past 10 years the Mabuwaya Foundation has worked in these areas. Rural communities have taken unprecedented steps to conserve the Philippine crocodile in the wild.

We feel that we now have to do all we can to support these communities to survive and rebuild their lives.

Please contact The Mabuwaya Foundation mabuwaya@yahoo.com to receive an appeal for help with some background information about the disaster. Or download an informational .pdf from the following link: <http://www.terralingua.org/news/Typhoon.pdf>

Do not hesitate to contact us for more information,

Your sincerely,

The Mabuwaya Foundation Team

Tess Balbas, Dominic Rodriguez, Sam Telan, Jessie Guerrero, Willem van de Ven, Wilda Calapoto, Robert Arano, Myrna Cureg, Arnold Macadangdang, Merlijn van Weerd and Jan van der Ploeg



Young Agta girl spearfishing in the Disulap River Philippine crocodile sanctuary in the municipality of San Mariano, Isabela Province, Luzon, Philippines. Credit: Jan van der Ploeg.



Translate for Sacred Nature and earn a book about Sacred Natural Sites

Please help protect sacred natural sites and their custodians by volunteering to translate three short documents into different languages.

We are collaborating with IUCN's Specialist Group on Cultural and Spiritual Values of Protected Areas (CSVPA), chaired by Rob Wild and co-chaired by Bas Verschuuren, to disseminate a call for translations relevant to the conservation of Sacred Natural Sites (SNS). SNS are biocultural areas; features of the landscape that are revered and protected for cultural and spiritual reasons, which results in the conservation of their biodiversity. But SNS are also biocultural areas at risk, threatened by development and inappropriate management practices by outsiders. The documents to be translated into as many languages as possible are part of a campaign to raise awareness and increase protection of SNS. Please help this campaign by volunteering to translate for CSVPA!

What are Sacred Natural Sites?

Sacred Natural Sites form the world's oldest socially protected areas network being cared for by their custodians and communities. Sacred sites exist in and outside designated areas such as World Heritage Sites, Protected Areas and Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas and are marked by a distinct spiritual dimension. Today, Sacred Natural Sites are increasingly under threat and many are being destroyed by development or inappropriate management. Guidance provided in unique languages can help improve the recognition and management of sacred natural sites.

What can I do? (...and earn a free book in the process)

You can help protect Sacred Natural Sites by translating some key documents into different languages. The providers of each new and unique translation will be sent a copy of the book "Sacred Natural Sites, Conserving Nature and Culture" (to the extent that we can reasonably provide).

What needs to be translated?

The documents that need to be translated are based on the IUCN-UNESCO publication "Sacred Natural Sites, Guidelines for Protected Area Managers" (Wild and McLeod 2008) and "Sacred Natural Sites, Conserving Nature and Culture" (Verschuuren et al., 2010) The former is already available for free download in English, Russian and Spanish from www.iucn.org[1]. A Japanese version is underway while French and Chinese versions are still missing.

The IUCN Specialist Group on the Cultural and Spiritual Values of Protected Areas (CSVPA) is seeking your help with translating and peer reviewing:

- The 5-page core guidelines for the management of Sacred Natural Sites

- A statement on Sacred Natural Sites made by their

indigenous custodians

An action plan for the conservation of Sacred Natural Sites

What is the process for translation?

The translations would ideally be carried out by a small group of people in order for them to be peer reviewed and improved. You are also invited to provide country- and culture-specific background information as well as photos, film or other media regarding the sacred natural sites of that country/culture.

What will happen with the translations?

Volunteer Translators will be fully credited and their work will be widely disseminated. The translations will be made freely available on the CSVPA website in pdf format for anyone to access. They will also be disseminated to indigenous peoples' organisations and conservation professionals, specifically protected area managers.

Interested in participating?

If you are interested in participating or would like to view the documents please download them from http://www.terralingua.org/bcdconservation/?page_id=1291. For any questions or further information, please contact CSVPA Chair Robert Wild robgwild@gmail.com or Co-chair Bas Verschuuren basverschuuren@gmail.com. The translations should be sent to either Robert or Bas.

[1] http://www.iucn.org/about/union/commissions/wcpa/wcpa_puball/wcpa_bpg/?2164/Sacred-Natural-Sites-Guidelines-for-Protected-Area-Managers

Visit the webpage

http://www.terralingua.org/bcdconservation/?page_id=1291



Become an Active Part of our Giving Circle!

Join the Terralingua Family

You can Contribute to Terralingua by:

Making a Donation:

Support Terralingua through a donation by cheque or secure on-line credit card donation through Secure Donations by Groundspring.

Monthly Donations:

Monthly contributions can be made through a direct deposit from your chequing account or a monthly payment on your credit card.

You can cancel or change the amount of your contributions at any time and Terralingua will process that change immediately.

A Major Gift:

For individuals wishing to deepen their relationship and increase their commitment to Terralingua goals.

In Memory Donations:

These donations are made in memory of much-loved individuals.

In Honour Donations:

In Honour donations are made to celebrate special occasions, such as marriages and birthdays.

In-Kind Donations:

Terralingua may accept in-kind donations.

Members of the Terralingua Family receive our bi-annual newsletter, monthly e-news, our annual report, notices of our events and publications.

Our newsletter Landscape is an informative magazine with articles on Biocultural Diversity. Our E-News will keep you informed about updates and events, emerging issues and most recent news.

Please consider becoming part of the Terralingua Family, for which you will be acknowledged in one of the following categories:

Director's Circle — \$50,000 and up

Guardian — \$25,000 and up

Steward — \$10,000 and up

Sustainer — \$5,000 and up

Friend — \$1,000 and up

You can choose to support our exciting program of work by earmarking your donation for one of the following:

- ♣ Education for Biocultural Diversity
- ♣ Capacity Building in Indigenous Communities
- ♣ Biocultural Diversity Conservation
- ♣ Policy for Biocultural Diversity
- ♣ Indicators of Biocultural Diversity
- ♣ Biocultural Diversity Mapping

Your contribution will help us pursue our mission!
Donations to Terralingua are tax-deductible in the U.S.A.

Donating has never been easier. Simply go to our website www.terralingua.org to use your credit card via our Donate Now secure server. You can choose to make paper-free and hassle-free monthly donations! You can also send us cash, cheques, or a credit card donation by mail. Just fill in the information below.

Please accept my generous gift of: ☐\$50 ☐\$100 ☐\$250 ☐\$500 ☐\$1,000 ☐Other_____

This Donation is in the form of: ☐Cash ☐Cheque ☐Credit card

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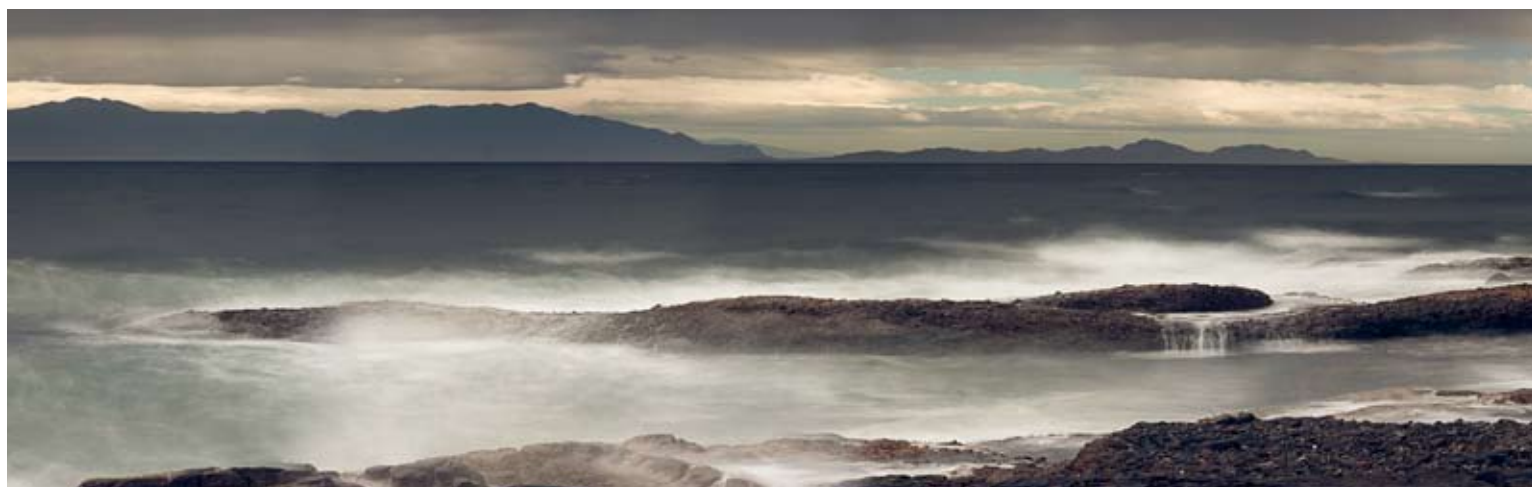
For Cheques: Please make cheques payable to: Terralingua and mail to: 217 Baker Road, Salt Spring Island, BC V8K 2N6 Canada

For Credit Card

Type of Card: ☐Visa ☐Master Card ☐American Express

Card Number:		Security Code	
Expiration Date			
Name on Card:		Signature:	

I want to make a recurring donation every: month 3 months year
I (we) _____ wish to have our gift remain anonymous.



Ocean Swells at Grassy Point during an evening on Hornby Island, BC. Photo by Stu Johnson / www.jrsj.ca

Become a Terralingua Member

Our Membership campaign continues! We are very enthusiastic about the ongoing communication with our network. If you would like to become a Terralingua member, please complete the membership form on our website <http://www.terralingua.org/html/member.html> or send us an email to members@terralingua.org

Next Issue of Langscape
CALL FOR
SUBMISSIONS
Linguistic Diversity
due April, 2011

If you would like to submit an article, story, or artwork for our next issue of Langscape please send your inquiries to ortixia@terralingua.org

A note on the font used for this issue of Langscape:

In order to accommodate all the special characters used in this issue I have used a special font called 'Aboriginal'.

It is also a statement. Using the Aboriginal font in correspondence and media is a recognition of and tribute to the diversity of the world's languages.

The aboriginal font can be found at:
www.languagegeek.com

Have you moved or changed emails? Keep us posted!
Send your updates to
members@terrralingua.org