

**Hlaa Dim Mas'us'm Ahl Luu'majam Hlit'**

Let's Play Ball - A Sport Method For Teaching Gitxsanimx

By

Ato'olgasxw [James] Nyce

Bachelor's Degree of Sport and Fitness Leadership, Camosun College, 2015

A Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION

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We acknowledge and respect the Ləkʷəŋən (Songhees and Xʷsepsəm/Esquimalt) Peoples on whose territory the university stands, and the Ləkʷəŋən and W̱SÁNEĆ Peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

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## Abstract

This research was inspired by my own up-bringing, mentorship and love for basketball, which explores the application of Total Physical Response (TPR), Where Are Your Keys (WAYK), and Situational Navajo methods for language acquisition to sport, specifically basketball, to teach Gitxsanimx̱. I developed a product-as-a-project, a coaches resource for teaching Gitxsanimx̱ through basketball, including a glossary of terms and phrases, example coaching plans, and labeled court diagrams.

In my community there are no language programs for Youth outside of the schools' Gitxsan Language and Culture exposure classes. However, basketball is growing in popularity with many players participating across the different age groups. Many teams are composed of Youth and adults, resulting in opportunities for mentorship and relationships to develop. Mentorship is a key aspect of the community and will be an important feature of the program if it is to succeed long term. Basketball serves as the perfect medium for language teaching, especially using physical language acquisition methods like WAYK and TPR. The benefit of using basketball to teach language is it takes the language out of the classroom and into the community. It provides a positive, culturally responsive, and fun space for community to use the language.

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## Dedications

As Misaax gant Oots'in, lip ama 'magaluxwumhl xhlg'i'y. Hlaa dim ganwila mas'os'm!

To Misaax and Oots'in, my wonderfully 'magalu children. Let's keep playing!!

You can do anything

Ahl wil'naat'ahl'y

To my family

Ahl noho'y

To my mom, for showing me what it means to be a generous, community-minded person

Ahl nigwood'y

To my dad, the original Mr. Nyce - everyone's favourite teacher & coach, me included. May I do

the title good

Ahl ts'iits'y gant ye'e'y

To my Nan and Bah, Sadie and Walter Harris, all of the love you had for each other and our people made this possible.

## Acknowledgements

Ahl naks'y, Rosalie Nyce.

I could not have done this without your constant love and support, and a gentle push in the right direction.

Ahl siwilaaksin'y

To all of my language mentors, xGwoimtxw [Sadie] Harris, Daxgyadim 'Neexhl [Jeanne] Harris and Xsim Muhl'Muhl [Barbara] Sennott (Harris), Axgoodim Tse'tsawit [Victor] Robinson, and Kil Gal Tsetiks [Cheyenne Morgan] Gwa'amuuk, who took the time to teach me the language. I am forever grateful for the beautiful gift you have given me.

## **Hlaa Dim Sit'aa'mam [Let's begin]**

There are many great metaphors to draw on when discussing basketball. As a player, you are often told to be prepared; your team needs to have a “next man up mentality.” This means you must be ready to play when your star player gets tired. You need to be ready to step up when your number is called. The truth is, you may not feel ready, but you get in and do your best. In this way, it is helpful for me to imagine Indigenous language revitalization as a team sport. Our Elders have given so much, and now it is their time to rest, while the younger generation fills their spot. When you watch or listen to great teams, they are constantly talking to each other, even from the bench. They help their teammates by offering encouraging words, tips, and keeping each other accountable. Mentorship is a beautiful aspect of basketball and sport in general. I have had many great coaches in basketball and my life, and I have always felt compelled to pay it forward to the next generation. This project helps with that goal, culminating in the creation of a resource for coaches to get more involved in Gitxsanimx language revitalization. My project seeks to unite my two worlds of Gitxsanimx revitalization and basketball by developing a method for teaching Gitxsanimx through basketball and revitalizing the domain of basketball in Gitxsan Nation.

## Positioning this project

### Background

Basketball was officially invented in 1891 in Springfield, Massachusetts, by Canadian, James Naismith. King (2015) states that the sport quickly grew in popularity and was played across North America. It was first introduced to First Nations People at Residential Schools as a means to assimilate First Nations People into the dominant, Anglo society. The First Nations Youth<sup>1</sup> loved the sport so much that they brought it back to their home communities and began playing against their neighbouring communities.

Eventually, the sport grew across North America, and in the year of 1960, All Native Basketball Tournament (ANBT) was born. Since then, Indigenous communities in British Columbia and Alaska have flocked to Prince Rupert to compete in the biggest tournament in British Columbia. This year's tournament (2026) had 62 teams competing across all of the divisions. Over the decades, rivalries have formed and been passed down, and lifelong friendships have been forged in the heat of battle in the Russell Gamble Gymnasium.

Local Gitxsan Matriarch, Bridie O'Brien (2025), recalls, many years ago, attending and cheering on the Gitxsan teams and vividly remembers the players using Gitxsanimx on the court. This was a point of pride for her. Where once the sport was used in vain to force assimilation, Indigenous people have made it their own and show pride in their communities by rallying behind their teams. "Rez Ball," as it has become colloquially known, is a tougher brand of basketball; it is more free-flowing and fast-paced, with hard fouls<sup>2</sup>. In 2024, a movie by the same name was released on Netflix, depicting this style of play, and showing how using Navajo to

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<sup>1</sup> I capitalize Youth for the same reason we capitalize Elder, out of honour and respect for the position in our society.

<sup>2</sup> Hard fouls could be but aren't necessarily always dirty plays. They border on excessive contact and make you think twice about driving to the basket.

communicate gave the Navajo team a competitive edge against their predominantly Anglo opponents. Basketball is the basis of my Master's project but I am utilizing and implementing my language, Gitxsanimx̱, as a pathway for revitalization.

### **Hasag'y num dim wilaa'y [I want you to know me]**

James Nycehl wa'y, Ato'olgasxw wa'm hawali'y, lax̱ gibuu p'degy, wilps xGwoimtxw wil sa 'witxw'y, Carrie Nycehl was noho'y, Nagwa Onhl wa'm hawali't, hi'de Rick Nyce 'op nc, 'Wiilamolhl wa'm xhaisla, Anspayaxw wil sa 'witxw'y, ii New Hazelton wil jog'y.

My name is James Nyce, my Gitxsan name is Ato'olgasxw, I am Wolf Clan from the House of xGwoimtxw. My mother is Carrie Nyce, her traditional Gitxsan name is Nagwa On. My father is Rick Nyce, he is from the xá'isla Nation but holds a borrowed Gitxsan name, 'Wiilamolhl'. I grew up in Anspayaxw [The Hiding Place] or Kispiox on Google Maps, and I currently live in New Hazelton, British Columbia.

For my Master's project, I have created a Gitxsanimx̱ immersion Youth basketball program. Sport has been a part of my life since childhood, when I was introduced to basketball and soccer. Over the course of my life, I have spent many weeks in February in Prince Rupert, attending the All-Native Basketball Tournament and cheering on my Nations' (Gitxsan and Haisla) teams. My passion for sport led me to attend Camosun College to earn my Bachelor's degree in Sport and Fitness Leadership with a specialization in Sport Management. After graduation, I pursued another passion of mine, helping my People, specifically Indigenous Youth, to lead healthy lives. I spent many years as a Youth Worker and Youth Programs Director at the Victoria Native Friendship Centre. Through these positions, I developed my skills by working one-on-one with Youth to help them set and achieve their goals. Later, I further expanded my skills as an activity planner and program leader.

In June 2020, three months into a global pandemic, my naks [wife], Rosalie Nyce, and I welcomed our firstborn, Misaax, into the world. This awoke a deep desire to reconnect with my culture and my language, to pass it on to the next generation. This was challenging, as we were living in Victoria, far away from my homelands. At that time my sister, Lynzee Nyce, introduced me to the Mentor Apprentice Program (MAP). She had been regularly meeting with our aunties, axgyadim 'Neexhl [Jeanne] Harris and Xsim Mihl'Mihl [Barbara] Sennott (Harris), online via Zoom. Ever since, I have been learning Gitxsanimx for five years from my aunties, my nan, xGwoimtxw [Sadie Harris] and former MILR program graduate, Kil Gal Tseetiks [Cheyenne Morgan] Gwa'amuuk.

In April 2021, Rosalie and I decided the isolation had become too much and we moved to the North, to my dad's community, Kitamaat, BC. Through hard work and my aunties' mentorship, I have achieved a level of proficiency that enables me to teach beginners at both the elementary and college levels. I am currently a college instructor at Coast Mountain College in Hazelton, BC, teaching adults.

Finally, I have been coaching Youth basketball for the past three seasons, primarily in English. I consider myself a novice coach, with lots to learn. I spend lots of my free time on YouTube learning from other coaches who are gracious enough to share their knowledge, expertise, and philosophy of the game. This has led me to shift my approach to practices from primarily drill-based to a small-sided games approach. This has resulted in more engaging practices and players having more fun. I experience the same level of joy and excitement watching my team execute the game plan as I do from watching my students pick up a new sentence frame or joke in Gitxsanimx.

It has been a core belief of mine as a teacher and coach - a belief that is supported by Masterson and Bohart (2019) - that learners perform better when they're having fun. This is what sparked the idea for my project. My unique background positions me well to bring my two worlds of sport and language together in a way this community has not seen for a long time.

### **Galts'ab'y [My community]**

The Gitxsan Nation is located in what is colonially known as (C.K.A.)<sup>3</sup> Northern British Columbia along the Xsan [Skeena River]. Gitxsan - The People of the River Mist: we are a matrilineal society with a strict wilp [house] system dividing into four clans: Lax̱ gibuu [wolf], Gisga'ast [fireweed], Lax̱ See'l/Ganeeda [frog], and Lax̱ skiikw [eagle]. For thousands of years, the Simgiigyat [Hereditary Chiefs] have successfully stewarded the lax̱ yip [territory] in accordance with their ayooḵ [laws], an area spanning 35,000 square kilometres (Gitxsan Huwilp Government, 2024).

The strength of the Gitxsan Nation lies in the strength of the feast hall. Despite the efforts of the Canadian government to extinguish this practice through the residential school system and laws, such as banning the potlatch, the Gitxsan people managed to keep potlatching, an example of our resilience. The feast hall is more than a place for the community to come together to share a meal. This is where we enact our laws, redistribute resources, and give thanks and gifts to those who helped the hosts.

I am writing this on the eve of the 66th annual All-Native Basketball Tournament. Many players, coaches, and fans are beginning their migration to Prince Rupert to represent the Gitxsan Nation. The Gitxsans haven't always been known as a basketball nation. For many years,

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<sup>3</sup> This refers to Colonially Known As or Currently Known As. This highlights the fact that these lands have not always had these names and leaves the door open to a future where they might take on a "new" name that properly honors the People that have stewarded these lands for Millenia.

basketball in the Hazeltons was in a lull. Recently, there has been a resurgence across all divisions, but especially the Women's and Girls' divisions. Last year, in the debut of the Women's Masters division, the Gitxsan Mystics finished 2nd. The Senior Women's Mystics remain in the upper echelon of the division and finished 3rd. Also of note, the Kispiox Women's Masters team earned the 'Most Sportsmanlike award. The Senior Men's Torchmen team continued to play great basketball and finished 5th overall. I would also like to celebrate the accomplishments of the Hazelton Secondary Spartans. Last year, the girls' programs swept the Zones tournaments, earning a banner for the grade 8, Junior, and Senior girls' programs. For many of these girls, basketball is in the gene pool. They grew up watching their parents play or their coaches, Tamara Stoney, Taylor Wale, and Brittany Simpson play in the All-Native Basketball Tournament. They were brought up playing in the Mystics program, starting with the Mini Mystics, to Junior Mystics, eventually they'll enter the Senior program and hopefully one day the Masters program.

I'm sharing this information to give a clear picture of the love my community has for basketball. This is a truly exciting time for my community regarding basketball. There are opportunities and a desire for people of all ages and genders to play basketball year-round. This was not the case when I was growing up in Hazelton. It fills my heart to see the next generation enjoying the game I love.

### **Situating Gitxsanimx**

According to our *adaawk* [stories], the trickster, 'Wiigyat, gave the first people of this land a language to speak. We called it *Sim Algyax* [real/true language]. Gitxsanimx is a dialect of Sim Algyax, along with Tsimtsian, and Nisga'a. There are two dialects of Gitxsanimx: Gigeenix [Upriver] and Gyeets [Downriver]. My Nan, xGwoimtxw [Sadie Harris], frequently reminds me

of the significance of the language to our culture. She says we cannot have one without the other. As Chiblow and Meighan (2022) stated, the language is embedded in our culture, the land, and our worldview.

Statistics Canada (2025) reports on a 2021 census that Gitxsanimx had 1,140 speakers left. Obviously, this number has gone down as our Elders have journeyed on to the spirit place. 1,140 speakers puts us ahead of our Tsimshian neighbours' 465 speakers. However, there is real pressure to grow the number of new speakers of Gitxsanimx. Currently, there are several adult language classes available across the villages and towns. However, outside of the public school system or even the band school system, there are no language programs for the Youth. This project aims to fill that void.

## Resource Bundle

### Research Topic and Questions

In Gitksan culture, the Sim'ooGit (chief) consults the matriarchs in times of difficulty or when a decision needs to be made, and together they reach a decision on how to proceed. While I am no Sim'ooGit, I always consult the matriarchs of my life, and I'm fortunate to have many to support me on my journey. In 1999, my nan, xGwoimtxw [Sadie Harris], earned her Master's degree of Education from the University of British Columbia. In her thesis, she offers a historical overview of Gitksan societal structures, documenting how strong our people were in the language pre-contact, and the causes of language erosion. She sets out a comprehensive plan, both short-term and long-term, to revive Gitksanimx̓. She implores the community to use Gitksanimx̓ in as many domains as possible, including sport. As a language teacher and coach, I am picking up the torch and carrying it forward for the next generation of Gitksanimx̓ learners.

This is the basis of my Master's project. This research seeks to revitalize the Gitksanimx̓ language domain of basketball by answering the questions:

1. How can Sport, and specifically basketball, be used in Indigenous Language Revitalization (ILR)?
2. What are the benefits of Sport as a method for language acquisition?
3. How can other language acquisition methods apply to Sport (basketball)?

One of the goals of my Master's project is to contribute to the growing field of Indigenous Language Revitalization by developing a method to teach Gitksanimx̓ through basketball. The current literary landscape for teaching an additional language through sport is

sparse, and even more so teaching an Indigenous language through sport is unheard of. Five themes emerged from my research:

1. Gitxsanimx language revitalization,
2. decolonizing sport,
3. sport and Indigenous language revitalization,
4. physical education and additional language acquisition,
5. and additional language acquisition methods and games.

### **Gitxsanimx Language Revitalization**

The breadth of literature on Gitxsanimx Language Revitalization is limited, but there are several articles. My work begins where my Nan, xGwoimtxw's [Sadie Harris], left off 26 years ago when she wrote *Not All Is Well: Can the Gitxsan Nation Reverse the Call*. In her thesis, she envisioned the creation of a language hub, a market-place, that offers a variety of activities in Gitxsanimx. She said, "We need to sell the idea of language learning through initiatives that are attractive; that is pleasing to the eye" (Harris, 1999, p.54). She imagines people coming to learn all the school subjects in Gitxsanimx, inclusive of physical education and sport.

There is also an article by fellow MILR graduate, Sinensxw [Jessica Starlund] (2025). *Gigi'ihl Algyax ehl Angooga'm: Seeking spoken language, from our Ancestors*. She writes an autoethnography about her experience of teaching Gitxsanimx in a school setting using Total Physical Response. It was beneficial to read about her experience with TPR as well as her father's teachings on the Gitxsan ayook (law) Gwiihl Yee'insxw- the responsibility of passing on knowledge to the next generation, and the games she uses to make learning fun.

Lastly, there is a MILR project by Kil Gal Tseetiks [Cheyenne Morgan] Gwa'amuuk (2017). In her project, she assembled all of the Gitxsanimx resources she could find, digitized

them, and put them on a website called [Gitxsan Language Resources](https://www.gitxsansimalgyax.com/).<sup>4</sup> I have been using her website for years as it is easily accessible and convenient. She organized the resources into five sections: Books & Resources, Dictionaries, Stories & Books, Curriculum, and Other Resources.

### **Decolonizing Sport**

There is a growing body of literature on decolonizing sport. My research draws on the work of Gurgis et al. (2023), Seiler & Chepyator-Thomson (2023), and Smith & Smith (2023). They have examined how mainstream sport for development is currently being delivered and have concluded there's another way that accepts, incorporates, and celebrates the uniqueness of Indigenous sport participants globally. Coaching basketball is about more than teaching our *majagalee* [children/flower] how to put a ball in a hoop. The research shows that the more care, cultural worldviews, and language we put into the creation of sport programs and coaching resources, the greater the impact will be on their participants. We call our Youth *majagalee* because like the delicate and beautiful flower, they need to be cared for and properly nourished and enriched to thrive and bloom. This was inspiring and highlights a need to create a sport-for-development system that implements and aligns with the Gitxsan worldview.

### **Sport and Indigenous Language Revitalization**

Up until very recently, there was little to no documentation on anyone using sport, specifically basketball, to teach an Indigenous language. A news article from *The Guardian* by Chazaro (2025) highlighted the novel bilingual, Ichiskíin/English, basketball league. Ichiskíin is a dialect of Yakama from the Yakama Tribe in Washington State. The program was initially started by Adrian Romaro and Mitch Thompson in 2021, serving predominantly immigrant,

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gitxsansimalgyax.com/>

Spanish-speaking Youth. To date, they've served 2000 participants. More recently, they teamed up with Adam Strom to offer the program to Yakama Youth. They have also brought the program to the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation (PBPB) in Kansas.

The founders and coaches all come from prestigious basketball backgrounds with extensive experience and knowledge. They collaborated with language speakers to develop a culturally sensitive and healing basketball program that celebrates language diversity. It is great to know that others have walked the same path, and I hope to be able to talk with Adam Strom in the future to understand how he ran their program and what methods and language games they implemented; this is one of my future initiatives.

### **Physical Education and Additional Language Acquisition**

I needed to get creative with my search terms and eventually broadened to the realm of physical education and additional language acquisition. There is promising research out of Italy that discusses using Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) Methodology to teach English in Physical Education. Fazio et al. (2015) describes the limitations of CLIL from the Spanish example as a means of teaching technical skills and not as a tool for teaching deep, reflexive knowledge. They go on to suggest some key improvements to the method based on cooperative learning, verbal interaction, and socialization. They require teachers to include the 4Cs (Content, Communication, Culture, and Cognition) to facilitate the development of linguistic competencies.

Content refers to the subject content of the lesson. Fazio et al. (2015) suggest prioritizing social and intellectual aspects when designing lessons. They encourage cooperative learning, verbal communication, and socialization. Communication encourages increased Student Talking Time over Teacher Talking Time. They believe it is best to “learn through language.” This

approach creates a more engaging, student-led learning environment. The Culture aspect gives students space to critically think about Physical Education and sport and allows them to deconstruct and integrate the contents in a way that can better serve them in the real world. Finally, the Cognition aspect refers to the process of learning a task: remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate, and create. They believe the CLIL methodology offers lots of opportunity to apply the final three phases of learning a task. (p.922).

As I'll be using basketball to teach Gitxsanimx, I'll need to fill out my drill library. Wright et al.'s book (2006) is filled with games for language learning that I sifted through for ideas to add to my curriculum. They have created games that fit several themes. They include: introductions and ice-breakers, mainly speaking, listening, writing, reading, vocabulary and spelling, grammar, and solo games. I've examined the book, and most games can be adjusted to a basketball setting.

### **Language Acquisition Methods**

Currently, there is no specific method for using sport for language acquisition. The “sport method for Indigenous language acquisition” will need to take inspiration from several existing methods. There are three methods I am most inspired by. These are Holm et al.'s (2003) *Situational Navajo* method, Gardner and Ciotti's (2018) *Where Are Your Keys* (WAYK) method, and Asher's (2012) *Total Physical Response* (TPR). I am a big fan of the Situational Navajo method and its potential for creating language speakers. Holm et al. implore readers to use every situation to elicit language from learners. This method can easily be implemented into a sport context.

Basketball encompasses many situations that can be mined for language production. The WAYK method was developed in 2001 as a rapid way for creating language teachers. It

emphasises developing speakers right away. Basketball seasons are quick, and in my lessons I need to prioritize generating speakers right away. In my view WAYK is the evolution of TPR. They share the same DNA as they both heavily rely on gestures to help communicate. Where they differ, TPR allows the learners to gradually pick up the language, starting with receptive language skills and WAYK puts more emphasis on quickly developing speakers and teachers utilizing their carefully crafted bundle of 100+ techniques or TQs.

In basketball, you often hear pundits talk about the eye test, “Does he pass the eye test?”. Recently, there has been a shift to letting statistics rule how coaches manage games and their teams. For example, X player shoots 5% better from the left side corner. Y player generates 1.01 points per possession (PPP) as the primary ball handler in the pick and roll, while Z player generates 1.18 PPP. Some coaches and managers rely on their basketball knowledge and what their eyes see. Can X player consistently make the correct read, does Y player make the extra pass, on defense can player Z read the play and make a steal?

In my case, the eye test will be an unofficial method for evaluation of the program. Can the players operate in the Gitxsanimx̓? Who can understand and follow instructions? Do most players understand the drill/game? Are players defaulting to English? This eye test method will help guide the overall pace of the program. It will also be beneficial to take a more quantitative approach. For this, I’ve taken inspiration from the First Peoples’ Cultural Council’s *Language Nest Toolkit* (2025). It gives me a good starting point to work from and adapt to my program needs. There are sections for testing the learners’, or in my case, the players’ language comprehension and production using photos, Total Physical Response, and familiar commands.

## Gaps in the literature

As previously mentioned, the challenge of my research was the lack of literature published on my research themes, specifically Gitxsanimx language revitalization and sport and Indigenous language revitalization. The Gitxsan Research Lab of the University of British Columbia has published many linguistic articles but lacks any on language planning. There are other academic linguistic works related to Gitxsanimx revitalization, such as *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw Song of the Newborn : knowledge and stories surrounding pregnancy, childbirth, and the newborn. A collaborative language project* by Catherine Dworak (2018).

Another major gap I butted up against in my searches was the lack of literature on sport and Indigenous language revitalization. I was unable to find any peer-reviewed articles on the subject. As mentioned, I was fortunate to find a news article highlighting a new program in Washington State. Unfortunately, they did not offer much insight on the methods they used aside from the inclusion of songs and drumming. It is my goal that my project can contribute to these areas of research. This concludes my resource bundle. I have an understanding of useful language methods and understand the game of basketball and have an intermediate understanding of my language; all three understandings created the project.

## Methodology and Methods

### Methodology

If you have spent any amount of time around basketball, there is a great chance you might have heard the phrase “ball is life.” For many players, basketball is more than a game; it is a lifestyle. This simple phrase speaks to the obsession, enthusiasm, and dedication to the game some players experience. It becomes a core part of their identity. I have always loved basketball, and I hope to be playing well into my Elder years. If “ball is life,” then certainly the basketball is the heart of the game. Hearing the ball bounce in an empty gym like a drum has always reminded me of a heartbeat.

### *Sagayt Goot [Gathering of people]*

The more I learn about Gitxsanimx̱, the more I learn about what it is to be Gitxsan. I open a door into the Gitxsan worldview. One of the most beautiful things I have discovered about my culture through my language is our goot [heart] words. Many things that are commonly associated with the brain or the mind in English go through the goot in Gitxsanimx̱. My methodology centers around this approach of working from the heart. A gathering in Gitxsanimx̱ is called sagayt goot [together heart]. When we are gathering we are bringing our hearts together. Keeping this in mind when approaching my meetings with knowledge keepers grounds the work in good medicine. For my project, I worked closely with my nan, xGwoimtxw [Sadie Harris], to ensure the language was correct.

### *Dax Goot [Perseverance]*

I excitedly told my Nan about my project, and humorously, her first thought was, “Couldn’t you have picked something easier?” Unfortunately, no, I could not. In Gitxsanimx̱, our word for perseverance is *dax goot* [strong heart]. Not only is “ball is life,” but one could also summarize McIvor et al. (2009) to say “language is life”. Sport and language fit so well together; I am compelled to do the work to make it available for the world. It was challenging as we needed to create new words and phrases, or get poetic with what we had as we brought the two worlds together.

### *Xsi Goot [To plan]*

When I am gathering with the knowledge keepers, the next step has always been to develop a plan. Our word for this is *xsi goot* which literally translates to ‘out of a heart.’ This might be my favourite of the three heart words, as it not only highlights how we come together but also how we work together. Working with your language is sometimes hard work, but it is also heart work. It is important to keep love and care at the centre of the work and we put that good medicine into our plans.

### *Yulhlimxhl [Transfer knowledge]*

Sinensxw [Jessica] Starlund (2025) discusses *Yulhlimxhl*, a word she learned from her dad. He breaks it down into two words - *yul* and *hlimxhl*. *Hlimxhl* means sound and *yul* modifies it to be sound in the body, together they mean to instill sound into a person or the “passing down teaching styles, methods, and provide guidance” (p. 11). Mentorship is a core part of the Gitxsan worldview, in the same way a *bi’i* [uncle] is to teach their younger kin to hunt, or how a Sim’oogit would mentor their eventual successor in *wilp li’ligit* [feast hall]. You have the

responsibility to pass on your knowledge to the next generation. As much as I have tried to dodge a career in teaching (I have joked it is the family business), I have always felt compelled to pass on what I know and to widen the path for the next person.

## **Methods**

For my Master's degree, I set out to create a deliverable as a project. The project was partially inspired by the 2024 Netflix movie, "Rez Ball," in which a Navajo team incorporated their language into their practices and games to gain a competitive edge on their opponents. I wanted to take this a step further and therefore I have developed a method for teaching Gitxsanim̓ through basketball. As I mentioned in the "Hasag'y Num Dim Wilaa'y" section, I am a Gitxsanim̓ Language instructor for adults at the local community college. At this time last year, I was discussing "Rez Ball" with my students, and they informed me that it isn't new for Gitxsan athletes to incorporate Gitxsanim̓ on the court.

With that in mind, I have created a coach's handbook that, with a bit of training, can immediately be used by other coaches with their teams. The coach's handbook includes a new curriculum for teaching Gitxsanim̓ through basketball, a lesson/practice plan template, four sample lessons, an extensive glossary of basketball terms and phrases in Gitxsanim̓, several diagrams identifying key landmarks on the court, tips on staying in the target language, and a description of how to run a practice using the method. This handbook is found in the Appendices.

As I mentioned, the language domain of basketball is not new to the Gitxsan people; however, in the interest of time, a limited resource, I opted to continue working with my Nan, a true fluent L1 speaker. I was able to find most of the words I needed for my project by looking through the many available dictionaries. These include Hindle and Rigsby's (1973), *A Short*

*Practical Dictionary of the Gitksan Language*, the Gitksan App by the Gitksan Research Lab at the University of British Columbia, which provides helpful audio clips from several speakers, *Ha'niimagoansxwhum Algaxhl Gitksen - Gitksan; Gitksenimx - Gitksanimx to English Dictionary Learner's Edition, Volume 1* by the Aboriginal Education Branch, British Columbia Ministry of Education, Gitksan Wet'suwet'en Education Society, School District #88, and the Sim'alga<sub>x</sub> Working Group, and the First Voices Online Gigeenix and Gyeets Dictionaries. I am grateful to Gwa'amuuk (2017) for the great work she did collecting the resources above as her MILR project.

Ultimately, in this, the project's first iteration, new Gitksanim<sub>x</sub> terms and phrases for basketball did not need to be generated. Instead, I was able to apply existing words to a basketball context. The same could be said for English; we don't actually shoot the ball, nor do we set snares when we trap an offensive player in the corner. This is not to say that new words will not be generated in future iterations of my project. I've mentioned that my project is meant to be a living document that grows and evolves over the years. The glossary is still growing as I come across new words or different ways to say something.

In Gitksan culture, we do not necessarily prioritize perfection. That is not to say we do not do our best. The clearest example I can share is when someone has been commissioned to make a button blanket for a sim'oogit [chief], they will purposefully leave a button slightly askew. The reason for that being, to leave work for the future generations to do. It is my hope that others will take on this work, adapt it, change it, and evolve it to suit their needs.

## **Basketball as a Teaching Method**

Basketball is a beautiful game that has the ability to connect people from all walks of life. It is totally possible to join a game of pick up anywhere in the world and to still have fun. You might not speak the language of where you're visiting, but you may be fluent in basketball. That is truly one of the impactful and powerful aspects of sport. As I mentioned in the "Resource Bundle" section, there is very little research in the area of utilizing sport for teaching an Indigenous language.

However, there is good research out of Europe by Fazio et al. (2015) that supports utilizing Physical Education to teach English. They highlight the increased motivation in learners to pick up the language to play (p. 920). My project has also taken heavy influence from the *Situational Navajo* method for secondary language acquisition, *Total Physical Response (TPR)*, and the *Where Are Your Keys* method. In this section I briefly describe these methods and then provide an outline of what one basketball session which incorporates these methods could look like. The Appendices provide examples of basketball sessions.

Holm et al. (2003) recognized that many children entered the school system with little to no ability to communicate in Navajo. This is a common problem across many Indigenous communities. In their opinion, the only way forward to create fluent speakers is through full immersion in pre-kindergarten to grade one. It is important to note that Navajo is a verb-based language and the verb forms used to communicate can be quite complex or almost sentence-like. Therefore, it is important to incrementally and strategically build up the students' language proficiency. Gitxsanimx̱ is similar to Navajo in this regard. They are both verb-based languages and their verb constructions can be similar. Holm et al. (2003) present Situational Navajo Language Immersion programs as the solution. They describe the core of these programs as

exploiting common, recurring situations in the classroom or home to elicit and build up proficiency in Navajo. A basketball practice by nature fabricates a variety of game-like scenarios.

My program also utilizes Total Physical Response (TPR) to teach Gitxsanimx through basketball. TPR was developed by Dr. James Asher. I have used TPR in my classrooms and found it to be particularly beneficial for beginners. Garcia (2001) shares:

The idea of introducing a second language to learners by acting out commands is derived from the natural path by which we all learn our first language. In the early stages of acquisition of a natural language, the child first listens and responds by acting out or doing things in response to requests, directions, or commands that other members of the family direct (p. 1).

TPR teaches language through actions and gestures; at first there is less pressure to speak and more emphasis on receptive language skills. Eventually, the instructor can build up the language skills of the students and communicate more complex thoughts or demand more intricate tasks to be completed through the use of actions and gestures.

Finally, I had the opportunity to take a two-week intensive training session on the Where Are Your Keys (WAYK) method with Evan Gardner, the creator of WAYK, and Susanna Ciotti. What drew me to both WAYK and TPR was the priority placed on developing speakers.

Basketball, and sport in general, lends itself well to methods like WAYK. I was fortunate to have prior experience with the WAYK method, as one of my language mentors, Kil Gal Tseetiks [Cheyenne Morgan] Gwa'amuuk, utilized the method in her community language classes. The WAYK method layers American Sign Language (ASL) on top of the target language. They implement Signed Exact English (SEE): in my context, I would implement

Signed Exact Gitsxanimx (SEG). True ASL is more efficient, whereas SEG trades efficiency for clarity.

The example Gardner gave during the WAYK training I attended in December 2025, was using SEE to ask us, “Do you want to go to the store?” This involved several signs and took 5-10 seconds total. Then he asked us the same question using ASL. This time it was approximately two quick gestures. ASL was significantly more efficient with its gestures to communicate the same question. However, utilizing SEG can help learners, at minimum, get the gist of what is being said with a bit of pre-teaching the signs before fully launching into an immersion setting. In context, this could look like the instructor/coach asking the players to *eda suuhl hlit'* [go get the ball].

*Eda* - extend the pointer finger from their chest out toward the object

*Suuhl* - now with the slightly extended arm, do a plucking motion

*Hlit'* - pretend to hold a ball

Perhaps the biggest benefit to utilizing SEG, is the reduction or complete elimination of English during lessons. Separate from SEG, WAYK implements over 150 techniques or TQs that each correspond to a unique hand gesture, to remain in the target language and not “Pop the Bubble.” The WAYK method strongly discourages English in lessons; they compare the immersion setting to a beautifully delicate bubble that can burst with even the gentlest touches. To differentiate SEG and TQs, they describe the former as a means of communication and the latter as a means to trigger an action.

Within the WAYK method, there are several ways to run a lesson. This project will use the TQ “Lotus” for most lessons,

When you choose to use a Lotus, arrange players around a table in concentric circles. The Inner Circle actively Sends Around a piece of language. The outer circles and the Lunatic Fringe serve as Angels for the players in the Inner Circle. Once a learner in the Inner Circle masters the lesson's Bite-Sized Piece, they get up and move to take their place as an Angel in the Lunatic Fringe. As players graduate from the Inner Circle, their seats are taken by players who, thus far, have only been practicing in the Fringe. Using this progression, everyone will have a chance to Angel as well as sit in an Inner Circle "hot seat." If seen from above, this arrangement of players looks like the petals on a lotus flower, hence the name (Gardner, *Techniques glossary* 2024).

Each underlined word in the description above corresponds to a TQ. For a deeper understanding, you can read the TQ descriptions in the TQ Glossary on the [WAYK website](#)<sup>5</sup>.

I will give a brief description of TQ Angel and Bite-Sized Piece. Angels in this context are thought of as the little helpers on your shoulder. It's their job to help the players in the inner circle by throwing the SEG gestures and mouthing the words to help jog their memory. Learning a language can be taxing on our mental faculties, so to help reduce overloading learners, you must break lessons down to more manageable chunks before moving on; in other words this is just like the practice of scaffolding lessons.

In Practice Plan 2 (Appendix J of my project) I have created, I implement TPR to teach the foundational movements of basketball. These are *bax* [run], *gos* [jump], *gi'nam* [pass], *luu maja* [shoot], *t'ok* [catch]. First, I list the actions in the order I will be teaching them along with their corresponding actions. At this stage I don't worry about including pronouns. I use lots of repetitions and keep everything in the same order, gradually, I increase the difficulty by altering the order and keep using the actions, then I drop the actions and direct the players using only the

<sup>5</sup> <https://whereareyourkeys.org/technique-glossary/>

key words. This builds up to a game of *Hes Sim'oogit* [Chief (Simon) Says]. In a following lesson we can include pronouns, e.g. *Bah'y* [I run], *bah'n* [you run], *bax't* [he/she runs]. This is done by running in place and pointing to yourself.

For my Master's project I created a glossary of useful basketball terms and phrases in Gitxsanimx (Appendix A - F of my project). There is a *Master List* (Appendix A) which is mostly comprised of helpful words (singular and plurals when available), verb modifiers, and limited phrases. Then I subdivided the master list by theme and added more example phrases. The breakdown is as follows: *Defense* (Appendix B), *Offense* (Appendix C), *Commands* (Appendix D) includes short 1 or 2 word phrases or helpful reminders to players, *Rules* (Appendix E), and *Ha'nii Galaak* (Appendix F) allows us to give each spot on the court a name which will help when playing games.

Next, I included practice plans, Appendices G - K. Each practice has been allotted 1 hour so as not to overload players. So it is important to be prepared, keep lessons to Bite-Sized Pieces, ensure everyone is rotating through the different roles of the Lotus. As the group progresses and becomes more familiar with the TQs and the method, they will move through the lessons quicker. There is a balance to be had between instruction time and play time. It is best to keep it as close to a 50/50 split as possible.

### *Xsagyamk [warm up]*

The practices begin with a warm up game of Throw Techniques At Me. The instructor can lead this activity by calling out "throw techniques at me!" and have everyone sign a different TQ. After 30 seconds, the instructor passes it around to someone new. They will repeat the name of the TQ and mirror it back to the person throwing the TQ. This activity is meant to be quick,

when the game has wrapped, take some time to review and discuss any TQs the group did not recognize.

Before launching into the day's lesson (Appendix H of my project), introduce the TQ "Craigslislist" –

**Craigslislists** are sets of related words that can be practiced together outside of a sentence (e.g., yes/no/maybe or I/you/he/she). Use **Craigslislists** to increase context, create memory tools, and practice your command of language structures. Preview a new "bite" of language by embedding it in a **Craigslislist**. (Gardner, *Techniques glossary* 2024)

You can see in the practice plans there is a space in the Gitxsanimx box where multiple lists have been organized. Keep an eye on the group to see how they're picking up the gestures. You can review at any time during the lesson.

### *Siwilaaksahl Gitxsanimx [Teaching Gitxsanimx]*

Now you can launch into the lesson. Each lesson will have four different phases to progress through. There is a set up phase where we establish what we are working on. For example, in the first lesson we focus on "Gwi Tun?" [What is this?]. We establish the object, "hlit'" [ball]

**A:** Hlit' tun [This is a ball] (**x3**)

**A:** Gwi tun? [What is this?]

**B:** Hlit' tun [This is a ball]

**A:** Ee, hlit' tun! [Yes, this is a ball] (**Confirmation**)

The next phase of the lesson we use TQ "Make Me Say Yes" (MMSY). To do this, you ask a 'yes' or 'no' question to which you already know the answer is yes. You get to practice asking

questions and hear another repetition of the language. This is one of the main standbys for teaching and hunting language. When teaching, always get learners to first say “yes” and then “no” in the target language. This not only teaches basic conversational skills and affirmation and negation in the language, but also opens up the conversation to conditional and hypothetical responses (if/for/and/or/but/maybe/etc.).

**A:** Neehl hlit' tun aa? [Isn't this a ball?]

**B:** Ee'e, hlit' tun! [Yes, this is a ball!]

**A:** Oo, hlit' tun! [Oh, this is a ball!] (**Confirmation**)

In the next phase of the lesson we introduce the new object - ts'a'waxs [shoe] and continue to use TQ MMSY.

**A:** Ts'a'waxs tun [This is a shoe] (**x3**)

**A:** Neehl Ts'a'waxs tun? [What is this?]

**B:** Ee'e, ts'a'waxs tun! [This is a shoe]

**A:** Oo, ts'a'waxs tun! [Oh, this is a shoe!] (**Confirmation**)

In the next phase of the lesson we use TQ “Make Me Say No” (MMSN).

**A:** Needii hlit' sun, ts'a'waxs tun [This isn't a ball, this is a shoe] (**x3**)

**A:** Neehl hlit' tun aa? [Isn't this a ball?]

**B:** Nee, needii hlit' sun, ts'a'waxs tun! [No, this isn't a ball, this is a shoe!]

**A:** Ee'e, ts'a'waxs tun! [Yes, this is a shoe] (confirmation)

The last phase of the lesson we present an Either/Or scenario. In this example we establish the correct answer, then ask them a *ligi* question, and always confirm at the end.

**A:** Ts'a'waxs tun, needii hlit' sun [this is a shoe, not a ball] **(x3)**

**A:** Neehl ts'a'waxs *ligi* hlit' tun aa? [Isn't this a shoe or a ball?]

**B:** Ts'a'waxs tun, needii hlit' sun [this is a shoe, not a ball]

**A;** Ee'e, ts'a'waxs tun! [Yes, this is a shoe] **(Confirmation)**

Depending on the group size and proficiency, it may take a couple times to progress all the way through the lesson. A natural stopping point could be after MMSN. This allows for a more dynamic game in the next phase of the lesson,

### *Mas'os'm [We Play]*

In this phase we implement what we've learned into drills and small-sided games (SSG), building up to full 5 on 5. Nuss & Kogan (2024) shared that the benefits of gamifying language learning are the reduction/elimination of boredom, deliberate practice, rehearsal and memorization, and reducing learner anxiety. SSGs involve fewer players, that could be anything between 1v1 up to 4v4. You can also play with uneven teams to give one team an advantage. These games are typically played on the half-court. The basketball benefits of using SSG align well with the aforementioned secondary language acquisition benefits. It is important to reiterate this is a language program first and basketball program second. Cramer Basketball (2024) states the benefits of using SSG are the increased repetitions for players, simultaneously working on offense and defense, helping players decision-making, and most importantly, it's engaging and

fun for players. An added benefit for the coaches is it helps to keep the main thing the main thing. Each game can have a specific goal or teaching point for the coach to focus on and not get lost in the weeds. There is also the inherent benefit of more repetitions of language, giving the learners more opportunities to practice the target phrases of the lesson while on offense or defense. Learners are also encouraged to stay engaged on the sideline while they wait their turn. They can be practicing to themselves or offering support to the players actively participating in the drill. Depending on the group's language proficiency, equipment availability, and the presence of a secondary instructor the group can be further broken up to increase repetitions.

In the example *Practice Plan 1* (Appendix H of my project), we play a 1v1 SSG. The premise of the game is that the coach will ask the players a question, and the first to correctly answer gets to be on offense while the other must defend. This game can be modified in a variety of ways. The coach can change the starting location, limit the number of dribbles allowed: in this method the use of English will **always** result in a change of possession. It's important to encourage and remind players to narrate what they're doing.

### *Xsigwineekw [cooldown]*

With the final minutes of the practice session, we move into the xsigwineekw [cooldown] and "Laagaltxw" [Assessment/check] sections. These can be done simultaneously. We guide the players through static stretching to promote muscle recovery after working out. This can be done in Gtixsanimx a couple different ways. We can assign names to different stretches and call them out and perform the stretch. You can also tell players to stretch a specific muscle or muscle groups. We can follow the same pattern from the lesson: the coach establishes what's happening, then asks the group the question, the group replies, and the coach confirms. This should take 30 seconds - 1 minute per stretch. Work your way around the body, this should take about 5 - 10

minutes total. This is the end of the session so players may be feeling full or may struggle more than they would earlier in the lesson. Here the coach can implement a couple TQs: **mumble** and **let it go**. This will take the pressure off but doesn't fully let players off the hook.

### *Laagaltxw [Assessment/Check]*

The last step before the session is wrapped is to assess everyone's progress. This can be done with an "Exit Ticket" using the TQ "Prove It." Gardner (2024) describes the TQ "Prove it" as follows.

Prove it is a critical part of the language hunting and learning process. As soon as learners think they have a good understanding of a new language piece, they should take the reins and try to prove their understanding to a more fluent speaker. They can do this by making a Set Up and using the new language piece in context. This way learners are actively showing what they know in immersion instead of just nodding along in silent understanding or translating into English. If a learner is just nodding along, the more fluent speaker can ask them if they're ready to "put their money where their mouth is" and prove that they can wield the language. Often when proving their grasp of one piece of language, learners will encounter a new Bite-Sized Piece that they don't quite understand. By using Set Up and Prove It in tandem, learners can extend their immersion sessions almost indefinitely! (Gardner, 2024, TQ: prove it).

So, before anyone can leave, they must prove to the coach they understand what they learned by demonstrating something they learned during the session. What this looks like in practice, could be the players using a phrase from the lesson in context, they could demonstrate their understanding of the pronoun system. If players aren't able to prove it, this is also good feedback

for the coach. Perhaps, the coach will need to find a new approach to the subject matter, create new Set Ups to make it more obvious.

### *Milestones*

My project follows the WAYK method's use of language milestones to track learners' progress. Gardner defines Milestones as follows,

Milestones are a key part of building a curriculum. While fluency is the goal for many learners, sometimes it might feel intangible and unattainable when you're just starting out. An intangible and distant goal is not the best motivator, so we look for more short-term goals on the road to fluency. Identifying these Milestones on a language learner's journey helps home in on the lessons that need to be developed to scaffold towards each Milestone. An ideal milestone is something that is self-contained, relatively short, and familiar to many people in your community. Milestones are often things that people want to learn how to do in the language (e.g. "I want to be able to introduce myself, I want to be able to say a prayer, etc.). Milestones will be different for every community, because every community has different needs and different materials to draw from (Gardner, 2024, TQ: milestone).

I will be drawing my milestones from the glossary I created. The first milestone is identifying an object, then objects, then objects further away. From there, we move into the basic movement patterns of basketball. Can I talk about myself, you, or he/she running, jumping, shooting the ball, passing, catching, etc.? Then progressing to talking about us, them, you (pl.) doing the actions. As learners get the hang of these, they can progress to using more complicated sentence forms. A major milestone of the program will be to play a 5 vs 5 game in Gitxsanimx̓. However, this may not even be the final milestone. Basketball is always evolving as new offensive and

defensive schemes are developed. The benefit of teaching a language through a physical activity, such as basketball, is the many teaching aids available. Coaches can use portable coaching boards to diagram drills or SSGs before players are expected to perform. Demonstrations, recasting, repetitions, reminders, and a positive attitude are all great tools to lean on to help learners progress through the milestones.

## **Saabax [the end]**

A love for basketball runs deep in my Nation. There is a popular saying among basketball coaches that they like to tell players: “Great teams talk.” Great teams are full of strong communicators who constantly read and react to what they see, and relay that information to their teammates. This MILR project endeavours to take the Gitxsan Nation to the next level on and off the basketball court. I hope my project will be, in the words of my Nan, xGwoimtxw (Harris, 1999), “attractive enough to garner the community buy-in needed for the long-term success of the program and our nation as a whole.”

Looking back to my research questions, “How can sport, specifically basketball, be used in Indigenous Language Revitalization?” Time and time again, sport has proven to be a versatile tool for change. Nelson Mandela said it best "Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope where once there was only despair” (Laureus, 2020, 0:01). I believe sport to be the perfect medium for Indigenous Language Revitalization. Basketball is a low-barrier, fun, competitive, team sport that many Indigenous communities have enjoyed playing for decades. The physical nature of the activity lends itself well to physical language acquisition methods like TPR or WAYK that use physical gestures and actions to communicate. In a practice, possibilities are endless with all of the different situations coaches can create to elicit language. Repetitions are a key part and existing norm in a practice situation.

My second question, “What are the benefits of Sport as a method for language acquisition?” There are numerous key benefits to implementing a sport method for language acquisition such as: the increased physical activity, having a built-in language community to

regularly talk to in the target language. In my experience as a language teacher, I've heard from many students how they feel they don't have anyone to talk to outside of the classroom. The community has an existing regular time and place to play, now they can incorporate what they're learning into their lives. This gets the language outside of a typical classroom setting and onto the hardwood where they can play, sweat, and have fun in Gitxsanimx! When learners are having fun they are more likely to remember what they learn. There are also competitive benefits to playing in an unfamiliar language. Your opponents won't be able to understand you while playing, which puts the opponents at a significant disadvantage.

Lastly, "How can other language acquisition methods apply to Sport (basketball)?" While my project specifically utilized three methods: Situational Navajo, WAYK, and TPR. There are plenty of other methods I did not have time to research and incorporate, such as the Direct Method. Benati (2018) explains that the Direct Method was developed by Maximilian Berlitz in 1887 and focuses on teaching in the target language without translations (p.1). The physical nature of basketball lends itself well to any method as you can incorporate or layer a variety of different teaching styles and methods onto it.

Basketball is a tool for improving the health and well-being of our Youth, which will give them confidence, determination, and lifelong bonds with their peers. Pairing this with learning Gitxsanimx will develop their sense of identity, pride, and belonging. Our language needs the Youth, and the Youth need the language.

### **Next steps**

For the time being, this is all a dream. The obvious next step will be to put this plan into action. There are several communities in the area with basketball gyms that may want to host a program like this. This program will need to find a home and financial support to get it off the

ground. When I was originally dreaming up this project, I envisioned it would be for Youth only. However, it may be best to open it up to all ages. This way there can be a multigenerational transfer of knowledge. So long as the community understands this is a language program first and foremost. As well, it will help to have players with prior experience and knowledge of the game as we progress through the milestones and begin engaging with more complex basketball concepts.

My ultimate goal is for all of the teams in the area to transition to playing basketball in Gitxsanimx full-time. This will not happen overnight and will take years of effort. This will require adults to learn the method and the language, so they can take it and make it their own with their own teams.

Mentorship has always been a beautiful part of the game and sport in general. Eventually, I would love to have a partner or assistant coach who has gone through the program and speaks the language. I have experienced coaching alone and have come to realize there are some benefits, but it is much easier to have a partner there to support you.

Additionally, I dream of expanding the method to other sports. Soccer is another popular sport in the area. It is relatively inexpensive to join, and there are established leagues for kids as young as 5 years old. Many of the words, phrases, and skills would be transferable to other sports. Ultimate Frisbee is another low-barrier sport on the rise that has many similarities to basketball.

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## Appendices

**Appendix A - MILR Project - Hlaa Dim Mas'us'm Ahl Luu Majam Hlit'**

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## **Ndahl Wil Sa ‘Witxw’y [Where I come from]**

Luu amhl good’y win gya’an, luu amhl good’y wil sa ‘witxwin ahl Hlaa Dim Mas’us’m Ahl Luu’majam Hlit’ Coaches manual. James Nycehl wa’y, Ato’olgasxw wa’m hawali’y, lax gibuu p’degy, wilps xGwoimtxw wil sa ‘witxw’y, Carrie Nycehl was noho’y, Nagwa Onhl wa’m hawali’t, hi’de Rick Nyce ‘op nc, ‘Wiilamolhl wa’m xhaisla, Anspayaxw wil sa ‘witxw’y, ii New Hazelton wil jog’y.

I am happy to see you, and I’m happy you have come to the Hlaa Dim Mas’us’m Ahl Luu’majam Hlit’ Coaches manual. My name is James Nyce, my Gitxsan name is Ato’olgasxw, I am Wolf Clan from the House of xGwoimtxw. My mother is Carrie Nyce, her Gitxsan name is Nagwa On. My father is Rick Nyce, he is from the xá’isla Nation but holds a borrowed Gitxsan name, ‘Wiilamolhl. I grew up in Anspayaxw [The Hiding Place] or Kispiox on Google Maps, and I currently live in New Hazelton, British Columbia.

I endeavour to create a Gitxsanimx immersion youth basketball program. Sport has been a part of my life since childhood, when I was introduced to basketball and soccer. I have spent many weeks in February in Prince Rupert, attending the All-Native Basketball Tournament and cheering on my Nations’ teams. My passion for sport led me to attend Camosun College to earn my bachelor’s degree in Sport and Fitness Leadership with a specialization in Sport Management. After graduation, I pursued another passion of mine, helping my People, specifically Indigenous Youth, to lead healthy lives. I spent many years as a Youth Worker and Youth Programs Director at the Victoria Native Friendship Centre. Through these positions, I developed my skills by working one-on-one with Youth to help them set and achieve their goals. Later, I further expanded my skills as an activity planner and program leader.

In 2020, my partner, Rosalie Fralick, and I welcomed our firstborn, Misaax, into the world. This awoke a deep desire to reconnect with my culture and my language, to pass it on to the next generation. We were living in Victoria, and my sister, Lynzee Nyce, introduced me to the Mentor Apprentice Program. Since then, I have been learning Gitxsanimx̓ for five years from my aunties, Jeanne and Barbara Harris, and my nan, xGwoimtxw [Sadie Harris]. Through hard work and mentorship, I have achieved a level of proficiency that enables me to teach at both the elementary and college levels. Finally, I have been coaching under-13 (U13) youth basketball for the past two seasons, primarily in English. My unique background positions me well to bring my two worlds of sport and language together in a way this community has not seen for a long time.

This coach's manual has been created to provide other coaches with a clear, step-by-step guide to teaching Gitxsanimx̓ through basketball. You may be wondering, “Why basketball?” That is a fair question. While I was doing my bachelor's degree at Camosun, a professor made us memorize a great speech by Nelson Mandela (2000). In the speech, he says,

“Sport has the power to change the world, it has the power to inspire, it has the power to unite people in a way little else does, it speaks to the youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope, where once there was only despair.”

This quote has stuck with me in a way I didn't anticipate. 26 years later, Mandela's powerful words still ring true, especially in the context of revitalizing Gitxsanimx̓. Gitxsanimx̓ is in a delicate spot, and it needs us, the people, to come together to change our world and replace despair with hope. Our People love sports, especially our *majagalee* [Youth]. This program and resource seeks to meet the People where they're at, on the basketball court!

## Background

Treat this manual as a living document; it will be continually added to and improved upon with each new iteration. It was designed as a language acquisition program first and a basketball program second. My goal is for this manual to be accessible to new learners and instructors, with an emphasis on developing speakers of Gitxsanim̓. This manual takes inspiration from various methods of language acquisition, including: Where Are Your Keys, Total Physical Response, and Situational Navajo. What these methods have in common is a strict adherence to the target language while teaching a lesson. This method takes the heaviest inspiration from the Where Are Your Keys method, which layers speaking in the target language with American Sign Language (ASL). They have also developed many useful techniques for maintaining an immersive learning environment. If you would like to review the list of techniques, with explanations and helpful photos of the corresponding hand signs, you can check out the Where Are Your Keys website below.

[Where Are Your Keys - Techniques Glossary](https://whereareyourkeys.org/technique-glossary/)<sup>6</sup>

## Expected Outcomes

The expected project outcomes for my Gitxsanim̓ basketball program are to develop a framework for teaching Gitxsanim̓ through basketball that honours and is accountable to the Gitxsan worldview. At the same time, I plan to develop a method for teaching Gitxsanim̓ through basketball and develop a coach's resource, so other coaches can do the same. A program such as this does not have an end but is meant to be continual. I will know I have met my goal when we can run a practice or game entirely in Gitxsanim̓ or when the older youth can

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<sup>6</sup> <https://whereareyourkeys.org/technique-glossary/>

confidently mentor the new kids in Gitxsanimx. Long term, I would love to see this implemented from the Under 13 programs all the way up to the Masters' programs.

## **Gitxsanimx Glossary**

This resource was put together using several dictionaries: First Voices online Gigeenix dictionary, Hindle & Rigsby's A Short Practical Dictionary of the Gitksan Language, and the Gitksan app. You can visit the First Voices website or the Gitksan app (free to download from the Apple App Store and Google Play Store) to hear audio clips of many of the words. Then I partnered with my Nan, xGwoimtxw [Sadie Harris], to review it and ensure it was correct. It's arranged in alphabetical order based on the English translations. It provides the word on its own in singular form and plural if it is known<sup>7</sup>, then provides an example phrase showing you how it can be used. There is a Master List of words that includes all the words and phrases, then I break it down into subcategories - Defense, Offense, Commands, Rules, and the Court.

The language domain of basketball has been dormant for many years, and much of the language of basketball in Gitxsanimx has not been easy to find. This has resulted in the generation of new words with the help of my Nan, or the giving of new meaning to old words. I hope that other nations and language groups can use this document to inform their own immersive language sport programs.

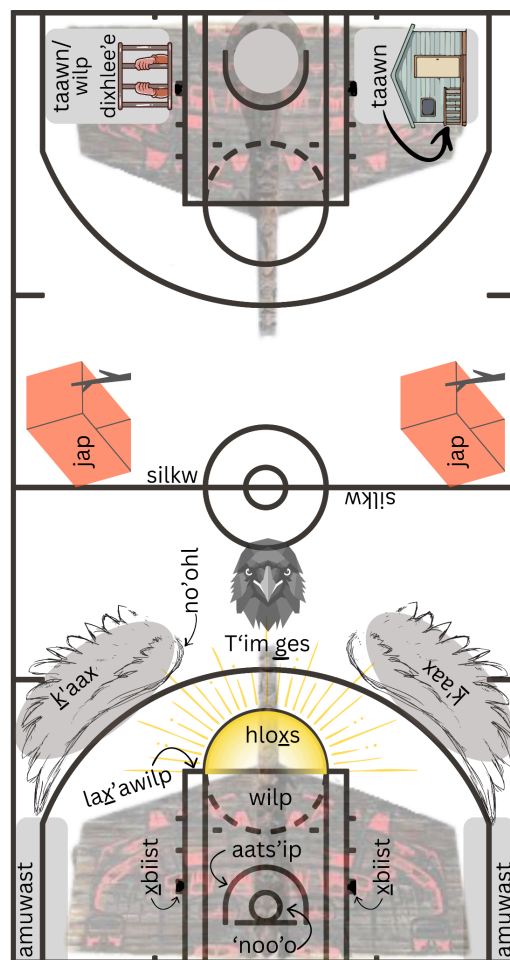
The glossary is also meant to be used as a tool for developing language lessons. Starting with the most basic words and short sentences, eventually building up to more complex offensive and defensive concepts for basketball. To design a lesson, you can pick a few words from the glossary and design a small-sided game to put the newly acquired language into use.

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<sup>7</sup> Plurals in Gitxsanimx behave unpredictably.

## Ha'nii Galaak [The Court]

When we're learning a sport, it is important to label key features and landmarks on the court. This way, we can guide our players to the right spots during our drills and games. Rather than directly translating the common English terms for the court, I decided to approach labeling the court (Figure 1, pictured below) from a Gitxsan worldview. The court tells the story of 'Wiigyat stealing the sun. The abbreviated story goes that 'Wiigyat heard of a sim'oogit from a nearby village that possessed a ball of light that he refused to share. 'Wiigyat wanted it because he believed it would change his life for the better. This was a time when the world was still in semi-darkness. He traveled to the village and began to spy on them. He discovered the sim'oogit kept the ball in a *xbiist* [box] in his *wilp* [house] sim'oogit had a daughter, so he followed her to a creek. She was thirsty and began to drink from the creek. 'Wiigyat saw this and transformed himself into a pine needle. He placed himself in the water and the sim'oogit's daughter drank him up. She became pregnant and the sim'oogit was so happy because he'd always wanted a grandson. Soon 'Wiigyat was born and he began to cry and cry. Eventually, in desperation the sim'oogit gave the boy his ball of light. To everyone's delight, 'Wiigyat stopped crying and the sim'oogit put the ball back into the *xbiist*. Wiigyat was happy for a day or two and then began to cry again until the



sim'oogit gave him the ball. This cycle repeated a few times. Then the sim'oogit began to trust 'Wiigyat with the ball and didn't watch him so closely. When the sim'oogit wasn't looking he transformed into a raven with a black *t'im ges* [head], black *k'aax* [wings] and *no'ohl* [shoulders], and tried to flee. The sim'oogit saw this and closed the *aats'ip* [door]. So Wiigyat fled from the *lax'awilp* [roof]. He traveled toward the Kisgegas River where he knew the Gitxsan would be busy. What he didn't realize was he came across 'the land in-between'. The people he saw were actually spirits who hadn't moved on. They liked the darkness that blanketed the world. 'Wiigyat tried to ask them if they'd like to use his light and when he opened his mouth the ball dropped and broke into millions of pieces. The bigger pieces became the *hloxs* [sun] and *hloxs'm axxw* [moon], while the smaller bits became the *bilust* [stars]. Just like that, Wiigyat had accidentally given the gift of light to the Gitxsan.

### ***Transition Offense***

Transition offense is the ability to quickly switch from defense to offense. The faster a team can accomplish this, the easier it will be to score. This is because the other team will not have their defense set, resulting in players scrambling to stop the ball handler from scoring. This results in mismatches the offense can exploit if they fail to score in transition. It's important to play fast but in control. Players need to stay organized and not get in each other's way. To help remind players of this, I created a diagram of the court (figure 2, pictured below). There are three lanes or rivers, like there are three rivers in our territory, the *Xsi Anspayaxw* [Kispiox River] (left), the *Xsan* [Skeena River] (middle), and the *Xsi Andoo'o* [Bulkley River] (right). As the coach you can instruct players to *Eda geets'* [go downriver]. This is similar to the English convention, get downhill. I placed *gan gan* [trees] between the *xsi* as a visual reminder to stay

out of those areas. After all it's much faster to travel in the river than it is to travel through the forest. If players forget, you can remind them to *xsaxwhl gan gan* [exit the the trees]

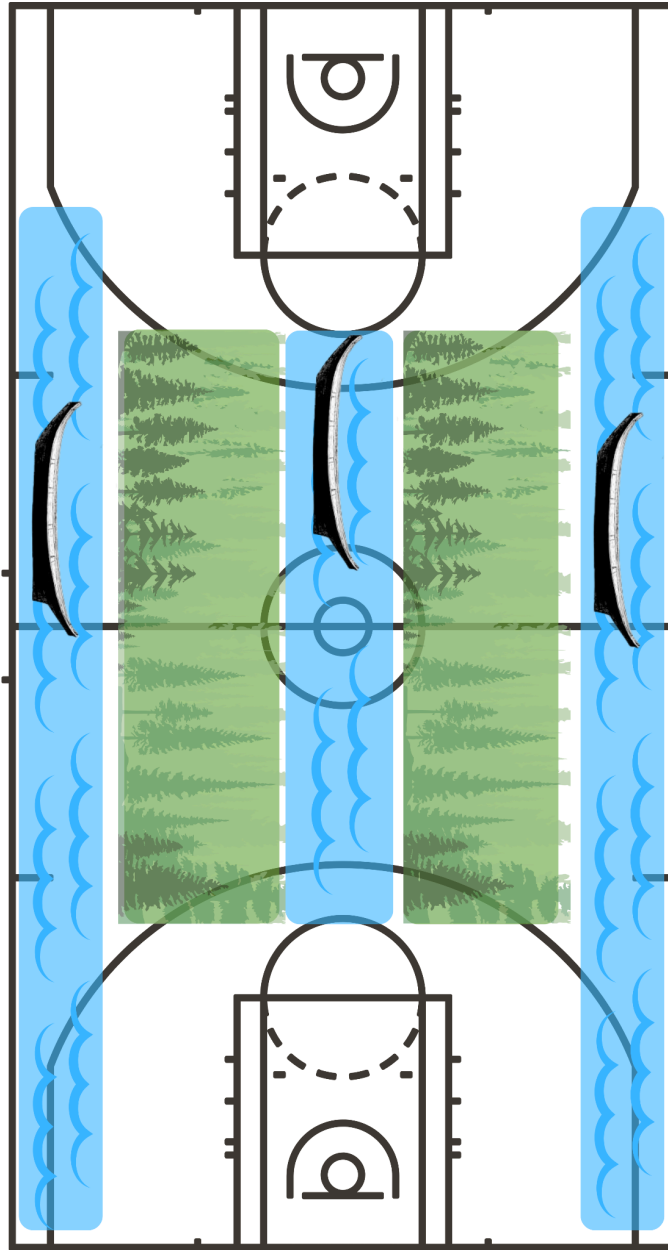


Figure 2 - Transition Offense

## Basketball As A Teaching Method

Basketball is a beautiful game that has the ability to connect people from all walks of life. It is totally possible to join a game of pick up anywhere in the world and to still have fun. You might not speak the language of where you're visiting, but you may be fluent in basketball. That is truly one of the impactful and powerful aspects of sport. My project has taken heavy influence from the *Situational Navajo* method for secondary language acquisition, *Total Physical Response* (TPR), and the *Where Are Your Keys* method. In this section I briefly describe these methods and then provide an outline of what one basketball session which incorporates these methods could look like. The Appendices provide examples of basketball sessions.

Holm et al. (2003) recognized that many children entered the school system with little to no ability to communicate in Navajo. This is a common problem across many Indigenous communities. In their opinion, the only way forward to create fluent speakers is through full immersion in pre-kindergarten to grade one. It is important to note that Navajo is a verb-based language and the verb forms used to communicate can be quite complex or almost sentence-like. Therefore, it is important to incrementally and strategically build up the students' language proficiency. Gitxsanimx̱ is similar to Navajo in this regard. They are both verb-based languages and their verb constructions can be similar. Holm et al. (2003) present Situational Navajo Language Immersion programs as the solution. They describe the core of these programs as exploiting common, recurring situations in the classroom or home to elicit and build up proficiency in Navajo. A basketball practice by nature fabricates a variety of game-like scenarios.

My program also utilizes Total Physical Response (TPR) to teach Gitxsanimx̱ through basketball. TPR was developed by Dr. James Asher. I have used TPR in my classrooms and found it to be particularly beneficial for beginners. Garcia (2001) shares:

The idea of introducing a second language to learners by acting out commands is derived from the natural path by which we all learn our first language. In the early stages of acquisition of a natural language, the child first listens and responds by acting out or doing things in response to requests, directions, or commands that other members of the family direct (p. 1).

TPR teaches language through actions and gestures; at first there is less pressure to speak and more emphasis on receptive language skills. Eventually, the instructor can build up the language skills of the students and communicate more complex thoughts or demand more intricate tasks to be completed through the use of actions and gestures.

Finally, I had the opportunity to take a two-week intensive training session on the Where Are Your Keys (WAYK) method with Evan Gardner, the creator of WAYK, and Susanna Ciotti. What drew me to both WAYK and TPR was the priority placed on developing speakers.

Basketball, and sport in general, lends itself well to methods like WAYK. I was fortunate to have prior experience with the WAYK method, as one of my language mentors, Kil Gal Tsetiks [Cheyenne Morgan] Gwa'amuuk, utilized the method in her community language classes. The WAYK method layers American Sign Language (ASL) on top of the target language. They implement Signed Exact English (SEE): in my context, I would implement Signed Exact Gitxsanimx̱ (SEG). True ASL is more efficient, whereas SEG trades efficiency for clarity.

The example Gardner gave during the WAYK training I attended in December 2025, was using SEE to ask us, “Do you want to go to the store?” This involved several signs and took 5-10 seconds total. Then he asked us the same question using ASL. This time it was approximately two quick gestures. ASL was significantly more efficient with its gestures to communicate the same question. However, utilizing SEG can help learners, at minimum, get the gist of what is being said with a bit of pre-teaching the signs before fully launching into an immersion setting. In context, this could look like the instructor/coach asking the players to *eda suuhl hlit'* [go get the ball].

*Eda* - extend the pointer finger from their chest out toward the object

*Suuhl* - now with the slightly extended arm, do a plucking motion

*Hlit'* - pretend to hold a ball

Perhaps the biggest benefit to utilizing SEG, is the reduction or complete elimination of English during lessons. Separate from SEG, WAYK implements over 150 techniques or TQs that each correspond to a unique hand gesture, to remain in the target language and not “Pop the Bubble.” The WAYK method strongly discourages English in lessons; they compare the immersion setting to a beautifully delicate bubble that can burst with even the gentlest touches. To differentiate SEG and TQs, they describe the former as a means of communication and the latter as a means to trigger an action.

Within the WAYK method, there are several ways to run a lesson. This project will use the TQ “Lotus” for most lessons,

When you choose to use a Lotus, arrange players around a table in concentric circles. The Inner Circle actively Sends Around a piece of language. The outer circles and the Lunatic Fringe serve as Angels for the players in the Inner Circle. Once a learner in the Inner

Circle masters the lesson's Bite-Sized Piece, they get up and move to take their place as an Angel in the Lunatic Fringe. As players graduate from the Inner Circle, their seats are taken by players who, thus far, have only been practicing in the Fringe. Using this progression, everyone will have a chance to Angel as well as sit in an Inner Circle "hot seat." If seen from above, this arrangement of players looks like the petals on a lotus flower, hence the name (Gardner, *Techniques glossary* 2024).

Each underlined word in the description above corresponds to a TQ. For a deeper understanding, you can read the TQ descriptions in the TQ Glossary on the [WAYK website](#)<sup>8</sup>.

I will give a brief description of TQ Angel and Bite-Sized Piece. Angels in this context are thought of as the little helpers on your shoulder. It's their job to help the players in the inner circle by throwing the SEG gestures and mouthing the words to help jog their memory. Learning a language can be taxing on our mental faculties, so to help reduce overloading learners, you must break lessons down to more manageable chunks before moving on; in other words this is just like the practice of scaffolding lessons.

Early on in the curriculum (Appendix J) I have created, I implement TPR to teach the foundational movements of basketball. These are *bax* [run], *gos* [jump], *gi'nam* [pass], *luu maja* [shoot], *t'ok* [catch]. First, I list the actions in the order I will be teaching them along with their corresponding actions. At this stage I don't worry about including pronouns. I use lots of repetitions and keep everything in the same order, gradually, I increase the difficulty by altering the order and keep using the actions, then I drop the actions and direct the players using only the key words. This builds up to a game of *Hes Sim'oogit* [Chief (Simon) Says]. In a following lesson we can include pronouns, e.g. *Bah'y* [I run], *bah'n* [you run], *bax't* [he/she runs]. This is done by running in place and pointing to yourself.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://whereareyourkeys.org/technique-glossary/>

Next, I included practice plans, Appendices G - K. Each practice has been allotted 1 hour so as not to overload players. So it is important to be prepared, keep lessons to Bite-Sized Pieces, ensure everyone is rotating through the different roles of the Lotus. As the group progresses and becomes more familiar with the TQs and the method, they will move through the lessons quicker. There is a balance to be had between instruction time and play time. It is best to keep it as close to a 50/50 split as possible.

### ***Xsagyamk [warm up]***

The practices begin with a warm up game of Throw Techniques At Me. The instructor can lead this activity by calling out “throw techniques at me!” and have everyone sign a different TQ. After 30 seconds, the instructor passes it around to someone new. They will repeat the name of the TQ and mirror it back to the person throwing the TQ. This activity is meant to be quick, when the game has wrapped, take some time to review and discuss any TQs the group did not recognize.

Before launching into the day’s lesson (Appendix H), introduce the TQ “Craigslit” – **Craigslits** are sets of related words that can be practiced together outside of a sentence (e.g., yes/no/maybe or I/you/he/she). Use **Craigslits** to increase context, create memory tools, and practice your command of language structures. Preview a new “bite” of language by embedding it in a **Craigslit**. (Gardner, *Techniques glossary* 2024)

You can see in the practice plans there is a space in the Gitxsanimx box where multiple lists have been organized. Keep an eye on the group to see how they’re picking up the gestures. You can review at any time during the lesson.

***Siwilaaksahl Gitxsanimx [Teaching Gitxsanimx]***

Now you can launch into the lesson. Each lesson will have four different phases to progress through. There is a set up phase where we establish what we are working on. For example, in the first lesson we focus on “Gwi Tun?” [What is this?]. We establish the object, “hlit” [ball]

**A:** Hlit’ tun [This is a ball] **(x3)**

**A:** Gwi tun? [What is this?]

**B:** Hlit’ tun [This is a ball]

**A:** Ee, hlit’ tun! [Yes, this is a ball] **(Confirmation)**

The next phase of the lesson we use TQ “Make Me Say Yes” (MMSY). To do this, you ask a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ question to which you already know the answer is yes. You get to practice asking questions and hear another repetition of the language. This is one of the main standbys for teaching and hunting language. When teaching, always get learners to first say “yes” and then “no” in the target language. This not only teaches basic conversational skills and affirmation and negation in the language, but also opens up the conversation to conditional and hypothetical responses (if/for/and/or/but/maybe/etc.).

**A:** Neehl hlit’ tun aa? [Isn’t this a ball?]

**B:** Ee’e, hlit’ tun! [Yes, this is a ball!]

**A:** Oo, hlit’ tun! [Oh, this is a ball!] **(Confirmation)**

In the next phase of the lesson we introduce the new object - ts'a'waxs [shoe] and continue to use TQ MMSY.

**A:** Ts'a'waxs tun [This is a shoe] (x3)

**A:** Neehl Ts'a'waxs tun? [What is this?]

**B:** Ee'e, ts'a'waxs tun! [This is a shoe]

**A:** Oo, ts'a'waxs tun! [Oh, this is a shoe!] (**Confirmation**)

In the next phase of the lesson we use TQ “Make Me Say No” (MMSN).

A: Needii hlit' sun, ts'a'waxs tun [This isn't a ball, this is a shoe] (x3)

A: Neehl hlit' tun aa? [Isn't this a ball?]

B: Nee, needii hlit' sun, ts'a'waxs tun! [No, this isn't a ball, this is a shoe!]

A: Ee'e, ts'a'waxs tun! [Yes, this is a shoe] (confirmation)

The last phase of the lesson we present an Either/Or scenario. In this example we establish the correct answer, then ask them a *ligi* question, and always confirm at the end.

**A:** Ts'a'waxs tun, needii hlit' sun [this is a shoe, not a ball] (x3)

**A:** Neehl ts'a'waxs *ligi* hlit' tun aa? [Isn't this a shoe or a ball?]

**B:** Ts'a'waxs tun, needii hlit' sun [this is a shoe, not a ball]

**A:** Ee'e, ts'a'waxs tun! [Yes, this is a shoe] (**Confirmation**)

Depending on the group size and proficiency, it may take a couple times to progress all the way through the lesson. A natural stopping point could be after MMSN. This allows for a more dynamic game in the next phase of the lesson,

### ***Mas'os'm [We Play]***

In this phase we implement what we've learned into drills and small-sided games (SSG), building up to full 5 on 5. Nuss & Kogan (2024) shared that the benefits of gamifying language learning are the reduction/elimination of boredom, deliberate practice, rehearsal and memorization, and reducing learner anxiety. SSGs involve fewer players, that could be anything between 1v1 up to 4v4. You can also play with uneven teams to give one team an advantage. These games are typically played on the half-court. The basketball benefits of using SSG align well with the aforementioned secondary language acquisition benefits. It is important to reiterate this is a language program first and basketball program second. Cramer Basketball (2024) states the benefits of using SSG are the increased repetitions for players, simultaneously working on offense and defense, helping players decision-making, and most importantly, it's engaging and fun for players. An added benefit for the coaches is it helps to keep the main thing the main thing. Each game can have a specific goal or teaching point for the coach to focus on and not get lost in the weeds. There is also the inherent benefit of more repetitions of language, giving the learners more opportunities to practice the target phrases of the lesson while on offense or defense. Learners are also encouraged to stay engaged on the sideline while they wait their turn. They can be practicing to themselves or offering support to the players actively participating in the drill. Depending on the group's language proficiency, equipment availability, and the presence of a secondary instructor the group can be further broken up to increase repetitions.

In the example practice plan in Appendix H, we play a 1v1 SSG. The premise of the game is that the coach will ask the players a question, and the first to correctly answer gets to be on offence while the other must defend. This game can be modified in a variety of ways. The coach can change the starting location, limit the number of dribbles allowed: in this method the use of English will **always** result in a change of possession. It's important to encourage and remind players to narrate what they're doing.

### *Xsigwineekw [cooldown]*

With the final minutes of the practice session, we move into the xsigwineekw [cooldown] and "Laagaltxw" [Assessment/check] sections. These can be done simultaneously. We guide the players through static stretching to promote muscle recovery after working out. This can be done in Gtixsanimx a couple different ways. We can assign names to different stretches and call them out and perform the stretch. You can also tell players to stretch a specific muscle or muscle groups. We can follow the same pattern from the lesson: the coach establishes what's happening, then asks the group the question, the group replies, and the coach confirms. This should take 30 seconds - 1 minute per stretch. Work your way around the body, this should take about 5 - 10 minutes total. This is the end of the session so players may be feeling full or may struggle more than they would earlier in the lesson. Here the coach can implement a couple TQs: **mumble** and **let it go**. This will take the pressure off but doesn't fully let players off the hook.

### *Laagaltxw [Assessment/Check]*

The last step before the session is wrapped is to assess everyone's progress. This can be done with an "Exit Ticket" using the TQ "Prove It." Gardner (2024) describes the TQ "Prove it" as follows.

Prove it is a critical part of the language hunting and learning process. As soon as learners think they have a good understanding of a new language piece, they should take the reins and try to prove their understanding to a more fluent speaker. They can do this by making a Set Up and using the new language piece in context. This way learners are actively showing what they know in immersion instead of just nodding along in silent understanding or translating into English. If a learner is just nodding along, the more fluent speaker can ask them if they're ready to "put their money where their mouth is" and prove that they can wield the language. Often when proving their grasp of one piece of language, learners will encounter a new Bite-Sized Piece that they don't quite understand. By using Set Up and Prove It in tandem, learners can extend their immersion sessions almost indefinitely! (Gardner, 2024, TQ: prove it).

So, before anyone can leave, they must prove to the coach they understand what they learned by demonstrating something they learned during the session. What this looks like in practice, could be the players using a phrase from the lesson in context, they could demonstrate their understanding of the pronoun system. If players aren't able to prove it, this is also good feedback for the coach. Perhaps, the coach will need to find a new approach to the subject matter, create new Set Ups to make it more obvious.

## Milestones

My project follows the WAYK method's use of language milestones to track learners' progress. Gardner defines Milestones as follows,

Milestones are a key part of building a curriculum. While fluency is the goal for many learners, sometimes it might feel intangible and unattainable when you're just starting out. An intangible and distant goal is not the best motivator, so we look for more short-term goals on the road to fluency. Identifying these Milestones on a language learner's journey helps hone in on the lessons that need to be developed to scaffold towards each Milestone. An ideal milestone is something that is self-contained, relatively short, and familiar to many people in your community. Milestones are often things that people want to learn how to do in the language (e.g. "I want to be able to introduce myself, I want to be able to say a prayer, etc.). Milestones will be different for every community, because every community has different needs and different materials to draw from. (Gardner, *Techniques glossary*, 2024)

I will be drawing my milestones from the glossary I created. The first milestone is identifying an object, then objects, then objects further away. From there, we move into the basic movement patterns of basketball. Can I talk about myself, you, or he/she running, jumping, shooting the ball, passing, catching, etc.? Then progressing to talking about us, them, you (pl.) doing the actions. As learners get the hang of these, they can progress to using more complicated sentence forms. A major milestone of the program will be to play a 5 vs 5 game in Gitxsanimx̓. However, this may not even be the final milestone. Basketball is always evolving as new offensive and defensive schemes are developed. The benefit of teaching a language through a physical activity,

such as basketball, is the many teaching aids available. Coaches can use portable coaching boards to diagram drills or SSGs before players are expected to perform. Demonstrations, recasting, repetitions, reminders, and a positive attitude are all great tools to lean on to help learners progress through the milestones below.

- Identifying an object
- Identifying objects
- Identifying object(s) from farther away
- Basic movement patterns of basketball
- Using singular agentive Indicative, nominative subjunctive, and possessive prominal suffixes ('y, n, t)
- Using plural agentive Indicative, nominative subjunctive, and possessive prominal suffixes ('m, si'm, dit)
- Using singular oblique pronouns (loo'y, lun, loot)
- Using plural oblique pronouns (loo'm, loosim, loodit)
- Mapping the court
- Recognizing all of the letter sounds
- Producing all of the letter sounds
- Follow simple commands
- Give simple commands
- Nim [to want to] sentence structures
- Naa [who] question forms
- Gwi [what] question forms
- Nda [where/how] question forms

- Using future tense
- Using past/present tense
- Understanding directional terms
- Counting things
- Counting people
- Identify body parts

## **Saabax [the end]**

Basketball is an ever changing global game. Each Nation that plays this beautiful game has put their own spin on it. That is my hope for this project. That we as Gitxsans can put our own spin on the game through our language and culture. It is my hope that through this project we shift the mindset of players/learners from “learning Gitxsanimx is hard” to “learning Gitxsanimx is fun!” It is my hope that Gitxsan Nation becomes leaders on and off the court and takes the lead in Indigenous Language Revitalization. It is my hope that you run with this idea and make it your own with your team. Basketball is a tool for improving the health and well-being of our Youth, which will give them confidence, determination, and lifelong bonds with their peers. Pairing this with learning Gitxsanimx will develop their sense of identity, pride, and belonging. Our language needs the Youth, and the Youth need the language!

## Resources

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# Appendices

## Appendix A - Master Glossary

English	Gitxsanimx̱ (sg)	Gitxsanimx̱ (pl)
<b>10/8 second rule</b>	k'yap/gando'olt seconds	
<b>2 point</b>	gilbil	
<b>3 point</b>	gwila'l	
<b>3-second rule</b>	gwila'l second	
<b>across</b>	jaga	
<b>across, blocking the way (pick</b>	sga	
<b>against, opposing</b>	hlibalt	
<b>along the side</b>	hahl	
<b>and one “and 1”</b>	sak'ap k'i'y?	
<b>assist (dime)</b>	daala	
<b>backboard</b>	t'aagan (baord)	
<b>be big, large (intrans)</b>	t'is	
<b>be fast moving; hurry, rush (intrans)</b>	t'ee'lt, t'e'lt	dilt'ee'lt
<b>be quick, fast (intrans)</b>	ayee	
<b>beaver (def trans role)</b>	ts'imilix	
<b>behind</b>	gina (vb mod.)	
<b>behind the back</b>	sdo'ohl hli hak'yo'o??	
<b>behind; in back of (backdoor cut?)</b>	k'alaa'n	
<b>bench</b>	ha'nii wan?	
<b>bend, be bent, crooked</b>	git k'esiitxwin!	git k'esiitxwsim
<b>between the legs, between pubic area and anus</b>	ts'imts'ee̱hl	
<b>blocking</b>		

<b>bonus</b>	gi'namtxw (be given (of a gift))	
<b>box out</b>		
<b>burst, explode, blow up, erupt (intrans)</b>	xhluxw	gaxhluxw
<b>carry</b>	da'witxw	
<b>catch</b>	t'ok	daxt'ok
<b>charge</b>	t'is (push, punch, slug, hit (with hands/fists))	
<b>charge circle</b>	sba'smax/sbi'smax?; anluut'aa	
<b>chase</b>	k'eegan	huudin
<b>close out/off</b>	dulbin (approach, come close to)	
<b>come here</b>	gala	gala'sim
<b>corner</b>	amuwast, amuxwast	
<b>court</b>	ha'niigalaak	
<b>cut</b>	k'ots	
<b>dam (def wall)</b>	andilgan	
<b>defence</b>	lihlx	
<b>defensive rebound</b>		
<b>do it again!</b>	hats'im hoo win	hats'im hoo wisim
<b>dominos</b>		
<b>down river</b>	gisa	
<b>downhill</b>	'yaga	k'aga
<b>dribble</b>	dagosin	
<b>drift</b>	ulks	hal'ulks
<b>ejection</b>	xsawin	
<b>flagrant foul</b>	damsxw (be forceful/harsh)	
<b>flop</b>	kw'adixsxw	
<b>forward, ahead</b>	widin (vb mod)	
<b>foul</b>	yats	

<b>foul</b>	axhoogyax (to do wrong)	
<b>free throw</b>	xgwiikw (payment)	
<b>free throw</b>	ts'i'naast (clearing, opening among trees)	
<b>give it to me</b>	nda'a	
<b>go</b>	eda	
<b>go ahead, go on</b>	gyop'	gyop'sim
<b>go get</b>	suuhl	
<b>go over there</b>	yin duu'w	
<b>go to the corner</b>	eda go'ohl amuwast	
<b>guard, protect</b>	lihlx	
<b>help</b>	hlimo'o	
<b>here, take this</b>	'na	
<b>hold</b>	da'mixs	
<b>i kicked it (forward) in front of me</b>	widin hlo'oxsi'y	
<b>i stood in, blocking the way</b>	luu sga hetxw 'nii'y	
<b>i took it out (of something)</b>	xsi guudi'y	
<b>i'll lock you up (eg. in jail)</b>	dim luu tk'al sga t'akwdi'y 'niin	
<b>i'm too hot</b>	gal gamk 'nii'y	
<b>in front</b>	luu saa	
<b>intentional foul</b>		
<b>jail</b>	wilp dixhlee'e	
<b>jump</b>	gos (intrans)	gasgos (intrans)
<b>let's go!</b>	di	
<b>lose</b>	jahl	
<b>make a beeline</b>	gandinsxw	
<b>man-to-man defense</b>	s <sub>g</sub> gasgitxw (oppose, prevent)	
<b>mouse in the house (mismatch)</b>	diboogithl ts'im wilp	
<b>net (basket)</b>	aat	

<b>offence (attack)</b>	k'esxw	
<b>offensive foul</b>		
<b>offensive rebound</b>		
<b>out of bounds</b>	xsaxw	
<b>over-and-back</b>	luuyaltxw walix (piggyback)	
<b>overtime/ extra/ bonus time</b>		
<b>pass</b>	gi'nam	
<b>pass fake</b>	hishalaldin?	
<b>peel switching</b>		
<b>pivot foot</b>	sgihl (stationary) se'e; wisa (roots of) se'e; se'e'm wist?	
<b>play</b>	ma'us, mas'us	
<b>possession</b>	sgihl/dox ? toost?	
<b>reaching</b>	'wa (get, reach, find)	
<b>rebound</b>	x̄bat'okhl [grab the ball]	
<b>reject</b>	neetxw	
<b>roll</b>	lax̄lilp	
<b>run</b>	bax̄ (intrans)	gol (intrans)
<b>see; catch sight of something out of the corner of one's eye</b>	ḡo'milt	
<b>share, give out; assist</b>	yeēk	
<b>shoot</b>	guxw (trans), xwdakw (intrans)	
<b>shot fake</b>	hisguxw?	
<b>shout, be loud</b>	'wii ame	wit'ax ame
<b>spread out</b>	bahlx̄an	
<b>squat, draw legs up</b>	t'ak'xw	
<b>start, go ahead, let's do it</b>	t'asxu	
<b>stand in the corner</b>	'nii hetxw go'ohl amuwast	
<b>stay behind</b>	xhlaa t'aa	xhlaa wan
<b>steal</b>	liluxws	
<b>steeltrap</b>	jayeehl	

<b>stop, halt</b>	gidiiguu	
<b>swing</b>	juul	
<b>switch</b>	sityeewa	
<b>tag</b>	das	
<b>take a short rest</b>	k'alam sgwaa'ytxwin	k'alam sgwaa'ytxwisim?
<b>take, pick up</b>	guu(t)	dok
<b>technical foul</b>		
<b>the key</b>	wilp	
<b>through a hole or opening</b>	galksi, galxsi (vb mod)	
<b>throw</b>	haladin (trans)	
<b>to bind, wrap (“lock up on defense” or foul)</b>	dakhl	
<b>to, from, at, over, throughout (a location)</b>	go'o	

## Appendix B - Defense

English	Gitxsanimx̱ (sg)	Example	Gitxsanimx̱ (pl)	Example
<b>against, opposing</b>	hlibal	amk'yuul ant hlibalhl amk'yuulit [one vs. one]		
<b>chase</b>	hiilan	hiilahl hlit' [chase the ball], hilahl gyad'n [chase your check]	huudin	huudin'simhl hlit' [you all chase the ball]
<b>close out/off</b>				
<b>dam (def wall)</b>	andilgan	nii'hetswhl lax andilgan [stand on the dam (defensive wall or midpoint of court)]	nii'litxwsim lax andilgan [you all stand on the dam]	
<b>guard, protect</b>	lihlx	lihxlhl 'noo'ohl [protect the basket], lihxlhl hlit'hl [protect the ball], haa'wum ja ha'nokhl jit xbaguudiithl hlit' as 'nii'n [don't let the other player take the ball from you]		
<b>help</b>	hlimo'ó	hlimo'o'y! [help me!], hlimo'ohl! [help him/her!]		
<b>hold</b>	dax̱yukw(t)	dax yugwihl [you, hold on to it], aa dax yugwihl [you,		

		hold on to it for a while]		
<b>i'll lock you up (eg. in jail)</b>	dim luu tk'al sga t'akwdi'y 'niin			
<b>jail (to keep person cornered)</b>	luu 'mukw	luu 'mugwinhl! [you, keep them cornered]		
<b>lose</b>	jahl	jahl'y [I lost], Dim jahl'n! [you will lose]		Jahl'm [We lost], Dim jahlsi'm [you all will lose]
<b>switch</b>	sityeewa	sityeewahl!		
<b>to box out</b>	suwi'y t'is [push away]	suwi'y t'ishl [push them away]		
<b>to lock up on denfense [keep player at standstill]</b>	luu aa t'is	luu aa t'is'nhl!		
<b>to tag</b>	das	am dashl! [tag him/her]		
<b>totem pole</b>	xwts'aan			
<b>trap</b>	gidii t'ax yukw	gidi t'ax yugwihl! [trap that player (command)]		
<b>wall</b>	hahlgan	nii'hetxwinhl lax hahlgan		

## Appendix C - Offense

English	Gitxsanimx sg.	Example	Gitxsanimx pl.	Example
<b>across</b>	jaga (vm)	jaga dagosinhl hlit' 'ni'y [i crossed the ball over]		
<b>across, blocking the way (pick)</b>	sga (vm)	sgahetxw ii laxlilp [pick and roll]		
<b>along the side</b>	hahl (vm)	hahl bahan [run along the sideline], hahl bahan go'ohl amuwast [run along the sideline to the corner]		hahl gol'sim [all of you run along the sideline]
<b>be fast moving; hurry, rush (intrans)</b>	t'ee'lt, t'e'lt		dilt'ee'lt	
<b>be quick, fast (intrans)</b>	ayee			
<b>behind</b>	gina (vb mod.)	ginadagosinhl hlit' hak'yo'o [dribble the ball behind your back], gina k'ods'nhl 'nit [cut behind him/her]		
<b>behind the back</b>	sdo'ohl hli hak'yo'o??			
<b>behind; in back of (backdoor cut?)</b>	k'alaa'n			
<b>between the legs, between pubic area and anus</b>	ts'imts'eexhl			
<b>burst, explode,</b>	xhluxw		gaxhluxw	

<b>blow up, erupt (intrans)</b>				
<b>catch</b>	t'ok		daxt'ok	
<b>come here</b>	gala		gala'sim	
<b>cut</b>	k'ots			
<b>dominos</b>				
<b>down river</b>	gisa (vm.)			
<b>downhill</b>	'yaga (vm)	'yaga baxhl [run downhill]	k'aga	k'aga gol'sim [you all run downhill]
<b>dribble</b>	dagosin	dagosinhl hlit' [dribble the ball],		
<b>drift</b>	ulks		hal'ulks	
<b>forward, ahead</b>	widin (vb mod)			
<b>go</b>	eda	eda go'ohl amuwast [go to the corner]		
<b>go ahead, go on</b>	gyop'		gyop'sim	
<b>go get</b>	suuhl			
<b>go over there</b>	yin duu'w			
<b>i kicked it (forward) in front of me</b>	widin hlo'o <sub>x</sub> si'y			
<b>i'm too hot</b>	gal gyamk 'nii'y			
<b>in front</b>	luu saa (vm)	luu saa k'ods'nhl 'nit [cut in front of him/her]		
<b>jump</b>	gos (intrans)	gos'n	gasgos (intrans)	
<b>lava lake</b>	sii t'ax			
<b>lava rock</b>	lo'oba mihl			
<b>let's go!</b>	di!			
<b>make 1 man guard 2</b>				
<b>make a beeline</b>	gandinsxw			

<b>mouse (mismatch)</b>	diboogit	gigi'yhl diboogit [look for the mouse], 'wa'yhl diboogit [i found the mouse], k'esxwhl diboogit [attack mouse], n'dahl diboogit? [where's the mouse?]		
<b>off-ball pick</b>	saasgahetxw ??	eda saasgahetxwin ii laxlilp [go set an off-ball pick and roll]		
<b>pass</b>	gi'nam			
<b>roll</b>	laxlilp			
<b>run</b>	bax (intrans)	bahan	gol (intrans)	golsim
<b>shoot</b>	guxw (vt), xwdakw (vi)			
<b>spread out</b>	bahlxan			
<b>start, go ahead, let's do it</b>	t'asxu			
<b>stop, halt</b>	gidiiguu			
<b>swing</b>	juul			
<b>throw</b>	haladin (trans)			
<b>to wait</b>	sgabee'esxw	sgabee'esxwin		
<b>to win</b>	xsdaa	xsdaa'y! [I won!]		xsdaa'm! [we won!]
<b>to, from, at, over, throughout (a location)</b>	go'o			
<b>trigger</b>				
<b>wait for</b>	giba, ba (vt)	gibat ahl hlit' [wait for the ball],		

		gibat ahl wag'n [wait for your brother (teammate)]		
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## Appendix D - Commands

English	Gitxsanimx̱ (sg)	Example	Gitxsanimx̱ (pl)	Example
<b>be big, large (intrans)</b>	t'is	t'is 'niin [you be big]		
<b>be hard, difficult, complex (mentally)</b>	t'ilgetxw	sgidim t'ilgetxwin [you need to be tough (mentally)]		
<b>be quick, fast (intrans)</b>	ayee			
<b>bend, be bent, crooked</b>	hlak	hlakhl gak'esii'n! [bend your knees!], hlakhl sgans'n [bend your elbow]		
<b>box out</b>				
<b>burst, explode, blow up, erupt (intrans)</b>	x̱hluxw	x̱hluxwhl ahl hlit' [explode to the ball]	gax̱hluxw	
<b>catch</b>	t'oḵ	t'og'n [you catch], t'okhl [catch it], t'og'nhl hlit' [you catch the ball]	dax̱t'oḵ	dax̱t'oḵ'sim
<b>close out/off</b>	dulbin (approach, come close to)	dulbinhl loot [close out on him/her]		
<b>come here</b>	gala		gala'sim	
<b>cut</b>	k'ots			
<b>do it again!</b>	hats'im hoo win		hats'im hoo wisim	
<b>do it yourself!</b>	lip jab'n		lip jipjap'sim [do it yourselves]	
<b>Don't throw it,</b>	ha'wum ja			

<b>hold onto it for a while</b>	haladinhlx, aa t'ax yugwihl			
<b>dribble</b>	dagosin	dagosinhl [dribble it], hooxhl sim on ahl dagosinhl hlit' [use your right hand to dribble the ball]		
<b>go</b>	eda			
<b>go ahead, go on, start</b>	gyop'		gyop'sim	
<b>go get</b>	suuhl	eda suuhl hlit' [go get a ball], eda lip suuhl hlit' [go get your ball]		
<b>go out, go outside, exit</b>	xsaxw	xsaxw ii luuhaladinhl hlit' tsim ha'nii hlit' [go out of bounds and throw the ball in]	xseek	
<b>go over there</b>	yin duu'w			
<b>help</b>	hlimo'o	hlimo'o'y! [help me!], hlimo'o't! [help him!]		
<b>hit out</b>	suut'is! ??	suut'ishl! [hit it out!]		
<b>hurry up!</b>	t'ee'etxw	t'ee'etxwin [you hurry up]	t'ee'etxwisim [all of you hurry up]	
<b>jump</b>	gos	'mingos'n!	gasgos	gasgosi'sim!
<b>let's go!</b>	di?			
<b>make a beeline</b>	gandinsxw	gandinsxw'n ahl amuwast [make a beeline to the corner]		
<b>pass</b>	gi'nam	gi'namhl [pass		

		it!], gi'nam'n hlit' [you pass the ball]		
<b>play</b>	ma'us	eda ma'us'n [you go play]	mas'us	ha'w'm ji mas'usi'sim [you all, stop playing]
<b>pout</b>	tl'ak'	ha'w ji tl'ag'n ii hats'imoo win [stop pouting and try again]		
<b>rip</b>	bis	bishl hlit' ii eda [rip the ball and go]		
<b>run</b>	bax	bahan!	gol	gol'sim
<b>shoot</b>	guxw (trans), xwdakw (intrans)	guxw'n! [you shoot!], xwdakw! [shoot!]		guxw'nhl hlit' [shoot the ball]
<b>shout, be loud</b>	'wii ame	'wii amehl "hlimo'o'y" [shout "help me"]	wit'ax ame	
<b>sneak up</b>	xhlgayxw			
<b>spread out</b>	bahlxan			
<b>squat, draw legs up</b>	t'ak'xw	t'ag'xw'n [you squat]		
<b>start, go ahead, let's do it</b>	t'asxu		t'asxusi'm	
<b>stop, halt</b>	gidiiguu			
<b>swing</b>	juul	juulhl hlit' ahl k'ilk'al [swing the ball around the outside]		
<b>switch</b>	sityeewa	sityeewahl gigyat [switch checks]		
<b>take a short rest</b>	k'alam sgwaa'ytxwin		k'alam sgwaa'ytxwisim?	
<b>throw</b>	haladin	haladinhl! [throw		

		it!), maxhalaldinh! [throw it over!]		
<b>touch [tag]</b>	das	dashl 'nit [tag him/her]		
<b>trap</b>	hapxw	hapxwhl 'nit [trap him/her]		
<b>warm up</b>	xsi gyamks	xsi gyamks'n [you warm up]	limlamk	limlamk'sim [you all warm up]

## Appendix E - Rules

English	Gitxsanimx
<b>1 point</b>	k'i'y
<b>10/8 second rule</b>	k'yaphl/ gandoo'lthl seconds
<b>2 point</b>	gilbil
<b>3 point</b>	gwila'l
<b>3-second rule</b>	gwila'lhl second
<b>blocking</b>	
<b>bonus</b>	gi'namtxw [be given (of a gift)]
<b>carry</b>	da'witxw
<b>charge</b>	t'is (push, punch, slug, hit (with hands/fists))
<b>court</b>	ha'nii galaak
<b>defence</b>	lihlx
<b>defensive rebound</b>	t'okhl hlit'dit [rebound their ball]
<b>ejection</b>	ha'w
<b>flagrant foul</b>	damsxw (be forceful/harsh)
<b>foul</b>	axhoogyax (to do wrong)
<b>free throw</b>	guxwhl ts'i'naast (clearing, opening among trees)
<b>hold</b>	da'mixs
<b>intentional foul</b>	
<b>man-to-man defense</b>	s gasgitxw (oppose, prevent)
<b>offence (attack)</b>	k'esxw
<b>offensive foul</b>	
<b>offensive rebound</b>	t'okhl hlit'm [rebound our ball]
<b>out of bounds</b>	xsaxwhl hlit'
<b>over-and-back</b>	luuyaltxw walix (piggyback)
<b>overtime/ extra/ bonus time</b>	

<b>pivot foot</b>	sgihl (stationary) se'e; wisa (roots of) se'e; se'e'm wist?
<b>play</b>	ma'us, mas'us
<b>possession</b>	sgihl/dox ? toost?
<b>reaching</b>	'wa [get, reach, find]
<b>rebound [catch]</b>	t'ok
<b>steal</b>	liluxws
<b>substitution</b>	sityeewa
<b>technical foul</b>	
<b>travel</b>	yee
<b>turnover</b>	kw'ootxw
<b>unsportsmanlike foul</b>	
<b>zone defense</b>	sagayt sgasgitxw

## Appendix F - Ha'nii Galaak

English	Gitxsanim <u>x</u>
<b>3pt line</b>	gwila'l
<b>baseline</b>	s'inhl ha'nii <u>galaak</u>
<b>box trap</b>	jap
<b>centre court</b>	silkw
<b>charge circle</b>	anluut'aa [nest], sbi'tsimilix [beaver lodge]
<b>corner</b>	amuwast
<b>defensive midline</b>	anist [branch], andilgan [beaver dam]
<b>elbows</b>	sgans
<b>short corner (porch)</b>	taawn
<b>sideline</b>	hli sdo'oxshl ha'nii <u>galaak</u>
<b>the block</b>	<u>x</u> biist
<b>the circle</b>	hlo <u>x</u> s
<b>the key</b>	wilp
<b>the wing</b>	<u>k</u> 'aax

## Appendix G - Practice Plan Template

# Luu'majam Hlit'mhl Xsagootxw - 1hr

Xsagyamk [warm up]

Time: 5 mins

<b>Drill</b>		
<b>Description</b>		
<b>Coaching Points</b>		
<b>Gitxsanimx</b>		

Siwilaaksahl Gitxsanimx [Teaching Gitxsanimx]

Time: 25 mins

<b>Drill</b>		
<b>Description</b>		
<b>Coaching Points</b>		

<b>Gitxsanimx</b>	<b>Lists:</b>
<b>Examples</b>	

Mas'os'm [We play]

Time: 20 mins

<b>Drill</b>		
<b>Description</b>		
<b>Coaching Points</b>		
<b>Gitxsanimx</b>		

Sigwineekxw [Cool Down]

5 mins

Description	Time: 5 mins
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Finish with some light static stretching. You can name the stretches in Gitxsanimx̱ (e.g. sganist [forward fold], Maskawoodax̱ [butterfly], masxw'm ts'uuts' [flamingo]) or tell players to stretch specific body parts. E.g sagi'nhl on'si'm [stretch your (pl.) arm], sag'inhhl ba'a'si'm [stretch your (pl.) thigh], sag'inhhl no'ohl [stretch your (pl.) shoulder]. Follow the same pattern: establish, ask, players reply, and you confirm. Spend 30 seconds on each stretch.

Coaching points: TQ copycat, mumble, let it go

Gitxsanimx̱:

A: Yukw dim sag'in'yhl sim on'y [I am stretching my right arm]

A: Yukw gwin? [What are you doing?]

B: Yukw dim sag'in'yhl sim on'y

A: Oo, yukw dim sag'in'nhl sim on'n [Oh, you're stretching your right arm]

## Laagaltxw [Assessment/Check]

5 mins

Description	Time: 5 mins
Exit ticket: learners must correctly use a phrase from the day's lesson in the proper context. The group will decide if they are correct.	

## Appendix H - Practice Plan 1

# Luu'majam Hlit'mhl Xsagootxw - 1hr

Xsagyamk [warm up]

Time: 5 mins

<b>Drill</b>	Throw Techniques at Me	5 mins
<b>Description</b>	<p>Techniques (TQs) are hand gestures learners use to stay in the target language without falling back into English when they get stuck.</p> <p>1 person stands, and the rest of the group “throws” hand gestures at that person. That person identifies and mirrors the hand gestures back to the group. After 4 or 5 gestures have been identified, they select the next person to throw TQs at.</p> <p>Afterwards, the instructor can review with the group and ask if there were any gestures people saw that they didn't know or forgot, and we can discuss what it means as a class.</p>	
<b>Coaching Points</b>	<p><b>Make Me Say Yes</b> - Ask yes questions</p> <p><b>Make Me Say No</b> - Ask no questions</p> <p><b>Full Check</b> - Check in with the group if they can keep going or need a break</p> <p><b>3 Times</b> - Repeat yourself</p>	
<b>Gitxsanimx</b>		

Siwilaaksahl Gitxsanimx [Teaching Gitxsanimx]

Time: 25 mins

<b>Drill</b>	Gwi tun/tust - Identifying objects	25 mins
<b>Description</b>	<p>With a small group (4 minimum)</p> <p>1 asker, 1 responder, X# angels</p> <p>Place object on the ground (1 hlit' [ball])</p> <p>Start by giving learners the list of keywords/gestures they'll be using.</p> <p>Angels stand behind the asker and responder to offer support. The instructor asks their partner, "Gwi tun?" and using hand gestures, they reply, "Hlit' tun". Repeat 3 times. move on to secondary object and then plurals. The coach is done and steps out of the circle for another person to join. The original responder is now asking the next person. Learners rotate in and out of the asker and responder roles and into the angel role on the outside of the circle. This will continue till each person has had a chance to participate in each role.</p>	
<b>Coaching Points</b>	<p>Introducing the new TQ - <b>Overdo It</b>.</p> <p>The angel's job is to offer as much help as is needed for the learner. They are <i>overdoing</i> it with their mouth shape to help transmit the first syllable to the speakers</p> <p>TQ x3</p>	

<b>Gitxsanimx</b>	<b>Lists:</b> Gwi/ neehl [what/ isn't it]; tun/tust [what is this/that]; hlit/ 'noo'o [ball/ basket]; ee'e/ nee/ ligi [yes/ no/ or]	
<b>Examples:</b> Hlit' tun/tust Gwi tun/tust? Hlit' tun/tust Ee'e, hlit' tun/tust	<b>MMSY</b> 'Noo'o tun/ tust Gwi tun/ tust? 'Noo'o tun/tust Ee'e, 'noo'o tun/tust	<b>MMSN</b> Needii hlit' sun/ sust, 'noo'o tun/ tust Neehl hlit' tun/ tust aa? Nee, needii hlit' sun/sust, 'noo'o tun/tust Ee'e, 'noo'o tun/tust  <b>EITHER/ OR</b> Hlit' tun Neehl hlit' ligi 'noo'o tun aa? Hlit' tun, needii 'noo'o sun Ee'e, hlit' tun!

## Mas'os'm [We play]

Time: 20 mins

Drill	1v1 - gwi tun/tust	Time
<b>Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• P1 and P2 meet coach at the t'im ges</li> <li>• Coach has a ball on a chair and calls out "Gwi tun/tust?",</li> <li>• Players must correctly identify the object(s) saying "_____tun/tust".</li> <li>• Winner immediately picks up the ball and tries to score and the loser is on defense.</li> <li>• Mix up which item is on the chair, the chairs location, then add in plurals</li> </ul>	
<b>Coaching Points</b>	Coach explains the drill in Gitxsanimx (Meta Gitxsanimx, (Situational Navajo)), using hand gestures and demonstrating what will happen	
<b>Gitxsanimx</b>	See above	

## Xsigwineekxw [Cool Down]

5 mins

Description	Time: 5 mins
Finish with some light static stretching. You can name the stretches in Gitxsanimx (e.g. sganist [forward fold], Maskawoodax [butterfly], masxw'm ts'uuts' [flamingo]) or tell players to stretch specific body parts. E.g sagi'nhl on'si'm [stretch your (pl.) arm], sag'inhl ba'a'si'm [stretch your (pl.) thigh], sag'inhl no'ohl [stretch your (pl.) shoulder]. Follow the same pattern: establish, ask, players reply, and you confirm. Spend 30 seconds on each stretch.	
Coaching points: TQ copycat, mumble, let it go	

<p>Gitxsanimx:</p> <p>A: Yukw dim sag'in'yhl sim on'y [I am stretching my right arm]</p> <p>A: Yukw gwin? [What are you doing?]</p> <p>B: Yukw dim sag'in'yhl sim on'y</p> <p>A: Oo, yukw dim sag'in'nhl sim on'n [Oh, you're stretching your right arm]</p>	<p>A: Yukw dim jab'yhl mask'awoodax sak' [I'm doing the butterfly stretch (x3)]</p> <p>A: Yukw gwin? [What are you doing?]</p> <p>B: Yukw dim jab'yhl mask'awoodax'm sak' [I'm doing the butterfly stretch]</p> <p>A: Oo, yukw dim jab'nhl mask'awoodax'm sak'?! [Oh, you're doing the butterfly stretch!]</p>
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### Laagaltxw [Assessment/Check]

5 mins

Description	Time: 5 mins
<p>Exit ticket: Use TQ "Prove It" - learners must correctly use a phrase from the day's lesson in the proper context. The group will decide if they are correct.</p>	

## Appendix I - Practice Plan 2

# Luu'majam hlit'mhl Xsagootxw - 1hr

Xsagyamk [warm up]

Time: 5 mins

<b>Drill</b>	Throw Techniques at Me	5 mins
<b>Description</b>	<p>Techniques (TQs) are hand gestures learners use to stay in the target language without falling back into English when they get stuck.</p> <p>1 person stands, and the rest of the group “throws” hand gestures at that person. That person identifies and mirrors the hand gestures back to the group. After 4 or 5 gestures have been identified, they select the next person to throw TQs at.</p> <p>Afterwards, the instructor can review with the group and ask if there were any gestures people saw that they didn't know or forgot, and we can discuss what it means as a class.</p>	
<b>Coaching Points</b>	<p><b>Make Me Say Yes</b> - Ask yes questions</p> <p><b>Make Me Say No</b> - Ask no questions</p> <p><b>Full Check</b> - Check in with the group if they can keep going or need a break</p> <p><b>3 Times</b> - Repeat yourself</p>	
<b>Gitxsanimx</b>		

Siwilaaksahl Gitxsanimx [Teaching Gitxsanimx]

Time: 25 mins

<b>Drill</b>	Gwi tun - Identifying Objects Continued	25 mins
<b>Description</b>	<p>With a small group (4 minimum)</p> <p>1 asker, 1 responder, X# angels</p> <p>Place a new object on the ground (1 anda aks [water bottle], 1 ts'a'waxs [whistle]).</p> <p>Start by giving learners the list of keywords/gestures they'll be using.</p> <p>Use TQ 3 Times.</p> <p>Angels stand behind the asker and responder to offer support to the person opposite them. To begin, the instructor places one object nearby and one further away, then signals <u>No Pressure Refresher</u>. Quickly review the <i>gwi tun/tust</i> lesson with a partner.</p> <p>Begin a new lesson on <i>dipun</i>, place new objects (anda aks) on the ground nearby, and follow the sequence below in the Gitxsanimx table. Move on to the secondary object further away, and begin the <i>dipust</i> lesson.</p> <p>The coach is done and steps out of the circle for another person to join. The original responder is now asking the next person. Only a round or two of review. Learners rotate in and out of the asker and responder roles and into the angel role on the outside of the circle.</p>	

	Launch the new lesson
<b>Coaching Points</b>	<p>Introducing the new TQ - <b>No Pressure Refresher</b> .</p> <p>Quick review of the previous lesson before launching into new material.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check in with the group before moving on</li> <li>• Make sure everyone is Angeling for speakers and rotating who they angel for</li> </ul>

<b>Gitxsanimx</b>	<b>Lists:</b> gwi, neehl, ligi [what, isn't it, or]; dipun/dipust [these/those]; sun/sust [this/that] (negative); anda aks, ts'a'waxs [water bottle, shoe]	
<b>Examples:</b>	<b>MMSY</b>	<b>MMSN</b>
Anda aks dipun/dipust	Ts'a'waxs dipun/ dipust	Needii anda aks sun/ sust, ts'a'waxs tun/ tust
Gwi dipun/dipust?	Gwi dipun/ dipust?	Neehl anda aks tun/ tust aa?
Anda aks dipun/dipust	Ts'a'waxs dipun/dipust	Nee, needii anda aks sun/sust, ts'a'waxs
Ee'e, anda aks dipun/dipust	Ee'e, ts'a'waxs dipun/dipust	dipun/dipust
		Ee'e, ts'a'waxs dipun/dipust
		<b>EITHER/OR</b>
		Neehl anda aks ligi ts'a'waxs dipun/dipust aa?
		Anda aks dipun/dipust, needii ts'a'waxs sun/sust
		Ee'e, anda aks dipun/dipust

## Mas'os'm [We play]

Time: 20 mins

<b>Drill</b>	1v1 - gwi tun/tust, dipun/dipust	Time: 20 mins
<b>Description</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. P1 and P2 meet coach at the t'im ges</li> <li>5. Coach places objects on a chair and calls out "Gwi dipun/dipust?",</li> <li>6. Players must correctly identify the objects, saying "____dipun/dipust".</li> <li>7. The winner immediately picks up the ball and tries to score, and the loser is on defense.</li> <li>8. Mix up which item is on the chair, the chair's location, then add in the singular form from the previous lesson</li> </ol>	
<b>Coaching Points</b>	Coach explains drill in Gitxsanimx (Meta Gitxsanimx, (Situational Navajo)), using hand gestures, demonstrate what will happen, and show drill diagram	
<b>Gitxsanimx</b>	See above	

## Sigwineekxw [Cool Down]

5 mins

Description	Time: 5 mins
<p>Finish with some light static stretching. You can name the stretches in Gitxsanimx̱ (e.g. sganist [forward fold], Maskawoodax̱ [butterfly], masxw'm ts'uuts' [flamingo]) or tell players to stretch specific body parts. E.g sagi'nhl on'si'm [stretch your (pl.) arm], sag'inhl ba'a'si'm [stretch your (pl.) thigh], sag'inhl no'ohl [stretch your (pl.) shoulder]. Follow the same pattern: establish, ask, the players reply, and you confirm. Spend 30 seconds on each stretch.</p>	
<p>Coaching points: TQ copycat, mumble, let it go</p>	
<p>Gitxsanimx̱:  A: Yukw dim sag'in'yhl sim on'y [I am stretching my right arm]  A: Yukw gwin? [What are you doing?]  B: Yukw dim sag'in'yhl sim on'y  A: Oo, yukw dim sag'in'nhl sim on'n [Oh, you're stretching your right arm]</p>	<p>A: Yukw dim jab'yhl mask'awoodax̱ sak' [I'm doing the butterfly stretch <b>(x3)</b>  A: Yukw gwin? [What are you doing?]  B: Yukw dim jab'yhl mask'awoodax̱'m sak' [I'm doing the butterfly stretch  A: Oo, yukw dim jab'nhl mask'awoodax̱'m sak'! [Oh, you're doing the butterfly stretch!]</p>

## Laagaltxw [Assessment/Check]

5 mins

Description	Time
<p>Exit ticket: learners must correctly use a phrase from the day's lesson in the proper context. The group will decide if they are correct.</p>	

## Appendix J - Practice Plan 3

# Luu'majam Hlit'mhl Xsagootxw - 1hr

Xsagyamk [warm up]

Time: 5 mins

<b>Drill</b>	Throw Techniques at Me
<b>Description</b>	Techniques are simple hand gestures that help learners stay in the target language without falling back into English when they get stuck. The game starts with a person standing and the rest of the group is doing hand gestures at the person standing. The person standing will identify and mirror the hand gestures back to the group. After 4 or 5 gestures have been identified, another person will be selected at random. Afterwards, the teacher can review with the group and ask if there were any gestures people saw they didn't know or forgot, and we can discuss what it means as a class.
<b>Coaching Points</b>	<p>Introduce a new TQ each round.</p> <p><b>Copy the Copycat</b> - The teacher speaks and the copycat repeats after them and the rest of the group copies the cat.</p> <p><b>Finished</b> - signals I'm done</p> <p><b>Full</b> - signals my brain is full and I can't absorb anything else</p> <p><b>Slow Down</b> - signals the speaker is going too fast</p> <p><b>Speed Up</b> - signals the speaker is too slow</p>
<b>Gitxsanimx</b>	

Siwilaaksahl Gitxsanimx [Teaching Gitxsanimx]

Time: 25 mins

<b>Drill</b>	Essential movement skills TPR
<b>Description</b>	Have everyone in a circle where they can see the coach, then the coach introduces the list of key words and their corresponding actions. The coach gives copycat gesture and repeats the words in a simple sentence (e.g. gi'nam'nhl hlit' [you pass the ball]) and actions in a consistent pattern, then coach drops the signs and learners repeat and demo the actions, and then mix up the order. Repeat several times at each stage.
<b>Coaching Points</b>	Good opportunity to utilise backwards build up technique on <i>xbat'ok</i> . Take your time through each stage, go at the pace of the learners, lean into repetitions. Gradually introduce key words and actions, repeat the words before introducing a new one, at first keep the order the words have been introduced, next stage the coach drops the actions, and the final stage is mixing up order without actions

<b>Gitxsanimx</b>	<b>Lists:</b> <i>gol</i> [run], <i>luu maja</i> [lay up], <i>luu haladin</i> [shoot], <i>gi'nam</i> [pass], <i>t'ok</i> [catch], <i>gasgos</i> [jump], <i>dagosin</i> [dribble], <i>xbat'ok</i> [rebound]	
<b>Examples</b>	<i>Gi'namsi'mhl hlit'</i> [pass the ball]	<i>Dagosinsi'mhl hlit'</i> [you all dribble the ball]
<i>Gasgosisi'm</i> [you all jump]	<i>T'okhl hlit'</i> [catch the ball]	<i>Xbat'oksi'mhl hlit'</i> [you all rebound the ball]
<i>Luu majam hlit'</i> [we put the ball in]	<i>'mingasgoshl</i> [you all jump in the air]	
<i>Luu haladinsi'mhl hlit'</i> [we shoot the ball]		

## Mas'us'm [We play]

Time: 20 mins

<b>Drill</b>	Hes Sim'oogit [Simon says]	
<b>Description</b>	Using the same examples from the previous lesson, play a game of Hes Sim'oogit. This can be made competitive by rewarding the winner or saying the losers have to do <i>xwsdinshl 'mingasgosim</i> [five jumping jacks].	
<b>Coaching Points</b>	Be loud, everyone needs a ball, learners should hold the ball till told otherwise	
<b>Gitxsanimx</b>	See above <i>Hes Sim'oogit "hooxhl sim on'si'm"</i> [Sim'oogit says 'use your right hand] <i>Hes Sim'oogit "hooxhl mat'ux on'si'm"</i> [Sim'oogit says, use your left hand] <i>Hes Sim'oogit "luu saa dagosinhl hlit'</i> [Sim'oogit says, dribble in front] <i>Hes Sim'oogit "Gina dagosinhl hlit'</i> [Sim'oogit says, dribble behind]  <i>Xsaxwin!</i> [You're out!] <i>Amhl jab'n!</i> [Good job!]	

## Sigwineekxw [Cool Down]

5 mins

Description	Time: 5 mins
<p>Finish with some light static stretching. You can name the stretches in Gitxsanimx̱ (e.g. sganist [forward fold], Maskawoodax̱ [butterfly], masxw'm ts'uuts' [flamingo]) or tell players to stretch specific body parts. E.g sagi'nhl on'si'm [stretch your (pl.) arm], sag'inhl ba'a'si'm [stretch your (pl.) thigh], sag'inhl no'ohl [stretch your (pl.) shoulder]. Follow the same pattern: establish, ask, the players reply, and you confirm. Spend 30 seconds on each stretch.</p>	
Coaching points: TQ copycat, mumble, let it go	
<p>Gitxsanimx̱:  A: Yukw dim sag'in'yhl sim on'y [I am stretching my right arm]  A: Yukw gwin? [What are you doing?]  B: Yukw dim sag'in'yhl sim on'y  A: Oo, yukw dim sag'in'nhl sim on'n [Oh, you're stretching your right arm]</p>	<p>A: Yukw dim jab'yhl mask'awoodax̱ sak' [I'm doing the butterfly stretch <b>(x3)</b>  A: Yukw gwin? [What are you doing?]  B: Yukw dim jab'yhl mask'awoodax̱'m sak' [I'm doing the butterfly stretch  A: Oo, yukw dim jab'nhl mask'awoodax̱'m sak'! [Oh, you're doing the butterfly stretch!]</p>

## Laagaltxw [Assessment/Check]

5 mins

Description	Time: 5 mins
<p>Exit ticket: learners must correctly use a phrase from the day's lesson in the proper context. The group will decide if they are correct.</p>	

## Appendix K - Practice Plan 4

# Luu'majam Hlit'mhl Xsagootxw - 1hr

Xsagyamk [warm up]

Time: 5 mins

<b>Drill</b>	Throw Techniques at Me	
<b>Description</b>	Techniques are simple hand gestures that help learners stay in the target language without falling back into English when they get stuck. The game starts with a person standing and the rest of the group is doing hand gestures at the person standing. The person standing will identify and mirror the hand gestures back to the group. After 4 or 5 gestures have been identified, another person will be selected at random. Afterwards, the teacher can review with the group and ask if there were any gestures people saw they didn't know or forgot, and we can discuss what it means as a class.	
<b>Coaching Points</b>	<b>Boss Angel</b> - speaker selects an angel and moves them into position <b>Fly Away Angel</b> - speaker no longer needs angel <b>Make Me Say Yes</b> - Ask a yes question <b>Make Me Say No</b> - Ask a no question	
<b>Gitxsanimx</b>		

Siwilaaksahl Gitxsanimx [Teaching Gitxsanimx]

Time: 25 mins

<b>Drill</b>	Identifying Body Parts	
<b>Description</b>	<p>The instructor introduces the key words, repeat words and actions before introducing a new one. Next step - instructor keeps the same order and uses short sentences "<i>Hooxhl sim on</i>" ["use your right hand"], and <i>players dribble with their right hand</i></p> <p><i>Repeat for each body part.</i></p> <p>Drop the actions but keep the same order,</p> <p>Next step - instructor jumbles the order</p> <p>Introduce <b>List 3</b>. Instructor demonstrates the actions, repeat in the same order before introducing next word.</p> <p>All learners need a ball, everyone needs to spread out and find space where they can still see and hear the instructor, and freely dribble.</p> <p>Command learners "hooxhl sim on'si'm ahl dagosinhl hlit'" ["use your right hand to dribble" (pl.)] and model the action and repeat the phrase, sagayt dagosinhl hlit' ahl sise'e ["dribble between your legs"]</p>	
<b>Coaching Points</b>	<p>TQ - copycat, x3, again, model, lists</p> <p>Learners narrate what they're doing.</p> <p>Check in with the group before moving on</p> <p>Go at the pace of the group</p>	

<b>Gitxsanimx</b>	<b>Lists:</b> L1 - <i>hoox</i> [use], <i>dagosin</i> [dribble]; L2 - <i>on/ an'on</i> [hand/ hands], <i>se'e/sise'e</i> [foot, <i>sim on/se'e</i> [right hand/foot], <i>mat'ux on/se'e</i> [left hand/foot], , feet]; L3 - <i>sagayt</i> [between], <i>luu saa</i> [in front], <i>gina</i> [behind]	
<b>Examples</b>		
<i>Hooxhl sim/ mat'ux on</i> [Use your right/left hand]	<i>Sagayt dagosinhl hlit' ahl sise'e'n</i> [dribble the ball between your legs]	<i>Luu saa dagosinhl hlit'</i> [Dribble the ball in front]
<i>Hooxhl an'onsi'm</i> [Use your (pl) hands]		<i>Gina dagosinhl hlit'</i> [Dribble the ball behind]

## Mas'us'm [We play]

Time: 20 mins

<b>Drill</b>	Hes Sim'oogit [Simon Says]	
<b>Description</b>	Using the language from the lesson play Hes Sim'oogit Players will need a ball	
<b>Coaching Points</b>	Be loud and speak clearly Encourage learners to keep practicing even when they're out Begin by demonstrating what you're asking learners to do	
<b>Gitxsanimx</b>	See above <i>Hes Sim'oogit "hooxhl sim on'si'm"</i> [Sim'oogit says 'use your right hand] <i>Hes Sim'oogit "hooxhl mat'ux on'si'm"</i> [Sim'oogit says, use your left hand] <i>Hes Sim'oogit "luu saa dagosinhl hlit' [Sim'oogit says, dribble in front]</i> <i>Hes Sim'oogit "Gina dagosinhl hlit' [Sim'oogit says, dribble behind]</i>  <i>Xsaxwin!</i> [You're out!] <i>Amhl jab'n!</i> [Good job!]	

## Sigwineekxw [Cool Down]

5 mins

Description	Time: 5 mins
Finish with some light static stretching. You can name the stretches in Gitxsanimx (e.g. sganist [forward fold], Maskawoodax [butterfly], masxw'm ts'uuts' [flamingo]) or tell players to stretch specific body parts. E.g sagi'nhl on'si'm [stretch your (pl.) arm], sag'inhl ba'a'si'm [stretch your (pl.) thigh], sag'inhl no'ohl [stretch your (pl.) shoulder]. Follow the same pattern: establish, ask, the players reply, and you confirm. Spend 30 seconds on each stretch.	
Coaching points: TQ copycat, mumble, let it go	
Gitxsanimx:	A: Yukw dim jab'yhl mask'awoodax sak' [I'm doing the butterfly]

<p>A: Yukw dim sag'in'yhl sim on'y [I am stretching my right arm]  A: Yukw gwin? [What are you doing?]  B: Yukw dim sag'in'yhl sim on'y  A: Oo, yukw dim sag'in'nhl sim on'n [Oh, you're stretching your right arm]</p>	<p>stretch (<b>x3</b>)  A: Yukw gwin? [What are you doing?]  B: Yukw dim jab'yhl mask'awoodax'm sak' [I'm doing the butterfly stretch]  A: Oo, yukw dim jab'nhl mask'awoodax'm sak'?! [Oh, you're doing the butterfly stretch!]</p>
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### Laagaltxw [Assessment/Check]

5 mins

Description	Time: 5 mins
<p>Exit ticket: learners must correctly use a phrase from the day's lesson in the proper context. The group will decide if they are correct.</p>	