

ENTEWA:RON'K

“We Will Be Speakers”

by

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Abstract

Thohtharátye (Joe Brant) shares auto-ethnographic reflections that exemplify what it takes to create and maintain a Kanyen'kéha (Mohawk Language) speaking home. As adult second language learners of Kanyenkéha, the author and his partner Tewahséhtha, dedicated themselves to learning Kanyen'kéha and passing it on to their children as their first language. Overcoming issues of dialect extinction, resource availability and second language Kanyen'kéha speaking abilities, they persevered and succeeded by creating the first, first language Kanyen'kéha speakers in their community of Kahá:nayen (Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory) in over sixty years.

Thohtharátye identifies three over-arching principles that are equal and interdependent in creating and maintaining a Kanyen'kéha speaking home: An Unwavering Loyalty to Kanyen'kéha; Reclaiming Domains of Kanyen'kéha Use; and Heeding to Natural Language Acquisition Processes. He presented his auto-ethnography narratives to Kanyen'kéha language stakeholders in three Kanyen'kehà:ka (Mohawk) communities. He summarized the presentations in an accompanying culminating video and has also completed the following report to share his research. The goal of his research is to exemplify best practices in Kanyen'kéha learning and inspire Kanyen'kéha learners to create and maintain Kanyen'kéha speaking homes.

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I would like to acknowledge all Kanyen'kéha language revitalization champions of the past, present and in the future. Wa'tkwanonhwerà:ton tánon kwanorónhkhwa tsi nítsyon wahskwarihwásnye'ne ne akwà:tsire ayakwà:ron'ke onkwawén:na: Karahkhwí:ne, Karihwénhawe, Kanatawákhon, Tehota'kerà:ton, Tehahénte, Owennatékha, Onenyatékha, Kawén:nase, Tewateronhyákhwa, Warisó:se, Tekahonwénhsere, Tewahsehtha, Tsyora'séhstha tánon Yakowén:nare. Á:kwah kwanorónhkhwa tá:non kwarihwakwennyenhstha'kó:wa! I will never have the words, in any language, to show how much I value your time, dedication and sacrifice to the revitalization of our language.

I would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of videographer Joel George. I understand that completing this work in the Mohawk language presented many obstacles and incurred many delays. Thank-you for your tireless work and fantastic production of the video for this project.

I would also like to acknowledge the work of the University of Victoria staff (past and present) that made the Master's of Indigenous Language Revitalization program a reality. To 2014 MILR cohort and professors: Nyawen'kó:wa, Thank-you for sharing your wisdom and experience with me. I am grateful everyday that you all are a part of my journey and I thank-you for including me in yours.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to my partner Tewahsehtha and our children Tsyora'séhstha and Yakowén:nare. Tekwanonhwerà:ton for endeavoring to walk this journey together. Kwanoronhkhwa'kó:wa áhsen nitsyon! Sénha kwanorónhkhwa tsi ní:yoht nya'tekahón:take yotehyà:ron onhwentsyakwé:kon tsi nen'náhe tsi shontayotonhwentsyatáhsawe. Tsi Nén:we Enkwanorónhkwake!

Keniyén:'a, our language was not passed to your mother or I by our parents or grandparents. They said, "I didn't teach you our language because I didn't want you to have to go through what I went through." Your mother and I dedicated ourselves to ensuring that you understand and speak our language so that you know who you are and understand your relationship with all elements of this world. We speak our language with you so that you don't have to go through what we went through. Tsi niseneryentí:yo. Yotokén:'a wahi tsi onkwawén:na nonkwá:ti nontá:we né:ne onkwashatsténhsera.

Kwanoronhkhwa'kó:wa Sewakwé:kon!

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Introduction and Positionality

My name is Thohtharátye – Joe Brant. I was born, raised, and now reside at Kahá:nayen, also known as Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory. I sit with the Bear Clan of the Kanyen'kehà:ka (The People of the Mohawk Nation) at Kahá:nayen. I come from a working class family with farming roots. My father's heritage is Kanyen'kehà:ka and English and my mother's heritage is French and English. I am Kanyen'kehà:ka; Not by majority blood quantum or complexion but by personal values, beliefs, and actions. The most important of these actions is my active use of Kanyen'kéha (The Mohawk Language).

I am a son, brother, uncle, husband and father. I am a harvester, a role that includes the more traditional titles of farmer, fisherman, hunter and gatherer. I reside close to my childhood home at Kahá:nayen, on a small hobby farm with my wife and two children. We speak Kanyen'kéha almost exclusively in our home and my children are the first, first-language Kanyen'kéha speakers born and raised in my community in over sixty years. Professionally, I am an educator and elementary school administrator with 13 years of professional experience in education at Kahá:nayen.

Observations

High regard for Kanyen'kéha use at Kahá:nayen was exemplified in the formative years of our post-American Revolution community wherein leaders advocated for Kanyen'kéha speaking teachers in the early 1800's and records show Kanyen'kéha use in public meetings until the 1920's (Hill, 2015). Enforcement of Indian Act statutes in the 1920's expedited Kanyen'kéha language shift (KLS) at Kahá:nayen (Green, 2009). KLS continued throughout the 1930's and 1940's due to socio-economic stresses associated

with the great depression (2009). Kanyen'kéha use in public and household domains drastically declined through the middle of the 20th century until the extinction of Kahanayen'kéha (Tyendinaga Mohawk dialect) with the passing of our last first language speaker (K1) in the 1990's (Green, 2009; Hill, 2015). Contemporary Kanyen'kéha revitalization efforts began at Kahá:nayen in the late 1970's with the implementation of Kanyen'kéha programming in the community's elementary Indian Day School (Doxtator, 2008).

I observe Kanyen'kéha revitalization efforts at Kahá:nayen as: a lifetime community member and resident, Kanyen'kéha learner, speaker, parent, teacher and administrator. It is obvious that formal education is the focus of the contemporary Kanyen'kéha revitalization movement at Kahá:nayen. Formal Kanyen'kéha programming is currently available for toddler to adult learners through Language Nest, Immersion, Native Second Language and Adult Learning models. Programming is administered and funded by Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte (MBQ) Elected Council, Tsi Tyónnheht Onkwawén:na Language Circle and Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada. Kanyen'kéha programming continues to progress but no current Kanyen'kéha program at Kahá:nayen is largely responsible for producing an advanced speaker as outlined by Miller's (2004) First Nations Language Assessment Benchmarks.

Informal language learning opportunities sparsely occur and take place in few domains. My home is the only home at Kahá:nayen where Kanyen'kéha is spoken as the primary language of communication. Another informal domain of Kanyen'kéha use in the community is at traditional ceremonies that are conducted periodically throughout the year. Novice and intermediate level, second language Kanyen'kéha (K2) speakers are

responsible for conducting speeches at ceremonies unless speakers from other communities are invited. Recitation of memorized Kanyen'kéha passages are used in church hymns, some community functions open with a recitation of the Ohén:ton Karihwatékhwen (a traditional opening prayer) and at MBQ elected council meetings a biblical prayer is recited in Kanyen'kéha. To hear a sustained fluent Kanyen'kéha conversation at Kahá:nayen is a rare and precious occasion.

If successful Kanyen'kéha language programming is measured by learners' proficient Kanyen'kéha speaking ability and learners' ability to transfer their language learning to the home and informal domains: Kanyen'kéha language programming at Kahá:nayen is unsuccessful. The research I pursued is intended to increase K2 learner success by highlighting principles and strategies that can help K2 learners effectively integrate Kanyen'kéha into all domains in their lives.

Literature Review

First Nation peoples continually confront cultural genocide and linguicide attempts by settlers and government authorities (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, n.d.). First Nation language vitality in Canada is now vastly identified as endangered and all identified languages show a decline in use and intergenerational transmission (Norris, 2004 & 2007). According to UNESCO (2011), 3000 heritage languages worldwide are now threatened, endangered, dormant or extinct. It is critical to understand that heritage languages are foundational in the perpetuation of First Nations' civilizations (Battiste, 2008; Littlebear, 1999; Kovach, 2009; Smith, 2012, Wilson, 2001 & 2008;). First Nation knowledge keepers and academic researchers have continually stated that the most critical aspect of accurate perpetuation of one's First Nation culture is

through the use and understanding of one's First Nation language (Absolon, 2011; Archibald, 2008; Alfred, 2005; Battiste, 2008; Littlebear, 1999; Smith, 2012; Wilson, 2008).

Fishman (1990) describes the process by which an Indigenous language community shifts to speaking another language as "language shift." KLS at Kahá:nayen and other Kanyen'kehà:ka communities is extensive. Fluent Kanyen'kéha speakers now account for less than 5% of the Kanyen'kehà:ka population (Hill, 2015; Maracle, 2002). Using Lewis and Simons' (2010) Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS), Kanyen'kéha at Kahá:nayen is at level nine out of ten and is characterized as dormant with some emerging second language learners (Hill, 2015; Lewis & Simons, 2010). The sad truth is that the only dialect of Kanyen'kéha that is extinct is Kahanayen'kéha, the Tyendinaga Mohawk dialect (Green, 2009).

The survival and maintenance of Kanyen'kéha and other First Nation languages is dependent upon successful intergenerational transmission (Fishman, 2001, Norris, 2004 & 2007). Hinton, (2013) argues that the most effective way to emancipate intergenerational language transmission is in bringing our language revitalization efforts to the most natural setting: the home and family. Researchers and activists around the world have documented effective, family-centered strategies to combat language shift (Chrisp, 2005; Edwards and Newcombe, 2005; Pauwels, 2005; Kopeliovich, 2010). Fishman (2001) argues that there is a systematic way that language shift occurs and a systematic way to reverse language shift (RLS). This model informs Kanyen'kéha revitalization efforts at Kahá:nayen to be concentrated to only the first stage: creating a community of proficient adult language speakers who have language function in various

“everyday” domains (Fishman, 2001; Hornberger and Pütz, 2006). Stages of RLS are progressive and Fishman warns that skipping stages and moving toward institutionalized educational programming is counterproductive, detrimental and simply delays the inevitable extinction of a language (Fishman, 2001; Hornberger and Pütz, 2006). Contrary to Fishman’s warning, stage five of RLS is the widely enacted approach at Kahá:nayen and other Kanyen’kehà:ka communities wherein tremendous amounts of financial and human resources are invested in institutionalized education programming (MBQ, 2014. Documents- Consolidated Financial Statement section, p. 42). The continued investment in this approach will not revitalize Kanyen’kéha but will only delay its extinction. Kanyen’kéha programming must focus on enabling and supporting a return of Kanyen’kéha to the family and home domain.

Research Question

In order to reverse KLS at Kahá:nayen, Kanyen’kéha use must be enacted by families in all public and private domains. In order to make this a reality I have shared my research answering the question: *What does it take to create and sustain a Kanyen’kéha speaking family?*

Research Method

Auto-ethographic presentations of my experiences in co-creating a Kanyen’kéha speaking home exemplified three main principles that guide highly effective strategies in family language use: Unwavering Language Loyalty, Reclaiming Domains of Use, and Heeding to Natural Language Acquisition. These three principles were directed at Kanyen’kéha K2 learners and stakeholders to help improve their success and ensure the future vitality Kanyen’kéha. An inductive research approach framed auto-ethnographical

reflective narratives where I exemplified, discussed and analyzed best practices in K2 language acquisition as well as K2 to K1 intergenerational language transmission within my family. Auto-ethnography is defined as describing and analyzing personal experience in order to understand a cultural phenomenon; a process and a product that will change the author and the world they live in for the better (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011). I used auto-ethnographic narratives because it is reflective of Indigenous methodologies where knowledge holders share their experiences, often through narrative, to inspire, guide and encourage their audience's introspect as they relate their actions to the story (Chase, 2011).

My research findings were presented in three Kanyen'kehà:ka communities to adult immersion classes as well as their community's Kanyen'kéha language stakeholders. The presentations to Kanyen'kehà:ka community language groups have been used to help develop a short video that summarizes my research findings. The video has been produced in Kanyen'kéha and captioned in English to serve Kanyen'kéha learners as well as allies of language revitalization efforts internationally.

Presenting my research in various Kanyen'kehà:ka communities was intended to pay homage to our sister communities that have been instrumental in helping Kahà:nayen's Kanyen'kéha learners. Unfortunately, due to the state of Kanyen'kéha understanding in the three communities, I was only able to complete one presentation entirely in Onkwawén:na (Our Language). This serves as another reminder of the dire state of Kanyen'kéha in our communities. As a decolonizing tool, our language holds inherent values and beliefs that cannot be easily captured using the English language (Smith, 2012). My intent was that if I was going to do research about Kanyen'kéha, I

was going to present the research entirely in Kanyen'kéha. This was intended exemplify the principles of Indigenous research methodology of respect, responsibility, reciprocity and reverence (Absolon, 2011). Smith (2012) refers to ironies in Indigenous language conferences and debates where issues of an Indigenous language are discussed in the language of the colonizer. In order to enable the largest impact, I conducted my research presentations in English and produced an accompanying video in Kanyen'kéha. Moving forward, I hope my and others' future research heeds to statements like Ngugi wa Thiong'o in Smith (2012), "to write in the language of the colonizers was to pay homage to them" (p. 38). Battiste (2008) states that non-indigenous researchers must know the language of the people they are researching. I know the language of the people that I have researched but I believe that for the same reasons Battiste (2008) came to this conclusion, this prerequisite must extend to all researchers, no matter of their ethnicity. I used Kanyen'kéha in every presentation and exclusively in one presentation as well as the video in order to help learners understand our worldview and exemplify the beauty and vastness of the Kanyen'kehà:ka civilization (Battiste 2008; Kovach, 2009). As a second language Kanyen'kéha learner, I did my best to present my research in the most clear and concise way but I do acknowledge that there may be more accurate, "fluent" ways to present my ideas.

Research Methodology

Indigenous scholars Smith (2012), Kovach (2009), Absolon (2011), and Wilson (2008) have expanded the field Indigenous Research Methodologies by sharing their theories and experiences from a unique First Nation perspective. I undertook a research journey that I believed would have the most impact on language learning in

Kanyen'kehà:ka territories. Throughout the research process, I succeeded in realizing a goal of revitalization and transformation in my language journey that Wilson (2008) summarizes, "If research doesn't change you as a person, then you haven't done it right" (p. 135). I started with burning tobacco and a speech known as the Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkhwen (translated to "the matter that come first") to ground myself with the foundational element to Kanyen'kéha culture, language and spirituality. The speech enables participants to reflect on the elements that sustain our lives while offering greetings, thanks, love and respect to each element of creation. With these humbling teachings in mind and heart, I undertook this research journey with most respectful intentions.

My research framework is to be known as, "Yonkwatehyaróntyé: A Natural Kanyen'kehà:ka Research Paradigm." This paradigm is rooted in the values and beliefs of the aforementioned Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkhwen, wherein all elements of our world are revered with Kanonhweratónhsera: The act of giving greetings, love and respect. It is the foundation of our existence as Kanyen'kéhà:ka and so, it is the foundation of this paradigm.

I used this framework to carry out my research by reflecting on five stages of natural human development that guided my research. Firstly, "Ó:nen Tasatatyà:thewe: You have arrived," a phrase that is often used upon the arrival of a newborn. The phrase is customarily followed by a speech that introduces the newborn to the elements of the natural world that will help sustain their life. I used this frame to introduce myself and provide the background for my research.

Secondly, “Karhón:ke Ronatya’tanentà:kon: They are on the Cradleboard.” It is customary that a baby is swaddled in a cradleboard throughout their infancy. Parents carry their children with them as they go about their daily business, allowing the child to observe life around them. Through this lens I shared my observations about the current state of Kanyen’kéha, predominately in my community of Kahá:nayen but also as I see it throughout Kanyén:ke (Mohawk Nation Territories).

It is through crawling that a baby learns how to coordinate various aspects of their being to discover elements of life that surround them. With this in mind, the third part of this paradigm is, “Ohswen’karakéhshon Ronté:sere’s: They are Crawling About.” This section was used to reflect on effective strategies in my nuclear family’s language development and align the strategies with current literature on second language learning and family second language development.

The fourth “cruising” stage of a child’s life is titled, “Ó:nen Ronne’s: They Are Now Moving About.” Like a baby that has learned to crawl and then finds plausible items to expedite movement, I synchronized literary research with my family’s best practices in creating and sustaining a Kanyen’kéha speaking family. Three overarching principles exemplified topics that can help learners achieve success and subsequently help in creating and sustaining their own Kanyen’kéha speaking families.

The fifth topic, “Tehonthahakhwenhátye: They Are Picking Up The Path,” is the final stage of my current research journey. It is at this stage that a baby has arrived, observed, explored, and coordinated their efforts in order to independently move about. My research has culminated with the synchronization of the aforementioned stages to stimulate thought and provide inspiration that can influence Kanyen’kéha language

revitalization efforts of learners and administrative stakeholders. The goal has been to use my research to enable learners and stakeholders to “pick up the path” that was left by people before us to ensure the vitality of Kanyen’kéha for generations to come.

Presentation Summary

My research began with auto-ethnographic reflective narratives that highlighted the most critical points in my Kanyen’kéha learning journey. I reviewed my journey chronologically using timelines, stories, pictures, as well as audio and video recordings. By analyzing my auto-ethnographic narratives as well as academic research in the field of language revitalization, I found common principles of creating and sustaining a Kanyen’kéha speaking home. These principles can be summarized using three overarching principles that are equal and interdependent: An Unwavering Loyalty to Kanyen’kéha; Reclaiming Domains of Kanyen’kéha Use; and Heeding to Natural Language Acquisition Processes.

The first principle, “An Unwavering Loyalty to Kanyen’kéha,” was the best way that I could summarize the most effective mindsets, strategies and actions that had positively impacted my learning. I found the term during my research as introduced to me by Hornberger and Putz’s (2006) reflections on Joshua Fishman’s work. As a Kanyen’kéha learner, I moved through a familiar continuum of commitment that included wishing, hoping, intending, and promising until I finally arrive at “doing.” I found that the only way to overcome the tremendous obstacles in my language-learning journey was to embrace an unwavering loyalty to Kanyen’kéha. Many personal, professional and recreational sacrifices had to be made to realize my ultimate goal of becoming a speaker. Even the wording of my goal setting had to be changed from a dedication to “learning

Kanyen'kéha" to "speaking Kanyen'kéha." It's important that we, a the Kanyen'kehà:ka nation, understand that we do not need any more Kanyen'kéha learners, we actually need Kanyen'kéha speakers. We need to be cognizant of the difference between these two mindsets and allocate human and financial resources to people who have made the obvious commitment to the latter.

I am forever cognizant of the impact that my first language (English) has on learning Kanyen'kéha. I had to embrace a truly life-changing mindset shift in order to optimally respect the inherent cultural understandings that come from within Kanyen'kéha words and phrases. I had to embrace this holistic shift in the physical, spiritual, emotional, and mental realms of my life. I believe it is important for Kanyen'kéha language learners to use introspect in asking themselves: What does "Language Loyalty" mean to me and what am I going to do to be loyal to my language?

The second principle in creating and maintaining a Kanyen'kéha speaking home is to reclaim domains of language use. There was a systematic way that KLS took place and there is an equally systematic way that we must reverse KLS (Fishman, 2001; Hornberger and Putz, 2006). The most important domain to reclaim is the home (Fishman, 2001; Hinton, 2013; Hornberger and Putz, 2006; Littlebear, 1991). I use the term, "teyakwanó:taton" to describe the process of creating a Kanyen'kéha sanctuary where my wife and I actively minimized or eliminated the presence of the English language in our home domain. This included but was not limited to interpersonal language use; television, radio, telephone communication; and domains that surrounded our home including play, gardening and the outdoors. One significant action that we facilitated was hosting or attending a Mohawk language dinner every week. We would

eat together with at least two fluent speakers who modeled the use of Kanyen'kéha and helped in acquiring new or unknown words and phrases. This provided a constant source of contextual comprehensible language input that positively impacted language development in our home (Krashen,1982).

In reflecting on my process of domain reclamation, the easiest place to begin was within domains that can be easily controlled. My first reclaimed domain was my car, wherein the radio was used as a source of language input and language output was completely within my control. Equally as evident is the importance of reclaiming high frequency domains and domains of high interest. As my children have continued to grow, so have their interests. On numerous occasions they have gained interest in an activity or topic that I have limited to no experience. I have had to do “language learning recognizance” in order to learn words and phrases that are needed before an activity in order to be able to present it to my family in a natural way. I am aware that if my children's first exposure to a topic interest occurs in English than it will be more difficult for me to cultivate their interest in participating in the activity using Kanyen'kéha.

Finally, as a second language Kanyen'kéha learner, I had to heed to natural language acquisition processes and the natural development of oral communication. As I have learned in reflecting on my children's language development, the first and most important step is to actively listen to and observe active Kanyen'kéha language use. Listening to and observing natural speech in a natural environment was a crucial foundational step that I now observe some Kanyen'kéha learners trying to circumvent. The second step is what is characterized with infants as “babbling.” This step is where I struggled with sharing thoughts while experimenting with the language by make sounds

that were often misunderstood or inaudible because deficiencies in accurate communicational means. The timely coordination of accessing learned vocabulary with the muscles responsible for audible output eventually moved me to producing comprehensible output. Once these skills were honed I was able to produce complete thoughts that lead to unscripted natural intercommunication.

Language must be interactive and is optimally transmitted intergenerationally from parent (most effectively the mother) to their child (Wilson and Kamana, 2009; Norris, 2007). In my home, natural intergenerational transmission was also optimized by my children's exposure to natural interpersonal adult communication, baby talk, song and play (Fishman, 2001; Hornberger and Putz, 2006). The endogamous language environment that my partner, Tewahséhtha, and I created and work daily to maintain, is also a key factor in the success of intergenerational language transmission in our home (Norris, 2007). My family was also very fortunate to be involved with a language nest that was committed to natural intergenerational language use in an environment that was characterized as a grandmother's home. Natural intergenerational language transmission was only achieved in conjunction with the first two aforementioned principles of language loyalty and the dedication to truly reclaiming high frequency, high interests domains of use.

Project Reflections

I am humbled and grateful for the opportunity to share my research with learners and stakeholders in Kanyen'kéha and international language revitalization. The research process has been strenuous but rewarding. The research process began with reflection and introspect to determine what events, strategies and actions had the most critical

impact on creating and sustaining my family's Kanyen'kéha speaking home. I found myself reliving moments from a not-so-distant past, sharing memories with my family, and revisiting pictures, videos and audio files that we had compiled throughout our journey. It was a refreshing experience to reflect on how far Tewahséhtha and I have come in our language use. We also were able to take the time to pay homage to our language mentors, consider the obstacles my family has overcome, and look forward to future possibilities.

The first presentation in Kahnawà:ke on February 15, 2016 was by far the most nerve racking experience in my recent memory. Some of my language mentors and role models were present and by the end I struggled with whether I had met their expectations of sharing a journey that I believe we undertook together. I wanted to call them up to the stage by name and tell them how deeply indebted I was for their efforts and dedication. Instead, I shared stories of the time they spent with my family and the impact that those experiences had on our lives.

I then had the privilege to visit and present at Onkwawén:na Kentyóhkhwa, my former adult language school at Ohswéken, Ontario on February 24, 2016. I presented twice that day, first to a first-year cohort and also to their third-year cohort. At these presentations I felt that I had attained Absolon's (2011) ideal of reciprocity. I presented in the same room where I attended, to a group of students that were at a similar demographic to when I studied there and of whom were under the tutelage of the same instructors. My message was simple, "I was in your situation not that long ago. You can do it and here are some of my experiences that may help you reach your goals." The culmination of my visit was presenting my research in Kanyen'kéha to one of my

language mentors and his students. Although it was my intent to present all of my research exclusively in Kanyen'kéha, this was the only target audience obliged. This exemplifies the state of Kanyen'kéha vitality and the need for us to move from learning Kanyen'kéha and talking about Kanyen'kéha to speaking Kanyen'kéha.

I strategically culminated my live presentations in my community of Kahá:nayen on February 29, 2016. I integrated what I had learned from the previous presentations to create a “final draft.” It was an opportunity to help Kanyen'kéha learners and stakeholders in my community understand the strategies, resources and degree of dedication needed to facilitate intergenerational Kanyen'kéha transmission in the home. I felt that I could use my experiences to influence long and short-term strategic planning for both learners and stakeholders in my community. I proposed rethinking our current Kanyen'kéha resource allocation and elicited thought about how we can help our next generation of families create and maintain a Kanyen'kéha speaking home.

The four presentations were recorded for use in a culminating video that would highlight findings from my research project. Upon the completion of the presentations, I began to collaborate with a local videographer to produce the culminating video. I accumulated and provided approximately five hours of presentation video, numerous family pictures, Powerpoint presentations and draft scripts to help in the production of the video. Unfortunately, we found that the presentation recordings lacked both audio and visual clarity and consequently had to change the video production plans. I scripted highlights of the presentations then recorded them at my home as a “backbone” for the video. I then transcribed, edited and provided the videographer with a draft format for the video's production. The videographer compiled the resources and after extensive

time spent formatting, and editing we produced the final fifteen minute and fifty second video. This process was exhausting and time consuming. The videographer and I accumulated over eighty hours of combined editing and production time for the culminating video. The technical complexities of video creation and production were overwhelming to me and my unwavering commitment to producing the video in Kanyen'kéha was overwhelming to the videographer, who did not understand the language. This is another testament to the time, dedication and energy that Kanyen'kéha, and other First Nation language champions, provide to ensure the perpetuation of our languages for coming generations: Tekwanonhwerà:tons (I continually offer you all greetings, thanks and love).

In closing, this research project provided me with invaluable life experiences. It has lead me on a journey that began with introspect, reflection and sharing memories and culminated with a look forward to how my experiences can influence the future vitality of Kanyen'kéha in all of our Kanyen'kehà:ka communities. I appreciated the opportunity to share my research and hope that it can be impactful to the next generation of desperately needed Kanyen'kéha speakers and First Nation speakers internationally.

Ó:nen káti wáhi wa'katerihwatkwé:ni tsi nahó:ten wa'katerihwayén:ta'se. Tókat othé:nen wa'katerhókta'se káton wa'kateryentawénrye, enkerihwà:neke tsi takí:tenhre tánon sewa'nikonhrakón:shon aesewakwatá:ko. É:tho Nikawén:nake tánon ó:nen é:tho. (I have completed my work to the best of my abilities. If there is anything that I have left out or have mistaken, understand that it was not my intent and in each of your minds you can correct these errors. That is all of the words that I have for now.)

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