



WIÁLKĚN NE SKÁL: SXEDFELISYE's SENĆOŦEN Auto-ethnography

by

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Abstract

The WSÁNEĆ School Board located on the Saanich Peninsula of southern Vancouver Island currently houses the SENĆOŦEN department, which includes the SƧÁSEN TFE SENĆOŦEN apprenticeship program. SƧÁSEN TFE SENĆOŦEN is the focus of this paper and is shared through an auto-ethnographical lens as a SENĆOŦEN apprentice and language learner. Each WSÁNEĆ logo is one of the language revitalization initiatives currently run by the SENĆOŦEN department. This is an auto-ethnographic account of my SENĆOŦEN journey and how my involvement with SƧÁSEN TFE SENĆOŦEN apprenticeship enabled me to teach in an immersion setting, thereby transforming my life.

Acknowledgment

HÍSŪKĒ XÁLS FIFEĒ SIÁM MEQ ÇENS LÁ, TEN MEQ ÇENS SÇA.
HÍSŪKĒ SIÁM FE NE WUCISTENEK LE I, SELWÁN I, ÇENÁT TONES I,
HUĆISTEN ET SENÇOFEN I, TFE WSÁNEĆ SOX HELI I, SKÁLS I, SNEPTENs
ETE. HÍSŪKĒ FE NE ŚWEŁOKE: NE TÁN I, NE SŁÁ, EŁ ÇENÁNET TOLW I
JSINETEN I, XEXŁÁM FEN INES TOLISIYE, LIQIFIÁ I FE, ILIYE. HÍSŪKĒ FE
NE SNOŹE PENÁWEN. YOŹ OL U MEQETIS I, ÇENENITEL I, TENEÇEL MEQ
SÇÁĆEL. ÇENSISTEL E TFE SOŁ ÇENTOL ESE I, HELISET E TFE SENÇOFEN I
I, LEÇSILEN TFE SKÁLS I, SOX HELI E TFE WSÁNEĆ STELITKEĒ.

I would like to acknowledge the SŶÁSEN TFE SENÇOFEN apprentices that created the logos that I am using in my auto-ethnography. HÍSŪKĒ PENÁĆ, SDEMOXELTEN, and PENÁWEN for your beautiful artwork that represents the SENÇOFEN initiatives.

I would also like to acknowledge STOLÇEĒ, ÇOSINIYE, and PENÁWEN for the SENÇOFEN logo on the title page. The logo translation- “The fire is the language and life within our people. The bear immerging from the fire is a protector of our immerging children and represents our growing seasons. The wolves on the outside are the protectors of our villages. The sun and the moon behind the bear represent the

seasons of our homeland, and the gift of each day – the gift of language for our people”

(STOLØEŁ, 2012).

The artwork and pictures may not be used without the permission of author and
SŦÁSEN TFE SENĆOFEN.

Dedication

I dedicate this to NE NENENE (my children). Let them forever know the sacrifices we took for them, and all the STELITKEŁ (children) in WSÁNEĆ. I dedicate this to the Elders that are resting, fishing, and speaking their first language in peace and harmony at the STOTELU LÁ,E TFE SÇÁĆEL. Also to all the beautiful people that have helped me along the way, I raise my hands to you all, ENÁN U JI,JEŁ NE SIÁM SELWÁN, I NE SIÁM SĆÁLEĆE.

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WSÁNEĆ SDIWIEŁ

HÍSŪKĒ NEŪE XAXE FIFEŁ SIÁM. HÍSŪKĒ MEQ ŪEN SŪA ÁŁE E TIÁ TENEŪ. HÍSŪKĒ MEQ TFE SILE Ć,SE LÁ,E TFE NŪS SPWELLO. TŪXINET TOLŪ ÁŁE E TIÁ TENEŪ. TŪXINET TOLŪ I, ŪENÁNET TOLŪ I,TELÁT E TFE ÍY, SOŁ. IYES ŁTE MEQ ŪENs SŪA. MEQ ŪENs LÁ,TEŪ E TFE TENEŪ I, TFE Á,LENEŪEŪ ŁTE. MEQ TFE XAXE FIFEŁ SNÁNET LFE: ŁÁU,WEL,NEŪ, SPÁ,EF, SŪAKE, PKOL,S, WSÁNEĆ I, WSÁ,SENEĆ I, W,MÍEFEN I,YOS. U, MEQ LELÁNEŪ SW HÁLE. MEQ U, NEŪILYE SI,I,ÁÁM. I,Á,MEKT NE SDIWIEŁ LÁ,E TFE XAXE E TIÁ ÁNEŪ. QENT TFE NE SČALEĆE, QENT MEQ TFE NE ŚWEŁOKE. MEQ OL TFE NE NENNENE I, TFE NE STOLEs I, MEQ TFE STETI,ŪEN, I TFE NE SŁA,EE I, TFE NE SNÁTWEN I, SNENÁ,EN. HÍSŪKĒ SIÁM E TFE S,JESENEŪ I, MEQ TFE TELETOFELNEŪ, I, ŚETEN ŪOLEK I, TFE ŚISEĆ I, MEQ DENO,EN TFE KO, I TFE TŁÁŁSE. ČEK TFE SČEN,NE I, TFE SDÁČEN I MEQ TFE TELEŪÁČES. LELÁNEŪ SW NEŪILYE SI,I,ÁÁM. MEQ I,ŪELEŪ, I, QELEŪSEN I, TFE JESKEN. TW SŁEWÁŁ SW TFE SČÁČEL MEQ U ŁNINEŁ. ČA,NEUEL, I ČA ŪENTOL I, ŚTENIST TOLŪ E TFE ÍY, SOŁ E TIÁ ÁNEŪ. HELIT SW XAXE FIFEŁ SIÁM EN SČA TFEN SHUĆISTENs I, TFEN SOXHELI. MEQ TFE NE SČALEĆE (STOLŪEŁ, 2004).

Thank you high respected one, sacred spirit. Thank you for everything you have made on the Earth. Thank you for grandmother and grandfather four winds. Take pity on us the ones you left on this Earth. Take pity on us and help us take a good path on Earth. We are happy for everything you made on Earth and our homeland. All of our sacred mountains: Mt. Newton, Bear Hill, Mt. Tolmie, Mt. Douglas, the whole of Saanich and the little Saanich Mountain. All of you listen, all of your respected spirits. Listen to me respected hono(u)rable ones. Bring my prayer to the Great Spirit today. Look after my relatives. Look after my brothers, sisters, my children, my partner, all my nieces and nephews. My in-laws and my brother and sister in-laws and thank you respected one for the entire showing of things. All of the animals walking in the hills in the forest, salt water, ocean, and the lakes and all islands. Listen all of my respected ones all the ones flying, Bald eagle, Golden Eagle. Let there be peace amongst us today. Work together with one another. And move us forward on a good path today. Let your sacred teachings and environment laws live. All my relations (STOLŪEŁ, 2004).

Opening with a SDIWIEĒ (prayer) is an important value that our Elders have instilled in all apprentices in the STÁSEN TFE SENĆOFEN program. “Prayer is a way to protect and guide our loved ones. A way to be thankful for all the things XÁLS the creator has given us on this Earth in this life” (PIŦELÁNEWOT, p.10, 2010). The prayer that I have included in this paper is a very special prayer because it was the first prayer that I learned. My language mentor STOLŦEĒ spoke about a time in his life where all he wanted to do was to communicate in his own language with our great Creator and that was the factor that motivated him to learn SENĆOFEN. When he told this story it really affected me because I was looking for guidance in my life, and learning this prayer opened up a whole new perspective that led me to the path I am on today.

Another important WŚÁNEĆ protocol is explaining our family lineage when meeting or speaking to people. It especially helps the Elders know which families you belong to. It also identifies what nation you come from and connects you to territory and ancestral names as well as genealogy or place of origin.

EN C,SE LÁ,E,KEN (Introduction)

EN C,SE LÁ,E,KEN ET SXEDFELISIYE (Hummingbird woman's Introduction)

SXEDFELISIYE FE NE SNÁ C,SE LÁ,E SEN ET WSÁNEC (WJOŁEŁP I BOKÉCEN). Darren James FE NE MÁN CS,E LÁ,E ET BOKÉCEN. XÅ,U I XEĶINEMEĶTEN FE NE SELSILE C,SE LÁ,E ET BOKÉCEN. Karen Sampson FE NE TÁN C,SE LÁ,E ET WJOŁEŁP. Paulette Sampson I XETÇOMTEN FE NE SELSILE C,SE LÁ,E ET WJOŁEŁP. NE STOLES PENÁWEN Elliott. TOLISIYE (9yrs), LIQIFIÁ (6yrs) I FE,ILIYE (4yrs) FE NE NENÑENE C,SE LÁ,E ET WSÁNEC.

C,SE LÁ,E TFE XAXE TFE SKÁL ŁTE. SENÇOFEN TFE CELÁÑEN ŁTE. SQÅ Çs ÇÁ,ET TFE SKÁL ŁTE. ČÅ I SEN TFE NE SENÇOFEN SKÁL MEQ SÇÁCEL. I, HUĆISTEN TFE WSÁNEC STELITKEŁ LÁ,E TFE LE,NONET SCUL,ÁUTW ÁŁE E WJOŁEŁP. ÍY ŠKÁLEÇEN I QOMQEM,SET I TU,E I,TOTELNEW TFE SENÇOFEN SKÁL ŁTE I, ÍY,TOW SEN ÇNES ÇOUES TFE SENÇOFEN MEQ SÇÁCEL. ČOÇES ÇNES TOLNEW MEQ SÇÁCEL. NEŤE SÇÁCEL I JELÁNEW SE TFE SENÇOFEN SKÁLS E TFE WSÁNEC WILNEW I STELITKEŁ ŁTE. SENÇOFEN TIÁ I, ČSE LÁ,E ET WSÁNEC SEN.

SXEDFELISIYE introduction translation

My name is Renee Sampson and I am from the Saanich Nation. My father is Darren James from BOKÉCEN (Pauquachin) and his parents are Rosalie James and Bryine James from BOKÉCEN. My mother's name is Karen Sampson and her parents are Paulette Sampson and Kenneth Sampson from WJOŁEŁP (Tsartlip). My partners name is PENÁWEN and our daughter's names are TOLISIYE (9yrs), LIQIFIÁ (6yrs), and FE,ILIYE (4yrs). Our language is from the Sacred One. SENĆOFEN is our birthright. We cannot let our language go. I have been working hard learning SENĆOFEN and teaching SENĆOFEN to our Saanich children in WJOŁEŁP (Tsartlip). I am getting stronger and have the highest regard for learning our SENĆOFEN language. I am still learning SENĆOFEN and use what I know in my every day life. One day we will hear our Saanich people and children using SENĆOFEN in all parts of life again. This is our language and I am WSÁNEĆ.

Background

Language is our unique relationship to the Creator, our attitudes, beliefs, values, and fundamental notions of what is truth. Our Languages are the cornerstones of who we are as a people. Without our Languages, our cultures cannot survive (Assembly of First Nations, 2007 p. 5).

The impact of colonization affected W̱SÁNEĆ people drastically. W̱SÁNEĆ people felt the language shift dramatically after contact and with the implementation of the reserve system, banning of the SXOLE (reef-net), the Indian Act, and residential school system (Elliott & Poth, 1990). Many Elders in W̱SÁNEĆ worked endlessly documenting SENĆOFEN. Our Elders spent thousands of hours recording and writing down words and sentences. They felt the urgency, they saw the break down of our natural language transmission, and they began to mentor those who are now our W̱SÁNEĆ mentor teachers (STOLÇEŁ, ÇOSINIYE, KÁNTENOT). Many SELWÁN (respected Elder advisors) would share their knowledge right up until they could not physically continue. This dedication and commitment in W̱SÁNEĆ will never be forgotten, that spark has not faded, and the flames are currently raging in W̱SÁNEĆ with today's language revitalization efforts.

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to document the SENĆOFEN community-based language initiatives in W̱SÁNEĆ with a focus on the STÁSEN TFE SENĆOFEN apprenticeship program through an auto-ethnographic perspective. My auto-ethnography will focus on my personal experience as a STÁSEN TFE SENĆOFEN apprentice documenting my SENĆOFEN language growth and my language

experiences before I was an apprentice. Undertaking this project is an opportunity to acknowledge the SQENSTENEK (fire-keepers-language champions and leaders), SELWÁN (our Elders), and STÁSEN apprentice team for their tremendous language revitalization efforts. I have been documenting my language growth since 2004 through personal language journals. I have held them close to my heart and now I am ready to share some of my most treasured memories, stories, and reflections from my language journey.

Overview

This auto-ethnography is written in seven sections. I have used WSÁNEĆ art logos as headings, created by STÁSEN TFE SENĆOFEN department, to signify each SENĆOFEN based initiative and how each initiative is significant to my language growth. The seven logos themselves depict the SENĆOFEN revitalization language initiatives through WSÁNEĆ (Straight Salish) art forms.

It was difficult for me to decide which initiative was going to be represented first so I decided to structure my auto-ethnography through a time-line of significant stories and events in my life pertaining to my language journey. Our team has created a poster that represents our STÁSEN TFE SENĆOFEN department. I would like to take the time to acknowledge the work that was done in the creation of this poster. The

creation of this poster was done in a group in a holistic fashion, and what came out of these gatherings was a I,ÍY,MET KŁO,EL (beautiful Camas flower). In figure 1. the STÁSEN TFE SENĆOFEN poster is in a minimized state. SENĆOFEN is the bulb, STÁSEN TFE SENĆOFEN apprenticeship is in the middle, and all of the other initiatives/logos are the petals. This poster was an inspiration for my auto-ethnography and I am honoured that my team allowed me to add pieces of our poster in my work.

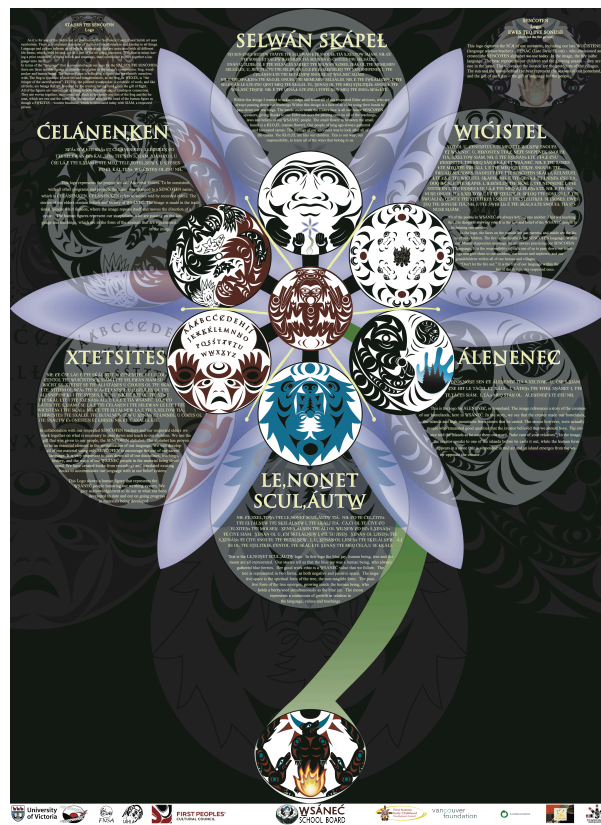


Figure 1. STÁSEN TFE SENĆOFEN Poster 2013

The roadmap for my auto-ethnography starts with *STÁSEN TFE SENĆOFEN* section. It is important for readers to understand what the word “*STÁSEN*” means and how our apprenticeship came to receive that name. *EKO,TEL ŁTE* (our team) is diverse in educational background, age, and gender. However, we share the same passion, which is the love for our language. This section also looks at *NE SOŁ* (my path) and how I became involved with *SENĆOFEN*, and how I came to be where I am today.

SELWÁN SKÁPEŁ (Elder gatherings) is the second section and is a reflection of the times spent with *WSÁNEĆ* Elders. This section discusses the relationship building with Elders and youth, as well as the friendships created with the Elders (gatherings) through the apprenticeship. The next section *ÁLENENEØ* (learning from my homeland) discusses the outdoor education program with a focus on place-based learning, the involvement of Elders accompanying us out on excursions, and immersion camps out on our *TELETÁCES* (islands). The fourth section, *WUCISTEL* (Master-Apprenticeship) focuses on the relationships that I have with my mentors and different activities and experiences that I have had working with them. Next, *ĆELÁNEN,ĶEN* (Ancestral voices, recordings, and storytelling) highlights the importance of listening to our late Elders speaking their first language *SENĆOFEN* in

a natural state. Listening and studying intonation, sentence structure, grammar, and WSÁNEĆ storytelling is what all the STÁSEN apprentices are required to do as part of our job. We all aspire to speak like these recordings and every year we begin to understand more of what is being discussed in the old recordings. XETSITES (Curriculum development) section touches on the SENĆOFEN curriculum projects that the apprenticeship creates. The last and final section, LE,NONET SCUL,ÁUTW (SENĆOFEN Survival School/Immersion programs), discusses the process of starting an immersion program and shares our WSÁNEĆ philosophy description, methods, and implementations of the school. This section delves deep into my personal thoughts about being a learner of the language and highlights my experience being a learner-teacher in immersion. This section ends with my thoughts on my new endeavors and hopes and dreams for my family and community.

The guiding questions that I kept in my mind when writing were:

- 1) How has STÁSEN TFE SENĆOFEN contributed to my language learning process?
- 2) How do I keep my fire going?

My aspiration is to share STÁSEN TFE SENĆOFEN's initiatives, challenges, and success to create language awareness and to promote what we are doing in

WSÁNEĆ in regards to language revitalization. I am hoping that my story will serve as an example of successful language learning that will inspire other learners.

ĆEĶ,I,USE (building of the fire)

SENĆOFEN language is the SONUSE (fire). To build my SONUSE (fire) I learned that I needed the following ŚWKÁLEÇENS (feelings that connects heart, body and mind): patience, determination, motivation, positivity, hope, humility, and perseverance. Before you start a language SONUSE (fire) you gather what you need; in language revitalization, it is EŁTÁLNEW (people), SELWÁN (Elders), SQENSTENEK (knowledge keepers), WUCISTENEK (language teachers), SCÁLEĆE (language allies, linguists), and networking with SCUL,ÁUTW (institution/organizations).

The following figure represents the key components that I needed to build my fire and continues to support and maintain my fire within.

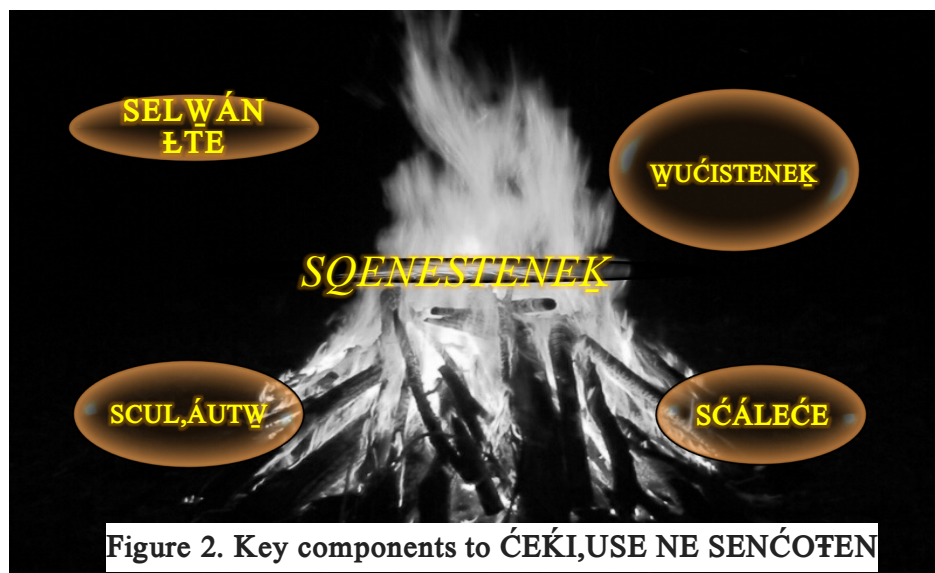


Figure 2. Key components to ĆEĶI,USE NE SENĆOFEN

ĆEK, IUSE TFE SQENSTENEK (Fire keepers built the fire)

My WSÁNEĆ role models are our language champions. They are the SQENSTENEK (fire-keepers), who ĆEK, IUSE (start the fire). The late Dave Elliott, Ernie Olsen, and many other Elders, ignited the fire in the 1970s by knocking on doors, pulling people together, and gathering the SĆEKNÁŁEN (kindling). Many of the young people that they encouraged became instrumental in later revitalization efforts. After some time gathering the different kind of SĆOŁ (wood), Dave felt that using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) was not an accessible alphabet for the community. The IPA typewriter was not affordable in those days, costing more than \$1000, and the IPA writing system had to be taught by a linguist. Dave Elliott, a determined and disciplined man who was deeply rooted in his WSÁNEĆ culture, felt it was important that we had an accessible, easy orthography. I have heard Elders speak about how proud they were of our SENĆOFEN alphabet. They would say that we do not have to rely on an outsider to create our alphabet; we have SĆUÁT (intelligent) WSÁNEĆ Elders. Many of the Elders would mention to us that they felt that having our own orthography was an act of self-determination and sovereignty. Dave created the SENĆOFEN alphabet using a \$30 typewriter, which was accessible and affordable (Hagar, 2005). The SENĆOFEN orthography created a bright blaze ÍY, OLUSE.

Thousands of words were documented and saved for the next generations to come.

Thousands of hours were spent writing, recording, typing, and meeting.

Our current W̱SÁNEĆ Elders lived during a time where they only heard SENĆOFEN in their homes. However, they felt the pressures of assimilation. They had seen the change in the younger people; W̱SÁNEĆ youth were no longer being raised with SENĆOFEN. Residential school survivors were no longer teaching SENĆOFEN to their children due to the trauma they endured. The times were changing and they felt the urgency of documenting and preserving SENĆOFEN.

It was a difficult time in W̱SÁNEĆ when our SQENSTENEK passed on. The fire dimmed and there seemed to be nothing left but KÁ,YEĆEP (ashes). However, in the late 1980's the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation fought hard to gain control over Native education. The W̱SÁNEĆ School Board was created and founded with the help of Marie Cooper, Phillip Paul, and many important W̱SÁNEĆ community members. Once again, this movement stirred something in W̱SÁNEĆ. Control over our education was a milestone, and in the early 1990's the building of ŁÁU,WEL,NEW Tribal school united the four W̱SÁNEĆ villages. The SONUSE in W̱SÁNEĆ began to give off ŁENTÁLS (sparks) again. Elders, carvers, language warriors, political leaders, and the community came together to build the school. It was the dream of the W̱SÁNEĆ

Elders to have a school where they could walk the halls and hear the children speaking the language. That was the dream: a place where they could be educated in our W̱SÁNEĆ way and learn how to walk in two worlds.

W̱SÁNEĆ lost Phillip Paul a few years later, as well as many Elders since then. Once again the fire began to dim. The original vision to have a school where our language and culture was at the forefront was put on the backburner.

EWES ṮEQ TFE SONUSE (Don't let the fire out)

In my graduate program at the University of Victoria I found it interesting to hear fellow classmates discuss “the knock on the door.” This is an expression that I have heard Elders in W̱SÁNEĆ use many times. It was a physical knock, but more than that it was a calling to learn, revitalize, and preserve our ancient language. They were recruiting individuals and continued to encourage them to go to gatherings, use the language in public, or become teachers of the language. The Elders that received the knock on their door refused to let the fire go out and refused to let SENĆOFEN go.

Late Earl Claxton Sr. and his apprentices began to stoke the fire and KEPEN TFE SĆOŁ (gather wood), built resources, and produced a new generation of teachers. The fire managed to survive. A small fire burned, it was not yet blazing but sat glowing for years. This small fire remained small by the SENĆOFEN exposure

programs being taught at the ŁÁU,WEL,NEW tribal school. The exposure program teaches language through an English medium. SENĆOFEN has been taught for 20-25 minutes a day for over 20 years. The exposure program illuminated and shone a light. WSÁNEĆ children felt the heat and warmth from a distance, but did not have the opportunity to feel the true warmth of the fire. They were only allowed to sit and be close to the fire for short amounts of time. The SENĆOFEN WUCÍSTENEK (teachers) used to be the apprentices, and now they were becoming the SQENESTENEK. Our mentors were the children of our past language warriors. They now held the torch and touched many WSÁNEĆ children in their programs.

The spark is within everyone; everyone is capable of learning the language. It is up to ones self to ignite it and let it blaze. Our Elders speak about language being within everyone. It just needs to be woken up. (ŁOSINIYE Elliott, personal communication, April 2009)

Many students did not know what that feeling was yet. But the inner fire was being nurtured without their total knowing. I, as well as others, were touched by their enthusiasm, creativity, passion, hope, and resilience which they shared with all of their students in their classrooms.



STÁSEN TFE SENĆOFEN Apprenticeship program

STÁSEN TFE SENĆOFEN logo translation

Within the STÁSEN TFE SENĆOFEN logo there are “three notable figures to consider in relation to the image’s composition: the frog, woodpecker, and human being. The human figure is reflective, a figure that we identify ourselves with. The frog is symbolic of new life and transformation, as the frog, or WEXES, is “the bringer of the sacred season.” XETEN, the pileated woodpecker is symbolic of work, and like all birds, are beings that are favored by the creator, having been given the gift of flight.

All of the figures are represented as being in both transition and kinship or connection. They are woven together and interconnected just as the hands and feet of the frog and the human, which are one and the same. The woodpecker rests on the head of the human figure as though it was a ŠWKITES – woolen headband, which is associated today with SIÁM, a respected person” (STÁSEN Poster, 2012).

To understand this section you need to understand where the name STÁSEN comes from. My involvement in STÁSEN TFE SENĆOFEN apprenticeship and my language journey will be covered in this section.

Our WSÁNEĆ ĆELÁNEŃ LE (ancestors) have passed on the story of STÁSEN to our SELWÁN and they have passed it on to us (SENĆOFEN Apprentices).

STÁSEN

STÁSEN was a messenger. It is more than a cedar plank; its presence at the door of our S,HIWEK (leaders) long house was our security system. When our ancestors would lay to rest at night, STÁSEN was on the look out for each long house, ready to notify our people who were inside resting. STÁSEN would be placed like a ramp at the foot of the doorway; it had “two hollowed out logs underneath it which would amplify the sound” (STÁSEN, poster 2012). If stepped on, it would illuminate a unique noise or “WHOMP” which would alert our WSÁNEĆ people. At times of XI,LEX (war), STÁSEN would be there to alert the people if an enemy was on our doorstep. However, at times of peace the STELITKEŁ (children) would bounce, play, and laugh on it. Our Elders said you could hear the children’s laughter echoing as they bounced and played and the big “WHOMP” sound would be heard by our relatives that lived in the next village, or even as far as across the bay. All who heard STÁSEN accompanied with the sound of children playing would know that this was a time of peace (STOLŲEE, personal communication 2010).

The name *STÁSEN* was bestowed on the *SENĆOFEN* apprenticeship (also what we call our language department) by *STOLČEĽ* (John Elliott) our *SELWÁN* (mentor/advisor). Our language department carries this name with pride and we all remember the importance *STÁSEN* had for our ancestors during both hard times and times of joy. Our apprenticeship is here to alert our people that we must not let go of our language, and we will continue to fight for our *SENĆOFEN* freedom. *STÁSEN* *TĚ SENĆOFEN* will be that bridge for *SENĆOFEN*. It is the cedar plank that our children can come walk on, play, laugh, and speak our birthright language. We will be that “springboard into the future. If the children can be heard speaking our language, then we know we are truly safe” (*STÁSEN* poster, 2012).

When people think of a language apprenticeship they often think of a master-apprenticeship. That is one of the initiatives that we have embarked on, but that is only one initiative out of the many that are housed in our department. To be an apprentice you have to be working towards a degree such as teaching, technology, art, child and youth care, etc. You have to be open to public speaking, working with technology, and creating curriculum. You have to be open to working well beyond what your list of duties. It is not just a job. We are running against time-documenting, preserving, learning, and working on language transmission, so that our beautiful language will be

here for generations to come. We network with other Indigenous communities, and go to conferences to see what is the latest language acquisitions strategies or methods. Do not get me wrong, I have the most fulfilling, meaningful, and fun job due to the great team I work with. However, there is so much work to do it can leave my head spinning at times. What we do is identify, nurture, and encourage everyone's gifts, like our people used to. Why should we try and know it all? There were people in our communities that had many gifts, but we had experts, or what some might call masters, in carving, fishing, hunting, weaving, midwifery, medicine, warriors, etc. If you needed help you would go to them and in return you would help them -- reciprocal giving. That is what I see in our apprentices. We have our SENĆOTEN apprentices that are the technological geniuses that use programs to make professional books, create their own posters, and are knowledgeable about the Internet. Then there are apprentices that help the Elders and have the gifts of protocol and public speaking abilities, and our artists who are revitalizing our WSÁNEĆ art as well as language. Some apprentices are the big picture thinkers and have the gifts of teaching, working with children, and building curriculum. Think-tank sessions are key to keeping a team strong and making sure we do not trap ourselves in the box, because our team members are out-of-the-box thinkers. That is what you need to do when you are

strategizing regarding ways to keep a language alive, with little to no money, or working on soft funding (SXEDFELISIYE, personal journal, 2012).

Language Authority

In 2010 our STÁSEN TFE SENĆOFEN received a grant from First Peoples Language and Culture Council to help set up our Language Authority. This was how we began to plan for the revitalization and preservation of SENĆOFEN. Our Language Authority consists of 4 community representatives from WSÁNEĆ, STÁSEN apprentices, STÁSEN facilitator, SENĆOFEN teachers, and WSÁNEĆ Elders. The Language Authority and STÁSEN are working hand-in-hand to develop a short and long-term language plan. This involves certifying language teachers, creating a SENĆOFEN archive, dictionary, and new terminology (lexicon), and creating outreach programs for community. STÁSEN keeps in mind the 8 steps of community language revitalization: Keeping it Alive that the First Peoples Heritage and Language Culture Council (2010) created.

EKO,TEL ETE (Our team)

We started with two summer apprentices (myself and Joan) in April 2009. Then in September of that year, we hired 7 more apprentices; six stayed on (myself, Joan,

SI,OLTENOT, PENÁĆ, MENEFIYE and PITELÁNEWOT). In 2011, we hired three more apprentices (PENÁWEN, SDEMOXELTEN, I FELAXIYE). We lost two apprentices due to family commitments and other job opportunities. Most recently, we hired three new apprentices (KÁNTENOT, Suzy, and Jacqueline).

The WSÁNEĆ School Board supports our language revitalization efforts and QELEQESEĆEN (Tye Swallow), our STÁSEN team facilitator, helps us find funding. He write grant applications and coordinates our team meetings. The majority of us are in classrooms, building curriculum, or working with Elders, so his role is very important because none of us have the time to write the reports and run around looking for grants. He also is the go-to-guy that counsels us when we need the extra support: as a friend or an ally that lobbies for our immersion initiatives, or a professional confidante. We are truly blessed to have such an open-minded person helping build our fire. His love for the land and his humble nature is a perfect fit for our team.

NE SOŁ (My path)

In 1987 I was in Little Raven pre-school; I was 4 years old. I had the kindest soft-spoken SENĆOFEN teacher; she had braids and a warm smile. She was short and smiled with her eyes. We would walk to her room, which was a small room, and she would greet us in SENĆOFEN and smile and sing. Her voice was strong but soft at the

same time. The way she interwove our language with song captured me, and it was her songs that stuck to my heart. She created an ember in NE TÁLE (my heart). I never realized how much she affected my love for language learning until now. She made me fall in love with learning languages. I did not realize that her teacher presence got embedded in me, in my style of teaching (SXEDFELISIYE, personal journal, 2013).

My parents decided to put me in public school where there was no SENĆOŦEN programming of any kind. They had their own reasons for not sending me to ŁÁU,WEL,NEW. I was one of the WSÁNEĆ children who went through public elementary, middle school, and high school with no WSÁNEĆ language or culture. I carried the love for learning languages with me from Little Raven to the public school. I loved learning French. Again, it was the songs that drew me and the puppets, the silly wolf, and the caboose filled with language activities. I enjoyed the enthusiasm of the French teacher, maybe a little silly but she was entertaining and she sang catchy tunes.

I never knew then that I was missing out on my own language. It was never spoken about or considered important in my household. My parents were too busy with their own lives, fighting with the effects of being children of residential school

survivors. I knew something was missing at a young age, I just did not know what that was. It was a silent loneliness, knowing that I was a little different from my classmates.

I took French up until grade 8; I received excellent grades and decided to try Spanish in high school. I completed one semester because I was upset that I received a C+ in that class. What a silly thing to do, stop learning the language because I got a lower grade. Again no programs were offered to support our own language in our own territory, but you could learn Japanese, Spanish or French (S_XE_DFELISIYE, personal journal, 2013).

I graduated from Stelly's Secondary in 2001 and my aunt SE,SÁ,ETE signed me up at Camosun College. I told her that I was going to take a few years off and work; she counseled me, "one year will turn to two years, and then three years, take this program and find out what you like and then go from there" (Garcia, personal communication, 2001). This was the year when I finally realized what that void, the searching, and what the hurt was; it was language loss.

I was 18 years old in the First Nations Community Studies program (FNCSP), a young mind, SKIKEL, and a bit lost. This program really made me realize just how little I knew about my culture, my language, and myself. In the FNCSP, we were given an opportunity to enter a Co-op internship at the end of the diploma. I was undecided

regarding what career path I wanted to pursue. I had just met ØOSINIYE Elliott, a SENĆOFEN primary teacher at our night classes that I had started to attend, so I thought maybe that would be a good placement. I spent 2 weeks with her, moving class to class where she taught SENĆOFEN. This is where I realized I wanted to be a teacher, a teacher that integrated SENĆOFEN into my lessons and everyday language in my classroom. Little did I know that I would be teaching from a SENĆOFEN medium, rather than English medium.

In 2003, PENÁWEN (NE STOLES - my partner) and I began to go to his family language classes at the community Heritage Building on Tuesday nights. His father encouraged us to come and learn. I was a bit hesitant, but also really curious. I went to the session with my paper pad and pen. They would talk amongst themselves in SENĆOFEN, go over word lists, tell stories and history, and write sentences down and speak the sentences and translate them into English. I went in with absolutely no SENĆOFEN background and a few LEKEM,IN,EN words. I had absolutely no idea what was being said that night. I looked up at the green chalkboard and had no clue what the sentences meant or how to move my mouth to pronounce what I was seeing. It felt so foreign to me on that first day, and it frustrated me. I did not show my frustration; I didn't want to show how little I knew, so I was silent. I did not know the

SENĆOFEN alphabet, but I went in with my eyes open, my mind open, and wrote and listened. The SENĆOFEN teachers and PENÁWEN's family and relatives did not make me feel inferior; they did not ridicule me or make me feel guilty for not knowing. They did what they were taught from their SELWÁN (mentors). They encouraged us younger ones to listen, repeat, learn, and told us that speaking would then come. They told us, "it was not very long ago that we were sitting in the same seat that you are sitting in now, learning from our SELWÁN" (Elders gathering, personal communication, 2003).

I remember how I felt the first night: confusion, excitement, sadness, happiness, anger, and then hope. I was on an emotional roller coaster ride. I remember feeling emotional about how hard it was trying to learn my heritage language, and angered by having to work so hard to learn a language that should be my first language. I felt saddened about the history of why it is not my first language. But in the end, I was excited and happy that I was making an effort to learn and I was hopeful. STOLČEE's words rang through my head; "If I can learn, anyone can. I was 26 years old when I started; I couldn't even count to 10. I wanted to be able to pray and connect with my creator in my own language and that was the motivation that pushed me to

learn” (Elliott, personal communication, 2001).



Figure 3. ESE (me) and PENÁWEN with child, 2004

Being pregnant with my first daughter changed everything for me. I wanted to learn SENĆOFEN for my unborn baby. My partner and I began to involve ourselves in night classes, and when she was born I would take

her to the night sessions and began to learn the alphabet. We also participated in the Linguistic 159 classes offered through University of Victoria. It was a total win-win situation because I was doing my core course load but needed a fourth class and was able to get credit for it. These classes consisted of a lot of paper and pen learning and oral story telling.



Figure 4. TOLISIYE, 2005 SENĆOFEN for her.

We had our first child and her SILE STOLØEŁ (grandpa) and his late cousin named her. She was named TOLISIYE, from TOL meaning far out at sea. Her SILE calls her princess of the sea. We promised her that we would learn

That summer I ran into QELEQESEĆEN (Tye Swallow), a Biology teacher at the Saanich Adult Education Center (SAEC). He knew that I was pursuing my Bachelors of Education degree. He asked if I wanted to be a part of a mini project, to be a language apprentice creating curriculum, working with technology and Elders. It felt as if the Universe was pulling me towards WŚÁNEĆ. The Universe was working hard at aligning me with SENĆOFEN.

Our three SENĆOFEN teachers carried the torch for 20 plus years with only each other. They were overworked; they built their own curriculum from drawing to



**Figure 5. LIQIFIA
(Second daughter),
2008**

labeling, all by hand. Then at night they would teach classes for our community. They also were asked by community and language organizations to assist them with language revitalization initiatives, and they taught SENĆOFEN full-time in the elementary, high school, and adult center.

Thinking about the future, and their retirement, they knew that they needed a training program. They began to plant the seeds of creating a SENĆOFEN apprenticeship program with the WŚÁNEĆ School Board.

In 2008, I had my second daughter LIQIFIA (LIQI-water lily); her SÍEŁ (older sister) calls her princess of the lakes and ponds. Also in 2009, the WŚÁNEĆ School

board (W̱SB) supported the idea of training young apprentices to shadow and learn from the SENĆOŦEN teachers that worked at the ŁÁU, WEL, NEW Tribal School elementary and newly founded high-school. W̱SB put a call out to the four communities (W̱JOŁEŁP, BOKÉCEN, STÁUTW, W̱SÍKEM) that 3 positions were going to be posted for SENĆOŦEN apprentices. There were 7 applicants that applied, and seven were hired. Out of the seven, six stayed on. This was a new endeavor for W̱SÁNEĆ. All apprentices were working towards degrees in visual arts and education, and one apprentice was working towards their Masters in Counseling. We were hired to work 10 hours a week, which was perfect for all of us because we were all enrolled full-time in post-secondary classes. We were all at different levels of learning, different families represented from our four villages. I was still trying to figure out how I was going to learn SENĆOŦEN, who was going to mentor me, and what was the best method for me to learn. We started our apprenticeship by meeting with our SELWÁN

once a week.



Figure 6. Convocation Renee (S̱XEDFELISIYE) Sampson with her daughters TOLISIYE, 6, LIQIFIÁ, 2, and FE,ILIYE, 1, outside the First Peoples House at University of Victoria. Photo: Sam Van Schie

Teacher dedicated to the survival of her native tongue

Article by Sam Van Schie

It sounds like a lot, but for a woman who gave birth to two of her three children while completing a full university course load—at one point writing a final paper in labor—it was nothing out of the ordinary. “There are three things that are of importance to me: family, education, and SENĆOFEN,” the 27-year-old says; “I have an incredible support network of family that made it possible to reach my academic goals.” Her Elders call her SXEDFELISIYE, meaning hummingbird woman, because she is always working hard, zooming this way and that, and she doesn’t slow down just like a SXEDJELI (hummingbird). Sampson found her hunger for learning in her twenties when she discovered the language of her people was critically endangered. With only a handful of Elders still fluent in their language, she realized that she wanted to be a part of preserving and revitalizing SENĆOFEN. “Language was taken away from our grandparents through the residential school system,” Sampson says. “They were forbidden to speak it, severely punished for speaking the only language that they knew, so it didn’t get passed down to their children.” Reclaiming her native tongue, she felt more connected to her culture. It filled a void in her that she didn’t know was there. Nothing will stand in her way of making sure the children in her community have an opportunity to learn it. “It’s the missing key,” she says. “When they know their language, they know their history.” The first in her family to attend post-secondary school, Sampson has already built up an impressive resume. She’s graduating from U-Vic’s Elementary Education Program with a specialization in language revitalization (CALR). “Everything I learn, it’s not just for me but for my kids and for my people,” she says (Van Schie, p. 11, 2011).

My life partner PENÁWEN was also hired on as an apprentice in 2010, and now we are both on a journey to learn as much of the language as we can so that our daughters will have the opportunity to hear it in our home. PENÁWEN will be graduating from the SENCÓFEN Bachelors of Education program in June 2015 and is working in the Grade One Immersion class along side two other teachers this September.

We have both had the opportunity to facilitate the Elders' gatherings and learned so much from them. Their words stick to my soul, and we will never forget their teachings. The next section will discuss our SELWÁN SKÁPEŁ (Elders gatherings).



SELWÁN SKÁPEŁ (Elders Gathering) Initiative

SŤI SEN ČNES HUISTW TFÁIYE TFE SELEWÁN ŁTE SNOUEŁ TIÁ S,XELTOW SI,IÁM. NIŁ ÇE TFE SOSES ET SÁLEW IŁEČSILEŃ TIÁ SELWÁN Čs ČEOUES TFE SELSÁLES.

ENÁN U, JI,IJEŁ OL E TFE SELSÁLES S,HIEKT TFE SELWÁN S,OSSES. JEÁŁ OL TFE MEMI,MEN SELSÁLES, U, JIET TFÁIYE TFE SELEWÁN LO,E ÇE Čs IŁEČSILEŃ TFE NEN SNEPENEK I, TFE ČELÁŃEN ŁTE TFE EŁTÁLŃEW SNOUEŁ ET WSÁNEĆ SI,IÁM.

NIŁ E TFE SPA,ĶENs TFE ĶŁO,EL ONUEŁ TFE MEMI,MEN SELSÁLES. NIŁ E TFE ŚWĶÁLEČENs E TFE SELEWÁN LE ŁTE ČSU QENT MEQ TFE ĶŁO,EL TU, XENÁN OL TFE MEQ STELITĶEŁ SNOUEŁ TFE WSÁNEĆ TENEW. NIŁ E TFE QENÁ,Ł ŁTE ČSU I,TOTELŃEW MEQ TFE SNIUs SČÁs ŁTE (SŤÁSEN Poster, 2012).

SELWÁN SKÁPEŁ (Elder gathering) logo translation

“Within this design there is a face of an Elder using his hands to pass down our teachings. The hands underneath the Elder’s face represent all of our future SENĆOFEN speakers, giving thanks to our Elder advisors for passing onto us all of the teachings, laws, and beliefs of our WSÁNEĆ people. The small flower in between the small hands is a KŁO,EL (Camas flower). Our people of long ago always gathered and harvested Camas. The feelings of our ancestors were to look after all of the Camas. The KŁO, EL is like our children. This is our way, our responsibility, to learn all of the ways that belong to us” (STÁSEN Poster, 2012).

This section will honour and tell the story of how our SELWÁN have touched my heart and soul with their compassion and open-mindedness, and humble wisdoms from being WSÁNEĆ.

OMET ÇENTOL NE SIÁM SELWÁN (sitting with my respected Elders)

In 2009, I was involved in a TD Indigenous student career project from the University of Victoria, which helps Indigenous students connect with community. Students have a choice of either preparing a workshop, or being apart of a reciprocal giving back through a gathering in community, as well as an opportunity to shadow

different professions. I came to a crossroad. I was in a position where I had to choose from either working at the Center of the Universe observatory, or working at the Saanich Adult Education Center with Elders and being apart of a SENĆOŦEN conference. I was really scared for some odd reason to work with the Elders. I knew of them; they were SIÁM SELWÁN (respected Elders) in our community. I let my ŚWĶÁLEÇEN (inner spiritual feelings) decide for me; it told me that I needed to stick closer to my community, closer to my Elders, and learn SENĆOŦEN. This experience changed my life and the way I looked at the world. Hearing the language in a fluent form, a natural, peaceful, conversation between two buddies touched my soul. They would joke, laugh, and be serious all in one breath. Their work ethic was what we call real CÁCI WSÁNEĆ ŚXENÁŦs (hardworking Saanich ways). They were punctual and respected others they worked with by not being late. They had fast breaks, as they were eager to work. They dedicated their Elder lives to helping preserve their first language. I would go over first voices SENĆOŦEN lists with them, such as the little one doing this, doing that, little one in a canoe, little one turning over the rock. They worked so hard. After a long day of work, they said they could not work on another word that involved a little one. We laughed and joked about this. I was so honoured and felt privileged that I was able to work with our late Elders and one young Elder

SELILIYE. SELILIYE worked with them for years, coordinating rides, scheduling meetings, and was their dear friend and relative. She has a gift. Some linguists might say she is a latent speaker. She is amazing; she can understand fluently, but due to “Indian day schools” and racism as a young girl she did not speak. When SELILIYE went to public school in the 1960s, she wasn’t allowed to speak SENĆOŦEN. “It was a nightmare for me,” she recalls. “We were taught Latin instead. I had no idea what any of it meant. I would get called a dumb Indian. I dreaded going” (Gordon, 2010).

She can understand fluently, but there is a block and I see that block coming down more and more every year. There are few people who can listen to old recordings of Elders and understand fluently. She told us that her mother would only speak SENĆOŦEN to her and all her siblings, and she told us that she would answer in English, but understood everything in SENĆOŦEN. She is able to articulate and translate like no one else I know. She helped us younger ones feel comfortable with our Elders by her upbeat attitude and her laughter. I realized that this is what we need. We needed a way to connect with our Elders. The SENĆOŦEN SELWÁN SKÁPEŁ was bridging that gap. I remember we once spoke about how we recognized that the times have changed. Younger people do not go and visit other Elders that are not their grandparents anymore. Our Elders told us when they were younger that they would go

to other families and visit their Elders and have tea. They told us that we do not see that anymore. So our Elders were happy to be able to speak to young ones that wanted to learn the language. Sometimes they would feel bad; they would feel alone because they had no one to speak the language to. They really looked forward to the sessions. We started with two Elders, and the fire grew from there.



Figure 7. First SELWÁN SKÁPEŁ ŁTE (our Elders gathering) PENÁĆ, SELILIYE, WIJELEK LE I TKOŁEĆTEN LE

STÁSEN SELWÁN SKÁPEŁ (Weekly Elders Gatherings)

After we were titled SENĆOFEN apprentices in 2009, we initiated and continue to maintain a weekly Elders group. Gathering Elders and Apprentices together provides an opportunity to discuss questions as they relate to words, phrases,

stories, and ideas. This initiative connects all of our work and continues to nurture, guide and sustain our SCÅ (STÁSEN poster, 2013).

I cherish the Elder gatherings. The time spent with them, our laughter, stories, and tears. I remember being really shy, and a bit afraid to speak SENCÓFEN in front of them at first. One of our Elders would stop us in our tracks when we were reading SENCÓFEN or saying something and would say, “What was that? Say that again?” Nervous and with all our might we would repeat the SENCÓFEN word again and they would say, “QEN,SET”: be careful how you say that, it almost sounded like you were going to swear. All the other Elders would laugh and we would wipe the sweat off our brow and laugh along with them. The intonation of our Elders is amazing, the waving of the hands and tapping on the table with their finger when they were getting serious. The way they stretch the word out to indicate how “LIIIIILLLL” (far) something was. As a young apprentice, I would catch myself speaking like one of the Elders after spending an afternoon with them. It was if I was a chameleon. I was trying to mimic, mold my own voice to theirs. My partner and I would discuss this. “Why are you speaking like you’re old, like an Elder?”, he would ask me. I said, “What? I am not.” I would not even notice this. This is something I have reflected on many times and continue to reflect on finding my own voice in SENCÓFEN.

We are still learning about Language Revitalization and which practices and methodologies are the best methods for adult learners. We try and stay in the language as much as we can in our gatherings. We thought that this would be very easy for the Elders, but we found out that it was actually quite difficult. In small groups the Elders were able to stay in the language longer, but in large groups it was very difficult, and we were not quite sure what factors caused this (hearing aids, space, too many side conversations, etc.). Sometimes, we felt that they were feeling a bit uncomfortable for us, worried that we did not understand. We would assure them to go ahead and not worry about us. We just wanted to hear them speak fluently, and we wanted to learn. One of the most inspiring phrases that I carry with me and tell other people was from our late Elder Theresa Smith: “ĆOÇES ÇENs TOLNEW” (use what you know). This was instrumental for my language learning. Our Elders encouraged us to “just speak,” and encourage us not to give up – use what you know.

In 2010 the Elders gave me the name SXEDFELISIYE (hummingbird woman). I would always be busy photocopying, making tea/coffee, or preparing food for them. I would help them in whatever way that I could and never slow down. I had two babies as an apprentice and brought my third child FE,ILIYE (FE,IT- meaning truth) to our Elder sessions. They would love seeing them, and would tell me that the babies were

soaking in the language and that they were going to be the next generation to bring back the language. I took this to heart and made it my mission to help make this dream of the Elders come true. Late Elder Ivan Morris told me as he tapped his finger to the table, “NETE SÇÁCEL LELÁNEW SE ŁTE TFE STĒLITKĒŁ ĆE,OUES E TFE SENĆOFEN SKÁŁ ŁTE” (One day we will hear our children using our SENĆOFEN language again in all aspects of life” (personal communication, 2011).

It was very difficult seeing some of our main language warriors leave us; the other Elders did not want to stop our gatherings. They told us that their dear relative or friend would have wanted us to not give up. We lost three of our main language carriers in three years. I made a promise to one of our Elders that I would not stop learning and would pass along what I learned, the knowledge and the SENĆOFEN, to my daughters and our WSÁNEĆ children.

SENĆOFEN TFE ĆELÁNEŃ ŁTE. EWES U XIXEXE I ĆOÇES I ĆE,OUES E TFEN SKÁŁ. EWES U MELLEK TFÁ,E. HO, ÇENS TOTELNEW ŁTE TFE SENĆOFEN, QOMQEM,SET ET ŁNINEŁ KELÁT.

SENĆOFEN is our birthright. Do not be embarrassed or backwards to use your language. Don't forget that. If we learn our language SENĆOFEN, we will strengthen ourselves again. (SENĆOFEN Elders meeting, 2009).

Our Elders play a monumental role in our language learning. The next section
ÁLENENEÇ (learning from homeland) will continue to discuss the importance of
Elder's in my adult language learning.



ÁLEÑENEÇ (Learning from our homeland) Initiative

EÇOS,NONE SEN ÇE ÁLEÑENEÇ TIÁ SXELTOW. U Ç,SE S,ŪIÁM U Ç,SE HIŪ
LE TÁCEL ET XÁLS. I, LÁTEÑs TFE FIFEĹ SNÁNET I TFE ŪETÁCES SXIÁM. I
ŪÁs MEQ STÁÑ OL. ÁLEÑENEÇ ŁTE SU NIĹ (SŪÁSEN Poster, 2012).

ÁLENENEĆ (Learning from the homeland) logo translation

This is the logo for ÁLENENEĆ, or homeland. “The image references a story of the creation of our homelands in WSÁNEĆ. In the story, we say that the Creator made our homelands, the islands, and high mountains from stones that he casted. The stones, however, were actually people who emanated good qualities that the Creator believed we should have. The creator told the islands as he cast them outward, “take care of your relatives.” In the image, the Creator speaks to one of the islands before he casts it out, while the human form appears in a stone that is suspended in mid-air and an island emerges from the water opposite the creator” (STÁSEN Poster, 2012).

Our Elders tell us that we have to remain connected to our TENEW (land), TELETÁCES (islands), and SÇEN,NE (oceans). They taught us that if we are looking for answers, go out on to the land where it is quiet. Go to a spot where you can think, without interruptions. You will always find your way when you are at peace and one with the land. This piece will describe the ÁLENENEĆ programs and interactions with Elders out on our territory.

ÁLENENEĆ ŁTE (Our homeland)

ÁLENENEĆ was a pilot project that began in 2006. The primary objective of this two-month unaccredited course for adults was to bring people and place together and to learn from those experiences.

As a collection of learners, we go to culturally significant places in WŚÁNEĆ territory by kayak or canoe and talk about history, teachings, and ecology.

SENĆOFEN place names frame this context. It is the bringing together of Elders, community, and our students that breathes life into our collective experiences. It is the energy of people, their stories, their knowledge, and their questions, that guide us in learning from WŚÁNEĆ places (SŦÁSEN Poster, 2013).

Since 2006 we have offered several iterations of our program, each time knowing we needed more SENĆOFEN language to fully engage in learning from our homeland (Swallow, personal communication, 2009).

ÁLENENEĆ was the awakening, the mind shift moment when I felt the most connected to our TENEW (land, earth), our language, and our ĆELÁNEN (ancestors). This program was an opening for many of us to a WŚÁNEĆ SENĆOFEN worldview. Of course we are born WŚÁNEĆ, but for many of us younger people we have grown up with WENITEM education system, with little to no language or culture. Being out

on the SÇEN,NE (ocean), smelling the saltwater, and paddling to our TELETÁCES (islands) was the most spiritual, powerful feeling that I ever felt. It was like my ancestors were awaiting my transformation of life, waiting for me to wake up my inner spirit and be open for change.

Many of the apprentices were a part of the ÁLENENEÇ trip and we have spoken together about how it affected our lives and pushed us to want to learn more. This is where our Elders saw something within us that they wanted to nurture.

HÁ,EQ SEN ÇE NE SELWÁN LÁ,E TFE ÁLENENEÇ
(I remember my Elders on our homeland)

I remember going on one of our exertions when I was pregnant with LIQIFIÁ. We were going to SENINES to pull invasive plants. We were all to gather at the Brentwood Bay Marina. One of our Elders was waiting for us there and was he ever strong. He would come on all of our outings to ŁÁU,WEL,NEW Mountain, the SASU (beach), and TELETÁCES (islands). He lived his youthful life on the sea, so he was excited to be going out with us that morning. We were all ready to leave when we saw our other Elder show up. We were surprised as he was not as mobile; his was vision not as good as it used to be, and he needed assistance to navigate around. We were worried whether he would be able to make it up the bank and the hill. He had his son

help him out of the car and we mentioned the bank and we mentioned the hill. We were informed that he had been ready since 5:30 that morning. How could we turn our respected Elder around and say no? So he came. He was grinning ear-to-ear; he was so happy to be out on the water. We needed two strong men to carry him to shore and escort him to the top of the bank. He was happy as he could be. I was supposed to go and help pull broom but I sat there and listened to the Elders sit on top of the hill and reminisced about the old days instead.

They spoke about KĒNES (whale) I KEL,ĽOLEMEĆEN (orca).

HIIFTF LE, E TIÁ SNÁĆEĆ TFE ĆELÁNEŃ LE ĽTE YEFOST TOLW “WAKEM I DENO,EN E TFE KĒNES I KEL,ĽOLOMEĆEN ÁĽE. ENÁN U ŤEĆ E TFE SNÁĆEĆ. EWEN XĆITs ŐE EXINES”

Their Elders told them of times when the whale and orca would jump and swim in our bay. You would see them swim to the arm and never see them emerge. They said we have a very deep SNÁĆEĆ (bay) here. We all looked out on our bay thinking of the times when our relatives of the ocean would come and visit our ancestors. The sun glistened beautifully on the waves that day, and I saw my Elders thinking about the times when they were young. We were silent for a few minutes listening to the leaves

rustle in the wind and I felt a kick from my unborn daughter and tears of happiness emerged, but I held them back (SXEDFELISIYE, personal journal, May 2009).

YÁ ŁTE OX LÁ,E E TFE ÁLENENEÇ LFE. HÍSWKE XÁLS SIÁM E TFE
ÁLENENEÇ ŁTE. I, DOQ ŁTE OX TFE NE ÁLENENEÇ ŁTE
(personal communication, STOLÇEEŁ, 2010).

This was the song that came to my SELWÁN (respected Elder advisor) STOLÇEEŁ when we were camping on WEN,NÁ,NEĆ (Salt Spring Island) on our traditional land. The words are translated, “we are going to our homeland, thank you creator for our homeland. We are going home to my homeland” (personal communication, STOLÇEEŁ, 2010). Being out on WEN,NÁ,NEĆ and learning about our WSÁNEĆ culture was the first time that I felt a connection to place. The experience of sitting where my ancestors sat, closing my eyes, envisioning a time where our beautiful SENĆOFEN language was shared effortlessly around the SONUSE (fire). Not “camp fire” as we call it now but our main source of warmth, our cooking source, and our light.

The echoing of the waves as they crashed along the shore rocked my soul. That yearning, that longing to use a language that felt so foreign, as I struggled to repeat the words were being shared with a bunch of students who all wanted the same thing. We desperately wanted to understand, learn, and speak SENĆOFEN and to know and

think as our ancestors did. My generation has grown up in a different time where being raised on our TELETÁCES (islands) and ŚZEN,NE (ocean) was something we did as a trip, an outing, not the way my great-grandparents lived. Our first attempt to stay only in SENĆOFEN was not a success but rather for many of us, a frustration. It was a learning curve as our minds were not quite ready to participate in it yet, and many of us were afraid, or so accustomed to speaking in WENITEM,ĶEN (English). We could not or were not ready spiritually or mentally to stay in immersion. However, this was a realization that we must work harder, and not give up hope (SXEDFELISIYE, personal journal, August 2011).

TÁCEL,NONET TFE SKÁL ŁTE (Our language has finally arrived)

QELEQESECEN booked something very special for us this year. We went to STOWELL Lake Farm on WEN,NÁ,NEĆ (Salt Spring). We had our meetings in a beautiful large wooden room where we held a massive think-tank-session. We slept in huts and ate organic tasty food. The morning we left STOWELL Lake we made a pact that for the whole day we would only speak SENĆOFEN, no WENITEM,ĶEN. This was our second attempt to do an immersion day from STÁSEN.

When I awoke I almost forgot that this was our immersion day. I lay there for a moment and wondered if PENÁWEN was going to remember. ISTÁ YÁ (let's go)!

PENÁWEN said, so I knew that he was committing himself completely. We jumped up and went to find STOLŹEŁ so we could do a morning SDIWIEŁ (prayer) with him. There were many of us there that morning. We packed up and headed to our camping site. It has become an annual STÁSEN haven, that beautiful point at WEN,NÁ,NEĆ. We set up our tents, ate, relaxed, sang songs, and ate again. It was interesting to see everyone working so hard to stay in SENĆOFEN. I was resting on the beach with my SÁĆs NENSIMU, her very first attempt at having a SENĆOFEN day. I was sleeping and I woke up and said, “where’s PENÁ?” She responded, “EWE NE WENITEM, KEN.” Oh! O ŚO. I said, “EXIN OĆE ET PENÁWEN SIÁM?” She responded, “MÁN” (dad), and closed her eyes and slept. I was so very proud of my aunt for sticking to her guns and even though she just joined the team, it showed her commitment. I was inspired and worked really hard and did not speak any more English that day. It was a fun, easygoing day. I was not stressed at all.

It was interesting when we had visitors approach us, we all refused to speak WENITEM,KEN and they did not know what to do. They got awkward and even put their heads down and backed away. We all just laughed really hard and it empowered us; it was like we jumped over a large hurdle that we kept tripping over before. We ended the night with a competitive game of SLEHÁL. What a night! Why was our first

attempt at an immersion day not successful? Maybe we were not there in our language proficiency? Maybe there were too many people? Not enough committed to staying in the language before? Reflecting back on this subsequent day I feel like it was a monumental moment and a sign of growth. This was a milestone for measuring our language growth as apprentices (S̱EDFELISIYE journal, 2013).

QELEQESEĆEN shared with us that he was swimming, even drowning at times and told us how he struggled with not understanding what was going on. It was funny; from my perspective I thought he was doing just fine. I think I was just excited that everyone was having fun and it was an experience that I will never forget.



Figure 8. WEN,NÁNEĆ ÁLENENEÇ Trip.



WICISTEL (Master-Apprentice) Initiative

YOF OL U, ÇENENITEL ŁTE MEQ TFE WILNEW SNOUEŁ ET WSÁNEĆ. U, HEÇOSTEN TFÁ,E NEŹE SNEPENEK SNOUEŁ TIÁ, S,XELTOW SIÁM. NIŁ E TFE ŠXENÁN_s ŁTE TFÁ,E ÇSU ÇENENITEL TFE MEQ SÁN E ŁÁ,E ET WSÁNEĆ. NIŁ E TFE S,OSSES ŁTE MEQ TFE ŠWUÁLI, I, E TFE MEQ STELITKEŁ SNOUEŁ TFE ŠWUÁLI SELSOSES.

DÁDESET ŁTE TFE SENÇOFEN SKÁL_s I, KÉLNEUEL ŁTE LÁ,E TFE WICISTEL SKÁPEŁ. NIŁ E TFE QENÁ,Ł ET ŁNINEŁ ÇSU YÁ, DOQ IŁĆÁLE TFE SKÁPEŁ I, IŁEÇSILEŃ TFE SKÁL I, TFE NENNENE, I, TFE STETIÇEN I, TFE ENINES ŁTE LÁ,E TFE MEQ Á,LELEŃ_s ŁTE. NIŁ E TFE SONUSE ONUEL TIÁ S,XELTOW I, E TFE STELITKEŁ ŠELOQ TFE SONUSE I, E TFE ŠWUÁLI Ç_s QENT E TFE STELITKEŁ I,ŠELEJ E TFE STELITKEŁ SELSOSES. EWES TEQ TFE SONUSE TIÁ, NIŁ E TFE ŠWHELIS E TFE SKÁLS ŁTE SNOUEŁ TIÁ SONUSE SI,IÁM (SŤÁSEN Poster, 2012).

WÍCISTEL (Master-Apprentice) logo translation

This design shows the teachings that the people in WŚÁNEĆ are always helping one another. It is the law and belief of the WŚÁNEĆ people to help one another.

“In the logo, the faces on the outside are our parents, and inside are the faces of our children. The fire in the middle is the SENĆOŦEN language. Within our Master-Apprentice sessions we are always practicing our SENĆOŦEN Language. It is the responsibility of each one of us to pass down our teachings and give them to our children, our nieces and nephews, our grandchildren, and those yet to be born within all of our homes and villages. “Don’t let the fire out.” It is the life of our language within the fire of the design, my respected ones” (SŦÁSEN Poster, 2012).

First of all, I would like to raise my hands to Leanne Hinton and the Indigenous people in California that have created, participated, and documented the Master-Apprenticeship (MAP) model. WŚÁNEĆ has learned from their research, books, and workshops. I will now discuss the significance of partaking in my own MAP experience.

WÍCISTEL (Master-Apprentice Relationships: Teachers Teaching the Teachers)

We began this initiative in 2009 with funding from the Vancouver Foundation. Initially we partnered apprentices with our current language instructors. It was a good fit as our current language teachers are all approaching retirement. Because of the decline of our fluent Elders, we had to be creative and partner people in small groups. For example, when we began, we utilized 2 to 3 apprentices to work with one Elder (STÁSEN poster, 2012).

Before the master-apprentice

As SENĆOFEN apprentices, one part of our job was to shadow the SENĆOFEN teachers. This was our first pairing with a fluent speaker. We would watch what the teachers were teaching, photocopy notes for them, or even write the notes down on the board. I would observe, participate, read things off the board, and have my ears opened. My mentor would give me resources such as notes, SENĆOFEN word lists. The most cherished moments were when STOLÇEEL would tell us our history, place names, and I,LEÇSILEN TFE SYESES (passing down our

teachings and history). I did not even know at the time about language revitalization and strategies. All that I knew was that I wanted to learn my language. I did not know how I was going to do this but I knew if I was able to spend time with our language teachers and Elders that I would pick up something. I did not intend to become a SENĆOFEN teacher. My intentions were to integrate what I was learning into my classroom as a general teacher, as I was busy trying to finish my B.Ed. at the University of Victoria.

Our mentors (STOLÇEEL and ÇOSINIYE) were funded through the Master-Apprentice Program (MAP) with First Peoples Heritage and Language Culture Council as apprentices with a senior speaker (their mother) in 2008 before we began. Following this the organization approached STÁSEN TFE SENĆOFEN to do a workshop with the newly hired apprentices and elders. This workshop informed our group about the work that Leanne Hinton had done with the Indigenous peoples of California and laid out the “do’s and don’ts” of a Master-Apprenticeship model.

The WSÁNEĆ MAP sessions did not follow the typical 1 mentor, 1 apprentice model, due to the fact that WSÁNEĆ did not have enough mentors at the time.

Some of our STÁSEN apprentices that completed their 2-year MAP training became Mentors themselves through the SENĆOFEN Bachelor of Education program.

STOLØEŁ's camp (my mentor)

In 2010, I asked STOLØEŁ to be my mentor. I knew he was a really busy man, and he needed his summer break. I asked him if we could meet 2 hours in the morning



Figure 9. Master-apprentice 5 am summer session at STOLØEŁ camp with baby FE,ILIYE 2010

so that it would not interfere with any of his responsibilities or yard work. So we would meet at 5:30 in the morning. My youngest daughter FE,ILIYE, who was almost 4 months

old, would come and listen to her SILE (grandpa) SDIWIEŁ (pray), and I XIÁM ØO

(tell stories) around his fire. I remember I would jump up and fly out the door in the early morning. STOLØEŁ could probably hear me a mile away because all the SĶELAXE (dogs) on Latess road would howl up a storm. The first goal I set for myself was to learn how to DIWIEŁ: acknowledge my creator XÁLS and everything that XÁLS has made on this earth. I really related to STOLØEŁ's story about wanting to be able to speak to XÁLS in our own language. So I observed and listened for a few weeks, then he would have me repeat after him, and finally he would get me to lead. However, favorite sessions were when he would tell me our SXIÁM (stories) of

LELEFEN (eel woman), SXÍEQES (raccoon), SĆÅNEW (salmon), and of course SQ,TO (raven) and all his own adventures (SXEDFELISIYE, personal journal, August 2011).

Centering myself around prayer has helped my little family and now my own girls lead prayers in our home, and at our relative's gatherings. They will even do their acknowledgments if we go to restaurants.

STOLÇEE was not the only mentor I had. ÇOSINIYE also led sessions with SI,OLTENOT and me. ÇOSINIYE took a hands-on approach and would also have us practice our reading in SENCÓFEN. Every time it was my time to read my hands would get sweaty and my ears felt like they were on fire. We created a lot of songs and slideshows, and she would use a lot of imagery and story-sequencing.

Doing a Master-Apprentice (what FPCC now call Mentor-Apprentice) is something I would love to start up again. I feel like I would be able to move to another level of proficiency. Just the other day, I went for lunch with the apprentices and STOLÇEE and we stayed in the language the whole time. My daughters were there as well and their SILE noticed my oldest NENE TOLISIYE listening to what we were saying. He was really happy she understood pieces of what we were saying. PENÁC, her SÁC's (uncle), told her in the language to keep up the good listening and not to

worry because she would understand us completely soon, and to never give up trying (PENÁĆ, personal communication, 2014). It was an awesome moment. TOLISIYE led the SDIWIEŁ, gave thanks for our food in SENĆOFEN, and I could see how proud her SILE was of her. I am so proud of my daughters. I was an adult when I learned how to say a prayer and my daughters who are 9, 6, and 4 years old can say a prayer. It is effortless for them and part of their normal day to acknowledge our world and families around them through SENĆOFEN.



Figure 10. HÍSWKE XÁLS SIÁM (Thank you great creator)



ĆELÁNEN,ĶEN (Ancestral voices) Initiative

SÇÁs SCÅ ŁTE SNÁs ET ĆELÁNEN,ĶEN. I,ĽEÇSILEŃ ÇO TFE SELEWÁN EÇs
ĶÁL,TEŃs TFE NEN S,ĶIÁM. ĶIÁM ÇO I, U ĆSE LÁ,E TFE S,ĶIÁM E TFE
MEQ. TELE,TOFEL,NEW I, U S,YESES ÇO ÇŁ ĶÁL,TEŃs. WU,ĆISTEN OL ÇSU
NIĽ (SŤÁSEN Poster, 2012).

ĆELÁNEN,ĶEN (Ancestral voices) logo translation

This logo represents the project we call Ancestral Voices. To be consistent with all other programs and projects the name was changed to a SENĆOFEN name, which is ĆELÁNEN,ĶEN. “ĆELÁNEN,ĶEN refers to stories told by recorded Elders. The stories of our Elders contain the beliefs and history of WŚÁNEĆ. The image is made in the traditional spindle whirl fashion, where the image repeats itself and moves in the direction of a cycle. The human figures represent our storytellers, who are passing on the language and teachings, which are in the form of the animals that are represented in the image” (SĶÁSEN Poster, 2012).

Even though we work around the clock revitalizing and preserving our SENĆOFEN language, it is still critically endangered. We have less than 5 first language speakers left in WŚÁNEĆ. We are so lucky that our Elders thought about the changing times and the future and spent hours documenting their stories and writing down hundreds of wordlists and sentences. At times it feels like they are communicating through the recordings. Related to this, I would like to share an interesting story.

During an Elders’ session the Elder we were sitting with was listening to an archival recording of Phillip Pelkey (PP). The Elder on the recording (PP) could not

remember a place name and the Elders we were sitting with was trying to figure out what he (PP) was referring to. The Elder we were sitting with said, “SMOKEĆ,” and the Elder (PP) on the recording said, “EWE, EWES SMOKEĆ” (No, not point Roberts). We all looked at one another, laughed and thought what a coincidence that both Elders (the our Elder we were sitting with and Elder (PP) on the recording) were thinking along the same lines. It felt like they were having a conversation across time.

This next section will discuss our archiving and mobilizing initiatives and how it has helped my language learning.

CELÁÑEN, KEN (Archiving and Mobilizing Ancestral Voices)

This was our most recent initiative that began in 2012 with funding from First Peoples Heritage and Language Culture Council (FPHLCC). Thankfully, WSÁNEĆ has a history of language documentation. We continue to reach out to the community in order to safeguard all language materials through digitization.

As a team, our next step is to figure out how to mobilize the materials. First Voices (<http://www.firstvoices.com>) has supported the development of an online language curriculum utilizing Language Tutor (FVLT). In addition, in partnership with the University of Northern Texas, we are engaged in a SENĆOFEN Dictionary project.

We are also currently creating a language lab, in partnership with the University of Victoria, to be housed within our school.

Networking has been key to many of the recent initiatives that we have been working with. When I was in my Bachelor's program we took a Linguistic 181 course. We looked at Tim Montler's work that was published years before and we had so many questions about the reasoning behind his translating and transcribing, as well as the history behind these stories. I approached my professors Adam Werle and Janet Leonard about possibly reaching out to Tim Montler. We, as young apprentices, had only heard that he worked with our Elders in the late 70s, 80s and early 90s and then disappeared into the US after that. Adam emailed Montler and to our surprise he got a quick reply back and forwarded his conversation to me.

After communicating with Montler, he shared many audio files of Elders that were given to him and some that he recorded. We utilized them right away; our STÁSEN team has studied these recordings and transcribed many with other Elders. In my classroom I use the recordings of stories and play it while my children have free time in the classroom.

Connected to this, intonation is a topic that interests me. The only recordings that we have are of Elders in their 70s or 80s. I often think about the past and wonder

what a young woman or a child might have sounded like. The majority of the recordings are male. Sometimes I hear people say that the younger generation speaks too fast; however, in many of the recordings that we have listened to, the Elders speak so fast they blend or drop entire sounds. This is fascinating and interesting to study. I think that personality also has an influence on the way that one speaks. However, I agree with my colleagues on the influence of WĒNITEM,ĶĒN on SENĆOŦEN. We do need to try the best we can to stay away from anglicizing our SENĆOŦEN. This is very challenging because WĒNITEM,ĶĒN is our first language. These tapes and recordings are very precious to our department as it gives us a glimpse into the past and fluent SENĆOŦEN.

We hear people speak about the old way of speaking and the modern way of speaking, and one day we might be like the Hawaiians and have a dictionary of the ancient SENĆOŦEN and the modern SENĆOŦEN. There are so many new terms that are being created that the Language Authority, SELWĀN (mentor advisors), and apprentices have a lot of work ahead of them. One recommendation from the STĀSEN Department is the creation of a lexicon committee that will work closely with our Language Authority.

Now that we have an immersion program we have been faced with many challenges in terms of scientific and mathematical terminology. Many new words have been created this year, and the majority of the terms have been changed into SENĆOFEN. First we analyze the old recordings, look at draft dictionary notes to see if our Elders may have discussed certain terms, and if they referenced something we will use that term from the recording. Listening to the recordings and creating new curriculum go hand in hand. The next section XETSITES will go more in depth about the curriculum development.



XETSITES (Curriculum development) Initiative

NIĚ ĆE Ć,SE LÁ,E E TFE SKÁL XTIT. U ĆENENITEL SE LFE OL ĆENTOL TFE WUÍĪSTENEK SIÁM I TFE SELEWÁN SIÁM SU WUÍĪST SE. XETSITES SE TFE ÁLI STÁNES U ĆEOUES OL TFE SKÁL ĒTE. STITEM OL SĀs TFE SĀs ET ĒNIĒĒ U ĪĒĀSILEŅ OL TFE ÁLI SNEPENEKs I TFE SYESES, ĒTE. SU WUÍĪST ĒTE OL TFE STIs E TFE SKÁL ĒTE I TFE SXENÁNs ÁLE E ĒÁ,E E TIÁ WSÁNEĆ. LO,E ĀO LÁTEN TFE S,ĪIÁM ĀSE LÁ,E TFE ĀELÁNEN I TFE SELEWÁN LE ĒTE I TFE WUÍĪSTENs I TFE SKÁLs. NIĚ ĆE TFE EĒTÁLNEW LÁ,E TFE S,XELTOW TIÁ,.

U HIWESTES TFE SXÁLEĒ TFE EĒTÁLNEW TEW U XENÁN ET ĒNIĒĒ. U ĀOĀES OL TFE SNÁUTW Ās ONESTEN ET ĒNIĒĒ NIĚ ĆE Ā,SXÁLEĒ ĒTE (STÁSEN Poster, 2012).

XETSITES (Curriculum development) logo translation

This logo shows a “human figure that represents the W̱SÁNEĆ people honouring our writing system. We give acknowledgement to its use in what has been developed to date and our ongoing progress in materials being developed.

In collaboration with our respected SENĆOŦEN teachers and our respected Elders, we work together on what is necessary to pass down and teach to our children. We use the gift that was given to our people, the SENĆOŦEN alphabet. The alphabet has proven to be an essential element in the revitalization of our language. We will develop all of our material using only SENĆOŦEN to encourage the use of our sacred language. It is very important to pass down all of our disciplines, teachings, history, and the ways of our W̱SÁNEĆ people in the material being developed. We have created books from recordings and translated existing books to accommodate our language within our belief system” (S̱ÁSEN Poster, 2012).

This section on XETSITES will describe the S̱ÁSEN TFE SENĆOŦEN curriculum development initiatives. There have been so many projects on the go that I will highlight only a few in this section.

XETSITES (SENĆOFEN Curriculum and Materials Development)

In order to grow the amount of curriculum and materials that our immersion school and community needs, we have initiated several Traditional Story projects and a SENĆOFEN beginner reader's project. We currently have a curriculum development team that is creating Kindergarten and Primary (K-3) immersion materials in order to fill this need.

Many times I have thought to myself, and other apprentices have expressed the same thoughts, about how easy English teachers have it. They can go to the store, the library, or on-line and "BAM" there are teaching resources at their fingertips.

However, all Indigenous language teachers know that if you have an idea or a lesson that you want to conduct you better be prepared to create, translate, and illustrate it yourself.

We are fortunate to have a computer digital master and three artists on our team. When they are not teaching they are making books, posters, and resources for our classrooms. They use InDesign creative suites, Photoshop, bamboo art sketchpads, and iBook programs, and are helping to create and digitize many of the stories that they work on. Many of the apprentices have taught themselves how to use these complicated programs and have produced beautiful digitized books such as SPÁEF I

SQTO (raven and bear), that have only been passed down orally until now. All the materials produced from STÁSEN use WŚÁNEĆ art designs. We want our artwork to represent our culture, and acknowledge our ancient designs and color use is just as important as revitalizing SENCÓFEN. Our artists are passionate about making sure we are exposing our WŚÁNEĆ students to WŚÁNEĆ art.

We have spent every summer making resources and have labellers to help translate existing English books. Our Elders and more proficient apprentices make the books. Elders will translate the books orally and the apprentices will then type out and label the books.

Community involvement is another initiative that we are always stirring toward. We are currently creating on-line lessons, and a dictionary that will be in paperback, as well as on-line with recordings. LE,NONET (immersion school) parents also receive parent-kits that have flash-cards, mini-posters, CD's with songs or sentences on them, as well as some short stories.

Many, if not all, of the materials and resources made are used in our LE,NONET SCUL,ÁUTW immersion program.



LE,NOŇET SCUL,ÁUTW

NIĚ ØE SXEL,TOWs TFE LE,NOŇET SCUL,ÁUTW TIÁ. NIĚ ØO FE ČEL,ČIYES
TFE EĚTÁLNEW TFE SĶELÁLNEW I, TFE ĚĶÁLJ TIÁ. ČÁ,ČI OL FE ČIYE ØO
ELXITENs TFE MOLSĚN. XENĚN,ÁLNEN TFE ÁLI OL WILNEW ØO EØs
Š,XENÁNs FE ČIYE SIÁM. XENÁN OL U, ØSI SĶELÁLNEW I, ØIL SU JISEN.
XENÁN OL I,JISENs TFE S,XENÁNs FE ČIYE SNOUEĚ TFE EĚTÁLNEW. I, U,
XENÁN OL I,JISENs TFE SĶELÁLNEW. Á,I SE OL TFE SĚLITKEĚ ØENTOL
TFE SKÁL ĚTE XENÁN TFE MEQ ČELÁ,U SE ĚĶÁLJ (SĚÁSEN Poster, 2012).

LE,NONET SCUL,ÁUTW (SENĆOFEN Survival school) logo translation

In the LE,NONET SCUL,ÁUTW logo “the blue jay, human being, tree, and the moon are all represented. Our stories tell us that the blue jay was a human being who always gathered blue berries. Her good work ethic is a WŚÁNEĆ value that we follow. The tree is represented in two forms, as both negative and positive space. The negative space is the spiritual form of the tree, the non-tangible form. The positive form of the tree emerges, growing inside the human being who holds a berry/seed simultaneously as the blue jay. The moon represents a continuum of growth in relation to the language, values, and teachings” (SŦÁSEN Poster, 2012).

LE,NONET SCUL,ÁUTW SENĆOFEN Survival school was a dream that came to reality with hard work and determination. This section will discuss the steps it took to get to where we are today. I will share my personal reflection, our philosophy, and key methodologies that we implement in our immersion school.

Does WŚÁNEĆ community support language revitalization?

In the fall of 2009, as part of the Aboriginal Service Plan (ASP) with the University of Victoria we conducted a two-fold survey with our WŚÁNEĆ nation. We looked at identifying community members that would be interested in taking the

proposed Bachelors of Education in Language Revitalization and we questioned the community if they wanted language immersion programming at the WSB. Parents were asked if they would send their child to an immersion daycare and pre-school if one were available. WSÁNEĆ community indicated with 98% affirming that they wanted SENĆOFEN revitalized within their community and 93% answered positively that they would send their child to an immersion daycare and pre-school if one were provided. Once the community indicated that they would send their children to an immersion program we took the leap and implemented our survey findings (STÁSEN TFE SENĆOFEN Report, 2011).

The LE,NOŃET SCUL,ÁUTW SENĆOFEN Survival School

SENĆOFEN is the medium through which our pre-school, kindergarten, and following grades will be taught. We also follow the B.C. Ministry curriculum. With the inception of our Language Nest in January 2012, the first cohort of students entered full day Kindergarten in September 2013, and will enter Grade One in September 2014. Our plan is to follow this group and lay the pathway for SENĆOFEN immersion programming for students up to grade three by 2016. Our mission and vision will continue to guide us while we foster and nurture this program.

LE,NONET Mission Statement:

Ć,SE LÁ,E TFE XAXE TFE SKÁL ŁTE.
U,DOT OL TFE SENĆOFEN ÁŁE E TIÁ WŚÁNEĆ.
WUCIST TFE SKÁLs I, TFE Ś,XENANs Ć,SE LÁ,E TFE ÁLENENEŹ TFE
WŚÁNEĆ.
TI TFE S,YESES SU ŚTENIST ŹENTOL E TIÁ ÁNEŹ I, ŹE,ŹÁĆELES E TFE
ŚW,KÁLEŹEN E TIÁ WŚÁNEĆ.
SNINU SE TFE I,TOTELNEW I, SIÁM,SET SE TFE EŁTÁLNEW.
SIÁM ŚWEŁOKE SU NIŁ.

(Translation)

Our language comes from the Sacred One.
SENĆOFEN is the original language of this emerging land.
We will teach from the ways and beliefs of our WŚÁNEĆ homeland.
Continue to value our history and will move forward with contemporary education
rooted in our WŚÁNEĆ worldview.
Our program will model WŚÁNEĆ disciplines and values to foster respected families.

LE,NONET SCUL,ÁUTW Kindergarten is rooted in WŚÁNEĆ values and
culture. We have created an immersion environment (8:00-2:30) where the children
have an opportunity to acquire SENĆOFEN language by participating in their natural
surroundings. They participate in outdoor education four afternoons a week (12:30-
2:30).

LE,NONET Kindergarten Program language methods and implementation

The program is based on the enhancement of different learning models:

- SENĆOFEN based curriculum based from TFE SĆELÁNEŃ ET WŚÁNEĆ PUC–
WŚÁNEĆ 13 ŁKÁLJ Saanich 13 moon cycle.
- SENĆOFEN Kindergarten Language Essentials (First Nations School Association)
- WIU,SET TFEN SEŁTÁLNEW ØENTOL SENĆOTEN Kindergarten adapted
HOP curriculum (PE)
- SENĆOFEN TÁLEN Saxon Math Kindergarten
- Accelerated Second Language Acquisition Greymorning Skill-sets
- SĆEL,SISEŃ SENĆOFEN Sign Language
- QÁLYN TFE QÁDEN (Moe the mouse)
- Total Physical Response (TPR)
- Communicative Activities/Master Apprentice Activities
- ÁLEŃENEØ ŁTE Program “Learning from our homeland”.
- SENĆOFEN SXÁLEŁ TFE SENĆOFEN PUCS (A-Y)

ÁLEŃENEØ, outdoor education program is the context through which we teach the Kindergarten curriculum. Our SELWÁN (Elders) continue to express the importance of learning from our homeland and encourage us to teach our younger ones to be stewards of the TENEW (land). Place based learning and field trips throughout our territory teach our children their sense of belonging to place. It also fosters a

healthy lifestyle as they hike, climb mountains, and trek through bushes and forests.

Not only are they being exposed to all our natural elements they are also learning

about the different eco-systems.

Utilizing a Nature Kindergarten program validated our SELWÁNs wishes. We incorporated similar guidelines from Sooke's Nature Kindergarten pilot project. A Nature Kindergarten provides young children with large amounts of time in natural outdoor settings where they can play, explore, and experience natural systems and materials found there (Wellhousen, 2002). Engaged outside in all types of weather, children and educators investigate natural phenomenon and learn about the place in which they live.

We have borrowed the Swedish expression, "There is no bad weather, just bad clothing." We purchased "muddy buddy" rain gear, and all students purchased rain boots. No weather kept us inside. Some of the weather highlights were NÁKE POLSENITEL (snow soccer), and playing tag in a wind storm along the beach.

Safety will always be our primary focus for our program. In the beginning of the school year, we utilize a site behind the ŁÁU, WEL, NEW Tribal School where children learn to be safe in nature. We participated in many drills that involved WTEKNEĆ (cougar) safety, SONUSE (fire) safety, ČÍEXT TFE TENEW (earthquake)

safety, boundary games, and NÁJNEĆ EĚTÁLNEW stranger danger. Other sites include KĚNNES (beach and waterfall) and the WJOĚĚP (beach and campground). We will continue to identify sites where children will be exposed to a WSÁNEĆ cultural understanding of place.

Implementing the Greymorning methodology in our immersion program

In 2010, Dr. Stephen Greymorning brought his Accelerated Second Language Acquisition methodology to STÁSEN TFE SENĆOFEN. His method uses visualization and immersion as the main teaching tools. Many WSÁNEĆ language programs use his method in their language programs. In his article *Hinono'eitiinoowu' and the Work of Language Survival* (Greymorning, 2004), Greymorning outlines an extensive list of language immersion programs in which his Arapaho community has been involved. He speaks about the success and the failures in his community, the language levels, and the rate of language loss. Like many Indigenous nations that were looking for inspiration, Greymorning went to Hawai'i and networked with the Māori people to observe their efforts to save their Heritage Language.

Greymorning's journey of building an immersion program closely mirrored the journey that WSÁNEĆ took in creating our LE,NONET SCUL,ÁUTW (SENĆOFEN survival school). During his workshop, he highlighted their process: seeking funding

and writing proposals, enlisting community support, finding willing participants, hiring teachers, and building an immersion curriculum.

One impressive factor was Greymorning's evaluation of the potential teachers who were going to be working with the children. The interview process consisted of a 30-minute, video-recorded interview of potential teachers engaging with children. As noted by Greymorning: "It was interesting to see that when actually faced with having to speak Arapaho to the children, some of the best speakers could not get beyond their barrier of feeling it made little sense to speak to children if they could not understand and answer back" (2004, p. 219). Greymorning noted that the number one challenge in the beginning stages of creating an immersion program was that the staff often fell back into English. We faced the same challenge when we first started our pre-school here in WSÁNEĆ. Greymorning emphasized that the teachers needed inspiration and proper immersion training. He took his teachers to Hawai'i to find the motivation and skills that spark the "fire within" to teach through an immersion environment.

In 2013, our STÁSEN program travelled to Hawai'i for the International Conference on Language Documentation and Conservation, as well as the Chief Atham conference in Kamloops, B.C. While in Hawai'i one question posed to the Hawaiian teachers was, "where are your Elders in the classrooms?" The response was

a bit surprising. We were told the majority of the teachers involved in the immersion school are second language learners, however, when they started they had more Elders in the classrooms. They found it was the Elders that were slipping back into English. So for this reason, as well as the energy that it takes to be in the classroom, they did not have any Elders directly in the classroom. They said their Elders are involved with other initiatives within the school, and are involved but not in the classrooms on a daily basis (HILO field study, personal communication, 2013). We can relate to their story. We too have experienced Elders using English in our immersion programs in WSÁNEĆ; it is a tough situation, but we are moving forward. We now have apprentices and our mentors (second language learners) who are able to run the programs in full immersion.

Teacher-Learner

Given that STÁSEN TFE SENCÓFEN is at the building capacity stage, we have created an immersion program with teachers who are not first language speakers or fully fluent. I am one of those teachers. Without knowing about the article *How to teach when the teacher is not fluent* (Hinton, 2003), STÁSEN followed many of Leanne Hinton's suggested strategies such as "lesson proper" and "rituals". "Lesson

proper” is learning language for a particular lesson and “rituals” which helps to create repetitive language for daily routines (Hinton, 2003, p. 80).

When I first started in the Language Nest, I would have labels of questions or phrases and recipe cards with my teacher phrases close at hand, until I did not need them. I would research my lesson, sit with my mentor, and create lessons, activities, and songs. On my own I would create a song from my notes and then have my mentor edit it. We would repeat phrases like “YÁ ȚEȚSISEN” (go wash your hands) and demonstrate the routines everyday until it was known. Then I would review the language alongside my students. Knowing terminology for discipline and classroom management is critical; then teachers need informal language to carry them through the day. We used visuals and TPR to demonstrate this to our students. For example, we would use cultural teachings such as JENI (wild woman) that teaches children about listening and appropriate behaviour. Hinton coined the term “classroom patter” to describe this language (2003, p. 81). Storytelling can be seen as a task that only a fluent speaker would be able to do. Hinton discusses the role of proper lessons in helping teacher-learners with storytelling, including the importance of working closely with one’s mentor on language needed to conduct a class. Storytelling can be challenging but with the help of visuals, drama, and your mentor, this task is not as

huge as it seems. Chief Atham has shown us through the TPR storytelling workshops that even a semi-fluent teacher can achieve this task. Having a mentor at our side helps a teachers' language growth and creates a more fluent learning environment.

“Am I ready?”

On Stage

What happens to one that gets pushed out on stage too soon before having a chance to rehearse, or study the script?

They hope they pull it off, save face.

Are they doing it –the play justice? Will the production falter? Can the play continue on with actors knowing only half or less of the script? Or what if you can't read up to par or memorize your lines?

(S_XE_DFELISIYE, personal journal, 2011)

When I was tasked with establishing our Language Nest, I had only read secondary sources. I wished there had been a guide that told me how to set one up back then. It was a frightening and exciting time, as I had just graduated with my B.Ed. I spent the whole summer creating curriculum, and PENÁWEN NE STOLES (partner) renovated the old Little Raven building where my SENCÓFEN journey began. I was coming full circle to the place were I first heard SENCÓFEN and now I was going to be the SENCÓFEN teacher.

My twitching eye and restless nights faded once I jumped into the adrenaline rush of teaching. Our pilot program started in 2011 with 8 students from 8:00-4:30,

five days a week, which was a really good model. I learned a lot of SENĆOŦEN that year, and had my second NENE (daughter) LIQI attend the program. It was difficult for the first semester having to teach my daughter, who was not ready to share her TÁN (mom) with her classmates. I would get home and head straight to bed as my brain was drained from being immersed in a new way of thinking.

Due to funding and licensing requirement changes in 2012, the program looked more like a typical preschool program (8:00-11:30). Sustainability is always an issue, and we had to balance Nominal Role funding requirements with program length.

In the summer of 2012, I started the Masters in Language Revitalization at the University of Victoria. The course content was beneficial but what was really amazing was networking with other Indigenous communities. I was able to see where we currently sit in our Language Revitalization planning in comparison with the other nations (e.g. self-government NWT). One thing that came out of the readings and lectures was the need for our children to be immersed in their immersion programs for at least 5 hours per day. As such, the fact that our program was cut to 2.5 hours has never sat well with me. This is a challenge we really need to confront moving into the future.

My cohort is moving on

This year, 2014 I made the difficult decision to stay in SENĆOŦEN Kindergarten. This meant that my cohort of 17 students (10 SU,WÍŦOŦ (boys), 7, SĚENSĚENEĆOŦ (girls), many of which I have had since they were 3 years old, would be leaving my nest. I have potty-trained many of them, and witnessed their SENĆOŦEN growth. At first they would look at me “like a deer in the headlights” when we would speak SENĆOŦEN to them. Now they joke, create their own songs, and use language without being prompted, all in SENĆOŦEN. They are the first children to become emergent SENĆOŦEN readers in Kindergarten and it fills my heart with hope.

I was talking to a friend about the detachment issues that I was feeling. I was joking with her saying; “no one prepared me for this in the education program.” I said “I guess when you have a regular class you know that they will be moving on every year. But I have had them for 2.5 years, as I sobbed into a tissue” (SĚEDFELISIYE, personal journal, 2013).

Creating two immersion programs (pre-school and kindergarten) has been very time consuming and I have sacrificed much. I have worked many 14-hour days, every Sunday and all summer for two years, as well as being a full-time graduate student, and

a mother of three. I felt my energy was spent and the prospect of creating a Grade One program is something I choose not to do. In addition, the SENCOFEN Bachelors of Education program is coming to the end and I have seen the growth in those soon-to-be teachers. I am confident and comfortable with the thought of my teammates taking on Grade One and my LE, NONET STELITKEŁ.

I need time to finish my Masters, build on my kindergarten curriculum, and slow down and focus on my own family's language learning. Those beautiful gifted children have changed my life and I am happy that we will be merging our Grade One and Kindergarten programs through our ÁLENENEÇ (outdoor education programming), recesses, and our morning prayers.

Bringing the language home

Fishman (2001) emphasizes that language in the home is essential for language transmission. Hinton's newest book has created a flood of excitement. WSÁNEĆ families are eager to try the Hernandez family plan model from *Bringing our Languages Home: Language Revitalization for Families* (BLH) (Hinton, 2013). The last chapter (BLH) describes a family plan similar to the master-apprentice plan; however, the Hernandez families from Kawaiisu have created an easy-to-follow roadmaps that can incorporate the whole family, from Elder to child. Some of the

activities include recordings for the entire family and immersion activities for children.

I am hoping to create a SENĆOFEN family plan this year that will include my own little family and my children's grandmothers who are their caregivers when we are working. I would like to include more extended family as we develop our family plan.

STÁSEN is about to embark on implementing "bringing the language home" plan (Hinton, 2013), as we prepare a new SENĆOFEN initiative that involves parents and their children called ØENSIST, TOLW HÁLE (holding hands together). These new programs will be run after school, and we will provide a light supper and offer bus transportation. My new project goal is to create a new initiative titled KAK I TÁN (baby and mothers) program where we look at babies' first language acquisition. My hopes are to create an immersion environment for infants, create baby resources for local Head Starts, and create infant-toddler rooms. We want to start the transmission of SENĆOFEN earlier than pre-school. We want our babies to become first language speakers. We have not had a SENĆOFEN first language speaker in over 70 years. This is an area of interest and I will be exploring this area in the next years to come.

My partner and I will be actively involved in POLŚENITEL (soccer) with many of my immersion students (U8 team) and my middle child LIQIFIÁ. We will

conduct our practices/drills in SENĆOŦEN. We will be teaching soccer terminology to our players and create SENĆOŦEN soccer resources for parents to learn.

Another, part of ÇENSIST, TOLW HÁLE is having SENĆOŦEN classes for parents. Apprentices will teach (Accelerated Second Language Acquisition) Greymorning classes for parents and “Where is your keys?” classes that involve sign language, SENĆOŦEN, and advanced immersion places for more proficient community members. We are constantly looking at ways to get the parents involved, and this is an exciting time. We, the apprentices are looking forward to participating in these new programs.

Summary

Each SŦÁSEN TŦE SENĆOŦEN initiative has been significant to my language learning. I have found out that I am a hands-on-learner and when I learn something I remember better when I teach someone else. I admire my partner who can read something and store it in his memory. I need to accept the way that I learn and draw from my strengths. I truly believe the fire is within all of us. We all learn in our own way, we just have to find which way is *our* way to learn. I feel lucky that I was hired as an apprentice and was able to spend time with our SELWÁN at our Elders

gatherings, to go out on the ÁLENENEÇ (learning from our home land) with them, and to teach our children what our Elders have shared with us. This apprenticeship allowed me to spend time with my mentors and WUCISTEL (MAP) and teach and learn from one another with my children in an immersion environment. This MAP accelerated my language learning and I hope to start another WUCISTEL in the future. My educational background helped me with XETSITES (curriculum development), but spending time with NE EKO,TEL (my team) and our SELWÁN (respected advisors) gave me a different way to look at curriculum. They taught me how to develop our curriculum from a WSÁNEĆ perspective, immersed with in our own cultural beliefs, and that is something that I could not get at University or from a textbook.

Networking with other Indigenous communities and sharing methods of implementation has helped our curriculum development journey. Our team is comfortable with technology and this has given us all an advantage as we create new materials for our school and SENĆOƧEN community programs. One goal that my partner and I have this year is to study more of the CELÁNEN,KEN recordings and transcribe them in SENĆOƧEN in order to study the intonation and the flow, as I want to one day eliminate the English accent.

LE,NOŃET SCUL,ÁUTW SENĆOFEN Survival immersion school is where my professional career as a teacher began and it is where I will stay. There is no going back to teaching in an English program for me; I love the challenge and the connection to culture, our ancestors, and our land. It feels so meaningful and I do not mind working over and beyond. One of sayings I heard in Hawai'i was if you feel comfortable and content in where you are then you must work harder, 110% no less (personal communication, HILO 2013 conference). Compliancy is something I will not do, but instead continuously strive to better my language proficiency, teaching practices, and resource development, and continue to grow along side my students, fellow apprentices, and my mentors. My mentors would always remind us that we never stop learning. Even at their age, they felt like there was so much more to learn.

As stated by Hermes (2007), "the Indigenous-immersion method is quickly being recognized as one of the most effective tools for restoring Indigenous languages". As I embarked on this project, the following words of Mary Hermes echoed through my head:

Being a progressive teacher educator, I had a golden opportunity to research, design, select, and then enact the curriculum I was planning. I want to write

about this year in a way that is accessible to others who may be contemplating starting immersion schools (2007, p. 54).

This is the message that I want to share along with SĀ́ÁSEN wants to share, my hopes are that by sharing my language journey it might awaken something from within, ignite that fire, or stoke a fire even more. Our team is working in all areas of language revitalization. Maybe someday, someone will read our story, and the words of Mary Hermes will also be reflected in their Indigenous language revitalization journey.

HÍSŪ́KE SIÁM ÇENS STOĒLES I LELÁNEN ƧE NE SĪÁM.

(Thank-you, respected one, for reading and listening to my story)

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