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Introduction

> The time has come for radical change in Indian education. Our aim is to make education relevant to the philosophy and needs of Indian people. We want education to give our children a strong sense of identity, with confidence on their personal worth and ability ….
>
> The Indian people are expressing concern that the native languages are being lost; that the younger generations can no longer speak and understand their mother tongue. If the Indian identity is to be preserved, steps must be taken to reserve this trend. (National Indian Brotherhood, 1972, pp. 3, 15)

Following a long, dark chapter in the history of formal schooling for Indigenous people in Canada came a pivotal shift still referred to today. Our first organized and coordinated effort to regain control over the education of our children emerged in a report entitled *Indian Control of Indian Education* published in 1972 (National Indian Brotherhood—now known as the Assembly of First Nations). This report brought on swift government action in 1973 towards a return of control over education for the majority of Indigenous children in Canada. Although, the report

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included a focus on reviving our languages, this connection began to unravel over the next two decades. For example, the establishment of more Indigenous-governed community-based schools focused more on delivering public education, and less time on maintaining and/or reviving our languages.

The 1992 report *Towards Rebirth of First Nations Languages* explained that '[t]raditionally, language was taught in the family and the wider community' (Assembly of First Nations, 1992, p. 2); however, 'much of the responsibility has been transferred to the education system' (p. 18). And so, the school system for Indigenous peoples needs to play a crucial role in the development of children, including language development. 'Consequently, any strategy to increase the number of speakers of any language must necessarily involve the education system' (p. 2). Despite this clear intention, the majority of schools developed in Indigenous communities across Canada were French or English-medium schools, with only a small minority of schools using Indigenous-language as the primary medium of instruction (Ball & McIvor, 2013; McIvor & McCarty, 2016). In 1991 law scholar James MacPherson noted this gap stating:

> The education system over the years has failed to recognize the importance of native languages. Unless the native languages are taught in schools by sensitive teachers, and given the prestige that goes with recognition, the languages are condemned to a slow death. (p. 44)

The 1970s movement for Indian Control of Indian Education also instigated Indigenous-focused teacher training programs (see Archibald & La Rochelle, 2017) as well as some teacher training focused on our languages, but these early approaches did not lead to university degrees and professional teacher certification. One important difference of that time was that most of our people spoke their own languages, were first language speakers and were still of working age. Now, we have far fewer speakers in our communities, and so programs have focused on both building new speakers *and* professional teacher training. This is a daunting task as learning a language within a highly regulated profession, alongside developing new classroom-ready, proficient language teachers is a major a challenge.

History and Context of the UVic Program

Prior to describing the details of the Indigenous language programs we offer at UVic in the Faculty of Education, we want to provide a context by examining briefly the historical antecedents in British Columbia (BC), Canada. BC is home to a rich and diverse heritage of Indigenous languages and cultures. Approximately 60% of all Indigenous languages in Canada are spoken in BC. These languages are spoken in 203 different communities; most are found nowhere else on the planet and all of them are endangered (First Peoples Cultural Council, 2014). There are seven language families within BC alone: Wakashan, Dene, Salish,

Tsimshian, Algonquian, Haida and Ktunaxa, with 40 distinct languages and 70^{+} dialects (First Peoples Cultural Council, 2014). In comparison, there are only three language families in all of Europe. UVic is therefore located in one of the most linguistically diverse areas of the world.

Indigenous language programs for teachers are a recent phenomenon in Canada. Bear Nicholas (2009) reports on the preparation of Maliseet and Mi'kmaq teachers as the 'first ever, native language immersion teacher training programme in Canada', established in New Brunswick in 2001. Another notable program in Canada is the Canadian Indigenous Language and Literacy Development Institute (CILLDI) based at the University of Alberta (www.cilldi.ualberta.ca) although this does not lead to professional teacher certification (see Blair, Pelly, & Starr, 2017). Our program at UVic supports students to both learn their language and gain skills and training to become professionally certified teachers.

Although several of BC's major post-secondary institutions (e.g. Simon Fraser University, University of British Columbia, University Northern British Columbia, Vancouver Island University) offer undergraduate and graduate degrees in Indigenous studies, Indigenous education and/or linguistics, few have the same focus on Indigenous language revitalization (ILR) as UVic. Several institutions offer programs that lead to partial or temporary certification (such as 1 year certificates; or a 3-year temporary provincial language teaching certification referred to as Developmental Standard Teaching Certificate programs—to teach language only), however, there is no other degree program presently that has as its goal, the graduation of new speakers with professional skills who can teach in K-12 immersion contexts.[1]

The current UVic Indigenous language and teacher education programs are based on a long history of successful language teaching, linguistic research and study, dating back to 1974. In the 1970s, the Faculty of Education, together with the Department of Linguistics implemented the Native Indian Language Diploma Program (1974), taught largely by linguists who worked directly with Indigenous languages in BC. The Native Indian Language Teacher Training program followed this in 1980. Both programs responded to the training needs for First Nations language instructors. Graduates of this early program were from multiple language groups and they returned to their communities with linguistic and literacy skills where they taught generations of school children written and oral language, as well as developed curriculum, recorded and documented language with elders, assisted with the development of dictionaries and generally contributed to the

[1]Other teacher education programs in the province focus on certification, such as the UBC Native Teacher Education Program (NITEP). This program operates through field centres, and offers the initial 2 years towards a 5-year teaching degree. Students are expected to attend UBC to complete the final 3 years. NITEP is a strong, consistent program in the province to certify Indigenous teachers, however it does not currently incorporate language courses in its program (see Archibald & La Rochelle, 2017).

health and continuance of their languages. Despite the success and far-reaching effects of these programs, the program did not continue past the early 1980s due to a lack of institutional funding. However, at the time, these programs were revolutionary as they provided linguistics training and language teaching instruction for Indigenous language speakers.

New program thinking emerged in the early 2000's, first with a 1-year certificate focused on language revitalization strategies, followed by a 3-year pilot program focused on teaching Indigenous languages, which grew into the now full degree program. The creation and sustainability of such programs also required Indigenous community consultation, and knowledgeable faculty and staff to implement. The first permanent Indigenous UVic Faculty of Education member, Dr. Lorna Williams, was appointed in 2004, followed by a second, Onowa McIvor in 2008. One of Dr. Williams's first initiatives was to embark on a year-long, province-wide consultation process with key First Nations stakeholders to determine the key directions for Indigenous language-focused degree programs. Under the visionary leadership of Dr. Williams and McIvor, dedicated staff members (Jane Mertz and Aliki Marinakis-author) and several non-Indigenous Linguistics faculty members holding expertize in ILR, the first UVic language-focused program was born. Two additional Indigenous faculty members (one in Linguistics, Dr. Jacobs and one in Education—Dr. Rosborough, author) specializing in ILR were hired in 2012 and 2013 to help strengthen these programs. Having Indigenous faculty members provides an important resource for all students and faculty, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, and contributes directly to helping to achieve Indigenous student success.

Program Features

The programs at UVic consist of three related and laddered programs: a Certificate in Aboriginal Language Revitalization (which exists autonomously as a 1-year credential in a separate faculty) leading into the Diploma in Indigenous Language Revitalization (DILR) and then to the BEDLIR program. The degree program follows a cohort model that is culturally and physically situated in individual language communities. The BEDLIR program provides a foundation of skills in Indigenous language, language revitalization strategies and elementary school teaching and graduates are eligible to be certified as teachers by the BC Ministry of Education.

Program Structure

Figures 1 and 2 provide a summary of the programs and notes changes in the program structure over the past 5 years.

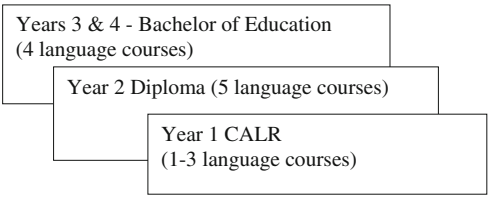

Fig. 1 Original laddered design of the undergraduate language revitalization programs at the UVic (2010)

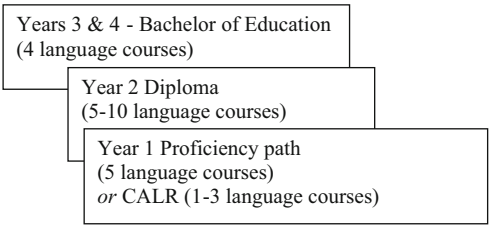

Fig. 2 The laddering of the re-designed undergraduate language revitalization programs at the UVic (2015)

Curriculum Design

The curriculum design was shaped in response to language revitalization needs identified by Indigenous communities in BC. Program design goals included a need to prepare new speakers of diverse Indigenous languages and trained professionals to work in the field of Indigenous language education from early childhood, to K-12 and adult education. Finally, there was the goal of enhancing access to post-secondary education in Indigenous communities, with multiple exit points ensuring multiple routes for success.

Distinctive Characteristics

The four key distinguishing characteristics of the BEDILR program include:

1. The program components ladder into each other, providing successful exit opportunities for students at multiple key points throughout the program;
2. The programs provide an opportunity to learn about how to revitalize language, as well as the opportunity to increase language proficiency through coursework;
3. The programs are designed for delivery in a community setting, in full or in part.
4. The programs result in language skills and professional teacher certification that will prepare graduates to teach in immersion language schools.

Target Audience

The two undergraduate programs (Diploma and BED) address a slightly different target audience: the DILR is targeted towards people who want to build on their

Indigenous language skills, better understand the contexts in which Indigenous languages can be successfully taught and gain some basic teaching skills. The BEDLIR program is targeted towards those who want to both learn their language and become professional K-12 teachers. These students may continue building their language capacity to ensure they are qualified to teach in an immersion context if desired. Both programs are designed for Indigenous community members who are unable or unwilling to leave their home communities for extended periods of time.

Community Capacity-Building

A foundational feature of this program is to build community capacity and draw upon the knowledge of knowledge keepers and Elders. Whenever possible eligible local instructors and/or community members are hired to teach courses, and community members are employed as program coordinators, teaching assistants and mentor-tutors. Fluent speakers are called upon to assist the students with furthering their language skills which leads to the program graduates being prepared to develop and implement immersion language programming at the K-12 level, a goal of many First Peoples[2] in BC.

Implementation

The BEDILR was launched in 2010 and offered over four and half years in two different communities. To date the BEDILR has been delivered in its entirety in two Vancouver Island communities, W̱SÁNEĆ and Kwakw̱aka̱'wakw, as a key support to revitalizing the SENĆOŦEN and Kwak'wala languages.

Both communities requested an alternative delivery model with three or four courses offered each fall and winter semester, and two or three offered in the summer. This configuration allowed participants to maintain their employment, but ultimately extended the 4-year Bachelor's degree to a longer delivery path. In 2014, an external review was commissioned to reflect on and learn from the first two (concurrent) offerings of the new degree.

What Have We Learned? Evaluating the BEDILR Program

An important feature of the formal review was a desire to assess and evaluate our successes and build on them, while also noting challenges and opportunities for change. The principal researcher, Dr. Catherine McGregor, conducted this evaluation with the assistance of WELCIEM Claxton and the guidance of an Indigenous

[2]First Peoples is common phrase used in Canada for Indigenous peoples.

advisory team with representatives from UVic and the W̱SÁNEĆ and the Kwakwaka̱'wakw communities. The evaluator took an Indigenist stance (Wilson, 2007), using culturally responsive evaluation methods that value and recognize Indigenous peoples, cultural beliefs and worldviews. The evaluation engaged students, Elders, instructors, practicum mentors and supervisors, and UVic and community planners and administrators. The impacts of the program on communities, schools and students were traced through a careful examination of participants' perspectives and experiences in classrooms, during practicum and in work with the community.

Our Findings: Creating a Culture of Hope

The evaluation identified broad impacts across the communities in which it was offered. First and foremost, the BEDILR program has created a culture of hope and change at the community level. The big successes of the program were identified in our analysis as (1) deep learning, (2) credentialing of a new generation of Indigenous educators and (3) the power of Indigenous languages to heal.

Our Participants

The students in both cohorts have a variety of backgrounds and experiences. Some began the program with strong academic skills, while others had not completed high school. Some student entered the program with strong language skills, while others were beginners to learning their language. There are many other contextual issues that need to be considered. For example, some students were survivors of residential schools—and many have affected family members. In conducting the evaluation, we found that *all* of our students have multiple responsibilities for family, community, cultural obligation and employment. Cultural and ceremonial activities remain a big part of these students' lives despite their additional responsibilities as students.

Context Matters: The Intersection of Passion and Purpose

It is also important to recognize that both W̱SÁNEĆ and Kwakwaka̱'wakw communities had existing leaders and language champions with extensive language revitalization experience with/in their communities. These leaders were powerful political voices with considerable influence in the community and were important allies to the BEDILR program planners. The Kwakuitl Nation leadership (the administrative lead for the Kwakwaka'wakw community partnership, which included the, Quatsino and Gwa'sa̱la-'Nak'waxda'x̱w Nations as well) had a keen interest in ensuring that more Indigenous teachers were able to work in the local

public schools and a deep desire to ensure these individuals were granted the same professional recognition and salary as all other teachers. In W̲SÁNEĆ, the goal of creating enough teachers to work in their nation-operated SENĆOŦEN immersion school was a key priority, given their existing preschool language nest programs. As these examples show, community leaders were powerful catalysts, advocates and resources for the BEDILR program; however, they also were agents in their own right who sought to shape the program in their own way.

What we hope this short summary makes evident is the BEDILR program is significantly different from a more typical teacher education program, not only because of its community-based delivery and language specific design, but simultaneously it seeks to serve educational, cultural, social, political and linguistic goals by inspiring current *and* future community leaders. It is a program model devoted to meeting community needs, and fulfilling the promise of education to change the lives of Indigenous children, and in particular, to make them language warriors of tomorrow.

Program Impacts and Successes—Student Voices

In this next section we provide evidence of the impacts this program had on the lives of our students. These student stories are inspirational: we share them here as testimony to the power of the program in effecting Indigenous learners and future generations of Indigenous language speakers.

Deep Learning

> I got schooled in so many ways; the course we took with [teacher's name] … I had never heard the stories she shared with us, and the residential school survivors. I had thought: we have to take control of our lives, stop blaming others and fix what it is now and move forward, and leave what happened in the past. But now I realize the wreckage that it created for many of our people. It does leak, it follows you, it hurts, continues to hurt people. It doesn't stop. In thinking about the moments like this in our classes over the last several years … I am now thinking I need to be more open—why, how, what. I am trying to answer the questions a lot more. My openness is a result of being in this program. It opened me to a different perspective. I'm grateful; I was close-minded, but it's different now. I like the fact I got to learn that much more of the historical value of our world, and our people, and that will make me a better teacher … I wasn't ready for this prior to this learning. (Program participant)

This story shows the learning offered by instructors and Elders went very deep with many students—so while much of the program was designed to offer insights into schooling and teaching, it was the development of their emerging teacher identities, informed by their cultural and historical contexts, which powerfully framed their philosophy and stance as a teacher. Such evidence helps to verify our claim that much deep, contextually rich and meaningful learning has been central to the program's success.

Creating a Cadre of Indigenous Teachers

> [This is a] *transformational opportunity to reinvent ourselves as we move into new spaces* [in the community] … *It is our work; it is a tremendous responsibility. But we have to be a part of all that work around language and culture and building the identity of our people*. (Program participant)

> *Having our people as teachers in our community on the North Island, that's what this program has to be about*. (Program participant)

> *Our university partners are learning too, and becoming our allies. They are doing things that will change how this program operates, make it easier to participate*. (Program participant)

Indigenous people are largely underrepresented in the teacher profession. Ryan, Pollock and Antonelli (2007) drawing from 1996 Statistics Canada data stated, '5.57% of the total Canadian elementary/secondary teaching and counselling population were visible minority or Aboriginal' (p. 10). A more recent British Columbia Teachers' Federation report (2015) stated there were 106 self-identified Aboriginal educators in BC (from a total of 24,000 full and part-time teachers).

Archibald, Glickman and McKinnon (2005) summarize several studies that argue for tripling the number of BC Indigenous educators (in 2001 estimated at 1,200) for the number of Indigenous teachers to accurately reflect the percentage of Indigenous students in schools. The BC Ministry of Education (2012) estimates there are currently about 65,339 Aboriginal students in the K-12 system, which accounts for about 10% of the total student population overall (p. 10). If there were a match between these percentages, then there would need to be more than 2,400 Aboriginal educators versus the reported 106. In addition, Indigenous teachers serve as catalysts for changing the educational system, as advocates for decolonizing and indigenizing the curriculum, and as role models for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students who want to make a difference in their communities.

In our evaluation report, we heard powerful voices for changing the experiences of Indigenous children and youth, and the ways in which Indigenous pedagogies and ways of learning could be more readily and fully integrated into public and nation-operated schools. It is evident that these program graduates will help to transform our schools, serving as part of a parallel healing process for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities in the teaching profession.

The Healing Power of Language Learning

> There is so much beauty in the language, you can know the territory, unleash secrets, tell your old stories …. Being native and young is hard, our people are going through such pain and heartache, but then you learn your language, and you have something to be proud of, it belongs to you, you have names for these islands, they still belong to you. It makes them light up and be proud again. If we can all be fluent in the language, with a new outlook on life, we can have a different world. (Program participant)

Evaluation participants conveyed the healing power of Indigenous language learning, in that, not only does language learning create a sense of confidence in how to teach Indigenous languages, it also instils a culture of pride as an Indigenous person. This is a key finding of our evaluation; language is a powerful vehicle that can empower learners and deeply affect their sense of agency and capabilities. It is clear that embedding Indigenous language learning into formal and informal educational spaces will make a difference for many learners, now and into the future.

Language Warriors: Lighting the Fire

> I am grateful to the Elders I've worked with, the language champions, the teachers, the learners, the way they have pushed me and allowed me to learn from them. So it is very much a co-construction, and we each bring something different to the situation. And someone new is created from that … that is especially important in a classroom with a lot of Aboriginal students … Where we come in, we come in as supporters—and allies—to the work of language revitalization … At the same time, I need to respond to why am I here? Why do I have to do this stuff? What I do is explore what is potentially practical, and what is beautiful and exiting, interesting … and what it tells us about who we are as human beings. (Program participant)

> My granddaughter is five, I can speak to her in our language, and she understands quite a bit more. She has been spoken to by her mother, and me, so she knows it more than some others … in the years to come, we'll better understand the legacy we've created.

> As First Nations people, you are the ones that have to be the expert, the champion of all things. You may be one of the first, and you are blazing a trail. (Program participant)

These students are trail blazers—they are on a journey to effect positive changes in their community, and they are inspiring others as they do this work, making a path that others can more easily follow. A strong desire to learn and serve is evident in many of the stories heard during the evaluation. These stories illustrate the power of Indigenous communities to draw from their past—their histories, their spiritual beliefs and the cultural traditions they have practiced since time immemorial. Their stories identify language as a cultural symbol and the tool through which they can heal themselves, despite the barriers and obstacles. We learned how much these participants are the new language warriors, lighting a fire that will burn intensely as they build a stronger future.

Identifying and Meeting Challenges

While we are inspired by the words of our participants and their community leaders, our evaluation also revealed the challenges we faced. Some of the greatest challenges identified directly relate to the divide between education institutions and

Indigenous communities and students. Program partnerships and administrators address challenges as they arise, however some of the challenges are more complex and involve outside factors. Community politics and dynamics around language revitalization, for example, are ongoing challenges as they include attitudes towards dialect and orthography differences, including political divisions within language communities. Some of these dynamics were addressed through coursework within the program, and inclusive approaches of community collaboration. We are able to address logistical delivery challenges around coordination and communication across distances as they arose, however academic preparation is an ongoing challenge both in recruiting and retention. Flexible entry opportunities created to ensure anyone wanting to learn their endangered language has that opportunity, can lead to difficulties in later meeting program requirements. Different kinds of challenges around expectations and ideology that arose in practicum placements (usually within public schools) offer an example of the ongoing need to continue building understanding of expectations between Indigenous communities and students, and western academic institutions. Our programs continue to challenge the university and provincial expectations in a number of areas, from admissions policies, to Teacher Regulation Branch regulations, to more direct accommodation for community events, such as deaths or weddings during times of course delivery. The two most pressing issues continue to be: (1) seeking and obtaining funds to deliver the program, and (2) improving upon on language teaching and learning opportunities in order to address the need to create new adult speakers.

Need for Stable and Adequate Funding

We would be remiss if we did not address the key challenge of funding. The funding of BEDILR programs is a combination of external funds, community partner contributions and university 'base' funding. Tuition alone is not adequate to fund these community-based programs. There are extra costs associated with community-delivery and Indigenous education, such as travel, and honorarium, as well as the extra costs of practicum. The involvement and support of community is both costly and essential. Our partners resource the programs with language and traditional knowledge experts, access to facilities and local coordination. Each individual community-delivery requires external funding, which is accessed through lengthy and competitive proposal processes. This means that communities and institutions must direct much of their time and effort towards seeking and securing adequate funding for language teacher education programs. Recent political attention towards the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015) the need to better support ILR efforts, however, we have yet to see an injection of funding that is both adequate and stable.

Responding to the Challenges: Emergent and Ongoing Changes Implemented

Given this context, we have taken a variety of measures to adapt and modify the programs in the face of the challenges and opportunities identified by the program staff and evaluation team. As result, we are more focused on changing and improving the areas we have influence over. In this final section of our chapter, we focus on two key areas of change: an increased focus on language proficiency, and the need to re-design the credential to better serve the needs and interests of our Indigenous community partners.

Increased Focus on Language Proficiency Development

We continue to learn and develop our approach to delivering a program that meets the dual need of developing new proficient speakers who also build skills towards certification to teach in their languages. While the BEDILR evaluation identified and celebrated the importance of language learning that occurred within the program, it also spoke to the challenge of learning one's language while simultaneously taking courses in teacher education. Many students expressed anxiety about their progress in learning their language and expected that participation in the program would have led to higher levels of language proficiency. In response to the needs of students, program leaders created *a proficiency path option* as the first year of the DILR.

The proficiency path of the DILR begins with three complimentary language courses: a language course that covers sounds of the language, vocabulary and grammar; a mentorship course that pairs learners with speakers for one-one and small group immersion; and, a newly created course, *Learning to Learn*, that examines effective strategies for adult language learners such as self-directed learning. A key factor to gaining language proficiency is time (McIvor, 2015). Launching the programs with a heavy emphasis on language proficiency building and devoting more class time to this endeavour bolsters early success and makes language learning seem like a real possibility. The *Learning to Learn* course responds to the recognition that students must manage their language learning path, both in and outside of courses. One of the aims is to support the students to become lifelong learners of their language.

The language learning outcomes of these community-based programs are also dependent on the first language speakers who support the students as mentors. The role for mentors is to speak the Indigenous language with students in one-one and small group immersion settings and to support the instructors in the delivery of language courses. In many cases, mentors too, are recovering their language in their own lives. Having their language disrupted by residential schools and other colonial influences, some of the mentors have used their language very little since

childhood. While the recovery of one's language can be joyful, it is complex and can raise issues of trauma and pain for both mentors and students. It is important that instructors, students and community liaisons are mindful of the social-emotional issues that surface and can be barriers to ILR. These dynamics require a respectful and thoughtful learning community and explicit agreements about how to support language learning and recovery. In some programs, students and Elders have developed an agreement in the form of an oath that describes how they will support each other through positive practice and the creation of safety within their shared language work.

The mentorship course has allowed us to respond to the learners' need for more time devoted to the language. With much resourcing from community partners, we have used this course as an opportunity to provide sustained immersion experiences. These immersion sessions are delivered in the form of activities such as camps, exploration of traditional territories, medicine and food gathering and food perpetration. Students often report that these experiential activities are an important part of their language learning journey. When describing the value of these activities, students speak about hands-on learning, language in the context of meaningful and real life experiences, and connections with ancestral teachings, as accelerating their language learning and strengthening their identity.

Moving Forward

Developing the language proficiency of the students is simultaneously the greatest success and the greatest challenge of the BEDILR program. Language revitalization is about bringing language back into the spaces of everyday life (e.g. see Hinton, 2013). For learners to become strong proficient speakers across broad domains takes time and much effort. In the words of one student,

> Language was supposed to be a keystone of what we were trying to accomplish …. The other things are important, but more time spent building proficiency and then going to the core courses that teachers need would be better. (Program participant)

While the BEDILR continues to evolve and respond by building in more language-focused courses and experiences, the time to devote to language proficiency development continues to be limited by teacher education regulation leading to certification. An obvious new direction is the need to negotiate an alternative structure for degrees which are dually focused on Indigenous language proficiency building and creating professionally certified teachers. This must not be a lesser than or second rate degree but rather a degree to recognize the important differences. For instance, such a program would need to be grounded in: (1) language proficiency building, (2) Indigenous values, teachings, worldviews and pedagogies and (3) explicitly include knowledge and training about additional language learning and teaching in a language that the children are learning at the same time (similarly to French immersion programs in western Canada).

Alternatively, UVic is currently exploring what might be an even better option—a 4-year Indigenous language proficiency degree. Such a degree would prioritize language learning and could be followed by a shorted post-degree professional program that leads to teacher certification. This may offer us the best way forward with language at the forefront of our program design and development, in addition to attracting new language warriors.

Summary

This chapter elaborated on the power of partnerships between educational and Indigenous communities, and provides important policy and practice exemplars for others engaged or interested in language revitalization work. We highlighted the challenges and successes of creating and launching this kind of work within and alongside a mainstream institution. We also set out our goals for revising our approaches to make our programs responsive to the passion of our communities—to revitalize their languages, and to take back their educational systems. At the heart of all of this are our languages, and our language warriors who will lift them up and ensure life breathes through them once again. Our hope is that together with our community partners, we are one small part of lighting the fire needed to sustain Indigenous languages for the benefit of our children, Indigenous peoples themselves and the betterment of a whole and just society.

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