

The Basics of Language Immersion

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What is language immersion?



How can language be taught?

Different methods emphasize different things:

- grammar
- functions/accomplishments
- interactions

Immersion for revitalization

- Immersion fits in the last category
 - emphasizing interactions
- However, immersion for revitalization is a bit different.

What is immersion? Why immersion?

- It's a method.
- It's a technique.
- It's a philosophy.

What is immersion?

- Method of teaching a second language
- In a K-12 school approach
 - All activities in the target language
 - Focus on language, culture, and academic content
 - Focus is on language acquisition AND academic content/subject area material

Immersion for revitalization K-12

- Begins early in children's lives
 - Establishes secure boundaries around communication in the heritage language
 - Focuses on spoken language
 - Blends authentic oral communication with challenging academic content
 - Validates and incorporates culture
 - Involves teachers, children, parents, and elders
- T.L. McCarty & L. Watahomigie, 1999

Teaching music

Here's a cello



Now, join the symphony.



Teaching sports

Here's basketball



Now, play for the Thunder.



Teaching language

Here are some words

gitli = 'dog'
tsisqua = 'bird'
walosi = 'frog'

Now, speak the language.



Teaching language

Here are some words

gitli = 'dog'
tsisqua = 'bird'
walosi = 'frog'

Now, write a book.



What do you see/hear/learn?

- I. Word lists and translations into English
- II. Pictures and the immersion language (No English)
- III. Pictures and recordings (No English)



gitli



tsisqua



walosi



gitli



tsisqua



walosi

What are the challenges?

- Lesson planning for both content and language
- Supporting all components of language (i.e., more than vocabulary)
- Need for speakers who are trained as teachers, administrators, curriculum specialists
- Finding/creating materials that are age and language appropriate
- Language not used in local society

Dealing with challenges

Teacher training

- Linguistics for
 - Phonology
 - Morphology
 - Syntax
 - Semantics
- Field Work to
 - Understand the language to organize lessons

(Hale 2001)



Expectation

... typical indigenous community expectation is no less than full revitalization of the local indigenous language....

W.H. Wilson & K. Kamanis, 2011

Where do we start?

- Keeping all these considerations in mind, what do we need to think about?
- How can we think of everything?

Where do we get help?

- Online (articles; websites)
 - Do's and Don'ts
 - Tips
 - Lessons
 - Books
 - Ideas
 - Guidelines
 - Workshops
 - NSU Symposium
 - CARLA
 - AILDI
 - ILI/CILO
- 

Look to others

Some language revitalization programs with immersion:

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| – Arapaho | – Inupiaq |
| – Atsina | – Maori |
| – Blackfeet | – Mohawk |
| – Central Alaskan Yup'ik | – Montana Salish |
| – Cherokee | – Navajo |
| – Chinuk Wawa | – Ojibwe |
| – Hawaiian | |

What does immersion look like?

Participate, observe, notice, and consider the following questions:

- What is the teacher doing?
- What are the students doing?
- What is the lesson about (i.e., content)?
- What language is being shared?
- What would/could you do in a similar lesson?

Demonstration of Cherokee immersion lesson
by Ryan (Wade) Mackey

Initial Comments/Breakdown

- What did the teacher do?
- What did the students do?
- What is the lesson about (i.e., content)?
- What language is being shared?
- What would/could you do in a similar lesson?

Impressions and reactions

- What was interesting?
- What seemed challenging?
- How was this similar to a "typical" class?
- How was this different from a "typical" class?

Thank you . . .

. . .and

GOOD LUCK!!!!