

ACTIVITIES REPORT — JUNE 2006

COVERING THE PERIOD JANUARY – JUNE 2006



This spring YNLC has continued its support and training of native language instructors by offering specialized sessions with a focus on language fluency. The YNLC recognizes that this type of training is vital for a new generation of native language teachers for whom language fluency continues to be a challenge.

The Yukon's native language instructors were also active this spring in responding to an invitation to participate in the Education Reform Project sponsored jointly by the Council of Yukon First Nations and the Government of Yukon. All instructors were given an opportunity to comment in advance, and a large group of experienced as well as new instructors made a lively and thoughtful presentation to the Project when it visited YNLC in March (see report below).

The upgrades to the YNLC website are almost completed. Please visit www.ynlc.ca to view our exciting and attractive new site, with its easy navigation bars and more consistent organization of material.



Linda Harvey and Anne Ranigler

YNLC now has its own traditional drum to be used in graduation ceremonies and other occasions. The drum was constructed by Urban Programs Co-ordinator Linda Harvey and painted by Northern Tutchone Specialist Anne Ranigler.

YNLC's activities for the first half of 2006 are summarized in the table accompanying this report. The Centre is finding its staff and resources increasingly stretched in order to support requests for assistance from community-based language programs. The Centre's long-term goal is to make as much material

as possible available through its website so that it can be accessed by anyone with a computer and Internet access.

Yukon Education Reform Project

On March 1 a group representing native language instructors in the Yukon made a presentation to the Yukon Education Reform Project, which is reviewing the Education Act. The group included experienced and trainee instructors from several communities, elders and YNLC staff. They expressed their commitment to the teaching of their languages in the school system and their concern about the future of those languages as well as about their professional status within the school system. They also presented their view of the key issues facing native language programs in Yukon schools, along with specific recommendations.



The Gwich'in class at F.H. Collins with instructor Randall Kendi

The members from the Education Reform Project were co-chairs Ed Schultz from CYFN and Colin Kelly from the Yukon Department of Education, along with Project members Mary Easterson and Shehnaz Ali.

Spring Graduation

Three graduates from YNLC's native language instructor training programs were honoured at Yukon College's graduation ceremony on June 3. Graduates of the three-year Native Language Instructor Certificate Course are Mary Henry (Hän) and elder Irene Smith (Southern Tutchone). Irene, who has received her Certificate at 77, was one of the



Graduates Randall Kendi, Irene Smith and Mary Henry

first language teachers at Whitehorse Elementary School. Mary Henry currently teaches at Robert Service School in Dawson City.

Randall Kendi, who teaches Gwich'in at F.H. Collins, graduated from the two-year Native Language Instructor Diploma program.

At the ceremony, elder Ruth Welsh from Tagish offered a prayer in Gwich'in, and Linda Harvey sang *O Canada*

in Southern Tutchone and English. Ruth and Linda also handed out the Certificates and Diploma to the YNLC graduates.

The Centre staff are very proud of these instructors, who have worked extremely hard to complete their training at Yukon College and in their home communities. We join family and friends in congratulating them on their achievements.

Native Language Certificate Training

A five-day Certificate Training session was held from March 13 to 17 for 18 participants representing six Yukon and Alaskan languages: Southern Tutchone, Northern Tutchone, Tlingit, Hän, Gwich'in, and Ahtna. The focus of the session was on professionalism and the importance of planning and accountability. Participants also prepared lessons for different levels of teaching - elementary, junior and senior secondary levels.

Guests during the training session included Pat Cassidy, Director of Curriculum, and Dave Sloan, Director of Learning for the Department of Education.



Instructor Bertha Moose and Trainee Amanda Workman with a Southern Tutchone class at Takhini School in Whitehorse

In-service Training Sessions

Ahtna In-service

On March 27 and 28, fluent Ahtna speaker Lena Charley and her granddaughter Jessica Denny from Chistochina, Alaska, participated in an in-service workshop led by John Ritter and André Bourcier. Jessica is a trainee in YNLC's Certificate program and teaches in Alaska. They were accompanied by Dr. Cynthea Ainsworth, director of the Ahtna language program for the Mt. Sanford Tribal Council. The session focused on grammar and especially the distinctions between possessed and unpossessed nouns. Ms. Charley recorded a large number of digital sound files illustrating these distinctions.

Southern Tutchone Trainee In-service

A Southern Tutchone in-service training session was held on March 29 to 31 with teacher-trainees Mary-Jane Allison and Amanda Workman, instructor Vivian Smith, and retired native language instructor and YNLC Southern Tutchone Specialist Margaret Workman. Polly Fraser, an elder and fluent speaker from the Champagne Aishihik First Nation and a former language teacher at Whitehorse Elementary, made a guest appearance. YNLC staff members John Ritter, André Bourcier, Linda Harvey and Jo-Anne Johnson led the session with the assistance of the elders, which focused on language fluency.



Children at Takhini Elementary School playing a language game with Trainee Amanda Workman

Northern Tutchone In-service

From April 3 to 7, a Northern Tutchone in-service training session was held with eight participants from Carmacks, Pelly Crossing, and Mayo, including native language instructors, trainees, and elders May Roberts, Emma Shorty, and Gertie Tom. The group wrote and corrected a Selkirk song that had originated in Carmacks. The group also reviewed names for traditional medicines, and brought in teaching materials for practice and correction.

Literacy Sessions



Participants in the February Upper Tanana Literacy Session

Upper Tanana Literacy Session

A literacy training session in Upper Tanana, organised in response to a request from the White River First Nation, was held February 21 to 23 for 15 participants from Beaver Creek, Whitehorse, and Northway, Alaska. Participants practised listening exercises, discussed place names, reviewed a sample language lesson plan, and practised two songs.

Northern Tutchone Literacy Session (Selkirk First Nation)

A literacy session in Northern Tutchone, requested by the Selkirk First Nation to support their community programming, was held from May 10 to 12 for 14 participants from Pelly Crossing, Beaver Creek, Carcross, and Whitehorse. The session focused on listening exercises, alphabet charts, and planning for their drop-in community language program.



Selkirk F.N. Elders Rachel Tom Tom and Johnson Edwards at the May Literacy Session

Presentations

Yukon Native Teachers Education Program

On January 23, a dozen third-year students in the YNTEP program attended a session at YNLC on family trees led by Linda Harvey and Jo-Anne Johnson.

Yukon College Anthropology Class

On January 31, a dozen students in Yukon College instructor Norm Easton's anthropology class attended a presentation at YNLC. Staff provided information on the Centre's activities and materials.

School Programs

School and Community Visits by Linda Harvey, Urban Programs Co-ordinator

School, Community	Native Language Teachers	Date
Ashea Daycare, Kwanlin Dun	Visited daycare and sang Southern Tutchone songs at invitation of the Director	Feb 14
Takhini Elementary	Amanda Workman, Bertha Moose	March 2
Takhini Elementary and Elijah Smith Elementary	Amanda Workman, Bertha Moose, Stephen Reid	Apr 18, 19
F.H. Collins	Randall Kendi (Gwich'in program)	Apr 19, May 3



Elijah Smith Elementary School students with Instructor Stephen Reid

School and Community Visits by Jo-Anne Johnson, Rural Programs Co-ordinator

School, Community	Native Language Teachers	First Nation	Date
Robert Service School, Dawson City	Mary Henry, Mabel Henry	Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation	Jan 30 - Feb. 1, April 11-13
Tantalus School, Carmacks	Ragene Blackjack, Grace Wheeler, Amy Billy	Little Salmon-Carmacks First Nation	March 21-22
Teslin School, Teslin	Bessie Cooley, Margaret Bob	Teslin Tlingit First Nation	May 17

Gwich'in Language Program

The Gwich'in language program at F.H. Collins was expanded to include Grades 8 and 9 after Christmas. Linda Harvey and André Bourcier provided ongoing support to Randall Kendi, Gwich'in language instructor at F.H. Collins, by assisting with lesson planning, listening exercises, classroom materials including wall displays, and curriculum development. New trainee Enna Vittrekwa was hired in May to assist instructor Randall Kendi in the Grade 8 to 12 program.



2006 Diploma Graduate Randall Kendi assists students in the F.H. Collins Gwich'in program

Place Names Project – Ta’an Kwach’an Council

The Ta’an Kwach’an Council has requested the help of YNLC in developing an interactive CD on Southern Tutchone place names in their area, including Lake Laberge and the region’s lakes. This CD would be modelled on *Dákeyi*, the existing Southern Tutchone place names CD created by YNLC.



Members of the KDFN Southern Tutchone language class at Marsh Lake

Kwanlin Dun Language Classes

YNLC staff supported the Kwanlin Dun language program this spring. Linda Harvey taught the Southern Tutchone class while Anne Ranigler taught the Northern Tutchone class from February to April. YNLC arranged for photographer Wayne Towriss to accompany the Southern Tutchone class on an outing to Marsh Lake (see photo).

Critically Endangered Languages Symposium

Jo-Anne Johnson, Linda Harvey, and Anne Ranigler attended the Critically Endangered Languages Symposium in Vancouver on April 25-26. The goal of the Symposium was to provide an opportunity for a variety of individuals involved in First Nations languages work to discuss the relevant issues around critically endangered languages. The Symposium was hosted by the Assembly of First Nations’ Chiefs Committee on Languages. YNLC staff members displayed materials and participated in small-group sessions.

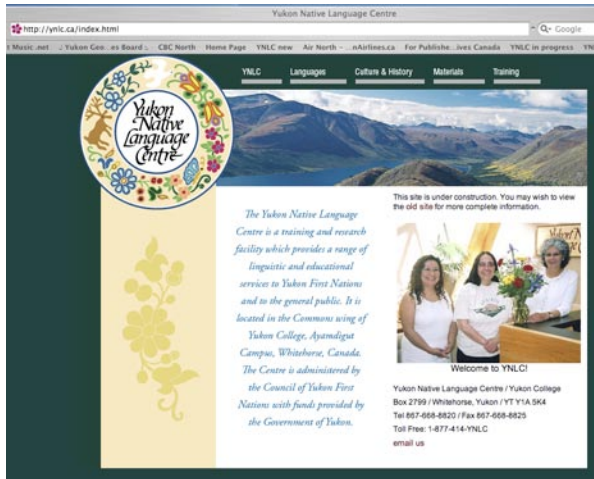
Southern Tutchone Dictionary

Retired YNLC staff member Margaret Workman has been returning to the Centre to continue her work on the Southern Tutchone dictionary. The dictionary now contains over 5,000 entries, each with sentences to show usage and meaning, and with accompanying soundtrack. Margaret is YNLC's linguistic authority on Southern Tutchone, with over 50 years’ experience in speaking and studying her language.



Margaret Workman, Southern Tutchone linguist and educator

Website Developments



The home page of the new ynlc.ca website

The upgrades and redesign of the YNLC website are almost completed. The sections of the new website on *YNLC*, *Languages*, *Culture & History*, and *Materials*, are now largely finished. The *Training* section should be completed by mid-summer. Please visit www.ynlc.ca to view our exciting and attractive new site, with its easy navigation bars and more consistent organization of material.

Currently, 36 titles have been posted in the four on-line storybooks series (*Moose Hunt*, *Fish Camp*, *At Home*, and *Camping*). All eight Yukon languages are represented, as well as Navajo and the Alaskan languages of Tanacross and Ahtna.

On-line Tlingit language lessons with speaker Sam Johnson have been added, covering the months from September to April. The months of May and June, as well as *Classroom Expressions*, will be available shortly.

A new storybook, *Aishihik Girl*, written and recorded by fluent Southern Tutchone speaker Margaret Workman and illustrated by Susan McCallum, will be posted on the website in the near future.

New Legacy Font and Keyboard

A major IT project has been the development of a replacement for the old Yukon, Gwich'in and Tanana fonts. The new YNLC Legacy font replaces all these fonts and works in exactly the same way. Users can use the new font to view and edit materials created with the old fonts, or can create entirely new materials in any Yukon language.



Visiting Tlingit Elders Sam Johnston, Winne Atlin and William Atlin, with YNLC's Josephine Holloway

Besides Legacy, which resembles the Times Roman font, there is also Legacy Sans, which resembles Helvetica or Arial. Both fonts have plain, italic and bold faces.

At the same time, a new keyboard layout has been developed for Macintosh OS X. This layout works with both old and new fonts, using the familiar keystrokes. These fonts, and the keyboard needed to use them, will be posted on the website and may be freely downloaded.

New Materials

Work is continuing on a book of Northern Tutchone listening exercises in the Tanana Reef dialect by YNLC Northern Tutchone specialist Anne Ranigler, with the assistance

of director John Ritter and staff linguist André Bourcier. This dialect shows a number of interesting features that make it distinct in Northern Tutchone.



A selection of the YNLC materials available

Instructor Lorraine Allen, with the assistance of YNLC staff, is continuing her work on a collection of traditional and personal stories by her mother and respected elder, the late Bessie Allen.

A number of materials (Percy Henry's Hän language lessons, Southern Tutchone session reports and the YNLC Publications Catalogue) have been reprinted to meet demand. New spring session reports now available are Upper Tanana, Southern Tutchone, Northern Tutchone, and Northern Tutchone Literacy for the Selkirk First Nation, plus the November Tlingit session report.

The Centre is also preparing new brochures on its training programs and other services.

All these materials can be ordered from YNLC (see contact information below).

Planning for Fall 2006

The Yukon Native Language Centre and individual teachers are busy planning for the fall session, with a number of literacy and teacher training workshops in preparation. The fall Certificate training session is scheduled for September 18 to 22.

On August 23, YNLC staff members Jo-Anne Johnson and Linda Harvey will be participating in the orientation of new teachers to the Yukon, organized by the Department of Education, to be held at Airport Lake near Carmacks.

How To Reach Us

If you would like more information on the Centre's programs or publications, please contact us:

- by telephone at (867) 668-8820, toll-free 1-877-414-9652
- by fax at (867) 668-8825
- by email at info@ynlc.ca
- by mail at Yukon Native Language Centre, Yukon College, Box 2799, Whitehorse, Yukon, Y1A 5K4.



YNLC staff André Bourcier, Linda Harvey, Jo-Anne Johnson, Doug Hitch, John Ritter
Anne Ranigler, Josephine Holloway, Founding Elder Gertie Tom, Sheila Maissan



TOGETHER TODAY... FOR OUR CHILDREN TOMORROW

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YNLC Sessions 2006			
Yukon Native Teacher Education Program	Clan System / Family Tree	Jan 16	1
Yukon Native Teacher Education Program	YNLC Presentation	Jan 23	1
Robert Service School Visit	Classroom Literacy	Jan 30 - Feb 1`	3
White River First Nation Literacy Session	Upper Tanana Literacy	Feb 21-23	3
Education Reform Project Visit	YNLC Presentation	Mar 1	1
Certificate Course	Teacher Training	Mar 13-17	5
Ahtna Literacy Session (YNLC)	Community Literacy	Mar 20-22	3
Tantalus School Visit	Classroom Literacy	Mar 21-23	3
APTN Town Hall	Language Preservation	Mar 24	1
Southern Tutchone Literacy (YNLC)	Classroom Literacy	Mar 29-31	3
Northern Tutchone Literacy (YNLC)	Classroom Literacy	Apr 4-6	3
Robert Service School Visit	Classroom Literacy	Apr 11-13`	3
Selkirk First Nation	Community Literacy	May 10-12	3
Teslin Community Workshop	Community Literacy	May 16-17	2
	14 Sessions		35