

ACTIVITIES REPORT — DECEMBER 2008
COVERING THE PERIOD JULY – DECEMBER 2008



Highlights

This fall YNLC continued to offer specialized training sessions for community native language teachers as well as school instructors. This is an area of increasing activity as the demand for native language lessons expands beyond the K-12 school programs.

YNLC recently developed a major new teaching aid in response to requests from native language instructors. *YNLC Illustrations and Templates* is a book and CD set of graphic tools to assist instructors in developing their own teaching materials in their own languages and dialects.

For several years the Yukon Geographical Place Names Board and YNLC have cost-shared extensive work in the recording and identifying of traditional names of geographical features like lakes, creeks and mountains. The work continued this summer with a photographic survey along the Stewart and Yukon Rivers.

Literacy sessions were held for Tlingit, Ahtna, Gwich'in, and Hän.

Linguistic research continues also, such as the ongoing work on the several versions of the 1869 Kohklux map.

Staff participated in a number of language conferences. YNLC is also playing a significant role in language planning by CYFN.

YNLC's activities for the second half of 2008 are summarized in the table at the end of this report.



Junction of Sixty Mile River and Yukon River

Teacher Training

September Certificate Training Session

A five-day Certificate Training session was held for 11 participants representing six Yukon and Alaskan languages. Participants learned grammar and sentence structure; practised listening exercises, drills, classroom activities and language games; and discussed readings. Each participant also conducted a demonstration lesson. Diploma trainees Mary Jane Allison and Georgina Stone shared their language learning and teaching techniques using technology such as PowerPoint and iPod. Mentor Dr. Cynthea Ainsworth of the Mount Sanford Tribal Consortium language program in Alaska helped with coaching and evaluating participants. Visitors included Southern Tutchone Elder Irene Smith and Yukon College student Shawn Smith.



Elders assist trainees at the Certificate Session

To graduate from the three-year Certificate Program accredited by Yukon College, participants must attend training sessions and must also complete three years of classroom experience. Graduates may go on to take a two-year Diploma program to develop their linguistic and teaching skills, create original teaching materials, and document oral history and traditional narratives.

Introduction to Teaching Native Languages

Eight community language instructors representing Gwich'in, Northern Tutchone, and Southern Tutchone attended this October session. These instructors teach in a variety



Language Song at the Introduction to Teaching Native Languages

of venues, including daycare, pre-school, and adult classes. The session focused on language structure, teaching techniques, and professionalism in the classroom. Participants practised using listening exercises as well as methods for teaching about animals, fish, and berries. The community language instructors also shared teaching ideas and conducted demonstration lessons. Dr. Karen Barnes, Education & Training Vice-President of Yukon College, attended as a special guest, and participated in a number of the sessions.

Literacy Sessions

Tlingit Literacy Session

Thirteen participants, including language instructors from Carcross and Teslin, attended a Tlingit literacy session led by Dr. Jeff Leer of the University of Alaska Fairbanks, September 8-10. The session concentrated on the complexities of Tlingit verb structure and provided advanced teaching and practice.



UAF Professor Jeff Leer at the Tlingit Literacy Session



Ahtna Literacy Session

YNLC staff John Ritter, Jo-Anne Johnson, and André Bourcier worked with visiting mentor Dr. Cynthea Ainsworth and trainee language instructor Honalee Sanford from Alaska in an intensive Ahtna session, September 22-23. The session focused on listening and transcription practice using listening exercises recorded by Katie John in the Mentasta dialect, and on vocabulary and sentence structure.

Ahtna Trainee Honalee Sanford

Gwich'in (Tukudh) Literacy Session

Sixteen participants from across the North attended this November Gwich'in workshop, including a large contingent from Fort McPherson. William Firth helped lead the session which centered on Tukudh, the early written form of Gwich'in. Tukudh was first developed by Archdeacon Robert McDonald and Gwich'in translators in the 1860s and is still used as the basis of worship for the Gwich'in people. Participants sang and studied a number of Chilig (Tukudh hymns written by McDonald) and completed the work started last year of transcribing the Ten Commandments from the Book of Common Prayer into modern Gwich'in.

Sixteen participants from across the North attended



Young and old sing Tukudh Chilig



Hän Elders Percy and Mabel Henry

Hän In-Service

In early December YNLC conducted a Hän language in-service for the teaching team at Robert Service School in Dawson City. Long-serving Hän speaker and Elder Percy Henry provided new language materials and shared life experience. Participants included Percy and Mabel Henry, Mary Henry, Georgette McLeod (newly hired

language instructor) and YNLC staff John Ritter and André Bourcier.

Presentations and Conferences

Yukon Teachers Association Conference

At the September YTA Conference held at Porter Creek Secondary School, YNLC program coordinators Jo-Anne Johnson and Linda Harvey led sessions on family trees and the clan system. Administrative assistant Josephine Holloway and linguist Doug Hitch hosted a display of YNLC materials.

Green College Oral Storytelling Panel

Linda Harvey was invited as a panelist for a session on oral storytelling and contemporary fiction held in October at Green College, University of B.C. Linda recounted a traditional Southern Tutchone story told to her by her mother, elder Irene Smith, and participated in the panel discussion and a question-and-answer session. She also visited UBC's First Nations House of Learning.



YNLC's Linda Harvey and Jo-Anne Johnson

Official Languages Unit, NWT Government

In August, YNLC computer specialist Doug Hitch was invited to Yellowknife to advise the Official Languages Unit of the NWT government on ways to make it easier to use Dene (Athapaskan) languages on government computers. Another meeting is scheduled for February. While working for the GNWT in the early nineties, Doug made a Macintosh Dene font and keyboard package that is still in use. At YNLC he has developed several fonts and keyboards for Yukon languages.

Ta'an Kwach'an Language Classes

Native language instructor Georgina Stone is teaching a Southern Tutchone language class one evening a week at the Ta'an Kwach'an office in Whitehorse.

Tlingit Recordings

Last fall, Tlingit Elder and fluent speaker Sam Johnston requested that YNLC assist him in documenting and preserving traditional names. On three occasions this fall YNLC linguists John Ritter and Doug Hitch recorded Mr. Johnston's materials. Dr. Jeff Leer from UAF assisted with checking transcriptions. YNLC produced three sets of audio CDs with transcriptions for Mr. Johnston called *Family Names*, *Ishkitàn Names* and *Tlingit Names*.



Tlingit Elder Sam Johnston with YNLC linguists André Bourcier and Doug Hitch

YNLC in Summer

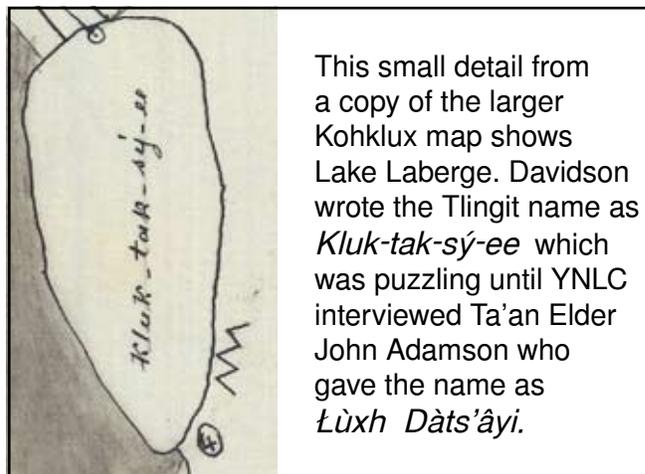
Following Yukon College graduation ceremonies in early June, the pace of activity slows somewhat at YNLC, allowing staff much-needed time to regroup, work on long-term research projects, and prepare for the fall term.

It also provides an opportunity for YNLC to renew its academic and administrative ties with the University of Alaska Fairbanks. In August, John Ritter and André Bourcier traveled to the UAF campus. They used the archives at the Alaska Native Language Center to examine the early writings of Bishop William Carpenter Bompas, who visited and did language translations with the Gwich'in and Inuvialuit in the 1860's and 1870's. They participated in a conference with the theme of *Climate, Language and Indigenous Perspectives*. The Director also met with officials in the College of Liberal Arts to discuss the credit transfer agreement between UAF and the Yukon College for students enrolled in the YNLC certificate and diploma programs.

Kohklux Map Project

In 1869 Tlingit Chieftain Kohklux from Klukwan, Alaska (near Haines), drew maps of the then uncharted southern Yukon interior for George Davidson of the US Coast and Geodetic Survey. The maps show the routes and geographic features that Kohklux and his wives were familiar with between the coast and Fort Selkirk, more than 500 kilometers away. Davidson carefully added the place names for these features as pronounced by the Tlingit.

In 2008 YNLC became aware of three related maps which are held at the Coast Survey Library and Archives Collection in Maryland: a hand-drawn copy of a large



This small detail from a copy of the larger Kohklux map shows Lake Laberge. Davidson wrote the Tlingit name as *Kluk-tak-sý-ee* which was puzzling until YNLC interviewed Ta'an Elder John Adamson who gave the name as *Lùxh Dàts'âyi*.

Klukwan map, apparently made by Davidson's assistant, Morse; a tracing of this copy; and a printed map from around 1867 with Davidson's annotations in red ink.

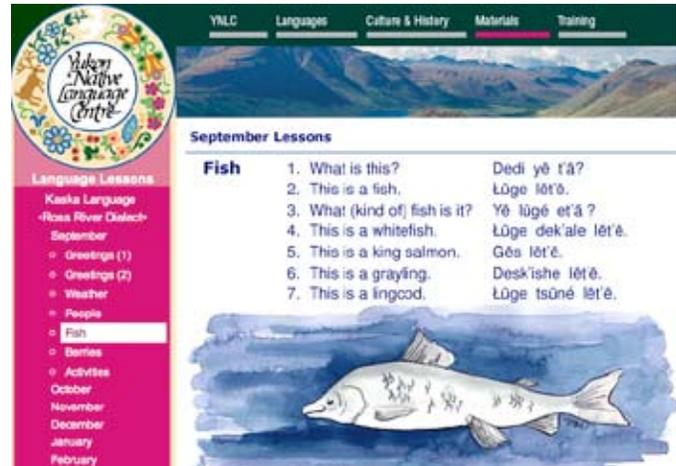
YNLC is focusing on the native language content of these maps and their cultural, geographic and historical context. The Centre will continue to determine the original Tlingit and/or Athapaskan forms underlying Davidson's spellings, and to match these with known geographic features. This is a challenging task because the maps vary in geographic detail and Tlingit transcriptions.

Website Developments

An entire set of Kaska language lessons by Testloa George Smith is now online. Hazel Bunbury's Southern Tutchone Camping audio story book is also now online.

YNLC computer specialist Doug Hitch has corrected the problem with some of the Dákeyi pages on the website, which were no longer displaying properly because of incompatible browser upgrades. He has also begun work on the image processing and programming for a new online audio storybook series, Hiking, and on developing interactive online Listening Exercises.

Our website address is ynlc.ca.

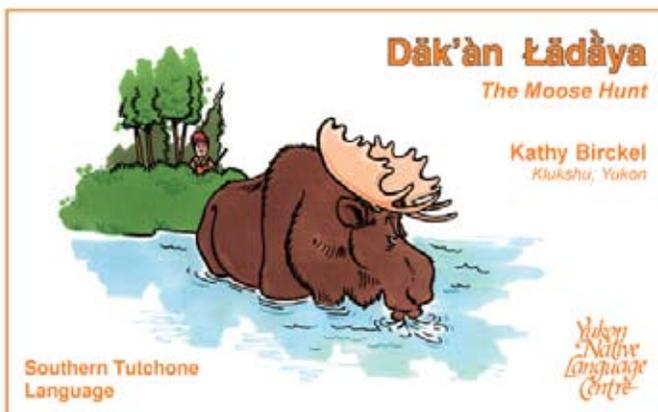


Kaska Language Lessons On-line

New Materials

YNLC Illustrations and Templates, CD and Binder

In response to requests from native language teachers, YNLC publications officer Sheila Maissan has undertaken the major job of preparing a large binder and CD to help native language teachers make their own curriculum materials. The CD contains over 1,400



Reprinted story book

small black and white illustrations, as well as template and example documents such as tests and word exercises, game cards, bingo cards, and listening exercises. With these illustrations and document templates in user-friendly form, teachers can now make their own materials and can customize them for their particular classes and teaching styles. YNLC staff Jo-Anne Johnson and Linda Harvey are working with language instructors throughout the Yukon to help familiarize them with using the CD.

Brighter Print Story Books

The other major job this fall was a redesign and reprinting of YNLC's print story books by various authors in a number of Yukon languages. There are now 23 different books in brighter and more attractive versions. They are similar (some are identical) to the ones found with audio on our website under materials > audio story books.

Publications Catalogue

The YNLC Publications Catalogue, listing all YNLC's publications, is available free of charge. A pdf of the most up-to-date version, as well as a printable order form, can be found on the website at ynlc.ca.

Planning for Spring 2009

The Yukon Native Language Centre and individual teachers are busy planning for the spring session, with a number of literacy and teacher training workshops in preparation. Please contact YNLC for further updates on scheduling.

How To Reach Us

If you would like more information on the Centre's programs, or would like to order our publications, please consult our website at ynlc.ca, or 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 YNLC, Yukon College, Box 2799, Whitehorse, Yukon, Y1A 5K4.



Visiting Students from Takhini Elementary School, Whitehorse

YNLC Training Sessions

Hän Literacy Session	Classroom Literacy	Dec. 3-5
Gwich'in Literacy Session	Community Literacy	Nov. 25-27
Introduction to N. L. Teaching	Teacher Training	Oct. 7-9
Ahtna Literacy Session	Classroom Literacy	Sep. 22-23
Certificate Course	Teacher Training	Sep. 15-19
Tlingit Literacy Session	Classroom Literacy	Sep. 8-10

Program Consultations

Tantalus School Visit LSCFN adult and daycare programs	Northern Tutchone Program	Nov. 21
St. Elias Community School	Southern Tutchone Program	Nov. 18-19
Kluane Lake School Visit	Southern Tutchone Program	Nov. 6-7
CAFN daycare and adult programs	Southern Tutchone Program	Oct 18
Teslin School Visit	Tlingit Program	Oct. 10

YNLC Presentations

Takhini Elementary School Gr 5/6	YNLC Presentation	Dec. 16
Green College Oral Storytelling Panel	YNLC Participation	Oct. 1
Duu Chuu Management Consulting	CYFN Language Action Plan	Sep. 30
Y.T.A. Conference	YNLC Presentations	Sep. 25-26
Aboriginal Language Font Assessment Meeting	YNLC Presentation	Aug. 26-27
University of Toronto, Aboriginal Studies and Linguistics	YNLC Presentation	Aug. 19

